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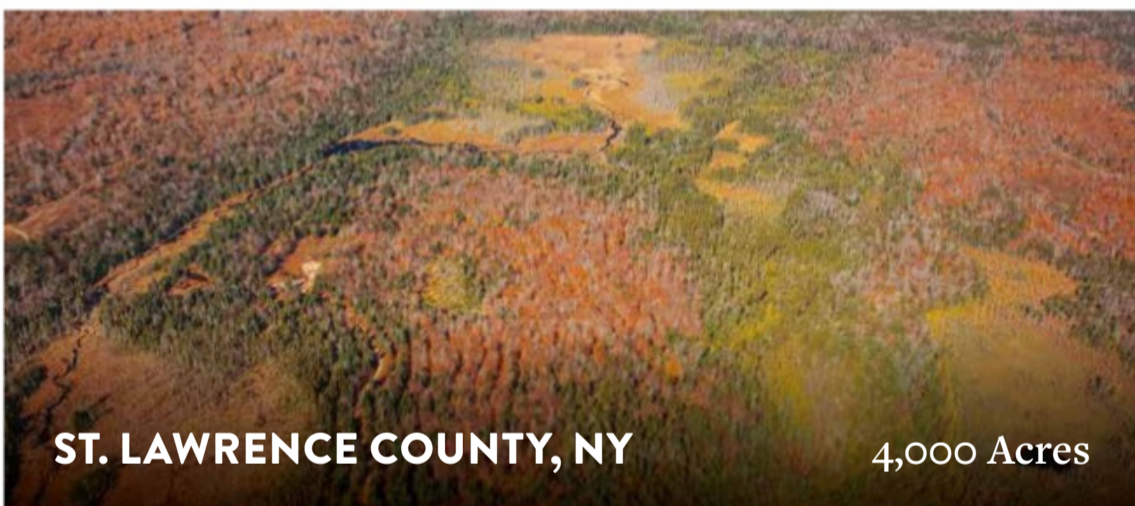
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VOLUME LI, NUMBER 3

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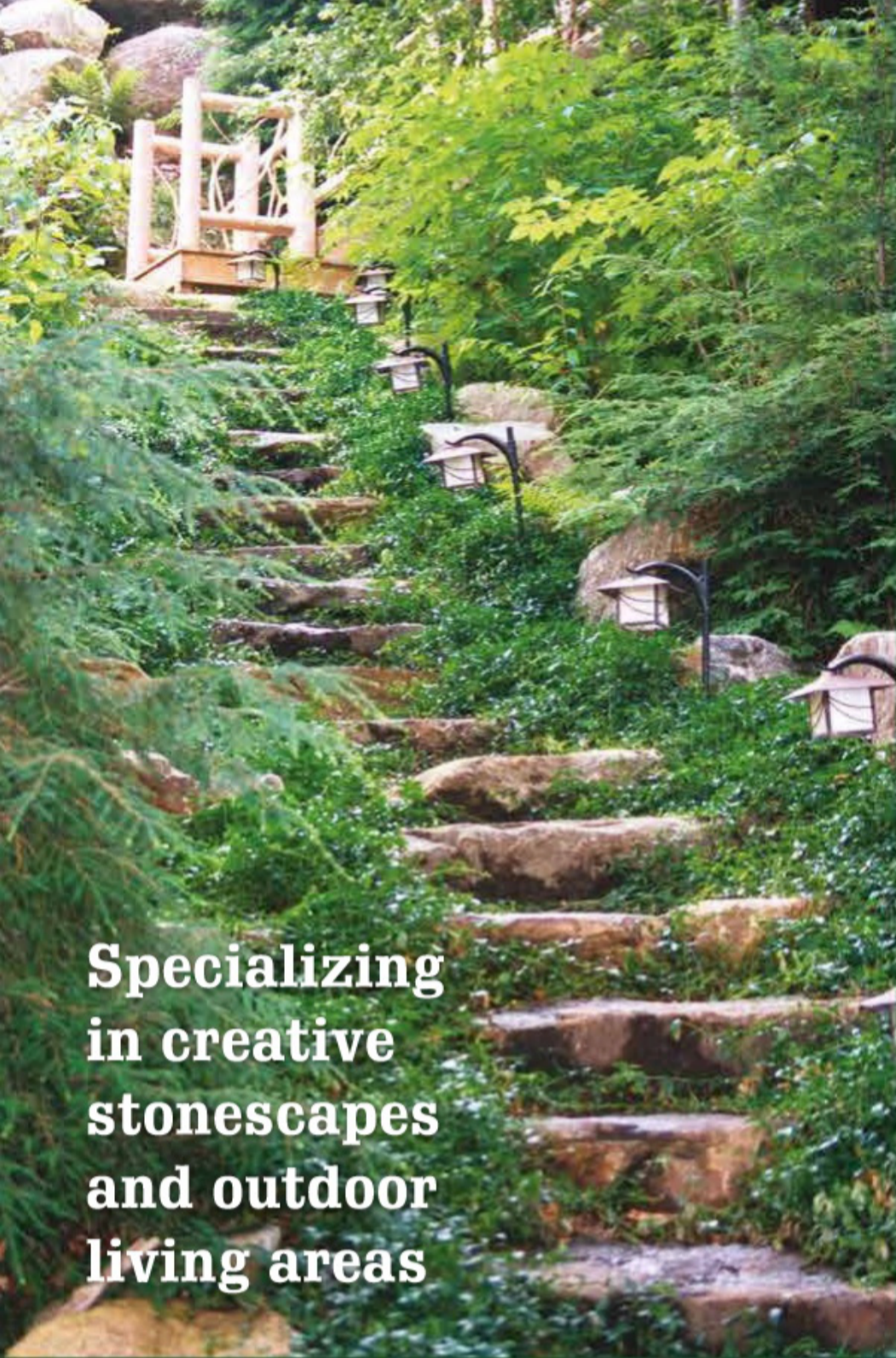
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ALL THE FEELS

Just finished reading your “Feel Good Issue” (April 2020) cover to cover. We love our Adirondack Mountains.

Debra Shaver
via Facebook

REALITY CHECK

I picked up your “Feel Good Issue,” hoping it might be a welcomed antidote to winter storms and depressing national news, but instead it set my adrenaline afire. While it is comforting to hear about the return of the brook trout to an Adirondack lake which was “fishless for decades,” it is downright dangerous to let ourselves bathe in that complacency without facing the reality that the Trump administration is hard at work dismantling the environmental regulations, 90 of them according to *The New York Times*, that made it all possible. The EPA, currently run by former fossil fuel executives and lobbyists, has rescinded regulations which cut harmful emissions from power plants and vehicles, made it easier for coal plants to pollute with impunity, and has tragically gutted the Clean Air and Water Acts. If this policy continues, the return of acid rain to the Adirondacks is inevitable. Though it may feel good to momentarily bask in all the “encouraging developments across the Adirondack Park,” what is happening right now, thanks to Donald Trump and his new sidekick Elise Stefanik, is absolutely terrifying. Reality cannot just be ignored for that feel good moment—there is just too much at stake here.

Janice Pontacoloni
Lake George, NY

SOME KIND OF MIRACLE

One of my most memorable moments of my childhood was watching the hockey game with my parents (“Saved by a Miracle,” February 2020). We all became hockey fans that year. It was a moment in time I will always cherish.

Jeffrey Herman
via Facebook



“While it is comforting to hear about the return of the brook trout to an Adirondack lake ... it is downright dangerous to let ourselves bathe in that complacency.”

PAGE TURNER

I thought you might be amused to see the image of birches I created with articles from *Adirondack Life*.

Elsa Dixon
Keene Valley, NY & San Francisco, CA



Adirondack Life welcomes the views of readers. All letters are subject to editing, must be signed and should be addressed to Box 410, Jay, NY 12941.
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Short Carries



Seeing Clearly

An urban vs. rural reality check

BY ANNIE STOLTIE

Ten o'clock on a Friday night we rode the escalator up, out of Pennsylvania Station in New York City. We'd made the two and a half-hour drive from our home in the Adirondacks to the Amtrak station outside of Albany, then another two-plus hours into Manhattan. We'd hurried from our train, packs on our backs, my daughter clutching my arm as we wove through the crush of people, many of them hockey fans in their teams' jerseys, amped up after a game in Madison Square Garden.

This trip was part of an early birthday celebration—Big Apple-style—for my nine-year-old. We were on our way to a friend's apartment, our weekend base camp for excursions around the city.

On the escalator, just as the chaos of 34th Street came into view, the man standing in front of us leaned over and threw up. We moved past him and jumped over his puddle,

onto the sidewalk. "Welcome to New York," I said to my daughter as I pulled her, horrified, away from the station.

That weekend we brunched, saw a show, counted the dogs in Central Park, shopped, gawked and walked—and walked some more. It was an incredible getaway. We took it all in—the city's aromas, its honking horns and sirens. We explored Hudson Yards, where, when I lived in the city more than 20 years ago, it was anything but what it is now—New York's newest luxury neighborhood. There, we climbed The Vessel, an Escher-esque beehive sculpture with stairs that circle into the sky, overlooking the Hudson River.

The next morning on the train home, I read in the newspaper that a teenager had jumped to his death from the top of The Vessel. He'd done it just after we'd left the sculpture the day before. I did not tell my daughter.

What I did tell her, as the questions

Artwork courtesy of the author

came, about the people sleeping in cardboard boxes; the man pleading for money on the subway; the woman who screamed at us from across the street; and the two boys, likely my daughter's age, slumped against the doors to Neiman Marcus—shoe-less, toes exposed through dirty socks—was that, sadly, people suffer everywhere. In the city we observed hardship in real time, life unfolding before us. In the Adirondacks, I told her, there were also people without food or shelter or who struggle with addiction or mental illness. But there, too often, it happens in the shadow of the forests and mountains. Our region's rural remoteness and its seasons—blankets of snow, erasing the truth—can keep us from seeing reality.

There is no perfect place.

My suburban and city friends visit me in the Adirondacks and, when the weather is best—sunny and blue, the bugs barely biting—they might say something about what a great place this is to raise kids or to pass the time. They're charmed by the clean air, our river swims, campfire-smoked sweaters and starry nights. I can sense their longing—maybe a cabin in the hills away from commutes, traffic and, right now, threats like Coronavirus.

I get it. And I love this place.

But I do dream of living among people of all cultures and religions and colors, of trips to doctors, grocery stores or sports practices that don't involve more than an hour-long drive.

While those "Entering the Adirondack Park" signs along the Blue Line are my comfort, I leave here when time allows so I can trust my perspective when I look out the window. There is so much beyond my little hamlet—a lesson I try to share with my children.

On the train toward home, after I'd read about the tragedy on *The Vessel*, I looked at my daughter, hunched over her sketchbook. All that we had witnessed in the city and what we know of our lives in the mountains had morphed onto her page in a colorful skyscraper-meets-pointy-peak mash-up.

It was a masterpiece to tack on my wall. ▲

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For more information visit www.littlefarmhouseflowers.com.

Walk the Walk

Show your love for the great outdoors on National Trails Day, June 6. Sign up to volunteer with the Adirondack Mountain Club (www.adk.org) on one of their projects around Heart Lake, in Lake Placid, or join the annual hike with retired forest ranger Gary Lee in Inlet (visit www.inletny.com for details). Not in the park that weekend? Find an event near you at www.americanhiking.org.



Best in Show

Winners of *Adirondack Life's* annual photography contest (see April 2020)—including Chris McManus's *Late in Long Lake*, above, which came in first in the People & Places category—will be featured at the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, in Gloversville (518-661-9932; www.pncreativeartscenter.org). Catch the Adirondack Life Art Show May 21 through July 7; the opening reception is May 28 at 6 pm.

War and Remembrance

Whether they served in Europe or the Pacific or kept the home fires burning, World War II touched the lives of every Adirondacker. From Wilderness to Warfront, an exhibition at Adirondack Experience, in Blue Mountain Lake, highlights the region's connections to the global conflict that ended 75 years ago. Among the artifacts on display starting May 22 will be a series of humorous pen-and-ink drawings by Upper Jay artist Arto Monaco, illustrating the dos and don'ts of behavior for army recruits, and the story of the Gladd brothers, who converted their Saranac Lake automobile dealership to manufacture parts for the military.



SHELL GAME

Test your eggs-pertise: guess which Adirondack birds these belong to.*



ANSWERS: 1. osprey, 2. Canada goose, 3. wild turkey, 4. red-eyed vireo, 5. blue jay

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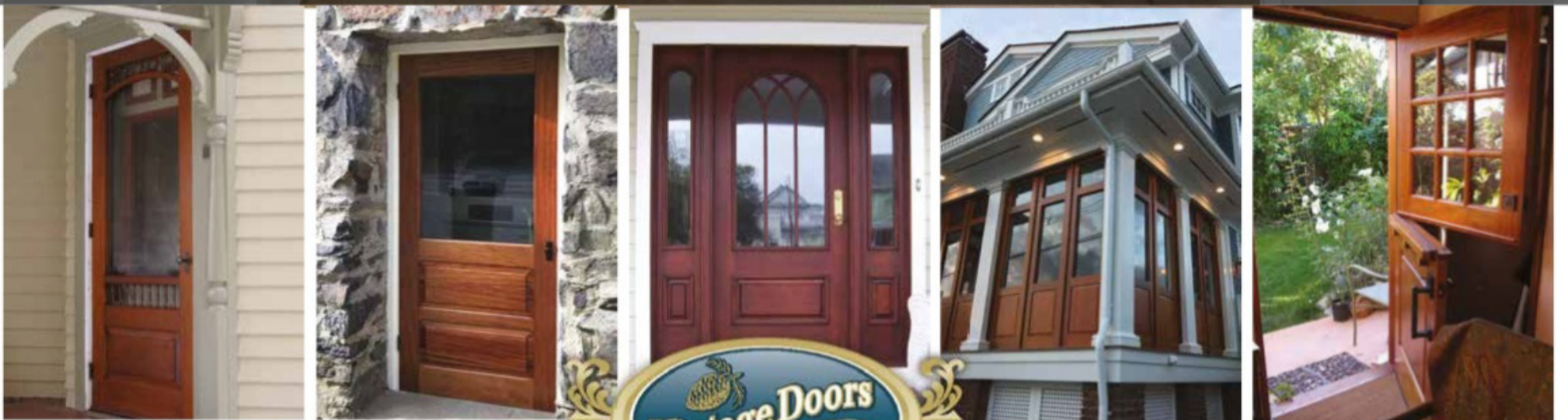
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Freedom Summer

How life at Sacandaga Park shaped Robert Reich

BY AMY GODINE

The son of an Adirondack pack peddler once told me his father knew the woods by memories of kindness, or its absence. From this farmhouse the young immigrant could hope for a seat at a kitchen table, maybe a plate of something warm. From that one, a pack of mean dogs snatching at his heels. And that was the map he went by, the one that showed the way. I know people who map the Adirondacks by their favorite vernal ponds, or swimming holes, or trails where they can run a dog off leash. Cyclist, barfly, bird lover, curator of epic views—they all have maps that don't match anything in print. Nobody's Adirondacks belongs to anybody else.

Political economist Robert Reich—Secretary of Labor for President Bill Clinton, part of the Ford and Carter administrations and advisor to Barack Obama's presidential tran-

sition team—has a private Adirondacks, too. And though it's been decades since he last crossed the Blue Line, he still recalls the old cartography. No mountains here, or campsites, lean-tos or foaming rapids, but ask him about the cabins and the porches and the wide view of the lake...

From toddlerhood to college, Reich spent part of every summer at a lakeside hotel and colony community called Sacandaga Park, just south of the Northville Bridge. Grandparents on both sides of his family bought cabins there as early as 1931, when the resort, then almost half a century strong, still owned a bright name as the "Coney Island of the Adirondacks." His parents met there at the Adirondack Inn (his father cut in at a dance), and by the time young Bobby made the scene, friends and relatives were already thick as acorns on the ground. So the Reich kid had the run of the place. The social net was wide and strong enough to let him really bounce

Illustration by Nip Rogers

around. “There was just an enormous sense of freedom,” Reich reminisced from his California home, where he teaches public policy at the University of California Berkeley. “We went to the beach. We waterskied. I fell in love. It was rather boring, but great fun.”

Camping out? No need, Reich laughed. It would have been redundant: “Inside those cabins, it felt like camping.” Each room had two double beds and every bed was occupied, and so was every porch. A boy could hop from one porch to the next and never lack for listeners, a little nosh, a joke.

Less richly evident, perhaps, were signs of Sacandaga’s glory days. By the ’50s, when Reich was charting an Adirondack world of porches, tennis

The short-of-stature Reich was often targeted by bullies. At Sacandaga Park, a kid named Mickey, slightly older, kept an eye out for this unwelcome teasing, and functioned as a kind of voluntary “personal protection racket.”

courts and picnics on the beach, the venerable resort was showing its old bones. The 250-room Adirondack Inn, once the biggest in the region, no longer sparkled with fresh paint. The reservoir had swallowed up and drowned the rickety rides on Sport Island, along with the old train tracks, and whatever gaunt remains of the 10 Adirondack hamlets slated for submersion that could not be hauled to higher ground. Also gone by Eisenhower’s era: the Shoot the Shute toboggan ride, the Texas burros, a miniature steam train, a Kinescope theater and the casino. Memories of command appearances by John Philip Sousa, Eddie Cantor and W. C. Fields were few. And nobody was taking tintype photos under the rusticated bent-twig arbor anymore. The arbor was long gone.

But Reich wouldn’t miss what was never his. And there remained the sunny

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waterfront, the new, upgraded summer theater, an expansive golf course, the bright scent of the pines, and, best, the thrill of hitching up each summer with relatives and friends.



One pal in particular Reich always liked to see. Stricken in his early youth with Fairbank's Disease, a bone disorder that curtailed growth, the short-of-stature Reich was often targeted by bullies. At Sacandaga Park, a kid named Mickey, slightly older, kept an eye out for this unwelcome teasing, and to Reich's great relief functioned as a kind of voluntary "personal protection racket." Then college beckoned and the boys fell out of touch, and only after would Reich realize that his childhood protector was one and the same as the Michael Schwerner who went south to Mississippi in the "Freedom Summer" of 1964 to register black Southerners to vote, and who, with two other civil rights workers, was kidnapped, tortured and murdered by the Ku Klux Klan.

The loss of his childhood defender grieved Reich, and got him thinking. The same instinct for justice that made his friend Mickey stick up for a kid at an Adirondack summer colony had just as surely, a few years on, fired this same man's resolve to defend the voiceless, the disenfranchised. Michael Schwerner understood, reflected Reich, that a bully is a bully, and bullies, large and small, have to be resisted, however terrible the price. In recent decades especially, Reich has shared his Michael Schwerner story in speeches, interviews and lectures. The memory of his Sacandaga boyhood friend's enduring courage gave the advisor to four presidents a hero and a lifelong goal as steep as any Adirondack peak.

Fight to be heard, and don't give in. This would be, for Reich, the story that charted his Adirondack map, the one he holds close to his heart. ▲

Historian Amy Godine wrote "The Greening of Al Smith" in the February issue and "A Poor View," about the legacy of Adirondack poverty, in the October 2019 issue. She's been uncovering the history of the region for *Adirondack Life* since 1989.

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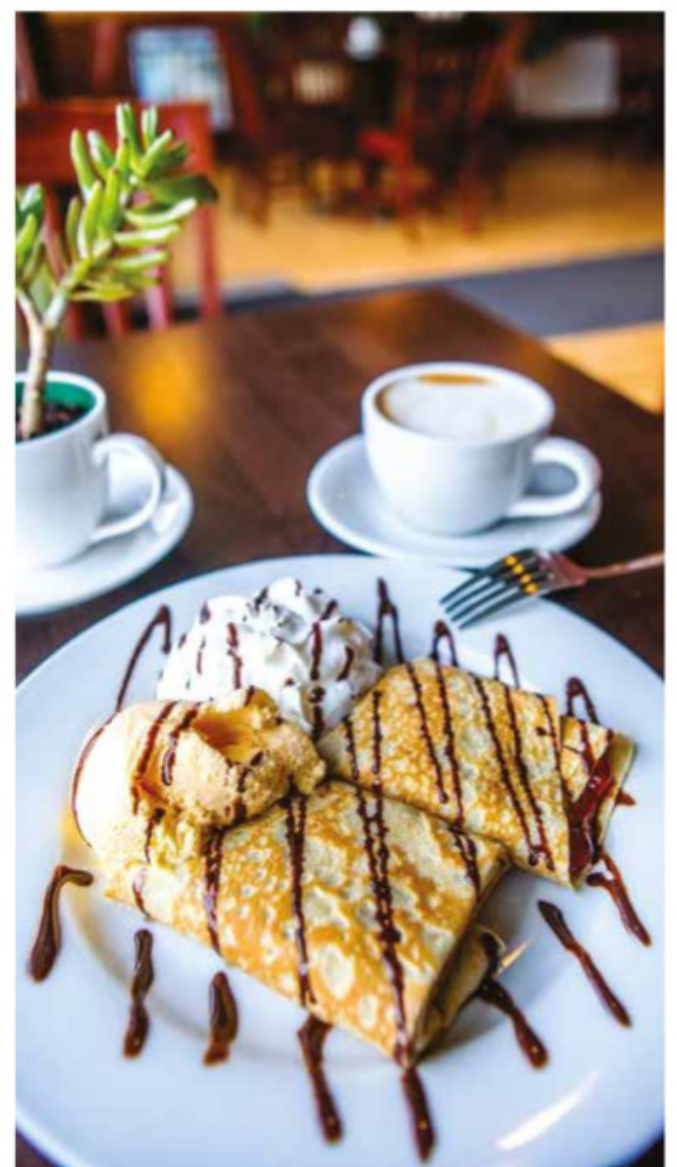
Where to find coffee, crepes or a place to stay in Port Henry

BY NIKI KOUROFSKY

When Tim Bryant bought an old storefront overlooking Port Henry's Main Street in 2011, the place had been abandoned for years—and it looked it. A wall had fallen in; part of the floor had collapsed. But Bryant was charmed by the circa-1915 Italianate-style building, and he knew that he might be its only hope. “If someone with a big heart didn't take it on, it would be gone,” he says.

After working overseas for decades, Bryant had moved back to his hometown to be closer to extended family, bringing along his wife, Irina, and three children. Perched on Lake Champlain and a short drive from the High Peaks, Port Henry looked like an ideal spot to raise kids. But Tim saw that something was missing in town—“a little corner,” he says, for people to hang out and meet up with friends.

So, bit by bit, with the help of a Main Street Grant from



Pride of Ticonderoga and funds from the Essex County Industrial Development Agency, the Bryants transformed the neglected storefront into that “little corner,” a low-key gathering place with four upstairs guestrooms. The Village Inn opened in late 2016, the Red Brick Cafe in 2017—and it’s been a family affair from the start. “Everybody does a little bit of everything,” Tim says, including his now-college-age son and daughter, who pitch in whenever they’re home. Tim’s stepson, graphic designer Timur Dzhambinov, helped lay out the interior—featuring Dzhambinov’s Adirondack photographs and a colorful mural of Port Henry—and served as manager until his recent move to Georgia. Paul Smith’s College alum Clayton Huestis mans the kitchen; his last gig was head chef at the King’s Inn, a Port Henry landmark that closed in 2016.

The Bryants have taken their time with this project, letting the business evolve naturally. The menu was limited at first, with coffee and espresso-based drinks, plus a sampling of paninis and sweet and savory crepes. But the offerings have expanded steadily, to include beer and wine, flatbread pizzas, fish tacos, tortellini and other daily specials. The cafe seats more than 30 and, in warmer weather, the deck can double that capacity. Upstairs, Tim says the rooms have been popular with visitors heading to the High Peaks from New York City or crossing the lake from New England.

Though the inn is open daily, the cafe serves lunch and dinner Wednesday through Saturday, so Tim and Irina can “keep some sanity.” Still, the Bryants are planning upgrades; they’d like to increase seating and host more local musicians. But nothing too over-the-top, nothing too rushed—a lot like the community it serves.

“The town inspires me,” Tim says of this once-bustling transportation hub that seems to be quietly staging a comeback. He points to recent growth at the local marinas and a new “wedding barn” added by the nearby Edgemont B&B. “Piece by piece, things are coming together for Port Henry.” ▲

Find the Red Brick Cafe and Village Inn (518-250-0993, www.villageinnandredbrickcafe.us) at 1 Star Way, in Port Henry.



Falling Star

The life of a forgotten Adirondacker

BY SALLY SVENSON

If you are seeking a novel form of entertainment,” counseled the *Duluth Evening Herald* in 1897, “you must follow New York’s lead and give an ‘Indian tea.’” The event’s success, it added, would depend upon having a Native American like New York City’s Falling Star in “full Indian regalia” on hand to manage the tea table.

Anne Paul Denis Fuller, or Falling Star, as she called herself, was an Abenaki woman from Lake Luzerne who became a New York City media sensation between 1897 and 1900. *The New York Times* interviewed her. A photographer for the *New York World* posed her in a variety of traditional clothes for a Sunday-edition photo spread. The *New York Sun* sent a journalist to Lake Luzerne to report on her family life. Articles about her were picked up and carried by newspapers throughout the country: to Mississippi, Texas,

the Mid- and Mountain West. What was it about Falling Star that so fascinated the press? Her face—considered “exotic” and “classic” in its Native beauty—and her unlikely career as an artists’ model in New York City.

Falling Star was born around 1855 in a log cabin on a small farm just outside the Abenaki mission village of St. Francis, Quebec. Responding to the loss of their lands and hunting territories, as well as the diminishment of the fur trade on which they depended, the region’s Abenaki reached out for new sources of income. They discovered that they could support themselves, at least marginally, by marketing to mainstream society’s romanticized image of the Native American population. This meant selling their splint-ash baskets, important in their culture and economy, and other Native goods to wholesale suppliers and to tourists in not-far-distant American resorts. Thus, in the mid-1860s, Falling Star’s parents loaded their three children into a birchbark canoe and traveled down into Lake Champlain. By 1870 they were spending most of the year in Keeseville, where they made baskets and beaded moccasins, gloves and mittens to sell to tourists.

Falling Star married Silas Fuller, a Keeseville resident, in the late 1870s; gave birth to a daughter, Carrie Maude Fuller, circa 1879; and was widowed 10 months later. She and her daughter (who would die from injuries sustained in an 1894 bicycle accident) subsequently joined her parents in Lake Luzerne, where the Abenaki had maintained a winter encampment on the shore of the Hudson River since at least the 1840s. By the mid-1890s this was a permanent settlement of about a dozen members of Falling Star’s extended family living year-round in two adjoining houses on a hill overlooking the river. (It was “not a young community,” observed a visitor to Falling Star’s home in 1898.) The family’s common occupation was crafting goods, which they sold at nearby resorts and from a shop fronting one of the family houses. Products included baskets made by the women, and chairs, card-playing boards, canes, small canoes, boxes and

Falling Star in Abenaki dress, circa 1900.



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bows created by the men.

During the early 1890s Falling Star accompanied St. Regis Mohawks from Franklin County in a touring troupe known as the St. Regis Indian Show Company—a kind of vaudevillian entertainment popular at the close of the 19th century. Generally owned by patent medicine entrepreneurs who exploited the mystique of Native Americans as natural healers, these shows attracted audiences by mounting mock powwows and war dances staged by costumed Natives—some authentic, some not. Falling Star wore traditional dress to sell her baskets, as she always did when marketing her products.

In March 1896 Falling Star traveled to New York City in connection with the second annual Sportsmen’s Exposition held in Madison Square Garden. The Adirondack Hotel League mounted an elaborate exhibit at the show, and Falling Star was employed in the Paul Smith’s Hotel booth, dispensing samples of the mountain spring water bottled and sold as a Smith sideline. In December of that year she ventured to New York again to sell baskets and beaded goods from an Indian medicine booth at the 10-day International Travelers Fair. Finding the market for her merchandise disappointing, she applied to wealthy poet and philanthropist Harriet Maxwell Converse for money to pay her passage back to Lake Luzerne, offering her baskets as security for the loan. Mrs. Converse was well known in New York City as a historian of Native culture, an active advocate for Native rights, and an honorary chief in the Seneca tribe of the loose Iroquois Confederacy. Upon meeting Falling Star, Converse was reported to have looked at her, and asked, “Do you know that you have a fortune in your face?”

Under Converse’s patronage, Falling Star became a popular artists’ model. She posed in full Abenaki attire (sometimes in a canoe) for individuals and for classes at William Merritt Chase’s Chase School of Art, at the Metropolitan School of Fine Arts, and at similar venues during a period when portraying Native Americans was a New York City artistic

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PROFILE

fad. She was not the only one to do so, but among women, at least, she was the most successful. Liked and respected by the artists for whom she posed, Falling Star had, according to one of them, “the sweetest voice” and “the gentlest ways.” Her intelligence and reserved manner meant that she was in demand for more than modeling assignments. She poured tea at art students’ dinners and receptions as well as at society functions, and taught schoolchildren and teachers how to weave baskets and make bows and arrows. During the several years that she wintered in New York City, she carried on a trade from her apartment in basket- and beadwork, deer hides, Native relics and traditional costumes. These she advertised, along with her profession as an artists’ model, on printed business cards. Each summer she returned to the Adirondacks, where James Wardner, proprietor of the Rainbow Inn on Rainbow Lake, had arranged for her to live in a cabin on hotel grounds and sell her baskets and beadwork at the resort. The “decidedly refined” and “well-educated” Falling Star, Wardner recorded in his memoirs, “proved to be quite an attraction for the place.”

The fickle New York City press lost interest in Falling Star after the turn of the 20th century. It took no notice of the crippling leg injury she suffered in a street railway accident in the early months of 1902. After many weeks spent at a hospital in Yonkers, she returned to Lake Luzerne, where her death from a heart attack early the following year generated one more flurry of newspaper attention. She was buried in an unmarked grave in her family’s Lake Luzerne plot.

Falling Star’s resourcefulness and independence were remarkable for the period, as was the attention she commanded during her New York City career. Adept at interpreting her Native heritage to a wide audience, she negotiated the limited opportunities available to her while acting as an ambassador of her culture. Long overlooked, her story is an important addition to the continually unfolding history of the Adirondacks. ▲

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The Property

Finding hope on a tiny piece of the Adirondacks

BY KELSEY FRANCIS

Down a half-mile dirt road sits our 1.1 acre of semi-tamed wilderness. Thirteen years ago, before the chainsaw and wood splitter began their work, our lot on Little Clear Pond was a poplar and pine jungle of scraggly trees. When my husband, David, drove me to see it for the first time, my apprehension was obvious. The mosquitoes instantly swarmed our car. I didn't want to get out.

"Really?" I questioned, as I looked out the car's windshield.

"Yes, really," David replied.

My husband was desperate to own a piece of land. Living in a neighborhood inside the village of Lake Placid had begun to feel too urban for him—a sentiment our non-Adirondack family and friends just couldn't understand.

"You already live in the wilderness!" his mother declared on more than one occasion.

David and I had both willfully transplanted ourselves to the Adirondacks—he from Rochester, New York, and I from the Maryland suburbs of Washington DC. Our choice to live five and 10 hours away from "home" was already something our families saw as remote. Why did we now need to own a piece of land down a half-mile dirt road with no neighbors?

We decided to buy that slice of wilderness near the shore of Little Clear Pond when I was three months pregnant with our first child. We thought maybe, someday, far in the future, we could build a home there. Or maybe just a seasonal camp. Or maybe it would simply serve to supply the firewood for our wood stove. The little acre seemed full of possibility. As my belly grew in size over the course of that fall and winter, so did our dreams of what this lot could become.

During our first summer of land ownership, David built an outhouse. With our newborn son in tow, and some visiting

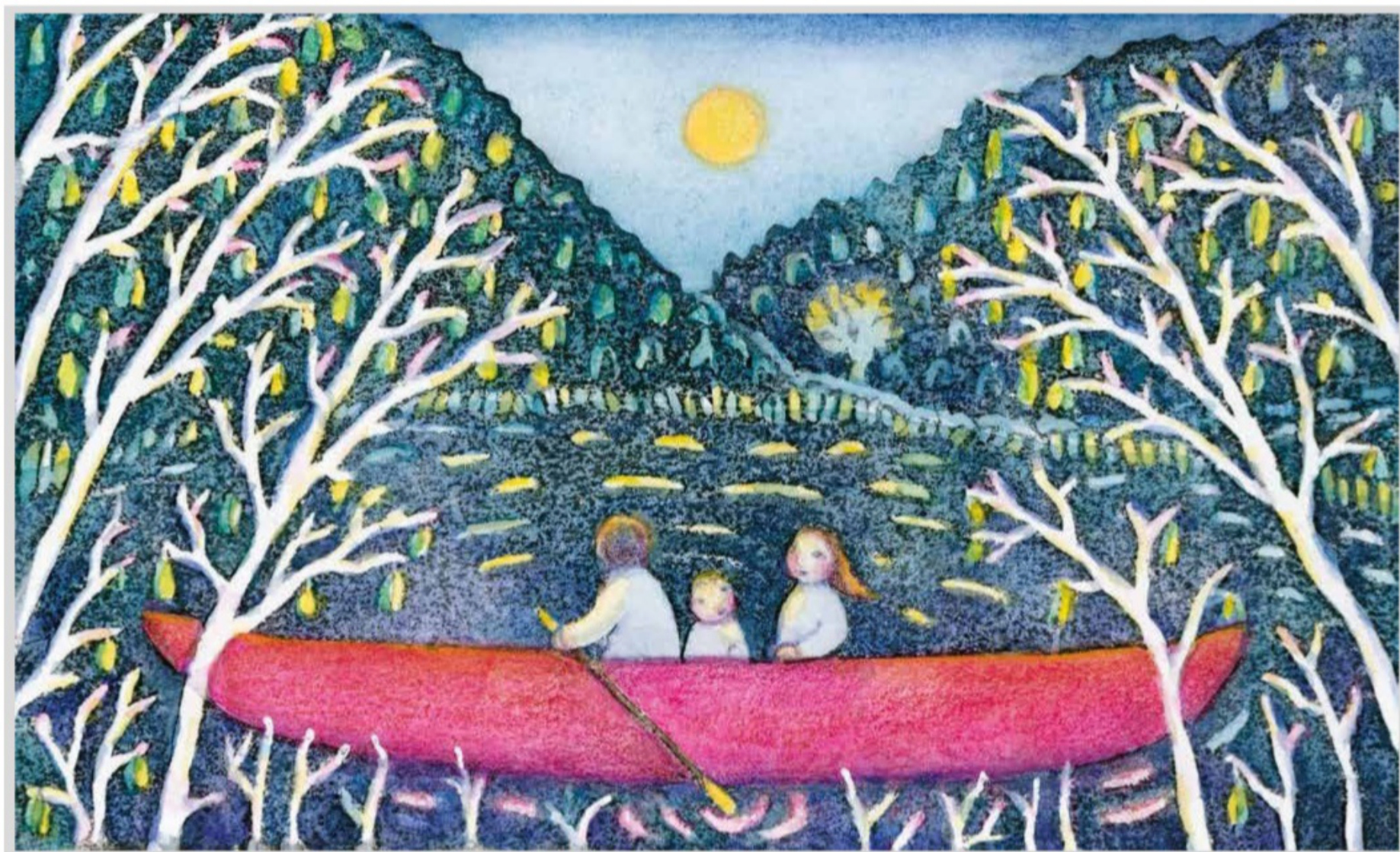


Illustration by Kristina Swarner

Maryland family, we held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the salvaged-lumber latrine. We all laughed and clinked bottles of beer while we debated recreating one of those Volkswagen Beetle commercials to see how many people we could fit inside the already weathered-looking outhouse. Our family and friends were beginning to see why we had fallen in love with this place. With burnt-orange sunset views across the pond and the nightly calls of loons, they had fallen in love with it as well.

Over the next three years, David spent every spare moment at Little Clear Pond clearing scrappy trees, splitting firewood, and laboriously turning our little acre of wild into a space for campfires, campouts and toddler explorations. He built a picnic table and a small storage shed. We bought a giant canoe to explore the shoreline and had picnics on an island covered in wild blueberries every August. After learning to walk, our son toddled his chubby legs into the shallow water from a tiny sandy cove. We called it his Adirondack baptism.

Little Clear Pond is a protected fish hatchery for landlocked salmon, so there is no fishing, public camping or motorboat access, making it one of the quietest places I've ever been in the Adirondacks. In this quiet, we found our escape from the noise of our public-school careers and from the structure of our in-town everyday lives. By the time our son turned three years old, he was affectionately calling our little acre in the woods "The Property." The simple name stuck.

"Are we going out to The Property this weekend?"

"Let's bring those old Adirondack chairs out to The Property."

Eventually, David decided he wanted to build something more substantial on the land. He had been researching various options for off-grid structures and seasonal camp designs for a few years. We decided that a two-story barn would provide us with the versatility of both seasonal living and seasonal storage. So, in the late spring of 2010, when I was newly pregnant with our second child, we broke ground on another part of our

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BARKEATER

Adirondack dream.

David worked long hours that summer, digging and pouring the foundation. Milling lumber from our own trees. Framing. Siding. Roofing. Friends, family and strangers all helped. We threw framing parties and roofing parties. And as my belly grew with our second baby, so did our barn. I would often bring our son to The Property to ride his pedal-less Strider bike and we'd cook dinner on the grill we now permanently stored there. It was a summer filled with long days of gritty labor and satisfying moments of admiring all that could be accomplished in a day's work.

By November of 2010, the barn was almost complete. I was eight months pregnant when the barn doors were finally installed. Winter was coming.

The barn had come to represent a time in our lives I desperately wanted to return to, but knew I never could. I couldn't walk through its doors and see the rough-cut reminders of a life that no longer existed.

We stood beneath the now leafless trees on Veterans Day and reflected on the months of backbreaking work. This had truly been a labor of love.

"We need to have a cross-country ski party out here after the baby is born," said David.

I laughed. "I'm not sure I'll be up to skiing, but yes, we need to have a party. There is so much to celebrate," I said.

At the hospital three weeks later, we learned that our baby would be still-born. I would give birth to a daughter we named June, but we would never learn why she died.

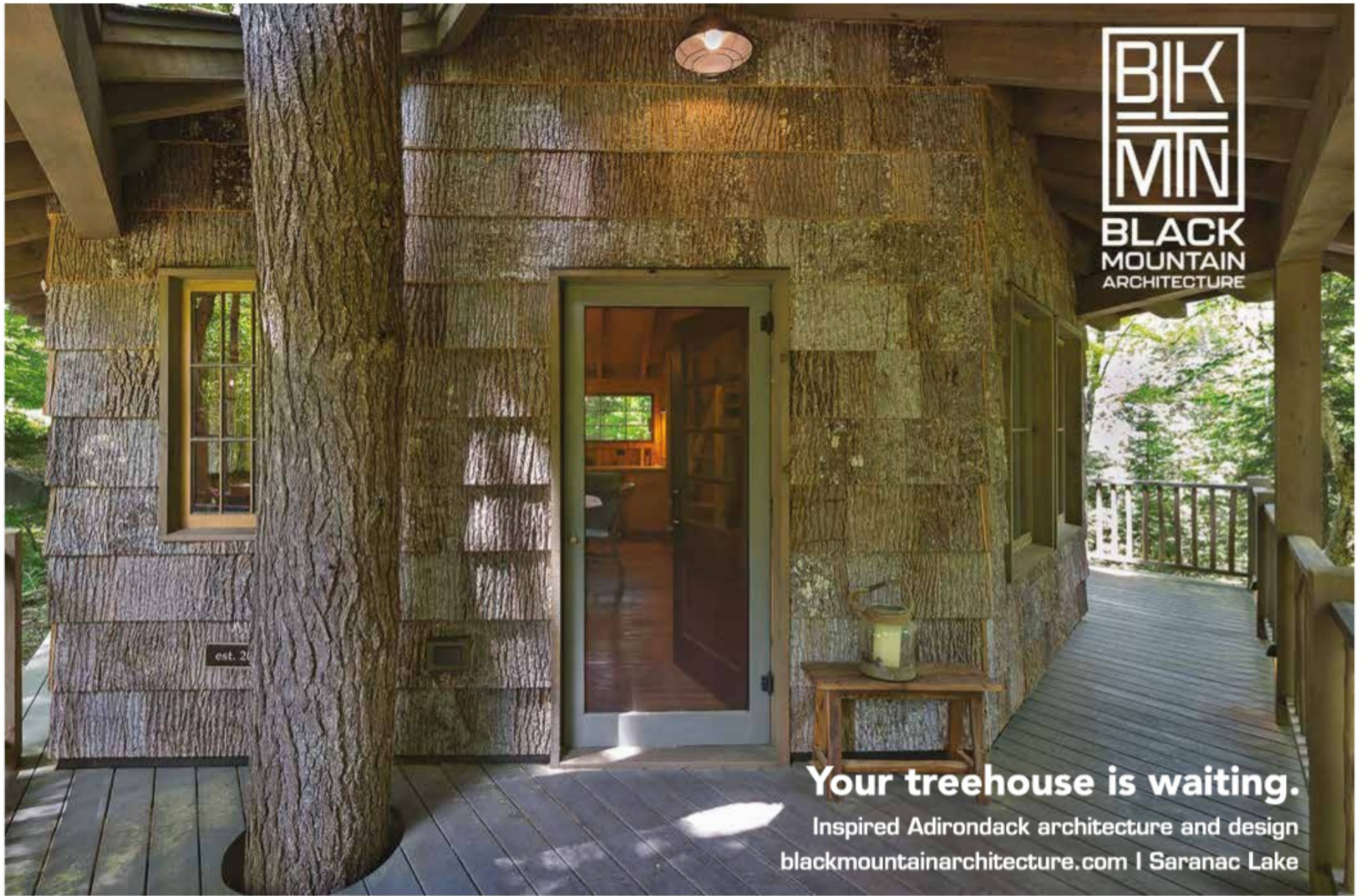
In the weeks following June's death, David and I drove to The Property a number of times to check on the barn. The snow had arrived early that winter and David needed to make sure the barn could withstand the weight. He was worried the barn was not strong

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BARKEATER

enough. We could be sure of very little in the darkness of grief that December, so if nothing else, he needed to make sure that all we had built on Little Clear Pond could survive.

On these barn checking trips, I would stay in the car. I couldn't leave. I would turn up the heat, letting the vents blast me with warmth. The barn had come to represent a time in our lives I desperately wanted to return to, but knew I never could. I couldn't walk through its doors and see the rough-cut reminders of a life that no longer existed.

After the snow melted, David continued to work at The Property. He painted the barn's exterior and built stairs. He split more firewood and cleared more brush. When I began visiting again, I walked the trails along the shore and stacked firewood. On those worn narrow paths and in those neat piles, I found predictability and order, both of which I desperately needed. My daughter's death remained a mystery. And grief doesn't like the unknown. Grief needs the familiar. The therapeutic familiarity that existed at Little Clear Pond became an antidote for my grief. I could see it in the way our son consistently collected dried sticks for campfires, his tiny piles mirroring my own larger ones. And I could hear it in the reliable nightly chorus of spring peepers. By the summer of 2011, I was pregnant again. I was a different person now, but slowly and tentatively, I let our Adirondack dream sprout new growth.

When David turned 40, in May 2012, we threw a giant party at the barn. It would become the first of many. As a family, we had emerged from an 18-month social hibernation and there was a lot to celebrate: the late arrival of blackflies, David's birthday, the barn's completion, and the healthy birth of our second daughter. Friends and family came from far and wide to stand beneath budding trees and admire all that could be accomplished not in a day's work, but in the cumulative collection of weeks, months and years. In the heartbreak and the joy. In the survival. This was all much more than a labor of love. This was the barn that hope built. 🌱

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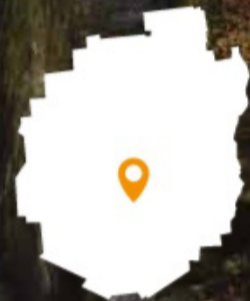
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FALLS BROOK

A 6-foot cascade among a succession of small, scenic waterfalls on Falls Brook, in Indian Lake.

From Indian Lake, drive north on Route 30. Park at the pull-off on the left, just after Lewey Lake. Take the trail on the south side of the bridge to view the falls.



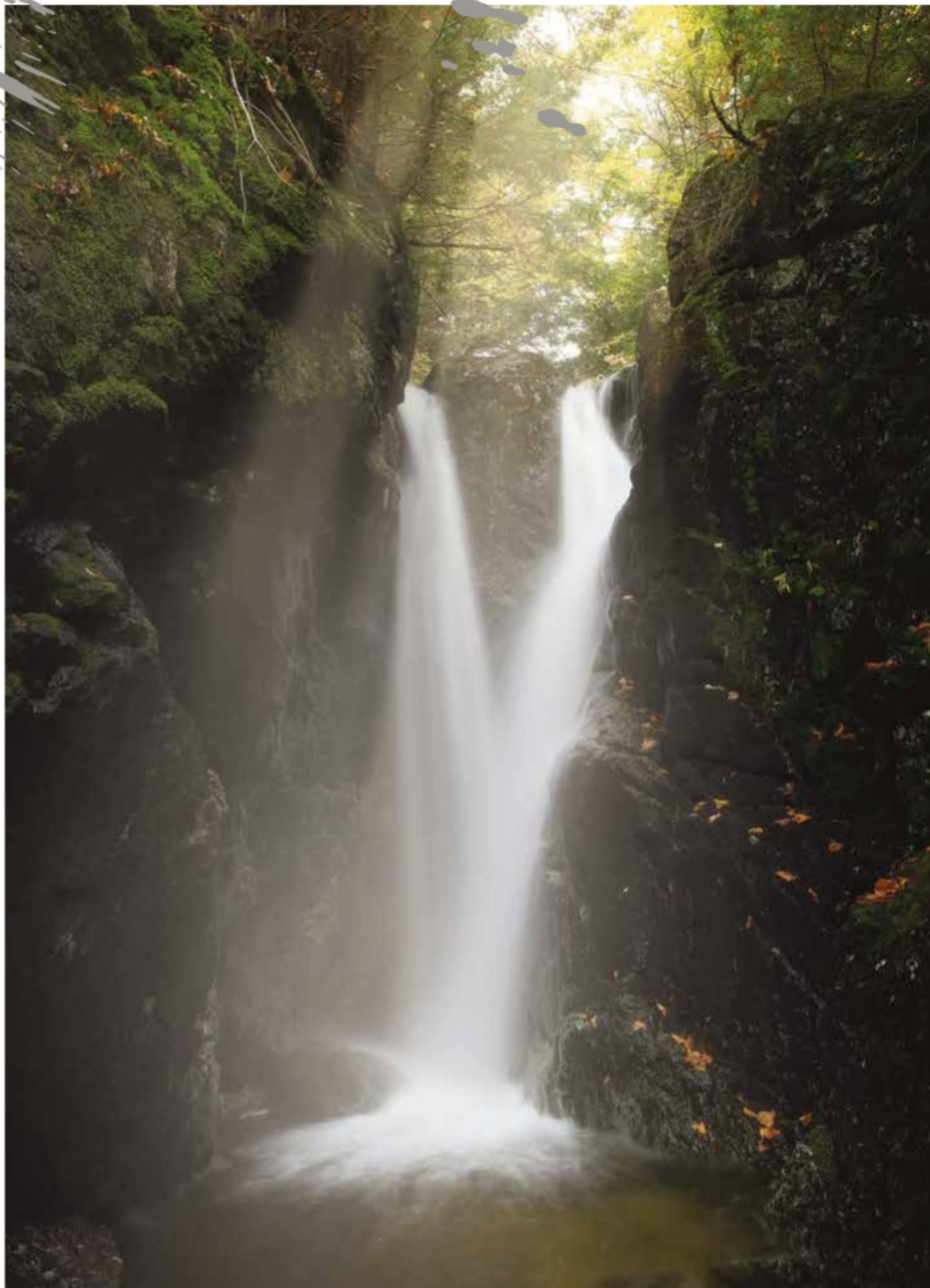


SPLIT ROCK FALLS

A 30-foot waterfall on the Boquet River, in New Russia.

From the junction of Routes 9 and 73, drive northeast on Route 9 for 2.3 miles. After crossing a bridge over the Boquet River, turn right into a parking area. A promontory below the falls offers picturesque views; the side of the gorge is also accessible.





SPLIT FALLS

A 20-foot waterfall on Gill Brook, in the town of Keene.

From Keene Valley, drive about 3 miles south on Route 73. Turn right on Ausable Road and park in the public lot on the left. On foot (this is private property), walk 0.5 mile along the gravel road, past the golf course, turning left by the tennis courts onto Lake Road Way. The Lake Road trailhead starts in another 0.1 mile at the twiggy gate into the Adirondack Mountain Reserve (AMR). Continue on the road for 2 miles, then turn left onto the Gill Brook trail. Follow the trail 0.5 mile to the falls.



SHELVING ROCK FALLS

A 70-foot waterfall fed by Shelving Rock Brook on the east side of Lake George.

From West Fort Ann, at the junction of Routes 149 and 9L/Ridge Road, drive 1.5 miles east on Route 149. Turn left onto Butter-milk Falls Road and drive north for about 3 miles. At Sly Pond Road, continue north for about 6 miles to Hogtown. From Hogtown, follow Shelving Rock Road about 3.5 miles to the Shelving Rock Falls and Shelving Rock Mountain parking area. Follow a well-marked trail south to the top of the waterfall.



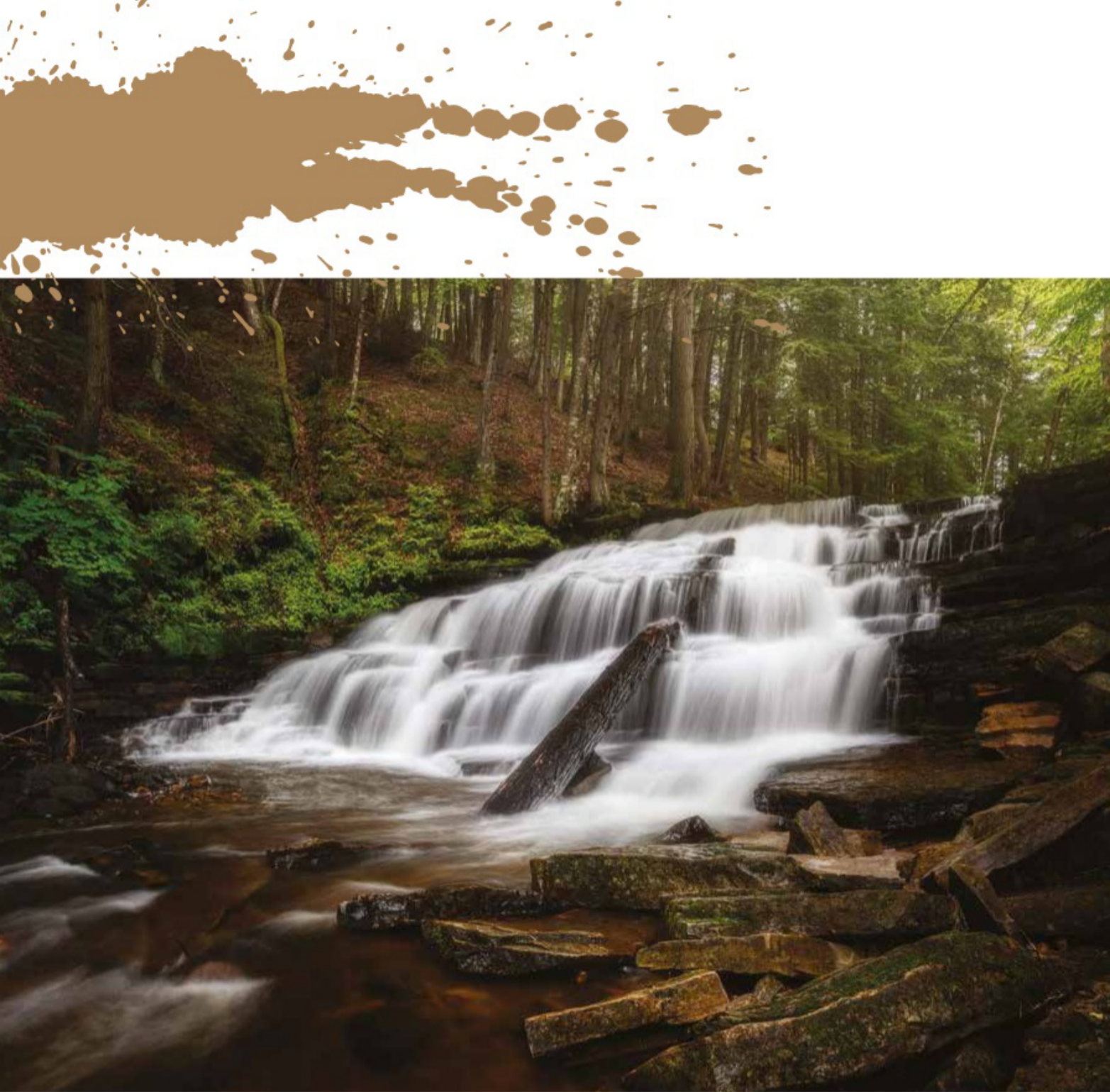


RAINBOW FALLS

A 150-foot waterfall on Cascade Brook, a tributary of the East Branch of the Ausable River, in the town of Keene.

Follow directions from page 35 (Split Falls) to the Adirondack Mountain Reserve gate. From there, hike Lake Road for about 3 miles to the dam on Lower Ausable Lake. At the dam, cross the footbridge and follow signs to the Gothics trail. Follow the trail for 0.1 mile and diverge right for another 0.3 mile to the base of the falls.





BEECHER CREEK FALLS

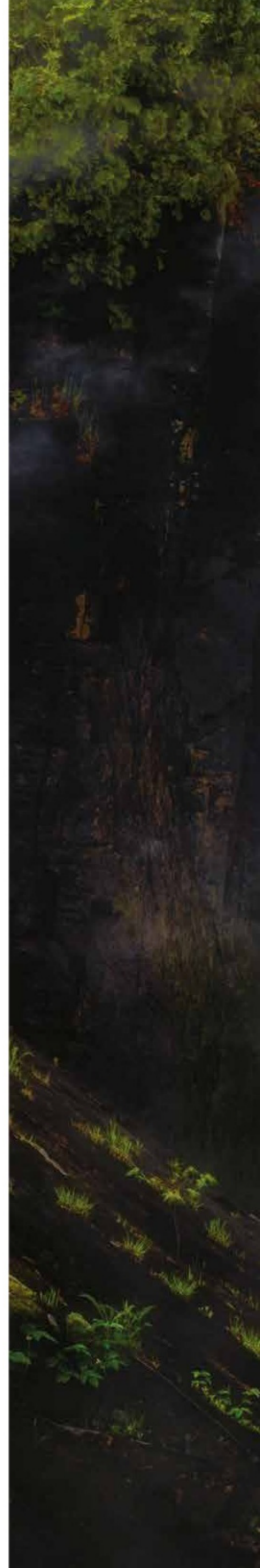
A 20-foot waterfall on Beecher Creek, in Edinburg.

From the junction of Routes 4/North Shore Road, 5 and 98 in Edinburg, drive northeast on Route 4/North Shore Road for 0.5 mile. Turn right into a roadside pull-off. The falls are accessed from a gravel path to a viewing area at the Arad Copeland Covered Bridge.

LEGEND OF THE FALLS

Directions to most of the waterfalls in these pages come from Russell Dunn and John Haywood's guide *Adirondack Fifty Falls Challenge* (available at www.adirondacklifestore.com). The book—and the challenge, which results in a patch—were developed to offer an alternative to High Peaks-heavy recreational usage that threatens natural resources, and to promote gorgeous but lesser-known places across the park. Learn more about the guide and the challenge at www.digthefalls.com, a site dedicated to cascades in New York State.

See more stunning photographs—waterfalls and otherwise—by Manuel Palacios, of Zone 3 Photography, at www.zone3photo.com or [@zone3photo](https://www.instagram.com/zone3photo) via Instagram.



Waterfalls can be dangerous. Terrain and trails can be slippery. High water levels increase the power and current of falls, leading to potentially deadly conditions for swimmers. Don't get too close to the edge of a waterfall's precipice. "People have fallen to their deaths trying to get a better look or by getting that photo or selfie," according to the authors of *Fifty Falls*.

WADHAMS FALLS

A 20-foot waterfall on the Boquet River, in Wadhams.

From the junction of Routes 9N South and 9 in Elizabethtown, drive east on Route 9N for about 4 miles. After passing under I-87, turn left onto Route 59/Youngs Road and drive northeast for 2.3 miles. Turn right onto Route 8, then in 0.1 mile bear left onto Route 22. Turn left into the Wadhams Free Library's parking area. The falls can be viewed from behind the library or head-on from the bridge.





EAST TIMES ON THE HUDSON

A 1980s RAFTING GUIDE
REVISITS LIFE ON THE RIVER

BY CHRISTOPHER SHAW

—
O

OUR RAFT LEFT THE INDIAN RIVER behind and entered the Hudson three miles below the Lake Abanakee Dam, outside Indian Lake, and I reflected on how deeply you can absorb a landscape, especially if you traverse it repeatedly for years. I wouldn't have imagined I'd remember every inch of the Indian River's whitewater since my last trip down it 10 or 12 years earlier. And in truth I did get confused about what was coming next,

Rafting photograph courtesy of Wayne Failing

but only in the same places I always got confused when I guided on that river and the Upper Hudson Gorge 40 years earlier.

That's the way it is with the Indian—it's relentless. So that kind of counts as remembering.

THE INDIAN, AND THE HUDSON River Gorge for the next 14 miles, with its continuous Class III-IV whitewater (depending on water volumes), dominated my working and imaginative life for a decade. Back then, in the early '80s, all the commercial rafting took place during the six to eight weeks of rain- and snow-melt-swollen runoff in the months of April and May, when temperatures were often in the 30s or 40s and it could be raining, sleeting or snowing.

On this day last August, however, cardinal flowers lined the banks of the Indian and Cedar Ledges below the mouth of the Indian in the Hudson, almost as far as Mink Pond Falls (painted by Winslow Homer, along with other scenes along the river). The leafy understory shaded and darkened the banks where the sun had previously shone on bare ground or unmelted ice. We wore shorts and sandals, instead of wet suits and neoprene booties. Our guide, Asa "Ace" Connor, 26, of Burlington, had a light touch and guided our 14-foot self-bailing raft flawlessly: my wife, Sue Kavanagh; my longtime friend, fellow ex-guide, and North River outdoor recreation legend Dick Carlson; and me. All three had been there in the first bloom of commercial rafting on the Hudson. We were never outfitters, always hired hands, but with equal if personal investments in making rafting a major force in the region—as an economic boon as well as a wilderness-based activity that continued an earlier and highly idealized profession from the days of log drives, but with fewer drownings and very low environmental impact. As Ben Woodard, the wilderness ranger in those days, used to say, "The only way to get that many people through a wilderness area in one day with so little impact is to fly them through."

It wasn't so long after the final dismissal of the proposed Gooley hydro proj-

ect that had threatened to impound the river in a series of dams from Newcomb to The Glen, even to Lake Luzerne, and not long after the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Our reasoning at the time was that the more people you could expose to the Gorge and its glories, the more people you could depend on to protect it.

But this was our first time down the Gorge in 10 years, since the town of Indian Lake had relented to pressure from rafting companies for limited summer dam releases. It was also our first time since the state acquisition of the former Finch-Pruyn lands in the Upper Hudson corridor from Newcomb on down.

I was there to note the differences not

only between spring and summer rafting, but between the state of the profession then and now.

Here's what I remember:

April 1981: Wake on somebody's couch at 5:30 after little sleep from worrying about high water. Assess hangover, consume four aspirin. Call pre-Internet river gauge: the number you're not supposed to know but that everybody does. Wait for the clicks, the long buzz, then count the number of short buzzes, note the pause, count the second series of short buzzes. Try to not lose track of the count—wait, was that 6.9 feet or 7.9? Big difference! Call Carlson. "Yeah, 7.9. Feeling the love? I'm watching the weather right now. Looks bad!" Consult thermometer. Thir-



Author Christopher Shaw, middle, with fellow rafting guides (clockwise from left): Dick Carlson, Vincent Woolley, Karla Matzke and Rusty Brust. FACING PAGE: Wayne Failing guides customers on the Hudson River, circa 1981.



Forty years ago Hudson River rafting trips happened on high water in early spring, often in rain, sleet or snow. Rafts were ungainly and helmets weren't required.

ty-eight degrees? Strategize layering.

Examine condition of rain gear, guide gear—gloves, fleece, waterproof shell (was there even Gore-tex yet?), PFD, handy double-bladed rafting knife mounted dramatically on the PFD where you could use it to fend off anacondas or cut the floor out of a raft in case of becoming pinned underneath it. (This never happened.)

Throw everything into the back seat of your 13-year-old car. Rummage around for leftovers from late dinner at Basil and Wick's

(the original one, since burned), proceed to Smith's Restaurant, or Anna's (now Chris-sy's) on Main Street, in the dark, being careful on rain-slicked streets with balding tires. Enter Anna's, its windows befogged by steaming bodies. Peruse the booths and counters packed with local guides, drivers, hangers-on, trainees, prospective trainees. Slide into booth between Carlson, Karla Matzke, also of North Creek; maybe John Lando, from Wilmington; "Big Jim" McGowin, of Wevertown; or photographer and guide Vincent Woolley. Await

first diner coffee in green-striped porcelain cup. Order the works. "If it's 7.9 now," Carlson says, darkly, "what's it going to be around noon, when we hit the Narrows, with the rain and snowmelt from yesterday in the High Peaks? Eight and half? Nine?" Some of us have never seen it that high. Outside, the temperature has risen into the 40s, a good sign. Devour enormous breakfast in a growing state of anxiety. Borrow \$4.58 to pay for enormous breakfast.

Begin drive to Indian Lake in ancient, decrepit vehicle alone or with multiple other raft creatures. On the long climb up Route 28 between North River and McGinn Meadows note precipitation change from rain, to sleet, to driving wet snow. Arrive at "headquarters," in this case a parking area along Route 28 outside Indian Lake, where the first customers are arriving or waking up in their cars, and the used school buses are idling their diesel engines. No bathrooms, no changing rooms, no coffee. Hand out cold wet suits to groggy customers in blowing wet snow. Women may change on the bus, but they and the men often just strip outside their cars and struggle half naked in hats and mittens into the cold suits and booties, then stand around like penguins and shiver. Eventually an urn of coffee arrives with the equipment bus and other guides. Go around adjusting life jackets as Carlson begins the safety talk, replete with one-liners, quotes from M*A*S*H, insinuations of trouble on the river if you fail to tip the guide. Hand out paddles. Board customer buses.

Arrive at the put-in on Chain of Lakes Road, below the "Otter Slide," where a sweeping eddy behind a mid-river island in the Indian makes a natural harbor that can hold numerous boats. Dozens of rafts belonging to various outfits have been inflated and lined up on shore in the snow by guide trainees and guides, in the order they are scheduled to take off. The rafts are "bucket boats"—ungainly affairs that need to be bailed after every wave with five-gallon joint-compound buckets carabinered to a thwart, so you spend the entire trip with your bootied feet in 35-degree water.

Eventually the customers array themselves on either side of the rafts and drag/carry the boats to the put-in, slide them through mud and snow into the water, then scramble and tumble into the bouncing cold rafts. You climb in last, secure your place on the slippery, cold

Hypalon tube by jamming your feet between said tubes and the sagging water-filled floor, and commence to order practice strokes for the first inkling of how well your crew will help you avoid trouble, and how to adjust the load. Then the rafts begin to peel out of the eddy and disappear around the island straight into the Indian's unreadable froth.

What's the point? you wonder, as the water washes over you in repeated waves, and you try above the roar to keep the boat on a safe but sporting line. It's hard to see what about any of this could be construed as "fun," in the sense of being an easy and untroubling diversion, a lark, a trifle. Which means there must be some other attraction, one having to do with the nature of wilderness travel in any and all conditions and our collective memories of it. I hesitate to make too much of this, but there it is. Few of the outfitters used wilderness as a selling point, few used it to promote what, for most people, was an adrenaline high. But it was all around you and dominated everything. You were in it. It was big, the water and the land; it was here, and it was real.

IN THE FIRST FEW YEARS A SIZEABLE amount of capitalist jockeying and display went on among the various outfits and guides. It had started by April 1979, when Joe Kowalski, of Wilderness Tours, in Pembroke, Ontario, and Wayne Hockmeyer, of Northern Outdoors, in The Forks (pronounced "fawx"), Maine, arrived simultaneously at the fisherman's access on the Indian, immediately downstream of the Lake Abanakee Dam and the Otter Slide, to run their first scouting trips. Each had a summer river where they made most of their money, but the Hudson provided a high-water spring trip their rivers didn't. Today they claim a long friendship, and for the most part relations were cordial, at least on the surface. But the tensions of low-profit, high-status capitalism (and exploiting a free public resource) pertained. Word got out and attracted other outfits, including local start-ups like the one we worked for. Any new and local outfitters who arrived on the scene were met with resistance from earlier arrivals. Outfitters formed an "association" with little authority to do anything other than

intimidate newcomers and negotiate with the town to control numbers, put-in times and dam releases when necessary. Amid an atmosphere of general fellowship and cooperation, an undercurrent of rivalry persisted.

In 1981, the first time Wayne Failing, of Middle Earth Expeditions, in Lake Placid, showed up with a single boat and eight clients, he immediately took heat from another local outfitter telling him the association was closed and he couldn't launch there. He stood his ground and insisted on his equal right to a public put-in. After a couple of years and numerous meetings, he prevailed. Wayne stood out in those days. He had a red boat and wore a long red sash around his forehead. In all his years rafting he never used more than two boats. He also had more training in swift water rescue, carried more emergency equipment than most outfits, and effected numerous complicated rescues. It wasn't unusual in those days to come around a bend in the Indian or the Hudson and see a couple of boats overturned or pinned to rocks, customers standing on rocks or on shore, swimmers everywhere. Recreational kayakers went out of their way to pull people back in, as did

sorted themselves out. Senior guides and more experienced outfitters started training newcomers better. River levels more or less cooperated and a couple of years later, by the time the Department of Environmental Conservation figured out it should get in on the act and monitor day use, a thousand customers went down the river on one rare sunny day in April.

KARLA MATZKE, ONE OF THE FEW women guides from those first years, grew up in North Creek and started kayaking downriver ahead of the rafts to set up lunch for Hudson River Rafting in 1980. By '81 she worked with Dick Carlson, Vince Woolley, one or two other regulars, and me, first for Adirondack Wildwaters, on the Hudson and the Sacandaga, until we all moved together over to Old Forge-based Adirondack River Outfitters, now AROAdventures. Karla, an artist, guided rafts all the way through college and grad school and now owns the Matzke Fine Art Gallery and Sculpture Park on Camano Island, Washington.

When I called her we had a hard time remembering the names of any other women guides, though there were one or

FEW OF THE OUTFITTERS USED WILDERNESS AS A SELLING POINT ... BUT IT DOMINATED EVERYTHING. YOU WERE IN IT. IT WAS BIG, THE WATER AND THE LAND; IT WAS HERE, AND IT WAS REAL.

the other passing rafts. There was almost never any serious injury, but on busy days or at low or high water it could look like mayhem.

By 1980 Wayne Hockmeyer had learned that a trip at high water could result in flips and end in boats and customers lost until dark. Local businesses loved the extra six or eight busy weekends after skiing. Eventually the association hammered out a rough cooperative plan and the larger and smaller outfits

two, especially on the Sacandaga in the summer. Mostly she remembered a bad swim she had at 8.5 feet, and the fact that "owners were unreliable," and close with a dollar. The established outfits from Maine had rigorous licensing requirements and better guide training, and paid accordingly. No such incentive attached to local outfits, at least at the beginning. When Dick Carlson showed up to guide on his first day in 1980 he was told, "There's your boat, here's your | *Continued on page 73*

MARSH M a D N e S S

THIS 660-ACRE WETLAND IS A SURE BET FOR BIRDERS

ALONG THE SHORE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN at the outlet of the Ausable River, the Ausable Marsh Wildlife Management Area is a favorite haunt of waterfowl, herons, birds of prey, songbirds—and an irresistible draw for photographers.

Russ Hartung, the retired emergency-room physician who captured these dramatic shots, has been coming here for decades. “I think it’s one of the best birding places around,” he says. “I can stay for hours and hours.”



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUSS HARTUNG





CLOCKWISE
FROM ABOVE:
Greater yellowlegs,
great blue heron,
juvenile bald eagle,
Canada goose.
PAGES 44-45:
A gaggle of
Canada geese.

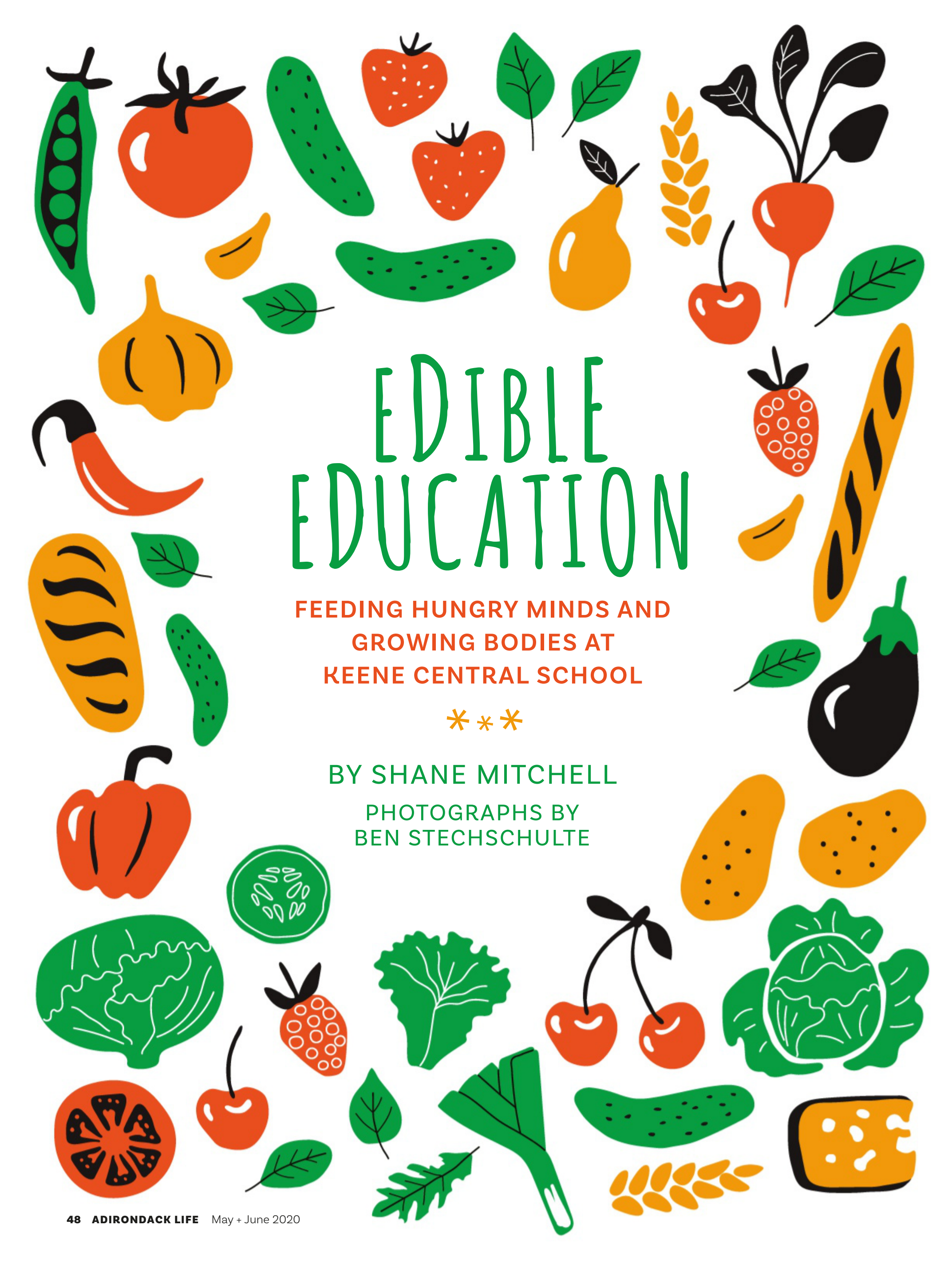




IF YOU GO

FIND AUSABLE MARSH OFF ROUTE 9 in the town of Peru. There's a small parking area, interpretive signs and a wheelchair-accessible viewing platform along the Ausable Point Campground Road, which leads to a Department of Environmental Conservation campground. Off-season, Hartung says the site's beach can be a quiet place to spot bald eagles and wading birds. If you'd rather explore the marsh from a canoe, there's a boat launch near the campground's entrance.

Farther south along Route 9, past Bear Swamp Road, a small sign leads to another entrance, with access to a short trail. Wading birds favor this section of the marsh, Hartung says, though they can be skittish. Sit still for a bit, and your patience will be rewarded. But be aware: this is also prime deer tick habitat.



EDIBLE EDUCATION

FEEDING HUNGRY MINDS AND
GROWING BODIES AT
KEENE CENTRAL SCHOOL



BY SHANE MITCHELL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
BEN STECHSCHULTE





“MISS PERKINS, CAN I GET SECONDS?”



asked the kindergartner, raising her hand.

“Yes, you may.”

Permission granted from her teacher, the student jumped up from the table and got back in the lunch line. Sloppy Joe day at Keene Central School, when the kitchen staff prepares soft bread buns smothered in rich, ground-beef chili, is always popular. The girl didn’t care that the meat was raised locally, or the sauce contained tomato puree the cooks preserved themselves over the summer, and butternut squash grown on a nearby farm. In her words, it just “tasted good.”

The National Farm to School (F2S) Network improves access to local foods in eligible school systems, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s guidelines for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). On the state level, the “No Student Goes Hungry” initiative encourages districts to purchase at least 30 percent of their ingredients and products from New York growers. (These school-supported programs are modeled on pilot projects like Edible Schoolyard, created by chef Alice Waters in 1995.)

The original Adirondack Farm to School Initiative was founded in 2013 by the food service director at the Saranac Lake Central School District; presently, the Cornell Cooperative Extension for Essex County has absorbed the initiative and continues to expand to more schools under a new set of grants. Multiple districts within the park boundaries now participate in a range of “edible education” programs, and what shows up on the cafeteria menu is augmented through

such hands-on activities as school gardens, farm visits and cooking classes. Schroon Lake Central raises chickens. Willsboro Central has a composting system. Boquet Valley Central, in Westport, and Yandon-Dillon Educational Center, in Mineville, feed local pigs with vegetable scraps. At Keene Central, students grow pea shoots in hydroponic beds and learn to forage in outdoor classes on “Forest Fridays.” All are designed to promote

EVERYTHING GROWN IN THE
GARDEN HAS ITS PURPOSE,
FROM THE SAGE USED FOR
STUFFING AT THE THANKS-
GIVING CELEBRATION TO THE
GARLIC IN THE PIZZA SAUCE.



healthier eating patterns and impact family purchasing in a region where food insecurity remains high.

“We have students who bulk up on Friday, and then eat a lot more again on Monday. That’s usually an indicator there’s not much at home,” said Julie Holbrook, who started as the cafeteria manager at Keene Central in 2004, and has since expanded her food service director role to six more North Country schools. Local farmers frequently reach out to her when they have a surplus; one offered her a low price per pound because he felt

strongly about feeding kids; others contribute because they have children in the schools. Most of the student population Holbrook serves eats free breakfast and lunch: of her schools, all but Keene qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision grant that targets high-need, low-income areas. Yandon-Dillon and the William A. Fritz Educational Center, in Plattsburgh, have the highest poverty levels, with over 90 percent of students qualifying for SNAP, Medicaid or direct certification in the NSLP. “The access to good food is harder than you think,” said Holbrook. “So when I talk to students, I tell them, ‘Let’s call your lunch ‘dinner’ and offer them excuses to fill up, like maybe your parents are too busy to cook or you’ve got team sports after school, but in truth a lot of kids don’t go home to much food at all.”

Taped to a cinderblock wall in the cafeteria kitchen at Keene Central is a bumper sticker that reads: “No Farms, No Food.” On a June morning shortly before the end of the school year, Jennifer Wright set loaves from the oven on cooling racks. Trays of blueberry muffins already rested on the counter. Her vinyl apron was cheerfully decorated with cartoonish cupcakes. Wright arrives at 6:30 every morning to prep breakfast and bake the cookies, cakes, granola bars and sandwich bread for the school’s 159 students. She researches many of her baked goods online and keeps a recipe box with index cards of time-tested cakes and breads.

Shannon Shambo slipped on oven mitts to transfer sheet pans of bubbling hot rhubarb crisp, carefully navigating the short flight of stairs to another prep area behind the cafeteria’s counter display. Jocelyn Lopez set up the salad bar and positioned racks filled with “dunkers”—buns loaded with grated mozzarella cheese—next to a grill station for quick turnaround. The storeroom was stacked with #10 cans of government-issue applesauce, peaches and beans; supersize bags of Tostitos; and tins of cocoa. These are backup supplies for days when orders don’t arrive. Depending on the season, the kitchen works with salad greens, carrots and onions from Keene Valley’s Wild Work Farm and yogurt from North Country Creamery in



With garden coordinator Bunny Goodwin, above, Keene students grow some of the foods that will end up in their school lunches—including their Thanksgiving meal, a longtime tradition involving families and community members.



Cooking from scratch is healthier and saves districts money, says Keene food service director, Julie Holbrook, left.

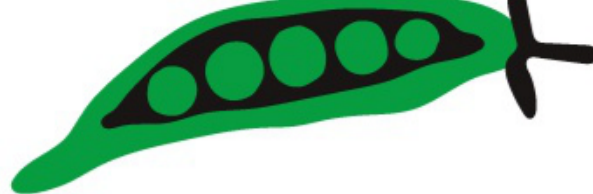
Keeseville; beef from Donahue Farm near Malone; tomatoes from Juniper Hill Farm, in Wadhams; or rhubarb harvested from the school's own garden.

Cooking from scratch cuts waste and saves the school system money. A case in point: baking muffins in the kitchen costs three cents per unit, much less than the wholesale price of 50 cents for pre-packaged snacks trucked into the Adirondacks. Lunch fees are low: grades K through five pay two dollars, grades six through 12 are charged 25 cents more, and 33 percent of students are eligible for the reduced-fee or free-meal programs. There is no lunch shaming at Keene Central.

"We usually try to serve one hot vegetable a day to give them a choice," said Shambo, scooping crisp into individual bowls. "Yesterday was sticky chicken with peppers and sweet potatoes. Somebody even said, 'My tray is so bright!'"

"This was the first year we made shepherd's pie and meatloaf," added Lopez, arranging bottles of water and juice in a cooler case. "Last month, we borrowed the teriyaki chicken recipe from another school. We try to make stuff the kids like to eat at home, but it's really hard





when you have K through 12, so that's how today's lunch came about. The older kids really like Sloppy Joes but the little kids not so much, just bread and cheese makes them happy. A senior boy could eat eight dunkers and still be hungry. It's really challenging trying to figure it out.

"Tell the cabbage story," she said.

"We had so much cabbage from Essex Farm," said Shambo. "Jocelyn brought in her recipe from home. It calls for maple syrup. We don't have a ton here, and need to use it for pancakes and French toast, so we substituted honey, a tiny drizzle with a bit of whipping butter on sauteed cabbage. And we kept putting it on the kids' trays. They looked at us and were like, 'No.' And I'm like, 'You'll still get it on your tray, try it.'"

Lopez laughed. "I constantly tell my son, who is in eighth grade here, to go back and get the fruit. He always sighs and says: 'Can you just be my lunch lady?'"

When the bell rang between classes at 10:52, they were ready for lunch service. Children piled into the cafeteria, pushed red plastic trays along the line, grabbed bowls of rhubarb crisp faster than Shambo could replace them, and plopped down at tables next to a mural of the High Peaks. Some picked up egg-salad or peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches ordered earlier in homeroom. Older classes hit the salad bar hard. When the final wave of students finished their meals shortly after noon, and scraped their trays into the compost bins, the three women cleaned up.

At the same time, outside in the late spring sunshine, Garden Coordinator Bunny Goodwin unlocked a shed containing kid-size tools to prepare for "Planting Week" sessions in the school plots behind the elementary classrooms. Scheduled during June when frost no longer threatens, this program is designed for students K through six to start crops that will appear on their lunch menus in the fall. In contrast to northern California, where the farm-to-school movement began, the Adirondacks' abbreviated growing season is a challenge for regional farmers, let alone after-school garden clubs. Goodwin has always raised vegetables at home, and initiated the Keene Central compost program on Earth Day in 1995. The gar-

den grew out of that concept, and now is so integrated into school life that it has a unique set of rules: a baseball accidentally hit into the beds is an automatic home run, allowing time to retrieve it carefully without disturbing the plantings. (If a ball lands on a bounce, it's a double.) The enclosed garden is an orderly place of raised beds, apple trees, a bean trellis and a repurposed geodesic dome for rainy day activities. Hand-painted signs indicate where rhubarb, carrots, parsnips, garlic and lettuces are planted.

"My idea of a garden was to have it accessible to kids," said Goodwin, arranging watering cans next to a bed bordered by woodchip paths. "They wander around here and eat everything. They pick on the herbs. They eat raw asparagus. They're so curious about insects. You'd think kinder-

DEPENDING ON THE SEASON,
THE KITCHEN WORKS WITH
GREENS FROM WILD WORK
FARM, YOGURT FROM NORTH
COUNTRY CREAMERY AND BEEF
FROM DONAHUE FARM.



gartners wouldn't want to touch them, but they do, especially the worms, and they get so distracted by it. They're so excited to be here at that age. Once they leave sixth grade, they can disappear into the middle and high school. I just never see them again."

When Goodwin was ready, she knocked on the door to the kindergarten classroom, and students stepped out one by one. She had each choose a rake or shovel and till the dirt, mounding piles with their hands, before giving each child pumpkin seeds to plant. They covered up the seeds, then happily splashed water from cans designed for bigger hands. (As first graders, they'll return to harvest the pumpkins and take one home in the fall.) Goodwin unpotted rosemary for several girls to add to the herb bed, already sprouting parsley and lemon balm. Chat-

ter and laughter accompanied these tasks, as Goodwin and another volunteer guided them to put away the tools. The bell rang again, and the children returned to their classroom to wash their hands.

Brushing dirt off her hiking boots, Goodwin explained her spring and fall crop rotation, noting students get at least two formal visits to the garden a year.

"The younger kids plant the bigger things like garlic, and then the upper elementary are doing things like the carrots and beets. Because if they're planting potatoes that class also should harvest them. If you don't do that, then you're not making the full connection again with [Holbrook's] program in the cafeteria."

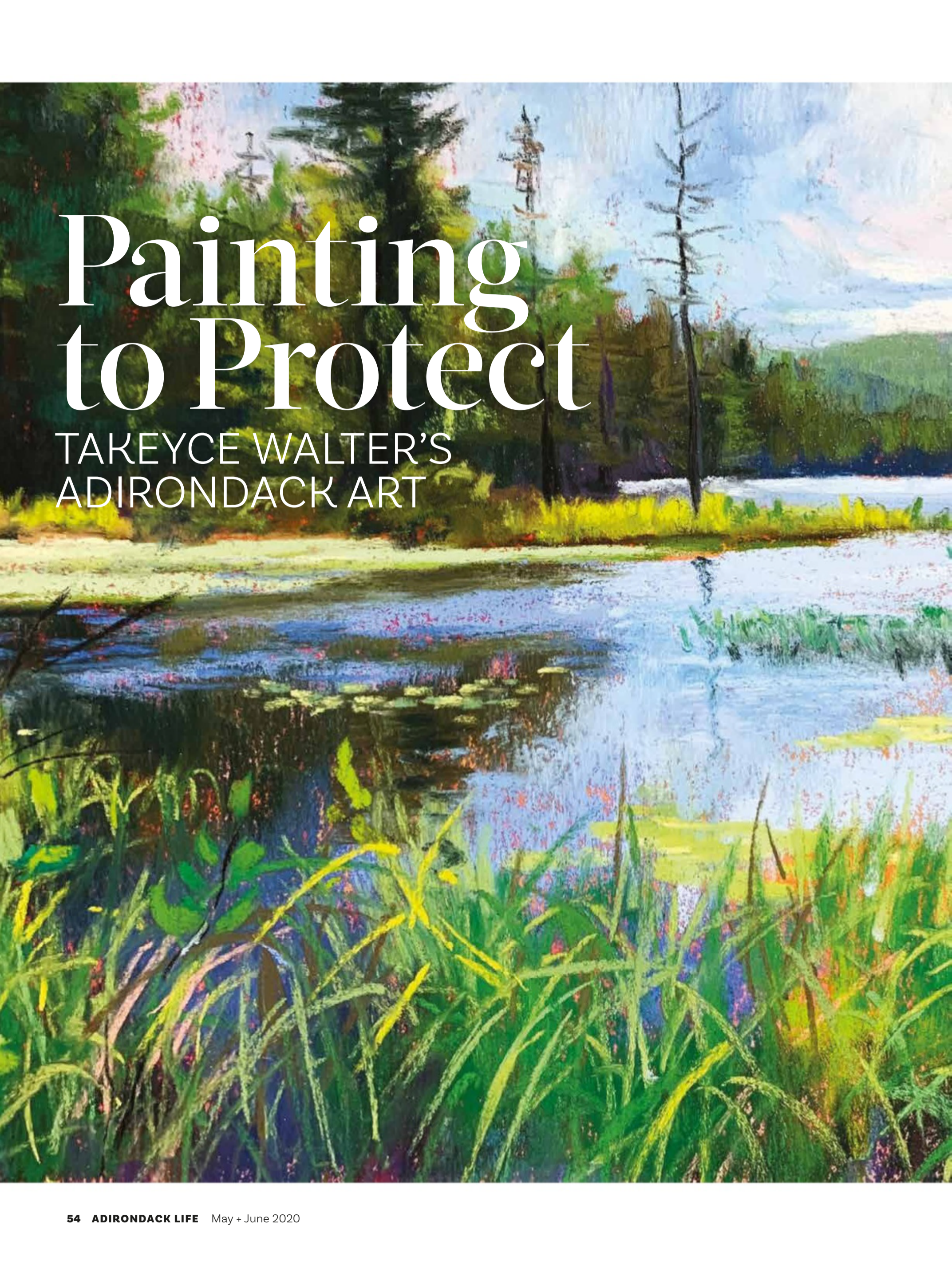
Following discussions with teachers about curriculum, Goodwin introduced parsnips while students were studying breadbaskets of the ancient world, and the kitchen staff turned the roots into parsnip fries for lunch. She raised corn so the children could grind kernels with a stone, and cook corn cakes in a frying pan on an open fire during Forest Fridays.

"The garden has so many other uses," said Goodwin. "I've seen kids come out here and read. One day, the career personnel were sitting quietly on the benches next to the butterfly bushes, and later they said, 'Oh, sorry. We were having a little mindfulness training.'"

With only 18 beds, it's not possible to feed the entire school, but everything grown in the garden has its purpose, from the sage used for stuffing at the school's annual Thanksgiving celebration to the garlic that seasons sauce on pizza days.

"I have ultimate respect for the cafeteria," said Goodwin. "In the beginning they didn't want to take stuff because we could never produce enough for everybody, but now when we come in with an armload of asparagus, there are smiles on their faces. So they're evolving, too."

When classes ended at 3:00, Goodwin welcomed members of the Garden Club for their final visit before summer. They grabbed gloves from the shed and squatted to weed the beds. After 30 minutes, everyone gathered at picnic tables, and Goodwin served generous slices of pie baked with the last of the season's rhubarb crop, along with scoops of vanilla ice cream. Seconds were allowed. ▲



Painting to Protect

TAKEYCE WALTER'S
ADIRONDACK ART



LIKE MANY WORKING MOTHERS, Takeyce Walter struggled to find time for her creative interests. In 2003, a family drive along Route 73 gave her the push she needed to turn painting from a hobby to a significant part of her life. Walter, along with her husband and son, had just moved from Long Island to Saratoga County.

Her first view of Chapel Pond, with dramatic granite slabs plunging into its waters, inspired a wonderment she hadn't felt since she was a child roaming her uncle's lush farmland in Jamaica, where she lived until she was 13.

"You have to paint this. You are so in awe," she recalls her husband saying. "You have to find the time."

So, despite continuing to work full time and having another two children, she did. At first, she posted her efforts—with the Adirondacks a frequent subject—on her blog. Gallery shows and commissions followed. Fans of her work included Peg Olsen, director of the Adirondack Chapter of the Nature Conservancy (TNC), who she met briefly at one of her openings and who bought one of her paintings.

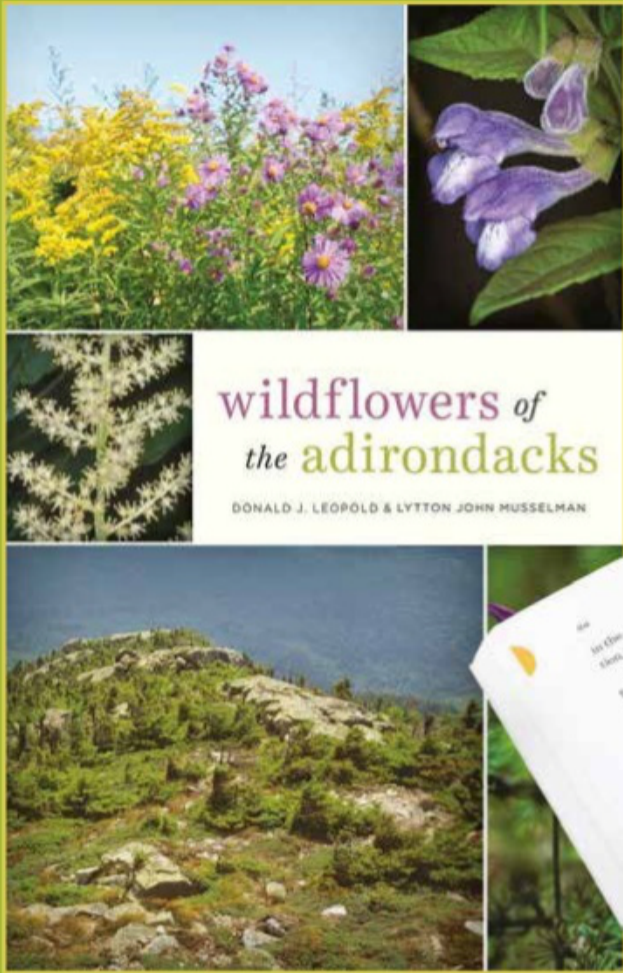
In 2018, Olsen invited her to join the chapter's board. For Walter, it was a no-brainer, a way to show her gratitude for an organization that protects the places she loves. Her appreciation has only deepened, she says, as she's learned about things like the species found nowhere else and the importance of the park's peat bogs for holding carbon.

A few years ago, Walter launched Creative February: each day that month, she posts an inspirational landscape photograph on Facebook; later in the day, she and other participants post their paintings of that photo. This year, Walter focused exclusively on Adirondack lands that have been protected by TNC. The paintings—including the Essex Chain of Lakes scene at left—will be exhibited at Spring Street Gallery, in Saratoga (518-290-0660; www.springstreetgalleriesaratoga.org), through May 30; and at Keene Arts (914-309-7095; www.keenearts.com), from June 11 to July 5.

"My hope for this project is to highlight the feeling I get when I'm here," she says. "I'm not kidding when I say it's essential to my well-being. I want to share this with people."

—Lisa Bramen

To see more of Takeyce Walter's paintings, visit www.takeyceart.com.



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Butterfly Effect

The lasting impact of
hobbyist W. W. Hill

BY EDWARD PITTS

On the third floor of the New York State Museum, in Albany, is a large, windowless room filled with gray metal cabinets, each containing dozens of sealed wooden cases with glass tops. Those cases hold the museum's priceless butterfly collection of approximately one million specimens. Among those are almost 2,000 specimens that serve as a historical baseline of everything we know about Adirondack butterflies and moths, collected by amateur naturalist William W. Hill.

Hill was born in 1833. By the age of 15 he worked for Nathaniel Wright, owner of an Albany business that manufactured and sold carriage and saddlery hardware. When Wright died in 1860, Hill and his cousin, John Woodward Jr., bought the company. Their hardware business prospered, and Hill became wealthy.

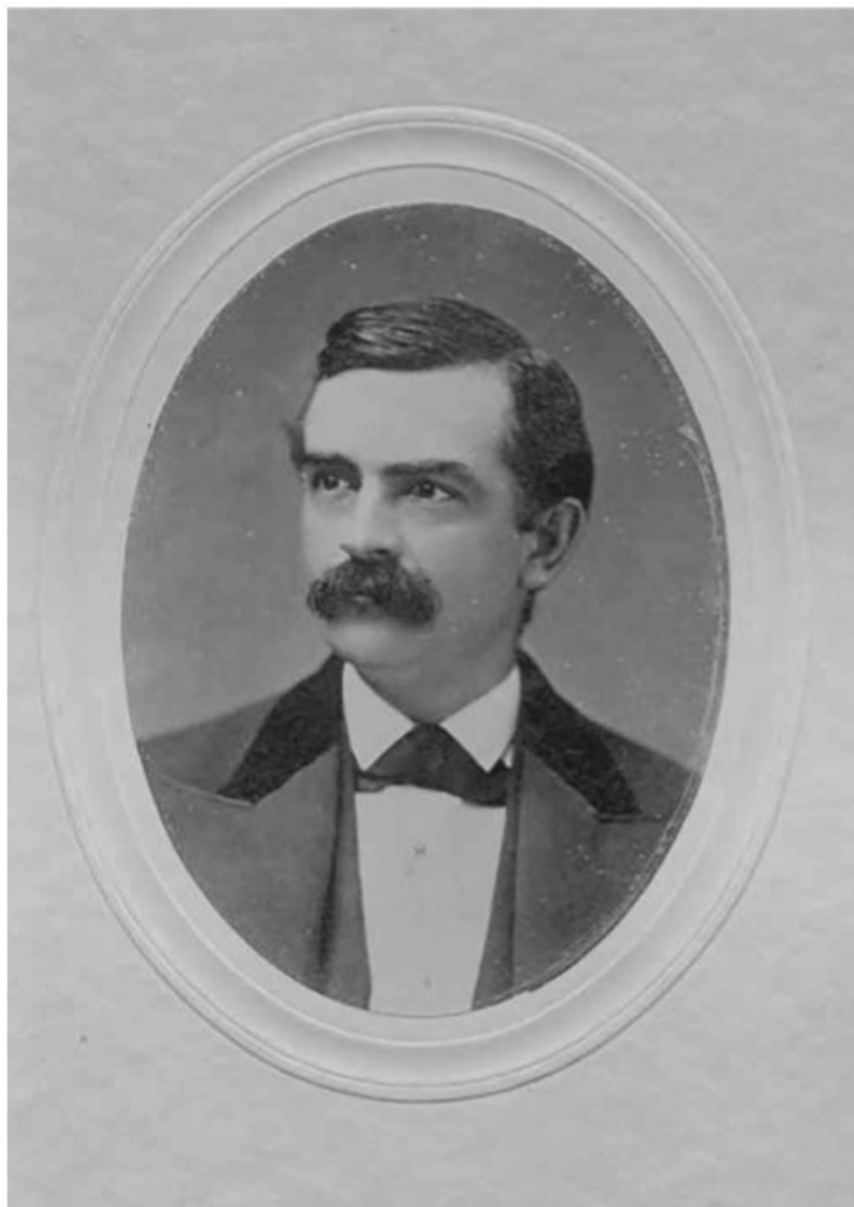
By the time Hill reached his 40th birthday he was one of the Albany elite. He was a member of the Masons and a vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. His

social circle included successful Albany merchants, as well as bankers, doctors and politicians. Hill counted John Boyd Thacher, a future Albany mayor, as a good friend.

Shortly after the Civil War, fly-fishing clubs sprang up in many eastern cities. Hill was a member of the Albany Fly Casters Association. His early fishing trips were to a remote area in the west-central Adirondacks that Hill called "the Beaver River country." Getting there involved taking the train from Albany to Utica and then transferring to the Utica & Black River Railroad to travel north to Lowville. After a night in a local hotel, the trip concluded with an 18-mile wagon ride over a rough road to the tiny settlement of Number Four on the Beaver River.

At Number Four, Hill stayed at the Fenton House, a sportsman's hotel that could accommodate 50 guests. In 1873, Hill, his wife, Jane, and their three teenage children took a month-long trip in the Adirondacks. From Fenton's they went on multi-day fishing trips deeper into the Beaver River wilderness. They visited Stillwater, Smith's Lake (now called Lake Lila) and the Red Horse Chain of Lakes. This area was one of the wildest places in the North Country.

The following year Hill was elected a



William W. Hill and *Eremobina hilli*, a new species he discovered in Number Four, Lewis County, in 1876.



Hill photograph courtesy of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, in Albany
Photograph of Hill specimen courtesy of Dr. Timothy McCabe, New York State Museum

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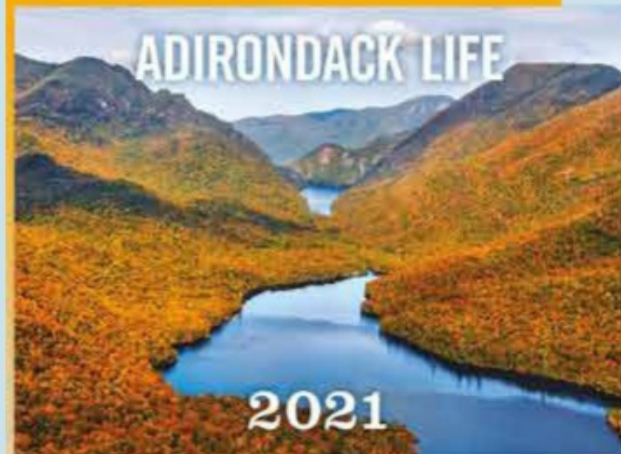
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NATURE

resident member of the Albany Institute of History & Art. The institute was concerned with advancing scientific knowledge of the natural world. These men were mostly amateur naturalists drawn from medicine, education, business, law and politics. The institute encouraged and validated collecting specimens as an important step in the scientific process. Members made collections including plants, flowers, animals, birds, minerals and, of course, butterflies.

When the Albany Institute gathered on October 20, 1874, to hear reports by its members on their recent research, Hill was in the audience. Joseph A. Lintner took the lectern dressed in a dark wool suit and sporting an Abe Lincoln beard. Lintner had just been appointed head of entomology at the New York State Museum. As Lintner displayed cases of mounted beauties collected by one of his associates, he made a point of contrasting the joy of butterfly collecting with dull success in the business world: "What is making money compared to this?" he asked.

On that day, W. W. Hill found a new hobby.

As an experienced fly-fisherman, Hill was attuned to the local insect population. He was undoubtedly aware there was a large and varied butterfly population in the Beaver River Valley. That winter, Hill assembled the equipment he would need: a butterfly net, a killing jar, pins, and a supply of glassine envelopes to protect his specimens. Lintner taught him how to identify, prepare and label them.

The next four summers Hill made extended trips to the Beaver River country to collect butterflies and moths. From his headquarters at the Fenton House he ranged up and down the Beaver River Valley collecting butterflies by day and moths by lamplight. His enthusiasm was so great that he won the willing assistance of his host, guide Charles Fenton, and of his fellow guests.

Until Hill's collection, no one knew exactly what butterflies and moths inhabited the Adirondacks—or in most locations in New York. This changed with the publication of the catalog of

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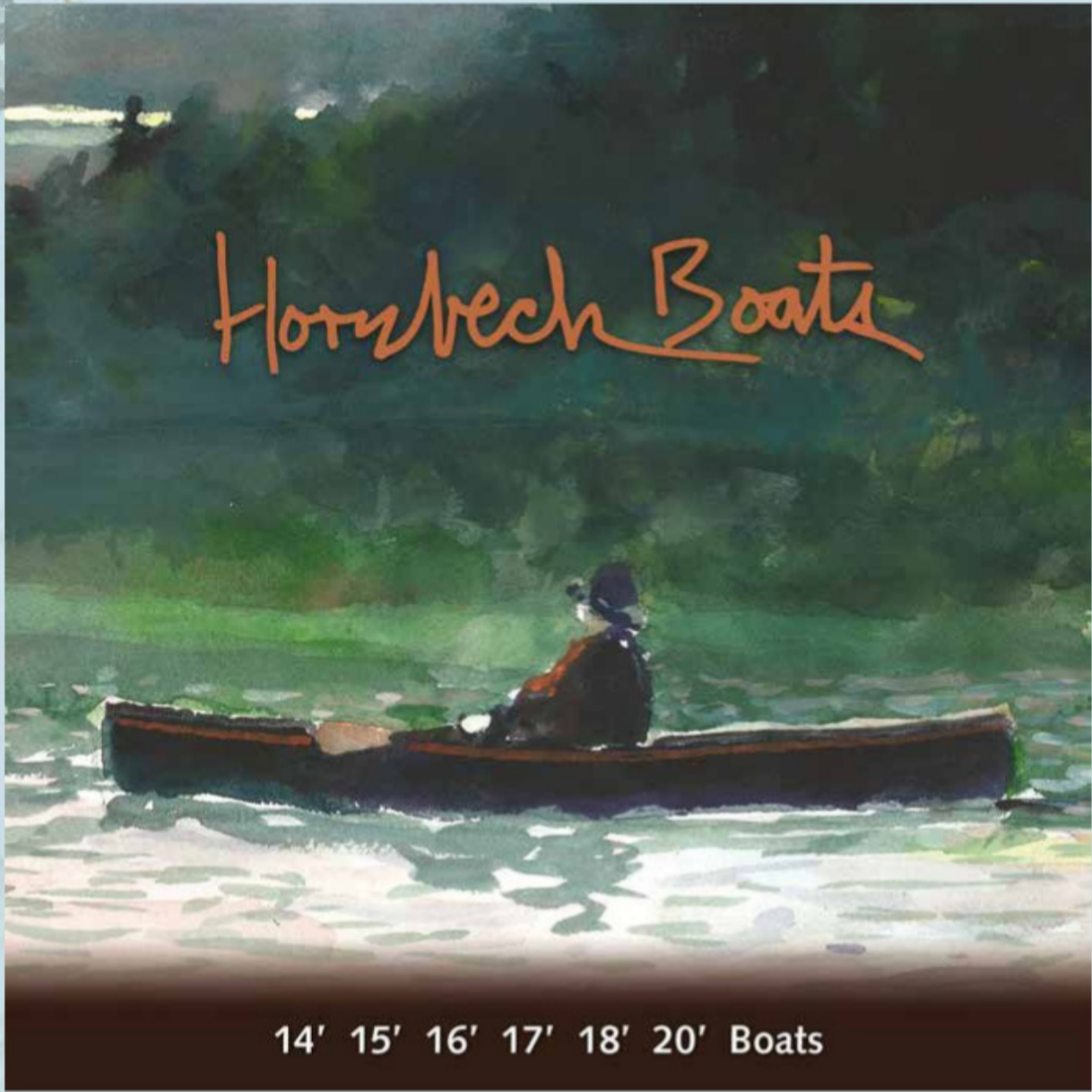
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Hill's collection of 2,625 specimens from 42 different species of butterflies and 373 species of moths. Some of these species were new discoveries by Hill. It was considered so important to the understanding of the Adirondack region that it was published as an appendix to Verplanck Colvin's 7th Annual Report to the Legislature on the progress of the Adirondack survey.

Hill made annual trips to the Adirondacks with his wife for the rest of his life, including stays at Henry Van Hoeverberg's Adirondack Lodge in the High Peaks. His love of fly-fishing and butterfly collecting never abated. Eventually his display cases held over 10,000 specimens.

Hill continued to participate actively in the Albany Institute and was elected corresponding secretary of the department of natural history there in 1886. Suddenly, in August 1887, Hill began to have trouble breathing. He was diagnosed with consumption, as tuberculosis was then called. One of Albany's leading physicians, Dr. Samuel B. Ward, a close friend and a fellow officer at the Albany Institute, advised Hill of the efforts being made by Dr. Edward Trudeau to treat tuberculosis at Saranac Lake. Dr. Trudeau was convinced that the disease could be slowed or even cured by following a good diet, daily vigorous exercise and plenty of exposure to cold, clear mountain air.

In October 1887 Hill and his wife relocated to Elizabethtown with the hope that his health might improve. Sadly, he died the following January. Five of his eight pallbearers were members of the Albany Institute, including the state entomologist J. A. Lintner and the director of the Adirondack survey, Verplanck Colvin.

Hill's heirs donated his collection to the New York State Museum, desiring that their "father's work should be maintained as a permanent memorial of his labors in entomology," according to the 1907 Report of the State Entomologist. The report described Hill's death as "a positive loss to entomology, removing from our midst an active worker whom it will be difficult to replace." ▲

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Cast in Iron?

Rethinking our historical monuments

BY JAIME FULLER

There are two historical markers outside the Six Nations Indian Museum, in Onchiota, in Franklin County. Both engrave the importance of the Haudenosaunee to the history of this area in rock, and were erected by the Akwesasne Mohawk Counselor Organization. The funds were raised for them by Ray Fadden, who built the museum more than 60 years ago. He spent his life trying to tell and preserve the indigenous history of northern New York, a tradition carried on by his son, John Fadden, who now runs the museum with his three sons.

These markers, built by the Native community to tell its history from its own perspective, are different from the familiar blue-and-yellow historical signs that dot New York State. “The ones who put up those signs are mostly the descendants of colonial people,” John Fadden says. “Their emphasis is on them. And that’s natural too, to talk about who you are, and make your kids proud of your grandfathers and great-grandfathers. But it’s a shame how they just neglect the reality of what was here once.”

New York’s historical marker program began in 1926 as part of the state education department’s plan to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the American Revolution. The catalyst for the program limited the subject matter of the signs from the very beginning. A 1959 article in the *Knickerbocker Times* reported that Hamilton County, one of only two counties completely within the bounds of the Adirondack Park, was the only

county in New York that had no marker at all. The article surmised that “until lumbermen, miners, and vacationers began going there, that Adirondack county didn’t experience much history,” an inaccurate conclusion—but one that could be easily reached if the only history you knew about the Adirondacks was collected through its state historical markers. The region’s markers leave an impression of history beginning with the French and Indian War and ending shortly after the creation of the park in the late 19th century, as if history started calcifying before anyone who lives here now was born, and that all the stories about what happened here have already been told.

There aren’t many state historical markers that acknowledge the indigenous history of the park. One in Essex is about Split Rock, a boundary between the territory of the Mohawk and Algonquin people. Other sites are summarized as places where white settlers sought refuge from Indians or were massacred by them, verbs of victimization preserving a fiction that has been told for a long time—that the mountains were not being used before white settlers arrived,

Photograph by Carrie Marie Burr

and that the empty land, therefore, was the settlers' to claim. It's a myth "based on this Western concept of where we spend our days," says Tim Messner, an archaeologist at SUNY-Potsdam who has excavated sites around the Adirondacks, finding artifacts that prove people lived here 10,000 years ago—both down by the water and up in the High Peaks. "For the majority of human history, people didn't live in one place ever. You're mobile hunter and gatherers; you live in a region. That was home."

The money appropriated by the state for these signs dried up shortly before the United States entered World War II. Applications in the 1940s, or notices of errors in signs that required fixing, were met by an apology from the education department that there was no money. By the 1960s, the state decided that innovation had rendered signs useless; someone in a car going 50 miles per hour wasn't going to be able to read them. Instead, the state transitioned into putting up new markers at visitors' centers along the highway. The history of the region was, for the most part, set in cast iron. Municipalities and organizations could put up new signs, but they would have to find the money to do so, as the state no longer ran the marker program. It still doesn't, even as stories of other states revising the histories told by their roadside markers have grown increasingly frequent.

Contemplating the addition of new historical markers to the Adirondack Park isn't a mere intellectual exercise. The William G. Pomeroy Foundation, based in Syracuse, has given grants for more than 600 new markers in the state since 2006, and continues to accept applications from municipalities and nonprofits for new signs. Some of those signs have been placed in the Adirondacks. Susan Hughes, the foundation's historian, thinks a marker in New Russia celebrating Lucy Bishop Millington, a botanist who discovered the dwarf mistletoe that was killing trees during the late 19th century, was a perfect example of a worthy addition to the state's roadside record. The organization would like to receive more applications that honor



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FOR THE RECORD

histories beyond those already well-represented in the existing signage. And if you listen to people in the Adirondacks, there are a lot of stories waiting to be made visible on the landscape.

Messner can list off many opportunities to recognize the region's indigenous past, while also preventing signage from becoming a beacon for looters looking for artifacts. A marker could go up, for example, on a highly visible part of Tupper Lake, noting that the oldest artifacts found in the region came from there,

A marker on Tupper Lake could note that the oldest artifacts found in the region came from there, evidence of hunter-gatherers living in the Adirondacks at the end of the Ice Age.

providing evidence of hunter-gatherers living in the Adirondacks at the end of the Ice Age.

Melissa Otis, who wrote the book *Rural Indigenousness*, a rigorous debunking of the Adirondacks' pre-colonial emptiness, says there are also plenty of opportunities to name specific people important to the region's indigenous history. In many cases, these figures made the contributions of already memorialized Adirondackers possible, acting as guides for surveyors and scientists and poets. A sign on Indian Lake could mention that it was named for the Penobscot-turned-Abenaki Sabael Benedict, who settled on its shore in the 18th century. The Sabattis family, which included a High Peaks guide and a Revolutionary War soldier, could also be recognized, she added.

Since the indigenous past of the Adirondacks often has a different relationship to place than the markers currently allow, the signs would have to evolve. A marker wouldn't tell a viewer that they are standing on history, or driving past it, but that this history is all around them.



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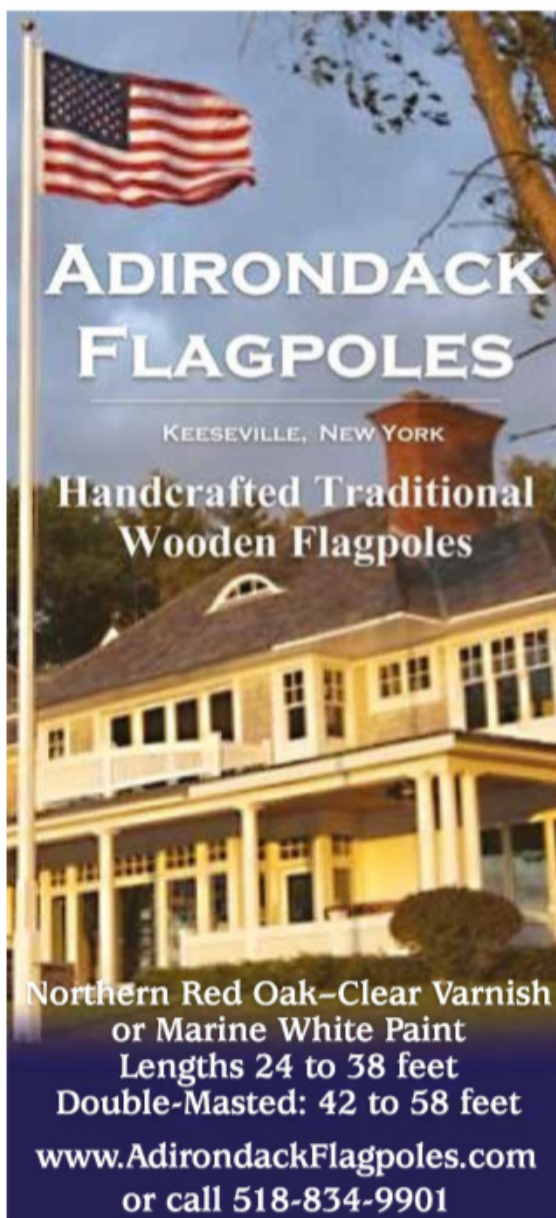
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The markers' preference towards fixing history at an exact location can make it difficult to tell stories about people who moved away from the Adirondacks, or who only ever had a transitory relationship with it. In North Elba, John Brown, who left behind his house and his mouldering body, is well-represented in signage. But Timbuctoo, the community of black homesteaders briefly created in the 1840s by abolitionist Gerrit Smith—who helped fund Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry—is left unmentioned by the state signs. In 1821, a new state constitution raised the property requirements for black voters while getting rid of the requirement for white men. By 1826, as Sally Svenson's book *Blacks in the Adirondacks* shows, only 298 of the nearly 40,000 black people in New York could vote. Smith's land grants, offering black Americans the chance to own a piece of the Adirondacks, were a small attempt to correct this wrong.

Hadley Kruczek-Aaron, head of the anthropology department at SUNY-Potsdam and a board member of the nonprofit John Brown Lives!, has spent the last decade trying to add Timbuctoo to the commemorative record. "One of the challenges," she says, "is that it's not one spot on the landscape. It's in 40-acre lots scattered over Essex and Franklin Counties." Recipients of Smith's land grants also formed a community in Loon Lake called Blacksville that lasted about a decade; another community was in Vermontville, where children grew up to fight in the Massachusetts 54th during the Civil War. Kruczek-Aaron and her students have excavated the land where Lyman Epps—the Smith grantee who stayed in the Adirondacks the longest—once lived on Bear Cub Road, looking for evidence of his life. Nothing has turned up yet. But signs could still be placed, telling the stories of these communities and the people who lived here. John Brown Lives! plans to apply for a marker grant from the Pomeroy Foundation.

Despite what many of the markers and monuments in the region would have us believe, pride is not a certain byproduct of the past, although the past can be



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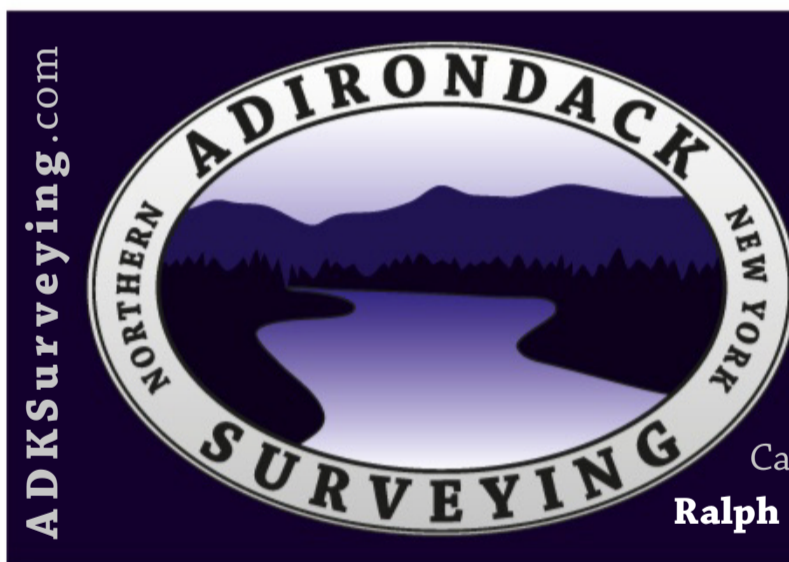
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FOR THE RECORD

carved and buffed to appear so to the future—and often is in places that rely on tourism.

“Unfortunately there are a lot of things that happened in the Adirondacks that people don’t know about or don’t want to talk about,” says Alice Paden Green, executive director of the Center for Law and Justice and founder of the Paden Institute and Retreat for Writers of Color, in Essex. Her family moved to the Adirondacks from Greenville, South Carolina, during the Great Migration, and she grew up in Witherbee. She has always noticed the silences in the record, and has stories that she would like to see on markers. Without the mines and the lumberjacks and the railroad workers who built the way to transport iron ore out of the Adirondacks—and vacationers into it—the region as we know it would not exist. And yet labor history is a somewhat untapped vein for local historical markers. Green thinks that one should be placed honoring the black miners who lived on Elizabeth Street in Port Henry, where a black church was built in the 1950s.

These histories are not unknown. There are books covering them, museum exhibits honoring them, articles about them, and people sharing them with their communities—work that will continue regardless of whether new markers are erected. And there is the valid question of whether these signs, which only allow for a few words to conjure up a compelling image of the past, are the best way to tell these histories. “Sometimes I wonder about the value of historical markers,” Melissa Otis says. “It’s the conflict that history often creates,” the inevitable coda to every sign “...but there’s so much more. I’m a firm believer, even if it can make things messy or complicated, in telling the whole story.”

Martha Swan, the founder of John Brown Lives!, sees the historical markers as a complement to all the work being done in museums and in books and events. “Because they’re usually placed in the soil where a thing happened, that can have the particular power of place. And historical markers usually have a very short text. Hopeful-

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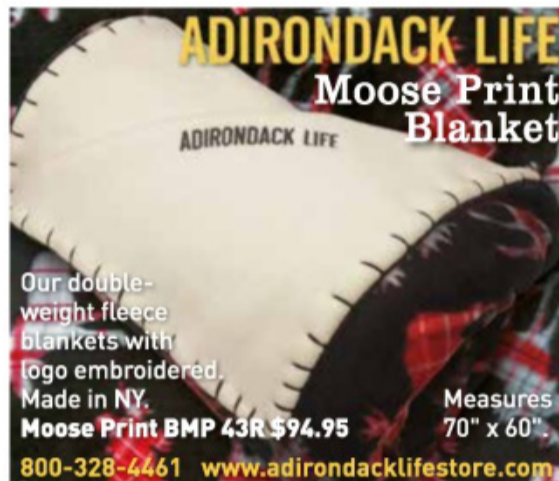


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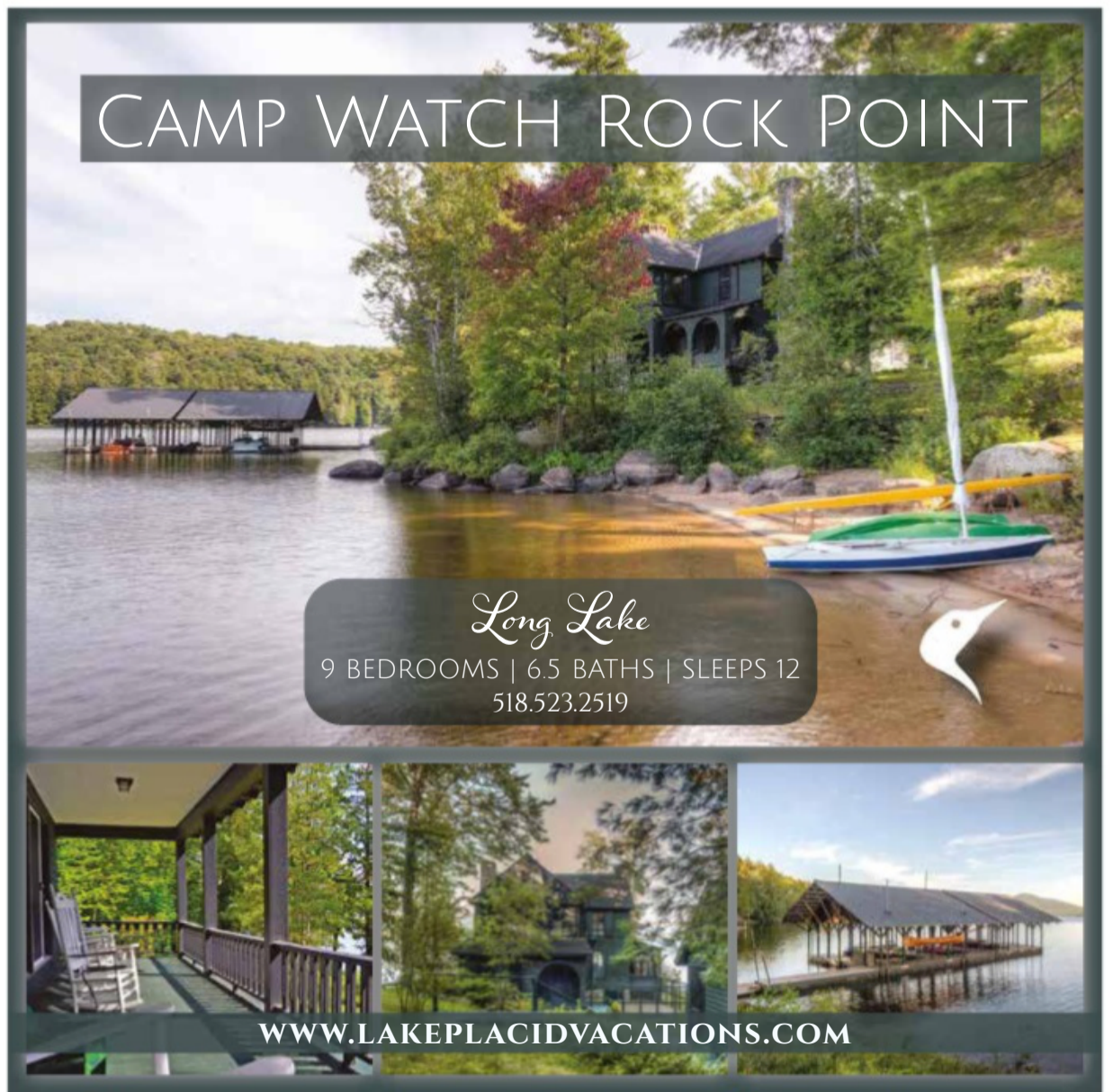
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FOR THE RECORD

ly they are crafted in a way that delivers something to the passerby that will encourage a curiosity to learn more. And at that point the books and the exhibits have an enormous role to play.”

Could an app tell this history better? Perhaps, but the preexisting signage remains, asserting its position of what history is important to the people who live here, and offering its own answer to the question of what the Adirondacks’ shared history might be. And the people who aren’t represented by the historical markers still live here too.

There is a model for how to reappraise history just outside the Blue Line. In June 2020, the city of Plattsburgh will unveil a panel that amends the story told by the Samuel de Champlain monument. It will acknowledge that the French explorer did not discover Lake Champlain, and that he couldn’t have found the lake without the help of his indigenous guides. It will also note that the attempt to represent the indigenous on the monument thanked the wrong people, as the Natives at the foot of the statue, towered over by Champlain, are wearing the clothes of Plains Indians. The panel would not exist without locals who sought to learn more about where they came from, adding a new chapter to the present by looking backward, says former district attorney Penny Clute. Clute was part of a committee that formed after the violent clash over Confederate monuments in Charlottesville, Virginia, sparked a discussion on the Champlain monument. The group listened to Native elders and historians, and then worked to add what had been left out or told incorrectly. The work isn’t done, but one step just might lead to another.

History is often portrayed as an immutable pile of facts, but it is a living thing, constantly changing based on who is able to assemble the raw materials of the past into a narrative. “Who we decide to commemorate,” Kruczek-Aaron notes, “says something about who we are now. We should think really hard about who we want to remember. It sends a message of who we are to the next generation—and to the current generation.” ▲

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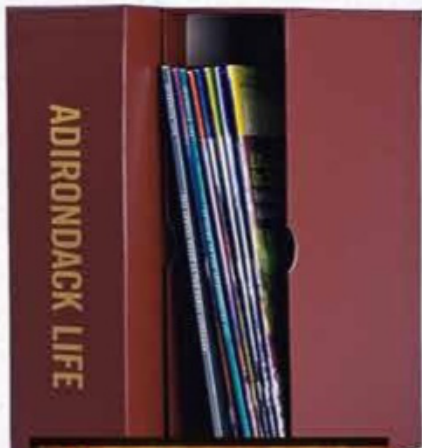
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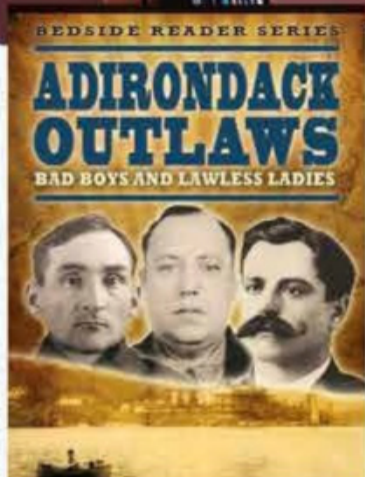
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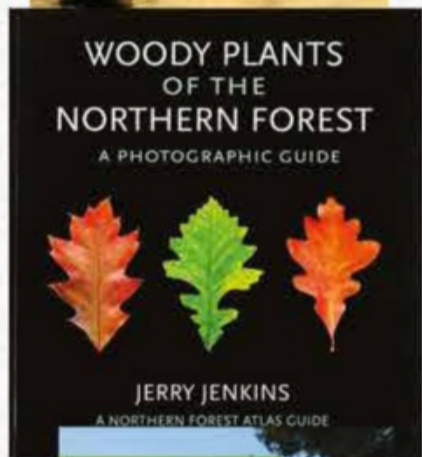
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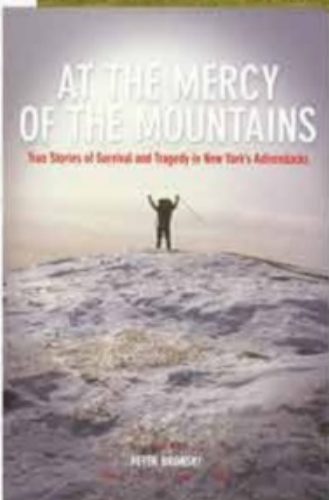
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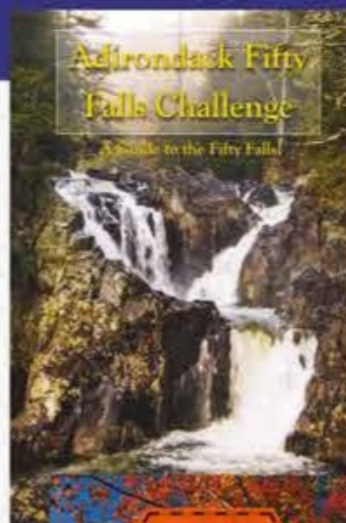
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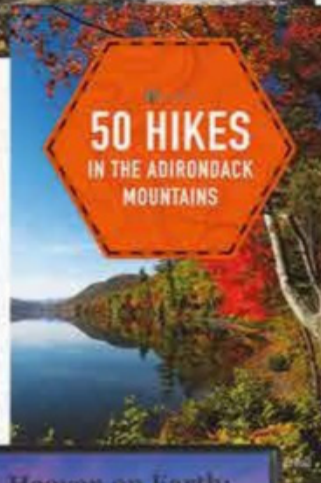
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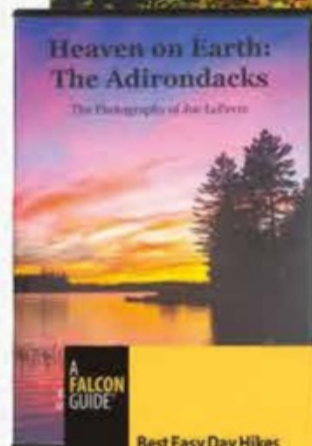
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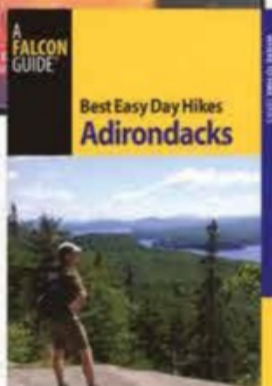
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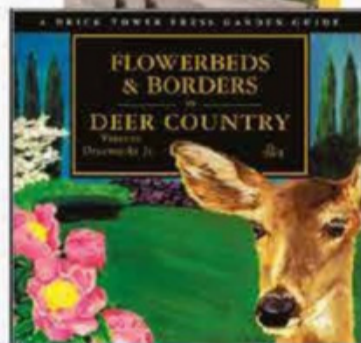
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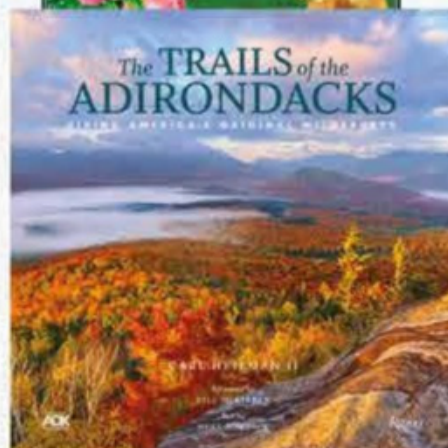
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FAST TIMES ON THE HUDSON

Continued from page 43

paddle, watch out for the Soup Strainer,” a mid-river rock at the top of Giveny’s Rift that could flip a boat at high water, or pin it at low water. He had never been in a raft per se, but he was a whitewater canoeist so at least knew how to navigate a rapid.

The outfitters’ assumption was that you were involved in a supposedly glamorous activity (and should therefore be happy to do it for nothing), yet one that required arcane skills and experience, and a level of cold-bloodedness. Starting down a half-mile train of eight-foot waves from the top of the Narrows, with eight or 10 family members or office friends in your boat, for instance, would definitely make you feel responsible for their lives and their experience, and that, yes, that should require more training and pay enough to more or less live on, if only during the season.

After the trips got off the river a lot of wild northern scenes took place in the bars and rafting headquarters, as well. You hear the phrase “like the old West” a lot, referring to the après-rafting shenanigans in Indian Lake and North Creek. But the West had nothing on the Oak Barrel Tavern in Indian Lake (where my wife and I shared beers the first day we met), or the old Basil and Wick’s, in North Creek. I put in my time in both, and it led to the end of my drinking life a few years later. For most of us rafting came at the end of a long winter, a new source of work that was also connected directly to old times and brought a sense of expansiveness, opportunity. A lot of acting out resulted.

For customers, you wanted women, who paced themselves and worked together without a lot of showing off and stupid locker-room hijinks. They wanted to perform, be safe and hit the good routes. The same was true on dry land, where they also held their own.

But the testosterone poisoning ran high, and things got out of hand. More than once I recruited women from Whiteface or around Saranac Lake, who would go down to the Hudson and train with one of the outfits, and then refuse to continue. There were a lot of shared crash pads and camping spots. One excellent recruit told me she’d never go back after a night of drunken harassment. I didn’t

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FAST TIMES ON THE HUDSON

appreciate that my team could be so prone to idiocy.

And it was almost completely white. Manuel Cruz, a Dominican mechanic and rock-climbing guide in Albany, guided for Whitewater Challengers for years. Other than him, *nadie*.

LAST AUGUST OUR WATER LEVEL with the Lake Abanakee dam release was in the respectable mid-4s on the gauge. We rode the waves of memory where all the rivers were one river again, and felt like ourselves. At that level the Indian is quite sporty, as are the larger rapids in the Hudson. Dick Carlson and I observed that with our light, dry boat and only four paddlers, Ace had hit every route and every wave exactly as we would have. It could have been hell for him guiding old-timers who knew the river when, but we did our best not to bore him to death.

We hooted like tenderfeet in the Narrows, Giveny's and Harris Rifts (Mile Long). Halfway down Blue Ledge Rapid, where the 200-foot escarpment with its nesting ravens came in view, my heart exploded as it always did. At the right-hand turn going into Harris Rift, Kettle and Pine Mountains rose straight up around us, softened by shiny summer greenery where before they had been gray and dark, with tendrils of spume pouring a hundred feet over their ledges, and where I had one of the memorable experiences of my life, where I had understood our origins in water and mind as flowing. By then we had fallen into the old rhythms and, as you always hoped would happen to your customers, stopped talking.

On the bus to the put-in I had ridden with a couple of women of color from Long Island, one of them a return customer. Out on the river the groups in the other boats showed far more diversity than in the early 1980s. There were women guides, and more than one outfit now included female ownership and guides, though most were still men. The recent land acquisitions had opened shorelines and mountain summits on both sides, as well as justly celebrated OK Slip Falls, where you could arrange to hike to the falls, meet boats at the river

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and raft out. When I asked Carlson about the concern some anglers and game clubs had with dam releases harming the fish, or raising the water levels too fast for wading anglers to avoid (they don't), he said, "They got over it."

To the naked eye the wild Hudson Gorge of 40 years ago, with its endangered riparian ice meadows, its brown, rainbow and wild brook trout, remained intact. We floated out the last few miles, ran Perry Eilers' Rapid along Route 28, in North River, and lifted our raft out of the water across the road from ARO headquarters: two large, well-equipped garages, an office, ample changing and bathrooms, kitchen and covered dining space. The trend in rafting had been to merge, and ARO had recently absorbed Whitewater Challengers and moved across the street to their headquarters.

I joined my old boss, ARO co-founder Gary Staab, who just turned 73, grilling chicken behind the garage. He told how he and Bob Burke, of Old Forge, had discovered rafting on a spring trip to North Carolina in 1978, and already planned to buy boats and start a company on the Moose River before they got home; how the early years were wide open and how things had settled into dependable if still low-margin predictability. The snows, rains and water levels had cooperated, more or less. Guides were better trained, had more experience, and many had insurance. (Though Ace was sleeping in a tent.) There still weren't enough women or non-white guides, but there were some. Gary said, "If you had told me 45 years ago I'd be doing this today, I would have said you were crazy. But it's given me a full life."

Wayne Failing said that rafting and guiding had given him "an incredibly meaningful life. I'm lucky that at 26 I found the right livelihood."

Which is the way you feel if your repeated navigations have layered you deep into a place and connected you there forever. ▲

Former Adirondack Life editor Christopher Shaw wrote the essay "Sensory Fieldwork," in the 50th Anniversary Issue of this magazine.

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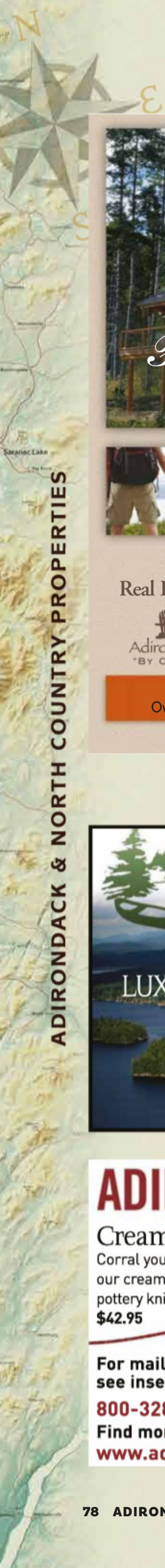
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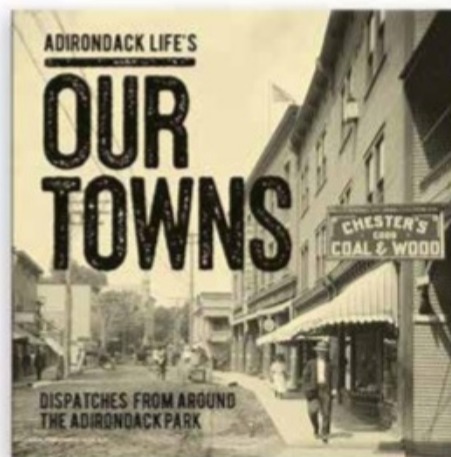


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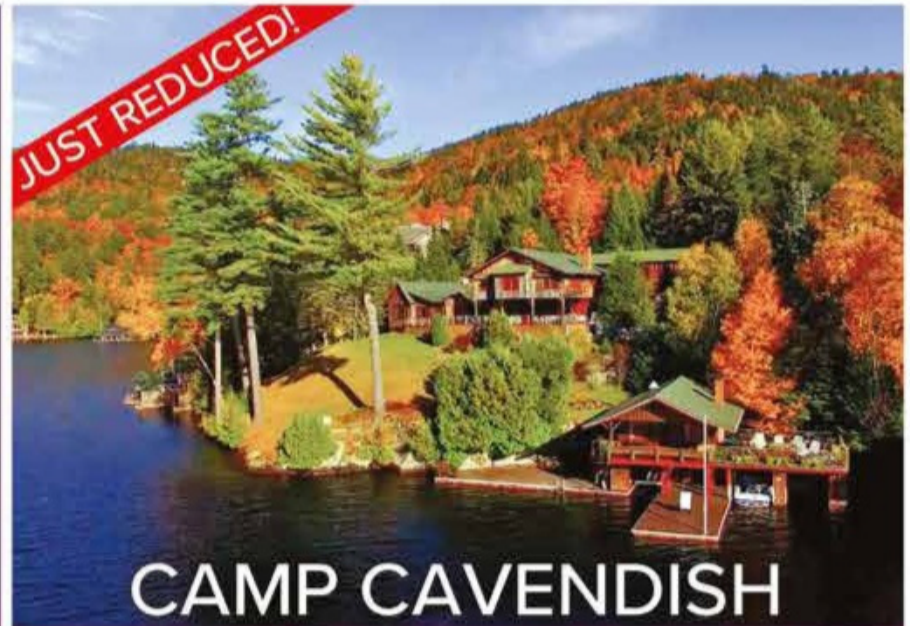
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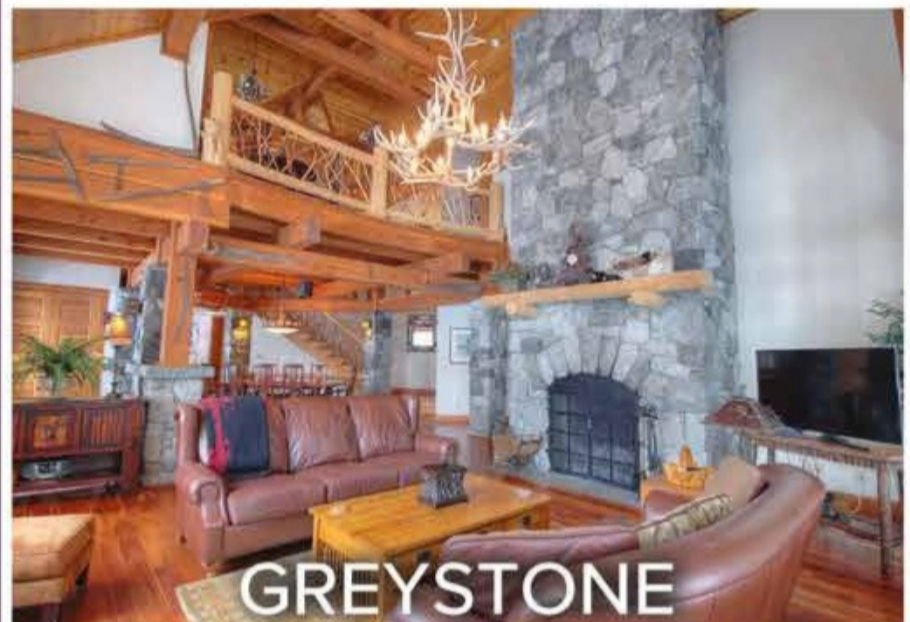
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Camp Redtop

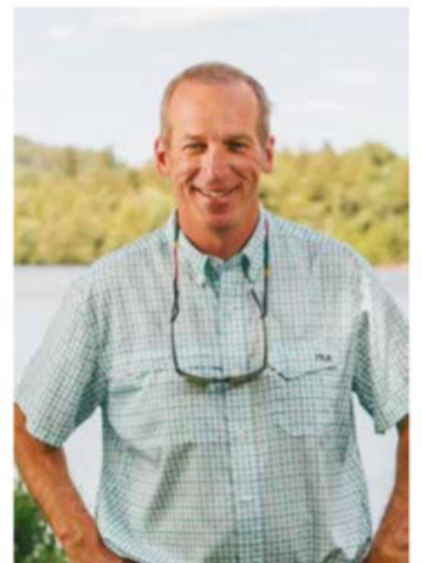
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