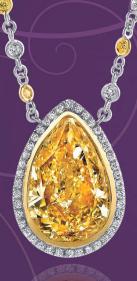
# Vellesleyvesten Magazine

winter 2017/2018

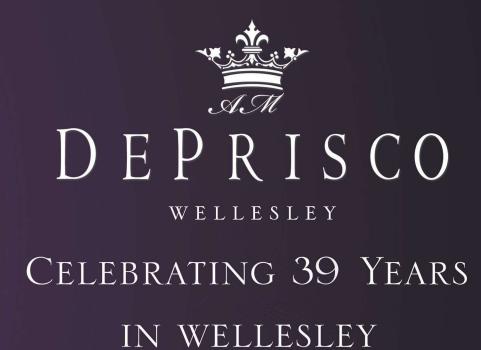


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PETER BAKER photographe

Dancers whirl about in the ballroom in this scene from Snow Village on display at the Festival of Trees at Elm Bank Reservation.



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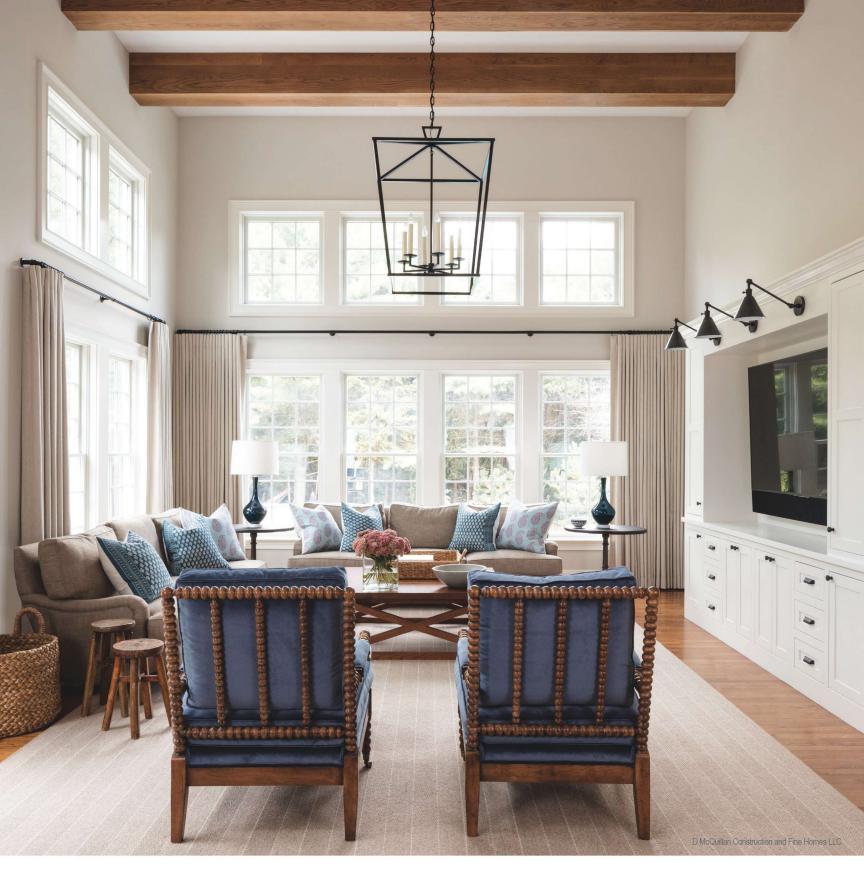
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# publisher's letter



BETH FURMAN beth@wellesleywestonmagazine.com there's nothing quite like music to lift our spirits and brighten our days. A familiar song can chase away the blues and conjure up memories of happier times. Especially during the holiday season, we rely on music to put us in the right frame of mind while we work, shop, cook, and entertain.

When was the last time you attended a choral concert? Perhaps you never have. If that's the case, you don't know what you're missing! The holidays are the perfect time to experience the joy of music, and we have more than our fair share of beautiful voices right here in our towns. I've had the privilege of attending a number of Wellesley High School choral performances, and I remember how absolutely amazed I was the first time I heard the a cappella group perform. Be sure to read our article "Sing!" to find out more about the Wellesley and Weston High School music programs as well as other top-notch choruses in our area that offer a variety of concerts during the holiday season and all year long.

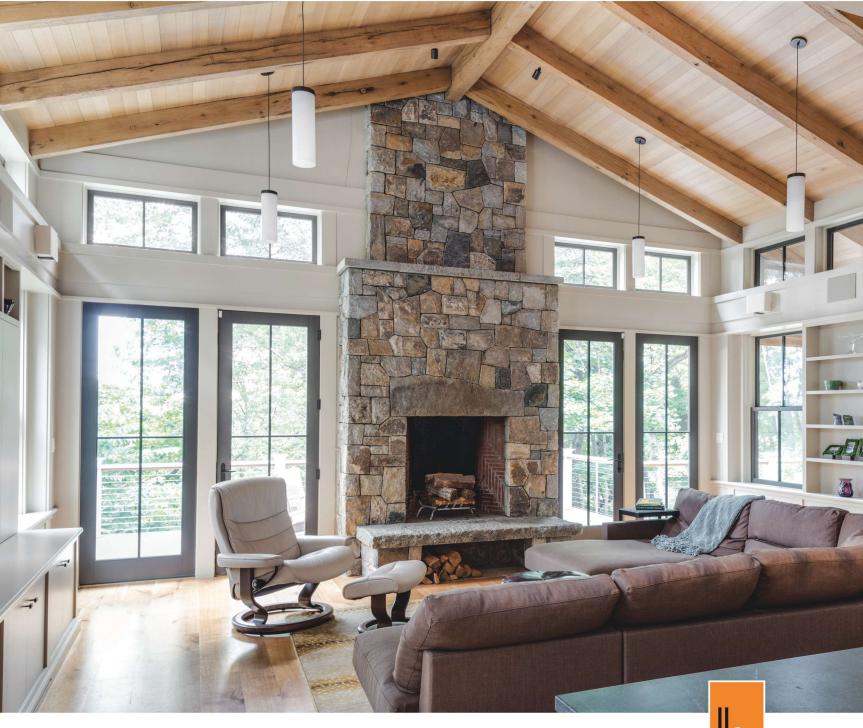
This issue is filled with plenty of ideas on things to do this winter *after* the holiday season when we all can use some creative ideas to keep us going through the cold winter months. One very special way to spend a blustery winter day is to pay a visit to the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. Following the completion of its reinstallation last year, the Davis is more spectacular than ever with 650 objects exhibited in 19 galleries. Visit the East Asian gallery and discover the world of Chinese ceramics. Or pay a visit to one of the galleries featuring West African art for a look at the collection of ceremonial masks. Get a more detailed sampling of what the museum has to offer in our article "Rediscovering the Davis Museum."

More and more people are interested in discovering their roots these days, and you may also want find out more about your own family history. In "Researching Your Family," you'll get tips on how to get to the heart of your origins and hear from locals whose DNA and genealogical research revealed some unexpected surprises. If your family is from this area, you may want to pay a visit to the local historical societies to begin your project in order to take advantage of the wonderful resources they have to offer.

Finally, you can take a trip without leaving home with our Food and Wine article, which puts you in touch with cookbooks and recipes that take you to faraway lands and exotic culinary delights. A cold winter night is the perfect time to open a fabulous cookbook, try a new recipe, and enjoy a delicious dinner in front of the fire. Wishing you a happy holiday season and a winter filled with warmth, comfort, and joy.

WellesleyWeston Magazine's blog is the talk of the towns with the latest event photos, calendar listings, and conversations for the people who make things happen in Wellesley and Weston. Log on today and you might see yourself in our expanded About Town and Inbox section. Post a comment by going directly to **wwmblog.com** or visit our website at **www.wellesleywestonmagazine.com** and click on About Town or wwmblog.

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# editor's



AROLYN ROSS

jill@wellesleywestonmagazine.com

JILL NILSEN

**One of my** oldest and fondest memories begins with a train ride. I must have been about four years old when my grandmother and I traveled by train from her home in northeast Ohio to the "big city" of Cleveland, where we were going to see Santa and holiday shop. I was wearing my new red winter dress coat and hat, and I'll never forget my nervous apprehension as I sat on the train watching the blur of the wintry landscape whiz by. What in the world was I going to tell Santa?

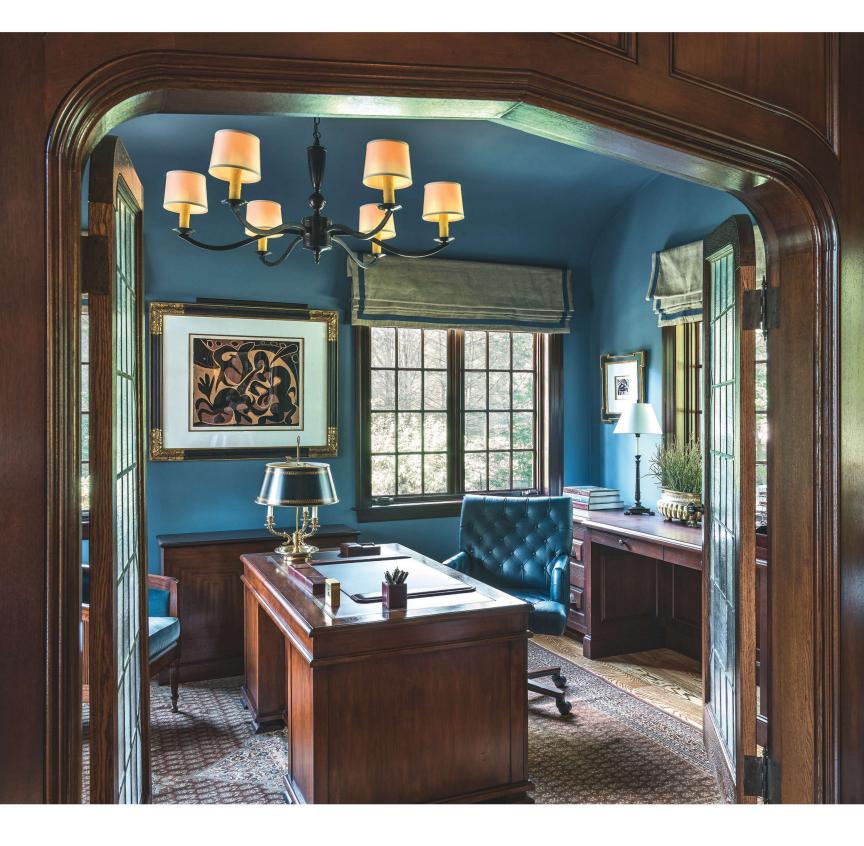
Meeting Santa was a highlight of the day, as was shopping at the kids-only Twigbee Shop on the tenth floor of Higbee's department store, filled with budget-friendly gifts that I could buy for my mom, dad, and little brother. But what I remember most about the day was the dazzling window display that greeted us at Higbee's. It was an amazing spectacle with a Lionel train running through an enchanted holiday village filled with moving toys, colorful ornaments, sparkling lights, and all of the fantastic things that bring smiles to people young and old.

You may also feel nostalgic after reading "Snow Village," the story of how William Meagher created his labor of love. With 325 buildings, five train lines, an aerial gondola, and even a miniature Fenway Park, Snow Village is a delightful display and a special treat for all to enjoy. You can see it for yourself this holiday season at the Festival of Trees at Elm Bank Reservation.

In "From Poland with Honor," we also travel back in time to the battlegrounds of World War II, where you'll meet General Wladyslaw Anders, the father of former Wellesley resident Anna Maria Anders Costa; and Julian Bussgang, the father of Wellesley resident Jessica Bussgang Rosenbloom. The story begins in Europe, continues in Wellesley, and returns overseas with an incredible memorial event. I know you'll enjoy reading about these remarkable men and their connection to our town.

Amidst all of the holiday festivities, we are reminded that this has been a very tough year with lives devastated by hurricanes, gun violence, forest fires, earthquakes, and other disasters. It is my sincere wish that we can all do what we can to help those who are suffering this holiday season and throughout the New Year.

Mollie Johnson Interiors, Inc.



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## the green scene

# **Bringing Winter Cheer Indoors**

RUTH FURMAN writer

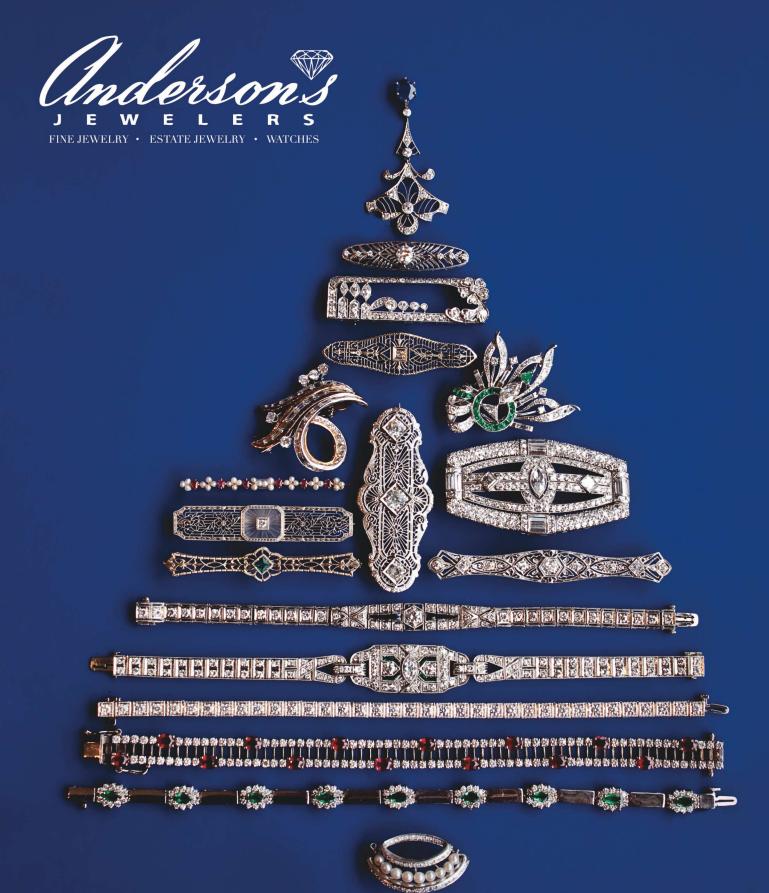
cold weather has closed in, and all of our outdoor gardening chores are on hold

until next season's warmer weather. Plant lovers fear not; indoor gardening can always keep our green thumbs from atrophying. Houseplants need looking after, too, and, as we prepare for the holidays, our green companions can be used to decorate indoor spaces for cozy gatherings with family and friends. Houseplants add color, texture, shape, and form to any interior space and are a way to stay connected with nature, particularly during the cold winter months. Plants also improve our air quality as they feed on the carbon dioxide we emit and in turn release oxygen for a perfectly symbiotic relationship.

Perhaps you haven't had much luck with houseplants and consider them too finicky. We've all had our failures for various reasons, but there are some basics to consider before spending time and money only to choose the wrong plant (again!). "Right plant, right place" applies to our garden



plants and it holds true for indoor plants, too. Every home has natural light coming through windows and skylights. So, assess the light situation in the areas where you want to have plants. Even some of the low-light areas can be suitable for certain plants. South-facing windows are the sunniest (brightest) and warmest; north-facing ones have the lowest light. A western exposure has more light than east but less than south. Amaryllis





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left: Calla lily; right: Cyclamen

Once you've determined the light situation, the next consideration is deciding what shape and size plant you envision. It's an important consideration as the wrong choice can look out of place in the space you've chosen. Plants

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Jesamondo Salor o Spa o Boutique 154 East Central Street | Natick MA | 01760 | 508.907.7171 | www.jesamondo.com grow, so bear in mind that the small plant you are looking at in the garden center will fill up and out in just a few growing seasons.

Along with size and shape, the next consideration is if you want flowers or foliage. Foliage plants will last year-round while flowering types usually go through a non-flowering period to regenerate. Foliage types can be grouped with seasonal flowering types such as the iconic Christmas poinsettias, cyclamen, or amaryllis for a jazzed-up seasonal display.

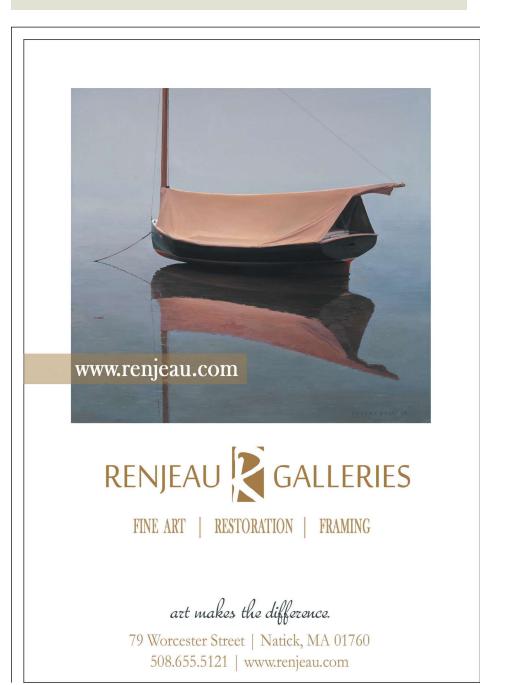
Then there is the choice of pots: Do you want decorative to augment or to coordinate with your interior design? Here the choice is one of "please yourself," but know that some of the pleasure of indoor gardening is the collecting of containers. Just as a new outfit is enhanced with accessories, so too for your houseplants; just think how to accessorize from your collection of containers.

If this is your first attempt at houseplants, look for the tried and true, easy care, practically indestructible plants like bromeliads, peace lily, or the increasingly popular succulents. The latter need minimal watering and grooming, and just a sunny window.

Last but not least is to ask yourself what your budget will allow. Larger specimens can be pricey and if your expertise is minimal, then you might want to opt for a smaller version to gain experience on.

If you already have a collection of houseplants, get creative and group them. Be bold. Grouping your potted plants provides pockets of lush greenery in your home, creating an indoor paradise to enjoy during the cold winter months and letting you stay connected with nature. Have a merry, green holiday, and enjoy a "green" winter!

RUTH FURMAN is a Massachusetts Certified Horticulturist (MCH). She trained in horticulture in England and spent many happy years working and gardening there. To reach Ms. Furman, email her at: Ruth@wellesleywestonmagazine.com.



WellesleyWeston Magazine | winter 2017/201

# 10 tips for...

#### MARGARET BOLES FITZGERALD writer

# THOUGHTFUL CHARITABLE GIVING

We are, as a whole, a very generous citizenry, believing in and actively supporting private/ nonprofit partnerships. The voluntary act of giving (of time, talent, and treasure) is bedrock to American democracy. More, the spirit of philanthropy is not necessarily motivated, nor measured, by one's individual wealth, but instead finds its inspiration in the work being done by those with "boots on the ground."

Aside from the practical matter of donations serving as a possible tax deduction from our earned (or inherited) income, the why/where/how much one gives is a deeply personal matter, coming from the heart and the head...motivated as much by one's EQ as one's IQ.

As another calendar (and therefore tax) year comes to a close, here are a few thoughts to guide your charitable giving, whether you are dipping a toe or taking a deep dive in the waters of philanthropy-what I call "heartwork" and homework.

## One Start with a Sense of Gratitude

Whatever your position in life, almost everyone can count some blessings...no matter how unique or small. This awareness of gifts received - even amidst the challenges - will help you define personal



"wealth" with fresh awareness, potentially sparking a natural generosity to give back to others who are in the midst of real need.

## TWO Take a Mental Inventory

Do you remember where you made your first charitable donation? Can you summon up the places that made a difference in your life-or the lives of others dear to you? Do you recall supporting a nonprofit organization where you felt important (maybe even life-changing/healing) work was happening? What was it (or where was it) when you felt your heartstrings tugged-on behalf of others.

# three Listen to Your Village

Need new ideas? Fresh and relevant insights? Listen to the elders and the youngers in your life...parents, teachers, religious leaders, social activists, friends, even your children. Those in your "extended family" might have much to teach you about what matters to them...and how it could matter to you as well.

# **TOUT** Make it a Family Affair

Invite your immediate family in for a group discussion about favorite causes or charities. Together, help define what all of you think makes for a better, more humane world. As a bonus, this time will serve as an important lesson for young children on the importance of charity, beginning at home. Each of you has the capacity to lead by example.

# $\Pi Ve$ Consider Your Charitable Gifts a Social Welfare Contract

The acts of giving and receiving can be mutually beneficial. It's hard to say who gets more out of a thoughtful act of charity, but hearts and lives can be changed, going both ways.

# S1X Get Inside

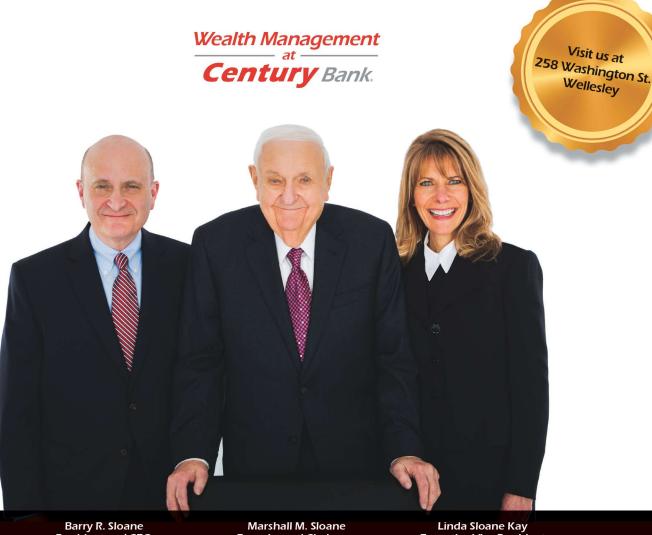
Curious about a nonprofit? Start as a volunteer and learn firsthand how the work is done, how effectively it is done,



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# 10 tips



and who is being helped. Such "field work" will only enhance your knowledge of and possible commitment to the future work of the organization. If you can't find the on-site time, take a walk through the nonprofit's website — most are inviting and instructive. Annual reports linked to the site speak to the financial solvency of a nonprofit—best to support a place that is responsible in its stewardship of charitable gifts.

#### Seven Turn the Calendar Upside Down

Consider supporting a charity on an off-season cycle. The hungry and cold need meals and clothing and shelter year-round. For example, the work of the Salvation Army continues every day of the year—not just at the holidays when you see (and maybe drop a small contribution into) the iconic red kettles at local crossroads. Summer camps for low-income children have ongoing cash flow needs when the snow is flying. Surprise (and delight and support) a nonprofit at a time of year when the planning is being done. Need knows no season.

# eight Get Specific

Give a Goat: No, Tom Brady's not for sale, but plenty of local and global community-sustaining organizations (Heifer International, for example) invite you to buy a flock of chicks (or a goat) for a farmer.

Others invite you to "sponsor" a child. Such personalized gifts can make you feel more directly connected to the community that you are strengthening. You can live out the maxim of "teaching a person to fish"—which has lasting value as a *shared* journey of building a better future.

# nine Do Your Homework

Make sure the organization you're supporting is a registered nonprofit, easily confirmed on the Internal Revenue Service or State Attorney General's Charitable Bureau websites. Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org) is an independent watchdog site that's useful for evaluating organizations to donate to. This is not to suggest that you be skeptical, but rather *thoughtful* in how your contribution will be used.

## ten Protect Yourself Against Fraud

This tip ties directly to tip nine, with an extra layer of healthy safeguarding. In these days of cyber-crime and silver-tongued scammers, you can't be too careful in knowing not only where/to whom you're talking and giving, but also to whom you might give your vital, personal data (credit cards, money/wire transfers and the like). Trust, but verify—and, if unsure, ask to have materials mailed to you first. Then visit the appropriate website for another, closer look.

In closing, charitable giving should *feel* good—balancing the scales between blessings present and needs apparent. Your support for worthy causes should settle well in both your heart and your head. A little bit of soul-searching can lead to affirming ideas. But remember, while we ponder figuring out where to give, other lives struggle. So, if you can, don't wait. Donate now!

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## Classroom Observations:

November 30 and January 19 | 8:30 -10:30 a.m. (for parents only, please register on our website)

#### Admissions Coffees: December 12 and January 9 (contact the Admissions office for details)

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Model Shown: 2016 Range Rover. "Price shown is Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price for the 20XX {vehicle\_model\_trim}. Supplies are limited. Excludes \${D&D\_charge} destination/handling charge, tax, title, license, and retailer fees, all due at signing, and optional equipment. Total Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price includes \${D&D\_charge} destination/handling charge and may include optional equipment but excludes tax, title, license, and retailer fees, all due at signing. Retailer price, terms and vehicle availability may vary. See your {dealerName} or call {legal\_telephone} for qualifications and complete details. © 2016 Jaguar Land Rover North America, LLC

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new position within the
firm. Custodie earned
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Design from the New
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University and joins

the Cutting Edge team with expertise in residential interior design with luxury boutique firms across Massachusetts. The inclusion of an interior design department builds on Cutting Edge Homes' reputation as an all inclusive boutique firm. For more information, call 508.435.1280 or visit www.ThinkCuttingEdge.com.

Dana Hall School in Wellesley is hosting the Forum at Dana Hall School, a public symposium series designed to examine a topic of particular relevance to girls and girls' education. As a leader in girls' education, Dana Hall School is well suited to lead an informative and practical discussion on topics that are timely and relevant to the parents of adolescent girls. The Forum events are held in the fall and spring, and they are free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.danahall.org. ▶ The Law Offices of Sonja Selami, P.C. held a client appreciation dinner to benefit St. Jude's Hospital. Hosted at the Elm Bank Gardens in Wellesley, the event raised over \$10,000 for the foundation. Sonja Selami has provided the Greater Boston area with quality real estate legal services for more than 10 years. Sonja and her team of skilled attorneys work closely

with homebuyers, sellers, lenders, and other real estate entities in a variety of estate transactions. Learn more at www.selamilaw.com.



▶ FLX Training of Wellesley is introducing a unique experience called FLX Recharge. The wonderful benefits of exercise come from the quality of our body's ability to recover, rebuild, and recharge. FLX Recharge is a special class to help

us release physical and mental tension, enhance mindfulness, and refocus our body's natural strength. If you are ready to recharge your mind,



body, and soul, please visit www.flxtraining.com or call 781.235.2733.

Lisa Abeles, president of Abeles & Associates Architects, Inc. and a Trustee of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, curated an inaugural sculpture



event called "Gifts from the Garden" that was held at Elm Bank in Wellesley. The gardens were symbiotically transformed, incorporating 37 intriguing sculptures by New England artists. "It was exciting to re-visit my education in art and architectural

art history, and satisfying to spend time evaluating sculptures, meeting with artists, and situating the artworks in the gardens," Abeles shared.

Drs. Femina and Ejaz Ali, and the team at Wellesley Dental Group celebrated their 20th year of delivering healthy and beautiful smiles to Wellesley and the surrounding communities. They



Longtime community leaders and Wellesley Council on Aging activists John and Dwin Schuler and Mary Bowers are being recognized as outstanding individuals for their significant contributions to the Town and to the Council on Aging over many years. Two prominent rooms at the new Tolles-Parsons Center will be named in their honor: The



John and Dwin Schuler Multi-Purpose Room and the Mary Bowers Café. The Wellesley Board of Selectmen unanimously approved this request by the New Era Fund, a program of the Friends of Wellesley Council on Aging.



left: John and Dwin Schuler right: Mary Bowers

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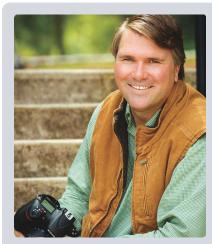
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were also awarded recognition as Boston's Top Dentists in the August 2017 edition of *Boston* magazine. They look forward to many more years of serving as smile ambassadors, especially now that their team is growing with the addition of their daughter, Dr. Zarah Ali, a general dentist, as well as a group of dedicated specialists.

▶ a Blade of Grass, a company offering a fresh perspective in landscape design, has moved to Sudbury. Heather Lashbrook Jones, MCH and her team are excited to have a new space where they can stretch their legs. The new location, at 9 Old County Road, offers a natural light design space, display gardens, and an expansive area for their vehicles and plants. Stay tuned for news of an open house and visit www.abladeof grass.com for more news.



John Harmon

Wellesley resident John Harmon of John Harmon Photography is one of 50 artists who will be displaying their work at Francesca Anderson Fine Art's 33rd Annual Almost Miniatures Show mid-November through January 13, 2018. Located in Lexington, the gallery's hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m. For more information, visit www.FAFineArt.com, email Francesca@PortraitsNorth.com, or call 781.862.0660.



time member of the Lions Club and branch manager of the **Brookline Bank** Wellesley Hills office, successfully revived the local Lions Club in July. Thanks to Mesmar's recruiting efforts, the charter already has 22 mem-

Ivette Mesmar, long-

bers and is looking to continue its growth and service in the community. For more information about the Wellesley Centennial Lions Club, call 774.245.2472 or email wellesleylionsclub@gmail.com.

Wellesley resident and architect Jan Gleysteen, AIA, was recently appointed as board member to the Wellesley Historical Commission. Gleysteen brings many years of experience in residential design and renovation to the position along

to the position along with his passion for historical architecture. For more information on his firm and their work, please visit www.JanGleysteenInc.com or call 781.431.0080.

Ian

Gleysteen

▶ Gail Lockberg, a Wellesley resident and broker at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Town and Country Real Estate has identified a need in the



marketplace for managers who care deeply about developing individuals on their team. For this reason, Gail has recently completed the Brian Buffini mentoring program and the company proudly announces that she is now a certified mentor.



Designer Bath and Salem Plumbing Supply, New England's longest-standing provider of fine fixtures, furnishings, and accessories for the bath and kitchen, recently opened a new 7,000-squarefoot showroom at 604 Pleasant Street in Watertown. Siblings, President Jason Sevinor and Showroom Brand Manager Mindy Sevinor, and the Designer Bath team bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and expansive product selection to homeowners, designers, builders, and architects in the Greater Boston area. For more information, visit www.designerbath.com.

Construction is underway on Charles River School's new middle school building, which will support the school's progressive, innovative curriculum. Project completion is anticipated this spring. To learn more about CRS, an independent school for Grades PreK-8, join them for one of their monthly Information Sessions. Contact Director of Admissions Kat Whitten at 508.785.8213 or kwhitten@charlesriverschool.org, or visit www. charlesriverschool.org. CRS will also offer new transportation options for the 2018–2019 academic year.



Kertzman & Weil, LLP announced that Amy Reich Weil, founder and managing partner, has been appointed to the Board of Advisors at North Hill, the leader in senior living communities in Massachusetts. Weil was asked to join the board because of

her close ties, both professionally and personally, to the Needham and Wellesley communities. Weil's firm provides attorney services for both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Premier Dental Group of Wellesley has moved to a new location. Now at 70 Walnut Street, Suite 102, in the Newton-Wellesley Executive Office Park in Wellesley, Premier Dental Group provides patients with a wide range of general, cosmetic, and restorative treatments to help them achieve beautiful, healthy smiles. Schedule an appointment today with Dr. Tina Wang and her team, and discover your options for achieving optimal oral health. For more information, please visit www.premierdentalgroupofwellesley.com or call 781.237.3031 to schedule an appointment.



Wellesley-based tech firm KeynectUp is excited to be moving to a new office at 30 Grove Street. Come visit! KeynectUp creates "app-less" technology to simplify the way organizations connect and communicate with their constituents. The company began

with a unique contact-saving service, but now serves as a comprehensive communication platform. KeynectUp's customers include over 90 of America's top colleges and universities, as well as auto manufacturers, professional services, recruitment companies, and more.

Jesamondo Salon & Spa is now offering a way to add a final touch of glamour before your next special event with an organic airbrushed spray tan from Aviva Labs Natural Spray Tanning products—the





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Local architect Patrick Ahearn FAIA published his first monograph, *TIMELESS*, available November 2017. *TIMELESS* reveals how Ahearn's historically motivated, human-scaled designs have advanced the art of place-making in some of America's most affluent and storied destinations including his hometown of Wellesley. Revealing the stories behind the 18 iconic houses and public environments handsomely depicted in its pages, *TIMELESS* captures Ahearn's singular vision, creative process, and deep expertise. Please visit www.patrickahearn.com for more information.



Forever Young Laser & Skin Center is now offering Microblading, one of today's top trends for creating the perfect brow. Forever Young's trained clinicians apply colored pigment to mimic hair on the eyebrow. A form of semi-permanent

makeup, the results can last up to 18 months. If you're thinking about brow enhancement that would eliminate the need to apply daily makeup, schedule an appointment by calling 781.431.2110 and visit www.frvryoung.com.

▶ JB Sash & Door recently opened a Marvin Window and Door showroom. Owners Rick and



Rick and Ron Bertoland

Ron Bertolami invite homeowners to explore their unprecedented 3,000-square-foot space where a Marvin Personalization Station acts as a giant "dream board," and Marvin pavilions exemplify creative installations that inspire new thinking. Visit www.jbsash.com/marvin for more information.



Wellesley resident Joseph Campanelli, president and chief executive officer of Needham Bank, announced a reorganization of the executive

team to further support the bank's recent growth and continued rapid influx of new customers. This included

the hiring of **Salvatore Rinaldi** to the position of chief administrative officer, and the promotions of **Eric Morse, Laura Dorfman,** and **Stephanie Maiona** to executive vice president. Needham Bank, with an office at 458 Washington Street in Wellesley, is a Member FDIC, SIF and Equal Housing Lender.



Wellesley resident and architect Jacob Lilley, AIA LEED, of Jacob Lilley Architects, Inc., was recently appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve as a board member on the Wellesley Historic Commission. The

Commission oversees the preservation and protection of the architectural, cultural, and social history



## Can we be your banker?

Goliath banks are like Goliath hamburger chains. That's the beauty of them. Sort of.

If you're hankering for the exact same medium-size fries with a shake you get in Dedham, Massachusetts, you can find it—even if you're in Topeka, Kansas.

The question you have to ask yourself is this: "What is that kind of convenience worth to you?"

And what if a David bank (such as ours) could deliver that kind of convenience in a far more personal way?

## Most people want David to win.

Not to overdo the hamburger comparison, but you probably agree there's something about Dave's local burger joint that you like: The waitress behind the counter. The cook (who is usually the owner, Dave) working away right in front of you. Your burger done the way you like it.

At Goliath you miss that experience. There's nobody to talk to. They don't say hello to you when you walk in. They don't care how you want your burger done and, even if they did, they have procedures and best practices to guarantee everybody gets the same burger—no matter what you ask for.

Going all the way back to the original David and Goliath, underdog fans have always rooted for David to win. Why?

# Because Davids are less intimidating and easier to work with.

Back to banking.

People think they need a Goliath bank because Goliaths have branches everywhere. Supposedly, this means you are never far from an ATM machine with your bank's name on it.

Think about this: if you add up all the locations of the top 10 largest banks in the United States, that would account for about 1/3 of all the ATM locations in America.

With a Needham Bank checking account, you can use your Needham Bank debit card at any of those ATMs and at any one of the bank ATMs making up the other 2/3s for FREE.

When it comes to ATM "freedom," we have as many if not more—free ATMs than any other bank, anywhere. Even if you travel overseas.

The other thing people often think is that Goliaths have the kind of clout that makes it easier to get loans at a favorable interest rate. Huge amounts of money, tons of banking transactions ...it all makes sense.

Only it's not true.



## Davids look at the person as a person.

When you apply for a mortgage or a small business loan at Needham Bank, you most often talk to someone who actually has the authority to approve it. This is good because the loan begins on friendlier terms and is more likely to continue that way.

Not always, but often, we can provide a better rate on a loan than the Goliaths. (This, by the way, is true of most smaller banks...not just ours.) It's also the case that Needham frequently offers higher interests rates on money market accounts.

Needham is also the kind of place where you can bring your problems and not have someone ignore or confuse you. Suppose you mistakenly overdraw your checking account. That's something we can work with you on. Or suppose we make a mistake—not entirely beyond the realm of possibility we will work quickly and apologetically to remedy it.

## The two questions you should always ask:

# A.) Do you care to do business with Goliath?B.) Does Goliath care to do business with you?

Yes. We want to be your banker. We care about doing a good job for you. We can say that and demonstrate it with more certainty than, we believe, the Goliaths can.

More than anything, there's an element of humanity that comes along with a relationship here at Needham. Basically, people like us because we like them.

In banking, that can make all the difference.

## Can we be your banker?



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# Classroom Visit Days

Fridays at 9:00 am December 1, 2017 January 5, 2018 February 9, 2018





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of the town. The Board also reviews all demolition permits for tear-downs that meet the town's new bylaw criteria.



A.J. Rose Carpets & Flooring is excited to announce the 2017 winner of the Dream Room Makeover: Scott Morin. Morin's "before" photo received more online votes than any of the other contestant's in this year's contest. Stay

tuned for an "after" photo once his Dream Room is complete. A.J. Rose is Greater Boston's go-to flooring expert. Visit one of their convenient locations: Burlington, Natick, or Saugus and online at www.ajrosecarpets.com.

Pine Straw is ready for the holiday season. New this year, you'll find fresh flowers and centerpieces for your holiday tables. Be sure to stop by for festive holiday events including the Holiday Stroll, complete with giveaways, Prosecco, and cheeses from Wasik's. And don't miss the Chan Luu Pop Up on December 5 where you'll find lots of fabulous gifts for those on your holiday list. Visit Pine Straw in Wellesley at 466 Washington Street and online at www.livegivepinestraw.com.



Courtney Tritta of Courtney Tritta Beauty, located at 471 Washington Street in Wellesley, is celebrating one year in Wellesley. Nicknamed the "Brazilian Wax Queen" because of a technique she has perfected over the past 10 years, Tritta is able to quickly and painlessly remove unwanted hair. She is also a brow expert and now offers microdermabrasion. Tritta uses Eminence Organics skin care products that are chemical-free and suitable for most complexions. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 401.369.2982 or email info@courtneytritta.com.

Amy Mizner and Shery! Simon

Benoit Mizner Simon & Co. announced that principals Amy Mizner and Sheryl Simon were once again honored by REAL Trends, a trusted source of news, analysis, and information on the residential brokerage industry since 1987. The Mizner Simon Team's transaction volume

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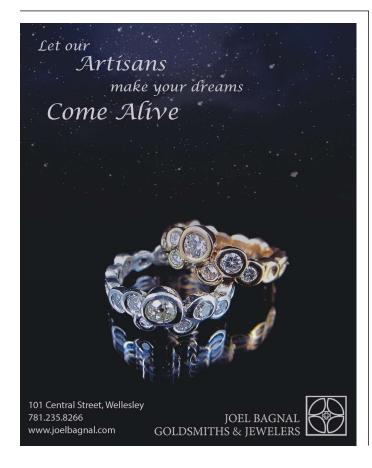
exceeded \$115 million, ranking them #203 of the top 250 RE teams in the nation. In Massachusetts, the Mizner Simon Team ranks #4 in total sales volume. In addition, Sheryl Simon was selected as one of Banker & Tradesman's 2017 Women of FIRE (Finance, Insurance and Real Estate).



Darby Road HOME will be hosting its annual Interior Designer Luncheon on November 30 to celebrate the end of another successful year. In an effort to continue its support of the Alzheimer's Innovation Fund, one of Brigham and Women's Hospital's cutting edge researchers will lead a discussion on the current landscape of early prevention of Alzheimer's disease that can affect someone we know. For more information please call 781.899.6900.

Dedham Country Day School (DCD), an inde-

pendent coeducational day school for children Pre-K through Grade 8, invites parents to come see the school in action during our Classroom Observation days on November 30 and January 19 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. (Registration on



our website is required.) Also, check our website at www.dedhamcountryday.org for dates and times of our Off-Campus Admissions Coffees. DCD is located minutes from the intersection of Routes 128 and 109.



Don't miss **TROVE's** annual Ray Griffiths Jewelry Trunk Show on Thursday, December 7, from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with champagne; Friday, December 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; and Saturday, December 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The renowned designer will bring an extensive collection of jewelry using his intricate 18-karat gold crown work setting of gemstones, diamonds, and pearls. TROVE, located at 542 Boston Post Road in Weston, features fine jewelry, handbags, accessories, home furnishings, gifts, and other luxuries from around the globe.

Krauss Dermatology welcomes Dr. Suzanne Mosher, Mohs surgeon, to the practice. Dr. Mosher is board certified in dermatology and specializes in removal of non-melanoma skin cancer and melanoma. She and the team at Krauss Dermatology understand that skin cancer surgery, particularly on your face, can be intimidating. Dr. Mosher is an expert surgical oncologist whose reassuring manner and superb surgical skills can calm even the most anxious of patients. For more information, call 781.416.3500 in Wellesley or email cosmetics@kraussderm.com.

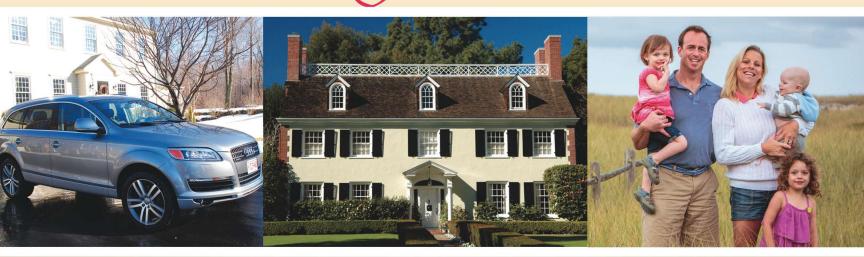


> Engel & Völkers Wellesley recently celebrated its grand opening at One Abbott Street in Wellesley Square. Engel & Völkers Wellesley is one of the newest shops in the residential real estate division of Engel & Völkers AG founded in



left to right: Peter Ianos, Denise Williams, Dean Poritzky, Nolan Tierce, Emme Punches, Kevin Balboni, Paige McVay, Sharon Mendosa, Anthony Hitt www.chinsurance.com

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1977 with world headquarters in Hamburg, Germany. As part of the opening celebration, the firm donated \$1,000 to the local Massachusetts chapter of Special Olympics to help advance the Play Unified campaign and Engel & Völkers' own effort to help create more respectful communities. Building another bridge from medicine to dentistry, ARID Newton-Wellesley Dental Specialty Group is the first dental clinic in the U.S. to introduce Digital aMMP-8 Biomarker Diagnostics. This tool strengthens preventive services by implementing early detection and prevention of oral inflammation

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leading to advanced gum disease, periodontal disease, and peri-implant inflammation. **Dr. Touradj Ameli** is a member of the Federal Association of Dentists (BZÄK) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Prävention und Anti-Aging Medizin. For more information,



call 781.237.1190 or email info@aridnw.com.

Katherine MacDonald, president and executive director of the Massachusetts Horticultural



Society, announced that the 8th Annual Festival of Trees and Snow Village will take place November 24 to December 10, 2017. Featuring over 70 beautifully decorated trees, Santa, horse drawn wagon rides through Elm Bank, and the magical Snow

Village and Trains, it's a holiday family event for all to enjoy. Check out www.Masshort.org/festival-of-trees for a detailed schedule.

Mortgage Equity Partners announced that Amy Tierce has accepted the position of vice president of sales and marketing. Tierce has a lengthy and celebrated career in the mortgage banking



industry spanning more than 30 years and has held leadership and governance positions at the Massachusetts Mortgage Bankers Association. In her new role, Tierce will be responsible for the look and feel of Mortgage Equity

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Partners and will be the mentor and manager of their sales and marketing teams.

Laurie Gorelick, the principal designer of Laurie Gorelick Interiors, a full-service interior design studio for residential and commercial spaces, was thrilled to participate in the Junior League of Boston's recent 2017 Designer Show House, held at the 1852 William Flagg Homer House in Belmont. Gorelick joined 20 other designers who donated their time and materials to demonstrate their talents while still maintaining the property's original character. The Show House is a charitable event to benefit community programs. For more information, visit www.JLBoston.org.



Deborah A. Katz if pleased to announce that Attorney Daniel J. Shanahan has joined Katz Legal Group, LLC as Of Counsel. Shanahan has spent 17 years focusing on litigation. He has been a faculty member and contributor to legal education programs

**BETH FURMAN** 

sponsored by MCLE and the National Business Institute. His extensive experience at both the trial court and appellate level will be an excellent addition to the office. Attorney Shanahan is looking forward to working with the firm and providing Wellesley residents with exceptional legal services.

Pam Kubbins, Wellesley-based entrepreneur and owner of Pam's Pashminas, is excited to



debut her 2018 Spring Scarf Collection. The new collection is online at www.pamspashminas.com and will be featured at the upcoming Boston Flower Show at the Seaport World Trade Center. Pam will be celebrating her 10th year at the Flower



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Show and always looks forward to seeing her wonderful customers there.

▶ Dr. William LoVerme and his team, at Accurate Aesthetics Plastic Surgery, P.C., are happy to announce that their practice has been named a Center of Excellence for BTL Exilis™ and BLT Vanquish™. Exilis is for patients who are seeking to reduce wrinkles and have a more youthful looking face and body without undergoing the knife. Vanquish Fat Removal has no downtime, is a FDA-cleared non-invasive treatment, and is easier than Cool Sculpt. You can lose two to four inches. For more information, call 781.263.0011 and visit www.AccurateAesthetics.com.



Charlie White and Jenn Shotkus

Owned and managed by Weston residents Linda and Stan Shotkus for 39 years before closing last spring, Lyn Evans celebrated a Grand Re-Opening shopping event this fall at its three locations in Norwell, Concord, and New Canaan, CT. South Shore resident Charlie White has invested in the brand and reopened the business. Helping preserve her family's legacy is Jenn Shotkus, the daughter of Linda and Stan, who is serving as buyer for Lyn Evans. To learn more, read "Carrying On" in the Business department on page 122 in this issue. The Wellesley Mothers Forum announced the start of the 2017–2018 membership year at a kickoff event held in the fall at the Wellesley College Club. Co-Presidents Kim Markelewicz and Sita Merchea are leading

the organization this year, with 65 dedicated volunteers. The new board of directors and committee volunteers are proud to provide opportunities for over 500 local mothers to come together with the goal of establishing a long-term support network. Membership is open to residents

www.wellesleymothersforum.com.

of Wellesley and surrounding towns. Visit



Eleni Kaplan is highlighted in the 2018 Boston Design Guide feature "Breaking Ground." Eleni, daughter of Marc Kaplan of Sanford Custom Builders, is a third generation builder and owner of E.K. Sanford Builders. Her custom home construction

company excels in crafting thoughtfully designed homes with finely executed details and skillfully works within the allocated budget and timeframe. Eleni can be reached at eleni@sanfordcustom.com.

Former longtime Wellesley residents Mark and Gwenn Snider, co-owners of The Nantucket Hotel, invite you to spend the holidays at their award-win-



ning hotel that was named the #1 Hotel in the United States by *TripAdvisor.* Stay for Thanksgiving and enjoy a traditional buffet feast, experience the famous Christmas Stroll, or celebrate 2018 at their Gala New Year's Eve Snow Ball with an orchestra



and champagne. This year's theme is "A Winter Wonderland." Visit www.thenantuckethotel.com for more information.

▶ MassBay Community College is pleased to announce that Governor Charlie Baker has reap-



pointed longtime Wellesley resident **Thomas E. Peisch** as Chair of the College's Board of Trustees. Peisch has served on the MassBay Board of Trustees since his appointment by former Governor Deval Patrick in July 2012. In November of 2012,

he was elected to Vice Chair, and Governor Baker appointed Peisch as Chairman of the Board of Trustees in November, 2015. He is a founder of Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch & Ford, LLP.



This year, Whitla Brothers Builders celebrates its 30th anniversary. Founded by Wellesley natives Stuart and Douglas Whitla, the company specializes in custom residential construction in both the Wellesley/ Weston area and Chatham. Since

Stuart's passing in 2007, Douglas has carried on the brothers' guiding principles of infusing passion, excellence, integrity, and fun into every Whitla Brothers project. For more information, visit www.whitlabrothers.com or call 508.359.4292.



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▶ The Wellesley Historical Society is pleased to announce its new Treasurer and Board Member, Maria Bunker. Maria is a partner with Livingston & Haynes in Wellesley, and works with clients in a range of diverse industries including nonprofit organizations. Maria is a CPA who received a Master of Science in Accounting from Bentley University. She brings valuable financial expertise that will be important to the Board and the membership as it continues to grow.

PLEASE SEND YOUR INTERESTING NEWS ITEMS to jill@wellesleywestonmagazine.com. E-mail submissions only please; jpeg photos are welcome at 300dpi.



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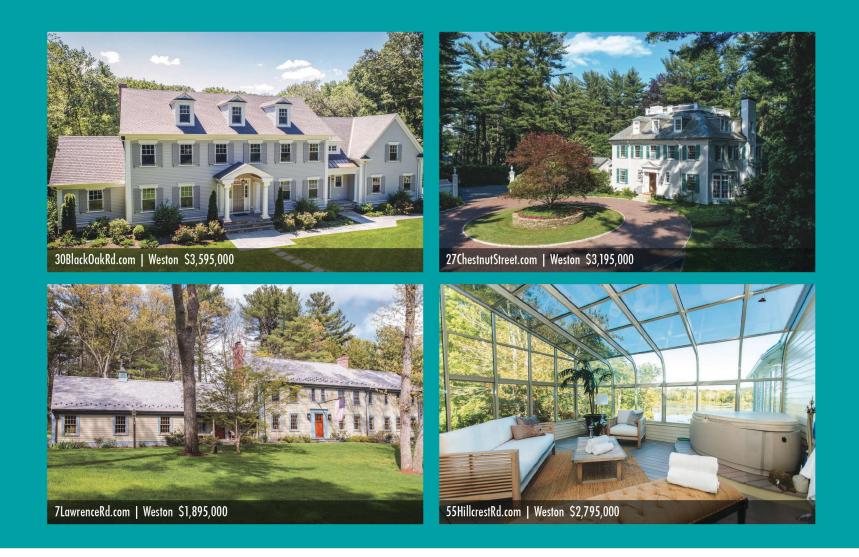
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# [forum]

# Behind the Surge of Wellesley's 40Bs

in the summer of 2017, a quiet neighborhood in the heart of the Sprague School District became the unlikely battleground for Wellesley's 40B crisis.

Residents of the double cul-de-sac formed by Stearns and Francis roads had enjoyed the ultimate quiet lifestyle and protection of single-family zoning for over a hundred years. Its nurturing streets celebrated every spring with the sounds of training wheels, basketballs, and spontaneous, happy shrieks from children darting between yards. Septembers brought early migrations of backpacked kids down Stearns to the Sprague School path while the older ones headed north on Francis toward Wellesley Middle School.

But the laws of opportunism, affordable mandates, and politics conspired to end its century of serenity. Two properties, separated by just 70 yards, suddenly fell into the hands of a developer who saw an opportunity to exponentially increase his profit margin by initiating hostile 40B projects on both. If backed by the state, the proposed buildings—one four stories and one five—would almost quadruple the size of the neighborhood with 56 new residences on just two parcels.

Sadly, the developer's move proved to be the beginning of a trend. By the end of the summer, the town was managing an unprecedented total of eight hostile 40B projects.

#### What's Chapter 40B?

If you're wondering how this could happen in Wellesley, here are the 40B basics. Massachusetts requires all cities and towns to have one of the following:

- ten percent of its available housing stock qualify as "affordable"
- an approved Housing Production Plan, with a 0.5 percent increase each year (until it reaches 10 percent)

If a town has one or both, it is awarded "safe harbor" from state-enforced 40B projects. Since Wellesley has neither, developers can apply for a 40B permit on any single-family lot.

A 40B permit can allow developers to override zoning laws and build large-scale projects that break the local height, density, and setback restrictions—as long as 20 percent of the units qualify as affordable. Without safe harbor, the state can enforce the proposal regardless of the town's stance. Even on singlefamily lots in residential neighborhoods.

Most often, when municipalities don't align with the state on affordable housing requirements, the battle plays out on the streets with residents pitted against developers. In Wellesley, it has seldom happened in small family-focused pocket neighborhoods surrounding elementary schools. But all things considered, the sudden shift in developer tactics should not have been a surprise.

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40 Grove Street, Wellesley, MA 02482 781-705-6030 | sselami@selamilaw.com | selamilaw.com 2007 that made Wellesley abandon its first Housing Production Plan. Since then, escalating home values have caused hundreds of emptynesters to sell directly to developers, avoiding real estate commissions and expensive repair issues. But recently, after a long run of fast and easy flipping (614 teardowns since 2007), developers have seen higher-priced construction sales slow and bylaws become less favorable, most notably the Historic Preservation Demolition Review bylaw that prevents immediate teardowns of houses built before 1949.

It was a matter of time before a few single-family "craftsman" home builders opted to reinvent themselves, targeting the town's weak spot by exploiting the state's affordable housing.

#### We, the Neighbors...

Adversity brings out strength in people and, in this case, the best kind. Not long after the shock of the building proposals had sunk in, I recall going to one of our early neighborhood meetings expecting a heavy dose of anger and legal strategy. Instead, I witnessed passionate exchanges of ideas about the larger issues surrounding affordable housing in our town and how we could make it work better for everyone involved—future residents, current residents, the town, state, and friendly developers. It turns out that we were all strong supporters of affordable housing, *unless* the only beneficiary happens to be a profit-seeking developer with an out-of-scale proposal.

We continued learning about 40B, town government, and of course our own looming predicament in the weeks and months that followed. But to the credit of the neighbors, discussions about our collective vision for the town's affordable future became more frequent and sophisticated. On a tactical level, some naturally took to researching Housing Production Plans and fighting for our town's independence. Others began seeking win/win opportunities with other town groups and set out to connect the dots. We wanted to be constructive on a grass roots level and worked to define our mission:

- Make the town more affordable to a diversely young population.
- Keep empty nesters from leaving out of necessity.

- Enable more town employees to live in the community they serve.
- Identify land for affordable development and seek consensus.
- Align our mission with groups dedicated to school capacity or tax-base issues.
- Enlist friendly builders to construct housing that respectfully integrates new residents with the community.

In September, we officially launched *Our* Affordable Wellesley—a forum dedicated to helping the community construct a brighter "affordable future." The website and outreach efforts are dedicated to educating residents on affordable housing topics and our Facebook community encourages the open sharing of facts, ideas, and opinions. The "*Our*" in our name refers to the entire Wellesley community, but also includes developers who have a sincere interest in helping us build affordable housing that respects people and nurtures healthy integration.

We have had a lot of help along the way and are particularly grateful for for the guidance of our town officials. Multiple boards are now working together to produce a Housing Production Plan that will hopefully provide safe harbor from future 40Bs sometime in 2018. We have also benefitted greatly from the knowledge and experiences of organized groups in other towns that have faced un-thoughtful 40Bs. If our work, in turn, can help residents of other towns take control of their affordable futures, we'd be honored. There's no reason it couldn't be *Our* Affordable (Anywhere)!

Two final words of advice to members of any neighborhood that is without safe harbor from 40B: 1) reach out to your town officials to better understand anticipated activity in your area and the town's efforts to reach Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) requirements, and 2) get a sense of the long-term plans for the properties around you and how they may eventually be sold. A well-planned, internal strategy that

guides them into friendly hands could protect the sanctity of your neighborhood today and in the years to come.

**PETE BUHLER** is the spokesperson and a founding member of *Our* Affordable Wellesley.

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# Source States St

when it comes to real estate developers in Wellesley, it's safe to say no one is more eclectic than William Meagher.

Downton Abbey, Fenway Park, Santa's Workshop, Buckingham Palace — those are just a sampling of the 325 buildings that Meagher has managed to sneak into a corner of town without a single visit to the Board of Appeals. That's not to mention five train lines, a trolley, and aerial gondolas.

But then Meagher's neighborhood, like Brigadoon, is not on the map and makes only limited appearances. And with most buildings under one foot in height, they all fit into a single room.

Snow Village has been part of the Festival of Trees at Elm Bank Reservation since 2014. Some 9,000 visitors trooped through the village last year, triple the number the first year.

"It has really made a difference in our festival," says Katherine Macdonald, executive director of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, which is headquartered at the Gardens at Elm Bank. The holiday festival, which also includes scores of decorated trees, wagon rides, and Santa, is Mass Hort's biggest annual fundraiser. This year's festival runs November 24 to December 10. Snow Village itself is open weekends to everyone and weekdays for group visits.

While Meagher, 79, pours his heart, time, and not an inconsiderable amount of money into the miniature buildings, people, and landscape of Snow Village, it is the trains that he is known for.

"Everybody refers to me as the 'train guy.' They give more headaches than anything," he says, with his ready laugh. What he loves is recreating the magic of Christmases past, including his own as a child in Rhode Island.

Snow Village is spread out over two large tables. Stand between them and close your eyes; it sounds as if you're in the middle of a rushing stream. The longest train route travels through a mountain tunnel; past a ski resort; and alongside a village with a vintage MacDonald's, a classic diner, and an old-fashioned Main Street. It then swings by the North Pole, where Santa sits at his desk making out his list with a swaying quill pen.

While children race back and forth to keep up with the trains, their parents and grandparents peek inside the illuminated buildings. In Downton Abbey, dancers whirl about in ballrooms. Shoppers ride an escalator in Kringle's

STEVE MAAS writer PETER BAKER photographer

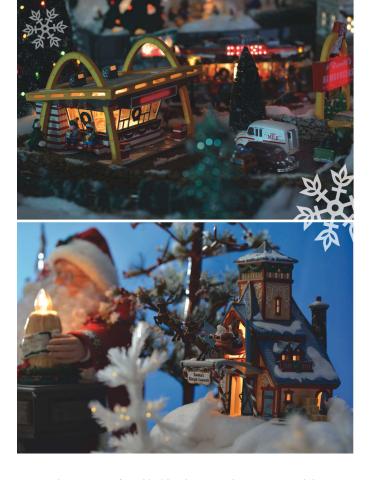
#### **Snow Village**

Department Store. Located in an amusement park, a theater cycles through six scenes of *The Nutcracker*, the ballerinas and sets changing with each. The Tchaikovsky score competes with carnival rides playing "The 12 Days of Christmas" and other carols.

The ceramic buildings come fully assembled, often with lights and mechanical figures. Most are manufactured by Minnesota-based Department 56 (visit its website to find out how it got its name). They come in a variety of sets, such as New England Village, North Pole, and Dickens' Village.

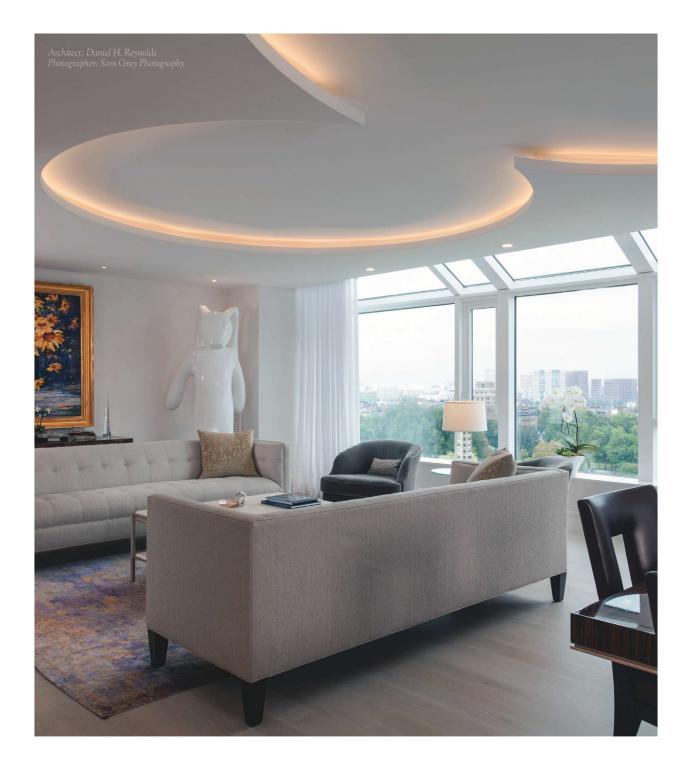
Fenway Park is a hodgepodge: the façade and lights (originally for a football stadium) come from Department 56; the stands and bullpen from LEGO; and the field and players from OYO Sportstoys, Inc. in Ayer. Meagher's wife, Ellen, painted the scoreboard, which shows the Red Sox tied 0-0 with the Yankees.

A long home run away from Fenway is a reproduction of an Italianate garden, complete with fountain, designed by the Olmsted Brothers a century ago. The real-life garden is just a stroll away, stretching out from Elm Bank's signature Manor House. Mass Hort hopes to restore the mansion to its Gilded Age glory and may commission a miniature one for Snow Village.



Meagher scours gift and hobby shops, garden centers, and the internet for accessories such as pedestrians, cars, benches, fences, trees, boat docks, and even replica advertising, such as the Citgo sign he found for Fenway Park.

He has his eyes on electric automobiles manufactured by a German company. They could travel the streets powered by a concealed track,



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but Snow Villagers would have to pass a huge tax override to pay for them. "One car costs like \$350, and you have to have a lot of cars running to make it realistic," Meagher says.

Meagher has fashioned much of the scenery himself. The mountains consist of wood frames covered by Styrofoam. He used a hot knife to carve out cliffs and create granite steps and stone walls. Meagher recreated the iced-over ponds of his youth by heating up a gel mixture—sold for artificial flowers—that cools into a water-like surface. He made snow from stretchable cotton originally intended for wrapping the legs of injured horses.

No schematic exists of Snow Village, except in Meagher's head. He says he's always thinking about how he could enhance the setup by adding more accessories or rearranging the layout. He was perplexed for days over how to transition from mountains to a town in one corner of his setup. The solution: a winter playground boasting skating ponds and ski slopes.



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Strollers, dancers, and skaters move in circuits propelled by magnets attached to hidden pulley systems. All those moving parts, combined with hundreds of tiny lights, were originally wired to dozens of extension cords. Retired Raytheon software engineer Gretel Anspach, a certified master gardener and until recently a Mass Hort Trustee, tamed the tangle by installing a series of power strips. She also rigged up a remote-control system for operating the trains and other parts of the village. "It wasn't rocket science," Anspach says, but it took many hours of painstaking work.

Meagher has also enlisted the help of retired business investor Ray Dutcher of Wellesley. "I've always torn cars apart and fixed and built things," Dutcher says. When Meagher moves buildings around, he pokes wires through the board so Dutcher can attach them to the strips below.

When they don't supervise the display in person, either Meagher or Dutcher are on call. Running ten hours a day, locomotives occasionally need to be swapped out. When parents lift their toddlers for a closer look, their children's tiny fingers sometimes knock gravel onto the roadbed, inadvertently causing derailments.



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Last year's big headache was a climbing Santa. The big guy was supposed to go up and down a ladder, presumably to help trim a tree. The problem was that he got stuck at the top. It wasn't a case of arthritic knees, but of wobbly arms. His hands no longer triggered the switch that would reverse his movement. With a little orthopedic surgery, Drs. Meagher and Dutcher put Santa in working order.

\* \* \*

Growing up in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Meagher reveled in Christmas, but never woke to a railroad zooming around the family tree. "I must have been a naughty boy," he says. "I asked for trains a few Christmases." A great uncle, though, had turned his three-room apartment into one giant train set. A carpenter, he constructed his own wooden buildings and lighted them with candles. "It's a wonder he didn't burn the house down," Meagher says.

Decades later, in 1995, Meagher, then managing partner of Arthur Andersen in Boston, was spending his lunch hour in Faneuil Hall. He noticed a store display that would change the course of his life: a Department 56 village. "When I saw the houses, it just brought back memories of my great uncle and my mother, who loved Christmas," he says, adding that his uncle "wouldn't be too happy that I didn't build them individually."

Was Meagher at last releasing his inner whimsical side after years combing through corporate spreadsheets? "Maybe," he says. "It's been a wonderful hobby."

# Santa's Village By the Numbers

325 buildings 25 8 small illuminated wooded

mountains

ng trains

2 Santas, one seated and

one climbing

1 trolley

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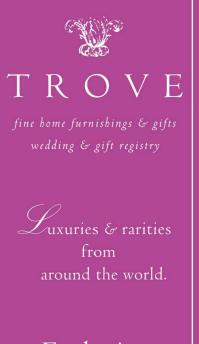
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He started out with a Christmas display of four houses at his home in Needham. Before when he traveled, he'd sit outside reading when his wife went shopping. "Once I got into this, you couldn't keep me out of gift shops," he says.

He decided that O Gauge trains (a 1:48 scale ratio) would work best with his model buildings. "I went into downtown Needham and watched the train come through and compared it with the size of the buildings," he says.

Meagher took early retirement when he was 60 to care for his first wife, Patricia, as she battled cancer. In his free time, he transferred his burgeoning collection of model houses to a barn next to his house. "The first year it took up maybe a third of the first floor of the barn, the next year another third and then another third," eventually expanding to the second floor, he says.

The hobby "was wonderful therapy," he says, helping him get through the loss of his wife in 2002. It's also been a treat for his friends and family—among them his five children and eleven grandchildren, six of whom are under age five.

In 2006, Meagher married Ellen Quinn, a longtime Wellesley resident who had been active in the horticultural society. It was her idea to move the collection to Elm Bank.

While everyone gasps with amazement at their first sight of Snow Village, Meagher says the most devoted fans are on the ends of the age spectrum: ages three to eight and the senior set. Special times are set aside during the week for groups of seniors to visit.

Meagher's favorite story about the village took place when it was still in his barn and a dozen residents of a Framingham seniors' home visited. When the first six returned from touring the loft, they were so excited that two people who hadn't tackled stairs in years insisted on trying to climb up, too. They succeeded.

"It just shows you when you really want to do something, what you'll do," says Meagher. Sounds like that could apply to Snow Village and its creator, too.

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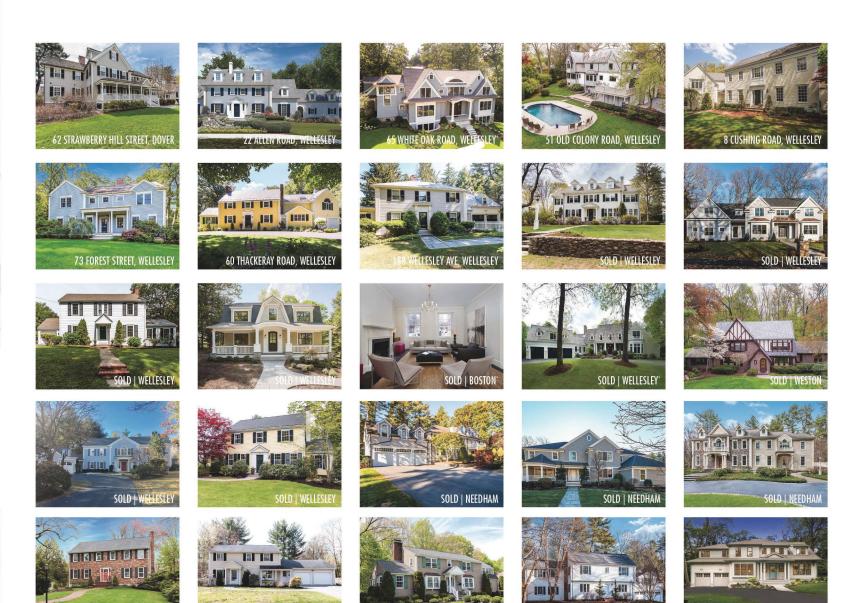
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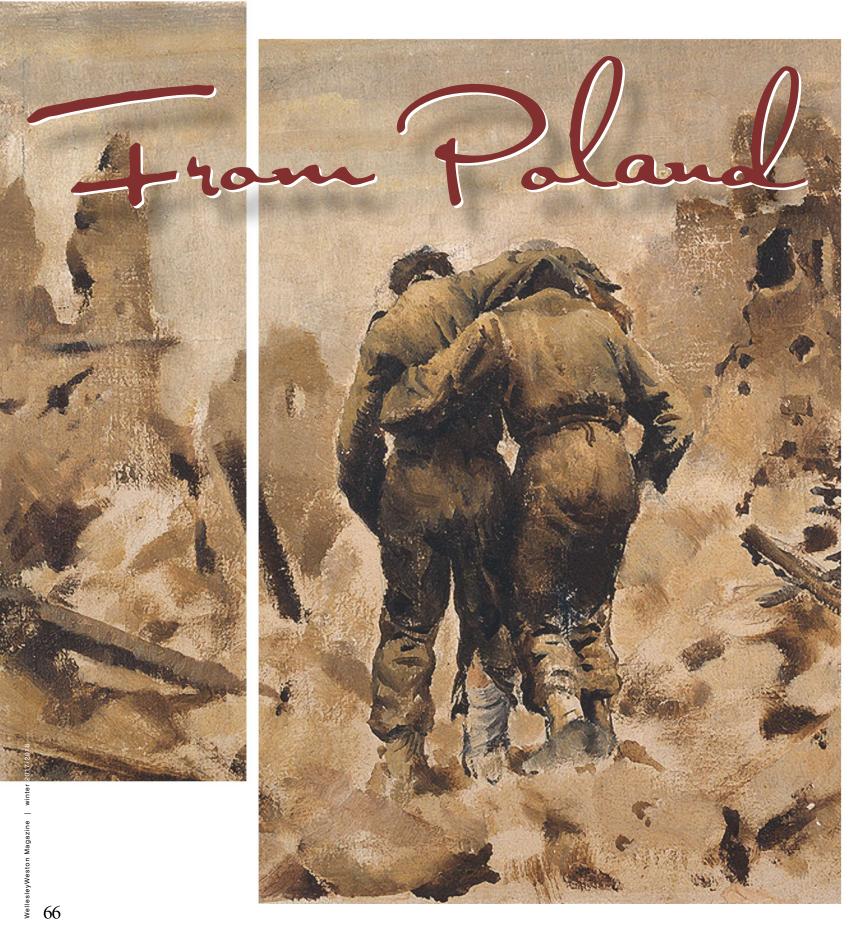
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#### It is a Small World

INTYRE.

Two women living in Wellesley are introduced by a mutual friend. The first is a British-born daughter of a Polish war hero and the widow of a highly decorated Vietnam vet, and the second, an American-born daughter of a Pole who courageously fled Poland to escape the Nazis and later fought for the Allies. Chance has it that both women's fathers fought in the Polish 2nd Corps, the Polish division of the British army know as the "Anders' Army." It was composed of Polish troops in exile who were given the mission to break through German lines in order to open the path for American troops in Italy during World War II.

Meet Anna Maria Anders Costa, daughter of the esteemed General Władysław Anders. General Anders was born in 1892 in an area 60 miles west of Warsaw that was then a part of the Russian Empire. He pursued a military education and had an illustrious military career. Anna Maria's father served in the Imperial Russian Army during World War I, joined the newly independent Polish army in 1918, fought in the Polish-Soviet War, and led a brigade against the Germans who invaded Poland in 1939. Then after learning about the Soviet invasion of Poland, he traveled south toward the city of Lwów, en route to the Hungarian/Romanian border, where he was captured by the Soviets and subsequently jailed in the Lubyanka prison in Moscow.

Released from captivity to fight against Germany when it became Poland and the USSR's common enemy, General Anders was allowed to form a Polish army comprised of Polish political prisoners freed from Siberia. That army, named the "Polish 2nd Corps," was permitted

67



ANZIO - CASSINO AREA, 1943 ATTEMPTS TO CROSS RAPIDO AND ARIGLIANO RIVERS, 17-20 JANUARY 1944. ANZIO LANDING, 22 JANUARY 1944. ~ ERMAN COUNTERATTACK AT ANZIO, 16-19 FEBRUARY 1944.



TENTH

80

top: General Władysław Anders bottom: The Polish 2nd Corps background: Map of the Anzio/Cassino area in Italy in 1943. Anzio is where the American troops landed to fight the Nazis in Italy.

to leave the Soviet Union for the Middle East, and then, went on to fight in Italy as part of the British 8th Army.

General Anders led his victorious army in pivotal battles in Italy, the most famous of which was the Battle of Monte Cassino. After World War II ended, the Soviet-installed communist government of Poland deprived Anders of his Polish citizenship and his military rank. He

resettled in Britain where he was a prominent member of the Polish Government-in-Exile. He lived in exile until 1970, and, according to his wishes, was buried in the Polish War Cemetery in Monte Cassino amongst his fallen soldiers. After the collapse of communist rule in Poland in 1989, the Polish government reinstated his citizenship and military rank posthumously.

Now meet Jessica Bussgang Rosenbloom, whose father, Julian Bussgang, is a Holocaust survivor and Polish refugee. Julian Bussgang was born in 1925 in Lwów, Poland into an assimilated Jewish family that fled for Romania two weeks after the Nazis invaded their homeland in September 1939. Fearful for their safety once again, the Bussgang family left Romania and settled in Palestine in 1940. Jessica's father graduated from a high school for Polish refugees in Tel Aviv, and, instead of continuing his studies, he volunteered, at age 18, to join the Anders' Army. He trained to drive tanks in the desert near the Suez Canal, then entered into an accelerated officers school and earned the rank of cadet-officer. About 4,000 Jewish soldiers went with Anders from the USSR to Palestine. About one thousand remained in the Anders' Army and fought in Italy. The other 3,000 stayed in Palestine, including Menachem Begin, who became the sixth Prime Minister of

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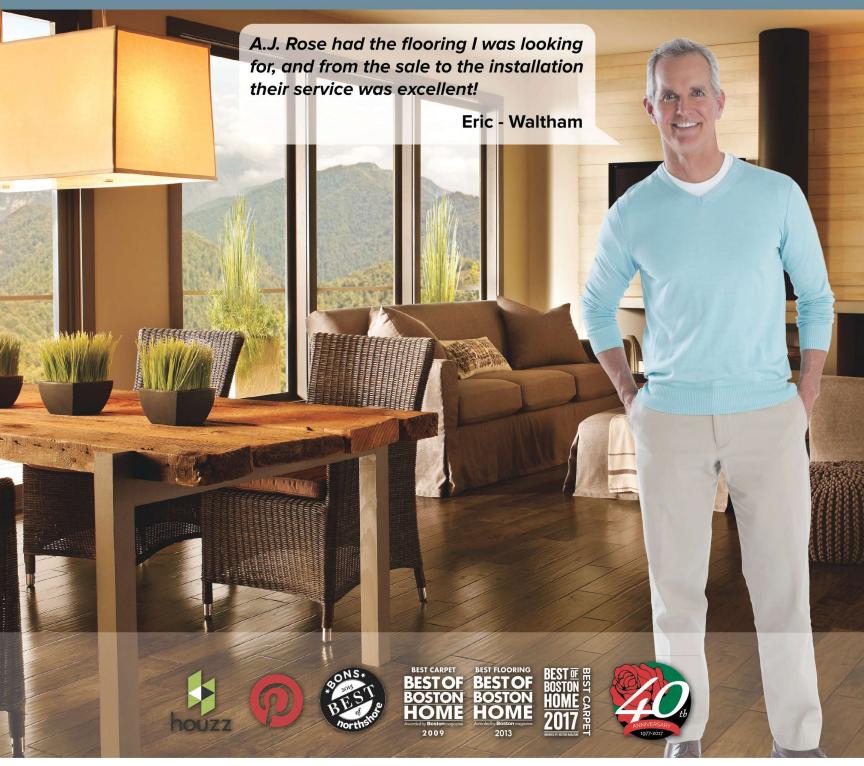
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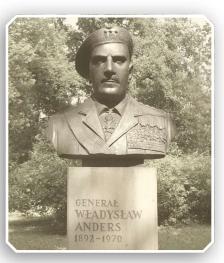
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**above**: Monte Cassino Abbey as seen from the Polish Military Cemetery; **right**: Pomnik General Władysława Anders in Park Jordana, Kraków, Poland; **below:** Anna Maria Anders Costa speaking at the Monte Cassino Polish Cemetery. Each cross marks an individual Polish military Catholic grave

#### From Poland With Honor



from Harvard. Today, he is a retired CEO of Signatron, an electronics firm he founded in 1962 and sold in 1984.

for the independence of Israel and others joined the Jewish Brigade to fight the Nazis in Europe.

Israel. Some of the Jewish soldiers who remained in Palestine fought

Bussgang fought in the momentous battles at Monte Cassino, Ancona, and Bologna under the ultimate command of General Anders, a man for whom he has the highest respect. When the war ended in 1945, Bussgang was first assigned to the British transit camp in Italy, using his English language skills to help former prisoners return home to countries across Europe.

Later, Bussgang and fellow soldiers enrolled in Italian universities to continue their studies. After the evacuation of Polish soldiers to Britain, Bussgang continued his undergraduate education in England rather than return to Poland, since his hometown of Lwów had been annexed to the Soviet Union and he had learned about the brutal Russian labor camps where many Poles had been deported during the war. In 1949, Bussgang immigrated to the United States and earned his master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and his Ph.D.

#### Fast-forward 72 Years

Anna Maria Anders Costa, now a member of the Polish government, as well as Julian and Fay Bussgang, their daughter Jessica, and granddaughter, Raquel all traveled to Italy in May of 2017 to take part in the 73rd anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino. The battle was a decisive but bloody one that enabled the United States army that had landed in Anzio, to break through to Rome, resulting in victory over the Germans.

The Office of Veterans' Affairs in Warsaw had invited all surviving Anders' Army soldiers to Italy to attend a series of ceremonies honoring the courageous fallen soldiers. "In years past, the Polish government organized memorial events every five years, but now that there are fewer and fewer surviving veterans, they host every year," explains Julian, who, at 92 years old, was one of the younger veterans in attendance.





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Julian and a small cadre of fellow veterans from Europe, Argentina, Canada, and the United States were joined by a large Polish government delegation, including Anna Maria Anders. Ever since the 2010 death of her mother, Irena Renata Anders, she has assumed her mother's mantle representing Poles in exile and the Polish 2nd Corps. In addition, Anna Maria currently holds the positions of Polish Senator for the country's eastern flank as well as Secretary of State for International Dialogue for Poland's Prime Minister, Beata Szydlo. "Not only did Anna Maria speak fluently and eloquently in Polish, Italian, and English at the ceremonies, but also it was extremely meaningful for our family, given our connection to Anna Maria from Wellesley and to her

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**above:** The veterans with their families and Polish government dignitaries visiting the Vatican where Pope John Paul II is buried; **right:** Julian Bussgang and fellow soldiers who took part in the Battle of Bologna received "Defenders of the Fatherland" medals at the Polish Cemetery in San Lazzaro, near Bologna, Italy; **below:** Julian Bussgang and Anna Maria Anders Costa at the Polish Cemetery at Monte Cassino, Italy

late father, who my father revered," recounts Jessica, speaking about the woman she met several years ago over lunch in Wellesley who now spends most of her time in Poland and on official Polish business around the world.





Jessica grew up hearing her dad tell stories about fighting in the Anders' Army and had always wanted to see where he and his fellow soldiers had broken the German line. She was surprised by how lush and green the land around Monte Cassino looks today, a sharp contrast to the barren terrain devastated by bombs that her father described to her. "My father endured rugged, primitive conditions as a soldier because he understood deeply how important it was to defeat the Nazis. When he was fighting in Italy, he learned that his relatives who remained in Poland had already been mercilessly killed," explains Jessica.

Today, the Polish military cemetery in Monte Cassino located at the foot of the historic hilltop abbey, rebuilt after the war,

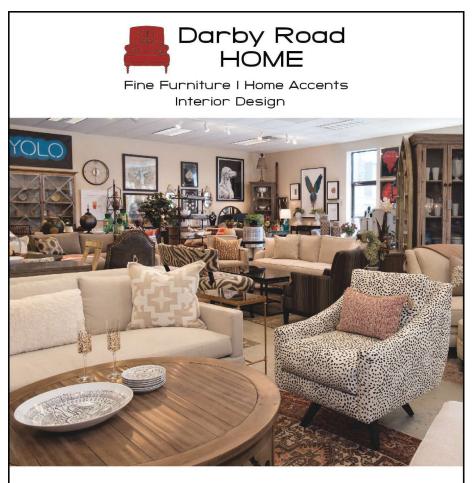


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#### From Poland With Honor

includes more than 1,000 Polish graves, including Anna Maria's mother and father's situated side by side. A section of 18 graves, each marked with a Star of David, bears witness to the sacrifice of the Polish-Jewish soldiers. "Life is strange," comments Anna Maria. "Times have changed since Poland was under martial law and the communist commander turned his back on my father's grave. It's ironic that so many years later that I, the general's daughter, am in Italy representing the Polish government."



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1395 Main St, Waltham MA I On 117 Weston Border 781,899,6900 I DarbyRoad.com After Monte Cassino, the group traveled to Bologna to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of the final battle fought by Polish troops in Italy. It was the first time that a ceremony was held at the Polish cemetery in Bologna, the largest Polish military cemetery in Italy with approximately 1,400 graves. Julian Bussgang and fellow soldiers who took part in the Battle of Bologna received a special medal, "Obrońcy Ojczyzny 1939-1945," (Defenders of the Fatherland). Jessica comments about the surprise tribute, "Anna Maria and the other government officials hosted a beautiful and meaningful ceremony, complete with pomp and circumstance to present the medals."

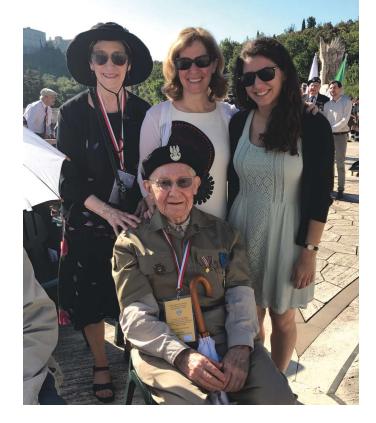
The veterans' trip began in Rome, where the Polish delegation lined up along the route of the Popemobile to receive a special blessing from the Pope. The group then participated in a brief ceremony inside the Vatican at the grave of the Polish Pope, John Paul II, the first non-Italian Pope since 1523 to preside over the Catholic Church. The trip concluded in Reggio Emilia, a small town north of Bologna where the Polish national anthem "Marsz, Marsz Dąbrowski" was composed in 1797 when the Polish Legion was serving with Napoleon's French Revolutionary Army in the Italian Campaign.

"The group kept a rigorous schedule, but I didn't hear any of the 90-year-olds complain," explains Fay. "We all had wake-up calls at 5:45 a.m. and were on the bus with our bags at 7:30 a.m., ready to travel to our next destination." Julian Bussgang with his wife, Fay; daughter, Jessica Rosenbloom; and granddaughter, Raquel Rosenbloom at the ceremonies held at the Polish Cemetery in Monte Cassino

Twenty-three years ago, the Bussgangs attended the ceremonies in Italy marking the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino. While the couple was joined then by a few of Julian's high school friends from Palestine who also were soldiers in Anders' Army, as well as by some 20 buses filled with dignitaries, veterans, and their companions, the Bussgangs participated without other family members joining them.

#### From Generation to Generation

For the 73rd anniversary trip, two family members accompanied Julian and Fay Bussgang: their daughter, Jessica, and granddaughter, Raquel who traveled from Morocco where she was on a Fulbright Scholarship.



"Raquel promised me that she would tell my seven other grandchildren all about her experience in Italy honoring Anders' Army," reflects Julian. "*L'dor, v'dor.* From generation to generation."



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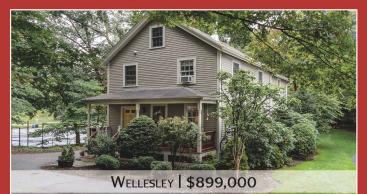
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# RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

# REDISCOVERING THE DAVIS MUSEU

#### STEVE MAAS writer

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF DAVIS MUSEUM AT WELLESLEY COLLEGE

imagine starting a new job and immediately being assigned a giant puzzle to solve, one containing 13,000 pieces of all shapes, sizes, and dimensions-from a silver tea set used by Wellesley students in the 1880s to an eight-ton mosaic from the Roman Empire.

Your puzzle would have to showcase such works as a painstakingly restored 17th-century Willem van de Velde the Elder scene of a busy Dutch harbor, a fog-shrouded Waterloo Bridge by Claude Monet, and a plywood Brillo box by Andy Warhol. And everything would have to fit into three floors-the upper two surrounding a large rectangular light well.

Such was the challenge faced by Claire Whitner when she arrived at Wellesley College in January 2014. She joined a small team of curators conducting a top-to-bottom overhaul of the Davis Art Museum initiated by its director, Lisa Fischman.

Today, a year after the reinstallation's completion, the museum exhibits twice as many objects—a total of 650—as it did before. They are arranged among 19 galleries, separated by free-standing dividers. Sweeping perspectives of the collection unfold as visitors climb the stairway that borders the central light well.

"I love the feel of the Davis today; the energy is totally transformed," Fischman wrote in an email. "[T]here are literally surprises around every corner."

# WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Suspended over the fifth-floor contemporary gallery is Alexander Calder's 'Study for Lobster Trap and Fish Tail" (1937-38), made of painted sheet iron and wire.

#### **Davis Museum**

The Davis Museum, which traces its roots to 1889 but opened in its current location in 1993, was the first building in North America to have been commissioned by Rafael Moneo. Three years later, the Spanish architect won the Pritzker Architecture Prize, often called the Nobel Prize of architecture.

In the Davis's previous incarnation, more of the space had been devoted to temporary exhibits. The permanent galleries had been organized by theme, such as "Perceiving Space in Art" and "Stories, Ideals, Beliefs." While that approach made for thought-provoking juxtapositions, Whitner says, "If someone was looking for a specific kind of art, it could have been in any of those galleries."



And some of the museum's prize pieces were out of sight. "Having theme drive content was not allowing us to show a lot of the really wonderful objects that were in our storage that just didn't happen to fit," she adds.

Combing through the museum's holdings, the curatorial team was struck by the breadth and, in some surprising areas, the depth of the collection. "We really needed to think about how we could show these strengths in an organized fashion," says Whitner, who is assistant director of curatorial affairs and senior curator of collections.

The solution was to return to the more traditional layout that emphasizes chronology and region, allowing viewers to appreciate how art forms change over time and artists are influenced by other cultures.

While the lower level is reserved for special exhibitions, the permanent collection begins on the second floor, with galleries displaying non-Western and ancient Mediterranean art, including pieces given to Wellesley College in honor of a faculty member's participation in an archaeological dig. Climbing to upper levels, the viewer sees art from around the globe, spanning four millennia.

But the curators didn't completely abandon the thematic approach. "We didn't want to throw out the baby with the bathwater," Whitner says. "So, we developed thematic installations where interesting connections could be made between objects from different time periods or cultures."



left: A view from the fifth floor lightwell to the galleries below; right: The 19thcentury American Art gallery features Hudson River School landscape paintings and artworks by the indigenous people of the Plains and Southwest





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#### **Davis Museum**

The East Asian gallery, for example, offers both a chronological and a crosscultural window into the world of ceramics. Across one wall is a thousandyear time line in the form of vessels decorative and utilitarian—fashioned in China. It illustrates the development



and application of new glazes and their periodic revivals.

A display case in the center of the gallery shows how the signature blue- and-white palette of Chinese ceramics became a global phenomenon. Through the network of Eurasian trading routes, including the Silk Road, the color pattern developed concurrently in Persia and China, and then, with the expanding Islamic empire, spread across southern Europe. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the color motif became popular in Western Europe through imports shipped by the Dutch East India Company.



Working with earthenware, Dutch artisans developed Delftware (also known as Delft Blue or Delft pottery) in an effort to imitate the Chinese porcelains. An example on display is a late 17<sup>th</sup> century blue-and-white vase decorated with images of stylized figures riding a camel, a turtle, and a rhinoceros. With colonization, the blue and white colors spread to the New World, where Mexican artists mixed Chinese and Native motifs, as reflected in a pharmacy jar (called an albarello) decorated with such images as a crane, the Taoist symbol of longevity, and a Nopal Cactus (also referred to as Prickly Pear), symbolizing the Aztec Empire.

Perhaps the most unusual object in the display case is "Sea Sculpture," a stack of porcelain teacups fused together by an inferno that sank a Chinese vessel carrying luxury goods to a Dutch trading post. The 1725 shipwreck wasn't discovered until 1998.

The Davis curators brought in outside experts to help evaluate the collection. A specialist from the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, for example, was "blown away by the quality and condition of the African art in storage," says Whitner. "We now have three galleries dedicated to African art."

Why that collection is so impressive is a story in itself. New York gallery owners John and Halina Klejman began donating many of the pieces after their daughter enrolled in Wellesley in the 1950s. The Klejmans, who had owned a gallery in Warsaw before World War II, were among the few Jews to survive imprisonment in the Warsaw Ghetto. They immigrated to the United States in 1950. In the 1930s, Klejman

Florentine sculptor Giuseppe Piamontini's bronze "Faun and Satyr" (before 1713).



had studied art in Paris, which abounded in traditional artifacts from the French colonies in Western Africa.

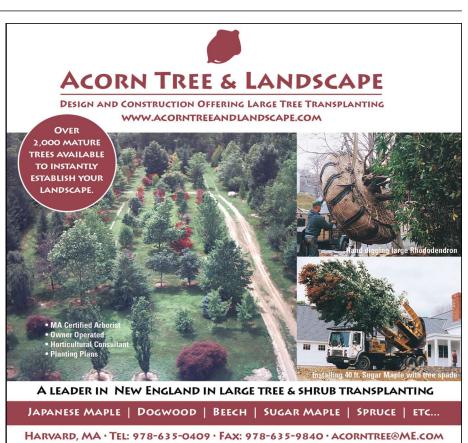
The Klejmans' donations range from tiny weights used for measuring gold powder to ceremonial masks. Illustrating proverbs, the weights depict intriguing scenes like an executioner with a decapitated head or a child with a tarantula. Displaying the masks presented a design challenge. "They were never meant to be sculptures," says Whitner. "These would have been part of dynamic display, meant to move." For one ritual, a male dancer would don a large mask, supported by his shoulders, to personify ideals of female power and motherhood. Known as a D'mba, the mask is exhibited at the height at which it would have been worn and is positioned at an angle to suggest action.

The mask comes from the Baga people native to the coastal area of what is now Guinea. Large historical maps accompany many galleries, showing the geographic relationship of several different cultures.

On the last landing before the stairs reach the top floor is a whimsical sculpture that literally flips the genre of still life on its head. A bou-

\* \*

left: View of the fourth-floor European galleries surrounding the central lightwell. middle: A D'mba, a wooden shoulder mask from the Baga culture, in one of the galleries of West African art. right: Art from Oceania and East Asia on the second floor.



PHOTOGRAPHY

BRIGGS

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PHOTOS





#### **Davis Museum**

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean and Ancient Americas on the second level, including a fifth-century mosaic excavated from the floor of a Roman villa.

quet of flowers rests on a single bud, the flowers emerging from a vase that is hanging from above. Tony Matelli, a New York-based artist known for his hyper-realistic works (including *Sleepwalker*, the scantily clad statue of a man formerly on the college campus), cast *Arrangement 9* in bronze and painted it by hand.

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WELLESLEY 54 Central Street 781.237.8181 WESTON 544 Boston Post Road 781.894.8282 NEEDHAM 936 Great Plain Avenue 781.444.8383 BENOITMIZNERSIMON.COM The positioning of the 2014 sculpture exemplifies how the museum's reconfiguration takes advantage of previously unused space and the building's vertical sightlines. Looking below from Matelli's sculpture, the viewer sees on one side a late 17th-century floral arrangement by the French painter Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer and on the other, the mid-19th century *Still Life with Fruit*, by Prussian-born Severin Roesen.

Appropriately for the museum's home, the three central landings on the staircases—the spine of the building—each display portraits of women. At the lowest level is French artist Alexandre Cabanel's 1871 painting of Cornelia Lyman Warren, attired in riding gear, with her chestnut hair cascading over her shoulders; Warren later served as a Wellesley College trustee. One level up is Alice Neel's 1967 *Wellesley Girls*, depicting the casually dressed students Kiki Djos (Martin) and Nancy Selvage when they visited the artist's son at her Manhattan home. On the top level is a painting of two black women with prominent Afros, holding hands and staring straight at the viewer as they stand in front of a warehouse door stamped "Loading." That's also the name of the work, part of Canadian artist Tim Okamura's *Brooklyn Mythology* series.

The renovation of the museum returned a fifth-century mosaic to its proper position—horizontal—after being unbolted from a fifthfloor wall. The stone fragment, measuring 13 feet by 13 feet, was excavated from a Roman villa in Antioch, now part of Turkey, during a 1930s archeological dig. The mosaic is the centerpiece of the second-floor

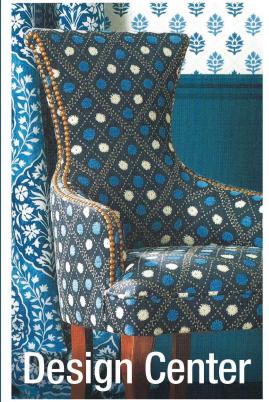
Ancient Mediterranean gallery. The geometric pattern can be viewed up close or from the floors above, as if one were peering down from a courtyard balcony.

Serendipitously, the medieval gallery featuring the stained glass work *Warrior with Castle* happened to have one of the museum's few windows. Although created in the 19th century, the scene recalls the Middle Ages. A turreted Wellesley dorm visible through a transparent part of the glass fits right in.

Of note, small white labels appear next to 120 pieces on view. They signify that the work was either made or donated by an immigrant. After President Donald Trump announced plans to impose a ban travel from designated Muslim-majority nations, the Association of Art Museum Directors joined the chorus of denunciation. "The arts are the manifestation of cooperation of people around the world," Whitner says. "I thought, how can we show that in our museum? How do you celebrate cultural pluralism and not cultural purity?"

Whitner proposed temporarily shrouding or removing the 120 objects. With Fischman's backing, the "Art-Less" initiative was staged over Presidents' Day weekend and garnered worldwide media attention.

Among the paintings pulled from the walls was a portrait by Swedish immigrant Adolf Ulrik Wertmüller. Its subject: George Washington. For more on the museum, visit www.wellesley.edu/davismuseum.





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#### ALBERT MCKEON writer MICKEY GOLDIN photographer

**just as** people need a home, organizations also need a place to "hang their hats." For 40 years now, a diverse mix of clubs, leagues, societies, foundations, guilds, and committees have found a home at Wellesley Community Center.

Drive too fast and the non-descript brick building on 219 Washington Street can escape the untrained eye. But for the people who have wanted to further their civic connection to the town—or just wanted to have

# The Place Where Wellesley Meets Wellesley Community Center



fun or learn something new—the Community Center has been, as its slogan goes, "the place where Wellesley meets."

Wellesley nearly didn't have this meeting place, but after years of fits and starts, residents Joe Grignaffini and Charlie Hoffman were determined to build a place where youths, senior citizens, and anyone else could gather. They got a lot of help—most crucially from the property owner, Wellesley Friendly Aid—and actually started construction despite having raised only half of the necessary funds.

Forty years later, the center continues to open its doors to all types of organizations. More than 30 organizations use Wellesley Community Center in some form or fashion. But by the end of this year, a longtime presence there, the Council on Aging, will move its offices and programs to the new Tolles-Parsons Senior Center.

Seniors have been such a key part of the Community Center's history that it's hard to imagine Wellesley's meeting place existing without this active constituency. But that's a future the Community Center's leaders are trying not to imagine. Instead, they're building on recent successes with local arts programs to serve as a springboard for the years beyond 40. They believe there are enough civic interests in the community to keep the center thriving. The John Calvert, Boston Area Assembly Number 29 Of The

# Celebrates

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Joe Grignaffini

The Place Where Wellesley Meets

As members of the Wellesley Jaycees (a civic group for young business and community leaders) in the early 1970s, Joe Grignaffini and Charlie Hoffman were determined to find a place for the town's youth to hang out. There was a spot in the old middle school but it was too small to keep teens occupied for long, Grignaffini said in a recent interview. Grignaffini—who ran a construction company with his brother Louis—and Hoffman—the longtime CEO of the family-run Hoffman Insurance—started scouting locations for a youth center, but kept getting rejected by property owners.

In the mid-1970s, Grignaffini and Hoffman had to leave the Jaycees because they had reached the organization's age cutoff, and the youth center search was lagging. Hoffman, then a new member of Wellesley Rotary, and Grignaffini, a new member Wellesley Kiwanis Club, were thus prompted to take a new approach. "That's

when we went to Wellesley Friendly Aid about having

GEOME with Stacie Meeker and Jackie Colognesi

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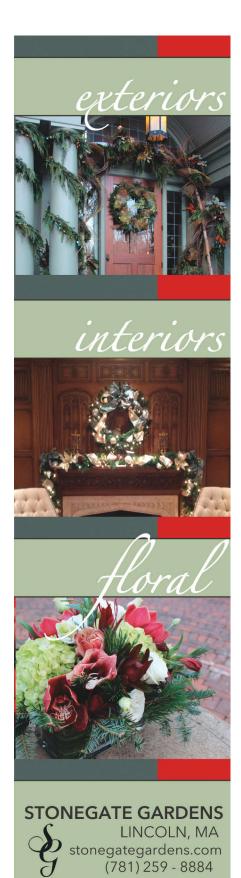
WELLESLEY COMMUNITY CENTER

"We're in a good place," said Sandy Joseph, a member of Wellesley Community Center's board of directors. "We originally were hoping we could accommodate the larger senior center, but we're moving forward. We're very useful, and I think there is always a need in Wellesley for the Community Center."

#### It Started as a Hang-out for Wellesley's Youth

By the 1970s, it was evident that Wellesley's population wouldn't abate. Between 1930 and 1970, the population increased from more than 11,000 to more than 28,000. As a desirable place to live west of Boston, Wellesley was also undeniably a desirable place to get involved, to take part in activities beyond work, school, and home.

# Dover



The Place Where Wellesley Meets

a combination youth center and Council of Aging," Grignaffini said. "We figured if they leased us the land, we would raise the money to build the center. We figured it would finally take off because it would be open to all organizations across town."

The Council of Aging agreed, and the much-talked-about youth center finally had a future home, albeit shared, near the intersection of Routes 9 and 16. What was needed next was money: \$500,000 for a building to adjoin the Council of Aging's home. Grignaffini, Hoffman, and others set out to raise funds, and got just about halfway there before it all stopped. People stopped giving.

"We had to make a decision," Grignaffini said. "We asked ourselves, 'Do we return the money?' It didn't look like it was going go to be feasible. So I said to the board (that oversaw fundraising and building), 'People are skeptical this is ever going to get done. Why don't we start building it? Once they start to see progress, they'll feel good about it and the funds will come in."

Ground was broken in spring 1977, Grignaffini Construction built at cost, and townspeople again opened their wallets. The Community Center opened its doors in fall that year, and at a lower-than-expected cost. It didn't exactly go according to plan, but the town finally had a recreation center for the youth and a meeting place for seniors. Yet, it didn't take

Society of Young Magicians with David Oliver



long for the long-held dream to shatter. The youth of Wellesley—teenagers, specifically broke quite a few Community Center rules and soon abandoned the place, Grignaffini recalled.

"It really held in there after that," said Grignaffini, who served as a member and president of the Community Center's board of directors. "People kept donating to keep the place alive. It was a struggle at times. For a while, we had bingo games there. They were really popular, but then we had competition from the churches, so that died away. It helped us go through tough times. The beauty of it all was the Community Center didn't cost the town any money. We raised it all."

#### A Welcome Home for Arts Organizations

Indeed, unlike most municipalities that fund their own community centers, Wellesley's prime meeting place is self-sufficient. The Community Center is a privately-funded, taxexempt 501(c)(3).

Flash forward from the innovative fundraising, teenage hijinks, and bingo games, and the Community Center hasn't veered from its mission. The building still serves as a meeting place for all: World of Wellesley, Wellesley Rotary, Wellesley Chamber of Commerce, Wellesley Hills Junior Women's Club, Wellesley Cancer Prevention Project, and American Needlepoint Guild are just a handful of the organizations that hold meetings and events there.

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#### **The Place Where Wellesley Meets**

Soon, though, seniors won't have much need to go to that spot on Washington Street. If interior construction concludes, as scheduled by year's end, the Council on Aging will hang a shingle on the Tolles-Parsons Senior Center at 494 Washington Street. The seniors' exodus for a bigger spot isn't a surprise. After more than a decade of discussion and work, several appearances on the floor of Town Meeting and on town-wide ballots, voters in 2016 approved the taxpayer-funded senior center. But just as Grignaffini and Hoffman improvised four decades ago, the Community



Center's board of directors and its executive director, Stephen Beach, long ago started preparing for this day.

In a way, their preparations are bringing the Community Center full circle. The youth are coming back. The center has for some time been a place to go for the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and several Wellesley youth sports leagues, but Beach has also been cultivating relationships with the arts community, including several arts organizations that cater to young crowds. These arts organizations have found the center to be a spacious and accommodating home for them to practice their crafts.

"We will have the capacity for the performing arts," Beach said. "We'll continue to be a base for and support all endeavors, but we're going from a general-purpose nonprofit to an affinity-based nonprofit."

Consider Willy Wonka as proof of that transition. Roald Dahl's famed chocolate factory owner came to life in May in a string of performances by Wellesley Theatre Project in the Community Center's Babson Hall. The nonprofit theater company had long needed extra room beyond its Central Street headquarters, and caught a break about two years ago when the building there sprung a leak. Beach opened the door to the Community Center, and, as eight shows of "Willy Wonka JR." illustrated, the project has no intention of leaving. "It's awesome we finally have the space," said Wellesley Theatre Project cofounder Ben Rush.



Also finding the open door were the Society of Young Musicians and Wellesley Society of Artists. Expect to see even more arts organizations in the future, Beach said, as the Community Center remakes itself as a home of the arts—on top of its usual calling card as a home to all organizations. Wellesley Community Center Chairman Don Kelley with Joe Murray of Dunkin' Donuts

"Some theater organizations have no place to practice, so they go to Waltham," said Don Kelley, chairman of the Community Center's board of directors. Even though Wellesley Theatre Project has a way of

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transforming Babson Hall into an impressive theater space, Beach said, it would like to go a step further in solidifying its footprint in the building. The group is hoping to renovate Babson Hall to better fit theater specifications, an encouraging sign that other arts organizations will also feel welcome at the center, Kelley said.

#### No Monkeying Around with the Future

In 2013, a year after Beach's arrival, he put word out to businesses that the Community Center had space for rent. Since then, companies have held business meetings, conferences, and seminars there. The center has also helped celebrate family milestones, from wedding parties to bar and bat mitzvahs.



**top:** George Barris' Monkeemobile from "The Monkees" television show; **left:** Blake Lothian and Dan Lothian; **right:** Stephen Beach with newspaper reporter

The Community Center also hosts Wheels of Wellesley, an automobile show that's full of classic and unique cars, during Wellesley's Wonderful Weekend. The star car of this year's event was the Monkeemobile, the 1966 Pontiac GTO from *The Monkees* television show.

Model train enthusiasts also flock to the Community Center each fall for the Great Wellesley Train Show. And Beach has ambitions to start an Oktoberfest event.

"If you had told me this was going to happen five years ago, I wouldn't have thought so," Beach said. Losing the Council on Aging could have been the death knell for the Community Center, but "looking long range and developing a mission to stay relevant" gives the place where Wellesley meets high hopes for the future.

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Teri and her assistant Lindsey were so incredibly amazing during the buying process. The whole process of finding our dream home could not have been easier or more pleasant. Teri's extensive experience was evident throughout all of our dealings with her. We are so happy that we used her as our real estate agent, and are thrilled that she is now a neighbor and friend!

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PATTY LENZ BOVIE writer

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# there are few things more joyous than singing, particularly around

the holidays. It can bring you back to special moments in your life, and establish new memories that will stay with you forever. Singing as part of a group can create a common bond with people you may not know. And listening to others perform can transport you to a different time or place. This holiday season, don't miss some of the incredible vocal performances right here at home.

### The Boston Saengerfest Men's Chorus

Based in Weston, the Boston Saengerfest Men's Chorus performs all around the world. Literally "singing group festival" in German, the original Saengerfest chorus was founded more than a century ago by a group of Harvard Medical School faculty and students who wanted to sing, eat, and drink together despite the university's ruling that they could not participate in undergraduate activities such as a glee club. In 1992, the group reestablished itself and this year celebrated its 25th anniversary with 63 singers from 32 towns stretching from Cape Ann to Cape Cod. The group meets Monday nights for rehearsals at First Parish Church of Weston from September through May. It performs a handful of times each year including its annual Christmas Concert.

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PHOT



First Tenor George Ecker has been singing with the Boston Saengerfest Men's Chorus since 1999. "There is a special camaraderie to singing in an all-male singing group. It's a night out with the boys with a feeling of accomplishment, with no repercussions or hangover," he says. "The everimproving quality of our singing means we can get extremely selective ensembles to sing with us in concerts."

Saengerfest's repertoire is eclectic and ranges from traditional Christmas carols and spirituals to men's music from more recent composers. At this year's holiday concert on December 16 at Regis College, Saengerfest will host the St. Paul's Choir School. Saengerfest usually performs a couple of concerts a year as fundraisers for various organizations and periodically goes to London for the International Festival of Welsh Male Voice Choirs at Royal Albert Hall. Four or five times a year Saengerfest sings the national anthem and *America the Beautiful* at naturalization ceremonies in Boston. "The looks of joy on the faces of new citizens make these occasions memorable," adds Ecker. "Singing has been an important part of my life since following my dad around when he came home from WWII. I sang in school, college, and the army. Saengerfest has enabled me to keep singing, and to make new friends."

Baritone Bob Ferrell has been with the group since 2001. "We are unique in being arguably the only male chorus in the country representing Welsh music among a large repertoire of other genres. Our uniqueness resides as well in our mission to provide a memorable music experience to raise funds for specific charities."

New members are required to audition with Music Director Tom Berryman. There are yearly dues and members are expected to help sell tickets to the concerts. Each individual covers his own travel expenses, but scholarship funds are available as needed. "Being part of a group of

2 - 2 - 2 - 2



**top:** The Saengerfest Men's Chorus performing at Faneuil Hall with the Boston City Singers, the Apollo Club of Boston, and The Highland Singers **bottom:** The Saengerfest Men's Chorus performing at Fenway Park

men carrying on a tradition I embraced in college, as did so many of us, to produce fine music and perform, gives me unparalleled pleasure," says Ferrell. "We whole heartedly encourage anyone who loves music of all genres to give us a look." For tickets to upcoming performances, visit www.saengerfest.org

#### Wellesley High School Choirs

2017-2018 marks Dr. Kevin McDonald's 14th year as choral director at Wellesley High School (WHS). Over the years, he's seen his choral groups consistently evolve, both in quality and numbers of participants. With five different choirs that meet during the school day and four different extracurricular a cappella groups, there's a spot for any student who loves to sing. And there are a lot of them. "This year, we have more than 300 singers," McDonald says, which is about 20 percent of the high school student body. "We're one of the largest choral departments in Massachusetts." And one of the most prestigious.

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**top:** The Wellesley High School Concert Choir perfoming at the 2017 graduation ceremony; **bottom:** The Rice Street Singers performing on WGBH's "Sing That Thing!"

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WHS has three non-audition choirs—one all-male (40 Brooks Brothers), one all-female (100 Song Sisters), and a co-ed choir (100 Concert Choir Members). There are also two select choirs. The Keynote Singers (50 students) sing music of a variety of choral traditions while the Rice Street Singers (20 students) sing jazz selections. Students must be enrolled in one of the five choirs to be eligible for an a cappella group.

"Over time we've built a reputation as a high-quality and well-rounded choral program with many strengths," says McDonald. For instance, last March the WHS ensembles presented two different clinics on recruitment and retention of male singers and the selection of vocal jazz repertoire at the Massachusetts All-State Festival and Concert.

The Keynote Singers earned gold medals at the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (MICCA) Choral Festival and performed as part of the Gold Medal Showcase at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. Several years ago, the Keynote Singers performed at Symphony Hall with the Boston Pops Orchestra's *Home Alone* concert. Representatives from Boston Pops came to WHS, assessed the quality and professionalism of the ensemble, and Keith Lockhart himself visited the school to work with the students. "It was an incredible music memory for the kids and myself," says McDonald.

Last year, the Rice Street Singers were chosen by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association to perform at the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers' Conference at the State House. That same group was also selected as one of the top ensembles in 12 states and performed for the National Association for Music Educators' (NAfME) Eastern Division Conference in Atlantic City last April. Rice Street has earned nine consecutive gold medals at the State Jazz Festival performing at the Hatch Shell in Boston as part of the Massachusetts

#### Sing!

Association for Jazz Education (MAJE) Gold Medal Showcase. "We've performed side-byside with several leading jazz vocalists—including the Grammy-winning ensemble New York Voices, which was one of the highlights of my career," adds McDonald.

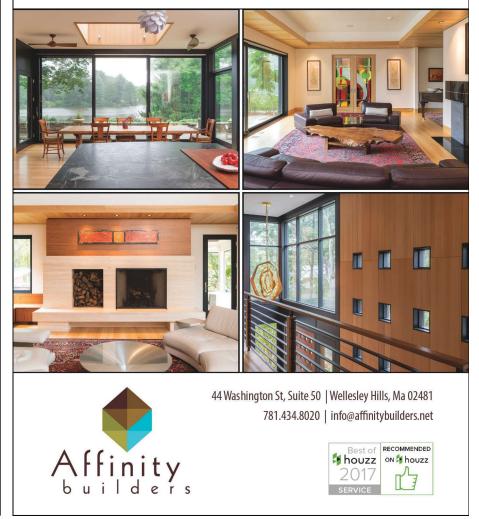
WHS students have performed on stage with professional organizations such as the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra and Chorus and the Boston Gay Men's Chorus. The a cappella program has flourished as well, performing with some of the best a cappella groups in the country.

When McDonald first came to WHS, many students took choir as a way to enhance their college applications. "Now the majority of students have a genuine desire to share their talent with others," he says. They sing at nursing homes and the Center for Alzheimer's Care. They perform at the Holiday Stroll and on Luminary Night as well as in concerts and music festivals. "This sense of selflessness is one of the things that makes our program special. It's not about the awards, it's a true desire to share our music," adds McDonald.

McDonald could not be more proud of his kids. "I believe strongly in exposing our students to the highest quality ensembles and challenging them to cultivate their talents to make the best music they can. My purpose is to use music to help shape the lives of other people, not just my students, but also the audience. Wellesley offers me an incredible student body and a very supportive community."



### A Tradition of Fine Homebuilding





#### Wellesley College Tupelos

For more than 65 years, the Tupelos a cappella group at Wellesley College, has been singing for audiences up and down the East Coast. Named for Lake Waban's scenic Tupelo Point, the college's oldest premier a cappella group holds two on-campus free public performances each semester. The group also sings periodically for the Wellesley community. The Tupelos' business manager, sophomore and alto Claire McCullough, has been singing practically her entire life and joined the group as a freshman. "Our performance venues vary, but we have a wide range of music in our repertoire to match the atmosphere of various different settings and occasions," she says. In the past, the group has caroled at Wellesley's town-wide holiday celebration (Luminary Night) and recently performed at Truly Yogurt's 25th anniversary celebration.

McCullough adds, "a cappella music comes completely from the self. The ability to share something that is so intrinsically personal can make you feel vulnerable at first, but is ultimately incredibly fulfilling. Each member has a specific role that is integral to the sound of the group,

which creates a dynamic unlike any other I've experienced."

The group practices three times a week for six hours total, and, as a result has created a tight bond among the women. "Singing and arranging music is a common interest that we all share," says McCullough. "Our relationships

left: The Wellesley Choral Society

left: The 2017 Wellesley College Tupelos; right: The Tupelos prepare for a concert

with one another have grown, allowing us to reach new levels of performance."

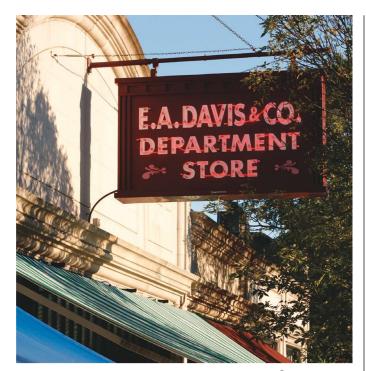
Adds McCullough: "There has been a lot of hype about college a cappella as of late, especially with movies like Pitch Perfect, and we love to share our lively, red-hot a cappella with the community." To book the Tupelos for an event, visit https://www.wellesleytupelos.com/.

#### The Wellesley Choral Society

Established just shortly after the end of WWII, the Wellesley Choral Society (WCS) celebrates its 70th season of making music this year. To culminate its milestone anniversary, the WCS will perform a gala concert in May featuring Schubert's Mass No. 5, a major choral work that calls for a large orchestra and professional soloists. The group is co-ed and open to new singers.







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#### **Upcoming Local Choral Performances**

■ THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 • 7:00 P.M. Wellesley High School Winter Concert at Wellesley High School TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12 • 7:30 P.M. Weston Community Chorus Concert at Weston High School ■ WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13 • 7:30 P.M. Weston High School Concert at Weston High School SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16 • 4:00 P.M. Boston Saengerfest Men's Chorus Christmas Concert with The Boys of St. Paul's Choir School at Regis College ■ SATURDAY, JANUARY 27 • 7:00 P.M. WCS Americana Cabaret Concert at Wellesley Hills Congregational Church ■ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8 • 7:00 P.M. Wellesley High School Pops/Step-Up Concert at Wellesley High School ■ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11 • 4:00 P.M. Boston Saengerfest Men's Chorus at Brothers Sing On! A Cappella Festival at WHS FRIDAY, MARCH 9 • 7:00 P.M. Wellesley High School Acastock concert at Wellesley High School ■ WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4 • 7:30 P.M. Weston High School Pops Concert at Weston High School THURSDAY, APRIL 26 • 7:00 P.M. WHS Masterwork Concert at WHS SUNDAY, MAY 13 • 4:00 P.M. WCS 70th Anniversary Spring Concert at Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills ■ MONDAY, MAY 14 • 7:30 P.M. Weston Community Chorus Concert at Weston High School ■ SUNDAY, JUNE 3 • 4:00 P.M. Boston Saengerfest Men's Chorus New England Concordance at Cary Hall, Lexington

"The Wellesley Choral Society is truly a special organization," says Linda Derezinski of Wellesley, a soprano who's been singing with the group for a decade. "We are a non-audition, all-volunteer chorus, open to anyone who loves to sing. We draw people of many ages, many walks of life, and with many different musical skills." As the only communitybased chorus in Wellesley, the group provides an opportunity for residents of Wellesley and surrounding towns to study and learn great choral music, and for Metrowest concertgoers to attend concerts at a reasonable price. "We have been given a grant this year by the Fund for Wellesley to increase our outreach to seniors in the area, so we are actively recruiting new singers as well as new audience members in the young senior demographic," adds Derezinski.

The group rehearses Monday nights from September through May and performs in churches in and around Wellesley. "We have never turned away anyone who wants to sing with us," she explains. "Some of our members are very skilled. Many are church choir singers. Most of us may have sung with our college glee clubs many years ago, but some are brand new vocalists who have come to singing from other instruments. We sing challenging music, so people with no musical experience at all may find it difficult to master."

For Derezinski, singing is her "me-time—involving her mind and body in a way very little else does." She says the WCS is a chance for her to indulge in her love of singing on a weekly basis. "I am so wide awake when I come home from rehearsal on Monday evenings, I often have trouble falling asleep!"

Five-year WCS soprano, Nina Moss, agrees. "I love the total immersion of our rehearsals each week. For two hours, we exist in a cocoon. No cell phones. No multitasking. Just focused on working together to slowly achieve individual and group mastery of the music. In a cynical, fragmented world, we get to experience community with people we don't always know well, doing work we love, or learn to love. That is a privilege," she adds. Soprano Elisabeth Dambolena has been singing with the WCS since 1978. She says, "Sometimes I don't feel like going to rehearsal—for example on a cold, dark winter evening. But I go, and a

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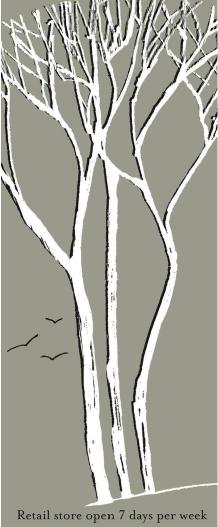


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left: The Weston High School Choir sings for the Boston Celtics and their fans; right: The Weston High School Choir

little miracle happens. We start to sing ... I leave the day behind ... and in the end I am refreshed and in a good mood. It works every time." Twenty-year WCS alto Sara Smith says, "When other voice parts join in with the altos, who are rarely part of the melody, it's magical. Choral singing, and singing in the Wellesley Choral Society, is the best stress reliever for the soul."

Carol Singer, an on-and-off WCS soprano adds, "Although singing had been a central part of my life since childhood, there was a long stretch of my adult life when I was immersed in work and the demands of family, and no longer sang with any groups. I have loved the opportunity to join WCS starting at age 50, which has enriched my life immeasurably in so many ways."

# Weston High School Choirs

Choral Director Dr. Thérèse Provenzano grew up in Weston and has been teaching at the middle school and high school there for 20 years. At the high school she conducts three groups: the non-auditioned high school chorus (125 students) and two select groups of upperclassmen— concert choir (40 students) and jazz choir (15 students). There's a good balance of boys and girls, she says. "The guys here are good about singing. They're not weird about it." And it doesn't hurt that they sing the national anthem annually at Celtics and Red Sox games.

"I tell my kids that it's important for them to sing no matter what they do," says Provenzano. "Singing taps into a totally different part of the brain which helps develop life skills. Focus. Organization. Working together as part of a group. Even mathematics." But these kids sing because they love it. Every October, they perform in a masquerade concert and dress up in costumes. In December, they give a winter concert focusing mostly on the classics like Mozart's Requiem. And in the spring, they sing lighter music at their Pops concert.

The students also like to give back to the community with their voices. They perform at retirement homes and spend time with the residents afterwards. They carol for patients of Dana Farber, Mass General Hospital, and Shriners Hospitals. Adds Provenzano, "I always have more kids sign



7:15 p.m. and currently has about 60 singers. The group sings a mix of classical music, pop, jazz and gospel. "I love to sing, even though you wouldn't want to hear me sing a solo," admits Provenzano. She's really a pianist. "But I love the whole experience of singing. The community feel. The music. And the feeling of letting go. There's nothing else like it." WW

up than I can take because they get a lot of joy out of sharing their talent with others."

Beyond the joy singing brings, Provenzano notes another benefit. "There's so much pressure on academics these days. But what people often don't realize is that singing actually helps kids deal with that pressure. The breathing. The posture. The chance to be creative. It's a huge part of their mental well-being."

Provenzano often brings in musical colleagues from Boston University or Brandeis University to teach student workshops. "These professionals have different ideas and techniques than I do," which challenges and inspires the students vocally. "I know I'm not the end-all be-all, but I love what I do. I get to do music all day."

# The Weston Community Chorus

In Provenzano's spare time she also conducts the Weston Community Chorus (WCC) made up of parents and residents from Weston and surrounding towns including Boston. "It's a non-auditioned group and anybody's welcome to join," she says. The WCC meets at the Weston High School every Monday night at





# Researching

# Your Family



# wellesley resident Melissa Mark has learned a thing or two about genealogy.

Mark's interest in ancestry research was sparked in 2008 when looking for an old article about her great uncle to give to her father as a birthday gift. Mark's father never met his uncle, John "Jack" White, but greatly admired him and had long talked of a newspaper story that recounted White's last act of military bravery in World War II. White was a superb athlete, a first lieutenant, and a paratrooper with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment. In 1944, he and his compatriots parachuted into a small Dutch town under Nazi occupation, liberating civilians there. He died from injuries shortly thereafter.

Mark, then an Ohio resident, first searched old newspapers and spent hours on a microfiche viewer at the Ohio Historical Society. While she never found the article, her interest was piqued, and she used the website Ancestry.com to obtain more information about her father's side of the family. In addition to uncovering an abundance of information about his heritage, she connected with family members she hadn't known. Through family connections, new and old, Mark also found photos and wartime letters written to and from her great grandmother and her two sons stationed overseas. "The letters are an amazing window into life at that time," Mark notes. "The rations, the food coupons. One uncle had polio and was under quarantine. The letters describe my grandmother's overwhelming worry as she waited for news from her children at war."

Mark then started looking into the lineage of her mother, who had always been told she was German and Irish. It quickly became apparent that her mother was actually Slovakian. Her mother's grandfather had



changed his country of origin and birthdate when he came to the United States. Mark speculates that perhaps he felt it would be easier to assimilate and find work if one was Irish versus Slovakian. She notes, "When people came through Ellis Island, they could be whoever they wanted to be."

Mark's mother was resistant at first, reluctant to believe that the new information was correct. So, Mark decided to pursue DNA testing. She told her mother, "If it shows Eastern European DNA, then we'll talk. And in fact, it did."

Mark took the raw data from the DNA testing (also done through Ancestry.com) and uploaded this to multiple sites, including Family Tree DNA (FTDNA.com) and GEDmatch (GEDmatch.com). Then, "the relative explosion came." She started seeing family trees into which she connected, people with grandparents born in the same small Slovakian village from which her great grandparents had come. Slowly, "A family tree is created as you confirm or reject information based on your own review, using knowledge of your personal history."

her mother accepted the information, and then became progressively fascinated by her own history. She discovered that her Slovakian grandparents were from a Gypsy culture. Now, Mark says, her mother likes to tell people, "I'm half Gypsy."

\* \* \*

Ancestry research is done by taking known family tree information and, in today's world, uploading it into online search engines. From there,



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# "A growing number of people are sending saliva samples to laboratories to unlock their genetic backgrounds."

records are located—census data as well as birth, marriage, death, and burial certificates. A family tree is created as you confirm or reject information based on your own review, using knowledge of your personal history. Family tree websites abound; a quick internet search yields numerous results, both free and for a fee or subscription.

If the process sounds overwhelming, or hours on a family tree website is not an option for you, there are other ways to sleuth. The New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) in Boston is a member-based nonprofit organization with multiple services and staff genealogists who provide consultation and guidance, and can do your search for you.

Rhonda McClure, senior genealogist at NEHGS and author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Online Genealogy* (among other publications), has advice for anyone researching their history: vet the information you get. She notes that Ancestry.com is a good website for those just getting started, because the site guides you by suggesting possible relatives. But "just because the site suggests a connection doesn't mean the information is accurate." When using the digital family trees created by the websites, McClure cautions, "Use the family trees as breadcrumbs, but don't take them as gospel." The online site McClure recommends to a person depends in part on the presumed heritage. For example, familysearch. org is a website with records from around the world and one which McClure recommends to someone of Italian or Polish heritage because of the site's extensive database of information on those ethnic groups and geographic regions.

McClure has seen a surge in ancestry interest in recent years. She attributes this in part to the popularity of television programs including *Finding Your Roots, Genealogy Roadshow,* and *Who Do You Think You Are?* Along with this increased interest has come a shift in the type of

customer she sees. In the past, many would come with an understanding of the process and with a specific question or roadblock that came up during their search. Now, she notes, people often come in with an expectation that their research can be easily accessed and handed to them, as this is often the way television portrays the process.

#### \* \* \*

Business is skyrocketing for companies that offer DNA tests, which promise to determine a customer's heritage and, with permission, to identify genetic relatives. There are many from which to choose, including 23andMe, Ancestry, and MyHeritage.

A growing number of people are sending saliva samples to laboratories to unlock their genetic backgrounds. According to the International Society of Genetic Genealogy, nearly 8 million people worldwide, but mostly in the United States, have tested their DNA through kits, often costing less than \$100, though some are as high as \$1,000 or more. DNA ancestry results are based on a few different types of DNA. There are 23 pairs of chromosomes. The most popular DNA-deciphering approach, autosomal DNA testing, looks at genetic material inherited from both parents on the first 22 chromosome pairs (the 23rd pair determines your sex). Since you inherit about half of this type of DNA from each parent, it reflects ancestry from both sides of your family tree.

Y chromosome DNA and mitochondrial DNA can also be tested. The Y chromosome is passed from fathers to sons and traces only the paternal line. Mitochondrial DNA is passed only by mothers to their children and traces the maternal line.

There are a variety of reasons for pursuing DNA testing. Customers may want to explore their ethnicity, connect with unknown relatives, assess genetic risk for certain medical conditions, or even find out how much Neanderthal DNA they have.



**Researching Your Family** 

# While unlocking mysteries of one's ancestry is exciting, it can sometimes lead to unexpected results.

In April, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration allowed marketing of 23andMe Personal Genome Service Genetic Health Risk (GHR) tests for 10 diseases or conditions. These were the first direct-to-consumer (DTC) tests authorized by the FDA that provide information on an individual's genetic predisposition to certain medical diseases or conditions, which may help to make decisions about lifestyle choices or to inform discussions with a health care professional. There are 10 diseases or conditions for which genetic variants can suggest increased risk, including Parkinson's disease, late-onset Alzheimer's disease, and Celiac disease.

The FDA released a statement in April warning that the GHR tests "are intended to provide genetic risk information to consumers, but the tests cannot determine a person's overall risk of developing a disease or condition. In addition to the presence of certain genetic variants, there are many factors that contribute to the development of a health condition, including environmental and lifestyle factors." \* \* \*

While unlocking mysteries of one's ancestry is exciting, it can sometimes lead to unexpected results.

For Wellesley resident Kathleen Baum, some free time over the holidays in 2012 led to finding a half sister she didn't know she had.

Baum says, "For 47 years, I was an only child."

Baum was initially hooked by the two-week free trial offered at Ancestry.com. She entered names, family information, and pictures. "I became very interested, and spent a lot of time on it," Baum recalls. After the trial was over, she let the temporary membership lapse.

About three months later, she logged back on to the site and opened up an email in her account: "Hi, my name is Hailey. I think my grandfather was your father, and that you and my mom are half sisters."

Baum knew her father had been married and divorced before marrying her mother, but neither she nor her mother had knowledge of any

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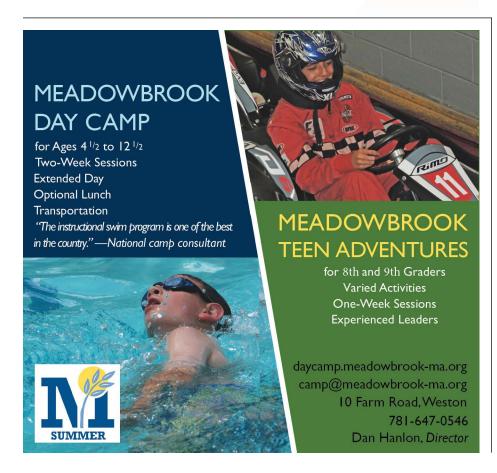
#### **Researching Your Family**

children he'd had previously. Her father, now deceased, never mentioned it, and Baum speculates that he may not have known himself.

After learning of her half sister, Linda, Baum emailed and Skyped with her that spring, The two met several months later on Long Island, where Linda lives. They've seen each other several times over the past few years. Baum attended the wedding of Linda's son and spent a Thanksgiving with Linda and her family. The experience has been positive not only for Baum, but for her mother and half sister as well. "Linda adores my mom and vice versa."

Of course, unearthing an unexpected family member is not always a welcome surprise and can upend long-held beliefs, identities, and family dynamics.

Genealogy sites ask customers their preference. For example, if you opt in to 23 and Me's "DNA Relatives," you will be able to send and receive invitations to connect with other customers who share DNA with you. You can choose whether to respond to these invitations or not, and your DNA relatives have the same choice Regardless of whether you both agree to share, you will be able to see their birthplace, locations of their ancestors, and surnames, if they have chosen to add this information to their profile. If you both accept sharing invitations, you will



be able to see ancestry reports and overlapping chromosome segments.

Online databases are large, and growing. The 23andMe DNA database has more than two million genotyped customers worldwide. AncestryDNA includes more than five million.

When signing up for DNA testing, Wellesley resident Lisa Siegel has some advice. "Click the right box," she says, and make sure you know what you're agreeing to.

Siegel pursued DNA testing for her mother, who was adopted at a Jewish adoption agency (now Spence-Chapin) in New York City in 1939. Siegel and her sister, Stephanie, convinced their mother, Susie Silver Fink, to do 23andMe to find out about her heritage. Fink never wanted to know anything about her birth parents, feeling like this would be an affront to her adoptive parents. Her daughters' goal was to discover more about Fink's ethnic background (51 percent Italian, 49 percent Ashkenazi Jew, as it turned out.)

Six months after completing the testing, Siegel was telling a friend about the experience, and offered to show her the 23andMe online account, which she had created and managed for her mother. What she saw next would change her mother's family as she knew it. An email from a man named Frank Marchese was in the 23andMe inbox. Based on his own research, he thought he might be Fink's half brother.

"Never in our wildest dreams did we think

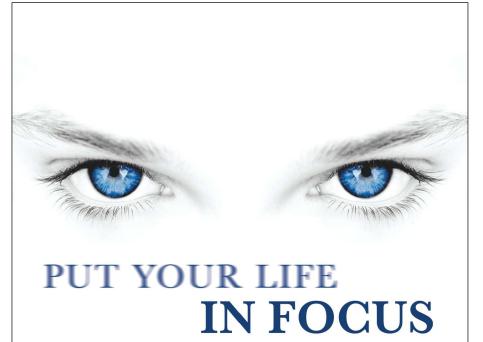
this would come of it, and it is not why we did it," Siegel says.

Confronted with the possibility that their mother (and they) might have a new relative, they proceeded cautiously. First, Siegel called 23andMe to see how accurate this kinship was likely to be. Then Siegel contacted Marchese. He had also not expected to find a half sibling, but had pursued DNA testing because his mother was adopted and he had an interest in her (and his own) heritage.

Next, Siegel, her sister, and Marchese talked by phone. Frank was enthusiastic about the possibility of meeting Susie and sent Siegel pictures of himself. They were all struck by the strong resemblance between Frank and Susie at similar ages in side by side photos. After careful thought, Siegel and her sister decided to tell their mother, keeping the conversation as factual as possible. "We told our mother 'Something interesting came up on 23andMe. A man contacted us, and it looks like you share the same birth father."

Her mother "kept it light," Siegel says, and took the news well. Susie and Frank have since met several times, and the experience has been positive.

Fink (who lives in Florida) notes while she is happy to know Marchese, the connection is probably even more important to her daughters than it is to her. "If it matters to my kids, it matters to me. Frank is a good guy. If he's nice to them, it's one more person to love them." And who could argue with that?



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### business

# **Carrying On**

ALBERT MCKEON writer

# george and diane Katsikaris, Linda

Evans Shotkus, and Joe Perdoni, Jr. recognized that if they gave their all to the people of Wellesley, they would form unbreakable bonds with customers and benefit from relationships that transcend the sale of food and merchandise.

When George, Diane, Linda, and Joe each passed away over the past few years, their deaths reverberated beyond their immediate circles of family and friends. Wellesley residents also mourned the loss of these entrepreneurs who took pride in their work and had an informed understanding of customers' needs. Business had meant sacrificing much and always being ready to serve the community.

This connection to community is what now pushes the Katsikaris, Shotkus, and Perdoni families to carry on. By keeping their family businesses open, the survivors are not just keeping their loved ones' spirits alive: They're



Peter and Paul Katsikaris

also furthering the commitments made by the departed in business matters large and small. They are just as devoted to service and wouldn't dream of ending their families' legacies.

#### Familiar Staples and New Offerings at Fells Market

George and Diane Katsikaris opened Fells Market in 1980. They died less than two months apart from each other in 2015. George had run a store in the Roslindale section of Boston before heading west and settling on a location that's nestled on the corner of Weston Road and a Route 9 traffic ramp.

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## business "intends to carry forward her mother's legacy"

Despite an ongoing thrust of cars and trucks, customers nonetheless make a beeline for Fells Market. Inside, they find a store that still has the familiar staples offered by George and Diane: milk, bread, boxed foods, produce, sodas, potato chips, and many of the products found in traditional convenience stores.

But the feel of the store had started to change before George and Diane passed away. The couple's sons, Paul and Peter, slowly took over operations prior to 2015 and started to incrementally make changes that would shift Fells Market from a convenience store to a gourmet shop.

Alongside those familiar staples are homemade sandwiches, and Fells Market now offers baked goods and prepared meals. And three years ago, the Katsikaris family carved out additional interior space to accommodate shelves of wine and refrigerated coolers for beer. The store was the first retailer to sell alcoholic beverages for off-site consumption in the history of the town; the Cheese Shop, Roche Brothers, and Tutto Italiano followed afterward.

"My father was here for that," Paul Katsikaris said with a proud smile this summer as he gave a tour of the store. "It worked out well for the town."

The shift in sales reflects the changing pace of customers' lives over the past four decades, Peter Katsikaris said. People are busier than ever, with both parents working and their children involved in several extracurricular activities, and they have less time to prepare meals, he said.

Customers need more than bread and milk on their way home, Peter said. They also want marinated steak tips and chicken, prepared meals such as chicken Parmesan and mashed potatoes, or a deli sub, he said. "They're in a rush and want something quality they can take home and heat in little time."

While the store has expanded its list of offerings, the Katsikaris brothers vow to remain true to their parents' attention to detail and desire to work hard. Paul and Peter started working for their parents when they were teenagers. "We try to remember everything they taught us and carry it forward," Paul said.



#### Stepping Back to Move Forward at Lyn Evans

About to accept a job with a national clothing retailer in 1978, Linda Evans Shotkus instead took a big leap and opened her own store. Lyn Evans Potpourri Designs flourished into a seven-store chain with an anchor location on Church Street in Wellesley.

Beyond the success of her business, Linda gave back to Wellesley and the Boston area through fashion-show fundraising events and other charitable contributions. When she died suddenly in May 2016, she left a predictable void. That emptiness spread to greater depth when her husband, Stan, retired this year following heart surgery, and he and his daughter, Jenn, closed the four remaining Lyn Evans stores in June.

But Jenn Shotkus isn't ready to let go of her mother's dream. It's her dream, too, and she considers the closing of Lyn Evans only to be a reboot. She found an investor — longtime retail executive Charlie White who will finance the eventual reopening of the four stores (including one in Wellesley at a location to be determined) and the strengthening of the business's online presence.

Interviewed in the largely empty Church Street store late this summer, Jenn detailed how she intends to carry forward her mother's legacy by integrating the fashions favored by longtime customers with those preferred by new ones.

"We're trying to bring in more updated brands and keep those favorite ones," Jenn said. "We're thinking about what worked and bring in some newness. We'll be a little bit modernized." For example, Jenn envisioned embroidered, bell sleeve, and plaid styles to find room on the stores' racks alongside the styles that customers expect to always find at Lyn Evans.

"The goal is to continue having the grandma, mom, and daughter all walk out with things they like," she added.

Jenn initially observed her parents' work ethics at home, and how they balanced the demands of work with domestic duties. Her first job at Lyn Evans came during high school, when she helped manage the warehouse. She has never worked anywhere else, and every position she has held within the company prepared her for her current role as senior buyer and vice president.

While putting her own stamp on Lyn Evans, Jenn intends to carry forward the values that marked her parents' approach to business.

"My mom and dad worked all day, every day," she said. "They also made sure the people behind Lyn Evans were a family. The people who work at the stores are friends on the outside, and some have been here more than 25 years."

White said he knew he wanted to put his money behind Lyn Evans after meeting Jenn and Stan Shotkus. "What appealed to me was how they're deeply engaged with the community," he said. "To join a brickand-mortar store with an internet presence is important, but just as important is how strong the staff is. You have that here."

For Jenn, she's combining the excitement of traveling to fashion shows with the duty of carrying forward her mother's legacy. "Now I get to start this little journey myself," she said. "This is the beginning of my career while still following the path of my mom's career."

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## business "escape there for pizza"

#### They're Still Talking about Joe at Old School Italian Pizzeria

Customers of Old School Italian Pizzeria still tell Sarah Perdoni stories about her late husband, Joe Perdoni, Jr. Whether it was Joe giving a pep talk to a kid, listening to an adult unload his problems, supporting a youth sports league, or helping someone in need, customers keep coming back to relive those memories with Sarah.

"His heart matched his size," Sarah said of Joe, who played football for his hometown Wellesley High School Raiders and then the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets.

Joe was only five years into his dream of owning and operating his own business when he died suddenly in May 2015. Sarah never thought twice about keeping the pizzeria open and running it herself.

"I felt like I had to be here, to let everybody keep talking about him," she said.

Sarah and Joe would have observed their 15th year of marriage in 2017. They eloped to Italy two months after meeting. "When you know, you know," she said. Sarah, who grew up in Dover,



lost her job in financial services during the recession of the late '00s. In 2010, she and Joe spotted a vacant storefront at 552 Washington Street in Wellesley Square and figured if there was ever a time to open a pizzeria, it was right then and there. "It was something he wanted to do," Sarah said. "He loved people. He was a really good salesman."

Other than a few slight changes to the menu, Old School Italian Pizzeria remains just as Joe had left it. People of all ages escape there for pizza or a sub and get lost in wall-to-wall memorabilia of Boston sports and 20th century popular culture. Pictures of Joe with Sarah and their children, Joey and Reece, can be found in various spots, hanging alongside framed portraits of Joe in his various football uniforms.

Sarah credits the restaurant's longtime manager, Charlie Doherty, and many other employees, with helping her continue operating. Joey, 12, helps out once in a while, while 10-year-old Reece tackles just about any duty with excitement.

Whenever Sarah gets stuck making a business decision, she asks herself, "What would Joe do?" She added, "I just take his lead. He did all the hard part. He was often here 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I couldn't let all of his hard work slip away by vacating this business. It would almost be a slap to his face not to keep it up."

Wellesley residents are certainly lucky to have these continuing businesses operate in their town.



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# Losing It New Research Offers New Hope for Weight Loss



when the gray, chilly days of winter envelop us hardy New England souls, we know exactly how to cope: brew some hot chocolate and bring on the cookies. But, in the season of eggnog and stuffing, many of us struggle with extra pounds. We feel indebted to bulky sweaters and camouflaging down coats. Come January, we look to the New Year for a reset and promise ourselves: "This is the year! This time I am going to lose that weight."

In the end, though, the question is: How? A meander down the aisle at local grocery stores might utterly baffle dieters looking for guidance in the vast and teeming weight loss ecosphere. Diets come and go with alarming velocity. "With all the revolving information out there, people are really confused," says psychologist Dr. Marilou Shaughnessy. "Eat this, don't eat that. It's better to reframe the question: How am I going to take care of myself?"

The 60-billion-dollar diet industry has made a big business out of sorting foods into easy-tounderstand categories. "Messaging matters," says Jonah Soolman, a Wellesley-based nutritionist. "People get the idea that food is clean or unclean, healthy or unhealthy. In our practice, we



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promote the idea that all food can be acceptable in some way." Indeed, multiple trends such as clean eating, the Paleo diet, intermittent fasting, early calorie loading, the Whole30 plan, not to mention powders and shakes, are enough to make the strongest among us head straight to the chip bag or a chocolate bar.

"The truth is that diets don't work," says Dr. Sheila Partridge, a bariatric surgeon at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. "Statistics show that only one out of 100 people will be able to keep the weight off after a diet." Studies bear out the sad fact that the success of traditional diets is extremely limited.

"People think, eat less and exercise more, and you'll keep the pounds off," says Soolman, "and for many, it's just not true." The conventional wisdom scolds us with the maxim that weight loss is mind over (very stubborn) matter but that old-school thinking isn't supported by current data. "It is so difficult because there is so much shame associated with extra pounds," says Dr. Shaughnessy. "It's heartbreaking."



The notion that people just aren't trying hard enough is frustrating too for people working with those trying to slim down. "It's not their fault; it's not willpower or discipline," says Soolman. "It's just biology; our bodies just so often do not respond to dieting." As science begins to untangle the complexities of weight loss, some subtle and overt barriers to success are being uncovered. In fact, encouraging research shows that a host of outside factors, some totally untethered to food consumption, can impact an individual's quest to shed pounds.

For example, researchers have been paying close attention to the connection between an individual's microbiome and weight loss. "The microbiome is the ecosystem we co-evolved with. There are trillions of microorganisms in our body, mostly in our gut," explains Dr. Janine Pardo, of the Weston Internal Medicine and Wellness Center. "They are involved in our inflammation response and in our ability to burn calories." If a person's microbiome is out of balance due to poor diet, stress, or lack of sleep, inflammation increases, which in turn encourages the body to hold on to excess weight. If the inflammation 'switch' is constantly on, the body's response can lead to cardiovascular disease or stroke. "The foods we consume have a direct impact on the balance of the bacteria," says Dr. Pardo. "Sugar, for example, will promote inflammation, versus a food like kale, which will promote a healthier balance and promote 'good bugs,' so to speak." Coaching the MIND Training the BODY Moving the SOUL





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If our bodies are an assembly of highly sophisticated interconnected systems, it makes sense that what we consume impacts the whole organism. Barbara Southcote, a health services nutritionist at Wellesley College, incorporates that thinking when counseling young women. "I provide students with medical nutrition therapy based on whole foods that naturally support the microbiome and discuss adding foods with an antiinflammatory effect," she says.

Microbiomes are unique to each person. "They are as individual as a fingerprint, so even healthy foods might promote inflammation in certain people. It can be super frustrating," says Dr. Pardo. "You hit a [weight loss] plateau and don't understand what the problem is." A health professional can assess a microbiome through a stool sample and mouth swab. In addition, there are lab tests that can pinpoint variables within the norm. "This is at the forefront of evidence-based research. The science is there and it's irrefutable," says Dr. Pardo.

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The study of epigenetics is another area of excitement for researchers. "It is the science of how our genes are shaped by our environment, which includes food," says Dr. Pardo. Scientists have discovered that environmental factors like food, sleep, or stress trigger our genes, either silencing them or stimulating them. A person can be eating healthy food but it can be a mismatch for their distinct genetic mutation. "Stressors can cause overactive genes," she says. "We can see changes happen on a cellular level." Dr. Pardo educates her patients on this new research. She says, "We need to be thinking about their microbiome and their epigenetics, because they can be a huge barrier for someone maintaining a healthy weight."

Pardo cautions that biology is not necessarily destiny, however. The fundamentals of weight loss still apply to some extent. "But the evolution of the science has reinforced those core principals," she says. "It is so empowering for people to not feel like a victim of their own genetic makeup and know that there are some very simple things they can do."

So, in this brave new world of cellular detective work and individual investigation, is there no place for some of the weight-loss trends in healthy eating? "Some of the big programs like Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig still can have value. They provide a lot of tools and support systems, and they are affordable," says Dr. Shaughnessy. Other approaches like the Whole30 diet pass muster with the experts as well, if only as a starting point for a more generally healthy approach to eating. "These diet platforms can be a great way for people to do their own self investigation, and they can be somewhat sustainable," says Dr. Pardo. And, of course, cutting out empty calories from highly processed foods and beverages gets a collective thumbs up.

But the best method to bring about permanent change may be as simple as listening to the body's conversation with the brain. "We need to get people to pay more attention to the internal signals that their bodies are sending them," says Soolman. "We need to be able to trust our bodies to tell us when we are hungry or full." Experts agree on giving ourselves a break. "Change of any kind is difficult and slow to happen," says Southcote. "I try to encourage my students to come up with one goal or change and try it for a month and go from there."







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# Dinner for 90

LISA LESLIE HENDERSON writer



**it's a busy** afternoon in the kitchen for Wellesley resident Mary Menino. Many of the 90 guests she's anticipating for dinner arrived earlier in the day and are making themselves at home, playing cards, and chatting, as Mary orchestrates the final preparations. She has a full crew at work in the kitchen, adding fresh springs of thyme to the roast beef, mixing lemon garlic dressing for the kale salad, placing roasted carrots and potatoes on serving platters, and crisping the crust on the blueberry and apple pies. It's Christmas day at the Bristol Lodge and Mary and her crew want to ensure that every dinner guest feels welcome and is well fed.

Not familiar with the Bristol Lodge? While the name may conjure images of an elegant mountain resort, with breathtaking views and roaring fires in oversized stone fireplaces, which hosts elegant dinners with festive cocktails for families that have been booking holiday stays for generations, it is actually a soup kitchen located in the basement of the Immanuel United Methodist clockwise from left: Mary Menino, Barbara Fullerton, Sue Brewster, and Sue Newbury



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Church on the corner of Moody and Cherry Streets in Waltham. It's a warm and friendly place, particularly on Christmas night when the soup kitchen opens its doors to anyone in need of a hot, nutritious meal.

The Bristol Lodge has been providing evening meals to people who are hungry, 365 days a year, for over three decades. In addition to offering a daily supper, the Lodge operates an on-premise food pantry and a monthly mobile food program that stocks fresh produce and dairy products, as well as frozen soup and high-protein items, free of charge. The Lodge is one of several programs in Greater Boston run by the Middlesex Human Service Agency (MHSA).

Mary and her supporting cast of volunteers are staples at the Bristol Lodge. She has been organizing, preparing, and serving meals to the



*left:* (*l* to *r*) *Phyllis Gold, Tare Newbury, and Dave Thielschur right: Sarah Smith preparing beets from Land's Sake Farm* 

Lodge's dinner guests for over 25 years. Mary became involved with the Lodge through First Parish Church in Weston; the Unitarian church's Outreach Committee had committed to providing a hot meal for Lodge guests on the fourth Wednesday of every month and was looking for someone to head up the effort. Mary answered the call. "It was the easiest volunteer position available," Mary says, half jokingly. Weston resident Gene Miller, who often works alongside Mary in the Lodge's kitchen, estimates that Mary and her volunteers have prepared and served over 10,000 meals to Bristol Lodge guests over the years.

While ease may have brought Mary to the Lodge, a desire to feed people who are hungry has sustained her interest. Today, one out of every 10 persons in Massachusetts is food insecure notes the nonprofit Project Bread, which defines the term to mean as not having reliable access to enough food for health and an active lifestyle. For Mary, this is

"Mary and her volunteers have prepared and served over 10,000 meals to Bristol Lodge guests over the years"









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#### good works "treated with dignity"

not an empty statistic; she knows the names, faces, and often the food preferences of many of the hungry that live or work in the community. "Hunger is not just a challenge for people over there," Mary explains, "It is a challenge for people *right* here."

Who comprises this 10 percent and why are they hungry? "I have fed men and women of all ages and every circumstance," Mary explains. "The common denominator is that they don't have enough money to cover their expenses."

Food insecurity can be an ongoing challenge for people who are unemployable as a result of disability, trauma, or mental health issues. Hunger can become a chronic issue for those who are experiencing a structural change in their household—death of a spouse, divorce, and/or responsibility for aging parents or a sick child—circumstances that can significantly, and often permanently, alter their income and/or expenses.

When cash is tight because of a decrease in income—think loss of a job, reduction in hours, or the need to use unpaid sick or personal days—or an increase in expenses—think medical bills

#### Food as Medicine

If you've ever skipped a meal or two, you may be familiar with the headaches, shakiness, lethargy, and irritation that develop when your blood sugar dips low and your appetite-related hormones get out of balance. Poor health outcomes are more severe when this happens frequently. For adults, chronic hunger increases the risk of obesity (because of the lack of access to healthier options), hypertension, and diabetes. For children, chronic hunger can manifest as asthma, anemia, and malnutrition. Both children and adults often develop psychological and behavioral health issues, which have downstream effects including poor educational outcomes, decreased labor productivity, increased health care costs, and higher crime rates. It is a matter of time before an individual's hunger can become a costly societal challenge.

Recognizing the vital connection between nutrition and health, Boston Medical Center (BMC) opened an on-premise Preventive Food Pantry that enables BMC health providers to write "prescriptions" for supplemental foods that promote physical health, prevent future illness, and facilitate recovery in their patients. On average, the pantry supplies over 50,000 pounds of food per month to more than 1,800 families in the Boston area. That's 7,000 people per month—40 percent of whom are children. Many of the beneficiaries are living with cancer, HIV/AIDS, inflammatory bowel disease, or other chronic conditions and are often lower-income families unable to get fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition to obtaining healthy food from the pantry, BMC patients also learn to cook nutritious meals at BMC's Demonstration Kitchen. or unexpected home or auto repairs—or a significant mismatch between the income and expenses, food insecurity can be a shortterm struggle. "Tightening the belt," sacrificing food and/or nutrition in favor of making fixed payments like rent, mortgage, utilities, car payment, or medicine, is often a go-to strategy in this situation. Success hinges, however, on how long one can go without adequate cash to pay the bills.

Today, 63 percent of Americans do not have sufficient savings to cover a \$500 emergency, according to a recent study by The Pew Charitable Trust. Accumulating ample savings can be particularly challenging in cities like Boston that have a high cost of living: housing costs are 94 percent higher here than the national average, childcare costs are the second highest in the country, and many have significant student loan debt. It takes a higher wage to earn a living wage, and to save, in these parts.

Unfortunately, that means that financial shocks can quickly, and abruptly, transport people from being full to being hungry. (The exception, of course, is in situations where there is external financial support—from friends and/or family, for example.)

How common are financial shocks? Sixty percent of households have experienced one or more financial shocks during the last 12 months. Like hunger, financial shocks are highly democratic. They happen at the same rate to people of all ages, ethnicities, and incomes. What is less egalitarian is how big of a

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financial shock a household can absorb and how quickly it can recover.

Hunger isn't always about food. In addition to feeling physical hunger, the frustration, misunderstanding, judgment, and shame that often accompany food insecurity can leave people famished for dignity. "We share the same desire to be treated with dignity; we all want to be seen, heard, acknowledged, and understood, especially when something doesn't feel right," explains Dr. Donna Hicks, an expert in international conflict resolution at Harvard University. "We have an inborn reaction to being treated unfairly, and a lot of conflict and war has resulted from it."

#### **One Good Deed Promotes Another**

Studies show offering support and kindness to others, even in little ways, not only benefits the recipient but also reduces stress in the givers.

"Helping others is one of the most rewarding tasks one can do," says Wellesley resident Ruthie Covo, a senior at St. Paul's School. A Turkish family sheltered Ruthie's great grandmother after she was orphaned during the Armenian Genocide. American missionaries took her great grandmother in permanently and educated her through childhood. "If it was not for these people going beyond their call of duty to help my great grandmother achieve success, then I would not be where I am today," Ruthie says.

As a high school freshman, Ruthie volunteered at the Wellesley Food Pantry (WFP) during school vacations. She sorted food and delivered groceries to patrons. She turned surplus ingredients, such as canned pumpkin, into baked goods, which found favor with WFP patrons. This past summer, Ruthie extended her culinary efforts to the Women's Lunch Place, a community that provides nutritious breakfast and lunch, along with education, social programs, and advocacy for low-income and homeless women in Boston.

"Before my work with various food pantries and shelters, I did not know what it meant to give back to my community," Ruthie explains. "Through my volunteering, I have learned that with just a few hours of your time and energy, tens of hundreds of people can be assisted."

For more information, visit www.womenslunchplace.org. Or, follow Ruthie's blog https://thebakedbreadproject.wordpress.com and get inspired!



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"When people come through the food line, we gently look them in the eye and call them by name," Mary explains. "Rather than automatically putting food on people's plates, we ask them what they would like — they get





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 SUPPORT THE RIDE FOR FOOD (September), the annual fundraiser for Wellesley Food Pantry; and Scouting for Food Drive (first Saturday in

November) and Stamp Out Hunger/Postal Food Drive (Saturday of Mother's Day Weekend). These drives stock the WFP's shelves before Thanksgiving and in early summer when school lunches end for the year. Visit www.wellesleyfoodpantry.org.

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### good works "generosity and goodness"

to choose. After dinner, we take dessert to the tables on a tray and let people select what they want."

The quality of the food itself can also affirm guests' dignity. The First Parish crew is committed to providing guests with a delicious and nutritious meal composed of "a protein, salad, starch, and vegetable—the kind of meal my mother provided for us," Mary says. During the growing season, fruits and vegetables are grown and donated by Land's Sake, an organic farm in Weston. Support from Weston's Conservation Commission enables the farm to give a significant portion of their annual harvest—over \$62,000 worth of produce in 2016—to hunger relief organizations, including the Bristol Lodge, St. Julia Parish, and the Weston Council on Aging.

"People know when our produce comes from Land's Sake," Mary explains. "They'll say, 'These vegetables are so fresh, they must have come from that farm in your town."

Volunteers at the Lodge also leave feeling well fed. Some say they gain perspective, feeling a renewed sense of gratitude for their lives. Others describe feeling nourished from being part of a community and from experiencing authentic human generosity and goodness. One volunteer reports learning something every time she comes. "A year ago, one guest told me how meditation helped him manage the chaos in his life and encouraged me to give it a try. He was spot on. It's changing my life."

"Most people say they would like to help out every month, but life often gets in the way," Mary says. She tries to make it easy by offering multiple ways to participate. Some contribute by sourcing recipes, purchasing ingredients, or preparing food ahead of time. Others come early to warm the main course and prepare the sides, and set the tables; others arrive just before dinner to serve guests and help clean up. "It's a pretty efficient operation," Mary explains. "Everyone is fed and on their way out the door by 6 p.m."

Perhaps the Lodge's ability to feed volunteers and guests alike, and on multiple levels, is what makes this church basement feel like a warm and welcoming mountain resort on Christmas night—and every other night of the year.

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# The Holidays After a Recent Divorce

Making Sure the Kids Will Be All Right

ALEXANDRA HALL writer



the first Christmas after my divorce came on like a freight train. In the months before it, I'd worked carefully to absorb and follow all of the advice from experts' books, therapists, and friends. Plus, as a kid of divorce myself, I instinctively understood those crucial golden rules for divorced parents: never argue with your ex in front of the kids or make kids feel like they need to choose sides; make sure they understand that the split wasn't their fault; and be crystal-clear that they'll always be loved by both parents, no matter what's to come.

I felt sure my ex and I were acing all of the above. But even still, once that first holiday season hit, there was no preparing me for how suddenly different the scene around the Christmas tree felt compared with the year just before it, when the whole family had celebrated together. And as hard as I tried to keep up the same traditions (cookie-making, tree-decorating, and such) for my two young kids, they and I quietly—if not always silently—still felt the change.

What I didn't know at the time was just how many other parents and kids out there were experiencing that very same feeling.

"Driving around town during the holidays, every house is seemingly decorated with wreaths and lights and glowing windows, and, from the outside, they all seem like the most beautiful and perfect, joyful family homes," remembers Jessica Johnson (not her real name), a Wellesley mom

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"Kids are very good at getting used to changes. As long as they have a bedrock of love and aren't forced to choose sides, they can be incredibly resilient." -Tanya Gurevich

of four kids. She says she couldn't help but contrast that with her own situation. "Right after a divorce, that can seem extremely lonely."

Even tougher, still: This time of year may be the most important one of all for parents to put our own emotions on the back-burner, no matter how difficult that may be, so our kids can just feel a safe sense of family connection.

"The first Christmas when my kids were with my ex, I remember thinking, 'Oh my God,'" says Cheryl LaMee, also a divorced mom from Wellesley. "But I remember telling myself, 'Time to put your big girl pants on. I'm not going to lie to my kids and pretend everything is the same, but I've got to show them that life goes on."

Finding that balance during the initial post-divorce holidays can be one of the most crucial challenges we face, says Steve Ballard, a Wellesley divorce attorney who volunteers his time and expertise as a board member of the nonprofit Wellesley Divorce Center. "Chanukah and Christmas magnify a lot of issues for any family, but especially so when parents have separated." Ballard says that one of the biggest issues that comes up is deciding and dividing where and when the kids will spend their holiday time.

"There are so many different strategies," he says. "Interfaith families can take advantage of the win-win of saying, 'You take them on Chanukah, I'll take them on Christmas.' Or, if everyone celebrates Christmas, plenty of parents will switch off, agreeing that one will have the kids on Christmas morning and the other will in the afternoon. And then they alternate that each year."

Meanwhile, some parents make the decision to spend the first holiday together for the sake of the kids' comfort. "Do we bring the other parent into the home right after a divorce? It all depends on the relationship between the two parents," says Tanya Gurevich, a Needham therapist and mediator specializing in divorce. "Some are amicable, or can manage to put their differences aside for that time, and it works. But the risk of doing that is confusing the children into thinking their parents are getting back together. If parents are consistent in saying that they won't be reuniting but are still celebrating together, I've seen everyone under one roof that first holiday be very good for kids."

And then, somehow, there are parents who basically want to kill one another and still manage for the holidays.

Johnson recalls just how difficult it was to put her resentment toward her ex aside on that first Christmas and welcome him back into the house. "We were very acrimonious," she admits. "It was like a sucker punch to have to put that anger to the side. But we agreed that the kids' feelings had to be the priority, so we just needed to power through for their sake."

Even amicable splits can pose huge challenges when you are trying to create a sense of normalcy. "It's definitely raw, those first couple of holidays," says Haven Tyler, a Newton mom of three. "My ex and I were friendly, so we figured he should come over and spend Christmas day with us. But it was so soon after [the divorce] that I found myself feeling frantic. And looking back, I know I overcompensated—basically turning myself into a crazy Martha Stewart mom who tried too hard to make everything perfect for everyone. I know we overcompensated with gifts, too—buying the kids too much to distract them from the situation." Fortunately that urge, she says, faded quickly. After that first year they moved on to celebrating separately, and now the kids get one big gift each from each parent. "It's a more modest holiday. We definitely still have fun, but it's much more authentic."

Speaking of gifts, Ballard has some advice, given the conflicts he's seen arise with clients: "With something like holiday wish lists, be as communicative as possible in advance with your ex about who will get what, and do your best to be reasonable in dividing up who will buy what. If not, it can turn into a competitive situation, with parents trying to outdo one another with extravagant presents. That only heightens the tension, and kids sense it."

Which brings up yet another point: The all-important quest to find a way to put our kids' needs first isn't only about avoiding fights with our exes in front of them; there are other, more subtle pitfalls. "Often without even knowing it, parents will put their kids in the middle, especially during the holidays, by telling them how sad they'll be not to be with them if it's the other parent's time to have them," says Gurevich. "This puts unfair pressure on a child, and makes them feel guilty for having a good time with the other parent during the holiday." It also falls into what experts refer to as "parentification"—a form of role reversal, in which a child is inappropriately



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given the role of meeting the emotional needs of the parent. Asking a child to fill a parent's void is unfair— and potentially destructive.

"Sometimes I think that it's the parents who are more worried about change than kids," she adds. "Kids are very good at getting used to changes. As long as they have a bedrock of love and aren't forced to choose sides, they can be incredibly resilient."

And that same resilience usually winds up extending to parents, too. In one form or another, it often comes with the realization that embracing change is the fundamental nature of simply being a family. "We put so much pressure to be as happy as possible and all together on this

"Embracing change in good time showed my kids it was okay to do the same."

-Alexandra Hall

one holiday, but that just can't happen every year," says LaMee. "After a little while I saw my own parents watch their grown kids not be able to make it. And one year one of my older kids wanted to spend it with their spouse's family. Divorce happens, but it's just one of the ways that families evolve."

Johnson echoes that learned perspective. Those joyfully dressed-up holiday windows that used to magnify her loneliness are now, years later, more a window into something else for her. "Who knows what's going on inside the houses?" she says. "Families go through all kinds of hurt and loss. The holidays make us think we need to be perfectly happy, but real life never is. Once you get past that first year and realize there's no such thing as perfection, it gets so much easier," she says.

Exponentially easier, I'm here to testify. Embracing change in good time showed my kids it was okay to do the same. The next Christmas, we started a new tradition: reviving my Danish grandmother's craft of intricately cut paper snowflakes, caught on video so that in the following years we'd never forget how to create them—or the goofy laughs we had making them.

And then eventually in the years that followed, we embraced even more change, morphing from a family of three in which I shared custody of my two grammar school-aged kids, into a blended family of six. Every Christmas we've all had together has been glorious, with all of us under one roof (for at least most of the day): my two biological kids, my two stepkids, and their dad—the guy I fell in love with and married. But here's the rub: This year my stepson will graduate from high school. My stepdaughter is halfway through college. By all rights, that means we're not just sharing custody of our little kids with my ex, we're sharing custody of our much bigger kids with the universe at large. And soon enough, the little kids will follow that same natural path. Our days all under one roof are numbered.

If the first Christmas after my divorce taught me to embrace change, it also prepared me to embrace the flip side of that change: When we manage to get lucky enough to wind up under the same roof, we revel in it, and don't let a moment of it go by without appreciating it.



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# **Meet Midge Connolly**

Interim Superintendent of the Weston Public Schools

ANNUNZIATA VARELA writer



**marguerite** "Midge" Connolly grew up in the middle of seven children, five of whom were boys, in a family that was "an automatic football team. "There was always a lot of humor and a strong sense of family," remembers Connolly. Still close with her siblings, the new interim superintendent of the Weston Public Schools kicked off her tenure last spring with full steam, three months earlier than expected. With compelling personal experiences, coupled with an extensive background in school administration, teaching, and curriculum development, Connolly might be just the leader to keep Weston Public Schools on top.

#### Laying the Foundation

A Newton North High School graduate, Connolly, 51, explains that her parents chose Newton for the schools "so we'd have the best educational opportunities possible." It wasn't long before

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A standout in athletics, Connolly was recently inducted into her high school hall of fame for her performance in volleyball, basketball, lacrosse, and track, attributing her successes to the positive influence of her parents. Her late mother, Peggy, competed at Senior Olympic volleyball tournaments, and her late father, Gerald, was her Little League coach. "They taught us many life lessons, like being kind to others, doing your best, and seizing opportunities whenever you can."

Her father was an electrical engineer for Boston Edison for 42 years while her mother worked as a crossing guard and as a receptionist at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, always choosing jobs that allowed her to be present for the children. "They couldn't pay for seven children to go to college, but what they gave us was the foundation and the confidence that we could do it," explains Connolly.

Connolly went to Boston College as a double major in elementary and moderate special needs education, working in restaurants throughout her time there to pay her way, while playing varsity volleyball and lacrosse. After spending a year teaching in Compton, California, she remembers



how the experience was "the first time I saw what abject poverty was and what an impact schools can have—or not—on children."

She earned additional graduate and doctoral degrees from Boston College in severe special education and curriculum and instruction, respectively. Connolly also warmly recounts how her grandfather "preceded" her at Harvard where she received a graduate degree in administration, planning, and public policy. "He was an Irish immigrant who, upon arriving in this country, worked on the construction of Harvard Stadium."

But perhaps the most impactful event both personally and professionally was the terror attacks of September 11th. Connolly's brother, Major David Scott Connolly, was an assistant district attorney in Suffolk County who re-enlisted in the Army after 9/11 and was later killed in Afghanistan. "It changed my life, and I now understand the true meaning of sacrifice. I feel more of a sense of urgency to take advantage of opportunities when they arise," says Connolly. "I try to do the best I can because you can't be sure of what's ahead, and it motivates much of the work that I do on behalf of children."

While working on her graduate and doctorate degrees, with the goal of one day becoming a superintendent, Connolly married Walter Devine and had two children. "Family has always been a priority to me, so I made sure that I was around to raise them, be their coach, or go to their games," recalls Connolly. Because



of that commitment, it was only during the high school years that Connolly put her goals of administration into a higher gear.

In fact, she advanced from Williams Elementary School principal in Newton to vice principal of Newton North High School while her daughter was a high school freshman. "She was worried, but I was excited," laughs Connolly. "The district gave me so many opportunities, and I wanted to give back." Today, their daughter attends Bard College and their son is a junior at Newton North High School.

#### At the Ready When Opportunity Knocked

Connolly was hired two years ago as the director of student services for Weston. "Special education in Weston is going through positive, significant changes to meet the individual needs of our kids. I wanted to carry on the work that came before me and build upon it. That's what drew me here," explains Connolly.

Pam B. Bator, assistant superintendent for district advancement for Weston Public Schools, distinctly remembers when Connolly first came to Weston. "It was clear that at the core of every meeting and every decision is the student," says Bator. "Because it is right for students is her mantra, and she holds us all to this truth."

Her colleagues couldn't agree more. Jennifer Truslow, who replaced Connolly as director of student services, has known her for more than a dozen years, working together in Newton Public Schools, when Connolly was the principal at Williams and Truslow was the assistant principal for student services at Brown Middle School. "She and I worked together on some tricky cases and I find Midge to be a strong, confident, and supportive leader who puts the needs of students at the center of everything she does," says Truslow. "Her intelligence and wonderful sense of



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humor draws people in. She is approachable and available to everyone, and welcomes feedback."

Bator echoes the sentiment and adds that, "Midge's experience in teaching and leading at every level, from elementary to high school, provides her with an understanding of the journey of a student, the expectations of and for faculty, and the extraordinarily difficult job of care givers in today's world. She is also dedicated to listening to and learning from those with diverse perspectives as they help inform what is best for each student."

From a young age through today, where being a teammate was weaved into just about every facet of her life, Connolly believes in the collaborative process. "The more voices is most often the better," admits Connolly. "And I have an open-door style of leadership. If I tell you to come to me or call, I mean it."

After an unexpected departure from the previous administrator, and decades preparing for this moment, Connolly was tapped by the School Committee for the superintendent position. A leader to help bring stability to the role and move the district in the right direction, Connolly notes the "incredible welcoming" she received. "We have tremendous intellect and resources in the faculty, staff, and families that most communities don't have. In addition, organizations like the Weston Education

Midge Connolly with Dr. Lee McCanne, Weston's Director of Technology and School Libraries

Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC), the PTO, and Weston PAC are what make Weston truly unique," Connolly expounds. "There is a passionate commitment of families for their children's education."

Pairing her belief in collaboration and collegiality with the makeup of a community that relies on one another to offer student opportunities, it's no surprise that her first order of major business is to prioritize the goals of Weston Public Schools. Through the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Planning for Success program is a proven vision and strategic planning process to help determine the general goals for the district and what every student needs in order to be successful. Kicking off in September, "This six-to-eight-month process will involve all members of the community, including parents, students, faculty, and other community members. We'll examine both academic and emotional needs, but also look at what those action steps need to be," explains Connolly.

While some may slow down when they achieve a goal, Connolly is just getting started. "To be able to be the superintendent in a system like Weston is both humbling and exciting. This is where I want to be."

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## artist profile

inspiration gallery imagination

# **Fantastic Shapes and Colors**

LISA ROGERS writer



george Creamer's abstract reliefs suggest the landscape and textures of the natural world, evoking its strength, brutality, and delicacy.

A push-pull tension extends to the viewer's response: there's the illusion created by painted surfaces, and the tactile experience of the chipboard substrate. There's movement and stillness, excitement and quietude.

Creamer, a Weston resident and former dean and professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, studied painting and sculpture at Middlebury College, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and at Yale University, where he received a master's degree in fine arts.

During his career, he's fabricated delightful twisting, spiraling wooden, linear sculptures, and large, light-emitting forms in fantastic shapes and colors.

Later, he created an installation, *Playhouse at 4 a.m.*, at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), inspired by the surrealist Alberto Giacometti's stage set-like sculpture, *The Palace at 4 a.m.*, and TV star Pee-wee Herman's fantasy "Playhouse." In Creamer's rendition, glowing curvilinear shapes interact with translucent, colorful geometric shapes to create a dazzling fantasy world that invites museum goers' participation.

His work has been exhibited at solo shows and installations, including the ICA, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, and several Boston galleries. He's also participated in group exhibitions, showing at, among many others, Lincoln's deCordova Sculpture Park and

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Museum, Brandeis University's Rose Art Museum, Yale University School of Art, and galleries in New York, Los Angeles, and at France's Euro-Disney Park.

For his current series, Creamer, who retired last year, has moved fulltilt in a new direction: using the unconventional material of chipboard as a substrate for his works.

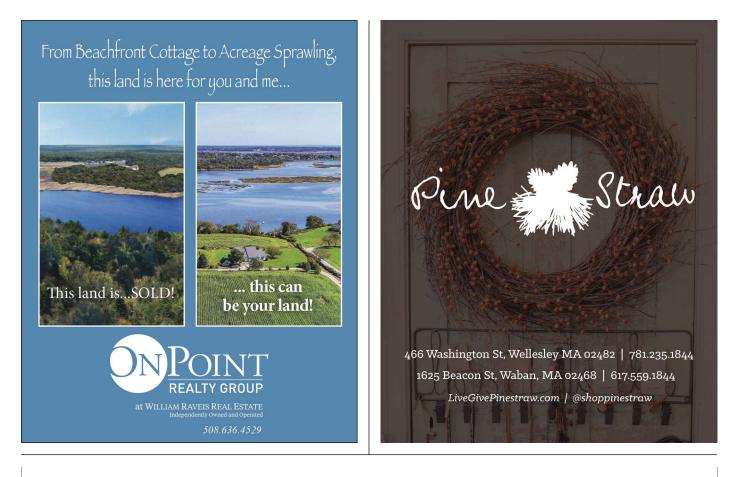
Retirement has granted him free time to dedicate to his art, and he's busier than ever.

"I've got too many approaches still awaiting fruition," he said during an interview at his studio in a converted garage. "I feel like I've been working at a fever pitch."

While his previous work often had a humorous quality, now he's taking a more sober approach. These new works "create an illusion — a

sense of space—on a tactile surface that's very active," Creamer added. "I like that they're complementary to one another. You're getting these two responses. From a distance, the works look very illusionist. When you get close up they seem very tactile, so they promote two types of viewing. The viewer senses an ongoing tension between those two." The art is seemingly simple, yet bold.

Creamer begins by sanding rectangular pieces of chipboard, about 24 inches high, to rid them of their sheen. He studies their surfaces, paying attention to the dynamic intersection created by the amalgamation of compressed wood chips, slivers, and bark. The flattening of these overlapping materials on a plane, Creamer notes, is reminiscent of analytic cubism, such as practiced by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



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#### artist profile "upbeat colors"

Next, Creamer adds elements that play with the chipboard's structure, a degraded material that he elevates through his artistic process. Depending on his response to the particular piece of wood, he might insert a polygon — often rectangular or triangular — into its surface. "I will play with different inserts," Creamer shared. "As a last resort, I will pull the color out and use wood putty, which mimics the substrate. Typically, I striate or scar a surface to give it texture for the paint to adhere to. Sometimes when I'm doing that, I see that it looks better. Rather than covering it over with paint, I leave it exposed. And some areas are excavated space."

"There's a lot of improvisation," he said. "There is no game plan."

Even though he begins each work with intention and creates parameters for it, he finds that intuition

takes over. "I let them talk to me," he said of his works in progress. "I can't force it."

In the studio, Creamer's works hang in rough order of their creation. He began this series by laying strict geometric shapes directly on the chipboard, using upbeat colors that suggest sticky notes.

"The earliest in this series were the most conservative and indebted



to Mondrian," Creamer noted. "Then I moved to a broader array of hues placed at varying angles."

Looking at them in sequence, it's as if a breeze has blown the shapes around and they have settled into a new pattern. Some seem as if an Alexander Calder sculpture has been flattened, its connecting arcs still giving the feeling of movement.

> "If you sit and look at my work for a while, they start to move," he said. "There's an actual, perceptual response that has the parts moving, which is indebted to Matisse's large *Dance*. Calder has a literal kinetic quality; whereas Matisse is more perceptual."

> One triptych began as three separate pieces, but Creamer felt they should be joined together. For Creamer, that piece again recalls Matisse, especially his environmental cutouts, which involve the viewer in a real way.









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#### artist profile "striking patterns and combinations"

Lately, Creamer has been excising shapes, completely cutting through the board. Into that void, he adds a plywood shape, perhaps painted, perhaps not. Gaps between the board and the inserted shape add light, puncturing the dense surface, somewhat reminiscent of spatialist artist Lucio Fontana's pierced canvases.

His shapes have become less strict in their geometry, and he now combines excised shapes with painted ones. The effect is even more layered and more organic.

"I work within the realm of possibilities," he said, "but usually the work intercedes, and I become a witness. I wait for the work to take off in its direction. It's a waiting game."

As Creamer talks about his process, his fingers move from shape to shape on one of his works, lingering on particularly striking patterns and combinations. "I was going to add more color," he muses, "but this one stopped me in midstream."

Creamer experiments with color by selecting from a stash of duct tape. Often, before committing to a contour or color for a work in progress, he'll fashion a shape out of tape and adhere it to the surface.

Some of his works are framed, and these he makes himself. One densely packed rectangle has a broad frame with a zigzag relief that complements its interior. Another sits deep within a white-painted border; others remain unframed, at least for the moment.

In the studio's center, Creamer is experimenting with display options for an upcoming show. Some works hang from the ceiling, so they can be viewed from both sides, and he's crafted a frame for many pieces, which sit on the floor as he ponders just how to present them.

"With any art statement, there's a balance between making something delicate and set against something scarred," Creamer said. The perceived "ugliness" of the chipboard combined with the reliefs commingles to make something satisfying—something that works not only for the artist, but for a viewer, too.

"People sense how exciting it would be to fabricate these reliefs," he said. As for himself, Creamer said, "These are probably the best works I've ever done."

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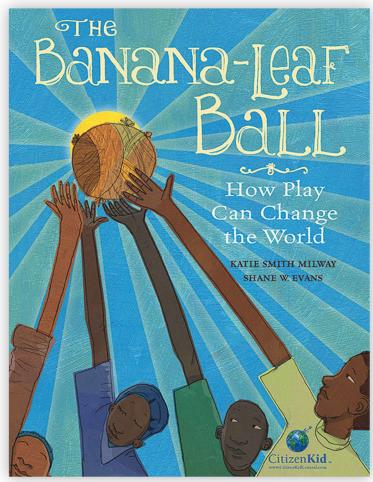
#### books

# One Banana Leaf at a Time

NAZ SIOSHANSI writer

in wellesley resident Katie Smith Milway's new book, *The Banana-Leaf Ball: How Play Can Change the World*, she tells the story of Deo Rukundo, a little boy who has to flee his home in Burundi and settle in Lukole, a refugee camp in northwestern Tanzania. On the night when his family realizes they have to immediately escape, Deo is forced to leave behind his prized possession, a banana-leaf ball, which is a soccer ball that he created by wrapping dried banana leaves around with twine. On his flight into the forest, he is separated from his family and manages to survive on rain water, wild fruit, and leaves. He is finally found by a fisherman, who brings him to Lukole.

At the camp, life can be somewhat normal when there is food, but when shortages occur, fights break out. Some boys form gangs, bullying others



for the little food or few possessions that they may still have. To comfort himself and remember home, Deo starts to make a new banana-leaf ball, but the dried leaves are soon stolen from him by the camp bully, Remy. A coach comes to the camp and places Deo and Remy on the same soccer team. The boys learn to play together and support each other. This is a turning point for Deo, and after the camp is closed and he is able to return home, he continues to coach the younger children in his town, teaching them how to work together via soccer.

The story of Deo is based on the actual childhood of Benjamin Nzobonankira from Burundi. In 1993, when Nzobonankira was 10 years old, he was forced to flee his village after the first democratically elected president of Burundi was killed. Like Deo, he was separated from his



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family and survived in a similar manner on what he could find in the forest. Luckily, he was reunited with his father and cousins at Lukole, but was heartbroken to learn that his mother and sister had not survived.

Similar to the characters in the book, the boys were bullied to give up their few possessions, and others were talked into joining militia gangs. In 2001, a coach from the organization Right to Play arrived at the camp. Right to Play helps children in refugee camps use sport and play as a means to overcome hardships they have faced. The belief is that the skills learned in playing sports can help model ways to create peaceful communities by finding ways to reduce conflict and overcome differences.

When Nzobonankira returned home in 2008, he helped create similar activities in his village, based on what he had learned through Right to Play. He eventually led Right to Play's national team in Burundi.

Benjamin Nzobonankira playing Follow the Leader with local children

"In my home country, I didn't spend a day without having a meal," shares Nzobonankira with Bill Littlefield in an interview on WBUR's *Only a Game.* "[When I was at Lukole, it] was very strange. Strange people there, strange conditions. Actually, I come to realize that, can life—will life be like this?" He also notes that only when he was playing soccer was he able to relax.

When Johann Koss, the Norwegian Olympic speed skater, started Right to Play, he had moments of self-doubt. On his first endeavor to help African refugees, he collected 13 tons of sports equipment from all over Norway and traveled down to Eritrea in Africa. When he met the country's president, Koss shared that he was not sure if he was right to



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## books "children are playing for the intrinsic value"

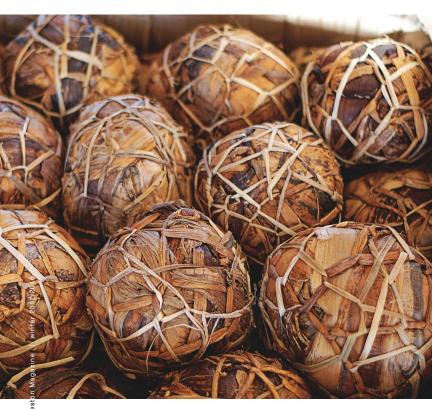
bring sports equipment and not food. The president reassured him that this made the nation feel like they were human ... that they were worth more than just being kept alive.

It is the impact of this type of social and emotional learning that drew Smith Milway to this story, which was an outgrowth of her previous book.

"In my earlier book, One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference, I focused on philanthropy, microfinance, and social entrepreneurship," Smith Milway says. "Kojo, a young boy in Ghana, buys one hen that lays eggs, which grow into other hens, until he becomes one of the largest chicken farmers in the country."

The resulting One Hen organization works to empower children to become social entrepreneurs that make a difference in their community and beyond.

Through the program, a small loan is provided to a group of children who then decide what product to make and sell. The children then pay back the loan and decide what portion of the profit to give to charity.





"We piloted One Hen at the Wellesley Middle School," Smith Milway says. "The largest surprise for everyone was the additional amount that the kids wanted to give to charity after the profits were calculated. I quickly realized that the program had no way to measure the impact of social and emotional learning that occurred. I knew that I wanted my next book to be focused on something that looks at social

left: Banana-leaf balls; bottom: Gabriel DuPont of Wellesley guiding big sister Elise in a trust-building game at the Banana-Leaf Ball launch at Wellesley Free Library



Wellesle

and emotional learning. When I was introduced to Nzobonankira, I knew I had found my story."

"A children's book is an exceptional medium with which to communicate," she continues. "The book is written to be reread many times-by both parents and children, so you are having an impact on a large audience. With The Banana-Leaf Ball, I think that many children can relate to a game where kids bridge a difference in an effort to win. It is so important to have unstructured play, a game that has no trophy or adult interference, but instead children are playing for the intrinsic value of the game itself."

Smith Milway continues to share that she had a focus group of neighborhood children to whom she would read drafts of the book."I would ask them, does this make sense? Is this what it would feel like to lose something you worked hard to create? What does it feel like to have someone you don't like on your team and then to win together? Oftentimes, the children would agree that they knew someone like Remy, who was a bully, but was really shaped by his circumstances. On a larger scale, the story of Deo is not very different from the story of young children in the inner city who are facing gang pressures."

Whether in the inner city, a refugee camp, or a suburban playground, recess can be intimidating to any child who is being bullied. At the end of her book, Smith Milway shares six organizations worldwide that use play and games as a means to build community and confidence. The games are also described so that you can use it with your own children or if you are coaching.

Smith Milway, who is a former Wellesley United Soccer parent coach, believes that through coaching and playing children can successfully overcome the differences that may separate them.

As Nzobonankira shared in his interview with Littlefield, "You have to love each other, even those who, maybe, you fled. You have to love them. And then, in that way, you become champion."

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# Exploring the World through Cookbooks

JANET MENDELSOHN writer



**you might** not think of cookbooks as travel guides, but they can be. Great ones, in fact. And not just because recipes give you a taste of a location's distinctive cuisine. When cookbook authors know a particular place inside and out, having lived there or having explored the territory in depth, they can whet our appetites for travel. Beyond standard introductions, these cookbook authors describe the history and culture of a place, taking us into the lives of people they meet. We sample the experience. We want more than recipes for signature dishes, local comfort foods, spice blends, or sauces. Suddenly we're thinking about flights and hotels, making vacation plans.

Looking for that kind of inspiration, I stop into Wellesley Books where I learn my quest is atypical.



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"People sometimes go on a trip to France, for instance, and when they return, they want to learn French cooking," says Marilyn Lustig, a longtime bookseller at the store. "They come in to see us specifically looking for French cookbooks. Other people will buy cookbooks with no intention of preparing recipes. They are drawn by the visual appeal of really good photography and design." But for travel ideas, she says, not so much. Pointing out their large food literature section ... memoirs, essays, histories, kitchen confidentials by chefs, farmers and foodies ... and shelves of useful travel guides, she told me, both are popular, although neither is quite what I mean.

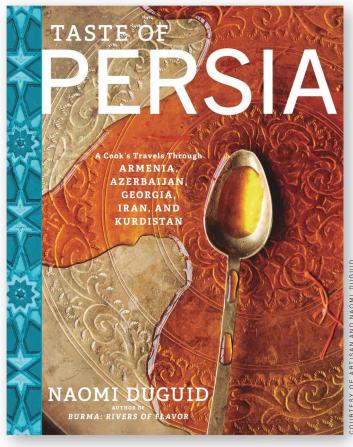
But then Lustig remembers a gem, *Deep Run Roots: Recipes and Stories from My Corner of the South* (Little, Brown and Company, 2016) by Vivian Howard. The book is closely connected to Howard's growing up on the coastal plains of Deep Run, North Carolina, where she returned as an adult, after working in New York, with renewed apprecia-

#### food & wine "cuisine with abundant variations"

tion for its simple food traditions. You might know Howard from her Emmy- and James Beard Award-winning PBS series *A Chef's Life* where she celebrates this style of Southern cooking. Her book is "not one that treats the South like one big region where everybody eats the same fried chicken, ribs, shrimp and grits, collard greens, and gumbo," she writes. "I interpret Southern cooking the way we understand French, Italian, and Chinese food: as a complex cuisine with abundant variations shaped by terrain, climate, and people."

Chapters are organized not by courses but by 24 ingredients that are mainstays of the region. Ground corn. Oysters. Sweet potatoes. Peanuts. Pecans. Turnips—meaning the entire family of bitter greens. And watermelon: Bacon-Wrapped Watermelon-Rind Pickles, and Pork Shoulder Steaks in Red Curry-Braised Watermelon.

Sausage gets a chapter. On the coastal plain it is preferred over country ham. They use every part of the pig. Howard describes the annual



ritual of putting up meat for winter, part of hog-killing day. But being frugal, most local cooks use it more for seasoning, a condiment to round out meals based on vegetables and grains. Traditionally meat of any kind is eaten just once or twice a week, she says. Another chapter, "Sweet Potatoes," begins like the others with a story. "Everything about Grandma's candied yams personified the woman who made them," Howard writes. "Grandma's version of the classic reflected the degree to which she was a realist, a truth talker, and a pragmatic farmer's wife. Too much sugar was a bad thing, and she warned me on many occasions with a stern look and a swat to the hand that I was 'plump enough.""

The North Carolina coast has jumped higher in my must-see list.

\* \* \*

Naomi Duguid's *Taste of Persia: A Cook's Travels Through Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and Kurdistan* (Artisan, 2016) might be the pinnacle of cookbook travel. Tucked among soup recipes is an essay on women in Iran. In the middle of great photographs and detailed recipes, Duguid tells us how she felt when, like the Iranian women, she began covering her head and body and what that experience taught her. Sandwiched between colorful photographs and recipes for Onion Salad with Barberries and Spinach Borani, a dish of thick yogurt and cooked vegetables topped with fried onions and walnuts, are these observations: "Unlike in Burma, where totalitarian rule left people frightened, in Iran I felt that people refused to be afraid, and instead tried to figure out ways of living their lives as fully and freely as possible. I walked around with my camera, knowing I was very obviously a foreigner, and felt no sense that people were eyeing me to take advantage. I walked on my own all over, and only at dusk in the rather deserted covered alleys of Yazd, ill-lit and buzzed by the occasional speeding motor-cycle, did I ever feel uneasy... [On public transportation] women were very welcoming and

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#### food & wine "delicious and easy to prepare"

generous to me. We shared sunflowers seeds and raisins, smiles and gestural conversations that felt relaxed and intimate."

Duguid includes more than 125 recipes in *Taste of Persia*, which received a James Beard Foundation Award for Best Book of the Year 2017, International. Among her other award-winning cookbooks is *Burma: Rivers of Flavor* (Artisan, 2012) in which she takes readers on boat trips and into a temple in Rangoon. Then she discusses Buddhism's central role in Burmese life.

Will I travel in Duguid's footsteps? Certainly not soon. But, like her, I relish a chance to expand my world through travel, food, and personal connections. So, maybe someday.

#### POTATO AND PUMPKIN SOUP

A simple country version of Jajuk—the Armenian name for yogurt soup. From Taste of Persia: A Cook's Travels Through Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, and Kurdistan by Naomi Duguid

- 2 cups large cubes unpeeled pumpkin or winter squash, or substitute 3 cups chopped zucchini
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped (2½ to 3 cups)
  1 tsp. sea salt, or to taste
- About ¼ tsp. powdered dried red chiles or cayenne ½ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, dill, or mint,
- or substitute 2 tsp. dried mint 1 cup plain full-fat yogurt, or as needed

Place the pumpkin or other squash and the potatoes in a pot, add about an inch of water, cover and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to maintain a medium boil and cook until the vegetables are very soft, about 25 minutes for pumpkin and winter squash, less for zucchini.

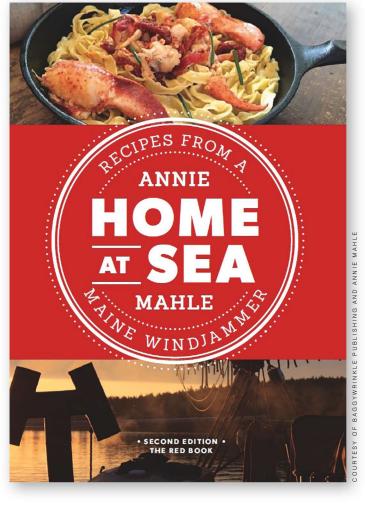
Drain, reserve the liquid, and set aside to cool for 30 minutes.

Remove and discard the skin from the pumpkin or winter squash. Transfer the pumpkin or squash and potatoes to a food processor and process to a smooth slurry.

Transfer to a bowl, add the salt, chiles or cayenne, and herbs and stir. Add the yogurt and stir to blend well. The texture will be thick yet pourable; thin it with a little of the cooking liquid or extra yogurt if you wish. Taste and adjust the seasoning if needed. Serve at room temperature.

NOTE: If you are making this in the summer and using zucchini, you might want to serve it chilled: Cover and refrigerate for an hour or so. If any liquid rises to the surface as it chills, just stir it back in before serving.

Serves 4 to 6



\* \* \*

Among my own favorites of the genre is *At Home, At Sea: Recipes from a Maine Windjammer* (Baggywrinkle Press, 2004) by Annie Mahle. If you've ever thought about spending a week aboard an old wooden schooner, or wondered what it's like to live on one all summer, raise children in its confines, share captain's duties with your spouse, and cook on a wood burning, cast iron stove, three meals a day for guests and crew, this cookbook is for you. Mahle, who trained at the Culinary Institute of America as well as under a Swiss chef, shares recipes and writes about her family's floating B&B, the J.&E. Riggin. She takes us down into the galley where she lights the antique woodstove at 4:30 a.m. to bake fresh breads and desserts before any-one's awake on deck. She introduces us to the Riggin, a National

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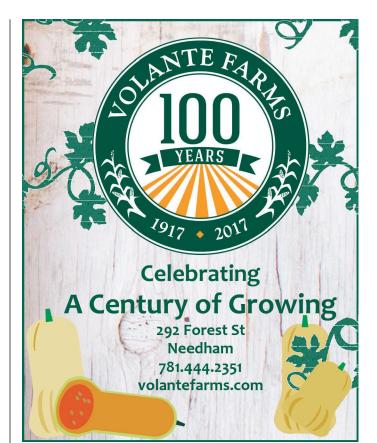
## **DANIELLE MEADE**



Over the past eleven years, Danielle Meade has straddled Boston Proper and the Metro West area specializing in Luxury Home sales. Danielle's career took off in 2007 when she held onsite sales positions for new construction developments in South Boston, Seaport and West Roxbury. Danielle executed and implemented all of Berkeley

Investments Residential Sales, selling 53 homes in just 21 months and has sold over \$50 million worth of property in recent years. She has recently taken the plunge in the suburban market working diligently with buyers and sellers. Danielle has innate knowledge of the Wayland and Sudbury markets but her expertise stretches as far as Boston, Weston, Wellesley, Framingham and Concord.

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#### **RED PEPPER JAM**

From At Home, At Sea: Recipes From a Maine Windjammer by Annie Mahle

- 4 large red bell peppers, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes 11/2 cups apple cider vinegar 21/2 cups sugar

Place the peppers in a food processor and pulse until minced. Sprinkle with the salt and let them sit for 30 minutes.

Rinse the peppers in cold water and drain the excess water. Transfer the peppers into a wide, heavy saucepan and add the red pepper flakes, vinegar, and sugar.

Bring the mixture to a boil and stir occasionally for 15 to 20 minutes or until a candy thermometer reads 220°F. Ladle the jam into hot, sterilized jars and seal. Alternatively, store in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

#### Makes 2 cups

#### CHICKEN PAPRIKA

From At Home, At Sea: Recipes From a Maine Windjammer by Annie Mahle

NOTE: If you plan to freeze or refrigerate this dish to serve later, set aside the sour cream. When you reheat, add the sour cream just before serving.

2 Tbsps.olive oil	1 Tbsp. minced garlic;
2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken	about 3 cloves
breasts or thighs, cut into	1½ Tbsps. paprika
1-inch pieces	1/4 cup tomato paste
1 tsp. kosher salt	1/2 cup red wine
Several grinds fresh black pepper	2 (14-oz.) cans diced tomatoes
2 cups diced onion;	Several dashes of
about 1 large onion	Worcestershire sauce
1 cup diced green bell pepper;	6 oz. button mushrooms, sliced
about 1 pepper	about 2 cups
	1/2 cup sour cream

Heat the oil in a large, wide stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the chicken, salt, and pepper and sauté for another 10 minutes or until the onion is translucent.

iced:

- Add the tomato paste and stir well for about a minute. Add the wine, tomatoes, and Worcestershire. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes or until the chicken is tender.
- Add the mushrooms and cook another 5 minutes. Stir in the sour cream and serve with noodles, potatoes, or polenta.

Serves 4 to 6

Historic Landmark built in 1927 as an oyster dredger. And she describes a typical week sailing on the windjammer in island-dotted Penobscot Bay so you know what to expect.

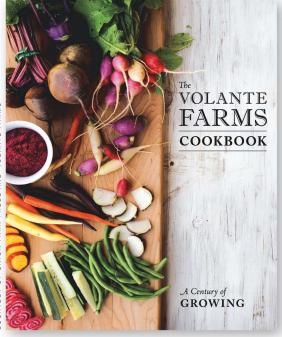
Last summer, I spent four nights aboard the Riggin for a knitting cruise, one of several themes scheduled each year including music and storytelling, quilting, and photography. Annie Mahle is an excellent chef. She offers cooking cruises where during part of each day she teaches menu planning and classes in preparing creative comfort foods, like those in her book.

Because she works in the tight quarters of a galley, Mahle thinks about efficiency as well as satisfying guests and crew, and these 260 recipes reflect that. From chicken paprika to lime pie, the dishes I've tried are delicious and easy to prepare in my own kitchen, with minimal pots and pans. Mahle's cookbook is available from Amazon or at www.mainewindjammer.com.

\* \* \*

I wish I'd read Jerusalem (Ten Speed Press, 2012) by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi before traveling to Israel the first time. Discovering it later, I learned more about the country from this cookbook than I did on a very good guided tour. Ottolenghi is Jewish and Tamimi is Palestinian. Both now work in London. They bring differing perspectives to a multicultural cookbook that is personal, informative, and chock full of tempting dishes. And the text provides a terrific introduction to the complicated place where they were born the same year on different sides-the Arab east, the Jewish west-of their native city.

"In the part of the world we are dealing with everybody wants to own everything," they write. "Existence feels so uncertain and so fragile that people fight fiercely and with great passion to hold onto things: land, culture, religious symbols, food-everything is in danger of being snatched away or of disappearing. The result is fiery arguments about ownership, about provenance, about who and what came first." They discuss why this is so, and give readers a lengthy, thoughtful history of the region from 332 B.C.E. to the present, all relevant to its food. Wonderful recipes include Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Fresh Figs, and



More Gift-Worthy Cookbooks

 MY GREEK FAMILY TABLE: FRESH REGIONAL RECIPES (Countryman Press, 2017) by Maria Benardis. With stories of summers cooking with her grandmother on a Greek island.
 MY TWO SOUTHS: BLENDING THE FLAVORS OF INDIA INTO A SOUTHERN KITCHEN (Running Press, 2016) by Asha Gomez. Recipes are rooted in Gomez's love of Deep-South cooking and Southern India flavors.

THE VOLANTE FARMS COOKBOOK: A CENTURY OF GROWING (Union Park Press, 2017) Four generations of the Volante family who have built a thriving farm in Needham. More than 100 seasonal recipes. Available at Volante Farms Stand or online at www.volantefarms.com.

■ IT'S ABOUT TIME: GREAT RECIPES FOR EVERYDAY LIFE (Steerforth, 2005) by Michael Schlow, executive chef and co-owner of area restaurants including Doretta Taverna & Raw Bar in Boston and Alta Strata in Wellesley.

Mejadra, an ancient dish popular throughout the Arab world and, of course, the popular Israeli breakfast or lunch dish, Shakshuka.

Ottolenghi's cookbook, Plenty More: Vibrant Vegetable Cooking from London's Ottolenghi (Ten Speed Press, 2014), was a New York Times bestseller. He owns five restaurants in London, including one that bears his name where Tamimi is head chef. Their new book has 120 recipes from Jerusalem's Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities. Happy reading and happy eating!

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#### Lyn Evans VIP Closing Party



BY SHAUNA EPS нотоз

7

**Needham Bank METCO Luncheon** 



David Lussier, Deborah Ward, Eric Morse, Kalise Wornum, and Steve Walls

Power in the Words of Women at Eileen Fisher



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Wellesley Weston Chabad Torah Dedication Ceremony



1 Julie Silk, Marina Shektman, Svetlana Silverman, Marcy Rosenberg, Judy Katz, Geni Bleich, Debbie Nicoletti, and Lauren Grinberg 2 Scribe Haim Zirkind 3 Geni Bleich and Rabbi Moshe Bleich





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### JEANNE RACIOPPI

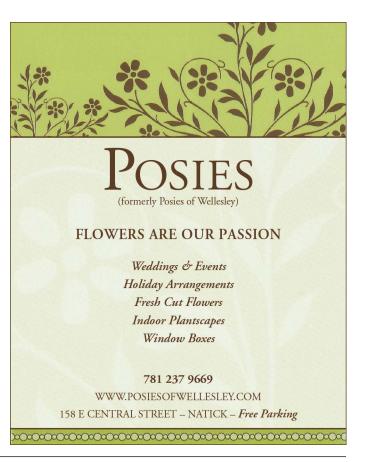
Jeanne Racioppi is the Founder and President of Jeanne Racioppi Designs previously Williams and Spade; a full-service interior design firm that handles projects throughout the United States and Canada. She is involved in every aspect of interior design, renovation, new construction and home management.

Jeanne has now added Real Estate

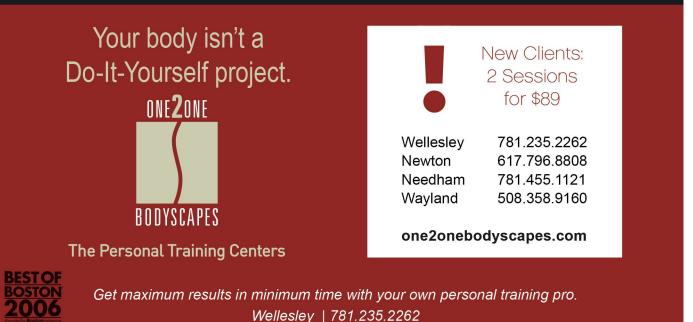
sales to her resume. Having joined forces with fashion stylist Francesca Purcell, the two have formed the Racioppi Purcell Group. Both bring experience in design and sales to the Benoit Mizner Simon team, bringing home buying to another level.

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Cambridge Fall Classic 5K









1 Cambridge Fall Classic team members 2 Paul and Annie Rolincik 3 Carol and 4 Annie Rolincik, Carol Chaoui, Carol Chaoui, Anne Jackowitz, and Paul Jackowitz

Ireland Funds Nantucket Celebration



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Third Annual Arts on the Green Evening at Elm Bank



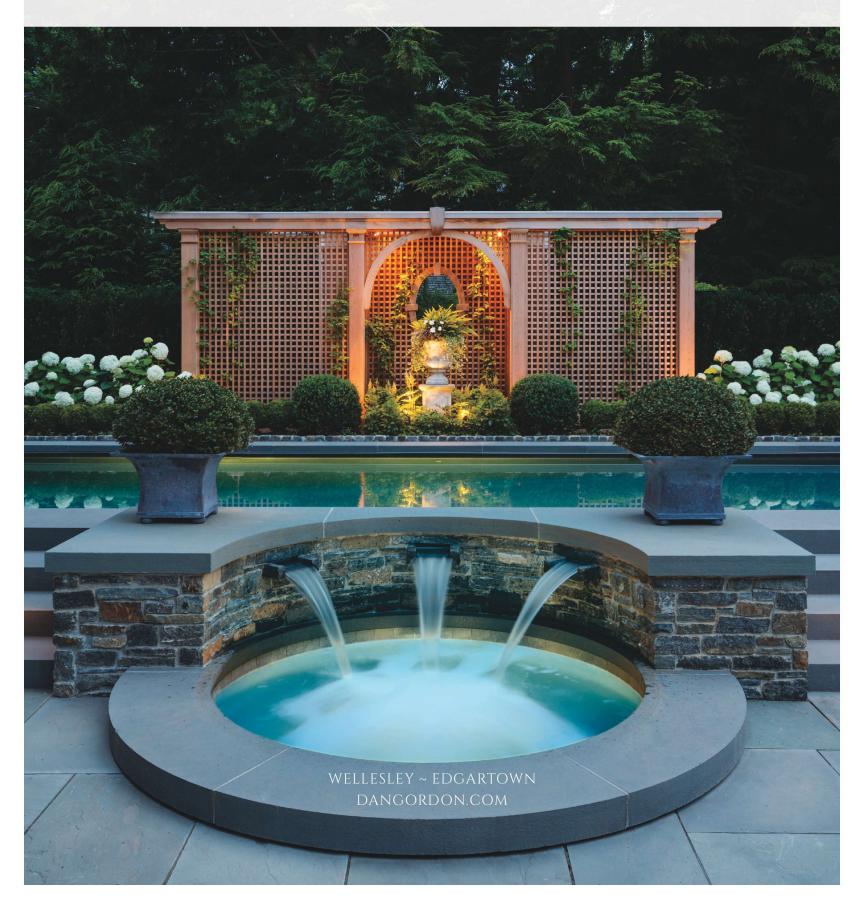






 Amy Steinmetz
 Dr. Michael Robinson, Maria Babb Pryor, and Angela Sherman
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#### **Engels and Völker Grand Opening**



1 (front): Bailey Poritzky, Kevin Balboni, Dean Poritzky, Sharon Mendosa, Anthony Hilt, and Tyler Poritzky; (back): Rob MacLeod, Jennifer Lozada, Sari Coduri, Renu Shukla, Karen Kirk, Paige McVay, and Keith Magnus 2 Keith Magnus, Dean Poritzky, Rob MacLeod And Paige McVay 3 Kevin Balboni, Karen Kirk, Renu Shukla, Sharon Mendosa, and Dean Poritzky 4 Nolan Tierce and Emme Punches

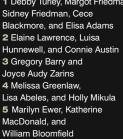




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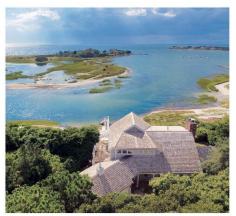
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Vintage Vogue Runway for Research





1 Betsy and Andy Kessler 2 Carol Chaoui 3 Erika Tarantal 4 Nanci Gelb, Beatrice Dauge, and Terri Tsagaris 5 (front row): Julie Garvey, Stephanie Hawkinson, and Colleen Phelps (back row): Mary Worthington, Kate Maul, Amy Liebowitz, and Carolyn Harthun



Traci Shulkin of Benoit Mizner Simon and the B Fund Back to School Party at Belkin Lookout Farm



1 Traci Shulkin and the B Fund volunteers 2 Christine Shechtman and Traci Shulkin 3 Juliesue Goldwasser, Karen Lefkowitz, Traci Shulkin, and Melanie Camp

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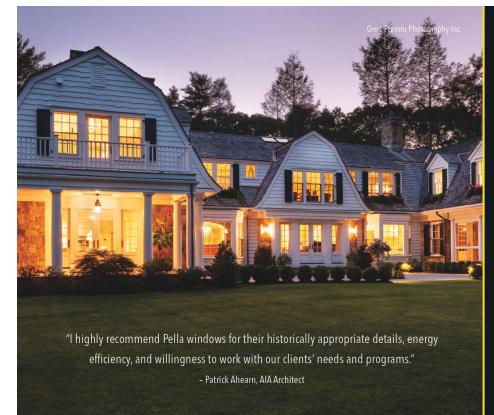
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narrative capturing a moment suburban sketches creative expressions

#### last but not least

### your voice painting a portrait reflections

### Winter Wonders

KIRA SEAMON photographer

**artist** Kira Seamon captures the beauty of the season in a series of kaleidoscope photos of the winter berry, which she found growing at the edge of Paramecium Pond on the Wellesley College campus. Seamon's recent exhibit, *Stained Glass Sky*, featured unique kaleidoscope photos of Wellesley's fall foliage and was on display this past fall at the Wellesley Free Library.



BE CREATIVE This page is designed to give our readers the opportunity to express themselves creatively. If you have a short piece of fiction or nonfiction (300-500 words), a poem, illustration, or photograph depicting life in Wellesley and Weston, we would love to hear from you. Please email your submissions to jill@wellesleywestonmagazine.com.

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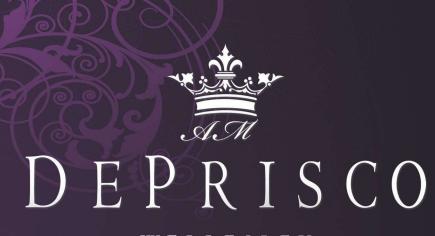
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