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Winter 2014

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Matters

M A G A Z I N E

Winter 2014 Vol. 24 Issue 1

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Love Issue

ON THE COVER

"I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently? And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps it says, "Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again."

— Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass*

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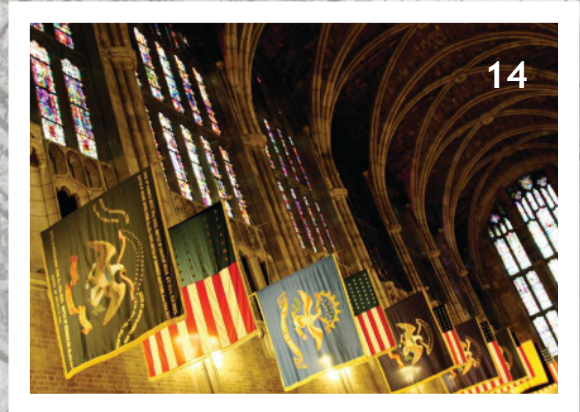
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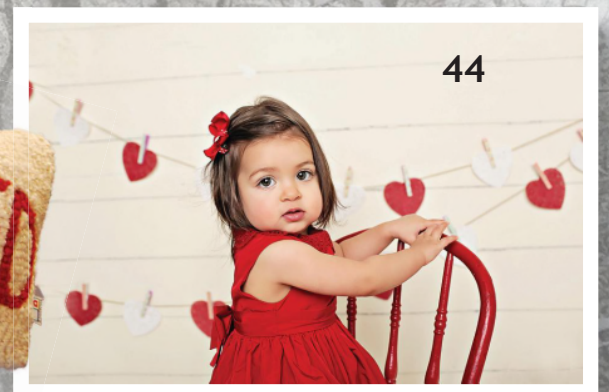
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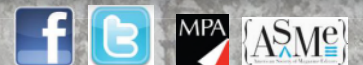


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Meant to Be

Barb and Nick Scali still enjoy doing everything together

BY KAREN DUNCAN

They first knew each other in geometry class. “But we paid little attention to each other,” says Barb. “I played football,” explains Nick. “Barb was a cheerleader, and we knew who each other were. But that’s about it.” That was until two years later.

Nick, like many boys in 1945, joined the Navy as soon as he turned 18 (which was in March). “Otherwise it was likely you’d get drafted to the Army,” he says. After boot camp he trained in San Diego as a pharmaceutical mate and a dental technician. But he was never sent to the Pacific, and when his 18 months were up he came back home and finished high school. He helped out at his family’s restaurant and joined the Naval Reserves.

One summer night in 1947 he walked into the local hangout – the downtown drug store where many of their friends congregated. Barb was sitting at the counter drinking an ice cream soda. “I walked right up to her,” he says, “and asked her out to the movies for that night.” He was smitten.

“I said yes.” Barb admitted to being immediately attracted to him, “But he had to meet my parents.” Which he did and that seemed to go pretty well. But when they began seeing each other every day, and every evening, her mother was not enthusiastic.

The families were very different. Nick’s grandparents came to the United States when Nick’s parents were young. So Nick and his brother were first-generation Italian-Americans. The family owned a popular local Italian restaurant called The Venice, and their home was a small farm where they grew everything for the restaurant, including raising goats, chickens and rabbits. The Girards, Barb’s family, had roots in the American Revolution. Her mother (who was my grandmother’s older sister) was born in 1892 and attended college – uncommon for women in those times. Her father was the general manager of the railroad.

Barb had completed a two-year degree from Middlebury College. Her mother may have had other plans for her daughter. Barb believes she just did not want her married.

Yet they continued to see each other and soon plotted their elopement. “I did not care what I was doing to her,” Barb says defiantly even now.

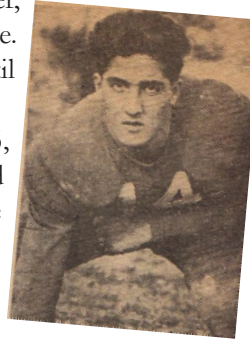
They secured a marriage license, had blood tests, bought rings and set out to find someone who’d marry them. Confiding in no one, they drove across the river to Wappinger Falls, NY. They stopped a police officer, asking where they could get married, and he did them one better: He drove them to his minister at the Methodist church, who agreed to marry them on the spot. The officer stayed as a witness. “We dressed up,” Nick recalls, but they have no photos. There were no flowers; there was no honeymoon. They then drove home to face the music.

Perhaps out of shock, the families accepted, ultimately embracing the marriage. Barb recalls her parents conceding that Nick’s family’s restaurant was nice, as were his parents. Nick’s mother began Barb’s lifelong learning of Italian cooking and she now speaks and writes Italian better than her husband. Nick began work at the local bank and during the next 50 years rose to become president and retired as chairman of the board. He graduated from Brown University, commuting to Rhode Island while at the bank. The couple have traveled the world, preferring Italy. They raised two sons, one now a successful attorney

and the other a revered physician, whose sudden and untimely death they endured with unimaginable grace.

Now in their later 80s, they still live in the home they built in 1952. They love to travel and truly enjoy each other’s company. “We pretty much do everything together,”

says Nick. They will mark their 66th wedding anniversary on April 2 the way they have for decades: visiting Italy and walking hand in hand down the well-traveled streets of their favorite cities.



The Buzz



Matters Magazine made a \$1700 donation to the Columbia High School music and fine arts department as a result of its fundraising event hosting the showing of the documentary, *The Entertainers*. The movie, produced and directed by 1997 CHS alum Michael Zimmer, chronicled the national Ragtime Piano Competition and his fellow classmate Ethan Uslan's quest for the championship. Both men were on hand for the showing of the film at the Maplewood Movie Theatre on September 10. For more about the event, visit mattersmagazine.com.

The Pierro Gallery, 5 Mead Street, South Orange, will host four alumnae of the Gallery

Mara Rubin, supervisor of fine and performing arts, for the SOMSD accepts the donation check from Karen Duncan, publisher of Matters Magazine, at the December Board of Education meeting.

Aferro Studio Residency program in an exhibition that will run through February 15. The artists will present installation-based exhibitions that were originally premiered at Gallery Aferro. Each artist's project reflects the rigorous and experimental studio work undertaken during a six-month residency. The installations, under the heading *Four From Aferro*, are "Skinning The Image" (Katrino Bello), "The Edge of Pause" (Marcy Chevali), "Sowing Promise"



Molly Matters © Dally/Duncan 2014



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The Pierro Gallery exhibit, *Four from Aferro*, includes this photo by artist Katrina Bello and runs through February 15.

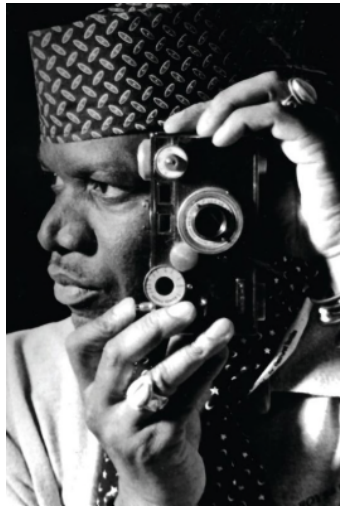
Artist Mansa K. Mussa will show his work at the Maplewood Memorial Library beginning this February.

(Vikki Michalios) and "Toile News Project" (Margaret Murphy). For more information, call 973-378-7755 or visit pierrogallery.org.

Evidence of Evolution, a solo exhibit of collages by Mansa K. Mussa, will be shown February 3 through 23 at the **Maplewood Memorial Library**, 51 Baker Street. An opening reception is scheduled for February 8 from 1:30 to 3:30. The reception features an artist's talk, music and refreshments. The exhibit traces Mussa's work from 1978 to the present and includes the things he loves most: people, dancers, artists, jazz musicians, cities and architecture. For more information call 973-762-1622 or visit maplewoodlibrary.org.

The 1978 Maplewood Arts Center, 1978 Springfield Avenue, will celebrate Black History Month and Women's History Month with the exhibit *Seven Decades: Climbing, Reaching, Turning Corners*, showing the works of renowned New Jersey artist Gladys Barker Grauer. There will be a private viewing on February 8 and the exhibit will open to the public February 16 from 2 to 6 p.m. with hot refreshments and cool jazz provided. Grauer is best known for her tapestries and corrugated constructions made from discarded and repurposed materials. Gallery 1978 has been exhibiting the work of established and emerging artists for 12 years, featuring a range of events and classes. For more information visit 1978artscenter.org.

The South Orange Performing Arts Center, 1 SOPAC Way, South Orange has great entertainment options this winter. Jazz vocalist Jane Monheit will perform February 8 at 8 p.m. Singer/songwriters Susan Werner and David Wilcox take the stage



February 15 at 8 p.m. Experience American musical legend Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural Jr. along with his band, Buckwheat Zydeco, March 1 at 8 p.m. La Cinematheque Film Club will show *Blue* in the SOPAC Loft on March 2 at 2 p.m. Grammy-winning singer Shawn Colvin will appear March 2 at 7:30 p.m. Don't miss top guitarist Johnny Winter on March 8 at 8 p.m. Enjoy Mike Griot and Friends as part of the Blues in the Loft Series March 9 at 7 p.m. Save the date for Richard Thompson with special guest Teddy Thompson, on March 15 at 8 p.m.



New Jersey artist Gladys Barker Grauer will have her work on exhibit at 1978 Maplewood Arts Center beginning February 8.

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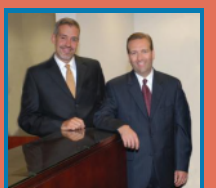
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Right: Grammy winner Shawn Colvin comes to SOPAC March 2.



Below: Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural Jr. and his band, Buckwheat Zydeco, bring the sounds of Louisiana Zydeco to SOPAC March 1.

The musical *Diary of a Worm, a Spider and a Fly* comes to SOPAC March 16.



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Bring the kids to see the musical *Diary of a Worm, a Spider and a Fly* on March 16 at 2 p.m. Come hear the Vince Ector Quartet, March 16 at 7 p.m. The double bill of Richard Shindell and Lucy Kaplansky will be offered March 22 at 8 p.m. Listen to the indie-folk sounds of Mason Jennings March 23 at 7:30 p.m. Laugh along with comedian Jay Mohr on March 27 at 7:30 p.m. Iris Dement and Red Molly will offer an evening of folk country music, March 28 at 8 p.m. Oleta Adams sings soul and gospel music March 29 at 8 p.m. Pianist Fei Fei Dong

will delight audiences on March 30 at 3 p.m. La Cinematheque Film Club will feature *White* in the Loft on April 6 at 2 p.m. Have fun with comedian Paul Reiser, April 11 at 8 p.m. Julliard @ SOPAC presents Trio Voce on April 13 at 3 p.m. For more information and tickets call 973-313-ARTS (2787) or visit SOPACnom.org.

The Montclair Art Museum, 3 South Mountain Avenue, Montclair, offers a wide variety of special events this spring. For free family fun there is the Kids' Jazz Concert on April 5 and

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Free Family Day on April 13 when the public can explore the galleries, studios and grounds indoors and out. Tiny Tours, on March 26 at 10 a.m., offers stroller-friendly tours through the galleries to discover an engaging artistic environment for the youngest museum-goers. African American Film Forum February 6 and 15 at 7 p.m. *Creating Art: Conversations with African-American Artists* on March 6 at 7 p.m. will include artist/moderator Adaora Udoji, correspondent for CNN and ABC. Egyptologist Stephen Harvey will discuss "Egypt's Last Royal Pyramids" on March 27 at 7 p.m. The Yard School at Montclair Art Museum offers workshops such as chocolate making or printmaking for children and lithography and graphic design for adults. For a complete detailed list of the many wonderful events the Montclair Art Museum has to offer call 973-259-5137 or visit montclairartmuseum.org.

Embroiderers' Guild of America-Monmouth Chapter will meet February 9, March 9 and April 6 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the DeHart Community Center, 120 Burnett Avenue, Maplewood. Stitchers of all types of needlework, from beginner to experienced, are welcome. There will be sit-and-stitch tables as well as special projects at the meetings. For



Matisse and Me artist Janet Taylor Pickett will be one of the panelists during the discussion, *Creating Art: Conversations with African-American Artists* March 6 at the Montclair Art Museum.

more information call 732-462-5540 or visit mcega.org.

Maplewood's historic house museum, **Durand-Hedden House and Garden**, 523 Ridgewood Road, Maplewood, offers an exhibit opening on February 23, *The Maplewood Theatre: Its Forgotten Saga*, celebrating the theater's long history, which dates to 1927. The exhibit includes drawings and photographs of the original Pompeian-themed interior, production photos and playbills from the live show era, early movie memorabilia including

Continued on page 40

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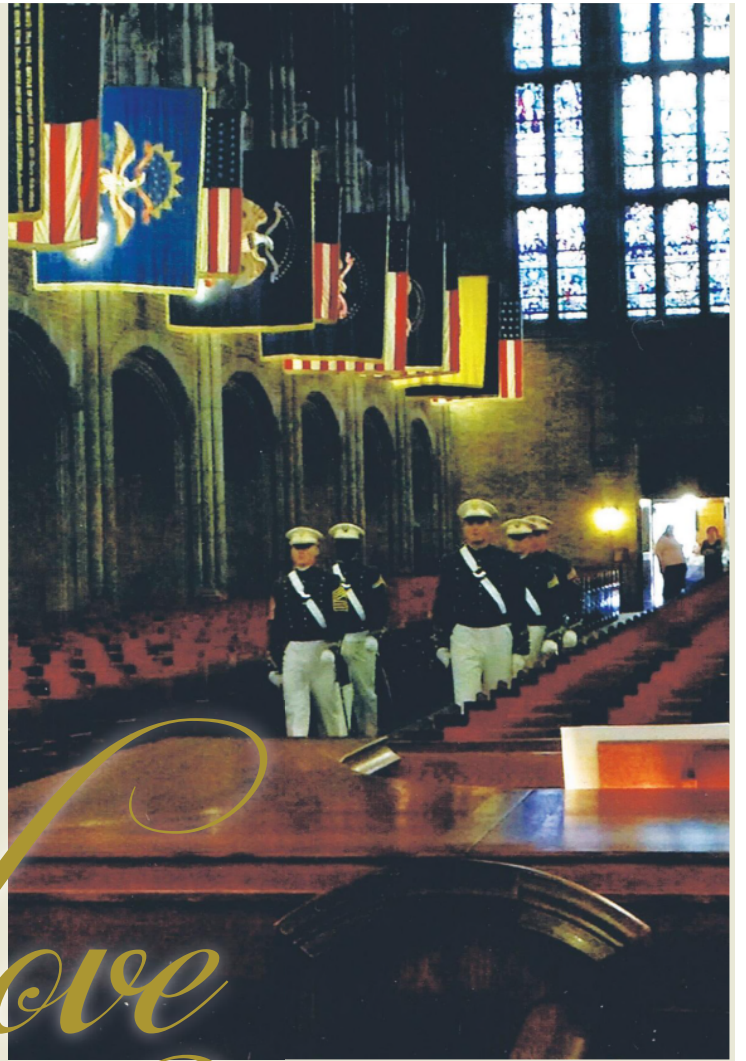
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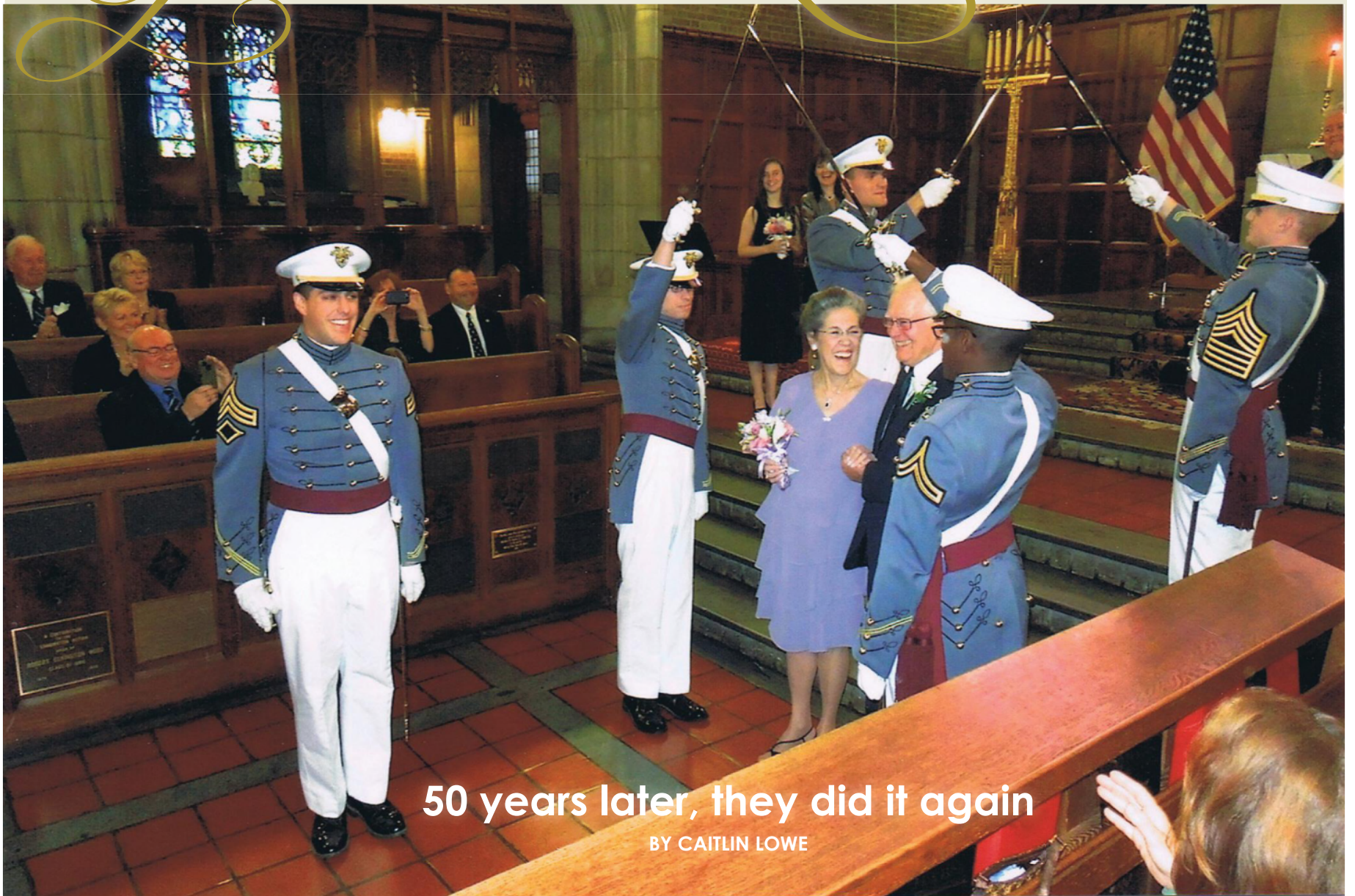
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Golden Love



50 years later, they did it again

BY CAITLIN LOWE



After 50 years of marriage, John and Eileen Dilley would do it all over again – and they sort of did. The Maplewood residents and owners of Bee & Thistle gift and antique shop, recently renewed their wedding vows to celebrate their golden anniversary. From spending their dating years seeing each other on campus weekends, followed by the first ten years of their marriage moving around the country to finally settling in Maplewood and building a life for their family, John and Eileen are still in love after all these years.

Their story started when John was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Eileen was set to accompany her best friend on a double date at the Academy, but the plan went off track when Eileen met her friend's date, John. "Once we met that was just it," she says. The couple laughs when they talk about a funny incident, the "chocolate cake story," clearly a defining moment in their early relationship. Shortly after they started dating, Eileen

Left top: Surrounded by family and friends the Dilley's renewed their vows at West Point's chapel. Previous page right: Cadets entered the chapel to prepare a raised swords arch for the couple. Left bottom: As Eileen and John came through the arch the cadets lowered their swords and said, "Kiss to pass," which had everyone laughing.

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Above: Eileen and John Dilley were married at West Point Chapel on October 26, 1963.
Left: Fifty years later their family joins them on the chapel steps after they renewed their vows.



hosted a New Year's Eve party at her parents' house. When John asked if he could attend, Eileen said she already had a date, but agreed to have him over the following evening. When John arrived, things were still set up from the party, complete with a chocolate cake Eileen's mother had baked from scratch.

"We danced, listened to records, talked about our lives and laughed. I offered him some cake and he said sure," Eileen explains. "He started to eat it and then all of a sudden, he kissed me, said the cake was great and asked me if I made it." She pauses with a smile. "I lied and said I did."

From that night on, Eileen traveled to visit John at West Point every Saturday and Sunday, about a 10-mile drive from her home town of Peekskill, NY. (At the time, cadets were not allowed to leave campus as underclassmen, so their dates had to come visit them.)

After dating for three and a half years, the two became engaged and after another year and a half, married in 1963. After graduation, John was assigned to the Fort Carson Army Base in Colorado, keeping the couple apart for most of their engagement. Fortunately, he arrived back in New York three days

before they said "I do." From there, they traveled together, moving 13 times in 9 years. "To say we were highly nomadic would be an understatement," says John. Aside from John's two year-long deployments in Vietnam, they went everywhere together. While the time apart was not easy, they did find some positive aspect to it. Says Eileen, "Over trials you can become closer. You have to keep that belief that it's all going to work. You realize what can be taken away from you."

When John retired from the military and started a career in computer software, they moved their family of four to Maplewood, finally a permanent home base. It was in 1973 that they moved into the home in which they still live, and opened the store.

Today, with a grown son and daughter living nearby, and the proud grandparents of a 13-year-old granddaughter, the two couldn't seem more settled. After retiring,



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At their reception party the Dilleys cut their anniversary cake with the sword of John's father, a graduate of West Point's class of 1935.

John joined Eileen in running the store and they do so each day, happily. They love to go on cruises, visit Nantucket and cheer on their granddaughter at her Irish dance competitions and various sporting events. In a nutshell, they still enjoy each other's company.

When trying to decide how to celebrate the past 50 years, their daughter suggested renewing their vows at West Point, the location of their original wedding ceremony. On October 26, 2013, almost 50 years to the day after their initial vows on October 27, 1963, John and Eileen said "I do" all over again. "We chose to keep it to about 40 people," Eileen says. "These were all people we have known, we care about and who care about us. It was like an extension of our family."

After the ceremony, when John and Eileen turned to leave, the chaplain placed his hand on John's shoulder and said, "Not yet." John looked down the aisle and saw cadets, swords raised in an arch ready for John and Eileen to walk under – a hallmark of a military wedding. When his son (his best man that day) asked if he knew anyone, John and Eileen were both in shock. These weren't just any cadets. As the local liaison officer


for admissions at West Point, John helps prospective applicants towards admission into the Academy, and he had worked with each of these cadets. "It was very emotional," John admits.

The couple's favorite song is "Moon River," the theme song from their favorite movie, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. A childhood friend of their daughter upped the poignancy by performing the song as they exited the chapel.

Fifty years may seem like an eternity to some people, but John and Eileen would love another 50 together, more if possible.

Eileen eventually 'fessed up that her mother had actually baked that cake on their first date. John laughed when he found out. "We are totally comfortable with each other. There's an old saying that happiness is being married to your best friend; I think both of us really feel that way," he says.

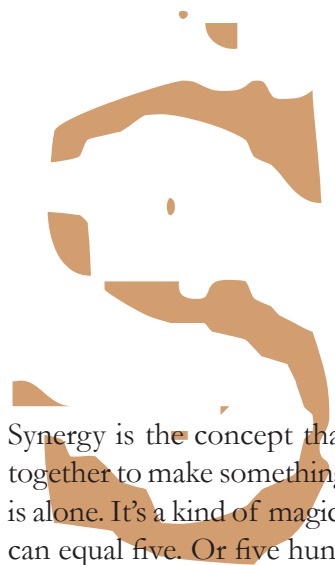
"It's not a 'me' situation. It's a 'we' situation – every day," says Eileen.

"Don't worry about divvying it up," adds John, "Just worry about staying together and enjoy life."  *Caitlin Lowe is inspired by her time with John and Eileen and hopes to have 50 years with her husband as well.*

Brotherly Love

with an operatic back beat

BY ADRIANNA DONAT



Synergy is the concept that two ideas can come together to make something more than either idea is alone. It's a kind of magic in which two plus two can equal five. Or five hundred.

Sometimes the influence of siblings can create synergy. This is the case with the musically talented Kariotis brothers, Tony and Alex, whose ability to blend the family rock and opera talents created a new genre.

Alex's album, *Alexander Kariotis and the Rock Opera Orchestra*, is an intriguing and energetic blend of styles, released by SONY/Red on iTunes in January and on Amazon on February 4. The album features a remix with Darryl "DMC" McDaniels of the pioneering hip-hop band Run DMC, as well as a collaboration with alto sax player David Sanborn. (Local philanthropist Tom Kern is the executive producer.)

And though the album stands on its own, the story of brotherly respect and love is vital to fully appreciating this work.

The Kariotis brothers grew up in Elmhurst, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago, similar to the Maplewood/South Orange area in character,



Alex Kariotis' single "Nessun Dorma – No One Sleeps" – is a 21st-century re-engagement with Puccini's beloved aria, and already a viral hit in pockets of Europe and Asia (You can listen to the single at alexanderkariotis.com.)



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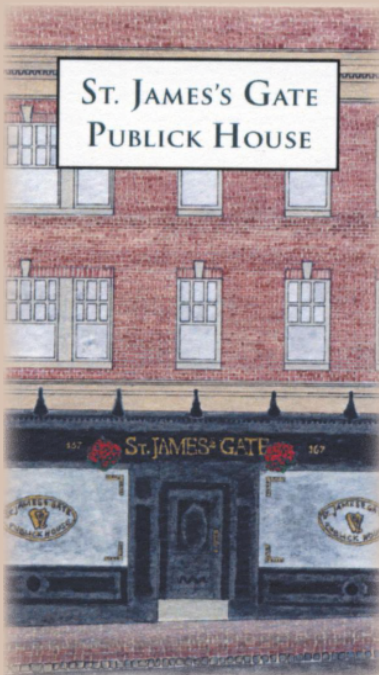
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but colder. In the 1970s music world, regional rock bands ruled. “Tony’s band, Gambler, was the band to see in the Upper Midwest, where the drinking age was 18, and Gambler filled 2,000-seat bars every weekend,” says Alex.

Alex adored his older brother. He helped with the band, sang backup, and eventually opened for Gambler. But when he sought help to become a front man for his own band, Tony intervened.

“He told me I needed to develop my voice more,” explains Alex. “He thought that I had something more in there.” So Tony began actively encouraging Alex to look into opera. “Tony got us second row seats to see Pavarotti when he came to town,” Alex remembers. “I knew the first time

I saw opera, it was for me,” he says.

After some investigation, Alex was able to get a full scholarship at the Mannes School of Music in NYC and again for an advanced degree at Northwestern University. He then studied with Pavarotti’s voice teacher, among other notables, to bring out his commanding lyric tenor voice, and spent his adult career performing in operas internationally.

But Alex never gave up on rock. He periodically returned to the states to work on rock projects with Tony. “When I had breaks in my performances, I’d fly to L.A. I’d leave as an opera lead, put on my leather pants on the plane, and be Tony’s backup singer by the time we landed,” Alex says with a laugh.

Alex met his wife, Aimee Willis, also a lauded opera performer,



while playing the leads in *La Bohème*. After years in various European venues, they settled in Maplewood, where they teach vocal lessons when they are not on the road. Their three children are all interested in careers in opera as well. Clearly, Tony's advice was perceptive.

Tony's early death in 1995 from ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) was a blow Alex still has trouble talking about. But it was formative as well. The experience of helping his brother through his last days compelled Alex to find ways to honor, remember and, in an odd way, collaborate with his brother even after his death.

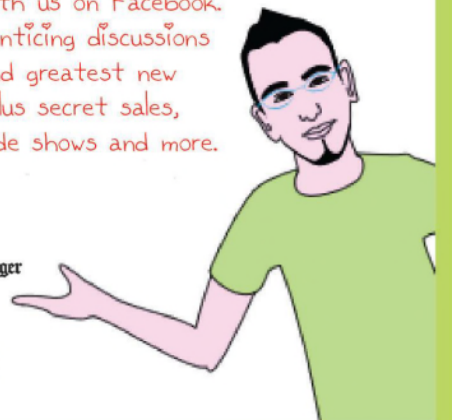


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He started by writing the one-man show, *Holdin' On* (directed off-Broadway by Lynn Thomson, dramaturge for *Rent*), which deals with the emotional impact of losing a loved one, in which he combines his voice with his brother's. Alex is developing a screenplay with acclaimed writer Ed Condran.

Alex also produces and performs shows with his vocal students benefiting ALS-afflicted families, with the support of the HK Foundation.

But this album is a new chapter in his homage to his rock star brother. He fuses his own opera talents with the rock music he learned with Tony, and describes the result on his website as "weaving timeless operatic arias amid soaring rock melodies with a powerhouse rock

rhythm section, strings, woodwinds, brass and backing vocals." His breakaway single from the album, "Nessun Dorma – No One Sleeps" – a 21st-century re-engagement with Puccini's beloved aria, and already a viral hit in pockets of Europe and Asia – splices together the best of hard-driving rock and operatic-tenor athleticism, with breathtaking results. (You can listen to the single at alexanderkariotis.com.)

So Alex Kariotis proves with his new album that sometimes synergy gives you more than you bargain for: two brothers plus two types of music equal one amazing new album with the bonus of a lot of love. 

Adrianna Donat is a freelance writer who lives a diva's life in Maplewood without all the encumbrances of vocal talent.



FROM

New Jersey, WITH LOVE

STORY BY TIA SWANSON PHOTOS BY CHRIS JORDA PHOTOGRAPHY

MA

Matt Bellfy is an economist by training, so he doesn't leave much to chance. This is a guy, who, wanting to know the best pizza in New York organized a sort of pizza crawl through the city, with stops at all the famous places, to try them for himself. (A place in Brooklyn won, but only because, he says, Roman Gourmet on Maplewood Avenue was out of the city and therefore out of the running.)

And so when it came time to propose to his girlfriend, Maplewood native, Kate Schoener, he gave himself several options. Keeping the champagne chilled at his Washington apartment in case the time didn't seem right, he made reservations at their favorite neighborhood place in Georgetown: Martin's, famous not only for its food, but because it is also the spot where some people believe JFK proposed to Jackie. The restaurant even

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calls the booth where the big event happened, the proposal booth.

On the night in question, Bellfy reserved the legendary booth, but all hopes of subtlety were dashed when the couple walked into the restaurant and the hostess said to them both, “Ah, you’re the ones who asked for the proposal booth.” Bellfy quickly ditched plans to pop the question during dinner. Instead, he opted for the couch and the bottle of chilled champagne.

And even if Schoener was by then onto him – it was after all, two years to the day of their first real date – she didn’t know what else he had in store: He had booked a ski weekend in New Hampshire. Schoener had graduated from Dartmouth and is an excellent skier, and the whirlwind trip – they left for

the airport almost immediately after he popped the question and they called their parents – was an utter surprise for her. (She is a better skier than he is).

All of this illustrates the reasons Schoener fell for him. They were friends at work in Washington for several years; then each of them started exploring advanced degree programs. Bellfy, who got his bachelor’s degree from Harvard, returned there for graduate school in 2010. Once there, Schoener contacted him to help her with her own grad-school applications. A year later, she would wind up at Columbia University.

While on winter break from Harvard, Bellfy came to D.C. for a visit and went out with a bunch of friends from work, Schoener among

Opposite page, top left clockwise: The Maplewood Country Club dazzled; a family recipe of homemade applesauce for all the guests; The pretty patio at Above restaurant in South Orange for the shower; A monogrammed cake; Kate outside her childhood home in Maplewood; en route from the Maplewood Country Club to Memorial Park for photos; the bride with her parents, Bill and Janet Schoener. Center: The invitation was designed and letterpress printed by Truly Yours on Baker Street in Maplewood Village. PHOTOS BY CHRIS JORDA PHOTOGRAPHY



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The ceremony was held at Our Lady of Sorrows Church on P

them. "Kate is very beautiful and very smart and that is immediately obvious," he says. But that night he felt they might have a connection. So he asked her out. It was January, 2011.

The date went well, especially considering that Schoener was not particularly fond of the pizza place he chose (pizza runs through their story). "We joke about it now," she wrote in an email, "because I don't love that restaurant, but didn't want to say no to the date!" Still, they were living in different places so things started slowly. Schoener's feelings followed a similar path. She doesn't recall an Aha! moment, just the gradual realization of "how wonderful Matt was," how thoughtful and caring, and how right for her.

Schoener has a big, delightful laugh, and she employs it often, especially when remembering their courtship and the lengths Bellfy would go to when visiting her at Columbia University. It was during her tenure in New York that he planned the pizza expeditions. "Matt did all the research," she says with a laugh; he invited friends, mapped out the route.

He gave the same attention to their wedding weekend. It took place in Maplewood. Although Bellfy grew up in Phillipsburg, on Warren County's Delaware River border, he has almost as much affection for this place as Schoener does. She is so enthusiastic about her home town that she generally identifies everyone who might have some connection to



Prospect Street in South Orange. PHOTO BY CHRIS JORDA PHOTOGRAPHY

it as soon as she gets to a new place: She never considered being married anywhere else.

The ceremony on October 13 – a beautiful day – was held at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in South Orange; the reception was at the Maplewood Country Club. All sorts of other venues in town had a connection to the wedding. Anthony Garubo Salon handled the hair and make-up; there was a shower at Above; Truly Yours did the invitations; there was a lunch at The Laurel and snacks at, of course, Roman Gourmet. While the couple got their pictures taken, they had a bus deliver folks to the middle of the village, so they could walk around and see the place for themselves. Bellfy drew a map,

with some of their favorite places noted. A group of wedding guests congregated at Roman Gourmet, but others found their way to the village’s gift shops.

The couple have returned to the capital and their jobs for a think tank there, but their hearts remain to some extent in New Jersey; Bellfy’s parents, and a brother and his family are all still in Phillipsburg. And Schoener, the only child of William and Janet Schoener, is as devoted to Maplewood as ever. Of Washington, Schoener says that “we have wonderful friends here,” but adds, “It’s definitely a dream to move back to New Jersey.”

Tia Swanson would love to take a pizza crawl through Maplewood and South Orange.

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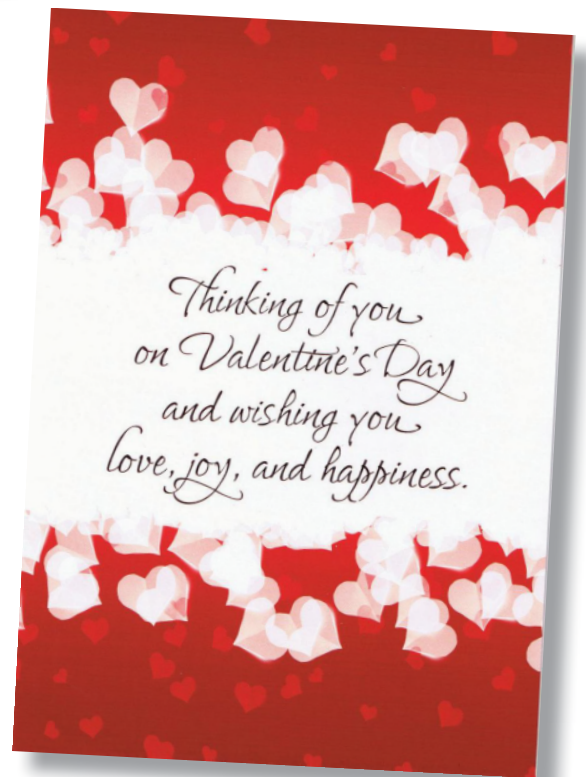
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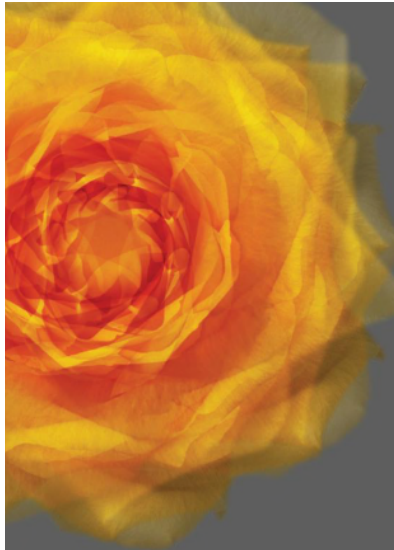
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Loving the Ice



The on-ice life of
a synchronized
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BY MARIA DIPASQUALE

B

Balancing a sport and school is a normal struggle for many Columbia High School students. For senior Sabrina Oudine, this is more than just an extra struggle; it's her lifestyle. Oudine is a member of the Skyliners Junior Synchronized Skating team. She and her team have represented Team USA for the past three years. As a result, Oudine's childhood in South Orange has been a little unusual.

What exactly is synchronized skating? "When I told people I was a synchronized ice skater," says Oudine, "they were like, 'Is that like a recreational thing? I don't understand what that is. Is that like a real thing? Is that an Olympic sport?'" Although the sport is still attempting to gain Olympic recognition, no one could say that what Oudine does is easy. Oudine describes it as "a combination of synchronized swimming and the Rockettes on ice." The sport involves 16 girls on the ice at the same time, doing every single move in synchronization. Teams are evaluated on the moves element, dance element, pairs element, and freestyle element, with scores awarded for the difficulty of the moves and how well they are executed.

Oudine's love affair with the ice started long before high school. She began skating when she was 5 and synchronized skating when she was 7. She spent her entire childhood competing in freestyle and synchronized skating competitions. Around the age of 13, Oudine decided to stop freestyle skating and to devote all her time to synchro. She tried out for Skyliners in eighth grade and joined her freshman year. Since her sophomore year she and her team have qualified to represent Team USA at international competitions abroad.

As a result, Oudine's life has been very hectic. She trains with her team three days a week, rotating among rinks in New York City, Rye, NY, Westchester,

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NY and Stamford, CT. Three more days a week are spent training alone at the Richard J. Codey Arena in West Orange.

Oudine attends a number of local competitions throughout the season, most of them local to the Northeast. Each winter she and her team compete to qualify to represent Team USA abroad. This has brought her to Rouen, France; Gothenburg, Sweden; and Helsinki, Finland. Oudine says she loves seeing other cultures and traveling to new places. She and her team have also had fun making friends with foreign skaters during the welcome parades before the competitions.

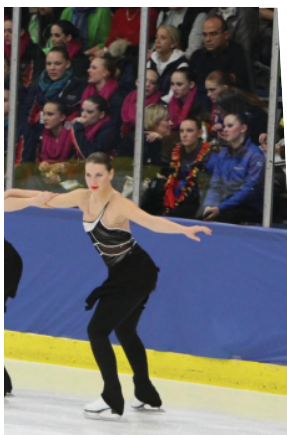
In addition, Oudine says there is no greater feeling than representing your country abroad. She lives for the applause that follows the announcement of the American team. "The best moment in my skating career was probably hearing that for the first time: the, 'And now representing the United States of America...'" she says.

Although Oudine has never medaled at an international event, she still feels proud of what her team has achieved. It received fourth place both years they attended the

French Cup in Rouen, France, and once scored only 10 points below Team Finland, which is one of the best teams in the world. "We're really pleased with our places and we know it's difficult to compete with these teams who skate every single day," Oudine says. In any case, Oudine's team has done very well nationally, winning the silver medal at the national championships two years in a row.


Oudine does not pretend that her life is easy. She often has to miss large chunks of school for competitions and has to make time for her make-up work on airplanes. "I've had some panics in my house where they're like, 'Oh my God you didn't get any credit for this class, go call the dean,'" Oudine confesses. In addition, her practice schedule forces her to cram in homework time whenever she can, such as when the Zamboni is cleaning the ice at practice. Despite all this, she has managed to excel in AP courses and make honor roll all through high school. She has also been able to leave one afternoon a week open for socializing with friends.

And even though she's had to miss her share of chemistry



and algebra lessons over the years, Oudine's experiences have taught her a number of valuable life lessons. "The discipline I've acquired through this sport is amazing," she says. She also says she has learned teamwork, responsibility and time management. And although she self-identifies as stubborn, she concedes that skating has allowed her to take constructive criticism from both authority figures and her peers.

Possibly the scariest thing in Oudine's life now is the future. As a senior, she is confronting the possibility of no longer skating. She has decided to put her education first when choosing a college, propelled by her interest in political science. Her top choices are Barnard College and Tufts University. If she goes to

Barnard, she could potentially stay with Skyliners. If she ends up at Tufts, she could attempt to join the Boston Haydenettes. However, she also might decide not to skate once she figures out where she is going. "I'm really sort of scared because I don't know what my life is going to be like without it," she admits. "It's such a constant thing, it's something that's always been there. I can always count on it. You know, go to the rink when I'm stressed out or frustrated and just skate." 

Maria DiPasquale tends to juggle a busy schedule of activities, classes, and commitments while attending Emerson College. But Oudine's story is a whole new level of "busy." If she can succeed on international ice and in school, there's nothing she can't do.

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*Tips for Loving Life:
a healthier you in*

2014

Every January, millions vow to lose weight and to become fit and healthy. Every February, millions have given up on their resolutions. Local experts reveal their advice on successfully achieving a healthy mind, body and spirit in 2014.

BY JUDIE HURTADO

1

“Instead of reaching for a cookie or a drink when you’re stressed, take a few deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose for two counts. Hold and then blow out on four counts through your mouth. Repeat several times a day to keep stress at bay.”

—Risa Olinsky, MA, Certified Wellness Coach, **Count On Yourself**, 973-761-5758, risaolinsky.com.

“Set small goals like exercising 2-3 days a week for 30 minutes. Make workouts a priority and have fun.”

—Eric Stoddard, senior program director, **South Mountain YMCA**, 13 Jefferson Ave, Maplewood, 973-762-4145, smountainymca.org.

2



3

“Brush and floss your teeth and gums in the morning after the first meal and at night before going to bed, for at least two minutes. Keep a timer in the bathroom or use an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer.”

—Fariba Farrokhi, DMD, FAGD, **South Orange Family Dentistry**, 358 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, 973-763-1161, sofamilydentistry.com.

4

“Any day can be your New Year’s Day once you are ready to embark on your fitness and wellness goals. Do it when you’re ready, not because of the date on the calendar or what your spouse thinks or wants. Do it for yourself.”

—Delon Nelson, personal trainer, strength coach and owner of **D & I Fitness**, 9 Scotland Road, South Orange, 973-821-5757, dandifitness.com.

5

“Continue to protect your eyes from Ultra Violet rays with polarized sunglasses, especially on snowy days.”

—Dawn Morano, optician, **Dawn Opticians**, 63 Second Street, South Orange, 973-762-9100, dawnopticians.com.



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6

“Instead of scheduling a Girls’ Night Out at a bar or restaurant, gather your friends for a Wellness Happy Hour. It’s an opportunity to embrace the same platform and the need to be with friends and to relax, but with a wellness backdrop.”

—Desiree Watson, **Wellness Lounge**, 14 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, 973-275-3868, wellnessinteractive.com.



7

“Subscribe to the 90-10 rule: Make healthy choices and eat clean 90 percent of the time, and let yourself live a little 10 percent of the time. Just make sure that you are enjoying that 10 percent. Don’t waste calories on something just because it’s sitting in your office.”

—Tara Roscioli, co-owner of **Align Wellness Studio**, 10 East Willow Street, Millburn, 973-376-4166, and owner of **Highway 2 Well, LLC**, align-wellness-studio.com.



8

“One of the biggest causes of back spasms or strains is dehydration. Even just a 3% loss in body water can cause a muscle to shorten and tighten like beef jerky. During the holidays that extra glass of wine, a cocktail or cup of coffee can dehydrate you. The American Academy of Sports Physicians recommends the guideline of half your body weight in ounces for the right amount of water to drink.”

—Dr. Stephen Levine, chiropractor, director of **South Orange Chiropractic Center**, 60 First Street, South Orange, 973-761-0022, southorangechiropractic.com.

9

“Modeling sensitivity, patience and compassion when we listen is just as important as when we speak. By welcoming all communication, verbal or otherwise, we make language irresistible.”

—John Fulweiler, MA, CCC-SLP, **Speech and Language Pathologist**, 973-517-5494.

“Consume more protein, such as chicken or turkey breast, egg white and tilapia and less starchy carbohydrates, such as bread and pasta. Don’t deprive yourself. Everything in moderation.”

—Matt Farley, manager and personal trainer, **East Side Fitness**, 1865 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood, 973-327-2239, eastsidefitnessnj.com.

11

10

“Since most children are no longer allowed to share foods in schools or various social events due to the risks of allergies, we are seeing a significant amount of children with severely restricted diets. Sit with your children at home to eat a meal together. Share food family style, talk about foods’ qualities, textures, tastes, smells. Describing foods can intrigue children to try things that they normally wouldn’t on their own. Remember, do not pressure or force children to try new things but rather just let them know that they ‘can’ try new foods when they are ready.”

—Cynthia Marrapodi, MS, CCC-SLP, director at **Creative Speech Solutions**, 151 Summit Ave, Summit, 908-598-0228, creativespeechsolutions.com.



“A child should visit an orthodontist by the age of 7 to check on his or her growth and development. The minimal records required for an orthodontist to make a determination whether everything is normal or further intervention or study would be advisable are pictures, usually digital, and a panoramic x-ray.

Anything less than this would not be adequate to properly assess the patient.”

—Michael G. Steinberg, DDS, Orthodontic Specialist, 214 Millburn Avenue, Millburn, 973-376-0496, essexorthospecialists.com.



12



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“The most important element to seeing improvements in your overall fitness is intensity. For cardiovascular exercise, this means exercising at a heart rate between 60 and 90 percent of your age-predicted maximum heart rate in beats per minute; you can calculate your max heart rate as 220 minus your age. For strength training, you must perform each exercise to momentary muscular fatigue – i.e., you cannot do another repetition – within 6 to 15 repetitions. It does not matter how many days per week or how many minutes per session, you work out if you’re not exercising intensely enough.”

—Myles S. Berg, owner at **Motion Fitness**, 187 Millburn Avenue, Millburn, 973-921-0500, motionfitnessclub.com.



13

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14

—Anna Winkler, director, **Shakti Yoga & living arts**, 1861 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood, 973-763-2288, shaktiyoganj.com.



15

“While we all forget about protecting our back at times, chances are that if you were lifting a 30 pound box of books, you’d squat down, get a good grip, steady yourself and push up with your legs. Think about this the next time you twist down sideways to lift your toddler straight off the floor. This turns out to be the cause of many ‘unexplainable’ injuries for my patients who are parents. Please try to remember that as far as your back is concerned, the best way to shovel your driveway is to hire someone to do it for you.”

—Wayne J Bass, DC, **Bass Family Chiropractic**, 491B Valley Street, Maplewood, 973-378-2277, bassfamilychiro.com.

16

“Bring your child to see a dentist by the time they turn 1 year old. To make brushing more fun, parents can brush their teeth alongside of their kids to a two-minute song.”

—Davia Strachan, DDS, pediatric dentist, **South Orange Dental Center**, 16 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, 973-762-2660, southorangedentalcenter.com.



17

“If you are tired of having your bed partner elbow you in the middle of the night due to your snoring, don’t hesitate to seek medical assistance. Getting a good night’s sleep is essential for your overall well-being.”

—Kevin Muench, DMD, MAGD, Dentist, 140 Maplewood Ave, Maplewood, 973-763-2221, kevinmuench.com.

18

“Be sure to wear sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 that provides UVA and UVB protection all year round, even if there’s snow on the ground or if it’s a cloudy day.”


—Aiko Mashiko, Bio Skincare & Day Spa, 175 Millburn Avenue, Millburn, 973-912-8708, bioskincarespa.com.

19

“Good friends are a powerful prescription for happiness at any stage of life. It is important to keep strong social connections with people you care about and who make you happy.”

—Susan Lippy, executive director at Winchester Gardens, 333 Elmwood Avenue, Maplewood, 973-762-5050, winchestergardens.com.



Judie Hurtado is a Maplewood mom and kids’ yoga teacher who intends to make 2014 her healthiest year ever by spending time with friends, taking more restorative yoga classes and making the most of these tips. 



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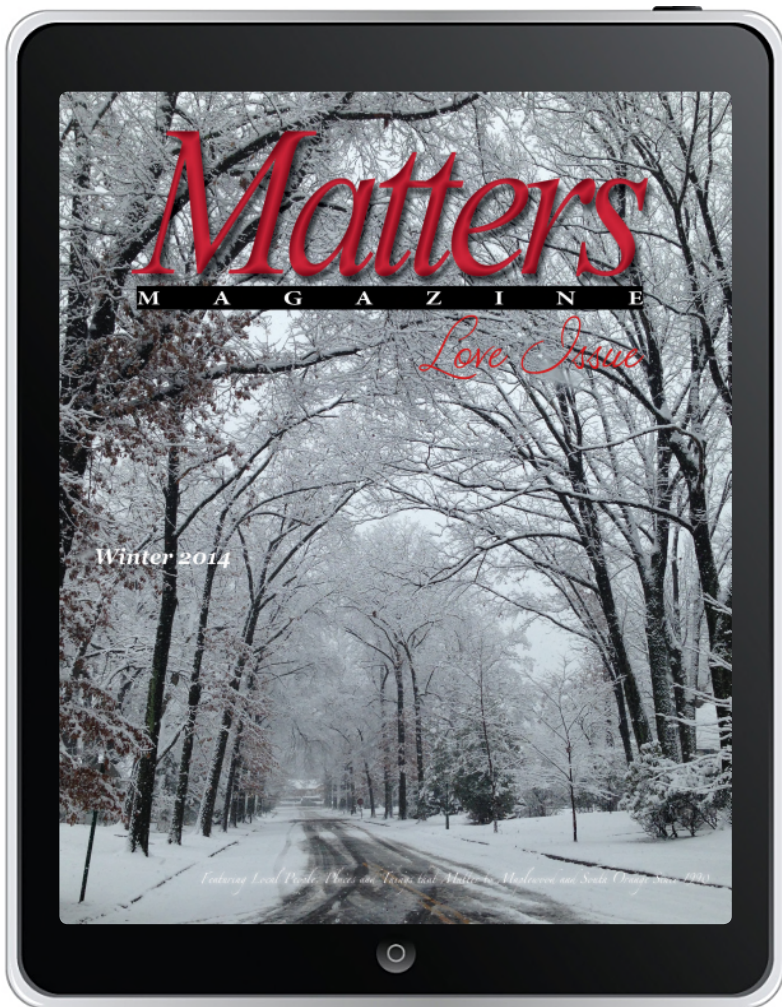
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Above: Members of the Embroiderers Guild of America meet at DeHart Community Center in Maplewood.

Right: Durand-Hedden House & Garden celebrates Women's History Month with the production of *Someone Must Wash the Dishes: An Anti-Suffrage Satire* starring Michele La Rue. Photo by Ken Smith of Quiet Heart Images

a Wurlitzer theater organ console and more. Highlighting Women's History Month, on March 30 at 2 p.m. Durand-Hedden will present a production of *Someone Must Wash the Dishes: an Anti-Suffrage Satire*, written by pro-Suffragist Maria Jenney Howe eight years before America's women won the vote. Directed by Warren Kliewer, the production will be performed by actress Michele LaRue, who tours nationally with a repertoire of shows by turn-of-the-previous-century American writers. This program is funded by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. Patricia Tratebas, landscape designer, will give a talk on "Landscaping Your Older House" on April 13. Most homes in Maplewood were built in the '20s and '30s, and Tratebas will offer a peek at the history of the period with emphasis on garden styles, popular plants and ornamentation of the house and landscape. For more information call 973-763-7712 or visit durandhedden.org.

Essex Time Exchange will sponsor an encore presentation of *Fixing the Future*, a documentary about local economies and time banking, on February 23 at the Loft at SOPAC, 1 SOPAC Way, South Orange. The documentary was the catalyst for the formation of the Essex Time Exchange, the local time bank in Essex County. South Orange resident David Brancaccio of Public Radio's *Marketplace* and *NOW* at PBS is featured in the film directed by Emmy-winning director,

Maplewood resident Mary Olive. For more information call 973-761-6105 or visit essextimeexchange.org.

Spring semester of **The South Orange-Maplewood Adult School** gets underway with famed documentary filmmaker Michael Moore coming to South Orange Middle School, 70 North Ridgewood, South Orange on March 7 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25. In addition to the many favorite adult classes that are offered each semester, the Adult School is expanding course offerings for children and families. Some highlights for kids include "Basic Sewing," "Fashion Design for Tweens and Teens," "Lego Robotics," "Writers' Café" and yoga. For parent and child, choose from cooking, photography, "Leonardo Da Vinci's World" and "What to Expect in Middle School." Also for parent and child are classes with the Greater Newark Conservancy:

The South Orange-Maplewood Adult School will present famed documentarian Michael Moore at South Orange Middle School March 7.





The Night of 100 Dinners benefiting the Achieve Foundation will take place on March 8.

“Urban Habitats,” “What’s the Buzz” and “Worm in the City: Urban Recyclers.” For tickets and more information call 973-378-7620 or visit somaladulthoodschool.org.

The **Night of 100 Dinners**, one of the **Achieve Foundation’s** most beloved events, will celebrate its 10th Anniversary this year. On March 8, South Orange and Maplewood residents will open their homes to dinner guests to raise money for Achieve’s programs, which benefit children in all nine district schools. Dinner guests are asked to donate \$50 per person. Last year’s event was the biggest yet, with a record number of gatherings and more than \$62,000 donated to Achieve. Consider hosting an evening or being a guest at one of the parties. It’s a great excuse to gather with friends. No party is too big or too small. For more information call 973-378-2055 or visit achievefoundation.org.


Photos of award-winning singer and actress Suzzanne Douglas will be featured in the *Goddess on Earth: The Women of Essex County* exhibit at **Luna Stage**, 555 Valley Road, West Orange. The installation, sponsored by the West Orange Arts Council, will be open from March 8 through May 11. Photographer Lisa Levart’s internationally traveling installation recently added photos of Maplewood resident Douglas. For more information call 973-395-5551 or visit lunastage.org.

The **Metropolitan Orchestra of New Jersey** will present its winter concert on March



Photos of Maplewood resident Suzzanne Douglas will be part of the *Goddess on Earth: Women of Essex County* exhibit at Luna Stage opening March 8.

16 at 3 p.m. at Millburn High School, 462 Millburn Avenue, Millburn. Titled *Simply Classical*, the program, under the direction of Maestro Michael Stratechuk, will feature Mozart’s *Concerto for Flute and Harp in C Major* (K.229), with soloists Miriam Lachenauer on flute and Patty Turse on harp. Also included in the program will be Beethoven’s *Fidelio Overture* and Haydn’s *Symphony No. 101 in D Major (the “Clock”)*. South Orange/Maplewood musicians James Buchanan, Carrie Schwimmer and Majorie Solomon will be performing with the orchestra. For concert information call 973-379-6431 or visit metropolitanorchestra.org.

The **Arc of Essex County** will hold its 16th annual “Building Tomorrows” 5K run/2-mile walk April 12 at 10 a.m. in Brookdale Park, Bloomfield. The run/walk serves to help raise awareness and support programs for individuals with autism, Down syndrome and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. For details, visit arcessex.org. 



The Metropolitan Orchestra of New Jersey will perform March 16.



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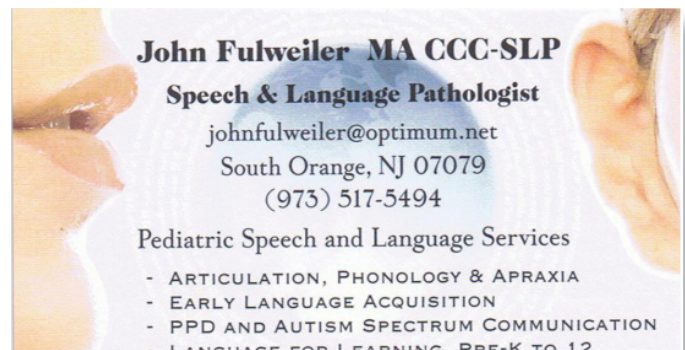
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We Camp Guide

Fun for the Summer is just a few months away! Sign up early for the best opportunities.

Aquinas Academy

388 South Livingston Avenue, Livingston
Maryjane Weiss
973-992-7158
aquinasacademynj.org
Ages 4 ½ -12
Aquinas Academy offers a flexible seven-week summer camp program that offers a wide range of activities: water play, sports, health & wellness, a game room, cooking, painting, science fun, arts & crafts, music and special theme days.

Christ Church Nursery School

30 East Lane, Short Hills
Barbara Pepe - Director
973-379-6549
christchurchnurseryschool.org
Ages 2 - 5
CCNS offers a six-week summer program from June 16 to July 24, Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. A "Lunch Bunch" program that extends the day until 1 p.m. is available. Activities revolve around weekly themes including water play on sunny days.

Class Act Performing Arts Studio

128 Irvington Avenue, South Orange
Page O'Connor - Founding Director
973-789-0191
classactpas.com
Ages 3-13
Class Act offers camps from June 30 – August 8, Ages 3-6: 9:15-11:15 a.m. week-long sessions exploring music and movement with a different theme each week. Ages 7-13: half or full day, over a two-week session, students will dance, sing, act and even put together costumes and scenery for a big studio show!

D & I Fitness

9 Scotland Road, South Orange
Delon Nelson
973-821-5757
dandifitness.com
Ages 4-16
D & I offers a conditioning camp to get your child ready for sports and physical activity. Their camp teaches kinesthetic awareness, through lead up games and movement education. Students will notice improvement in physical and mental health once they return to school in the fall.

Geralyn's Art

103 Baker Street, Maplewood
Geralyn Robinson - Owner
973-275-1966
geralynsartstudio.com
Ages 4 and up
Geralyn's daily Summer Art Camp will be held Monday through Friday beginning June 23 until August 29, offering arts and crafts, photography, print making, collage and clay. Two camp sessions will be offered daily – 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for ages 4 - 7 and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for ages 8 and up.

Hedwig Gruenewald Early Childhood Center at Congregation B'nai Israel

160 Millburn Avenue, Millburn (located near the Maplewood border)
Rochelle Baron - Director
973-379-4040
cbi-nj.org
Ages Toddler-4
Hedwig Gruenewald Early Childhood Center offers a seven-week minicamp from June 23 to August 8. The camp is based on weekly themes and offers outdoor water play, arts & crafts, music, stories, playground and assorted specialists.

Kinder Gan

113 Parker Avenue, Maplewood
Frumie Bogomilsky - Director
973-763-7455
maplewoodjewishcenter.org
Ages 2-5
Kinder Gan Kiddie Camp is dedicated to enriching the lives of children of diverse Jewish backgrounds. Innovative themes and creative activities provide enjoyment and inspire children to try new and exciting things. Activities include music, art, science, water play and lots of action.

Lydia Johnson Dance

Burgdorff Center, 10 Durand Road, Maplewood
Lydia Johnson - Artistic Director
LJDSchool@yahoo.com
lydiajohnsondance.org
Grades 1 -12
Lydia Johnson Dance offers weekly camp sessions from July 7 through July 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Open to students who have completed first grade through high school, including those new to dance. An extended day is available in partnership with Geralyn's Art Studio. Scholarships are available.

MarbleJamboree Day Camp

954 Kinderkamack Road, River Edge
201-497-6512
marblejamkids.sharepoint.com
Ages 12-21
A NJ DDD authorized community based camp program with a focus in social skills and life skills training to teens and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Development Disabilities. Headed by special educators and trained professionals, camp is offered in four one-week sessions from July 28 through August 21, Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

MarbleJam Kids - Joey Travolta Short Film Camp

Academy of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 10 County Road, Tenafly
201-497-6512
marblejamkids.sharepoint.com
Ages 11-23
The camp teaches students how to shoot a digital short film. From July 28 to August 8, campers learn everything from script development, pitching an idea, lighting, directing, acting, editing, and animation. The program is inclusive to kids with special needs and on the higher end of the autism spectrum.

Mickey Fried Nursery School of Oheb Shalom Congregation

170 Scotland Road, South Orange
Iris Ehrlich - Director
973-762-7069
ohebshalom.org
Ages 2-5
Oheb Shalom offers camps from June 23 through August 8. The Mini Camp for 2-year-olds runs from 9 to 11 a.m. The Oheb Camp for preschoolers runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There is also early drop-off at 8 a.m. Activities include water play, sand play, nature, music and movement, drama, cooking, sports, arts and crafts, story time and snack.

Mini Camp at Far Brook School

52 Great Hills Road, Short Hills
Paula Levin - Director
973-992-2192
minicamp.org
Ages 3-8
Mini Camp at Far Brook School from June 23 – August 1, is the ultimate experience for 3 to 8-year-old children in a relaxed rural environment with experienced, nurturing teachers.

Montclair Art Museum

3 Mountain Avenue, Montclair
973-259-5139, 973-259-5159
montclairartmuseum.org
Ages 5 and up

The Yard School of Art's eight-week SummerART camp program for children offers four types of camp experiences from June 30 to August 22. All camps are offered in four two-week sessions in a variety of morning, afternoon and full-day programs. They also offer a summer series of classes for teens and a variety of adult classes and workshops.

Morristown Beard Day Camp

70 Whippany Road, Morristown
Stephanie Galvez
973 539-3032
summer.mbs.net
Ages 4-13

The Morristown Beard Day Camp takes over the 22-acre campus from June 23 through August 8. The counselors work to promote good sportsmanship and self confidence while helping children develop skills in sports, arts & crafts, drama, swimming and science.

New Jersey Fencing Alliance

50-58 Burnett Avenue, Maplewood
Frank Mustilli - Director
973-763-5728
njfencingalliance.com
All ages

NJFA is dedicated to introducing the sport of fencing to people of all ages and athletic abilities. The club offers professional instruction, recreation and competition in all weapons. All programs encourage self-esteem and self-confidence, promoting education through athletics. Contact the Alliance for summer programs.

Our Lady of Sorrows School

172 Academy Street, South Orange
Sister Judith Blair, S.C.C. – Principal
973-762-5169
ourladyofsorrowsschool.org
Please contact the school for more information about summer camp 2014.

The Summer Session at Newark Academy

91 South Orange Avenue, Livingston
Robert Mallalieu - Director
973-992-7000 ext. 217
summersession@newarka.edu
Grades 1-12

From June 23 through August 1, Newark Academy offers courses in enrichment and skill development as well as preview courses in core subjects. The classes, taught by a talented faculty provide an excellent academic experience. New specialized workshops will also be available.

The Summer Sports Institute at Newark Academy

91 South Orange Avenue, Livingston
Liz Bona-Beach - Director
973-992-7000 ext. 212
summersports@newarka.edu
Ages 5-14

Weekly sports camps from June 21 through August 1 for boys and girls include such sports as baseball, lacrosse, fencing, basketball, wrestling, swimming, soccer and field hockey.

South Mountain YMCA

13 Jefferson Avenue, Maplewood
973-762-4145
smountainymca.org
Ages 3-15

The YMCA offers a wide variety of summer day camps perfect for children ages 3 -15. The camps are progressive, providing activities that are educational, exciting and fun and experiences that build self-esteem, lasting friendships and treasured memories.

South Orange Country Day

461 Vose Avenue, South Orange
Annemarie Maini - Director
973-762-6451
socds.com
Ages 2 ½ - 6

South Orange Country Day offers a weekly flexible schedule this summer. They will have themed activities and special visitors planned for each week, from June 30 through August 6.

The South Orange – Maplewood Adult School Summer Program

17 Parker Avenue, Maplewood
Judy James - Executive Director
973-378-7620
somadulthoodschool.org
Grades 1-9

The Adult School's children's summer program, open to all students entering grades 1- 9, will run from June 30 to July 25. The schedule is full of enrichment programs in the creative arts, science and sports; this year, they will also hold a music academy for grades 5-8. Catalogs will be available in mid-February.

Thelma K. Reisman Preschool of Beth El

222 Irvington Avenue, South Orange
Sandy Sachs - Director
973-763-0113
bethelnj.org
Ages 2-5

The Thelma K. Reisman Preschool mini camp is seven weeks of fun and games from June 23 to August 7, including water play, nature activities, arts and crafts and music. Activities move indoors when the weather is unpleasant. Hours vary by age. Post school/special pre-camp week June 16 -20.

The Craft Loft

55 Kendal Avenue, Maplewood
Sandra Charlap - Owner
973-220-2331
thecraftloft.com
Ages 8 and up

The Craft Loft offers summer craft camp Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in six-week sessions from July 14 through August 18 with a wide range of workshops including mosaic, bath and beauty, collage, printmaking, jewelry, decoupage and much more.

TSTI Iris Family Center Preschool

432 Scotland Road, South Orange
Carol Paster - Director
973-763-4600
tsti.org
Ages 2-6

TSTI offers a half-day camp which includes art, music, cooperative games and nature exploration as well as water play. Early drop off and extended day options are available until 3 p.m.





Fostering Love

...is just not a problem in our family

BY JULIA JONES

Last month two small people were carried out of my door, loaded safely into a white minivan and driven to a new home. All of their worldly possessions were loaded in a cardboard box. It was everything they'd accumulated in 10 short months. These two precious children first came to Doreen and me 10 months ago with just the clothes on their backs, a few diapers, a stuffed animal and some formula. Kaylee was 18 months old with beautiful doe eyes that held a sheen of want. Jeremiah was just an infant, barely five weeks old – a new person ripe with possibility.

Doreen took on the role of the major nurturer seeing to their day-to-day needs: food, clothing, fun and loads of love. She arranged for early intervention for Kaylee, who didn't speak, but expressed herself with screams and aggression. Finding the right formula for Jeremiah included making sure he was safe and warm. Love and cuddles are not a problem in our family.

Doreen managed all their affairs with the state's Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), with its overburdened workers and a judicial system that minds trends in children's welfare rather than the welfare of individual children. I made myself as domestically useful as possible, which was extremely limited by my career since at the time of their arrival I was in rehearsal for the Broadway production of *Motown, The Musical*. (I had been given the lead stage-manager position on very short notice after my colleague had decided he could not continue with the project.) It is a job that is often all-consuming.


Our children, Olivia, Cooper and Ruby, presented both challenges and support in this journey. They loved the extra big family. Cooper and Ruby insisted on carrying Jeremiah everywhere and Olivia immediately took on the role of interpreter for Kaylee, though she couldn't be bothered with Jeremiah, whose baby status held no interest. But the three of them were also – and immediately – sorely tried by the attention that these two sweet babies took away from them. Suddenly there were bedtime books for Kaylee, who after a book comforted herself by screaming herself to sleep. Cooper shared bedtime with “Jer Jer,” which was tricky for a boy heavily reliant on routine.

Yet somehow all of these new challenges were muted by the joy we had as a family. Grocery bills skyrocketed, the ability to get up and go decreased by a good 40 percent, but still my family was happy and our two little additions were learning to smile and play. We were a family of seven and thrilled to be so.

The next 10 months continued to roll by with a family vacation to Myrtle Beach, pool visits, park visits, fighting, friends visiting, braces, school starting, homework, day trips to farms, holidays, hospital visits for Jer's less than impressive lungs coupled with a very impressive case of reflux, birthday celebrations, new cousin Benjamin's arrival, Kaylee's therapies to catch her up (after a first year propped up in front of a television), and lots of bedtime adventures. There were a variety of mixed signals from the state regarding the fate of our foster babies. We had no idea if we were adopting or returning to family. We were just living in the moment.

Then one day we got a call from the children's case worker. Kaylee and Jeremiah's birth mom had requested that her children be fostered by a foster family that attends the same church she attended. Doreen, being the rational foster parent, began the painful process of transitioning the children, speaking with the intended foster parents about the children's needs and working through the paperwork with the state.

Doreen was not only doing this for the two foster children but also for our three children so they would understand what was happening. Meanwhile I lived happily in my bubble of denial, giving these two little babies cuddles and love as if they were my own. My brain listened to what was happening but my heart, which rules my life solidly, ignored all of the signs that were in front of me.

When I loaded that baby boy and girl in that car and watched my son Cooper give Jeremiah a final kiss goodbye I had to excuse myself, run to my room and have a deep cry. The pain was very intense and it still lingers in my mind. Kaylee and Jeremiah mean ever so much to me, and because of that I need to move on, believing with all my heart that they will be loved by their new family and grow happily. I do wonder, as Doreen and I move forward in fostering more of these angels that need to be loved, how will I embrace them? Will I let my head be involved? Probably not. It's hard to teach an old dog a new trick. 

Julia Jones and her partner Doreen Chila have for 10 years been local foster parents providing a home for children who have been abandoned, neglected or abused and who temporarily are not able to live at home. They are also raising three young children they have adopted through the Foster program. Foster parenting is a commitment to make a meaningful contribution to a child's life. As a foster parent, one experiences the joy of parenting, even if temporary, and the satisfaction of making a positive difference in the life of a child. The requirements for becoming a foster parent are not complicated, and many families in Maplewood and South Orange are actively participating. To inquire about becoming a foster parent visit NJFoster.org or call 1-877-NJFoster.

kw SOMA



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