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### TWO-FAMILY HOME FOR SALE





PHOTO BY COLIN BAZZANO

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*On the Cover: Spring in Great Barrington*  
 by Colin Bazzano

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# Welcome to The Berkshires

In this special section for spring, we're looking north to the lively county of The Berkshires. Known for its incredible scenery, colorful sidewalks, and a bustling Main Street full of shops to explore, The Berkshires is more than just a weekend getaway, it's a cultural center where music, art, and most of all theater reign supreme. It is where you can find James Taylor performing at Tanglewood, magnificent productions at Shakespeare & Company where the late Massachusetts-native Olympia Dukakis used to wow us with soliloquies, and it was once the home of influential historical figures like Edith Wharton, Susan B. Anthony and W.E.B. Du Bois. In this special section, we explore The Berkshires of today, with some familiar favorites, some new hidden gems, and lots of upcoming summer events.



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# ‘Fame to table’ with Farm chef Michele Ragussis

Fans of TV cooking shows who have ever wanted to indulge in a meal prepared locally by a celebrity chef are now able to do just that, as Food Network regular Michele Ragussis has taken over the position of executive chef at Gedney Kitchen, the restaurant portion of the Gedney Farm wedding and event venue in New Marlborough.

The first cooking show Ragussis appeared on was “Chopped” in 2010 before moving on to “24 Hour Restaurant Battle” and finishing in the top three of the eighth season of “Food Network Star” in 2012. After competing on and winning an episode of “Beat Bobby Flay,” she has returned to judge one or two episodes of the show every season since Season 4. She has made appearances on “Guy’s Grocery Games,” with her most recent episode premiering just a few weeks ago.

Ragussis met Gedney Farm co-owner and sommelier Peter Miscikoski in Provincetown some 13 years ago, and they later worked together there at the Crown & Anchor. “He’s the reason I took the job [at Gedney Farm],” said Ragussis. “I loved his idea of food and wine.”

Ragussis described her cooking style as mixing her Greek and Italian heritage with New England seafood. She is looking forward to utilizing Gedney Farm’s massive outdoor wood-fired Argentine grill and oven for roasting vegetables for dips, baking pizzas, and, of course,



PHOTO PROVIDED

**Michele Ragussis is the new executive chef at Gedney Farm.**

preparing seafood.

“I want to change the menu up as much as I can,” she said. “I’m not trying to mess everybody up in the kitchen by doing a whole menu thing, but ... I get bored of a dish after two weeks, so let’s change it up. The one thing I love about New England is the food is in mini microseasons. You get ramps and then you get fiddleheads and different fish ... utilize it all while we have it so things are never the same.”

“Once we get the garden going, we’re really going to utilize that,” said Ragussis. “I do think it’s all about fresh ingredients and making

**“I don’t cook food that is pretentious. Most everything I make has like seven ingredients or less.”**

food simple, not fussy.”

Ragussis is originally from southern Connecticut and studied in the culinary program at Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island. After heading restaurants across New England, she moved to New York’s Hudson Valley nine years ago and became a private chef.

“I don’t cook food that is pretentious,” said Ragussis. “Most everything I make has like seven ingredients or less.”

Ragussis said “A big part of coming here [Gedney Farm] was Peter was like, ‘You can still do all your TV.’” She noted that the camaraderie of the TV chef community plays a large role in her interest in competitive cooking.

“Her food is intense,” said Miscikoski. “Her flavors are eclectic. She puts things together that, sometimes, you’re like, ‘Really?’ and then they work brilliantly.”

“There’s something about this whole job,” said Ragussis. “I swore off restaurants. I was never coming back to a restaurant in my life.”

# The Devil comes to Great Barrington



*Raquel Gonzalez*



*Justin Hopkins*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL

*Duke Kim*

In its ninth season this summer, The Berkshire Opera Festival will present Charles Gounod's "Faust" beginning Saturday, Aug. 24., at The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington. Based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's German masterpiece "Faust: A Tragedy," the French opera by Gounod, also known for his Shakespearean operatic adaptation, "Roméo et Juliette," was first performed at The Théâtre Lyrique in Paris in 1859, and has remained a classic ever since. Berkshire Opera Festival Artistic Direct and Co-Founder Brian Garman discussed the upcoming season.

**Alexander Wilburn:** You're big summer production in August is the French opera "Faust." How does your team pick the operas and what was the inspiration for choosing this supernatural story?

**Brian Garman:** We try to balance interesting programming with, of course, the need to sell tickets, which is always a concern. It's a particular concern when you do only one production during the summer. This is our ninth season coming up this summer, and we have never done French grand opera before, so this is our first foray into it. I didn't want to do "Carmen" — I love "Carmen," I don't want that to be taken out of context — but I knew that I couldn't follow up a "La Bohème" year with a "Carmen" year. So "Faust" — because of the cast that I knew was available — was a no-brainer. We knew this season that if we ventured into the French repertoire "Faust" would be the perfect choice. It's been one of the most frequently performed operas in the world ever since it premiered in 1859. It's the most performed opera ever at the Paris Opera and was the opera that opened the Metropolitan Opera

in 1883.

**AW: I didn't know that! So "Faust" has two lead male roles. One for a tenor in the character Faust and a bass-baritone in the devil Mephistopheles. Can you tell us about the casting?**

**BG:** One of the things that I'm most proud of — most proud of always — is the world-class caliber of artists that we're able to put on our stages in the Berkshires. This cast is one that I'm very, very excited about. Duke Kim is going to be singing the title role. He's a young Korean-American tenor. He won the Met competition in 2021. This particular season has been extremely busy for him. He was at the Irish National Opera singing the role of Faust, which was his debut in the role. He just now finished, maybe a week or two ago, in Pittsburgh as Alfredo in "La Traviata." At the moment, he's in Seattle for "Barber of Seville," then he goes to Des Moines for another "Barber of Seville," and then to the Berkshires this summer.

**AW: So you got a really in-demand guy.**

**BG:** Really in-demand guy! And at an exact time, when he had this slot free in his schedule, which makes me very happy. Because then in the winter, he's going to be singing Tamino in "The Magic Flute" at the Met.

**AW: And Justin Hopkins is playing Mephistopheles.**

**BG:** He has a big, gorgeous bass voice and a very commanding presence on stage. He is American, but he's spent the better part of the past five years of his career in Europe. And the past two years, he's been a principal artist at La Monnaie in Brussels. He's eager to get back to the States, and I'm eager to have him. I should mention Raquel Gonzalez as well, playing Marguerite. She's covered a number of things at the Met, including Mimi in "La Bohème" last season, and the title role in "Florença en el Amazonas" this season. She's also at Houston Grand Opera this year for performances in the title role of "Madame Butterfly." She's done Micaëla in "Carmen" in Austin and a handful of concerts as well.

**AW: Sounds like a cast of bright young stars this season. This is also an opera that's been done with really elaborate make-up and costuming. What can we expect in this production of "Faust?"**

**BG:** Well, the design is currently in progress,

and we will certainly have elaborate costuming and makeup. What I've seen so far of the designs is that the production is going to be very sleek, very streamlined in a way that I think will highlight the individual personal conflicts between these characters. You know, we always like to take a new look at these classic works and present them as much as possible in a fresh way. We're at The Mahaiwe in Great Barrington this summer. It's not a massive, huge stage. Same thing with The Colonial in Pittsfield. So we try to design productions that match the space, as well, and feel appropriate in the space.

**AW: Finally, what can you tell us about the Faustian Fête held in June?**

**BG:** It's an evening of music and merriment to celebrate the 2024 season. It's at The Lenox Club on Sunday, June 30. Cocktails and a silent auction, then we have dinner and a live auction. Plus a special musical performance that I can't reveal just yet...

*For more information and to purchase tickets go to [www.berkshireoperafestival.org](http://www.berkshireoperafestival.org)*



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# Where to grab a coffee, a bite, or a little treat in Great Barrington

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## SoCo Creamery

5 Railroad St, Great Barrington  
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# Big shows this summer in Great Barrington

The award-winning Great Barrington Stage Company in downtown Pittsfield is a summer destination whether you're a Berkshires local or live beyond. Now celebrating 30 years of outstanding programming, which includes receiving 8 Berkshire Theatre Critics Awards for the 2023 season, including Outstanding Production of a Musical for its production of "Cabaret," Great Barrington Stage Company, under the artistic direction of Alan Paul, has lined up an exciting selection of shows for its 2024 summer season.

The season opens on Tuesday, June 11, with Harvey Fierstein's "La Cage Aux Folles" based on the 1973 French farce by Jean Poiret. This musical comedy, with music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, is directed by Mike Donahue and will be performed on the Boyd-Quinson Stage.

Then on the St. Germain Stage, starting Tuesday, June 25, Alan Paul will direct "A Tender Thing" by British dramaturg and playwright Ben Power, known for his National Theatre production of Euripides's "Medea." Paul, who directed 2023's "Cabaret," previously served as associate artistic director of the Tony Award-winning Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. This new twist on The Bard's classic romantic tragedy, first staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company, explores the characters of Romeo and Juliet if they had survived the original play's brutal ending. Who



PHOTO TINSELTOWN/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Debra Jo Rupp will star in "Boeing Boeing" this summer.**

would they have become?

Starting Wednesday, July 17, on the Boyd-Quinson Stage, Debra Jo Rupp, best known for her hilarious turn as the madcap matriarch on the hit sitcom "That '70s Show," will star in Marc Camoletti's "Boeing Boeing," a 1960s Parisian romp translated by Beverly Cross and Francis Evans and directed by Julianne Boyd. Rupp will be joined on stage by theater actors Mark H. Dold and Christopher Innvar.

On Tuesday, Aug. 13, Great Barrington Stage Company will present the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical "Next to Normal," with music by Tom Kitt and book and lyrics by Brian Yorkey. Directed by Alan



PHOTO COURTESY OF GBSC

**Great Barrington Stage Company is known for its award-winning shows.**

Paul, this rock musical exploring the inner psychological struggles of a family will be performed on the Boyd-Quinson Stage with the cast to be announced.

*For more information on Great Barrington Stage Company's season and to purchase tickets go to [www.barringtonstageco.org](http://www.barringtonstageco.org)*

# Finding your craft at Hart

“I’m an artist, and I make stuff. But anybody can make things,” said Jamie Goldenberg, the fiber artist who owns and operates Hart on Railroad Street in Great Barrington. “I really love the way that this shop can make that experience accessible.”

## Classes

Goldenberg, who taught photography at Parsons School of Design in New York for years, offers an array of rotating classes for adults and children, from sewing 101, knitting, and crochet to weaving intensives, tapestry-making workshops, basket making, and a class in which you learn to do anything you want to learn that you’ve never done before.

Though Goldenberg is largely self-taught, she said, teaching is one of her favorite parts of owning Hart. Teaching skills with more complex tools like large looms, she says, involves a lot of translation.

Said Goldenberg, “You have to be willing to not know how to do something in order to learn how to do it. One of the most difficult things as an adult is getting over the fear of not knowing how to do something. And so getting through that, getting through that period of doubt and confusion, and helping people learn to trust their hands, learn to trust their brains, in order to learn new things—I see them shift.”

The classes are part of how she works to make the crafts and arts accessible to everyone (for example, class discounts are available for



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMIE GOLDENBERG

**Classes at Hart are the perfect way to expand your craft and meet new people.**

service industry workers).

“I try to de-mystify how these things work, and I don’t gatekeep. I want everyone to know that everyone can do this if they want to,” she said. “I teach people how to use the things, and then encourage them to become creative and to try things and to make mistakes. Mistakes are really important because that’s where we learn the most.”

## Products

“They come in expecting it to be a yarn shop. But it’s not a yarn shop. A yarn shop is like one section of what we do,” said Goldenberg.

The store includes tools, kits, and books of instruction for kids and adults, beginning and well-practiced makers alike, in a vast array of art forms: natural-dye making; looms of all sizes and for all levels, needles, crochet hooks, yarns and threads,

embroidery hoops, felting kits, mending kits, natural dye-making kits, vintage buttons in every imaginable shape, size and color, workbooks, instruction books, knitting magazines and technique booklets and how-to cards (i.e., How to Sew a Button) that Goldenberg designed and illustrated herself.

A lot of times people come in and they’ll be like, whoa, what is this? I’ve never seen anything like this,” said Goldenberg. “I have a little bit of everything, what I think is the best stuff. And then the ability to get more, like unique things that you’re not going to find that big shops.”

She has also tried all of her products herself, and if the shop isn’t busy, she will teach a customer how to use a new tool for free. Some products that are more difficult to use, like the Cricket loom, come with a free hour-and-thirty-minute lesson with a purchase, to get the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAMIE GOLDENBERG

**Hart is more than just a shop, it brings the crafting community together.**

new owner started.

“You can get 90% of the way there on YouTube with a lot of stuff, but oftentimes you need the other 10%. You need someone to show you,” she said. “I want people to be able to use this tool. I don’t want to just sit there because someone can’t figure out how to use it,” she said. That kind of engagement is part of living the “people before profit” model Hart subscribes to, she said.

## Mending Night

On the first Thursday of each month, Goldenberg hosts an open mending club (five-dollar suggested donation) at 7 p.m., where she and others are on hand to teach mending techniques and offer support and advice. You can attend to learn an ancient Japanese quilting technique to mend a tear in your child’s jeans or get guidance on reweaving

a sweater, but I often go to just talk to cool people and sew buttons back onto depleted shirts.

## Pop-Ups

Hart regularly hosts pop-ups as well—for example, a fabric pop-up with a local fabric designer, or a pop-up with a local flower farm, which sold dye plants at the shop last fall. She’s planning a vintage clothing pop-up next.

## Artwork

Goldenberg’s current exhibition, ‘Material Record,’ is on view at the Daniel Arts Center at Bard College at Simon’s Rock in Great Barrington, until Wednesday, April 17. It consists of woven, stitched, and dyed works that constitute an archive of a single, tumultuous year



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**Jamie Goldenberg, left, is always on hand to instruct.**

of Goldenberg’s life, as well as a communal weaving project: visitors to the gallery are invited to add to a tapestry using yarns Goldenberg dyed using native plants, and given all the tools and instructions they need to do so.



PHOTO BY COLIN BAZZANO

## ***Art is everywhere***

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# Women's stories on stage

WAM Theatre in Lenox is celebrating its 15th anniversary year of producing theater, continuing its mission to champion women's stories and showcasing female talent both on the stage and behind the scenes with its directors and playwrights. In addition to theatrical productions, WAM donates portions of ticket sales back into the community, contributing funds in past years to causes like the Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts, the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohicans Family Services Center, and the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact Program.

This August, WAM's 15th Anniversary Benefit will be held at The Mount, the National Landmark home that belonged to Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edith Wharton. "Outside" is a new play-experience that will be performed at the benefit, created and directed by WAM's new artistic director Genée Coreno. This is designed as an immersive theatrical event as audiences will be guided through the grounds of The Mount by characters, text, original score, and puppetry. WAM describes "Outside" as the story of "June Ashbury who returns to a place called Paradise following a climate event. Guided by a lone-wolf, June traverses landscapes weathered by time and loss, gathering strength and hope as she journeys towards new horizons."

In October, WAM will present its fall mainstage production of "Galileo's Daughter" by award-winning New York playwright Jessica Dickey.

**In addition to theatrical productions, WAM donates portions of ticket sales back into the community.**



*Reena Dutt*



*Genée Coreno*

Dickey's previous work includes "The Amish Project," a one-woman play that explored the true story of the 2006 West Nickel Mines School shooting, in which a lone gunman targeted elementary school girls in a one-room Amish school in rural Pennsylvania. "Galileo's Daughter," directed by Reena Dutt, will be performed at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre at Shakespeare & Company, and explores the relationship between Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei and his eldest daughter, the nun Sister Maria Celeste.

*To learn more about WAM and to purchase tickets go to [www.wamtheatre.com](http://www.wamtheatre.com).*



*Jessica Dickey*

# The Triplex Cinema is back and better than ever

“As a movie-lover, I just could not bear the idea of living in an area that didn’t have a theater,” said Nicki Wilson, president of the board of the Triplex Cinema in Great Barrington.

The Triplex ceased operations and closed in June 2023 before being reopened five months later as a nonprofit.

“The [first] anniversary of us being a nonprofit [was] April 10,” said Wilson, who, on April 1 and 2 of last year, used her own living room to host a group of community members concerned about the theater’s fate. They organized themselves and started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to buy the theater, and were able to afford their first mortgage payment in July.

“People think because we came out with such a bang — starting off with “The Holdovers” and then having Nina Bernstein and having fundraisers and doing a lot of PR — that we’ve been in existence a lot longer than we have,” said Wilson. “We had to literally start from scratch.”

Since reopening in November 2023, the Triplex has hosted a number of community events, talk-backs, and fundraisers in addition to showing films. “Our motto is ‘movies for all,’” said Wilson, “so we have a lot of indie, very niche films, but we also have big blockbusters that people want to go see. We also have children’s programming and we’re going to be starting an environmental series.”

From May 10-24, the Triplex will host a fundrais-





ing silent auction that will include an original script and Indiana Jones paraphernalia donated by actress Karen Allen; a basket of items donated by artist Walton Ford; a tour given by Dorinda Medley of “The Real Housewives of New York City” of her home, Blue Stone Manor; and “all sorts of fun things,” said Wilson.

On Saturday, May 11, the Triplex will host a “Shrek Day” for families, with screenings of “Shrek” and “Shrek 2.”

On Tuesday, May 14, the Triplex will screen the documentary film “Who Will Write Our History?,” based on the book by Samuel Kassow, a professor at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. Following the film will be a talkback between Kassow and Aaron Lansky, founder and president of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts.

“There was a lot of work that needed to be done in the theater because it was originally built in 1995,” said Wilson, “so we had to spend a huge amount of money on getting it up to date.”

The Triplex is showing films on three screens and has applied for a variety of grants to help redo its fourth, which “probably won’t happen until next winter, because that theater was the most damaged of all the theaters,” according to Wilson.

The Triplex building includes four other spaces, one of which is being renovated by Josh Irwin, a partner in the nearby Mooncloud cocktail bar and former owner of Cantina 229 in New Marlborough, to become Juju’s, a fast-casual food establishment set to open in mid-May.

“Josh approached us very early on and said ‘I’d like to do this pop-up idea,’” said Wilson, “and he broke into the wall so that our lobby and his food place is all one.” The menu will feature popcorn-sized fried chicken and vegetable treats as well as salads and Irwin’s soft-serve ice cream.

“We are a community-owned theater,” said Wilson. “The community needs to understand that it only exists if the community supports it.”



PHOTO BY RON ADLER

*Dorinda Medley*



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEXT FILMS

# The Berkshire community



PHOTOS BY COLIN BAZZANO AND HORSEWORKS



PHOTOS BY COLIN BAZZANO

BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

# Did you know there's a mummy in The Berkshires?



PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER WILBURN

Pahat's sarcophagus is painted with details that signify his role as a priest of the fertility goddess Min.

Meet one of the oldest residents of The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield — his name is Pahat. While Pahat lived to be around 50 to 55 years old, this ancient priest (known as a Sem Priest of Min) lived during the Ptolemaic period in Upper Egypt near the east bank of the Nile River. How he died remains a medical mystery, but with no trauma to the body, natural causes are presumed, explained Berkshire Museum Educational Specialist Sophia Holmes. Pahat was given the “first class” treatment upon his death, and his intricately painted sarcophagus, displayed under glass next to Pahat's mummified wrapped corpse at the museum, presents plenty of clues to his high status in society, almost like a time capsule for his life.

In Ancient Egypt, religion helped people understand the universe and kept society united. The priesthood preserved traditions and ensured order in the community. At the time of his burial roughly 2,270 years ago, Pahat's burial included luxurious embellishments, including expensive necklaces and amulets which have since been taken from the mummy. Before coming to The Berkshire Museum in the early 20th century, Pahat was the victim of grave robbery in Egypt. Tomb raiders were in the practice of unsealing sarcophagi and looting mummies for any valuables buried with the dead — often breaking things that might later have historic value, but had no monetary value. Holmes explained that in addition to Pahat's missing gold mask, his broken neck is the result of the tomb raiders pulling a necklace off to make a quick loot

## DREAM DESIGN BUILD



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and get away.

Pahat's feet are also a sign of interest, Holmes pointed out. Before being put under glass, visitors would rub his feet as they passed by for good luck, and the oil from the visitors' fingerprints has left a noticeable difference — hence why Pahat lives under glass today. Holmes also pointed out the poor angles and misshapen nature of his feet. As a priest, Pahat was essentially vegan — his status forbade him from consuming and touching animal products, which means instead of sturdy leather shoes he would have walked around in parchment sandals and likely developed arthritis in his feet.

The display at The Berkshire Museum, located on the second floor, also includes an interactive screen where visitors can inspect the CT scans of the mummy over the years, where x-ray imaging reveals hidden details and further clues about Pahat's life. The CT scans create a biological profile of mummies that help identify their age, gender, stature, facial structure, and how they might have died.

*Make a visit to The Berkshire Museum or learn more at [www.berkshireremuseum.org](http://www.berkshireremuseum.org)*



**Pahat's mummy was looted by tomb raiders in Egypt before he was acquired by the museum.**

Edward Moran, English American (1829 – 1901)  
City and Harbor of New York, 1889  
Oil on Canvas



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# Equine therapy is more than just horsing around

At Berkshire HorseWorks in Richmond, horses do more than just carry riders through scenic trails — they're friends, confidants, and therapy tools. Founder and Executive Director Hayley Sumner explained the therapeutic practices behind HorseWorks, as well as the Ranch Life 101 upcoming program for equine enthusiasts looking for a creative and fulfilling summer of recreation on a working Massachusetts ranch.

**Alexander Wilburn: To start off, tell us about the main mission and the theory behind equine therapy for those who might be unfamiliar.**

**Hayley Sumner:** Berkshire Horse Works started in 2013 first as a for-profit organization wanting to provide equine-assisted team building to businesses that could then help at-risk children. We quickly found out within a few months that the need for mental health services was so strong in the area that to be a thriving business we had to become a non-profit to be able to accommodate all of the populations here that needed those services. So without being able to write grants as a for-profit entity, that was not going to work out. In 2014, we applied for our nonprofit status. We're celebrating our tenth anniversary this year as a non-profit. We provide EAGALA model equine-assisted psychotherapy, equine-assisted learning and life skill development, equine-assisted team building, and horse-powered reading and math, which is



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HORSEWORKS

**On the ground equine therapy is HorseWorks model for helping families, veterans and at-risk patients with their mental health.**

also an EAGALA program.

**AW: Those are a lot of terms, can you break down some of the concepts for readers?**

**HS:** When most people think of equine therapy, they think of therapeutic riding, right?

**AW: That's what I imagine too.**

**HS:** That is a different certification that's called PASS. We are EAGALA, which is an acronym.

It's E-A-G-A-L-A: Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association. We're always on the ground, not riding. The model mandates that you have a licensed mental health professional and an equine specialist that work together. It's solution-focused, strength-based, and predicated on cognitive behavioral

*continued on page 24*



Horses are intuitive animals explains founder Haley Sumner.

At the Ranch Life 101 summer course children of all ages can explore working on the ranch.



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therapy. We create a curriculum that helps organizations, children, veterans, and first responders meet their treatment goals or their big group dynamic goals. Our mission is to transform lives through the powerful interaction with horses.

**AW: What would happen on a first encounter with someone doing ground-based equine therapy?**

**HS:** What happens is people with mental health, behavioral, or literacy challenges come to the ranch. We have a seven-acre ranch in Richmond. Let's say their goal is to create safe boundaries. Our goal in working with anyone in this model is to bring them down to the most basic level of clean language. For example, the first activity would always be to send them out into the field with a herd of rescue horses and donkeys and ask them to observe and think about which animal might be most like them. Then they come back and give us an observation about each animal. Typically they'll think they're giving an observation — but it won't be an observation, it will be a perception. They'll say, "That one hates me because he walked away. That one is angry," or "That's the loner." Whether it is a child or a family or a first responder, an inmate, or a veteran, that's where people go with their observations. What we try to do in these first activities is to get them not to ascribe a meaning to something, so that their interaction is instead based on a clean eye. So instead try, "He has two legs. He has two ears. He's black and white. His nose is moving." That way they can start thinking about observations instead of perceptions. They can interact with people at work, at school, at home, or in



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HORSEWORKS

**Couples looking for day activity in any reason can take a trail ride followed by a picnic with wine.**

their family in a very pure way. They start accepting what they see versus ascribing a meaning prior to having an interaction with someone.

**AW: You're creating a space where people can interact with horses, but in a way that they can learn to go out and interact with the world. Let's shift gears. You have a summer Ranch Life 101 program that's now open for registration. What can attendees expect?**

**HS:** The premise is that you learn life skills while doing activities you love and being outdoors. We integrate people of all different socioeconomic backgrounds and different age groups, and through the ranch chores and activities that we do, inherently they develop these relationships that are not predicated on their specific age or financial background. So the older kids wind up mentoring the younger ones. The ones who have horse experience tend to take the lead. We do a lot of team building. The team building is always thorough, let's say: the

horses' water troughs are all empty. What are we going to do? Well, how do we take care of a horse? Empathy. So here are the tools. You guys have six of you. You've got 15 minutes. How are you going to fill all these water troughs? Just by saying that, they break into these groups, and they find the tools that they're going to use.

**AW: It sounds like a really great alternative for children who are really interested in horses, but maybe don't have the family resources to invest in their own horse or the time commitment of entering competitions.**

**HS:** That's true. One of the key things is to get kids outside and to get everyone on a level playing field. I know that's a little bit of a banal expression, but to get them out in nature, feeling their best, doing things around horses, who are very intuitive animals.

**AW: You also do day excursions for visitors who want to ride.**

**HS:** We do a lot of different recreational activities people can



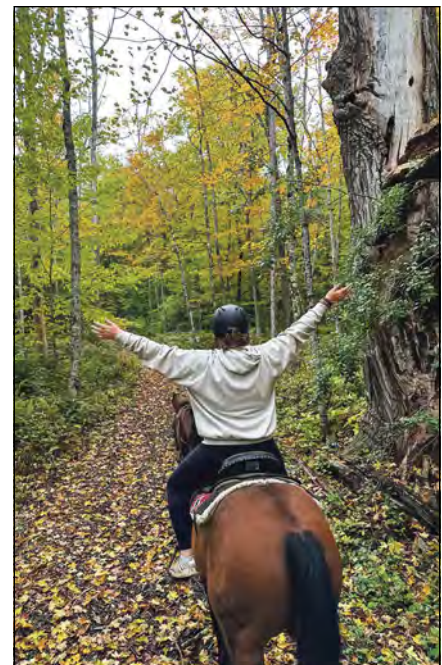
just come for a trail ride lesson experience and end with a wine and cheese picnic.

**AW: How nice!**

**HS:** They can groom the horses and then they can take a 35-minute trail ride, come back and have beer and wings, or we do free range donkey play, or horse painting, or photography at the ranch... yoga at the ranch. So we have all of those activities, as well as our key one, which is corporate team building retreats, and they all pay for scholarships for therapy for those who are either at risk or under-served. If there's anyone who reads this and wants to support this non-profit, I would say, most importantly, to book a team-building experience, whether it's for your family, a bachelorette party, or for your company or staff. Equine-

assisted team-building really works, so instead of going to a ropes course or golfing, do something that's really fun but also very impactful and can be very strategic. So with companies looking to define their goal, we create a curriculum specifically for them, whether it's a half-day or full-day workshop. That corporate team building or family team building all goes to fund at-risk programming. The second way to help out is to sponsor a horse. Horses cost \$6,500 per year with food and medicine, and that's challenging for a small nonprofit. You could also sponsor a child to attend the Ranch Life 101 Program.

*For more go to [www.berkshire-horseworks.org](http://www.berkshire-horseworks.org) or call (413) 698-3700.*



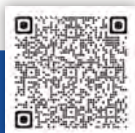
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# Introducing a new newsletter

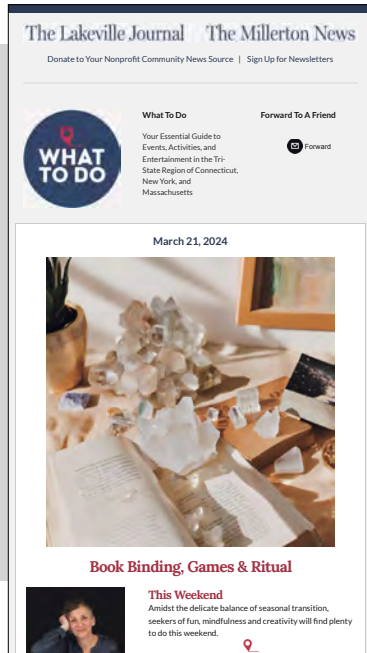
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# New voices in The Berkshires

Great Barrington Public Theater is the place to see emerging voices brought to life as GBPT's Berkshire Voices returns for its seventh year after its creation in 2017. This Berkshire County-based initiative was crafted to aid playwrights at various stages of their careers as they strive to bring original work closer to a full-stage production. The program helps create a community of playwrights as well as actors and directors to build relationships and creative collaboration, as well as to schedule readings of new works with a live audience. New scripts are workshopped bi-annually, in the spring and autumnal sessions during a 14-week writing intensive with feedback and suggestions.

On Tuesday, April 30, at 7 p.m., Great Barrington Public Theater will present a free public reading of eight of the 10-minute short plays that have come out of the Berkshire Voices program. Held at Saint James Place in Great Barrington, these readings, all directed by the team of Liam Castellan and Joshua Briggs, will include work from Joe Lyman, Elisabeth Ruthman, Max Rissan, Allan Greenberg, Leigh Curran, Carolyn Brancato and Gabrielle Orcha.

On May 1, at 7 p.m., the latest version of Anne Undeland's newest workshopped play, "Madam Mozart, The Lacrymosa," will be read by actors Tara Franklin and Ryan Winkles in accompaniment with pianist Lary Wallach who will provide the musical elements of the



**Oren Safdie**

play, given its Classical subject.

Later in the summer, on the McConnell Theater mainstage, GBPT will present the American premiere of a new parlor dramedy, "Survival of the Unfit," on stage from July 6 through July 21. Written by Canadian-Israeli playwright Oren Safdie (cousin of filmmakers Joshua and Benjamin Safdie, "Uncut Gems," "Good Time"), he has been the recipient of several awards and fellowships in Canada, including awards from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, and the



**Matt Penn**

Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. "Survival of the Unfit," a four-actor show in a one-room setting, will be directed by Matt Penn (son of Academy Award-nominated director Arthur Penn and nephew of famed fashion photographer Irving Penn) who has worked on television dramas like "Law & Order," "The Sopranos," and "The Closer."

*For more on Great Barrington Public Theater's upcoming season go to [www.greatbarringtonpublictheater.org](http://www.greatbarringtonpublictheater.org)*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREAT BARRINGTON PUBLIC THEATER

# Perform a healing spell under the new moon

Did you know you can participate in a magic ritual in The Berkshires? On Wednesday, May 8, you'll have your next chance as a new moon hangs over the sky. A new moon is the first lunar cycle when Earth's moon becomes invisible to the human eye as the moon and the sun align with the same ecliptic longitude. This can be a particularly mystical day in divination and astrology. When the sun and the moon share in perfect celestial harmony, it's a time for new beginnings and well

as profound endings. Visit Mass MoCA in North Adams on May 8, as well as any other new moon day throughout 2024 (usually the first or second week of the month), and take part in a cosmic rite when you visit the ongoing exhibit "Like Magic." In artist Grace Clark's "In a new light (Healing Dirt)" room designed to look like a darkened desert chapel (straight out of "Dune," you might think), visitors can take grace in applying charcoal earth to anywhere on the body to harness its magical

healing properties — it may change visitors' outlook, revolve or luck for the coming month.

"Like Magic" is a large-scale installation exhibit at Mass MoCA featuring work by artists Simone Bailey, Raven Chacon, Johanna Hedva, Gelare Khoshgozaran, Cate O'Connell-Richards, Rose Salane, Petra Szilagyi Tourmaline, Nate Young, and of course, Grace Clark. As "Like Magic's" curator Alexandra Foradas wrote in the show notes, "When we say something is 'like



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF MASS MOCA  
"Healing Dirt" exhibit by Grace Clark.

magic,' it is a way of articulating that its operations are beyond the scope of our comprehension, or even are perhaps ultimately unknowable. For those whose lives are surveilled because of their race, sexuality, gender identity, indigeneity, or immigration status, magic's unknowability can function as a refusal of a system's efforts to know, categorize, and control their lives and stories."

*To learn more about "Like Magic," view a lunar cycle calendar, and book tickets go to [www.massmoca.org](http://www.massmoca.org)*



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