

**Aquatic Roots  
dives into  
battle against  
invasive plants  
— page 10**



- Inside this issue**
- ◆ BCC FACILITY TARGETS STAFFING NEEDS OF HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY..... 2
  - ◆ WIGWAM OWNER PUBLISHES SHORT HISTORY OF LONG TUNNEL..... 2
  - ◆ BNRC CALLS ON LOCAL FIRM FOR TRAIL MAP TRANSLATION PROJECT ..... 4
  - ◆ FORMER OWNER OF OLDE HERITAGE TAVERN OPENS '101' IN PITTSFIELD..... 15



**Restaurateur  
chooses Lee  
for latest  
Avocado Cafe  
— page 14**

# BERKSHIRE TRADE & COMMERCE *monthly*

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“The Business Journal For Berkshire County”

OCTOBER 2021

## **ACCESS TO ACREAGE**

### **New fund looks to lend stability to small farms**

BY JOHN TOWNES

With the increasing popularity of locally produced food, and a pool of current or aspiring farmers with agricultural and business skills, the possibilities for continued growth of the regional agricultural economy are bright.

However, there is still a significant obstacle: limited access to affordable farmland at a price that allows small and mid-sized farms to gain security and long-term financial viability. This has been a barrier to entry for many aspiring farmers. Others rent land, which allows them to operate but does not provide for long-term stability.

This long-standing problem has become increasingly acute as real estate prices and the value of land for commercial and residential development continues to escalate.

A new initiative, the Harry Conklin Fund for Farmsteads, has been launched to help alleviate this situation by providing an alternative to renting or outright land ownership.

*continued on page 18*



Molly Comstock has Colfax Farm's produce ready to sell at the West Stockbridge Farmers Market. Her search for a new location for her farming operation has inspired an initiative to provide small farmers with an alternative to either leasing or purchasing agricultural land.

## **GROWING CONCERNS**

After nearly a decade of operating Many Forks Farm in Clarksburg, Sharon Wyrick has succeeded in her long-term effort to acquire all 20 acres of a property that had earlier been divided. The additional acreage (shown partially in foreground) will allow her to continue expanding her community supported agriculture (CSA) operation and begin the search for an eventual successor for the farm.

### **MANY FORKS' FUTURE** **Reunited tract plants seed for succession plan**

BY JOHN TOWNES

In addition to the demands of the growing and harvesting seasons, the goal of preserving the regional agricultural economy requires addressing longer-term generational strategies to maintain independent farms into the future.

One example of this is Many Forks Farm, situated on a 20-acre site along the North Branch of the Hoosic River, at 1360 River Rd. in Clarksburg.

Sharon Wyrick, owner of Many Forks Farm, has launched an initiative to find a successor to eventually take over the farm.

“I’ve reached the age where I have to prepare for the time when I no longer run the farm,” said Wyrick, who established Many Forks Farm in 2012 by leasing 2 acres of the current site. “I’m looking for someone who has experience with farming, the ability to manage it, and has a good understanding of the community and the mission of the farm.”

Wyrick added that she is not planning to leave her position immediately. “This is a part of the long-term goal I’ve had since the beginning,” she said. “I’m going to continue to operate the farm while looking for the right person, and I expect to stay on and work with them during the transition.”

*continued on page 16*





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## FRONT pages

### BERKSHIRE CULINARY INSTITUTE

## BCC facility targets staffing needs of hospitality industry

BY BRAD JOHNSON

At a time when positions within the hospitality and culinary sector have become difficult to fill, Berkshire Community College is stepping forward with a new facility and expanded programs that will provide a pipeline for the chefs, cooks and other trained workers that are so much in demand.

"Industry-wide, there was no indication that the hospitality industry would lose half its employees," said Jay Baver, director of workforce development for the hospitality sector at BCC. Baver was referring to the ongoing COVID-related upheaval in the industry that, both locally and around the nation, resulted in many workers being laid off in the early stages of the pandemic, and a corresponding reluctance on the part of many of those workers to return to jobs in the industry as demand picked up.

"The basic situation is we need new hospitality and culinary people to fill these positions, and we've spent the past year building this infrastructure needed to support that," said Baver.

At the heart of this infrastructure is the new Berkshire Culinary Institute, developed over the past year as the college's hospitality and culinary programs emerge from a hiatus. The project is supported by a \$400,000 grant recently awarded by the Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program, which encourages individuals to develop the skills necessary to meet the varying hiring needs of employers in the commonwealth.

"The Berkshire Culinary Institute will offer post-high school culinary training to complement the successful online Fast-Track

Hospitality & Culinary program and new degree programs," said Baver. "It will serve as a state-of-the-art facility that trains head chefs, cooks, bakers, and other food specialists, an industry growing at a rate faster in the Berkshires than the national average."

The capital grant will finance all-new equipment in the college's former teaching kitchen, which will be transformed into a specialty bake shop. Construction is also underway to transform a large portion of the former cafeteria into the new culinary space.

"That's being turned into a classroom to support these programs," said Baver.

He added that, while the small former teaching kitchen is being set up as a bake shop, the larger adjacent commercial kitchen that previously provided food service to the college community is being repurposed as a full-function teaching kitchen. Down the road, this facility will resume its food service role, and will be operated by students as part of their culinary training.

"We saw it made sense for students to make food for everyone on campus," said Baver. "We're focusing on a grab-and-go format that will take shape for 2022."

This combined footprint will provide room for catering preparation, cooking labs and classrooms, which will be available to both students and the community for events and workshops. "We want this to be available for everyone," said Baver.

BCC's culinary program is part of the combined Hospitality and Tourism Management and Culinary Arts Management programs, which offer associate degrees as well as certifications in Lodging Management, Culinary Arts Management, and Food and Beverage Management. Baver heads up the programming of noncredit workforce development courses, while James Storey, faculty and curriculum coordinator – hospitality management, handles for-credit programs for enrolled students at BCC.

Baver, who joined BCC to manage the workforce development programs for the hospitality sector in April 2020, noted that these programs and the for-credit degree programs at the college do have some overlap. "Many of the courses are similar, and they share the same facilities," he said.

Over the past year, however, the non-credit and for-credit sides took divergent paths as the pandemic played out.

"The for-credit hospitality and culinary program was put on hiatus for 2020," he said, noting that concerns related to the pandemic made the hands-on, in-person training involved in these courses impractical.

Meanwhile, one of Baver's first responsibilities in his new position in the spring of 2020 was to oversee a transformation of the existing Fast-Track certificate program from live to remote format.

"Fast Track had been developed earlier as a live program," said Baver. "Last year, we created a new remote Fast Track program that turned out to be very successful."

**"Our Fast Track graduates found good career opportunities at a time when wages have been going up."**

The program had cohorts in summer 2020 and spring 2021, with a combined 58 graduates. "Our Fast Track graduates found good career opportunities at a time when wages have been going up," said Baver.

He said the next Fast Track program is expected to launch in October. Also, in September, a special program was launched for Spanish speaking residents who want to learn

English and receive professional culinary and hospitality training.

The new Berkshire Culinary Institute and its programs are being supported by a number

of area businesses. Among them is Mill Town Capital, which has several local business holdings in the hospitality and culinary sectors.

"Mill Town has pledged to employ four interns per semester and during the summer for three years," said Baver, adding that these interns would come from both the certificate and degree programs. The cost of hosting these paid interns is estimated at over \$170,000.

Another local company, Currency Coffee, has pledged \$50,000 in equipment and consulting services to support training as baristas and related functions. "They're going to help design the beverage/coffee program at BCC," said Baver.

While work on kitchen and other facilities for the Berkshire Culinary Institute is being completed, the scheduling of courses there will be subject to pandemic conditions and related considerations.

"The for-credit courses will be on-site this fall," said Baver. "I want to have our [certificate] programs here this fall as well, and that's what we're working toward."

For more information on applying for BCC's hospitality and culinary programs, visit [www.berkshirecc.edu](http://www.berkshirecc.edu). ♦

## Wigwam owner publishes short history of long tunnel

BY JOHN TOWNES

In addition to the region's natural beauty and cultural attractions, one of the most frequent topics of questions and conversation with customers at the Wigwam Western Summit on the Mohawk Trail (Route 2) in North Adams is the Hoosac Tunnel, according to owner Lea King.

"People constantly come in looking for information about the Hoosac Tunnel," said King, who purchased the prominent Wigwam Western Summit overlooking North Adams with her partner, Wayne Gelinas, in 2018. Since then, they have revitalized the site as a gift shop, cafe and lodging facility.

"I looked for information on the Hoosac Tunnel to share with people, but unfortunately there is not a lot of material readily available," she said. "The Hoosac Tunnel has an amazing history, but it's in danger of being lost to time. I decided to do something to make sure that its history is preserved, as it is such an important part of the story of Florida and North Adams."

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news & notes from the region

The result is a new 20-page book, *The Hoosac Tunnel: 19th Century Engineering Marvel*, which was released in early September. It is on sale at the Wigwam Western Summit and the North Adams Museum of History (in the Holiday Inn in downtown North Adams) for \$9.95.

King has partnered with North Adams historian Chuck Cahoon, who is president of the North Adams Historical Society, as co-author. The book was designed and edited by Nancy-Fay Hecker of Applehill Designs in South Egremont.

King noted that her shop already had a nod to the Hoosac Tunnel on its shelves, in the form of a teddy bear that she carries named Henry, the Hoosac Tunnel Engineer Bear. “He’s a popular item,” she said.

King said she initially had considered producing a children’s coloring book about the building of the Hoosac Tunnel.

“I thought that would be a good way to tell the basic story of the tunnel,” she said. “But, then, when doing the initial research, I met with Chuck. He has an amazing amount of knowledge and stories about it. I realized that a better idea would be to produce a book based on that, and I suggested that we work together on it. He agreed, and we began meeting regularly.”

She said that during the six-month process, Cahoon would provide extensive notes and photos, and they would assemble it into the content, which Hecker edited and designed.

King noted that it emphasizes pictures and graphics along with the text, to provide an accessible and engaging approach.

“It’s not intended to be an exhaustive scholarly history,” she said. “Rather, we wanted to make a lively overview that would bring the story of the tunnel to life.”

Engine for innovation

The 4.75-mile Hoosac Tunnel was a major engineering feat, and in its time was the longest railroad tunnel in the U.S. and one of the longest in the world.

It was created as part of a rail route through northern Massachusetts to provide a direct connection from the eastern part of the state to Albany and points beyond. The tunnel was necessary to enable the railway to pass through the Hoosac Range. It starts near the Deerfield River in Florida and extends to its western portal in North Adams.

Work on it began in 1851 after many years of discussion and planning. Construction took over two decades to complete, and the first train passed through it in 1875.

It was costly in terms of human life. Some 195 men died during its construction due to explosions and other accidents.

One of the less recognized aspects of the project today was its contributions to construction technology. The construction required trial and error, and complex methods were developed to connect the sections of the tunnel.

“Most of the equipment and techniques that were required didn’t exist, and it was started with a few star-shaped hand drills, chisels, hammers and black powder,” King said. “They had to create methods and inventions as they went along. Many inventions came out of the project that subsequently became widespread.”

Among these were new types of drilling equipment. It also was the first instance where nitroglycerin was refined into usable form for construction in the U.S. A first-of-its-kind nitroglycerin factory was established in North Adams to serve the tunnel project.

Another innovation was an elevator system to service shafts that had been dug from the surface down to the tunnels. This system

was patented and subsequently purchased by Otis Elevator.

There were also false starts, King noted. A boring machine was created but proved unsuccessful. “It got stuck in the tunnel, and work had to stop for two years while they moved the entry to another site,” she said.

King said that they are planning a second edition of the book. She also intends to revive her original idea for a children’s coloring book on the tunnel.

Regional revitalization

The book ties in with a larger goal for King and Gelinas of revitalizing the town of Florida and the section of the Mohawk Trail from that town to North Adams.

King noted that Florida was once a prosperous community but fell on hard times.

“We want to bring back economic activity for the local community, and preserve and highlight the history and qualities that made it successful as a destination for visitors,” she said.

Their purchase of the Wigwam Western Summit was the first step in that plan. After acquiring the landmark property with stunning views of the city below and to points west in 2018, they renovated and reopened the gift shop there—expanding its offerings and activities to make it a thriving seasonal destination for residents and tourists alike.

They did the same with the rustic cabins on the site, enhancing their appeal to a broader market of guests and successfully connecting the Wigwam’s natural beauty with the nearby cultural attractions.

They took another step in January 2020 when they purchased a 4,800-square-foot two-story building at 137 Mohawk Trail in Florida, about three miles east of the Wigwam. That building had previously been a general store, but that had been closed for several years and the structure was in disrepair.

Their plan is to use the building as a com-

bination local history museum, gift shop and country store (*August 2021 BT&C*).

The museum will portray the history and lore of the town and carry gift items. The country store will carry grocery staple items.

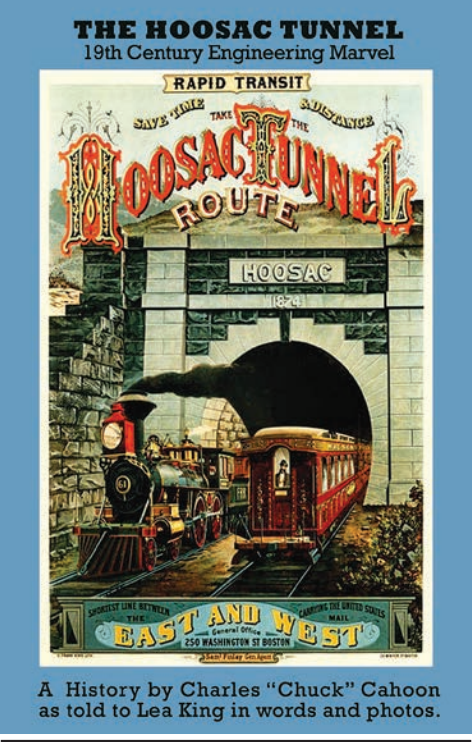
The building has an upstairs apartment that has been converted into a short-term vacation rental unit. They also plan to do that with a new log cabin-style building currently under construction on an adjacent site.

Meanwhile, the couple have placed the Wigwam Western Summit on the market. “We’ve been successful at getting the Wigwam Western Summit back in business, and I’ll continue to actively manage it until it has been sold to the right buyer,” King said.

She added that, once they have gotten the new store open and running successfully, they also plan to sell that.

King explained that she and Gelinas believe they can best accomplish their goals by creating a framework.

“Our strength is not as long-term business operators,” she said. “What we’re best at is envisioning what something can be, and developing it and then handing it over to another owner to take it forward.” ♦



“We wanted to make a lively overview that would bring the story of the tunnel to life.”

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# Map translation removes barrier to enjoyment of BNRC properties

Project showcases services of local language consulting firm

BY JOHN TOWNES

A low-profile business in the Berkshires has played a prominent role in enhancing access for Spanish speaking residents and visitors to the some of the region’s most popular natural resources.

In an effort to encourage Spanish-speaking members of the community to enjoy its network of hiking trails, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) land conservation organization recently launched a project to translate its maps and informational material.

To implement the project, BNRC contacted Silvana Kirby, founder and owner of Berkshire Language Management Inc. (BLM), a full-service language consulting, cultural awareness, and educational company based in Pittsfield.

“All BNRC reserves are free and open to the public,” said Jenny Hansell, president of BNRC. “However, that alone is not enough to make them truly welcoming and thoughtfully inclusive. By expanding BNRC’s language offerings, we seek to remove one significant comfort obstacle on the lands that BNRC makes available for public use.”

Hansell explained that after conversations with Berkshire nonprofits, businesses, and community members, BNRC recognized that language accessibility was creating a barrier for Spanish speakers to feel comfortable and welcome on the region’s hiking trails.

To remove that barrier, BNRC enlisted the services of Silvana and BLM to translate its existing English trail map brochures into Spanish. They are available on the BNRC website (bnrc.org), and by snapping the QR



## MAPA DE SENDERO THE BOULDERS



**Descripción del Sendero:**  
**Healthy Heart Loop:** 0.5 millas, ida y vuelta  
Dificultad: Fácil (cuestas poco empinadas, cimentación equilibrada)  
**Green Trail (Sendero Verde):** 1.4 millas, ida y vuelta (fácil)  
**Blue Trail (Sendero Azul):** 2.8 millas, ida y vuelta  
Dificultad: Moderado (cimentación irregular, cambios de elevación)  
**Red Trail (Sendero Rojo):** 2.4 millas, ida y vuelta (moderado)

Desde la parte sur del inicio del sendero en las Rutas 8/9, el **Blue Trail (Sendero Azul)**: hacia la cresta de la gran roca es una caminata de 45 minutos aproximadamente. Este sendero proporciona una ascenso gradual a la cresta de 1,395 pies de altura. Desde ese punto, los visitantes, después de la caída de las hojas, pueden distinguir Taconic Range (la Cordillera Taconic) al oeste. El inicio del sendero al norte en Gulf Road brinda acceso a una caminata corta por el **Healthy Heart Loop** o una caminata extendida en Green and Red Trails (los senderos de color Verde y Rojo).

**Historia Natural:**  
Los trozos de roca gris desgastados de The Boulder son una práctica parada de descanso después de una escalada moderada. La base de esta propiedad es principalmente la roca pelítica, una metamorfosis de grano fino de roca sedimentaria. Los grandes afloramientos del cresta de las grandes rocas muestran parte de un concéntrico arco llamado “fractura semilunar”. Estos forman de una interacción entre hielo, presión, y una roca muy dura como la cuarcita encontrada en este lugar. Los venados y los búhos barrados se encuentran entre otras muchas especies de animales en este lugar; el trillium rojo y la orquídea rosa zapatilla aparecen en primavera entre muchas otras flores silvestres efímeras.

The Berkshire Natural Resources Council contracted with Berkshire Language Management owner Silvana Kirby (shown here with her puppy, Maverick) to translate maps and other informational material from English to Spanish to encourage Spanish-speaking members of the community to enjoy its network of hiking trails.

code at BNRC trailhead kiosks. Additionally, they are provided free at five of BNRC’s most popular trails including the Hoosac Range, The Boulders, Housatonic Flats, Thomas & Palmer Brook, and Yokun Ridge South.

One purpose of the translated materials is to provide practical guidance and directions, as well as descriptions of the wildlife and other features encountered on the trail.

Kirby said that the BNRC project is also intended to convey the safety of hiking in their conservation and recreation sites.

“The idea of safely going for a hike in unfamiliar places is one of the things we take for granted here,” said Kirby, a native of Colombia. “However, that’s not the case for many who come here from Latin America. In many areas, you don’t go off familiar property. If you do, you could get into trouble or encounter guerrilla or other dangerous

situations. So, the translated material also needs to make people comfortable with the basic idea of going out on a hiking trail.”

### Diversity drives need

This is one example of the increasing importance of language translation and interpretation services as the U.S. population grows more diverse.

Kirby has long experience in language translation and cultural awareness. She moved to the United States with her parents in 1988 and grew up in Delaware and Pennsylvania. She received a bachelor’s degree in International Business from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh with continuing education in Translation and Interpreting from Pittsburgh University and UMASS Amherst.

In Pennsylvania, she worked in large-scale corporate global export and import sales and

project management, and also with the World Trade Center in Pittsburgh, where she became involved in cultural issues and concerns.

Kirby moved to the Berkshires with her husband Adam, who is from here, and launched BLM (413-553-1007 or [www.berkshirelm.com](http://www.berkshirelm.com)) in 2004.

BLM provides a variety of services to businesses, attorneys and other professionals, social services and other organizations and individuals. The firm also conducts workshops, including training sessions for language interpreters, and works on larger projects and initiatives.

In addition to BNRC and other clients in the Berkshires, Kirby works with those outside of the region. One job, for example, involved translating presentations for the Boston Red Sox. She has also translated presentations for an international food distribution company.

Kirby said that, in addition to her own services, BLM is a resource for a variety of jobs of all scales. While her own expertise is Spanish and Portuguese, for example, she said BLM is capable of working in other languages. “I have a team and access to a network of colleagues who can provide services and work on projects,” she said.

One of her personal areas of expertise is as a nationally certified medical interpreter (CMI-Spanish).

Kirby is director of Medical Interpreting Programs (MIT) at Berkshire Area Health Education Center (AHEC), an affiliate of the statewide health education and community engagement program. She has also served as Berkshire AHEC’s lead instructor for the Medical Interpreter Training Program and collaborated in the development and implementation of the UMASS Medical School’s MassAHEC Network Medical Interpreter Training Program curriculum. She also works with local hospitals and private practices as a culture consultant and instructor.

### Cultural context

Kirby explained that the field of language management is varied and involves much more than simply translating words from one language to another.

There are two basic aspects to language services, she said. Translation involves written language, while interpretation is oriented to verbal communication.

Both facets also require conveying cultural awareness. While that term is sometimes referred to in terms of broader social and political diversity, it also involves applying knowledge of very specific and practical differences among differing populations and cultures.

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Inaccuracy in small details can have serious consequences.

“For example, it’s vital to be precise when translating medical labels,” Kirby said. “The English phrase ‘once a day’ could be understood as the number 11 in Spanish. So it’s very important to write the number one instead.”

Also, language is not generic. Just as there are many flavors of English, other languages have many variations and dialects reflecting national, regional and local differences, ethnic cultures, class distinctions, slang and other factors.

“Just because someone speaks Spanish does not necessarily mean they can be an interpreter,” Kirby said. “It also involves awareness of how best to communicate with the specific readers or listeners within the appropriate cultural context.”

She noted that words or phrases can have different meanings in different countries. In some cases an innocent word in one country can be an insult or have vulgar connotations in another.

She added that it is important to factor in the specific audiences for communications.

“If you’re an organization that works with a diverse Spanish-speaking population, you have to communicate in ways that can be widely understood,” she said. “However, if you are focused on clients from a particular country, translations can reflect that.”

Interpretation issues

There are two basic forms of verbal interpretation.

Simultaneous interpretation is used to repeat speeches or public remarks from one language to another while they are being delivered. The interpreter has to be skilled in simultaneously listening in one language and repeating the content in another.

This is very demanding, and Kirby said it is common practice to have two interpreters on hand because the length of time that level of concentration can be held is limited.

The other type is consecutive interpretation, which is used during meetings and conversations. The interpreter listens to the speaker in one language, and then repeats it to the other party in a different language.

The interpreter has four basic roles, according to Kirby. “You are serving as a conduit for language between people,” she said. “That’s the most straightforward role.”

The interpreter also has to clarify what is being said, to avoid or correct possible misstatements.

“Another role is as cultural broker,” she continued. “That involves educating partici-



Silvana Kirby, who established Berkshire Language Management in 2004, provides a variety of translation and interpretation services to businesses, social service agencies, attorneys and other professionals.

pants on the other’s culture to increase their understanding in communications.”

Kirby noted that this is especially important in professional meetings, such as law and health care.

As an example, she cited conferences in geriatric medicine in which interpreters participate in discussions between various professionals and a patient’s family regarding decisions for treatment and end-of-life care.

“In this country, different members of the family are often involved in these discussions and make decisions together,” she said. “But in another country, the oldest child might make all of those decisions. Also, in some cultures, the male takes the lead role regarding his wife’s health care and will do all of the talking with the medical staff. The staff might not understand the reasons for that. So it’s important to explain that to enable them to work with the patient and family most effectively.”

A fourth role is advocacy, but Kirby emphasized that is an area that has to be handled carefully, and only when necessary.

“We have to be careful not to overstep our boundaries,” she said. “There’s an overall balance we have to maintain. Our basic job is to facilitate communications. That may involve guiding conversations, asking questions for clarification and other tasks to achieve that. However, you don’t want to be the center of attention or lead the conversation.”◆

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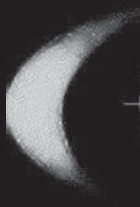
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FRONTpages

BUSINESS Update

The **MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board** has received \$235,000 to support the development and management of healthcare training programs for the next two years. This project is funded by a Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and is administered statewide by the Commonwealth Corporation, and locally administered by the Berkshire Workforce Board. Through a comprehensive partnership of Berkshire County’s healthcare employers, educators, workforce professionals, social service agencies and career development agencies, the Berkshire Healthcare Hub aims to increase opportunities within the healthcare sector for training and workforce development by aligning opportunities with the needs of area employers. The partnership looks to help establish a north county-based Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, as well as continue a blended online CNA program to address a growing and persistent problem of nursing assistant shortages. All training and services will be free of charge for participants. Funds will also address the demand for medical assistants through support of training opportunities. Training programs will be geared towards unemployed and underemployed Massachusetts residents, with opportunities beginning in October. For information on programs currently accepting applications, visit <https://masshireberkshire.com/free-certified-nursing-assistant-training/>.

Be Kind Berkshires, an illustrated public service campaign, has been launched by **1Berkshire** in collaboration with **Norman Rockwell Museum** (NRM). The campaign features three original illustrations by noted regional illustrators Leo Quiles, Marc Rosenthal and Nicole Tadgell. Each commissioned image was created to inspire patrons to take a moment and reflect on how their actions can make the world a better place by extending kindness and empathy to workers who are doing their very best. Initiated in response to continued changes the region faces along with the ever-changing COVID conditions, Be Kind Berkshires aims to invite empathy from customers who patronize Berkshire businesses, service providers and attractions. The idea for the campaign came about after hearing about challenging working scenarios from several business leaders this summer, and the sometimes disgruntled exchanges between patrons and employees. “We thought that a ‘kindness campaign’ might help people consider that we are truly all in this together – that a smile or a thoughtful word can change a person’s day for the better,” said NRM Director and CEO Laurie Norton Moffatt, who contacted 1Berkshire CEO Jonathan Butler with the idea. Butler noted that the idea resonated with the team at 1Berkshire. “Not only did it seem like a timely and necessary collaboration for the Berkshires, but it also felt like a great way for us to use our strong network to speak to residents and visitors alike about the value of kindness during this tough time,” said Butler. “We are excited to be partnering with the Norman Rockwell Museum on this important initiative.” The Be Kind Berkshires campaign will run through the end of 2021. For information on how to get involved, visit [1berkshire.com/be-kind-berkshires](http://1berkshire.com/be-kind-berkshires).

The **Berkshire Botanical Garden** has decided again this year to cancel its annual Harvest Festival. The event, which had been slated for Oct. 9-10, was called off in mid-September due to concerns regarding resurgent COVID caseloads in the region. Similar concerns had caused the 2020 event to be canceled as well.

**Adams Community Bank** has developed strategic relationships with 11 high schools across Berkshire County to offer a multifaceted financial literacy program this school year. The program, offered through Ramsey Solutions, provides a Foundations in Personal Finance curriculum to students. Dovetailing with the bank’s goals of increasing financial literacy across Berkshire County, the philosophy of this program is that every student in America should graduate from high school knowing basic money management principles. “We frequently hear from customers seeking ideas and tools to help them better manage their finances,” said Charles O’Brien, president and CEO of Adams Community Bank. “This series of modules covers topics ranging from saving, budgeting, managing credit and debt, understanding insurance, and paying taxes, and will provide training on many relevant topics.” O’Brien said the bank, which will underwrite the entire cost of this program at the 11 high schools, views financial literacy as essential because it equips students with the knowledge and skills to emerge as independent adult consumers. This offering is part of a broader initiative by Adams Community Bank to increase the financial knowledge of the residents and businesses of Berkshire County through outreach and charitable giving.

The **Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire** (CDCSB) will hold its 2021 fundraising event on Oct. 8 with a 7 p.m. virtual screening of the documentary film, *Citizen Jane: Battle For The City*, about the life and work of urban planning activist Jane Jacobs. The event includes a live, online Q&A session with the film’s producer and director, Matt Tymanauer, and film editor, Bob Eisenhardt. In 1960, Jacobs wrote the seminal book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, a critique of modern urban planning and post-war urban renewal. She has become a symbol for strength within a community and a focal point for the voice of the people. This fundraiser will support the CDCSB’s work in southern Berkshire County, building affordable housing developments such as Windrush Commons on South Main Street in Great Barrington, which is due to break ground this fall. Sponsorship opportunities for this year’s virtual film fundraiser are available at all levels. To learn more, visit [cdcsb.org](http://cdcsb.org). Tickets to the screening and Q&A can be purchased for \$15 at [cdcsb.org/2021filmfundraiser](http://cdcsb.org/2021filmfundraiser).

**BFAIR** has been named a 2021 Health New England Well Worth It Award recipient at the bronze level for successful worksite health promotion and employee health improvement. The award recognizes BFAIR’s commitment to their employees’ overall health and their achievements in implementing health and wellness programs. “Last year impacted everyone, and BFAIR dedicated tools and resources to meet the critical needs of their employees,” said Katie Bruno, public health and wellness program manager for **Health New England**. “Health New England is proud to recognize BFAIR for their commitment to their employees’ overall health and well-being.” This year’s workplace wellness activities at BFAIR included a variety of workshops for employees such as yoga, healthy eating, and smoking cessation. Also included were self-driven programs such as a walking challenge and a hydration challenge. Individuals served by BFAIR were also included in the wellness program. “Wellness, both physical and emotional, remained a top priority for us at BFAIR,” said Laura Baran, Wellness Committee chair at BFAIR. “Our Wellness Committee recognized that our essential staff came to work, day after day, and did their job caring for others regardless of the pandemic, and we wanted to ensure that they had all the tools they needed to stay well.” Since 1994, BFAIR has been providing adult family care (AFC), residential, in-home clinical services, employment and day services for adults and children with developmental disabilities, acquired brain injury and autism.

**MountainOne Insurance**, a full service insurance agency with offices in North Adams, Pittsfield and Williamstown, has been named a “Top Insurance Employer” by Insurance Business America (IBA). IBA’s annual Top Insurance Employer program ranks leading U.S. insurance organizations based on a series of employee satisfaction metrics, including benefits, compensation, culture, employee development and diversity. This is the second time that MountainOne Insurance has been recognized, having also achieved this distinction in 2019. “We are honored to be recognized again by Insurance Business America as a Top Insurance Employer,” said Jonathan Denmark, MountainOne Insurance’s president and chief operating officer. “I am especially proud of the resilience of our employees over the past year. They reached new heights in the delivery of insurance solutions and customer service throughout our region. As a provider of personal and business insurance products as well as employee benefits solutions, we know it is critical to invest in our employees to ensure they have the skills and tools to not only attract and retain customers, but also to provide advice as a trusted advisor. This corporate culture helps make MountainOne Insurance Agency a desired workplace and has led to this prestigious recognition.”

During **Carr Hardware’s** annual Spring Merchandise Book Giveaway, two local winners, selected by random draw, received a \$500 gift card in August. The winners were Jodi Joseph from Williamstown and Matthew Govoni from Lee. “Everyone has extra projects going on right now, and we knew these prizes could be put to good use,” said Bart Raser, president of Carr Hardware. “We thank all those who entered the giveaway for their participation.” Carr Hardware’s giveaway also sparked its own donation story. When Jodi Joseph found out she was a grand prize winner, she decided to donate her winnings to **Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity**. Joseph also reached out to Carr Hardware and asked if they would match her donation. Alongside Joseph’s donation, Carr also donated another \$500 worth of Pratt & Lambert stain to Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity for a recent project. “Jody’s spirit of giving, generosity and paying it forward is incredible,” said Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity CEO Carolyn Valli. “The community is a better place because of her gift and that of Carr Hardware for matching the donation with product.”

In early 2021, with grant support from the MassDevelopment Collaborative Workspace program, the **Berkshire Innovation Center** (BIC) launched an Augmented/Virtual and Mixed Reality Simulation (Sim) Lab in a dedicated space at its Pittsfield facility. The lab seeks to provide industry and academic partners the ability to explore and develop applications for skills assessment, employee training, student education and applied research in augmented reality (AR), mixed reality (MR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies in areas including plastics molding, rapid prototyping, medical device manufacturing, safety training, additive manufacturing, robotics, construction, aerospace and defense engineering. In support of that project, **General Dynamics Mission Systems** (GDMS) has donated 15 Microsoft HoloLens Commercial Suite (1st Generation) mixed reality headsets, valued at \$5,000 per set. These headsets, the first fully self-contained holographic computer running Windows 10, are completely untethered (no wires, phones or connection to a PC is needed). They allow the wearer to place holograms in their physical environment, allowing a heads-up and hands-free user experience. AR, MR and VR simulations have proven to help businesses operate in a more efficient, safe manner with less cost as it relates to machine maintenance and repair, product design and prototyping, virtual conferences and trade shows, facilities management, safety training, and step-by-step task guidance for training employees. The technology is also an effective way to engage students and expose them to the work of the future. “The application of this technology was advancing quickly prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pace has accelerated rapidly as more and more organizations turn to it to adapt and thrive,” said BIC Executive Director Ben Sosne. “The lab, and this unbelievably generous donation from GDMS, will help bring this revolutionary technology to companies and educational partners in Berkshire County.”

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BerkShares Business of the Month

What first struck new Artistic Director Ryan LaBoy about the Berkshire Childrens’ Chorus (BCC) was the intergenerational nature of the organization; young choristers, their parents, and alumni all play an important role in building the choral community in the Berkshires. The nonprofit, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, was founded as a way for students in the Southern Berkshires to develop their singing skills and learn a more challenging repertoire than what is offered in school. Since its start, Board President Alice Maggio estimates hundreds of students have passed through the program. The BCC has historically been composed of three different internal choirs; junior choir for grades 1-5; senior choir for grades 6-9; and coda for grades 10-12. While their home base is the Old Parish Church on Main Street in Sheffield, the chorus has traveled regionally to Cape Cod and New York City and even internationally to Italy, France, and England.



Berkshire Children’s Chorus  
P.O. Box 18, Sheffield, MA (413) 347 9606

ming called “Take the Lead” through which alumni offered workshops to the public to share how their experience with the chorus has shaped their career paths. More than just singing, the chorus provides invaluable mentoring relationships and life-long friendships. Alice reflects on the confidence she gained while participating in the chorus growing up and how beneficial it has been for her: “The way you learn to listen and work with others translates to all aspects of life.”

Inspired by the rolling hills - and desire to conduct programming in a safe space - the first program of the year will be held outdoors. The “Take a Hike” concert will lead young choristers on a walk through the woods where they will perform pieces, sight-read new songs, and learn from practitioners about local conservationist efforts. Ryan explains his creative vision: “When we reach a beautiful vista, we’ll stop and sing as the moment inspires us.” Musicians will be planted along the trail to accompany the singing. To make it accessible for all, the program will be live-streamed for the public.

What Ryan loves about music is that it allows you to travel without leaving your home. Whether it’s a Polynesian children’s song or an 18th century Mozart piece, singing can give you a sense of time and space, location, and community. Alice adds, “there’s so much to learn about a different culture and style of singing that reflects a place.” This understanding invites a deeper appreciation for one’s own community. Alice and Ryan draw the parallel that the work of the Berkshire Children’s Chorus is about enriching the lives of people in the Berkshires through music just how BerkShares inspires a conversation regarding the importance of community, connection, and local resources. The success of initiatives like BerkShares and the BCC, Alice continues, “depend on respect and accountability to each other.”

more stories like this one at [www.berkshares.org](http://www.berkshares.org)

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news & notes from the region

**Downtown Pittsfield Inc.** will present **Indoors Out!** Music on North on Oct. 1 from 5-7 p.m., at Sotille Park, Persip Park, and the parklet at the **Marketplace Cafe**. The three downtown locations will feature free outdoor performances by local performers who have also played with **Berkshire Busk!** in Great Barrington this summer (*June 2021 BT&C*). The performances will be presented in partnership with First Fridays Artswalk, which will take place from 5 to 8 p.m. For more information, visit [downtownpittsfield.com](http://downtownpittsfield.com).

On Sept. 16, **Credit Union of the Berkshires** (CUB) members voted to approve the proposed merger with **Greylock Federal Credit Union**. The merger will become effective on Oct. 1 and all CUB Members will be moved over to Greylock Federal's banking systems by the end of October. Greylock Federal will assume CUB's nearly \$23 million in assets and approximately 2,000 members. All employees of CUB have been offered positions with Greylock Federal. The CUB branch on Williams Street in Pittsfield will be closed due to the proximity of an existing Greylock Federal branch on Elm Street. "On behalf of CUB's amazing staff and board of directors, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our members," said Beth Wallace, president of the board of directors for CUB. "For 80 years, we have benefited from the patronage and support of our wonderful community. We are all very excited to be joining the Greylock family and look forward to seeing all our members there soon." The Sept. 16 vote was the final step in a process that began when CUB approached Greylock Federal with a merger request for proposal and subsequently led to regulatory approval from the National Credit Union Administration, Massachusetts Division of Banks, and Massachusetts Credit Union Share Insurance Corporation. "Greylock is honored to be chosen to carry on CUB's legacy of community and exceptional personal service," said Stanley Walczyk, chair of Greylock Federal's board of directors. "We are looking forward to meeting all of their members and learning from their wonderful staff. The credit union legacy is strong in Berkshire County, and we are grateful to be able to support its continued growth."

**Inspire Confidence Group**, a private wealth advisory practice of **Ameriprise Financial Services Inc.**, has moved its Williamstown office from 24 Water St. to 377 Main St., Suite 102. "Just moving down the street, we are excited to stay in Williamstown and live and work in the community," said Matt Neely, APMA, financial advisor with Inspire Confidence Group, who is joined in the new location by Jennifer Bayliss, client concierge. The firm has other offices in New York, Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

**Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll)** Berkshire County has begun its Fall 2021 Business Accelerator program which will support the launch of the 13 business ideas selected to participate. These 13 businesses (14 individuals) represent a wide array of ideas and come from a broad swath of the region. They include: Alisa Costa, Pittsfield, **Orchard Engagement**; Anneice Cousin, Hudson, N.Y., **Beautiful Racket**; Genesis Rivera and Talya Taliaferro, Pittsfield, **TG's Clubhouse**; Kira Smith, Dalton, **Shire Alchemy**; Marlee Tyska, Pittsfield, **Berkshire GreenLeaf & Wellness LLC**; Mary Stucklen, Hinsdale, **Tommy's Compost Service**; Maya Richards, Pittsfield, **Little Wing Wellness**; McKenna Burzimati, North Adams, **Roxie's Barkery**; Michael Dell'Aquila, Pittsfield, **Hot Plate Brewing**; Paula Buxbaum, North Adams, **Bux Vintage**; Susan Slack, Pittsfield, sewing business **TBA**; Travis Toole, Windsor, **Build With Nature**; and Trevor Daniels, Pittsfield, **Winter Games/Cookout**. This is the fourth Business Accelerator for EforAll's Berkshire County site, with 36 entrepreneurs already "launched" through the three previous cohorts. This new class of 13 meets twice per week for business education, and participants are being matched to three volunteer mentors from the community who will work with them for the duration of the program. The classes and mentoring are being held virtually over Zoom for the most part. Health conditions permitting, the public will be invited in December to the Gala and Showcase at the Berkshire Innovation Center at the conclusion of the 12-week program. EforAll is a nonprofit organization that partners with communities nationwide to help under-represented individuals successfully start and grow a business through intensive business training, mentorship and an extended professional support network. To learn more, visit [eforall.org](http://eforall.org).

**Salisbury Bank** is sponsoring a free Shred Event and Food Drive on Oct. 2 at its Sheffield branch at 640 North Main St. For the safety of participants and volunteers, the bank will hold the event in a "drive-thru" format with a limit of four bags/boxes per car (paper only; no binders). Participants are asked to consider bringing a non-perishable food donation as well which will be directed to local food pantries.

The Center for Food Studies at **Bard College at Simon's Rock** will host the 8th annual ThinkFOOD Conference on Oct. 1-2, with a focus on looking to nature for sustainable ways to eat and lessen impact on the planet. This year's theme, "Field and Forest," will offer interactive sessions and workshops from experts from the Berkshires and beyond in areas such as sustainable eating, home gardens, food entrepreneurship, urban gardening, ethical foraging, agroforestry, and Berkshire-local agricultural initiatives. Emily Broad Leib, clinical professor of Law, faculty director, Food Law and Policy Clinic at Harvard Law School, and author of the Blueprint for a National Food Strategy, will give the keynote address. "The aim of ThinkFOOD is to empower attendees to learn more about Berkshire-local and regional initiatives aimed at softening our impact on the planet in the realms of agriculture, forestry, food service and feeding ourselves," said Professor Maryann Tebben, head of the Center for Food Studies at Simon's Rock. The event will be held in person at the Simon's Rock campus in Great Barrington. Conference tickets are \$25 for access to all sessions or \$10 for the keynote only. The conference is free for students. For more information and registration, visit [simons-rock.edu/thinkfood](http://simons-rock.edu/thinkfood).

The **Berkshire Bike Path Council** (BBPC) has kicked off a new bike safety campaign: **Berkshire Streets for All**. "This campaign is directed toward new and experienced bicyclists, as well as those who use public byways in an effort to achieve mutual respect and a peaceful coexistence," said Marjorie Cohan, president of the BBPC. "When we say 'peaceful coexistence,' we're referring to the respectful shared use of roads and paths, understanding that everyone has shared responsibility for safety." In addition to the BBPC, the campaign committee also includes representatives from **MassBike**, **MassDOT**, **Berkshire Regional Planning Commission** (BRPC), and the **City of Pittsfield**. Along with consultation from AAA, the committee developed materials to help users understand signage, basic cycling safety and best ways to share the road. The campaign will include a two-sided colorful tract focused on safety that will be distributed to local bike shops, group rides and at community events. (It is also available at [berkshireplanning.org/projects/berkshire-bike-path-council/](http://berkshireplanning.org/projects/berkshire-bike-path-council/).) On the front, safety guidance for those riding bicycles includes four main points: be visible and predictable, ride with traffic, obey the rules of the road, and respect shared spaces. On the back, it features an image of a street with a breakdown of road markings. While the campaign will begin in Pittsfield, the plan is to extend through the county. For more information, contact Cohan at 413-212-7998 or email [momimarge@msn.com](mailto:momimarge@msn.com).

Registration is open for **Berkshire Community College's** Nonprofit Institute, an eight-part virtual workshop program dedicated to teaching essential functions for those involved in the nonprofit sector. The workshops, available as a package or a la carte, will be held via Zoom on Thursdays, Sept. 30 through Nov. 18, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. "We've designed these workshops for business professionals, board members and volunteers who are new to the nonprofit sector or who might need a refresher course, as well as students interested in pursuing a career in the nonprofit sector," said Christina Wynn, interim dean of business and outreach. "It's like a bootcamp for nonprofits." Workshops will be led by Abbie von Schlegell, CFRE, FAFP, who has more than 40 years of nonprofit experience and is a certified governance trainer with BoardSource, an organization dedicated to inspiring and supporting excellence in nonprofit governance. Sessions include: Sept. 30 – Basics of Development; Oct. 7 – Governance of Nonprofit Boards; Oct. 14 – Finances for Nonprofits; Oct. 21 – Volunteers; Oct. 28 – Annual Fund/Annual Appeals; Nov. 4 – Major Gifts (from individuals); Nov. 11 – Corporations; and Nov. 18 – Foundations. Registration fees are \$40 per workshop or \$250 for all eight workshops. To register, visit [www.berkshirecc.edu/nonprofit-institute](http://www.berkshirecc.edu/nonprofit-institute). Upon registration, links will be provided to each virtual session.



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FRONTpages

BUSINESS  
Update

This school year, **Greylock Federal Credit Union** is again providing families and teachers with free access to Banzai, an online financial literacy program that integrates interactive classroom materials with professional presentations to develop personal finance skills. The award-winning online program and content library allows students to learn by doing. All students, teachers, and members in Berkshire County, Westfield, Southwick, Granville, Montgomery and Russell, in Massachusetts and Columbia County, N.Y., can create a free online account. “These resources make a huge impact on students and their families by building a solid foundation of basic financial skills and real-world knowledge of personal finances,” said Cindy Shogry-Raimer, Greylock Federal’s vice president director of community development. Through the Banzai online courses and complementary lesson plans, students may practice managing a budget, saving for a goal, and dealing with unexpected financial pitfalls. Teachers are able to monitor and grade student progress remotely. Other resources include articles, calculators, coaching sessions, and customized classroom wrap-up Zoom sessions with Greylock Federal experts. Teachers can learn more and access these classroom resources at [greylock.teachbanzai.com/](http://greylock.teachbanzai.com/). Members can access the tools directly through Greylock’s Community Empowerment Center at [www.greylock.org/community-empowerment-center.html](http://www.greylock.org/community-empowerment-center.html).

**Riverbrook Residence Inc.** has been awarded a combined grant of \$50,000 by the **Stockbridge Community Preservation Committee**, using funding from the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The grant includes \$17,000 in historic preservation funds and \$33,000 in affordable housing funds to help Riverbrook with a major renovation to improve accessibility within the home and increase the safety of the building. This is the culmination of Riverbrook’s three-year fund-raising campaign to update the organization’s century-old original Berkshire cottage, which serves as a residence for women with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Construction is underway to install an ADA-compliant lift elevator and a state-of-the-art sprinkler system, update plumbing, and turn two half-baths into one large, more accessible bathroom with a walk-in tub.

**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts’** continued commitment to an excellent, affordable education is reflected in the 2022 U.S. News and World Report rankings: The college has risen to No. 7 on the list of Top Public Colleges, and risen to No. 21 as a Top Performer on Social Mobility and first among all Massachusetts schools. MCLA also continues to appear on the list of Top National Liberal Arts Colleges. MCLA has appeared on U.S. News’ list of Top Public Colleges for nine of the past 11 years. The college has also appeared on its list of National Liberal Arts Colleges for Social Mobility since the organization adopted this ranking in 2019. This list measures how well schools graduate students who receive federal Pell Grants, typically awarded to students whose families make less than \$50,000. More than 45 percent of MCLA undergraduate students receive Pell Grants, and more than 40 percent are the first in their families to go to college. Nearly 85 percent of students receive some kind of financial aid. The 2022 rankings represent a march upward for MCLA, which in 2021 was ranked No. 9 on the list of Top Public Colleges, and appeared in the top 50 National Liberal Arts Colleges for social mobility. “I am proud to see MCLA recognized again as a Top Public College, but I am more proud of the work we’ve done to continue to climb these rankings for nine of the last 11 years,” said MCLA President James Birge. “We have an excellent faculty body with expertise and dedication to a liberal arts education. We have staff dedicated to student outcomes at every level and in every department. We have incredible programs that contribute to social mobility, helping our under-resourced students achieve a college education, which will help them earn more in their lifetimes, find fulfilling careers, and live meaningful lives. Public colleges help contribute to furthering economic equity every day, and we are proud to make this part of our mission as an institution.” U.S. News ranks colleges based on indicators that reflect a school’s student body, its faculty, and its financial resources, along with outcome measures that signal how well the institution achieves its mission of educating students. For more information, go to [usnews.com/colleges](http://usnews.com/colleges).

**Berkshire Community College (BCC)** has announced its plan to use \$335,000 in federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) to erase outstanding balances accrued by students enrolled in credit degree or certificate programs from March 13, 2020 through May 31, 2021. HEERF funds were earmarked as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Students affected by the program have been informed via letter. Debt forgiveness not only allows students to reapply for admission to BCC, but it also stops attempts from collection agencies and Intercept, a system used by the Commonwealth to attach student debt to tax returns, lottery winnings, etc. “Even small amounts of debt can derail a student’s ability to progress through their college career, which will negatively impact their ability to find high-wage employment later in life,” said Adam Klepetar, BCC’s vice president for student affairs and enrollment management. “Getting students to graduation is something we approach holistically, and debt forgiveness aligns with our commitment to equitable student success.” While the current debt forgiveness program is specific to the pandemic, Klepetar explained that keeping education affordable has long been a priority at BCC. “Our strategy has been to provide long-term financial wellness coaching, offer credit courses in financial literacy, and create opportunities for paid internships,” he said, noting that a recent gift from **Berkshire Bank** will help supplement these efforts. To further help students with short-term and long-term financial strategies, BCC has also bolstered its financial coaching team and created cross-divisional alignments through its One Stop Student Success project. For more information about debt or financial aid at BCC, visit [www.berkshirecc.edu/financialaid](http://www.berkshirecc.edu/financialaid) or email [onestop@berkshirecc.edu](mailto:onestop@berkshirecc.edu).

Funded by an Artist Resource Trust (ART) grant, Monterey artist **JD Logan** has teamed up with Housatonic web design firm **TSquare Design** to launch a new website and online shop, [jdlogan.com](http://jdlogan.com). After traveling the art festival circuit for many years, Logan decided it was time for a new business model and direction. “I turned 60 during the pandemic and it felt clear that, as much as I enjoyed life on the road, this feels like the right direction for myself and my work in today’s world,” said Logan. After receiving funding from **Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation’s** ART program, Logan sought out the services of Abby Tovell and TSquare Design to set up the new site and online shop. “Working with Abby was really easy,” Logan commented. “I’ve also partnered with a fine art reproduction company in the U.S. that now is handling the production and shipping of my prints. Originals will still come directly from me. This business model will let me really focus my energies on painting and marketing.”

**Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC)**, part of **Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC)**, earned an “A” for hospital safety from the Leapfrog Group. The national distinction recognizes SVMC’s achievements protecting patients from harm and providing safer health care. “This recognition is a reflection on the diligent professionals we have working in patients’ best interests,” said Thomas Dee, FACHE, SVHC’s president and CEO. “Our team of outstanding physicians, nurses and support staff fulfill our mission to provide exceptional care and comfort each day. We’re very proud of that.” The Leapfrog Group is an independent national watchdog organization driven by employers and other purchasers of health care. The organization is committed to improving healthcare quality and safety for consumers and purchasers. To see SVMC’s full grade details, visit [www.hospitalsafetygrade.org/h/southwestern-vermont-medical-center](http://www.hospitalsafetygrade.org/h/southwestern-vermont-medical-center).

Paula Almgren, a Lenox attorney whose firm, **Almgren Law Group**, specializes in elder law, estate planning and life care planning, will present an educational webinar entitled “Legal, Financial and Care Planning for Alzheimer’s Disease” on Sept. 27 at 5 p.m. The one-hour free webinar is open to the public and offered as part of a series of free virtual educational programs being sponsored this fall by the **Alzheimer’s Association**. To register, visit <https://action.alz.org/MTG/76642009> or call the Alzheimer’s Association at 800-272-3900.

Registration is now open for **1Berkshire’s** first round of small business and organization technical assistance cohorts. Being offered in partnership with the **Berkshire Regional Planning Commission** and with support from the United States Economic Development Administration, this initial round of seven cohorts looks to support up to 49 small businesses and organizations this fall. Each individual cohort will be limited to seven participating businesses/organizations and will kick off with a required two-hour workshop. Following the workshop, participants in each cohort will be given materials to complete before then receiving up to two hours of additional free one-on-one technical assistance from expert resource providers. Cohorts include: Get Ready to Get Funded, with Robin Helfand, starting Oct. 6 and Nov. 4; Employee Engagement and Retention, with Karen Carswell and Lucy Steinert, starting Oct. 13 and Nov. 10; Essentials of Digital Marketing, with Francesca Olsen, starting Oct. 20 and Dec. 1; and Don’t Just Stand Up, Stand Out, with Carolyn Blitz, starting Oct. 28 (for nonprofits only). This is the first of a multiple series of technical assistance cohorts that will be conducted over the next 18 months as part of the Berkshire Economic Recovery Project. These technical assistance workshops are completely free to participating businesses and organizations, but registration is considered a commitment to fully participate in the entirety of the process. To register for one of the cohorts, small businesses and nonprofit organizations in the Berkshires should go to [1berkshire.com/berkshire-economic-recovery-project-technical-assistance-program](http://1berkshire.com/berkshire-economic-recovery-project-technical-assistance-program). Registration will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis and is open immediately for all cohort sections. Once filled, registration will cease; however, interested individuals may request to be added to a waitlist. For additional information, contact the 1Berkshire economic development team at [economicdev@1berkshire.com](mailto:economicdev@1berkshire.com).

**Bard College at Simon’s Rock** has earned top accolades in the latest rankings from U.S. News & World Report and the Princeton Review. For the second consecutive year, the Great Barrington school is ranked in the top five in the categories of Best Undergraduate Teaching and Most Innovative colleges by U.S. News & World Report 2022 Best Colleges rankings. Additionally, the Princeton Review has named Simon’s Rock among the Best Regional Colleges in the Northeast in its 2022 rankings. U.S. News & World Reports ranks the colleges for Best Undergraduate Teaching based on nominations by college presidents, provosts and admissions deans who participated in a peer assessment survey focusing on their view of schools with strength in undergraduate teaching. Similarly, the Most Innovative Schools received the most nominations in a peer assessment survey based on colleges thought to be making the most innovative improvements in terms of curriculum, faculty, students, campus life, technology or facilities. The Princeton Review determines its college rankings based on the data from surveys of 143,000 students at the schools included in its book, *The Best 386 Colleges*. Bard College at Simon’s Rock is the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. For more information, visit [simons-rock.edu](http://simons-rock.edu). ♦

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Hardware stores in Lee join forces in acquisition

BY JOHN TOWNES

Lee’s two competing downtown hardware stores have been combined under a common business umbrella.

Carr Hardware, a Pittsfield-based regional chain which operates a store at 57 Park St. in Lee, is purchasing Lee Hardware True Value, located at 221 Main

*“The transition will be seamless, and customers will continue to have a choice.”*

St. from Joey Scapin, who has operated the business since 1991. The sale is slated to close on Sept. 27.

“The two stores have been respectful competitors for decades,” said Bart Raser, president of Carr Hardware. “The Scapins have a great business and employees and an excellent store. When Joey decided he was ready to sell, we worked a deal to purchase it that is a win-win for everyone.”

Scapin said in a prepared statement that he had wanted to ensure that Lee Hardware, which was founded in the 1940s, would be purchased by a company that shares his values.

“In making this decision, it was important that the qualities I value for my employees, customers and community continue,” said Scapin. “I am confident that uniting our two family businesses will do just that. It has been an amazing 30 years with the support from the community and employees of Lee Hardware. I am honored to have served your families and businesses over the years and am looking forward to some new life adventures, including seeing you while shopping at the store.”

Carr Hardware & Supply Company, Inc. was founded in 1928 in Pittsfield by Sam Carr. In 1962, the Raser family purchased the business and continues to operate it. It presently has stores in Pittsfield, Lee, Lenox, Great Barrington and North Adams in Massachusetts, and Avon and Enfield in Connecticut.

Raser said the purchase is beneficial for Carr Hardware on several levels, including an expanded presence in the Lee market, and the addition of a larger store that is accessible and more modern. Lee Hardware constructed a new building about 15 years ago, with ample parking and ease of access to the street.

He noted that Lee Hardware has about 8,000 square feet, while Carr Hardware’s store a few blocks away is about 4,400 square feet. “So, we’ve added almost double the size of what we had originally,” he said.

Raser said both stores will continue with their present identities.

“Lee Hardware will still be Lee Hardware and Carr Hardware will still be Carr Hardware,” he said. “The transition will be seamless, and customers will continue to have a choice.”

The management team at Lee Hardware (which includes Scapin’s daughter, Courtney) and its employees will remain at that store, said Raser.

“The staff will be the same, as it has been,” he said. “One advantage will be in flexibility.

In some cases an employee at one store might fill in at the other as needed.”

There will be some changes in the stores’ merchandising.

“We’ll likely consolidate our rental, paint and power equipment departments into single locations, and combine what the two stores offer in those areas,” Raser said.

He added that there will be coordination of the overall product offerings of the two stores, while maintaining their separate identities. The goal is

to offer a broad range of complementary products and services at the two locations.

“We’ll be working to differentiate the two stores in terms of what they offer and the customer experience,” Raser said. “Our goal for this is to increase the options available to the public.”◆



With its purchase of the 8,000-square-foot Lee Hardware store at 221 Main St., Carr Hardware has expanded its presence in Lee, where the company also operates its own 4,400-square-foot store at 57 Park St.


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# Underwater gardeners

## Aquatic Roots dives into battle against invasive plant species



Laurie Rock (left) and her mother Jo Smith suit up for a recent job of clearing invasive weeds from water along a client’s property on Laurel Lake in Lee. This underwater gardening operation is the focus of Aquatic Roots, a new venture that Rock has spun off from her established Pittsfield scuba shop, Action Sports & Travel, a business that Rock’s parents started in the early 1980s. (Photo by Neathawk Media)

**BY BRAD JOHNSON**

The problems caused by invasive aquatic plants are familiar to many lakefront property owners, lake associations and municipalities.

Also familiar are the limitations presented by existing approaches for controlling the growth of the non-native weeds, such as mechanical harvesting with specialized boating equipment or repeated treatment

of the water with herbicides, which can be expensive, ineffective and environmentally unfriendly.

And, for most individual property owners, taking action to clear their own stretch of water along the lakefront has never been a practical option.

A new Pittsfield company, Aquatic Roots, is looking to change that by providing an alternative approach to controlling invasive

species through underwater “gardening” by teams of scuba divers and surface support crews. This process, on a basic level, involves carefully pulling out the weeds by the roots from the lake bed and removing the entire plant from the water to protect against reinfestation.

“Our primary clients are lakefront homeowners,” said Aquatic Roots owner Laurie Rock, who noted that their primary goal is

to enhance the recreational use and safety of their section of the lake. “Entanglement is a concern, especially for young family members.”

The business also works for private lake associations and municipalities that control public lakes or reservoirs in their towns, whose concerns and goals often have to do with the overall health of the body of water. That health can be compromised when vegetation clogs lake inlets and outlets, which interferes with flow and drainage, or when weeds form thick canopies that block light and threaten the ecological balance of the water below.

“There are lots of eco-friendly reasons why it’s important to keep invasive plant species under control,” said Rock. “It’s similar to landscaping. The aquatic ecosystem needs maintenance to stay healthy.”

**Pandemic pause**

Although Rock formally launched Aquatic Roots this May, it actually took 20 years for the seeds of her new business to sprout, an occurrence attributed indirectly to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It was the realization that you can’t pay rent with nothing,” said Rock, who is also owner of Action Sports & Travel (AST), a well-established scuba instruction, equipment and excursion business in downtown Pittsfield.

Rock’s comment reflects the negative impact that the pandemic-related shutdown in March 2020 had on her business – disrupting both the local instruction side and the travel component that involves multi-day excursions to domestic and international diving hot spots.

“In 2020 we had more trips scheduled than in past years,” she said, adding that all had to be cancelled or rescheduled due to travel restrictions.

One aspect of her business that was not affected by the shutdown, however, was a small subdivision focused on underwater gardening.

Falling under the same general category as landscaping services, removing invasive weeds to improve the overall health of the aquatic ecosystem – whether along a small section of lakefront owned by a private

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homeowner, or for an entire body of water maintained by a town, association or other public or private entity – was considered an essential business and thus exempt from the state’s shutdown order early in the pandemic.

Rock explained that in May of 2020, two of her previous underwater gardening clients reached out to her to arrange for weeds to be cleared for the season ahead.

“It was, ‘Okay, we’ve got something to do, let’s do it,’” said Rock, noting that with all her other AST operations shut down, it was a relief to see there was some work that they could still do. “Then came the epiphany: this is how we’re doing things this year. The pandemic brought [underwater gardening] to the forefront.”

This underwater gardening process was pioneered locally by Rock’s mother, Jo Smith, who along with her husband Jerry were the original owners of Action Sports & Travel.

“My history of getting into the sport of scuba diving stems from the fact that both my parents were scuba instructors,” said Rock.

The Smiths started AST (originally Aquatic Adventures) in Pittsfield in the early 1980s after having earlier operated a similar business in Yuma, Ariz. “Yes, they had a scuba shop in the desert,” said Rock with a laugh.

Focused initially on scuba instruction, the business was recast as Action Sports & Travel in the early 1990s when Jo Smith became a travel agent and began adding



At this Laurel Lake job site, dense growth of Eurasian milfoil can be seen beginning to form a canopy. Aquatic Roots owner Laurie Rock notes that no native plant growth was found in this area. (Neathawk Media photo)

scuba adventure travel packages as part of the operations.

Rock grew up in the business as a youth, but took other directions in work and life following high school. That included getting married (she is now divorced), having children

and moving to Boston where she worked in a larger scuba store for a short period in 2003.

“I was there nine months – it was too much city for me,” said Rock. “But when I came back [to Pittsfield] I had a lot more business sense from working in the Boston store.”

She worked with her parents at AST for several years, and took on more responsibility for its operation in 2011 when Jo and Jerry Smith bought a second home in South Carolina. “They would come up to help with the business during the summer,” Rock said. “Operating a business is very demanding, and they wanted to make sure I was able to handle it.”

After three years of that arrangement, Rock purchased AST from her parents in 2014. At that time, the underwater gardening was still an informal aspect of the business.

“It was something that my mom first got involved in back in 2000,” she said. That’s when Jo Smith got a call from a resident asking about pulling weeds underwater from a lake in Becket. “She began experimenting with that – first on a volunteer basis and then as a paid service,” said Rock.

As the years went by, the underwater gardening operations grew slowly, with new customers coming by word of mouth. And, when Rock returned to the business after living in Boston, she also got involved in the weed clearing work with her mom.

“I did get roped into it,” she said, noting that it added a new aspect to her overall appreciation for scuba diving. “Being underwater became my healing from various things in life,” she said. “And, when you’re underwater gardening, you get transported – it brings you somewhere else.”

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After Rock took over AST in 2014, she continued the underwater gardening on a background level. “For the most, I saw it as a subdivision of Action Sports & Travel,” she said, adding that she hired her first employees for it on a seasonal basis in 2018. Jo Smith also remained involved on a limited basis when back in Pittsfield during the summer. As noted above, the pandemic-related shutdown of AST’s other operations created an opportunity for Rock to bring the underwater gardening to the forefront. “The clients we did have – some municipal, some private – were increasing their budgets at the right time, and that kept us busy,” she said.

EforAll experience

However, Rock was also working to salvage some of the instructional aspects of AST as the shutdown continued. “Education is very much the core of Action Sports & Travel,” she said. Rock shifted some of her classroom instruction to Zoom in April 2020 to keep her diving students up to date on the educational components of AST’s courses. In the following months, as shutdown restrictions began to loosen gradually, some in-person activities were able to resume, including some in-water diving instruction at area lakes and pools. During this period, Rock learned of a free business accelerator program offered by Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) Berkshires, a nonprofit organization that promotes the startup and growth of small businesses in the region (*October 2019 BT&C*). Rock decided to apply for the three-month accelerator program EforAll was offering in the fall of 2020. “Originally, my goal was to focus my efforts on digital aspects of Action Sports & Travel,” said Rock. However, during her interview with program organizers, a different direction and opportunity came to light. “I mentioned what I had just been doing with the underwater gardening [since the



Jerry and Jo Smith join their daughter Laurie Rock outside of the downtown Pittsfield store that they established in the 1980s (and which is now among the longest continuously operating scuba shops in the country). Laurie Rock worked at Action Sports & Travel for several years before taking over the business in 2014.

shutdown], and they picked up on that and it stuck like glue,” she said. Rock explained that the EforAll organizers encouraged her to separate the underwater gardening from AST and develop it into its own business. “They saw something I didn’t see,” Rock said. She noted that they viewed

the eco-friendly aspect of the operation as especially appealing, and suggested that it could be better developed and marketed as a stand-alone business. Rock said that the suggestion gradually took hold. “Now, it makes so much sense to have the business separated,” she said. “But it was a struggle for me to get to that point of view.” She focused on that goal during the virtual EforAll program, which she described as “covering all aspects of owning and growing a business.” “The networking was probably my favorite aspect of the program,” she added, noting that it provided an opportunity to develop new friendships during the pandemic – even if only through virtual interaction. This networking and collaboration also contributed to the selection of Aquatic Roots as the name for her new business. “It came up through a conversation with someone in my cohort during an EforAll homework session,” she said. Following the program’s completion last December, Rock began working on the some of the administrative and legal aspects of establishing Aquatic Roots as a separate business. That included looking for liability insurance for the commercial diving operation, as well as workers comp coverage for Massachusetts and New York. By mid-May Rock was ready to formally launch Aquatic Roots as its own business, and has since been reaching out to past clients to arrange for underwater gardening as the summer season has progressed. “My mom’s helping me get Aquatic Roots off the ground,” she said, noting that Smith is serving as an active diver, while Rock is providing surface support.

Staffing and training

She has also been focusing on recruiting additional staff – both divers and non-divers – with the goal of having a team of eight to handle the workload this season. That goal has been a challenge, as Rock has faced the same situation as many employers who were looking to staff up for seasonal work after pandemic restrictions eased. “It has been a struggle looking for employees,” she said. “I’ve reached out to some who worked with us before and found that they have lives taking them in other directions.” Building a team of divers and non-divers involves on-site, hands-on training and evaluation. “The divers have to keep their skills updated,” said Rock. “That also makes it harder – you have to be more selective.”

Team members are also trained in CPR, first aid and other areas to ensure safe operations at all times. Also included is hazardous material training related to the use of chlorine bleach to disinfect gear used during dives to prevent cross-contamination of plant fragments from one body of water to another. Rock explained that having multiple teams on the roster allows Aquatic Roots to take on larger projects. “Having additional personnel also makes it easier for scheduling and allows for down time,” she added. On a typical job of clearing weeds from water extending from the property edge, a single team may need one to three days depending on weed density, weather conditions and other factors. Dives generally last from 90 minutes to 2 hours, Rock said, noting that in warm weather two dives can be done on the same day. The season for underwater gardening runs “from when the ice melts to when the ice forms,” said Rock, noting that most clients focus on the period between Memorial Day and Labor Day. “Others are proactive and are prepped for end-of-season clearing,” she added. “It depends on need and budget.” Clients for Aquatic Roots generally come by word of mouth and referrals by other customers. “People contact us, and we set up a free consultation to determine their need,” said Rock. That also includes determining whether the property owner is required to get a permit for the work to be done. “A lot of times there’s no permit required,” said Rock. “But for some watersheds, it is something they are required to have in place.” Satellite mapping of the site is used to determine the exact square footage where gardening will be done. “Most homeowners have a small waterfront area of 1,000 to 2,000 square feet,” she said. Costs for underwater gardening range from \$3 to \$6 per square foot, depending plant density and other factors. Following the job, clients are provided with full data on the operation, including before-and-after video footage. “The goal is for them to see long-term what the benefits are,” Rock said. Among those benefits, she added, is a gradual return of native plants that had been crowded out by the invasive species. “It does take time, but that’s the goal,” she said. Another benefit is the removal of trash or other items that divers find during their work. “A lot of things can find their way into

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During a dive in the Bahamas in August, Laurie Rock waves to an ocean that she had missed over the prior year and a half as the COVID pandemic disrupted the excursions she leads at Action Sports & Travel. This was the company’s first excursion since the pandemic began. (Photo provided by Action Sports & Travel)

the water, and cleaning that up is part of the process,” she said.

Rock noted that existing clients from when the underwater gardening was conducted as part of AST generally hire the company each year. “Sometimes, it may just be to do a visual survey to check on negative plant growth,” she said. “Other times, property owners see the plant growth and know it’s time.”

As part of separating Aquatic Roots as its own business, Rock has established a separate website (www.aquatic-roots.com). Also, through a grant she received from EforAll, she hired a company to produce an underwater gardening video for promotional purposes.

Meanwhile, Rock is also looking forward to brighter days for Action Sports & Travel,

which is coming out of it’s pandemic pause this summer.

She noted that the broader diving community adopted the slogan “The ocean is waiting” to remind themselves that the pandemic would pass and people would soon be able to travel to their favorite dive locations as they did before.

That’s the case for Rock and AST, which completed an excursion to the Bahamas in August and has another scheduled in November to Bonaire.

Rock, who leads all excursions, said they play an important role in maintaining people’s skills in – and appreciation of – the sport. “The trips help keep our divers active, and that helps keep the business healthy,” she said.◆

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## LODGING & *dining*

### AVOCADO CAFE

## Lee eatery shares format, menu with 2 siblings in N.Y.

BY BRAD JOHNSON

Downtown Lee has expanded the scope of its culinary offerings with the opening in August of the Avocado Cafe at 5 Railroad St.

Specializing in traditional Mexican cuisine, the eatery is the third to be opened and operated under the same name by owner and chef Ivan Carrera. It joins sister Avocado Cafes in Millerton and Amenia, N.Y.

"The three all share the same basic menu," said Carrera, adding that each location has one or two special dishes of their own.

That shared menu also means that all three emphasize traditional Mexican dishes as opposed to Tex-Mex or other similar hybrids.

"It's the real thing," said Carrera, noting that he uses spices and other special ingredients that come directly from Mexico. "It's very close to the original. That's the main idea."

Since arriving in the U.S. from his native Mexico some 20 years ago, Carrera has worked at a variety of restaurants, including several in eastern New York and the Berkshires.

The opportunity to establish a traditional Mexican eatery of his own took shape six years ago when he opened the Avocado Cafe in Millerton, a small town in the Mid-Hudson Valley region of eastern New York.

The original Avocado Cafe soon became popular with customers in the region, with a primary emphasis on takeout service and limited on-site dining.

That business model proved to be beneficial in an unexpected way a few years later when the COVID-19 pandemic first took hold in early 2020. "We had an advantage because we were already more focused on takeout," said Carrera. That made it easier to pivot exclusively to takeout as COVID concerns disrupted conventional indoor dining for several months.

Nonetheless, Carrera said, the cafe found it necessary to temporarily reduce operations. "When the pandemic was at the top point, we had to close [on some days]," he said. "But we stayed open on three days a week because we didn't want people to forget about us."

Gradually, he said, the cafe was able to resume regular operations. "After two months we came back little by little," he said, with the cafe adding more days and offering curbside service to better accommodate customers' concerns.

Those customers, in turn, proved to be very loyal to what had become their favorite spot for traditional Mexican fare. "We were



Ivan Carrera, who opened his original Avocado Cafe in Millerton, N.Y., six years ago, has found opportunities to expand his business amidst the COVID pandemic by adding a second eatery in Amenia, N.Y., last December, and his newest location on Railroad Street in downtown Lee, which opened in August.

very happy," said Carrera. "Our customers really supported us."

Some restaurants in the region, however, did not survive the pandemic's disruption, resulting in a scattering of shuttered buildings.

Carrera came upon one such location in Amenia, N.Y., another small town a few miles away from his Millerton cafe, and turned it into an opportunity to expand his own business.

"Somebody had closed there," he said.

"It was a nice location, a bigger place than in Millerton, and the landlord gave me a good deal on the lease."

He opened in that location in late December 2020. "It's going well there," he said. "People are responding to the food."

A similar situation led Carrera to the town of Lee in western Massachusetts, where another vacant restaurant space came to his attention.

That space, at 5 Railroad St., just a few steps away from Main Street in downtown Lee, had been home to a number of restaurants in recent years, including Pho Saigon and, more recently, Post.

"It was another good deal and good terms on the lease," said Carrera, noting that he

began discussions with the building's owner back in March.

"We really liked this location. It's a bigger town, and we saw the opportunity there," he said. "We decided to take a chance and see what happens."

Another attraction was that the restaurant space was largely turn-key. "It was really in good shape," said Carrera. "It just needed some touches and decorations."

The Avocado Cafe has been set up to accommodate 31 on-site diners, about a third fewer than its certificate of occupancy allows. That arrangement provides additional space between

tables in a nod to ongoing concerns with COVID. Like the other locations, takeout is also available.

The space also has a section set up for bar service. Carrera noted that he is in the process of applying for liquor licenses for the Lee and Amenia locations.

Carrera said the process of expanding with two new locations amidst an ongoing pandemic has gone much better than he had hoped. "The response has been very good," he said. "It is more than I was expecting."

*continued on next page*

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101 RESTAURANT AND BAR

# Former owner of Lenox tavern gets back into industry

BY JOHN TOWNES

John McNinch and his son, Tucker, have launched a new business that hopes to “re-invent the restaurant industry” by taking a step back and changing the way the industry operates and reinvent the perception of industry workers.

The first venture for their company, The McNinch Restaurant Group, is the 101 Restaurant and Bar, opened on Sept. 20 on a limited basis in the Holiday Inn and Suites at 1 West St. in downtown Pittsfield.

The 101 Restaurant and Bar (413-499-2000 ext. 4) occupies the hotel’s main restaurant space on the second floor. It is accessed via the elevator in the hotel’s lobby.

For two decades John McNinch had operated the Olde Heritage Tavern, a popular eatery and nightclub in Lenox. He sold that business and property in April to Ryan Salame.

“I had wanted to start a new business with Tucker for a while,” said McNinch. “When the opportunity to sell the Heritage arose, that seemed like the time to do it.”

He said Berkshire Hospitality Group LLC, which owns the Holiday Inn, approached him to operate the hotel’s restaurant.

“They wanted to reopen it, and we discussed it and came to an agreement,” he said. “It’s a straight lease, and we’ll operate the restaurant as an independent business.”

The restaurant’s name is based on the Disney film 101 Dalmatians. “I own a Dalmatian, and the name was inspired by that,” said McNinch.

The restaurant will cater to a mix of hotel guests and local residents. “We want to create a place where local people can go out and enjoy a good meal in Pittsfield,” said McNinch.

They are retaining the restaurant’s contemporary decor, although they are renovating the kitchen.

There are a combined 150 seats in the restaurant and lounge area. One unique visual aspect of the restaurant are windows overlooking the hotel’s swimming pool.

Initially, 101 will be open for breakfast only. “We’re focusing on that because breakfast service is important in a hotel,” McNinch said. “They also have a number of tour groups booked, and they want to be able to provide breakfast to them.”

They will expand to dinner service after that, and then add lunch.

McNinch said the timetable for dinner and lunch service will be based in part on when they gain a liquor license, as well as building a staff. “We’re starting with around 15 or 20 people on staff at first, and hope to reach about 50 people once it is in full operation,” he said.

The menu is still being developed. In general, he said, the focus will be American cuisine with an upscale pub-style menu. He added that it will likely have some items that were served at the Heritage under his ownership but will be expanded.

“Basically, there will be burgers and other items people are familiar with at the Heritage, but we’ll also be stepping it up with more range and include entrees that are a little more upscale,” he said.

Prices for dinner entrees will range from about \$17 to \$30, with lunch from \$12 to \$20. There will also be a bar menu of lighter fare.

Currently, the Holiday Inn’s banquet facilities are being used by the Berkshire County Courts as spaces during the pandemic. When those become available again, the McNinches will also offer catering services for events there.

**Employee focus**

One larger goal of the McNinches is to change the way restaurants operate in terms of employment.

“We have a real employee focus,” said Tucker McNinch, who graduated with a dual degree in Finance and Economics at Northeastern University in 2019. “We want to help people make this a career rather than just a job.”

He made the decision to move home to the Berkshires after school and start a business. He said he had always believed it was difficult for the younger generation get ahead in the Berkshires, but he wanted to demonstrate that it was possible to succeed here. Before starting The McNinch Restaurant Group with his father, Tucker had been working as the head of finance and operations at the Heritage Tavern.

John McNinch grew up in the hospitality industry. His family used to operate Eastover Resort in Lenox. He moved to Boston and worked in the restaurant industry for 20 years before returning to Lenox and purchasing the Olde Heritage Tavern.

McNinch noted that one of the most challenging aspects of operating a restaurant is finding and keeping staff. This had long been an issue in the industry, and it has become more acute since the COVID pandemic.

In McNinch’s view, this is largely due to the policies of restaurants towards staffing, with comparatively low wages and benefits.

“Restaurant jobs have often been considered something people do for a while before moving onto something else,” he said. “However, this is an industry in which people can do really well if they’re treated properly.”

One of the goals of The McNinch Restaurant Group ([www.mcninchrg.com](http://www.mcninchrg.com)) is to create an environment that puts that into practice. That includes offering insurance and other benefits, profit-sharing, training and an environment that encourages a team orientation.

They also plan to create training programs within the company that will teach people newly entering the industry, and then find a placement for them within their own company or possibly forming a hiring collaboration with other restaurants.

They have also been exploring the possibility of creating formal training programs in conjunction with area educational institutions.

McNinch noted that, beyond 101, their goal is to operate other restaurants in the region. “We’re definitely pursuing a variety of opportunities,” he said. ♦

**Avocado Cafe**

continued from previous page

One wrinkle in the operations, however, has involved staffing at the two new locations. “We’ve had a problem hiring people,” said Carrera. “That is the most difficult part of this.”

Getting adequate staff has necessitated reducing days and hours of operation in the short term, and has led Carrera to fill in as needed at all three of his locations. He noted that the staffing issue has eased somewhat recently. “Now we are having people come who leave phone numbers and want to work,” he said.


Another issue affecting all three of his locations has been the substantial increase in the cost of many cuts of meat in recent months. “It’s really hard right now for restaurants,” he said, explaining that they have to find a balance between absorbing the higher cost or passing it on to customers through higher menu prices.

“We had to adjust prices – no too much,” he said. “We think we can survive.”

Even with those pressures, the Avocado Cafe’s menu remains in the moderate range, with the highest priced item, Carne Asada (an 8-ounce grilled hangar steak served with grilled onions, nopales, avocado, rice and queso fresco) coming in at \$20. For the full menu, go to [www.avocadocafelee.com](http://www.avocadocafelee.com).

The Avocado Cafe (413-394-4022) is open Monday through Wednesday from 3 to 9 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. ♦





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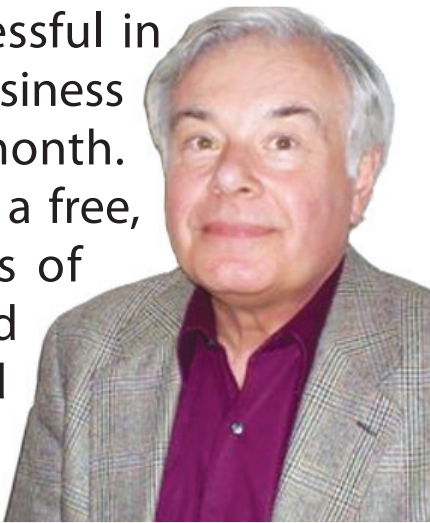
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COVERstory

Farm succession plan  
continued from page 1

She noted that the time is right because of her acquisition of the full 20 acres this spring and other circumstances in the farm’s development.

“Until this year, the site had been divided between a section I owned, and another section I rented,” she said. “I knew that it would be difficult to find someone to take it over while the farm was divided like that. Now, with it all under common ownership, it is much more feasible.”

While Wyrick lives off-site, she noted that a house on the property is suitable for residency by a new farmer.

**Advocate of local food access**

Wyrick currently grows about 75 different vegetables, herbs, flowers and berries. She operates the farm (manyforksfarm.com) with a full-time farm manager and also has an average of two to three seasonal employees.

While Wyrick emphasized that Many Forks Farm is an entrepreneurial venture, it is also an outgrowth of her longtime interest in – and advocacy of – local food and sustainable food systems. She sees her farm both as a way to put those beliefs into practice and to increase the public’s awareness and access to fresh local food.

Wyrick started growing vegetables in Tulsa, Okla., where she grew up. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma, she moved to Washington, D.C., for post-graduate studies in the performing arts at American University.

She became a professional dancer and choreographer and interdisciplinary artist based in the Washington, D.C., area – incorporating opera, performance art, theater and other forms of creative expression into her work.

Although her career was in the arts, she retained her passion for agriculture and food. Among other themes, Wyrick’s creative works addressed subjects related to food and the natural world.

While living in the rural foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, she established a small homestead garden and became active in the local agricultural community.

*“I was happy renting and had not planned on becoming a landowner. But I had made significant investment in the soil and infrastructure, and it would have been extremely difficult to start over on a different leased acreage.”*



Above: Kathy Kierstead and her daughter Morgan of North Adams select their vegetables during one of Many Forks Farm’s weekly distributions to its roughly 80 CSA members. Below: Many Forks owner Sharon Wyrick arranges onions for curing in one of the Clarksburg farm’s hoop barns.

She spent much of her time learning to grow food plants and creating aesthetically appealing vegetable gardens and edible landscaping.

She moved to Massachusetts in 2000 after meeting her husband, Matt Silliman, a philosophy instructor at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

Wyrick became involved in local projects related to food and farming. She produced a documentary, A Place of Stones, about the local food movement in northern Berkshire County.

She also prepared to establish an agricultural venture, taking courses at the University of Massachusetts and workshops in organic vegetable growing and small farming and innovative approaches to growing food.

“I knew I wanted to do something in agriculture here before I moved up, although I wasn’t sure in what form,” she recalled.

After developing her plans and saving up enough money to get started, she launched Many Forks Farm on a half-acre at the present site.

Wyrick started the farm as a market garden, and then initiated a community

supported agricultural (CSA) venture in the 2013 season with 15 family shares.

In a CSA, customers purchase shares of a farm’s projected harvest before the growing season, which provides the farmer with capital to finance the operations. The members then receive a portion of the crops over the season.

Currently the Many Forks CSA has about 80 shares held by 150 households.

One of Wyrick’s passions is providing access to quality food to everyone, including those on moderate and low incomes. About 30 percent of the CSA members receive financial assistance for the cost of their shares through community collaborations with Hoosac Harvest, Berkshire Grown, Community Health Programs, and individual donors.

Through her farming, Wyrick emphasizes sustainable practices and healthy food. She continuously builds the soil and biodiversity of the farm to improve the health of the land and the environment. The farm does not use GMOs or synthetic fertilizers or pesticides.

In addition to the more familiar forms of produce, Wyrick has also grown unusual and heirloom variations of culinary staples,



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including vegetables of colors not usually associated with them. “I want to introduce people to different varieties of vegetables than they are used to,” she said.

In 2019, she also began a long-term project of cultivating native plants, shrubs and trees that provide habitat and food for beneficial insects, pollinators and birds.

Farm reunited

From 1959 to 1980 the 20-acre property just south of the Vermont border had been owned by John and Evelyn Keizer, who lived there before leaving the area.

The Keizer family retained the northerly 12.5 acres hoping to return or build on their parcel at some point in the future.

They sold 7.5 acres, including a house, to Sharon and Curt Foehl.

Wyrick started Many Forks Farm in 2012 by renting a portion of the property owned by the Foehls. Then, in 2015, the Foehls decided to sell their 7.5-acre property and farmhouse, and Wyrick purchased it.

“I was happy renting and had not planned on becoming a landowner,” she said. “But I had made significant investment in the soil and infrastructure, and it would have been extremely difficult to start over on a different leased acreage.”

To finance the purchase, she received a Farm Service Agency farm ownership loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

She noted that the Foehl portion of the site also includes wetlands and woods, and about 2 acres of it are cultivated.

At around the same time, she enlarged the farm and the amount of land she could cultivate by renting the 12.5 acres that were still owned by the Keizer family. That added roughly two more acres of cultivated land.

Wyrick said she had periodically checked with the Keizers to see if they were interested in selling their remaining land to her. This past March, the family called her and said they were ready to sell.

“We discussed it, and they agreed to lower the price from its higher full-market value down to its agricultural value,” said Wyrick. “So, I used my personal savings to purchase it for \$28,000.”

Wyrick said that, in addition to increasing the amount of land that can be cultivated, she was also motivated to preserve the original characteristics of the overall property as a working farm and a resource for the community and environment.

“It wasn’t only a business decision,” she said. “I believe it was important to reassemble and protect the original 20 acres as a working farm for a variety of other reasons.”

Wyrick also hopes to place the property under some form of agricultural easement to further ensure it will remain a farm for the long run.

She took a step in that direction after becoming eligible in September 2020 (prior to the purchase) for a Farm Viability Enhancement Program grant from the state to install a farm processing kitchen connected to the farmhouse. That facility, which is currently

being built in a lower section on the house’s rear side, is designed to produce baked goods, jams, and other products that utilize the farm’s produce and expand and diversify its potential revenue.

As one of the requirements for the grant, she agreed to put the farm property under a five-year agricultural covenant, which requires that it remain in agricultural use for at least that period of time.

Wyrick is currently exploring other possibilities to establish a longer-term agricultural easement through a land trust or other organization. “The five-year agricultural covenant will give me some time to investigate and hopefully figure out how to put the farm under a more permanent agricultural easement and protection,” she said. “That is my plan and hope.” ♦

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COVERstory

Fund for farmsteads  
continued from page 1

Its strategy is to acquire small parcels of farmland, which would be made available to farmers with an affordable 98-year lease. The farmers would operate their businesses on the land, and would also own any buildings or other facilities and infrastructure improvements they make on it, which they would be able to sell if they leave.

“It’s certainly possible for a small farm to be a successful business today,” said Molly Comstock, who operates Colfax Farm in Alford, and is also the campaign coordinator for the Harry Conklin Fund. “However, most farmers require special circumstances to gain access to the land they need, such as renting or being part of a family who already owns land. The Conklin Fund is intended to provide another avenue for farmers to gain access to the land they need.”

The fund has been organized as a collaboration between the Berkshire Community Land Trust and its sister organization, the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires.

Its other partners include Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, a nonprofit organization that provides farmers with technical and business assistance, and flexible financing options; and Berkshire Grown, an organization that provides shared marketing and other support to develop the local food system.

They are presently coordinating a campaign to raise financial contributions, as well as seeking potential donors of land.

Comstock’s role as coordinator will include contacting people who have expressed interest in the fund, as well as convening public meetings to give presentations and answer questions. She will also be pursuing and following up on leads for potential sites for farms (including her own and those that will be allocated to others.)

Comstock will begin the job in October, after the harvest season. The fund-raising campaign will be officially launched then.

In the meantime, as of Sept. 19, the Harry Conklin Fund for Farmsteads had received 18 individual contributions, ranging from \$50 to \$25,000, for a total of \$40,600. (For information on making a donation, visit [berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org](http://berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org) or call 413-528-4472.)

Operation uprooted

Comstock’s own situation was the spark that led to the formation of the fund. For four years, she has been renting 3 acres under cultivation from the Wilcox family for her business.

However, Comstock has to find a new home for her farm next year.

“The Wilcox family has been very supportive, but there were changes in operating circumstances that have required me to look for another site for next year to support the farm and its growth,” she said.

When word of her situation became public, supporters of Colfax Farm began looking for ways to help her. This led to the formation of the Harry Conklin Fund.

Susan Witt, a founder of the Land Trust of the Southern Berkshires and director of the Schumacher Center for a New Economics, which is affiliated with it, explained that the land trust’s board president, John Fulop,

proposed that the organization purchase land for Colfax Farm.

“We subsequently held a public meeting (on Zoom) to gauge the level of interest, and there was enough support to go forward with it,” said Witt.

However, while Comstock will be the first farmer the fund will address, it was decided to expand its mission to support other farmers on an ongoing basis.

“Finding land for Molly will be the first priority, but that’s just one step,” said Witt. “The overall purpose is to develop an inventory of farmland that will be a community resource

to support small farmers and the agricultural system here.”

She noted that Comstock had pushed for that when they approached her.

“Molly made it very clear when we first discussed it that she did not want this project to just be about her,” said

Witt. “She emphasized that she is just one of many farmers who need this type of support, and that anything we do should have a larger focus.”

The fund is named after Harry Conklin, an attorney who passed away in July. Conklin grew up on a farm in the southern Berkshires and practiced law in the area for over 40 years. A popular local figure, he was active in the community, including serving on the board of the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires, among other endeavors.

“When Harry died, it was a fitting tribute to name the fund after him,” said Witt.

Long overdue

Witt noted that, in some respects, the formation of the fund is overdue.

“This is something that has been needed for a long time,” she said. “If the community wants and cares about agriculture, we have to step up and create conditions that make it possible for small farms to survive and succeed.”

She noted that the fund is based on a concept that the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires first developed and used in 1999 to save Indian Line Farm at 57 Jug End Rd. in South Egremont, the first community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm in the country.

When Robyn van Eyn, the owner of Indian Line Farm, died unexpectedly in 1997, the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires purchased the property. The Nature Conservancy, which owns nearby conservation land, also provided an agricultural easement on the property.

They provided a lease for Elizabeth Keen and Alex Thorp to take over the farm with the security of a long-term site. Since then, Indian Line Farm has become a popular and successful source of local food.

“As a result of that, that site will remain in agricultural production permanently,” said Witt. “It was an innovative approach that worked.”

Witt said that, in hindsight, it would have been advantageous if the Indian Line Farm arrangement had led to similar initiatives at the time.

She added that circumstances since then have made the idea especially important and viable. The need has increased because of rising land values, and the opportunities have also grown with a resurgent interest in small-scale farming.

“One of the things that has changed since then is the growth of small farms in the region, and their increasing role,” said Witt.

“There is definite support. People have fallen in love with farms and farming, and there is also greater recognition of the importance of regional food sovereignty.”

The Harry Conklin Fund for Farmsteads is taking a holistic approach.

The word “farmstead” is used deliberately. A farmstead includes a home, barns, sites for greenhouses, plus flat land for growing. This will enable farmers to live on the site.

“The goal is to provide sites that can be a home as well as a working farm,” said Witt.

Along with providing a site, the initiative is also intended to provide additional support, such as technical and business consulting, and access to affordable financing for construction and other expenses.

“We’ll also look for agricultural-use easements and covenants to further assure the land will remain in agricultural production permanently,” said Witt.

This model removes the speculative value of the land from the farmers’ costs while providing equity in improvements.

If the farmer needs to leave, they can sell all improvements made on the land at current replacement cost adjusted for depreciation, but excluding the land cost to keep the sale affordable to the next farmer. The lease can include conditions such as organic methods of tillage and minimum crop production, ensuring that a one-time community donation of the land value keeps the land in active food production into the future.

The Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires, is a 501c2 organization that was founded in 1980. It owns the site of Indian Line Farm, a property that is also

occupied by the Schumacher Society and a small number of homes, and the land under the Forest Row affordable housing development in Great Barrington.

The Berkshire Community Land Trust is an affiliated 501c3 organization that has a focus on education.

Witt explained that the Berkshire Community Land Trust will acquire property, and the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires will manage it.

Common problem

Comstock said she did not want the Harry Conklin Fund for Farmsteads initiative to focus only on her because her situation is not unique. Other small farmers who lease land face the uncertainty of losing their leases. They also are not developing equity in the land or the investments they make on outbuildings, greenhouses and other improvements.

“In addition to assisting individual farmers, this also creates a greater awareness of the importance of local agriculture,” she said. “It’s not only about shopping at local farms. It’s also vital to create conditions to make farms sustainable.”

Comstock emphasized that Colfax Farm is a viable business. She sells the food she produces through a CSA with approximately 130 members. She also sells at the West Stockbridge Farmers Market, and also has several restaurants as wholesale customers.

“Apart from the issue of land, this is a successful business,” Comstock said. “Many other small farms are in the same situation. Projects like the Harry Conklin Fund for Farmsteads can create a stopgap that will enable us to achieve the stability to grow.”

She added that regional food production is not simply an amenity.

“People are recognizing that fresh, naturally grown food is important for their personal health,” she said. “Also, with climate change, changes in the global economy and other conditions, the importance of regional food security is also becoming increasingly clear.”

For example, Comstock noted, membership in her CSA has doubled over the past year, which she attributes to the COVID pandemic.

“It seems strange to see the farm grow during the pandemic, when so many other businesses are suffering,” she said. “One reason, I think, is that having access to local food that you can trust has become more important to people. One of the benefits of local farms and CSAs is that you get to know the farmer directly, and you know about how your food is grown and produced.”

Comstock also believes the nature of a CSA has provided a social outlet during the pandemic.

“We had to make adjustments for social distancing and safety, but we’ve been able to operate during the pandemic,” she said. “I think people appreciated the opportunity it provided to get out and see each other, when so many activities were either closed or restricted. It became a kind of safe community center.”

Comstock grew up near Binghamton, N.Y.

She said she was first exposed to agriculture as a child.

“My parents weren’t technically farmers, but they had a home-stead garden and grew most of their own food,” she said.

She initially pursued a career as a commercial photographer after earning a Bachelor of

Fine Arts degree from Rochester Institute of Technology. She shifted to a career in agriculture about a decade ago.

“I decided to do something else besides the world of commercial photography,” she said. “One of the reasons farming appealed to me is because it is a service that is directly connected to people. I plant a seed, cultivate and grow it, and then give it to you so you can enjoy it and benefit from it as food.”

In 2010, Comstock apprenticed on a farm in New Lebanon, N.Y. In 2014, she established Colfax Farm (using her father’s middle name for the farm’s monicker). Operating as a tenant, she started it in East Chatham, N.Y., and then moved the farm to West Stockbridge before leasing her present acreage in Alford in 2018.

Comstock acknowledged that her present situation is difficult. In addition to managing the current growing season’s business, she is seeking a new location for the farm.


“Normally, I’d be starting to plan for next year,” she said. “Farmers need to be thinking ahead about what to order and making other preparations. But I can’t really do that because I don’t know where I’ll be next year.”

Comstock said her goal is to find a long-term site with between 5 and 10 acres, with land for cultivation, as well as a house – or space where she can build one – and room for a barn and other facilities. Because her market is primarily in the area from West Stockbridge to Great Barrington, she hopes to find a site equally convenient for customers there.

“Ideally, I hope to know where I’ll be by the end of October, so I can begin preparing for next year,” she said. “But if I can’t find something by the end of the year, I’ll make transitional plans for next season, possibly on a smaller temporary site. Either way, though, I will be farming and selling next year.” ♦

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ADAMS

19-21 2nd St.  
Buyer: Zachary Poplaski  
Seller: Traylen Chalmers  
Price: \$169,900  
Mortgage: \$152,740  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/30/21

45 Commercial St.  
Buyer: Kyle Allen +  
Seller: Earl Kornn +  
Price: \$200,000  
Mortgage: \$196,377  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/19/21

134 Commercial St.  
Buyer: Tamika Wells +  
Seller: Donald Saunders Jr  
Price: \$155,000  
Mortgage: \$147,250  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/7/21

3 Dubis St.  
Buyer: Ziva Larson +  
Seller: Nicholas Modena +  
Price: \$215,500  
Mortgage: \$150,500  
Lender: Triumph Mtg  
Date: 7/16/21

35 E Orchard Ter.  
Buyer: Barbara Kittler  
Seller: Jason Klammer  
Price: \$306,000  
Date: 7/16/21

192 East Rd.  
Buyer: Nathan Poirot +  
Seller: Helen Hamelin  
1998 RET +  
Price: \$302,400  
Mortgage: \$282,232  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

16-18 Grove St.  
Buyer: Adams Community Bk  
Seller: Marcus Leake +  
Price: \$100,000  
Date: 7/19/21

14 Highland Ave.  
Buyer: Melissa Silverstein  
Seller: Walker Fortin +  
Price: \$235,000  
Mortgage: \$213,001  
Lender: Republic State  
Date: 7/13/21

46 Melrose St.  
Buyer: Stephen Olson +  
Seller: Natasha Wicks  
Price: \$205,000  
Mortgage: \$207,070  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/2/21

86 N Summer St.  
Buyer: Jacqueline Polynice  
Seller: Cassidy Thorn  
Price: \$232,000  
Mortgage: \$227,797  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/6/21

40 Notch Rd.  
Buyer: Carol Ruggles +  
Seller: Ann Conroy  
Price: \$235,000  
Date: 7/7/21

9 Orchard St.  
Buyer: Daniel Savary  
Seller: Harold Dupee Jr  
Price: \$232,500  
Mortgage: \$234,848  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/26/21

12 Phillips Hill  
Buyer: Lachay Canada +  
Seller: Forrest Houghton +  
Price: \$200,000  
Mortgage: \$176,377  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/23/21

16 Siara St.  
Buyer: Ashley Puggioni +  
Seller: Narendra Metha +  
Price: \$170,000  
Mortgage: \$171,717  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/2/21

14 Summit Ave.  
Buyer: Heather Main  
Seller: Robin Gagne +  
Price: \$150,000  
Mortgage: \$120,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/26/21

ALFORD

147 Green River Rd.  
Buyer: Alison Chan-Bevan +  
Seller: John Bevan +  
Price: \$576,000  
Mortgage: \$460,800  
Lender: Fairway  
Date: 7/12/21

BECKET

33 Beach Rd.  
Buyer: Brian Schultheis  
Seller: Douglas Jaeger  
Price: \$184,900  
Mortgage: \$147,920  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/8/21

59 Berkshire Rd.  
Buyer: Ellen Mooradian  
Seller: Jean Duhon +  
Price: \$225,000  
Date: 7/20/21

1512 Excalibur Dr.  
Buyer: Ronald Rauscher +  
Seller: William Difederico +  
Price: \$185,000  
Date: 7/29/21

609 Main St.  
Buyer: Cory Wishes NT +  
Seller: KMS Inc  
Price: \$89,250  
Date: 7/20/21

235 Mcnerney Rd.  
Buyer: Avraham Stein  
Seller: Matthew Dechaine  
Price: \$400,000  
Mortgage: \$404,040  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/20/21

186 Old Abbey Ln. W  
Buyer: Mark Newberg +  
Seller: Karen Brodie  
Price: \$265,000  
Mortgage: \$238,500  
Lender: Guaranteed Rate  
Date: 7/21/21

CHESHIRE

108 Dean St.  
Buyer: Edward Pezze 3rd  
Seller: Cindy Gajda +  
Price: \$230,000  
Mortgage: \$202,500  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/6/21

122 Fisher Hill Rd.  
Buyer: William Wendell +  
Seller: Bernard Fallon  
Price: \$265,000  
Mortgage: \$257,050  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/16/21

136 Ingalls Rd.  
Buyer: Kelsey Kurowski  
Seller: Jennifer Madewell  
Price: \$261,111  
Mortgage: \$248,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/30/21

53 Meadowview Dr.  
Buyer: Corbin Brassard +  
Seller: Betit Edward Est +  
Price: \$295,000  
Mortgage: \$265,500  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/16/21

20-22 Mill Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Michael Chiellini +  
Seller: Town Crest Prop Group  
Price: \$190,000  
Mortgage: \$170,810  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/27/21

381 N State Rd.  
Buyer: David Harding +  
Seller: Nathan Saldo +  
Price: \$309,900  
Mortgage: \$317,027  
Lender: Mtg Research  
Date: 7/19/21

1181 Outlook Ave.  
Buyer: Germaine Valentine  
Seller: Western Mass Const  
Price: \$190,000  
Date: 7/23/21

158 S State Rd.  
Buyer: Tristan Lysko  
Seller: USA HUD  
Price: \$114,000  
Mortgage: \$131,670  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/30/21

Stafford Hill Rd. Lot 1  
Buyer: Michael Bresett +  
Seller: Mark Fortier +  
Price: \$140,000  
Mortgage: \$105,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/2/21

397 W Mountain Rd.

Buyer: Sara Blanchette  
Seller: Graig Plumb  
Price: \$240,000  
Mortgage: \$228,000  
Lender: Bk of Bennington  
Date: 7/12/21

664-810 Wells Rd.  
Buyer: Craig Kahn  
Seller: Carol Pearl  
Price: \$200,000  
Date: 7/6/21

CLARKSBURG

565 Middle Rd.  
Buyer: Sheryl Gibson  
Seller: Janice Poirot  
Price: \$120,000  
Date: 7/15/21

DALTON

29-31 Ashuelot St.  
Buyer: Jason Berry  
Seller: Lee Mccasland  
Price: \$225,000  
Mortgage: \$213,750  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/2/21

92 Bruce Dr.  
Buyer: Timothy Oconnor +  
Seller: Amy Zabian  
Price: \$370,000  
Mortgage: \$296,000  
Lender: Valley Natl  
Date: 7/9/21

28 Curtis Ave.  
Buyer: Mollie Kellogg +  
Seller: Paul Galliher +  
Price: \$215,000  
Date: 7/30/21

54 Dalton Division Rd.  
Buyer: Constance Harris +  
Seller: Jonathan Cann +  
Price: \$275,000  
Mortgage: \$270,019  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/23/21

813 Dalton Division Rd.  
Buyer: BTB Realty LLC  
Seller: Dalton Div Dev LLC  
Price: \$100,000  
Mortgage: \$50,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/20/21

48 Daly Ave.  
Buyer: Brandon Lane  
Seller: Jason Hektor  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$210,000  
Lender: USAA Fed SB  
Date: 7/30/21

37 Field St. Ext  
Buyer: Jon Macht +  
Seller: Janet Macht +  
Price: \$150,000  
Date: 7/21/21

9 Franklin St.  
Buyer: Stephen Cedar  
Seller: Roberta Stewart  
Price: \$228,000  
Mortgage: \$228,000  
Lender: Mtg Research  
Date: 7/26/21

52 Hemlock Hill  
Buyer: Erik Sokolowski +  
Seller: Linda Craft  
Price: \$435,000  
Mortgage: \$413,250  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/29/21

135-137 High St.  
Buyer: Robert Christman 2nd +  
Seller: Kyle Heilbroun +  
Price: \$263,000  
Mortgage: \$258,236  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/6/21

368 High St.  
Buyer: Nina DelosSantos  
Seller: Richard Derosé  
Price: \$295,000  
Mortgage: \$286,150  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/16/21

359 Hinsdale Rd.  
Buyer: Briana Joyner +  
Seller: Louis Paris Jr +  
Price: \$200,000  
Mortgage: \$190,000  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/15/21

51 Kirchner Rd.  
Buyer: Thomas Scherben Jr +  
Seller: Craig Controy  
Price: \$489,900  
Mortgage: \$280,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/27/21

205 Kirchner Rd.  
Buyer: Donald Davis

Seller: Elizabeth Sullivan  
Price: \$140,000  
Date: 7/22/21

210 Orchard Rd.  
Buyer: Churchill St Realty  
Seller: Mark Stetson +  
Price: \$96,000  
Date: 7/19/21

48-50 Pine St.  
Buyer: Laurie Chivers  
Seller: Richard Drinan +  
Price: \$210,000  
Date: 7/30/21

41 Pomeroy Ave.  
Buyer: James Beaudin  
Seller: James Boland Jr  
Price: \$120,000  
Mortgage: \$96,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/28/21

42 Riverview Dr.  
Buyer: Kenneth Welch  
Seller: Robert Welch +  
Price: \$230,000  
Mortgage: \$182,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/20/21

209 South St.  
Buyer: Ryan Smith +  
Seller: Sandra Klemme  
Price: \$105,000  
Mortgage: \$84,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/16/21

68 Tower Rd.  
Buyer: Michael Merriam  
Seller: Juli Koweach  
Price: \$252,000  
Mortgage: \$195,500  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/15/21

60 North St. U:8  
Buyer: Ellen Paluilis  
Seller: Rita Villaman  
Price: \$156,000  
Mortgage: \$124,800  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/2/21

EGREMONT

7 Buttonball Ln.  
Buyer: Ronald Ronan +  
Seller: Kevin Ronan  
Price: \$472,000  
Mortgage: \$250,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/28/21

124 Egremont Plain Rd.  
Buyer: Stephen Feingold  
Seller: Michael Gilmore +  
Price: \$875,000  
Mortgage: \$650,000  
Lender: Workers CU  
Date: 7/9/21

30 Main St.  
Buyer: Kevin Molloy 2021  
RET +  
Seller: Craig Martin +  
Price: \$580,000  
Date: 7/23/21

Mount Washington Rd. Lot 1  
Buyer: Gregg Massini  
Seller: Delmolino FT +  
Price: \$230,000  
Date: 7/1/21

Mount Washington Rd. Lot 2  
Buyer: Gregg Massini  
Seller: Delmolino FT +  
Price: \$90,000  
Date: 7/1/21

50 Shun Toll Rd.  
Buyer: Daniel Brenner +  
Seller: Adam Hersch +  
Price: \$1,900,000  
Mortgage: \$1,417,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/9/21

Terra Ferma Dr. Lot 10  
Buyer: Koota LT +  
Seller: Terra Ferma NT +  
Price: \$130,000  
Date: 7/2/21

Terra Ferma Dr. Lot 9  
Buyer: Koota LT +  
Seller: Terra Ferma NT +  
Price: \$170,000  
Date: 7/2/21

GREAT BARRINGTON

70 Castle Hill Ave.  
Buyer: Michael Anglin +  
Seller: James Ketchen RET +  
Price: \$1,085,000  
Mortgage: \$868,000  
Lender: Citibank  
Date: 7/16/21

Christian Hill Rd.

Buyer: Scott Mcfarland +  
Seller: Donald Gulick +  
Price: \$96,000  
Date: 7/26/21

26 Kalliste Hill  
Buyer: Benjamin Rosenblum +  
Seller: Gregg Wellenkamp +  
Price: \$195,000  
Mortgage: \$146,250  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/2/21

37 Kirk St.  
Buyer: Richard Montano 3rd +  
Seller: Bard Teigen +  
Price: \$399,000  
Mortgage: \$379,050  
Lender: JPMorgan Chase  
Date: 7/30/2



Lake Ave. Lot 2  
Buyer: Carter Vanallaen-  
Forringer +  
Seller: Carly Shafiroff  
Price: \$160,000  
Date: 7/26/21

333 Long Pond Rd.  
Buyer: Mujahid Ishaqsait  
Seller: Timothy Martin  
Price: \$950,000  
Date: 7/1/21

32 Mahaiwe St.  
Buyer: Coblox LLC  
Seller: Topa Enterprises LLC  
Price: \$360,000  
Mortgage: \$255,361  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/16/21

293 Main St.  
Buyer: Toms Toys Realty LLC  
Seller: Toms Toys Bldg LLC  
Price: \$2,600,000  
Mortgage: \$2,300,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/21/21

389 Main St.  
Buyer: Hunt Slonem  
Seller: Educational  
Consultants  
Price: \$3,250,000  
Date: 7/8/21

300 Maple St.  
Buyer: Stacy Case  
Seller: Jason Blackwell +  
Price: \$537,500  
Mortgage: \$376,250  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/16/21

298 N Plain Rd.  
Buyer: David Long +  
Seller: Charles Pierce  
Price: \$330,000  
Date: 7/1/21

3394 Park St.  
Buyer: Bright St Properties  
Seller: Blue House  
Properties LLC  
Price: \$730,000  
Date: 7/12/21

392 Park St. N  
Buyer: Bright St Properties  
Seller: Blue House  
Properties LLC  
Price: \$730,000  
Mortgage: \$525,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/12/21

26 Prospect St.  
Buyer: Carter Forringer +  
Seller: Thomas Gladwell +  
Price: \$640,000  
Date: 7/26/21

91 Railroad St.

Buyer: Daniel Studwell  
Seller: Dennis Downing +  
Price: \$252,000  
Mortgage: \$200,000  
Lender: Berkshire Bank  
Date: 7/2/21

48 State Rd.  
Buyer: 48 State Road LLC  
Seller: Paul Morgan  
Price: \$520,000  
Mortgage: \$390,000  
Lender: TD Bank  
Date: 7/16/21

135 West Ave.  
Buyer: Isabel Gregg  
Seller: Martha Klay  
Price: \$395,000  
Mortgage: \$335,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/12/21

21 Wyantenuck St.  
Buyer: PGA Holdings LLC  
Seller: Bruce Cutter +  
Price: \$475,000  
Date: 7/16/21

Burning Tree Rd. U:9  
Buyer: Yaron Sadan +  
Seller: Ejajones &  
Associates LLC  
Price: \$1,360,000  
Mortgage: \$1,088,000  
Lender: Wells Fargo  
Date: 7/23/21

Burning Tree Rd. U:16  
Buyer: Athena Dratelis  
Seller: HN&Beatrice  
Kudler RET +  
Price: \$820,000  
Mortgage: \$656,000  
Lender: Wells Fargo  
Date: 7/7/21

Emily Ct. U:6  
Buyer: Kashmira  
Madhuwala +  
Seller: Kristine Bahr  
Price: \$184,000  
Mortgage: \$115,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/7/21

HANCOCK

Corey Rd.  
Buyer: Kevin Oreilly +  
Seller: Moose Creek  
Holdings Inc  
Price: \$165,000  
Date: 7/1/21

Corey Rd.  
Buyer: Rockwell Cooley +  
Seller: WJ&NP Hopmans  
FT +  
Price: \$227,000  
Date: 7/16/21

90 Goodrich Hollow Rd.  
Buyer: Etta Jacobs  
Seller: Meme Rasmussen  
Price: \$260,000  
Date: 7/30/21

2589 Hancock Rd.  
Buyer: Paul Kilventon  
Seller: Mitchell Ramos  
Price: \$375,000  
Mortgage: \$150,000  
Lender: Berkshire Bank  
Date: 7/30/21

Mountainside Dr. U:9521  
Buyer: Sean Mullally  
Seller: Laurie Weber  
Price: \$455,000  
Mortgage: \$432,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/1/21

HINSDALE

68 Church St.  
Buyer: Christian Rodriguez +  
Seller: Robert Paradysz  
Price: \$165,000  
Mortgage: \$162,011  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/26/21

40 Rose Dr.  
Buyer: Eric Goidel +

Seller: 40 Rose Drive RET +  
Price: \$650,000  
Date: 7/23/21

LANESBORO

10 B St.  
Buyer: 10 B St NT +  
Seller: Tracy Ames +  
Price: \$901,500  
Mortgage: \$680,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/28/21

8 Baker St.  
Buyer: John Farley Sr +  
Seller: Keith Mclear Jr +  
Price: \$150,000  
Mortgage: \$142,500  
Lender: Home Point  
Date: 7/16/21

15 Goodell Rd.  
Buyer: Michael Patten +  
Seller: Jeanette Rotondo  
Price: \$315,100  
Date: 7/6/21

65 Orebed Rd.  
Buyer: Robert Kend  
Seller: King Keeler +  
Price: \$497,500  
Date: 7/8/21

LEE

362 Bradley St.  
Buyer: Todd Burdick  
Seller: Jeanette Rotondo  
Price: \$113,000  
Date: 7/23/21

5 Chanter Rd.  
Buyer: Thomas Farley  
Seller: Moskin John Est +  
Price: \$150,000  
Date: 7/15/21

183 Chanterwood Rd.  
Buyer: Peter Levy +  
Seller: Trevor Johnson +  
Price: \$113,000  
Date: 7/21/21

276 East St.  
Buyer: Steven Bowers  
Seller: Maria Shaw  
Price: \$160,000  
Mortgage: \$152,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/30/21

60 Erskine Dr.  
Buyer: Andrew Dremak  
Seller: Adam Hersch  
Price: \$125,000  
Date: 7/2/21

355 Fairview St.  
Buyer: Lisa Pincus-Hamroff  
Seller: Steven Denhardt +  
Price: \$420,000  
Date: 7/2/21

45 Marietta Ave.  
Buyer: Bryan Hernandez +  
Seller: Edward Forfa +  
Price: \$292,000  
Mortgage: \$283,240  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

55 Mountain View Ter.  
Buyer: Brennan King  
Seller: Diane Carroll  
Price: \$315,000  
Mortgage: \$252,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

140 Orchard St.  
Buyer: Cristina Markham  
Seller: Mary Antoniazzi +  
Price: \$250,000  
Mortgage: \$224,750  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/27/21

390 Spring St.  
Buyer: Shawn Ceanga +  
Seller: Elizabeth Bernstein  
RET +  
Price: \$300,000  
Mortgage: \$225,000  
Lender: Success Mtg  
Date: 7/28/21

190 Summer St.  
Buyer: Shannon Beattie  
Seller: Jacob Ojala +  
Price: \$382,000  
Date: 7/12/21

250 Valenti Farms  
Buyer: Christopher Byrne +  
Seller: Yokun Ridge Prop  
Mgmt LLC  
Price: \$148,000  
Mortgage: \$111,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/22/21

770 Summer St. U:1D  
Buyer: George Bain +  
Seller: Mark Friedman +  
Price: \$497,500  
Date: 7/8/21

LENOX

53 Galway Ct.  
Buyer: Munya Tovares +  
Seller: Stanley Germond +  
Price: \$755,000  
Mortgage: \$604,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/28/21

64 Holmes Rd.  
Buyer: Basema Shalhoub +  
Seller: Bga RET +  
Price: \$270,000  
Mortgage: \$216,000  
Lender: MSA Mtg  
Date: 7/21/21

131 Housatonic St.  
Buyer: Jon Sterrett +  
Seller: Benjamin Wood +  
Price: \$439,000  
Mortgage: \$394,000  
Lender: Nationstar  
Date: 7/16/21

119 Under Mountain Rd.  
Buyer: Rami Kaminski +  
Seller: R&Ingrid Taylor  
RET +  
Price: \$3,150,000  
Date: 7/16/21

180 Walker St.  
Buyer: Robert Dowling +  
Seller: Milton Mott Jr +  
Price: \$685,000  
Mortgage: \$548,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/14/21

42 West St.  
Buyer: DC&SL Belda  
2004 T +  
Seller: Billetter Richard Est +  
Price: \$589,000  
Mortgage: \$400,000  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 7/7/21

165 Kemble St. U:15  
Buyer: Stephen Greenberg +  
Seller: Sidney Koch +  
Price: \$1,350,000  
Date: 7/28/21

260 Pittsfield Rd. U:D13  
Buyer: Miller Place LLC  
Seller: S&Carol Leibowitz  
NT +  
Price: \$162,000  
Date: 7/15/21

3 Rolling Hills U:7  
Buyer: Martin Abramowitz +  
Seller: Tina Kassman LT +  
Price: \$269,900  
Mortgage: \$215,920  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/27/21

7 Rolling Hills U:8  
Buyer: Beling NT +  
Seller: Francis Johnson  
Price: \$280,000  
Date: 7/12/21

MONTEREY

10 Art School Rd.  
Buyer: Casolari Group LLC  
Seller: Milton Beller  
Price: \$265,000  
Date: 7/1/21

continued on next page

BERKSHIRE  
HATHAWAY  
HomeServices  
Barnbrook  
Realty



REALestate

continued from page 19

15 Lake Ave.  
Buyer: Gillian Wells +  
Seller: John Miller  
Price: \$256,500  
Mortgage: \$251,853  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/7/21

32 North Rd.  
Buyer: Sarah Delorey +  
Seller: Matthew Vella +  
Price: \$380,000  
Date: 7/1/21

165 Stevens Lake Way  
Buyer: Andrew Bevacqua +  
Seller: Jeremy Rawitz  
Price: \$640,000  
Mortgage: \$512,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/16/21

MOUNT WASHINGTON

Cross Rd. Lot 1  
Buyer: Vincent Giracca +  
Seller: Phyllis Fink  
Price: \$177,000  
Date: 7/28/21

399 East St.  
Buyer: Pamela Pescosolido  
Seller: Brian Torrico  
Price: \$880,000  
Mortgage: \$280,000  
Lender: Trustco  
Date: 7/23/21

NEW ASHFORD

123 Beach Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Melissa Brooks  
Seller: Matthew Kelly +  
Price: \$405,000  
Mortgage: \$360,000  
Lender: Wells Fargo  
Date: 7/23/21

94 Route 7  
Buyer: Springs Motel LLC  
Seller: Shri Swami Samarth Ent  
Price: \$833,000  
Mortgage: \$652,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/12/21

NEW MARLBORO

Hartsville Mill River Rd.  
Buyer: Friday Group LLC  
Seller: Bettee Stalker  
Price: \$425,000  
Date: 7/28/21

1386 Hartsville Mill River Rd.  
Buyer: Umpachene Grange LLC  
Seller: Kevin Regan  
Price: \$225,000  
Mortgage: \$88,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/2/21

Hayes Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Kathy Andrus  
Seller: Arthur Fefferman +  
Price: \$250,000  
Date: 7/14/21

9 Lakeside Rd.  
Buyer: Christopher Monroe +  
Seller: Edward Collins Jr +  
Price: \$376,000  
Date: 7/23/21

650 Mill River Southfield Rd.  
Buyer: Pixley Corners RT +  
Seller: Martin Love NT +  
Price: \$269,000  
Date: 7/16/21

772 Mill River Southfield Rd.  
Buyer: Ellery Royston +  
Seller: Rebecca Schenberg  
Price: \$505,000  
Mortgage: \$425,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/26/21

New Marlborough Hill Lot 5  
Buyer: Aroline Herzig +  
Seller: New Marlborough Hill LLC  
Price: \$215,000  
Date: 7/29/21

New Marlborough Hill Lot 7  
Buyer: Geoffrey Maynard +  
Seller: New Marlborough Hill LLC  
Price: \$235,000  
Date: 7/29/21

New Marlborough Rd.  
Buyer: Gregory Poole  
Seller: Margaret Burnett  
Price: \$200,000  
Date: 7/15/21

145 Norfolk Rd.  
Buyer: Christopher White  
Seller: Bove Inter Vivos RET +  
Price: \$610,000  
Mortgage: \$431,250  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/29/21

1193 Norfolk Rd.  
Buyer: Jenny Plasencia +  
Seller: Ruth Madow +  
Price: \$106,000  
Mortgage: \$84,800  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/19/21

55 Pine Rd.  
Buyer: Yuhgo Yamaguchi +  
Seller: John Ambos +  
Price: \$317,000  
Mortgage: \$240,000  
Lender: Sofi Lending  
Date: 7/7/21

NORTH ADAMS

103-15 Bracewell Ave.  
Buyer: Rebecca Lymberis +  
Seller: Dsm Properties LLC  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$100,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/19/21

7 Brook Ter.  
Buyer: Diego Unda-Benavides  
Seller: Amalio Jusino 3rd  
Price: \$150,000  
Mortgage: \$134,850  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/16/21

98 Brooklyn St.  
Buyer: Ryan Frazer +  
Seller: Paul Hopkins  
Price: \$143,000  
Mortgage: \$114,400  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/7/21

80 Cady St.  
Buyer: Gloria Brand +  
Seller: David Witherell Jr +  
Price: \$279,000  
Mortgage: \$210,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/27/21

676 Curran Hwy.  
Buyer: Tan Realty Inc  
Seller: Guy Cariddi  
Price: \$500,000  
Mortgage: \$450,000  
Lender: Seller  
Date: 7/6/21

29 Dean St.  
Buyer: Mitchell Biros

Seller: David Biros  
Price: \$94,000  
Mortgage: \$75,200  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/14/21

194 E Main St.  
Buyer: Beau Barela +  
Seller: Joyce Forth  
Price: \$75,000  
Mortgage: \$60,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/20/21

339 E Main St.  
Buyer: Kaileigh Lewis  
Seller: Agnes Beverly  
Price: \$126,500  
Mortgage: \$124,208  
Lender: Neighbors Bk  
Date: 7/21/21

33 Forest St.  
Buyer: Ari Menashe  
Seller: Susan Perry  
Price: \$117,500  
Date: 7/9/21

95 Furnace St.  
Buyer: Acelynn Fulton  
Seller: David Richards +  
Price: \$189,000  
Mortgage: \$185,576  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/8/21

39 Goodrich St.  
Buyer: Richard Astle  
Seller: Richard Howe Jr  
Price: \$124,500  
Mortgage: \$120,765  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

117 Hawthorne Ave.  
Buyer: Erik Steinbach  
Seller: Wayne Wilkinson +  
Price: \$163,000  
Date: 7/14/21

53 Liberty St.  
Buyer: Boris Shavlov  
Seller: Michael Jackson  
Price: \$106,000  
Date: 7/23/21

140-142 Liberty St.  
Buyer: Rebecca Lymberis +  
Seller: Dsm Properties LLC  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$100,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/19/21

21-23 Lyman St.  
Buyer: Zusammen LLC  
Seller: Luke Furey  
Price: \$163,500  
Date: 7/20/21

49 Maple St.  
Buyer: Border Mountain Farm LLC  
Seller: Albert Lewis Jr T +  
Price: \$190,800  
Mortgage: \$155,900  
Lender: Julie Sloan  
Date: 7/23/21

921 Mohawk Trail  
Buyer: Jamie Sheldon +  
Seller: Marjorie Sheldon  
Price: \$153,000  
Mortgage: \$150,228  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/27/21

1-3 Olds St.  
Buyer: 1-3 Olds Street LLC  
Seller: Peter Reardon +  
Price: \$218,000  
Date: 7/21/21

27 Phelps Ave.  
Buyer: Peter Karkantzelis  
Seller: Mark Iacuessa +  
Price: \$140,000  
Mortgage: \$133,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/12/21

9 Pine Hill Ter.  
Buyer: Shawn Brierley +  
Seller: Paul Holbrook +  
Price: \$390,000  
Date: 7/1/21

640 State Rd.  
Buyer: Russell Leblanc  
Seller: James Falandes  
Price: \$105,900  
Date: 7/1/21

388 Ashland St. U:3  
Buyer: Derek Shell +  
Seller: Jill Taylor  
Price: \$98,500  
Mortgage: \$78,500  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/28/21

101 Clarkson Ave.  
Buyer: Brandon Bessey +  
Seller: Maria Stracuzzi NT +  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$203  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/2/21

32 Clydesdale Dr.

Price: \$340,000  
Mortgage: \$272,000  
Lender: Salisbury B&T  
Date: 7/30/21

15 Old State Rd.  
Buyer: Jacob Finkel  
Seller: Robert Rocke +  
Price: \$365,000  
Mortgage: \$358,388  
Lender: United Wholesale  
Date: 7/30/21

464 Pine Rd.  
Buyer: RS&BA Knowles T +  
Seller: Robert Therriault +  
Price: \$532,600  
Date: 7/2/21

95 S Lake Ave.  
Buyer: Gary Traversa +  
Seller: Timothy Pierce +  
Price: \$410,000  
Mortgage: \$328,000  
Lender: Citizens Bk  
Date: 7/16/21

PERU

98 E Main Rd.  
Buyer: Derek Strzepa  
Seller: David Strzepa  
Price: \$262,000  
Mortgage: \$236,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/19/21

PITTSFIELD

1st St.  
Buyer: Berkshire Hills Health Inc  
Seller: Randy Porter +  
Price: \$253,000  
Date: 7/15/21

50 Ashley St.  
Buyer: John Tullock 3rd +  
Seller: John Boldyga +  
Price: \$150,000  
Mortgage: \$135,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/14/21

148 Birch Grove Dr.  
Buyer: Nelson Forfa +  
Seller: C Thomas Seddon Jr  
Price: \$185,000  
Mortgage: \$179,450  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/20/21

205 Brown St.  
Buyer: Richard Wojtczak  
Seller: Robert Aulisio  
Price: \$90,000  
Mortgage: \$92,000  
Lender: QS Lending  
Date: 7/21/21

36, 40 Burbank St.  
Buyer: First & Burbank LLC  
Seller: Randy Porter +  
Price: \$277,500  
Mortgage: \$208,125  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/15/21

63 Burbank St.  
Buyer: Rose Segara +  
Seller: Jason Berry  
Price: \$121,000  
Date: 7/2/21

1 Charisma Dr.  
Buyer: Michael Finneran +  
Seller: John Moore +  
Price: \$537,500  
Mortgage: \$437,500  
Lender: Freedom Bk  
Date: 7/28/21

203 Cheshire Rd.  
Buyer: Sebastiana Carnevale  
Seller: Karen Fonda  
Price: \$156,000  
Mortgage: \$153,174  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/26/21

326 Cheshire Rd.  
Buyer: Kaitlin Delasco  
Seller: Donna Kasala +  
Price: \$225,000  
Mortgage: \$217,490  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/8/21

17 Churchill St.  
Buyer: Chester Palmer 3rd +  
Seller: Hoag Jean Est +  
Price: \$275,000  
Mortgage: \$120,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

101 Clarkson Ave.  
Buyer: Brandon Bessey +  
Seller: Maria Stracuzzi NT +  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$203  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/2/21

Buyer: Brent Bette +  
Seller: Josephine Brunjes  
Price: \$320,000  
Mortgage: \$310,400  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/19/21

91 Clydesdale Dr.  
Buyer: Mitchell Langlois +  
Seller: Beatrice Thomas  
2014 FT +  
Price: \$315,000  
Mortgage: \$252,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

901 Crane Ave.  
Buyer: BFG MA RI LLC  
Seller: Prime Storage  
Pittsfield  
Price: \$7,537,943  
Date: 7/22/21

19 Dalton Ave.  
Buyer: Berkshire Home Rentals LLC  
Seller: Michael Phelps +  
Price: \$229,000  
Mortgage: \$177,600  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/1/21

1230 Dalton Ave.  
Buyer: Chelsea Gancarz  
Seller: Ellies Holdings LLC  
Price: \$180,000  
Mortgage: \$174,600  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/6/21

35 Danforth Ave.  
Buyer: Melanie Rivas  
Seller: Doreen Vandermolen  
Price: \$145,000  
Mortgage: \$132,768  
Lender: Amerisave  
Date: 7/30/21

68 Daniels Ave.  
Buyer: Alberto Taveras +  
Seller: Yi Zheng  
Price: \$123,000  
Mortgage: \$98,400  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/9/21

73 Deborah Ave.  
Buyer: Phyllis Arthur-Badoo +  
Seller: John Koldys +  
Price: \$300,000  
Mortgage: \$294,566  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 7/23/21

21 Doreen St.  
Buyer: Turner Scott  
Seller: John Lester Jr +  
Price: \$200,000  
Mortgage: \$190,000  
Lender: Republic State  
Date: 7/15/21

92 Doreen St.  
Buyer: Cheryl Rocca  
Seller: Catherine Choquette  
Price: \$180,000  
Mortgage: \$131,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/19/21

205 Eleanor Rd.  
Buyer: Nguyen Lai +  
Seller: Josephine Kilmer  
Price: \$340,000  
Mortgage: \$272,000  
Lender: Guaranteed Rate  
Date: 7/14/21

112 Elm St.  
Buyer: New Milfords Ct Inc  
Seller: Center for Ecotechnology  
Price: \$231,999  
Date: 7/8/21

25 Fern St.  
Buyer: Brittany Shepard  
Seller: Shane Willis +  
Price: \$180,000  
Mortgage: \$159,600  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

38 Garden St.  
Buyer: Sherrie Ellsworth  
Seller: Frank Manzella  
Price: \$139,900  
Mortgage: \$140,000  
Lender: Anthony Mazzeo  
Date: 7/27/21

53 Harvard St.  
Buyer: Michael Bruno  
Seller: RJL NT +  
Price: \$160,000  
Mortgage: \$152,000  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/13/21

130 High St.  
Buyer: Allan Bates +  
Seller: Carol Lew High Street LLC  
Price: \$181,750  
Mortgage: \$172,663  
Lender: Greylock FCU

Date: 7/7/21

55 Hillcrest Ave.  
Buyer: Kaitlyn Rathbun  
Seller: Jessica Patterson  
Price: \$190,000  
Mortgage: \$194,413  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/23/21

62 Holmes Rd.  
Buyer: Kevin Macdonald  
Seller: Kevin Phelps +  
Price: \$245,000  
Mortgage: \$196,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/28/21

145 Holmes Rd.  
Buyer: Martin Cosdto-Gomez +  
Seller: Karen Ingegni +  
Price: \$257,500  
Mortgage: \$187,500  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/16/21

650 Holmes Rd.  
Buyer: Adam Steck +  
Seller: Donald Daly +  
Price: \$315,000  
Mortgage: \$252,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/16/21

56 Imperial Ave.  
Buyer: Geoffrey Powell  
Seller: USA HUD  
Price: \$208,000  
Mortgage: \$178,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/1/21

Jones Ave.  
Buyer: 4 Towers LLC  
Seller: Bruce Collingwood  
Price: \$84,000  
Date: 7/8/21

23 Laurel St.  
Buyer: Peerayot Noummano +  
Seller: Fontaine Anita Est +  
Price: \$85,000  
Date: 7/23/21

323 Lenox Ave.  
Buyer: Berkshire Home Rentals LLC  
Seller: Michael Phelps +  
Price: \$139,000  
Mortgage: \$111,200  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/1/21

39 Leona Dr.  
Buyer: Neil Myers +  
Seller: Thomas Scherben Jr +  
Price: \$315,000  
Mortgage: \$299,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/26/21

Lillybrook Rd. Lot 2  
Buyer: Tamara Whitney +  
Seller: May Brook Dev Corp  
Price: \$160,000  
Date: 7/9/21

Lillybrook Rd. Lot 3  
Buyer: Tamara Whitney +  
Seller: May Brook Dev Corp  
Price: \$160,000  
Date: 7/9/21

94 Livingston Ave.  
Buyer: Roberta Tegethoff  
Seller: Susan Anderson-Wismer  
Price: \$360,000  
Mortgage: \$288,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/23/21

15 Longfellow Ave.  
Buyer: Jimmy Nguyen +  
Seller: Brendon Cowdrey  
Price: \$221,000  
Mortgage: \$140,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

32 Marian Ave.  
Buyer: Triniity Ventures LLC  
Seller: Arena Josephine Est +  
Price: \$75,000  
Date: 7/7/21

24 Meadow Ridge Dr.  
Buyer: Shamseldeane Zabian +  
Seller: Marian Dolphin  
Price: \$608,000  
Mortgage: \$486,400  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/2/21

35 Melbourne Rd.  
Buyer: Michael Doyle +  
Seller: Anthony Pastore RET +  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$121,250  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/29/21

42 Merriam St.

Buyer: Clifford Love  
Seller: Erika Casas  
Price: \$179,900  
Mortgage: \$176,641  
Lender: Republic State  
Date: 7/1/21

83 Mountainview Dr.  
Buyer: Daniel Martin +  
Seller: William Marley Jr +  
Price: \$385,000  
Mortgage: \$365,750  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/7/21

644 North St.  
Buyer: FP Lend Fund 1 LLC  
Seller: 644 North Re LLC  
Price: \$580,000  
Mortgage: \$464,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/1/21

125 Northumberland Rd.  
Buyer: Cynthia Cardeli +  
Seller: Harry Methven RET +  
Price: \$309,000  
Mortgage: \$293,550  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 7/9/21

51 Nottingham Dr.  
Buyer: John Baker  
Seller: Anthony Sinico Jr  
Price: \$247,500  
Mortgage: \$175,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/1/21

104 Parker St.  
Buyer: Henry Montoya +  
Seller: MTGLQ Investors LP  
Price: \$99,900  
Date: 7/13/21

29 Putnam Ave.  
Buyer: Mary Hostetler  
Seller: Monica Ryan  
Price: \$270,000  
Mortgage: \$239,400  
Lender: Quicken Loan  
Date: 7/26/21

87 Quirico Dr.  
Buyer: E Roxanne Gawthrop  
Seller: Frederic Hyman  
Price: \$220,000  
Mortgage: \$176,000  
Lender: Salisbury B&T  
Date: 7/19/21

5 Richmond Ave.  
Buyer: Daniel Hocctor +  
Seller: Aaron Sondrini  
Price: \$145,000  
Mortgage: \$115,000  
Lender: Berkshire Bank  
Date: 7/27/21

54 Roberta Rd.  
Buyer: B Southard Family RET +  
Seller: Susan Ressler +  
Price: \$305,000  
Mortgage: \$200,000  
Lender: Stifel B&T  
Date: 7/14/21

41 Rockland Dr.  
Buyer: Michael Faucher +  
Seller: Constance Anderson +  
Price: \$251,000  
Date: 7/23/21

21 Root Pl.  
Buyer: Casey Mccarthy +  
Seller: Keith Ferry  
Price: \$195,000  
Mortgage: \$165,750  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/1/21

152 Sampson Pkwy.  
Buyer: Francis Johnson  
Seller: Gibney FT +  
Price: \$366,900  
Mortgage: \$200,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/23/21

118 Somerset Ave.  
Buyer: John Lester +  
Seller: Joanne Kellogg  
Price: \$245,000  
Mortgage: \$232,750  
Lender: Republic State  
Date: 7/15/21

20 Southern Ave.  
Buyer: Jamel Robinson  
Seller: Leydet Properties LLC  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$125,681  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/1/21

20 Spadina Pkwy.  
Buyer: Stuart Rodkin +  
Seller: Christopher Greene +  
Price: \$570,000  
Date: 7/16/21

381 Tyler St.  
Buyer: Jonathan Vella  
Seller: VS LLC  
Price: \$125,000  
Mortgage: \$125,000  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/28/21

Valentine Rd.  
Buyer: Jeffrey Rose  
Seller: Tammy Rose  
Price: \$120,000  
Date: 7/13/21

91 Velma Ave.  
Buyer: David Strzepa  
Seller: Darla Walek  
Price: \$252,000  
Mortgage: \$180,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/19/21

189 Velma Ave.  
Buyer: Jacob Witherell-Menard +  
Seller: Donald Menard +  
Price: \$300,000  
Mortgage: \$240,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/30/21

47 W Housatonic St.  
Buyer: Zuccos Real Estate  
Seller: Morton NT +  
Price: \$159,900  
Mortgage: \$127,920  
Lender: Pittsfield Coop  
Date: 7/26/21

79 W Housatonic St.  
Buyer: 45 Pine Street LLC  
Seller: Michael Hobart  
Price: \$148,000  
Mortgage: \$111,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/21/21

457 Williams St.  
Buyer: Katherine Grubbs  
Seller: Judith Bellora  
Price: \$327,000  
Mortgage: \$261,600  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/30/21

Appleton Ave. U:141  
Buyer: Ronald Gallo +  
Seller: Mitchell Desire-Langlois  
Price: \$149,000  
Date: 7/30/21

Aspen Way U:21  
Buyer: Andrew Hochberg +  
Seller: Bruce Kellogg +  
Price: \$569,000  
Mortgage: \$160,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/19/21

81 Dartmouth St. U:208  
Buyer: Shaun Gariepy +  
Seller: Anthony Rossi  
Price: \$130,000  
Mortgage: \$104,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/30/21

108 E Housatonic St. U:9  
Buyer: Matthew Colacino  
Seller: Hilary Smith  
Price: \$115,000  
Mortgage: \$99,750  
Lender: Atlantic Home  
Date: 7/19/21

1450 North St. U:110  
Buyer: John Fitzpatrick +  
Seller: 1450 North St Unit 110 NT +  
Price: \$189,900  
Date: 7/19/21

1450 North St. U:208  
Buyer: Marie Inoue +  
Seller: US Bank NA Tr  
Price: \$185,000  
Date: 7/9/21

RICHMOND

85 Cone Hill Rd.  
Buyer: 100 Acre Wood NT +  
Seller: Beling NT +  
Price: \$1,850,000  
Date: 7/20/21

40 Maple Rd.  
Buyer: Bryan Trecharne +  
Seller: Michael Dinicola +  
Price: \$185,000  
Mortgage: \$148,000  
Lender: Berkshire Bank  
Date: 7/19/21

115 Shore Rd.  
Buyer: Anthony Viola  
Seller: Hould Frederick Est +  
Price: \$300,000  
Mortgage: \$236,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/12/21



Berkshire County real estate transfers



Mortgage: \$283,200  
Lender: Cross Country  
Date: 7/15/21

1134 Brush Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Michael Baron +  
Seller: Glenn Murray  
Price: \$255,000  
Mortgage: \$190,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/9/21

185 Hulett Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Roger Tilles  
Seller: John Shmulsky  
Price: \$460,000  
Date: 7/6/21

49 Lime Kiln Rd.  
Buyer: Lime Kiln Land LLC  
Seller: Lane Construction Corp  
Price: \$350,000  
Date: 7/22/21

49 Lime Kiln Rd.  
Buyer: 7 West LLC  
Seller: Lime Kiln Land LLC  
Price: \$100,000  
Date: 7/22/21

1224 N Main St.  
Buyer: Michael Elliston  
RET +  
Seller: Natural Habitat LLC  
Price: \$225,000  
Date: 7/12/21

432 N Undermountain Rd.  
Buyer: Andriana Evangelista  
Seller: Lucie Curtiss  
Price: \$367,000  
Date: 7/9/21

91 Old Joe Rd.  
Buyer: Gail Rubin +  
Seller: Juliet Long  
Price: \$820,000  
Mortgage: \$500,000  
Lender: Lee Bank

Date: 7/9/21

21 Sheffield Business Park  
Buyer: MBR Hldg  
Sheffield LLC  
Seller: RKB Properties LLC  
Price: \$600,000  
Date: 7/8/21

8 Hawthorne Rd.  
Buyer: Peanut Gallery LLC  
Seller: Dwyer Doriot Est +  
Price: \$1,100,000  
Date: 7/16/21

STOCKBRIDGE

36 Lake Dr.  
Buyer: Steven Averbuch +  
Seller: R Prentice Pilot +  
Price: \$940,000  
Date: 7/2/21

11 Mahkeenac Shores Rd.  
Buyer: Justin Silver +  
Seller: Esther Karp  
Price: \$425,000  
Date: 7/12/21

11 Wheatley Dr.  
Buyer: 11 Wheatley Drive LLC  
Seller: Beth Brandtner  
Price: \$2,595,000  
Date: 7/12/21

26 East St. U:B  
Buyer: P Marie Mcphee T +  
Seller: Paul Faggioni Jr +  
Price: \$215,000  
Mortgage: \$204,250  
Lender: Homestead Fund  
Date: 7/1/21

WASHINGTON

1570-B Washington  
Mountain

Buyer: Timothy Murphy  
Seller: Jerome Yavarkovsky +  
Price: \$185,000  
Mortgage: \$120,000  
Lender: New Valley B&T  
Date: 7/27/21

WEST STOCKBRIDGE

Birch Hill Rd.  
Buyer: Carrie Hammond +  
Seller: Paul Kopperl +  
Price: \$275,000  
Date: 7/1/21

5 Hotel St.  
Buyer: Joel Devenport  
Seller: Hue Nguyen  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$189,000  
Lender: Lee Bank



Date: 7/16/21

17 Maple View Dr.  
Buyer: Joseph Carpenter +  
Seller: Joan Wenz +  
Price: \$299,000  
Mortgage: \$239,920  
Lender: Salisbury B&T  
Date: 7/26/21

9 State Line Rd.  
Buyer: Ellies Holdings LLC  
Seller: Armata Susan Est +  
Price: \$182,000  
Mortgage: \$173,200  
Lender: Lending Hm Fund

Date: 7/16/21

38 W Alford Rd.  
Buyer: Ronald Sunog +  
Seller: Eric Lederman +  
Price: \$360,000  
Date: 7/27/21

Silvermine Ln. U:4  
Buyer: Dominick Luchi Jr +  
Seller: Silver Mine LLC  
Price: \$200,000  
Mortgage: \$140,000  
Lender: Lee Bank  
Date: 7/15/21

WILLIAMSTOWN

27 Bridges Rd.  
Buyer: Destinie King  
Seller: Pedercini Roger Est +  
Price: \$230,000  
Mortgage: \$225,834  
Lender: Academy Mtg  
Date: 7/9/21

30 Candlewood Dr.  
Buyer: Lisa Cruz  
Seller: Peter Ticconi 3rd +  
Price: \$660,000  
Mortgage: \$528,000  
Lender: JPMorgan Chase  
Date: 7/14/21

533 Cold Spring Rd.  
Buyer: Janice Williams  
Seller: Adam Cameron  
Price: \$210,000  
Mortgage: \$168,000  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/30/21

37 Hamel Ave.  
Buyer: Brian Dempsey Jr +  
Seller: Gail Roy +  
Price: \$255,000  
Mortgage: \$242,250  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/9/21

905 Hancock Rd.  
Buyer: Richard Glejzer +  
Seller: Alice Hadley 2018 T +  
Price: \$623,500  
Mortgage: \$323,500  
Lender: MountainOne  
Date: 7/16/21

148 Main St.  
Buyer: 144 NT +  
Seller: Bottom Line RE LLC  
Price: \$405,000  
Mortgage: \$324,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/28/21

377 Main St.  
Buyer: 85 Main Street NT +  
Seller: W&G NT +  
Price: \$190,000  
Date: 7/2/21

25 Maple St.  
Buyer: Frank Tanner-Colby +  
Seller: Alice Gagnier T +  
Price: \$450,000  
Mortgage: \$382,500  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/23/21

560 N Hoosac Rd.  
Buyer: Timothy Koch +  
Seller: Lawrence Sanborn 2nd +  
Price: \$595,000  
Mortgage: \$524,000  
Lender: Greylock FCU  
Date: 7/8/21

19 School St.  
Buyer: Julia Keosaian +  
Seller: RW & Mary E Grosse FT +  
Price: \$620,000  
Mortgage: \$496,000  
Lender: Leader Bank

Date: 7/23/21

421 Water St.  
Buyer: Shivon Robinson +  
Seller: David Jolin +  
Price: \$350,000  
Mortgage: \$280,000  
Lender: MountainOne  
Date: 7/30/21

70 White Oaks Rd.  
Buyer: Deborah Holmes  
Seller: Albert Naclerio +  
Price: \$177,000  
Mortgage: \$141,600  
Lender: Adams Community  
Date: 7/7/21

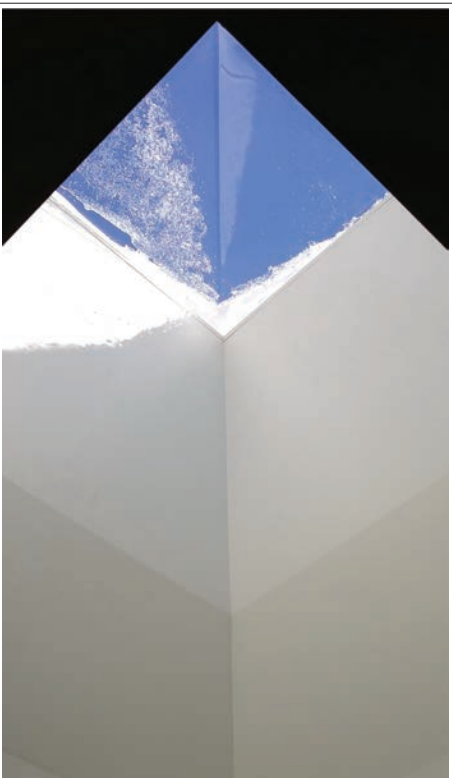
189 Stratton Rd. U:D3  
Buyer: Reinhard Wobus  
Seller: David Casey +  
Price: \$179,000  
Date: 7/29/21

WINDSOR

1742 E Windsor Rd.  
Buyer: TMR Realty LLC  
Seller: William White +  
Price: \$131,000  
Date: 7/27/21

1095 North St.  
Buyer: Shawn Trevor-Bunnell +  
Seller: E Conlin Bradley  
Price: \$514,600  
Mortgage: \$365,000  
Lender: Movement Mtg  
Date: 7/27/21

877 State Highway 9  
Buyer: David Missildine  
Seller: Steven Knappe +  
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Tuhrim

Berkshire Health Systems has announced the appointment of **Stanley Tuhrim**, MD, and **Betty Mintz**, MD, fellowship trained neurologists – and husband and wife – to the medical staff of Berkshire



Mintz

Medical Center, where they also join Drs. Octavian Adam, Herbert Gregg, Thomas Kwiatkowski, and Laurence “Jay” Ufford, and Nurse Practitioners Anurag Bansal and Kathleen Hanley at Neurology Professional Services of BMC. Tuhrim is board certified in both neurology and vascular neurology. He is fellowship trained in cerebrovascular disease from the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Mintz is board certified in both neurology and electrodiagnostic medicine, and fellowship trained in neuromuscular disease from Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Mintz specializes in electromyography and nerve conduction studies, as well as treating patients with myasthenia gravis, a condition caused by a breakdown in communication between nerves and muscles.

**Lisa Donovan**, professor of arts management at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), is the recipient of the 2021 Irene Buck Service to Arts Education Award. The award, presented by Arts Learning, a state advocacy agency for arts education, honors an individual for distinguished and prolonged service as an advocate for arts education. A passionate advocate for arts education, Donovan has published widely on arts integration and rural arts education, and has led multiple grant-funded initiatives that seek to increase access to the arts for Berkshire students. Donovan serves as the director of the Creative Compact for Collaborative and Collective Impact (C4) initiative, creating the Berkshire County Blueprint for Arts Integration and Education, which is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. She is also co-director of the Berkshire Regional Arts Integration Network (BRAINworks), funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement, and director of the MCLA Institute for Arts and Humanities, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Thornton

Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) has welcomed **Patrice Thornton**, MD, to SVMC Northshire Campus and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Putnam Physicians. Thornton has worked as a primary care internist with Nuvance Health/Western Connecticut Medical Group. She worked for more than 20 years as a primary care internist at Village Medical in Pawling, N.Y. She has also served as an assistant clinical professor of medicine at New York University.

The Berkshire Center for Justice has added the following new members to its board of directors: **Jon Masters**, whose varied career has included work as managing principal of a corporate governance consulting firm, a senior partner in a law firm, a vice chairman of a securities firm, and a director of both business and nonprofit corporations; **Jane Breslin Jacobs**, Esq., a former corporate attorney and college professor who serves as secretary of the board; **Barbara Vacarr**, PhD, formerly CEO of Kripalu in Lenox and now a consultant and leadership coach; and **Jerry Congress**, a former board member who now serves as president of the board of directors of the Berkshire Center for Justice.

The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank has announced the promotions of two employees. **Julie Coe** will now serve as the bank’s commercial loan administrative officer, and **Cindy Perrea** will now serve as loan servicing officer. In her new role, Coe will be responsible for all incoming business lending and commercial real estate applications, preparation of commercial loan documentation, loan closing, and portfolio management. She has been an employee of the bank since 2005. Perrea, an employee of the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank since 2008, began her career as a teller and quickly moved to the loan department filling various roles until her promotion to loan servicing officer.



Coe



Perrea

The Community Development Corporation of South Berkshire (CDCSB) has welcomed **Allen Harris** as the newest member to its board of directors. Harris, a Berkshire native and longtime resident of Dalton, is the founder and CEO of Berkshire Money Management (BMM), a full-service financial management firm headquartered in Dalton, with a new satellite office in Great Barrington (*August 2021 BT&C*). Harris was elected to serve a three-year term on the CDCSB’s board, where he will be a member of both the economic development and the marketing/fundraising subcommittees.



Harris

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Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts has welcomed three new vice presidents to its executive team: **Joseph DaSilva**, vice president of administration and finance; **Dr. Richard Glejzer**, vice president of academic affairs; and **Dr. Jeannette Smith**, vice president of student affairs. DaSilva joined MCLA in June. He has worked in public higher education for over 28 years, of which the last 21 years were at Springfield Technical Community College. During his tenure as vice president of administration/CFO, DaSilva provided executive-level vision, leadership, planning and direction, and oversaw all aspects of fiscal operations, facilities management, campus police, information technology, student financial services, and human resources/employee benefits and operations center. Glejzer joined MCLA in July. He was most recently the interim dean of graduate studies at Muhlenberg College, and previously served as provost and dean of faculty at Marlboro College for 10 years. Prior to joining Marlboro, Glejzer served as professor and chair of English at North Central College, and as chair of the college's academic programs and policy committee. Among his other institutional duties, Glejzer served on the college's steering committee and the Dean's Academic Advisory Committee, and was a faculty liaison to the board of trustees. Smith joined MCLA in June. She is a scholar-practitioner with 16 years of work experience in higher education, having worked most recently as the associate dean of student affairs and engagement at Evergreen State College. Smith was previously employed at Truckee Meadows Community College, University of Nevada, Reno, and Elmhurst College. Her practice areas of experience include student unions, residence life and dining, academic advising, financial aid, shared governance, and student employment. Her scholarship areas of interests include policy, equity, financial aid and student development.



DaSilva



Glejzer



Smith

**Mike Beck**, executive director of the Berkshire Botanical Garden (BBG) in Stockbridge, is taking a sabbatical to spend two years in England. During that time, Beck's duties will be fulfilled by **Thaddeus Thompson**, who will serve as interim executive director. Thompson served as the director of institutional advancement at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston during a period of extraordinary growth and development. He is also a member of the board of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Thompson was offered the position after a candidate search conducted by members of BBG's board of trustees.

**Tim Gallagher** has joined Jan Perry Realty & Associates, where he will focus on developing commercial real estate opportunities throughout the Berkshires and beyond. Gallagher is a licensed real estate agent and has over 30 years of experience as a commercial and residential real estate investor. In addition, he has had several professional careers such as owner/seller of small business startups, director of business development and community relations at Hillcrest Educational Centers, director of health and healing at Canyon Ranch, and president/CEO at Ramblewild. A Berkshire County native, Gallagher will play a role in supporting and promoting the growth of the Berkshires through commercial property development, and by working with a variety of business and property owners to meet their current and future business needs.



Gallagher

Salisbury Bank has announced recent graduates of its Leadership Development Program, which provides an opportunity for bank personnel to develop leadership skills designed to enhance their performance and potential. The 2021 graduates are: **Kevin Bennett**, vice president, commercial loan officer; **Stacey Curtis**, vice president, branch administrator and Newburgh branch manager; **Kim Downey**, CTFA, vice president, senior fiduciary officer; **Megan Gawel**, vice president, retail operations officer and Regulation O officer; and **Amanda Lidstone**, CRCM, CAFP, vice president, risk management officer and privacy officer. ♦



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When Tami decided to leave her job after 19 years to start a “non-traditional” staffing services agency in Pittsfield, she knew she needed help. After working with local agencies to create a plan, she contacted Jay Anderson, President and CEO at the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank, to help with the financing. Together, we created the tools to build TEC Staffing Services and a solid relationship.



Tami is especially proud of the “TEC-NewGens,” or new generation, an internship program she created to reach out to and support young people in the workforce.

*“The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank made my dream come true. They believed in me and my business plan and gave me the chance of a lifetime. Pittsfield Cooperative practices what they preach by standing by local companies and making a difference in the community by providing the tools necessary to foster Berkshire County business growth.”*

—Tamara E. Sime, Chief Executive Officer  
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