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SUMMER 2020

INSIDE:

Nature-inspired decor

Grilling 101

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Editor's letter:

"I love the way of life here [in the city.] But I didn't expect this."

New York City-based artist Bernard Solco (see interview on page 16) is planning to move to the country; to move here, by preference. He's not alone.

Nobody expected any of this: the pandemic, lockdown, shortages, the death, the protests, raging at the killing of George Floyd. The sharp taste of anxiety in the air—of a sudden, savage uprooting of life as we knew it. They're all driving a surge of interest in living in the country.

People want to move here. As writer Linda Drollinger points out, we've seen this before and time will tell if this is a long-lasting shift. In her feature, a real estate agent offers perspective on the latest change. Do check it out on page 14.

What draws people here? The stunning beauty. Two artists, Ellen Silberlicht and Lucille Norella, weigh in on seeing our world through their eyes and translating it into creativity. Try it yourself!

In scary times, creativity is calming. Veronica Daub gets nature-inspired DIY tips from Christen Wrighter, who has created functional decor from materials she forages around her home in Narrowsburg.

Our farmers' markets are also a huge



Photo by Annemarie Schuetz

This is a random picture of my cat, Buggy. I've been staying calm by watching *all* the cat videos the internet has to offer. A tough job but I'm willing to keep at it.

draw, reminding visitors that the region is famous for its agriculture too. Ramona Jan, former OCH editor and well-known DIY-er, offers a farmer's market bag that you can make from an old t-shirt (no sewing required!) and use to tote your produce.

And about that food: **River Reporter** food columnist Jude Waterston describes her return to the U.S. at the outset of the pandemic and gives recipes to try on your grill now that we're all emerging from lockdown.

What do we grill it on? A grill, naturally. We checked in with folks who'd know, here and online, and found out what you need and what you should cook.

Welcome to Our Country Home.

— Annemarie Schuetz, editor

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Cover photo by Joe Cooke

The fish pond in Norman Campbell's garden in Hortonville, NY.

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Photos contributed by Ellen Silberlicht

A wall hanging by Ellen Silberlicht portrays the Smoky Mountains, made of dyed sheep's wool that has been felted.

Preserving the world

We live in a place of stunning beauty. Our artists capture it for us and show you how

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Ask almost anybody—ask them what drew them here, what keeps them here. Sometimes it's family, sometimes it's a job. But most of the time, it's the land around them.

It calls to us.

Maybe most of all, it calls to our artists. We talked to two Pennsylvania-based artists who integrate the natural world—what we find in our forests and backyards—into their work.

Ellen Silberlicht, for one, usually creates in fiber and clay, or imprints leaves and flowers onto fabric. "It's an adventure: an artistic, creative adventure," she said.

Lucille Norella agrees. She dries local flowers, combines them with prayers or thoughts and frames them, making mementos that people "read over and over," she said. "It nourishes me [to make them] and it

nourishes other people."

Both artists have strong connections to our natural world, and it's reflected in their work.

"As a child, I went camping," Silberlicht said. "We went across the country. Every state has a different terrain." She remembered "the undulating trees, the undulating earth." And here? "The rolling hills."

No wonder she embraced sewing, developing a three-dimensional garment from a flat pattern. Later she moved into pottery (more three-dimensional shapes) before later felting fiber.

"Everyone thinks they have to go someplace else, but here it's beautiful," she said. "Living rurally, you live with nature."

Flowers captivated Norella, who lives in Waymart. "I love flowers, I love working with them," especially the pansies and johnny-jump-ups around her. **- Page 6**



Handmade felted purse by Ellen Silberlicht, eco-printed with leaves.

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PRESERVING THE WORLD - Page 5

From her window, there's plenty to admire. As the day moves on, the sun on the mountainside changes. Through the year, the leaves shift from green to red to the bare branches of winter.

For her, the area's beauty is tied to faith. "Creating is akin to spirituality, my lifeline to God," she said. "Just being in nature gives me a lot of joy."

"As I watch [the natural world] in all its beauty," Norella continued, "It gives me hope. Hope for the future."

View works by Ellen Silberlicht at www.ellensilberlicht.com.

View works by Lucille Norella at www.artbynorella.50megs.com or www.facebook.com/artbynorella.

Sources

For fiber, try local knitting shops or alpaca or sheep farms. Even if the stores themselves are still closed, often they'll do online orders. Just ask!

Flowers and leaves can be found at local florists. Garden shops know who grows what locally. Again, ask! Even if nobody sells the plants, you can buy the seeds at farm and garden stores and grow your art materials yourself.



Photos contributed by Lucille Norella

Dried flower arrangements by Lucille Norella include Queen Anne's Lace, echinacea, maple leaves, snapdragons, daisies, coreopsis, buttercups, yellow coneflower, daffodils and pansies.

Leaving the house

Artist Ellen Silberlicht has an excuse to get out of your home and still keep to social distancing guidelines. "I drive around the country and take photos," she said.

Why does this matter? Because living here, we take our landscape for granted. But we can change that. We can see it with new eyes.

"Just get in the car, stop and take photos. Slow yourself down and capture that moment."

Or, to really, truly immerse yourself in the world, "get a little watercolor set, find a spot and paint what you see," Silberlicht said. "I don't care if you're an artist or not."

In truth, "It doesn't matter what it looks like." Art, she said, is what and how you feel.

Be careful what you collect

Although our area offers a plethora of choices when it comes to flowers, leaves and other natural materials, foraging even for non-food is a learned skill. (Leaves of three, let it be, and that's just for starters.) If you want to be sure your artwork won't poison you, flowers to dry and leaves to use in printing are all available from local florists or ask for guidance at garden shops and/or the National Park Service. They're the experts.



Nature's excess turned decor

A peek into a beautification addict who makes art out of the ordinary, and some things to try at home

By VERONICA DAUB

Having Christen (Chris) Wrighter as a neighbor was a treat that came with many visual perks. Our shared patio area was under constant redesign, and the yard was always undergoing ever-updating improvements that I was baffled she ever even thought of. Her apartment itself was a homey art exhibit also in never-ending, surprising flux. Each day, I met her in the midst of two or three new projects.

Meeting up with her to chat about simple, nature-inspired home decor tips, I saw that nothing had changed—in that everything was different.

The energizer bunny of landscaping, home improvement projects and DIY crafts, she has a style that heavily highlights the natural beauty of our area. Not only are there actual plants everywhere—pouring out of large planters outside in beautiful arrangements, filling every nook and cranny inside her home and hanging from the curtain rod (which, she mused, she might replace with birch sticks) in place of curtains—but she also incorporates natural materials into her crafts and decor. By mid-summer, after they've had a chance to grow and fill in, those arrangements are serious works of art; as her former downstairs neighbor, I once had to relay to her that a passerby exclaimed "what a sophisticated color scheme" about one of them.

The most obvious new feature I spotted in her backyard was a makeshift covering for a segment of fence where her neighbor had built a composting station. With its unfortunate placement pointing right at Chris's porch and hammock-area, Chris mended the sight (and some of the smell) with a covering made from the invasive jerk of the Delaware, Japanese knotweed.

She went in early spring and gathered pieces that were still standing in large patches of trampled sticks. The thicker, the better. Some were so large she had to cut two feet off of them, though the covering itself stands at over 4.5 feet. Transporting them home was interesting: "They were pointing out the back and passenger windows, moving around the whole way home," she told me, but her car's no stranger to having random materials poking out of it.

In her constant stream of yard work, in



Photos contributed by Christen Wrighter
One river's invasive species is another gal's fence.



Take a tip from Chris: All it takes to spruce up a corner is a container filled with some sticks—she spray-painted hers white.



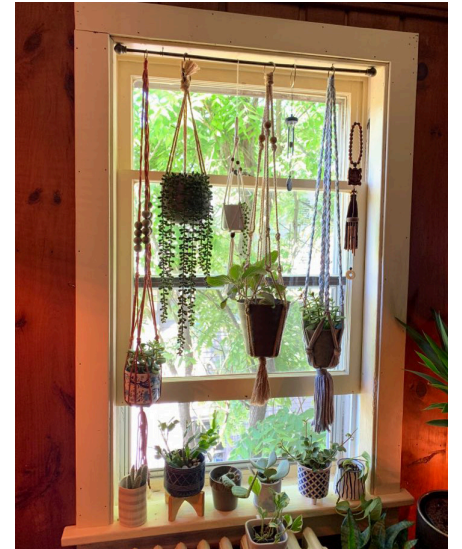
Clearing out a massive walnut tree that fell over in her yard before she moved in provided her with enough bark from branches to cover up a storage space beneath the porch..

her own backyard and beyond, she comes across sticks quite a bit. Before she moved in, a large walnut tree had fallen in the back yard. It was a massive cleanup project that took her months, but it gave her plenty of materials to work with. With the bark of branches, she was able to cover up the unsightly space beneath the porch and use it as storage.

If you find yourself with too many sticks in your yard, take a tip from Chris: All it takes to spruce up a corner is a container filled with some sticks—she spray-painted hers white. (She loves spray paint.)

Did you take a hike and find a walking stick that you know was destined for greater things? Maybe it's just the thing to fill that

empty space over your bed. That's where I first saw Chris's biggest wall hanging, but they can be as big or small as the sticks (or tree branches) you find. Pick up the yarn of your choice and get tying! There are many ways to experiment to get different looks. Making a wall hanging with the thick, soft yarn will have a much different look than using something thinner. You can space the knots apart at the top or tie them on top of each other. You can add knots and play with length at the bottom—have the pieces meet at a V or go for a choppy look. Tie knots at the bottom if you want to!



At Chris's house, plants hang in place of curtains. She plans to replace those rods with birch sticks.

Chris makes the most out of the ordinary excess every day without trying. Being her friend for a couple years now, it seems that's just how her brain operates. I've even seen her addiction to beautification span beyond her yard: She's known to weed-wack beside the road across the street, mow down by the abandoned storefront and fill empty planters with flowers. People keep telling her she should do her creative landscaping thing for a living—she agrees, and she's working on it.

Stay tuned for a website coming soon. Feel free to inquire about landscaping at weareallaparadox@yahoo.com.

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Her hammock patio area has grown a lot since I last saw it.

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Grilling basics

Because summer and outdoor cooking go hand in hand



A grill at home in Pennsylvania, just waiting for a post-lockdown barbeque or Father's Day meal.

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

Grilling symbolizes the season, even this summer of 2020, as weird as it might be. Perhaps it will entail virtual grill get-togethers? Or practicing social distancing in the yard with everyone eating a few feet apart? At least we're outside enjoying the sun, the warmth, the food and the love.

As soon as summer starts here in the country, the grills fire up and the scented smoke drifts through our neighborhoods. Our mouths water and we want to invite ourselves over.

If that's not possible, we can join the brigade.

If you've never grilled before, if you don't own a grill or you're thinking about trying something else... well, this is the place to start.



Photos contributed by Joe Cooke

Find your outdoor cooking needs at the Honesdale Agway.

Why grill?

It's an American dream: some adult cooking on the grill, someone else waving the flies off the potato salad, a horde of kids playing or standing around hoping for a spare hot dog. (Or tofu dog. Whatever moves you.)

Here's what you need:

A grill.

Okay, that's obvious. But what kind of grill? Gas? Charcoal? Pellet?

Tom's Guide says gas is convenient—you just turn a knob. If you have natural gas, you can go that route. Propane's available too, and it's the most popular option at Delaware Valley Farm & Garden in Callicoon, NY. Gas can be cheaper than other fuel sources. It's fast and, as Mark McClusky argues in *Wired* magazine, a delicious grilled dinner is on the table in half an hour.

Charcoal is traditional, and Arkansas-based grill manufacturer PK Grills (which was revived in 2016 by grilling enthusiasts), has a whole list of reasons why coals are the fuel of choice. Start with an incomparable smoky taste and a higher temperature, so you can get the crusty outside layer, along with the fact that the grill is portable so you can take it to the park, no electricity required. Should there be a problem, charcoal grills can often be repaired at home. Plus, charcoal grills are usually less expensive.

Pellet grills/smokers burn hardwood pellets, so you get the smoky wood taste and you can roast, smoke meat and—often, but not always—grill on it. And the smoking function is great, says Alycia Gordon on *Chowhound*. Pellet grill/smokers cook more evenly, she adds, and you can get different flavors with different types of wood pellets.



A coal pot, basin-shaped and containing coals, with a rack for grilling. They can be cast iron or clay. Enormously popular in the Caribbean, coal pots came from Africa or India and can cook delicious food in the Islands... or here in the Delaware River Valley.

And sometimes traditional is best. A friend originally from the British Virgin Islands occasionally cooks food here in his coal pot. It's easily portable and "just about any cherished Caribbean meal can be cooked to perfection," writes Steve Bennett over at www.uncommoncaribbean.com. So, I can say for a fact, are American meals.

What else do you need?

Tools. Tongs to flip the food. Spatula. A scraper or brush to clean the grill. A thermometer, maybe, to monitor the food's temperature. Fire-lighting stuff like matches or a chimney if you have a charcoal grill. Grill gloves, maybe. At farm and garden stores, like Delaware Valley and Honesdale, you can find smoker boxes, skewers, baskets and rotisseries as well as all the other items.

Charcoal, if you're using a charcoal grill or a coal pot. Says Alex Delany at *Bon Appetit* magazine: Hardwood lump gives better flavor and burns hotter; briquettes burn slower and more evenly since they're manufactured of sawdust and binders. They're great for long, slow cooking.

The food

Butchers at the Callicoon Peck's Market recommend New York strip or Delmonico steak. You can grill chicken or vegetables too. (See Jude Waterston's recipes on page 10.) Really, the grocery store's your limit. Try Jude's recipes and search the internet for more. You're good to grill.

Buy your grills or grill tools from local farm and garden stores, at Peck's Market, at hardware stores, or online.

For more on PK Grills, see www.pkgrills.com.



Photo contributed by PK Grills
The PK Original Grill is made in the U.S. Both a charcoal grill and a smoker, PK's shape and vents make it easy to grill hot and fast or low and slow. The cast aluminum grill is rust-proof, durable, lightweight and conducts heat more efficiently than steel charcoal grills, says the company. "The grill detaches easily from its stand, making it also perfect for tailgating, camping and more."

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Photo contributed by Jude Waterston

Jude picnicking on the back porch.

By JUDE WATERSTON

Leaving the warmth of the people and the climate of Oaxaca, Mexico was difficult this past March. It had been our longest stay, and we had rekindled and strengthened relationships with Americans and Canadians we've met over the years. And we had become close to many Oaxacans: shop and market vendors, waiters and waitresses, and the staff at the two hotels at which we stayed.

What was hardest about our departure was the frightening uncertainty; what were we going home to and what would we encounter upon our return to the States and our home?

The pressure and stress of cutting our trip short, canceling flights, hotel and restaurant reservations in Mexico City, and hearing horror stories of airport delays and endless lines had us on edge as we hurriedly packed our bags and said our farewells, now just beginning to be aware of needing to refrain from embracing friends.

Once we landed at LaGuardia Airport, the impact of the pandemic was like a slap

in the face. The woman we'd contracted to pick us up and drive us upstate arrived wearing a protective mask and surgical gloves, our first encounter with such gear.

Finally ensconced in our little house in Callicoon, we began the process of self-quarantine. Luckily, Janet and I are comfortable being in close quarters and spending time together, pretty much 24/7. Living in the country, as opposed to New York City, we were used to being isolated and we're both naturally drawn to the life of a hermit.

The worst part of being back was the relentlessly awful weather in the month of April. The skies were perpetually grey. It was difficult to awake feeling uplifted. It rained endlessly and the temps were depressingly low. It snowed more than once.

The gym at the Villa Roma was closed. Movement and Chair Yoga classes at the River Family Wellness Center in Callicoon were suspended. I felt desperate to take a walk and itchy to get out of the confines of the house. The days seemed long, though I was surprised at how quickly the time had gone by. What day was it anyway?

We ventured out only to food shop, stop at the bank's ATM, or pay a visit to the Post Office. The masks Janet sewed for us were lovely. We looked like attractive banditos, but they were eventually uncomfortable and irritating. Being home and inside for so long was getting on my nerves. Some days, we were blue.

Finally, the month of May arrived and with it a few warmer days accompanied by clear blue skies. We took a few walks, reveling in the freedom, getting some much-needed exercise and seeing other human beings, if from a distance, for the first time in weeks.

Then, just recently, it was warm enough, if a touch windy, for us to eat lunch on our front porch. We have a picnic table on the back porch, where we keep our grill, but the bird feeders and houses are up front, and the action was astounding. As we ate, Baltimore Orioles, woodpeckers, goldfinches, rose-breasted grosbeaks and even the elusive indigo bunting and bluebirds alit on the feeders and their chattering voices filled the air, along with the ringing of multiple wind chimes.

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Eating al fresco is my favorite aspect of having a house in the country. Warm weather signals the task of lugging our unwieldy Weber charcoal grill up from the basement. Many prefer gas grills, but I don't like messing with oil or tradition. Give me a metal chimney, a fistful of newspaper, and a long match and I'm set. Fifteen or 20 minutes later, I dump the glowing coals into the bottom drum, secure the rack and oil it in preparation for a smoke-kissed feast.

Grilled food is obviously meant to be eaten outdoors. Now is the tricky part. We are all feeling the desperation to see friends and family on something other than a screen. As the weather warms, the skies clear and our need to connect becomes stronger, with some common sense and a few precautions, we should be able, taking mindful baby steps, to reunite and share food. Nothing is more binding.

Getting back to the grill and congregating, one idea is to have a picnic on the lawn, which allows for distancing. Or if you want to sit at the table, invite only two or three other people, depending on the size of your picnic table, so you can space yourselves out. Set up a station, like at a buffet, where people can get up one at a time to serve themselves.

Some folks we know have already gotten together with friends on a sunny day, each toting their own food and drink and sitting in a wide circle where they feel comfortable physically and calmed mentally. Which ever way you decide to go has to work for you. Follow your heart.

I offer here a couple of recipes for grilled food, for both vegetarians and carnivores. Get out there and allow the smoke to waft through the air, inhale deeply. Look around at your surroundings. Feel and revel in the freedom, if only for an hour or two.

I do hope that we will share our tables once again, in the not too distant future, with those we love and with whom we cherish exploring culinary adventures.



Grilled baby zucchini with Greek flavors

Serves four

Fruity extra-virgin olive oil, lemon juice and fresh herbs such as dill and mint call to mind the flavors of the Greek isles. I have combined them here, along with pungent feta cheese, in a vinaigrette to be poured over hot-from-the-grill baby zucchini.

6 small zucchinis (or a combination of zucchini and yellow squash)

1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint

3 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Trim off the ends of the zucchini and slice each squash in half lengthwise. Lay them on a plate cut side up and drizzle with two tablespoons of olive oil. Season them with salt and pepper and set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together 1/4 cup of olive oil, lemon juice, mint, dill, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside. Prepare a grill. Fire is ready when you can hold your hand about five inches above rack for just three or four seconds. Lay the zucchini on the grill cut side up and grill for eight minutes. Turn the zucchini over and grill for about eight more minutes, or until charred, yet somewhat firm. Remove from grill to a cutting board and slice, on the diagonal, at one-inch intervals. Lay the sliced zucchini out on a platter in one layer. Re-whisk the vinaigrette and correct seasoning, if necessary. Ladle the vinaigrette evenly over the warm zucchini. Scatter the crumbled feta over the top and serve immediately.



Grilled chicken brochettes with cilantro pesto and honey maple mustard sauce

Serves four

1 1/2 pounds boneless chicken thighs (or use breasts, if you prefer white meat)

10" long wooden skewers, soaked in water to cover for at least 1 hour

For marinade:

1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves

Cut the chicken into big, yet not unwieldy, pieces. Place the chicken cubes in a large bowl. Whisk together the marinade ingredients in a small bowl. When combined, pour the marinade over the chicken. Refrigerate, covered for at least one hour and up to three. Prepare hot coals for grilling. Thread four or five chicken strips onto each skewer. Do not crowd them. Place the skewers three inches from the coals and grill, turning once, six to seven minutes, or until just cooked through. Serve with dipping sauces.

Honey maple mustard sauce

Makes about 1/2 cup

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

2 tablespoons country-style (whole grain) Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon honey

3 tablespoons pure maple syrup

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to use. Return to room temperature for 15 minutes before serving.

Cilantro pesto

Makes about 1/2 cup

2 cups fresh cilantro leaves

1 garlic clove, minced

3 tablespoons fresh lime (or lemon) juice

1/4 cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons honey

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place cilantro and garlic in the bowl of a food processor. With motor running, slowly drizzle the olive oil and lime juice through the feed tube, processing until the cilantro is pureed. Transfer to a bowl and add the honey, and salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to use. Return to room temperature for 15 minutes before serving.





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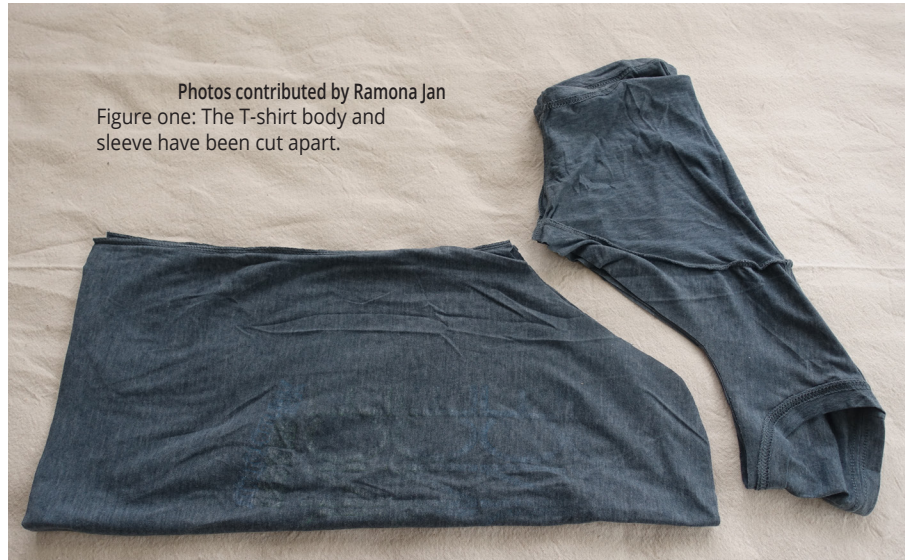
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DIY no-sew farmers' market bag from a T-shirt

By RAMONA JAN

Rejoice! Plastic shopping bags are rapidly disappearing in grocery stores and at farmers' markets far and wide. This means that ocean life will be safer and, in turn, we will not be eating fish that have ingested our garbage.

For many of us, the shift from plastic to "bring your own bag" seems to have happened overnight. Some of us were not prepared and even went to the grocery store without a bag. (I'm speaking about a friend, of course.) If you are one of the less prepared, here's a quick DIY bag you can make at home, easily carry anywhere and even launder.



Photos contributed by Ramona Jan
Figure one: The T-shirt body and sleeve have been cut apart.

The rewards of creating your very own DIY T-shirt bag:

You will be the envy of all.

You can now make dozens of these for yourself and your friends.

Finally you can repurpose all those unwanted but sentimental T-shirts.

You can make colorful bags whenever needed.

You'll be getting rid of old T-shirts and creating market bags at the same time.

You can roll them up and take them anywhere.

With every bag you make, a fish, turtle or perhaps even a dolphin is saved.



Small clips in the fold create ventilation. The longer slice at the top creates the handle.



The completed bag, full of local produce

You will need the following supplies:

Cotton T-shirt, one that isn't too stretchy

Scissors

Fabric Glue (At Walmart it's called Fabri-tac and at Callicoon Supply it's called Multi-Purpose glue. It's essentially a cold hot glue. No glue gun is necessary.)

1. Turn the T-shirt inside out.

2. Fold the T-shirt in half lengthwise. Tip: It helps to press the T-shirt before folding and cutting, but for those of you who don't want to drag out the ironing board and iron (like me), you may ignore this tip.

3. Cut the shape shown in figure one.

4. Clip into the fold as shown. This creates ventilation. You want ventilation for fruit, flowers and vegetables. Tip: Don't make the

vent clips too big or else all your fruit will fall through the ventilation holes.

5. Continue to fold and clip into the shirt as desired, but don't go crazy. Leave at least two inches between clips and, again, make the clips small.

6. Along with the vent clips, slice a handle in the curved part as shown in figure two.

7. Using fabric glue, carefully glue the lower edge of the T-shirt closed.

8. Let dry.

9. Turn the bag right side out.

10. Fill the bag to your heart's desire. The bag will stretch a bit when you fill it but that's to be expected. If you made the ventilation slits too big, start again. You'll get it after a while.

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Photos contributed by Deborah Jagel at Cabins & Canoes Real Estate

The great 2020 exodus

One realtor's view

By LINDA DROLLINGER

FORESTBURGH, NY — Pandemic shutdown notwithstanding, Deborah Jagel of Cabins & Canoes Real Estate has sold 17 homes in the past two months.

That sounds like a lot.

"It is," she said. "We're working at a frenzied pace to meet demand many times the norm."

"Most of my buyers are married professionals in their 20s and 30s," says Jagel. In normal times, people wait until they are established in their careers and have a reasonable degree of financial security. "But these are not normal times."

What are these young people hoping to find in Sullivan County? "Safety and some degree of normalcy. They're looking for a place where they can let their shoulders down and build a life with some measure of certainty. The only certainty they have now in the city is continued uncertainty—about their jobs, their homes, their health and their physical safety."

It's not just Jagel seeing a rush of potential buyers. All real estate agents have been intensely busy recently. (See related story, "Local realtors rejoice" at www.bit.ly/RRrealtors.)

"We are so lucky to have a very cooperative group of realtors in our area," she added. "This trying time is when our bonds

tighten, helping each other in any way we can."

First it was the COVID-19 pandemic, then the resulting economic shutdown and financial meltdown, and now civil unrest in the wake of George Floyd's killing by Minneapolis police. All of those events have made urban life look less attractive and more dangerous to many young people.

"When they call me, they're panicked.

They want to get out of the city and into the country as soon as possible. And, honestly, we don't have enough inventory for all of them," says Jagel.

What can they do to help you help them? "They can come to me prequalified for a mortgage; if they have that guarantee, I can help them move quickly." What else? "They can be flexible in their selection of properties. I tell them not to be particular about the house, but to look for property that they love. Most houses have issues. Rarely does one meet all of the buyer's expectations. Houses can be altered, properties not so much."

Assuming they have mortgage prequalification, how long will it take to find and close on a property? "That depends. Everyone is in a rush, so triage is necessary. One of our more urgent purchases is by a woman eight months pregnant with her first child. Her husband is on military deployment to an aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean, and

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she needs to close before July 1. I had to find her a new obstetrician in the county, so that she can give birth here.”

That seems like service above and beyond the real estate norm. “We’re not selling properties. We’re selling new lives. This is not a frivolous purchase. This is a purchase that will change lives and life paths. My rule of service: If I wouldn’t buy it, I won’t sell it.”

A fourth-generation entrepreneur with 38 years of real estate experience, Jagel began her work life expecting to be a kindergarten teacher. No sooner had she completed her student teaching than she turned to the business that would become her life’s work.

Still, her kindergarten teaching experience has not been wasted. A big part of her job is giving urban dwellers a primer education on the practicalities of rural home ownership. “They come here knowing nothing about septic tanks, wells, water pumps and other things they need to understand before making an informed buying decision.”

So they find a property, then what? “Then we find them a banker, a lawyer, a renovation company and/or general contractor, and sometimes also doctors, dentists, churches, whatever service is important and necessary to the start of their lives here.”

Real estate agencies are working hard these days. And “no matter the company,” Jagel said, “our goal is the same, to help

“The only certainty they have now in the city is continued uncertainty – about their jobs, their homes, their health, and their physical safety.”

– Deborah Jagel

our clients with the highest service possible under our current state guidelines.”

She added, “We need to be their sunshine while making the sales experience as seamless and painless as possible.”

Jagel has an empathetic grasp of the culture shock experienced by urban dwellers moving to the country. Although her home here was purchased in 1993, she and her family moved here only four years ago from Chicago. They’ve all settled in nicely since; her children now run the Forestburgh General Store.

This is not the first exodus from NYC. There was a massive move from city to country after WWII, another in the 1970s, and, most recently, one after 9/11, the latter also motivated by fear and uncertainty. But many of those who came here then have since moved away. Is this migration part of a new, ongoing pattern of American life, or just safe harbor from a storm?

Contact: *Deborah Jagel, Cabins & Canoes Real Estate, 312/852-7500*

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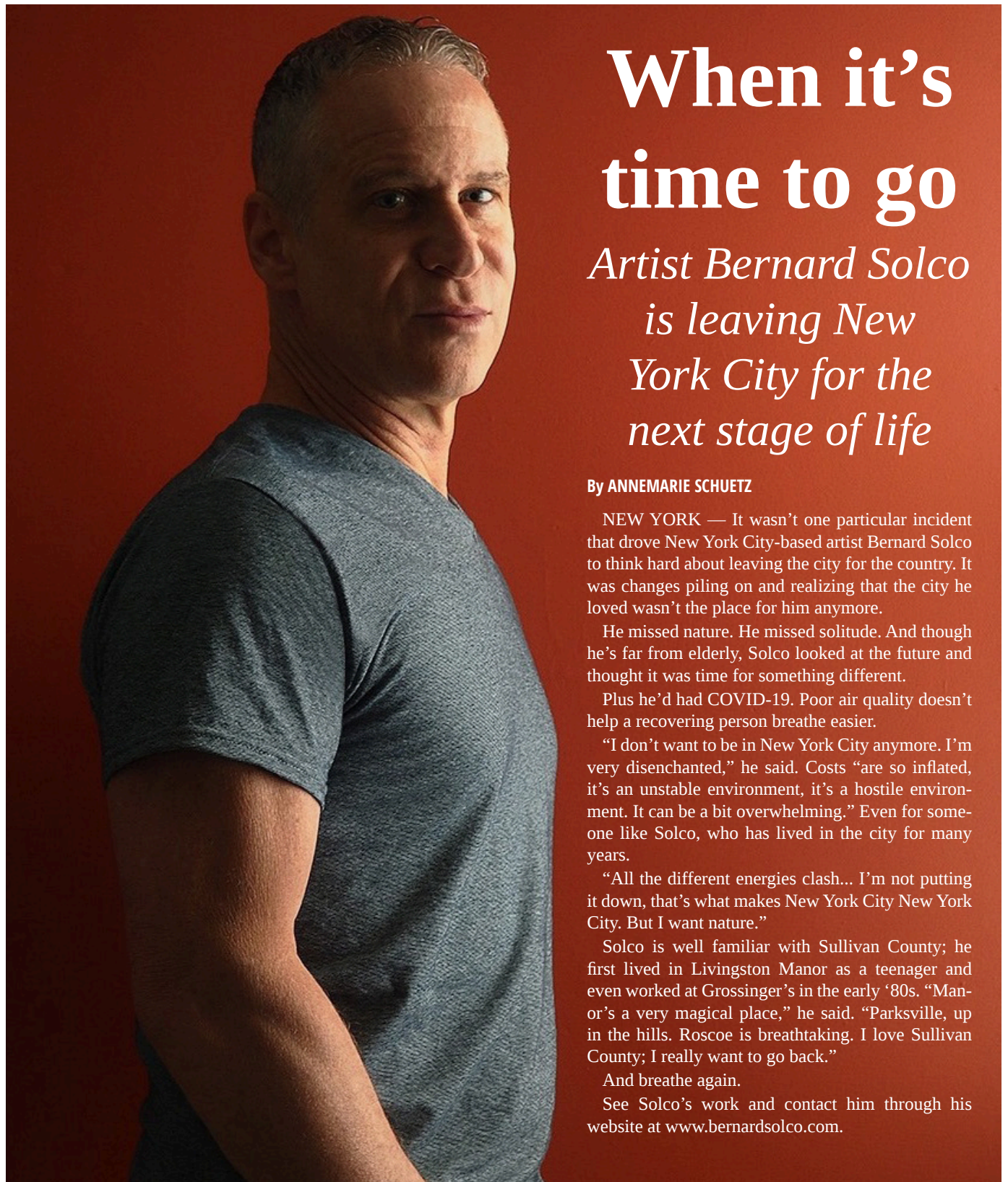
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When it's time to go

*Artist Bernard Solco
is leaving New
York City for the
next stage of life*

By ANNEMARIE SCHUETZ

NEW YORK — It wasn't one particular incident that drove New York City-based artist Bernard Solco to think hard about leaving the city for the country. It was changes piling on and realizing that the city he loved wasn't the place for him anymore.

He missed nature. He missed solitude. And though he's far from elderly, Solco looked at the future and thought it was time for something different.

Plus he'd had COVID-19. Poor air quality doesn't help a recovering person breathe easier.

"I don't want to be in New York City anymore. I'm very disenchanted," he said. Costs "are so inflated, it's an unstable environment, it's a hostile environment. It can be a bit overwhelming." Even for someone like Solco, who has lived in the city for many years.

"All the different energies clash... I'm not putting it down, that's what makes New York City New York City. But I want nature."

Solco is well familiar with Sullivan County; he first lived in Livingston Manor as a teenager and even worked at Grossinger's in the early '80s. "Manor's a very magical place," he said. "Parksville, up in the hills. Roscoe is breathtaking. I love Sullivan County; I really want to go back."

And breathe again.

See Solco's work and contact him through his website at www.bernardsolco.com.

Photo contributed by Bernard Solco

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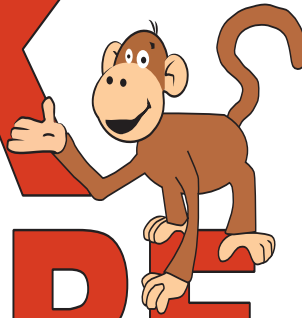
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— Annemarie Schuetz



Photos by Joe Cooke

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