

The Newspaper of Franklin Local
Franklin, New York

Vol. XVIII, No. 1

SPRING 2024

‘INDEPENDENT, FEARLESS AND FREE’

THE NEW METHODISTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

By Frances Ruth Harris
Photos by the author

Pastor Betsy Ott:

“The history of The Methodist Church in Franklin dates back to the early 1800s when circuit riders came through this area to preach, baptize, marry and bury. They also offered communion as they traveled. The first church met



The Open Doors Methodist Church holds services every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the multipurpose room,

in people’s homes, and a small group began to gather at one of the houses on Main Street, an apartment building today. The present church was built in the 1860s and reconfigured in the 1920s. At that time, the Fellowship Hall and kitchen with bathroom were added. In the 1960s, the basement was excavated to make more Sunday School classrooms. The sanctuary windows are noteworthy for their beauty. One was a gift of the McCall family.

“The church went through a long period of declining membership and

See **CHURCH**, con’t on Pg. 9



The Launch Team: 1 to 4, Thomas Briggs, John Wilson, Pastor Betsy Ott, and Donald Hebbard (Absent: Steve Banks and Diane Whitbeck)

PLANNING FRANKLIN

By Brian Brock

Like Rip Van Winkle, Franklin Township has been napping, but now is waking from its Catskill slumber. In the last few years, we have seen a wave of commercial developments: many short-term rentals, a proposed Dollar General, two attempts to site a solar array, and ideas for a major campground.

Short-Term Rentals

For decades, visitors looking for a place to rest their heads had to look elsewhere than Franklin.

Taverns and hotels crowded the village in the 1800s but faded with the onset of the temperance movement and after a railroad was built bypassing the village. The last hotel in the village, the Franklin House (aka Franklin Inn, Franklin Hotel, or Edgerton Hotel) closed in 1936 and burned down in 1938.

But many residents ran smaller boarding houses, until the Catskills became a less-fashionable tourist destination after WWII when vacation options proliferated. The tradition was revived in 2015 when the Franklin Guest House opened as a short-term

See **PLAN**, con’t on Page 16



The Franklin Farm family in summer, 1982 Photo by Chuck Haupt

REMEMBERING THE FARM

PART I

By Marjorie B. Kellogg

Venture over the back of Leland Hull Road today and take the righthand fork. You won’t find much. But forty years ago, this wooded hillside was alive with Franklin’s fabled utopian community, The Farm.

The ideal of communal living had its first American flush during the 19th century, with nearly eighty communities starting up in the 1840s alone. But none of these – such as New Harmony in Indiana (1825 – 1829) or the Oneida Community in New York (1848-1881)

– lasted very long in fully communal form.

The 1960s and 70s saw a revival of this lost ideal, as young Americans “dropped out” to find a more “righteous” way of life. But these hopeful experiments tended to be short-lived as well. A Franklin couple who lived on The Farm in the 1980s may offer insight as to why.

An afternoon of friendly reminiscence with Thomas and Mary Ellen Collier over tea and brownies revealed a more three-dimensional view of The Farm than this reporter had gleaned via hints and inuendo over many years in Franklin.

ORGANIZING IN FRANKLIN

By Carla Nordstrom

For some politicians like me, Michigan is the gold standard for progressive organizing. It was not so many years ago that a Michigan governor took over the city of Flint, diverted their water system and caused a serious health emergency. Organizers in Michigan got to work and turned the state from red to blue with the trifecta of governor and both houses of the legislature running the state.

One of those organizers who lives among the trees in the Upper Peninsula is Michael Moore, the well-known film maker and podcaster. He was raised in Michigan and has been involved in political organizing since he was a teenager. Last year he released a podcast called “Blue Dot in a Red Sea,” a twelve-part series on how to organize

in rural communities.

Each podcast deals with different approaches to organizing like-minded people in a rural area to get involved in the community and local government. Franklin seemed like a perfect place to try out some of these strategies.

A few of his ideas have been tried in Franklin, like bringing ballot measures to a vote. We did that successfully in 2019 with allowing restaurants to serve wine and beer and not so successfully in 2022 with the cannabis optout. In both cases, more people voted in those elections than in years where only candidates were on the ballot. An important goal in local organizing is to bring the people out, whether for an election, meeting, or event.

Moore suggested recruiting a group to discuss local issues, get involved in

See **DOTS**, con’t on Page 13

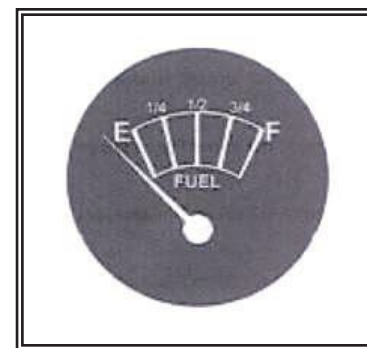
You mean it wasn’t all sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll? Not by a long shot.

The Farm in Franklin was a “satellite” of a 1200-acre spiritual community established in 1971 by hippie-activist Stephen Gaskin and a group of like-minded friends. They set out from San Francisco in a sixty-vehicle caravan – painted school buses and all – landing in Summertown, TN. The community was non-denominational, open to all, and strictly vegan.

Mary Ellen: “Our main protein was beans...First thing we learned was that a vegan lifestyle would provide enough resources for all the world to eat – an equitable diet.”

Membership required signing a vow of poverty.

See **FARM**, con’t on Page 17



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

REGULAR FEATURES:

Your Neighbor’s View	Pg. 2
Chaos or Compromise?	
Three Way Grift	
The Mayor’s Corner	Pg. 3
Green Banks Garden	Pg. 5
Kitchen Basics	Pg. 7
Inside Local Realty	Pg. 8
Real Estate Sales	Pg. 18

SUSTAINABILITY:

A Watershed’s Worth	Pg. 10
Ouleout Assessment	
Local Burn Ban	Pg. 11
Fire Map	Pg. 11
Farmers’ Market	Pg. 18

LOCAL NEWS:

Rotary Trash Pickup	Pg. 4
Weighted Voting	Pg. 6
Rabies Clinic	Pg. 6
COMIT Primer	Pg. 8
2023 in Franklin	Pg. 10
Eclipse Map	Pg. 18
Janice Smith	Pg. 19

LOCAL ARTS:

Book Review	Pg. 12
Catskill Cats	Pg. 13
Upstate Arts	Pg. 12
Carmina Burana	Pg. 12
Alicia Pagano	Pg. 14



music
literature
education

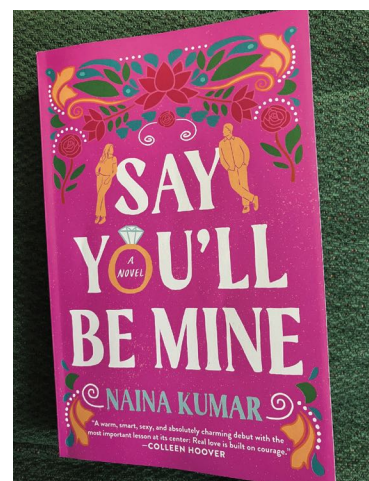
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

fine arts
poetry
holiday fun

AT THE LIBRARY

NEW BOOK REVIEWS

SAY YOU'LL BE MINE
By Naina Kumar



Reviewed by
Alexis Greene

Valentine's Day is long behind us, but romance, happily, is always with us. What begins as romance and deepens into true love is the story within Naina Kumar's enticing first novel, *Say You'll Be Mine*. As her publisher, Penguin Random House, puts it, Kumar "is a lawyer by day and a reader and writer of romance at night."

Meghna Raman teaches English at a middle school in Dallas, Texas, and is directing her students in a production of the musical *My Fair Lady*. Karthik Murthy is an engineer who lives and works in New York City.

But despite the many miles that separate them, they have something of consequence in common. Meghna is twenty-eight and unmarried, and long past the age when her Indian parents believe she should be wed. Karthik is also unmarried, and his Indian parents have been arranging for him to meet many potential brides, in the hope that he will select one and soon get married. One of these women is Meghna.

The pair pretend to be engaged, to please their families' cultural traditions and, in Meghna's case, provide a public façade when she agrees to be "the best man" at the wedding of a former boyfriend, for whom she still feels amorous.

At first, the teacher and the engineer seem to be an odd couple. Meghna is an emotionally open woman, a caring and giving person; her first impressions of Karthik are that he is uptight and "rude." As she tells her best friend, Ankita, "He was very clear that he never wants to get married." But as Meghna and Karthik spend more and more time together during their pretend engagement, they become increasingly attracted to each other. And ultimately, they fall

deeply in love. Indeed, the second half of *Say You'll Be Mine* is its most affecting, as the novel turns to how love grows, and how it changes those who fall in love, as they open themselves to sexual desire and emotional needs -- their own and each other's.

The novel's other strength is Kumar's ability to create lively and revelatory dialogue, of which there is aplenty, making *Say You'll Be Mine* primed and ready for the film adaptation that's undoubtedly in its future.

The novel could benefit, however, from descriptive passages of places and people, and from stronger characterizations of Meghna's and Karthik's friends and relatives. But *Say You'll Be Mine* is a first novel, after all, and despite these drawbacks, a pleasurable and moving read.

Say You'll Be Mine
by Naina Kumar
Copyright 2024

A Dell Trade Paperback Original

An imprint of Random House, a Division of Penguin Random House LLC
ISBN 978-0-593-72388-3
U.S.A. \$18.00



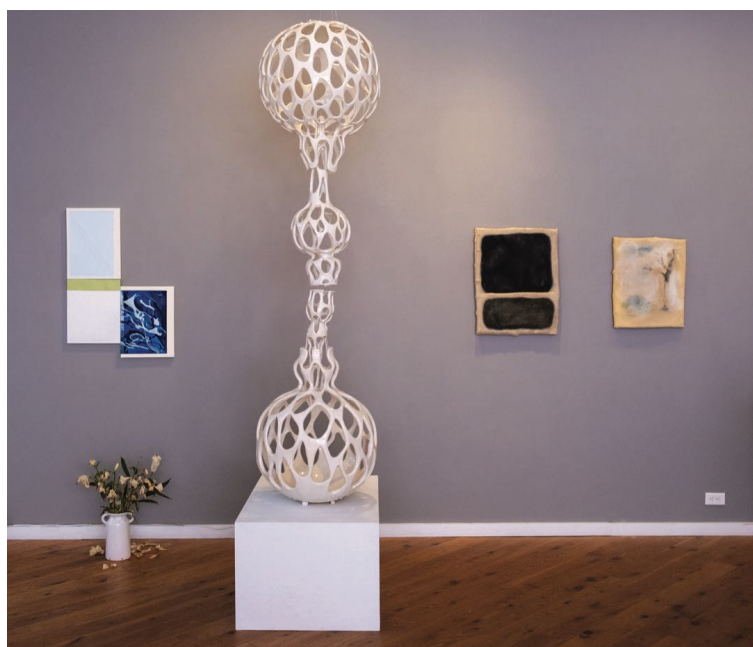
UPSTATE ARTS

ON THE VERGE @ Bushel Collective Space and

FORGOTTEN SPACES @ Roxbury Arts Ctr.
Reviewed by Valerie Cole

Two group shows opened in February in Delaware County - *On the Verge* at the Bushel Collective Space in Delhi (February 3 - March 10) and *Forgotten Spaces* (February 17 - April 13) at the Walt Meade Gallery of the Roxbury Arts Center. Both shows resulted from open calls to local artists from the incredibly vibrant arts scene in the Western Catskills.

The Bushel exhibition focused on frameworks of time in both historical and current conceptualizations, as well as seasonal and ecological approaches to time. Jeri Coppola's silver prints and neon lights piece welcomed me to this multimedia exhibit featuring films, videos, watercolor, mixed media, oil, earthenware and even a toxic



"On the Verge" at Bushel Collective Space in Delhi NY
Left to right: works by Nathan Moser, Kailey Maher, Zachery Cummings.
Photo: Kento Igarashi

mixture of mud and detritus. For example, the Kailey Maher piece (*Sentience of Time*) hanging from the ceiling on one thread seemed to hold time in limbo, asking the visitor to hold their breath lest they gasp too hard and shatter the fragile earthenware spiderweb orbs. Images of cityscapes and fantastic universes (Mark Strodl, *Meditation 2*, video) intermingled with delicate ephemeral watercolor flora of the region (GG Stankiewicz, *Winterberry I - III*). The rich and varied interpretations of the theme offered by the eleven artists evoked a sensation of promise and inevitability.

"The show is endless," remarked Kathleen Hayek, local artist from Walton.

Forgotten Spaces, at the Roxbury Arts Gallery, has a similar timeless feel. The focus in this exhibit is the effect of time on the spaces we inhabit or those that no longer exist. How have these structures, both metaphorical and literal, reflected our growth, our decay, our deaths, and our grief? Lauren Whritner's eerie soundscape invited us to find a new

See EXHIBITS, continued on Page 14

The Catskill Choral Society presents...
Carl Orff's Carmina Burana
With Chorus, Soloists, two pianos, and percussion
Under the Direction of Dr. G. Roberts Kolb, Artistic Director
Burana
and the CCS Youth Choirs Under the Direction of Cynthia Donaldson
Friday, April 26th 2024 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, April 27th 2024 at 3:00 pm
First United Methodist Church,
66 Chestnut Street, Oneonta, NY
www.CatskillChoralSociety.com for more ...
This program, sponsored in part by Oneonta State University, is made possible through public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Office of Cultural Affairs. Oneonta State University also supports this program and its New York City chapter.

For Children, their Parents, and Franklin Community Members

CARMINA BURANA
Performed by
the Catskill Choral Society,
Catskill Symphony Orchestra,
and Youth/Children Choir

First United Methodist Church
66 Chestnut Street, Oneonta
Thursday April 25th: 6pm

Free admission to the dress rehearsal including visiting with the choir directors

For reservations:
Sheila Ayres
607-746-6922
thistledeew2@stny.rr.com

This outing is made possible by a gift from Tom Morgan and Erna Morgan-McReynolds



At Bushel: Left to right: works by Gayle Brown, Emily Johnston, GG Stankiewicz, Jeri Coppola, Emily Johnston.
Photo: Kento Igarashi

Artist's Statement: ALICIA PAGANO

I look out at the hills surrounding my home and think how fortunate I am to live here. Born in 1929, I grew up in Unadilla and after many travels have returned. Childhood years in Unadilla had a major impact on my life, and I'll always consider myself a Unadilla Girl. It was here that I learned how to live amiably in this world. During my career in formal and non-formal education, I purposely created opportunities for travel. In addition to visiting many countries, I have lived in Costa Rica, Senegal, and Germany. This travel has enriched my life.

My days 2015-17 with lymphoma have been a teacher of the importance of faith and hope for the future. I am thankful for my close family and for my many friends both near and far. I have always been a writer. I must write! So, my writings continue. Each year I create a calendar with my art and poetry. I'm working on the 2025 calendar now. The first two poems below are from *Hills Join Hands*, and the last is from *Wander Spirit*.

The Hills

The hills join hands beneath the earth
and circle the valley in a dance
that holds the still point

Observing the Mountain

I know how the mountain
crumbles, tumbles downward
pulling away from its former self
Stone by stone, layer by layer
until it's transformed
into something new

It is no longer
the young mountain
rough and sharp-edged
but a rounder, softer one
carrying an ancient shape
full of histories and stories.



Alicia Pagano

The Beauty of Returning Home

The beauty of returning home
has become an inner joy for me
It spills over every part of me
The satisfaction of seeing my life,
not just as one project, one phase, one event,
but to contemplate the full circle

To see myself as a child moving forward
to see who I am today in the context of my life thus far
But even more than that, to see my life,
within the broader tapestry of my parents, grandparents
and others who played out their lives before me
who prepared the stage even before my entrance.

I am continuously living in the presence
that is perfumed by the past or made richer
with memories and new discoveries of my hometown
and its surrounding villages.
The place I left for many years
and now have returned to discover anew.

- Alicia Pagano

Born June 29, 1929.

Education: MAT, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL.

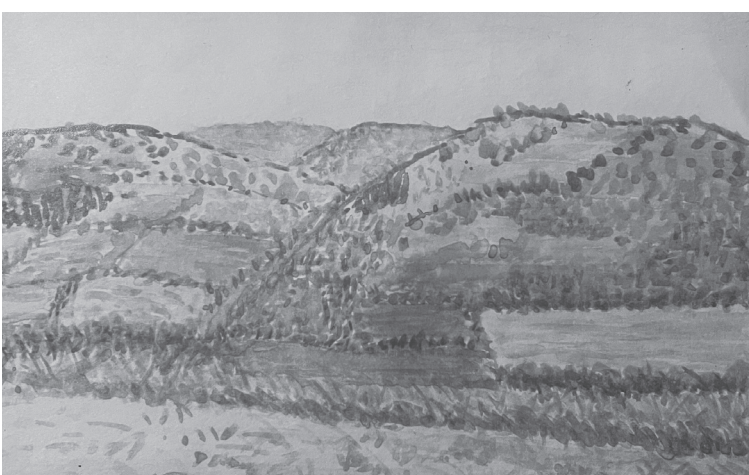
EdD, The American University, Washington, DC.

Career: Professor, Medgar Evers College, Brooklyn, NY.

New Jersey City University, Jersey City, NJ.

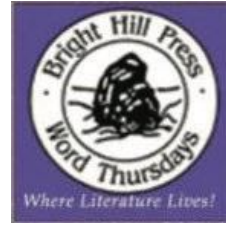
National Director of Program, Girl Scouts of the USA

Publications: 4 self-published poetry books



"Hills Viewed From My House" by Alicia Pagano. Watercolor on paper

Bright Hill Press & Literary Center of the Catskills 2024 Programming



Children's Workshops

Taught by Bertha Rogers

Summer I: June 24-28: The Magic of Catskill Rocks & Mountains

Summer II: July 22-26: Octopuses & Squids & Their Friends

Summer III: August 12-16: Stars and Clouds and Winds

Adult Workshops

Taught by Georgia Popoff

Session 1: The World Beyond Haiku - Examining Japanese
Form: June 17-July 22

Session 2: Is this a Poem? Prose poetry in All its Possibilities:
July 29-Sept 9

No class on Labor Day

Art Shows

May 4 - 25: *May the 4th b/u*

June 8: *Stagecoach Run* Bright Hill public opening.

August: open call: responses to *Haiku* class

Word Thursday

Every 2nd and 4th Thursday

February to November

7pm live on Zoom and Facebook Live & in-person

Check our Facebook for details

Email: info@brighthillpress.org

94 Church Street, Treadwell, NY 13846

See EXHIBITS, continued from Page 12

meaning in familiar landscapes. This collection included prints, fabric, oils, videos, watercolor, and stoneware.

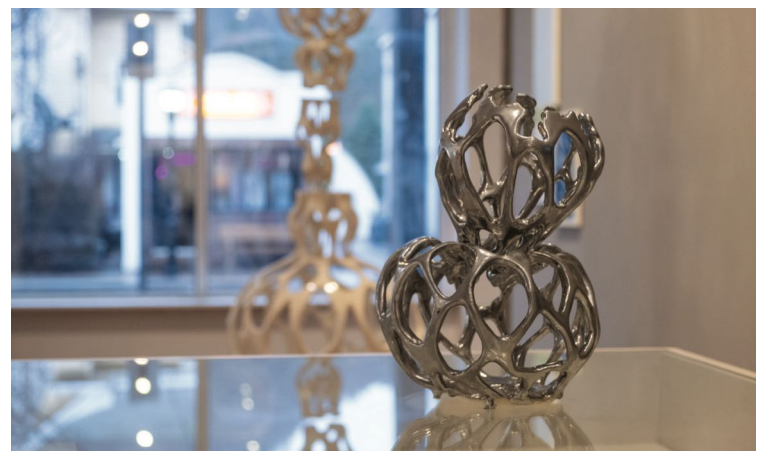
Jody Isaacson combined media in her audacious sculpture, *Aubade*, that seemed to ascend in one piece, uniting the separate components of stoneware, ribbons, inkjet on okawara, and woodcut. These different and unique materials merge to create a surprising sensation of flight.

In a nearby corner, two pieces, Joseph Damone's stark white photo, *Winter Barn*, and Tabitha Gilmore-Barnes' fibertapestry, *GRIEF*, seemed tucked away as if the curators didn't want the guests to experience the isolating sadness of spaces that have deliberately been forgotten. I moved away, looking for respite in Timothy Cleary's video, *All Visitors*. As I was guided through an empty-stalled barn to a wooded sunlit field just outside the door, the rays of the sun occasionally ob-

scured the goal, and a small bird flitted about. The exit remained out of reach. I turned to another wall. The young woman in Jessica Farrell's *Ascent (of an evening star)*, a vivid acrylic

visual, tactile, and auditory experiences that I was overwhelmed with appreciation for the opportunity to share this space and time with others from the area.

Many of the artists in



At Bushel Collective Space: Kailey Maher, *Like Calls to Like*, earthenware. Photo: Kento Igarashi.

on wood painting, looked wistfully out at the viewer: is she trying to escape the small town behind her?

It was difficult to fully embrace the atmosphere and the collective effect at the Roxbury opening because of the huge crowd of artists, fans, and well-wishers. Both exhibits were so full of

both groups are transplants from other regions of the country, most frequently the New York City area. As more and more talent migrates to the welcoming hills of the Western Catskills, we can expect more shows of this caliber.