



# The Gardiner Gazette

Winter 2009 - Issue #1

A call to community ...

## The First Issue ....

This inaugural issue of the Gardiner Gazette was born out of a conversation about our future, and a realization that each of us has a unique responsibility to meet the challenges ahead. If change is coming, what do we want it to look like, and how do we shape it? We have no answer, but feel that the kernel of an answer lies in coming together as a community in these tough times. None of us have been immune to the troubles on Wall Street—no matter how far away that world seems. It is a problem that has felt utterly out of our control, and yet it affects us at the core of our goals and dreams. Many of the articles in this issue focus on the resources that we have available to us locally: they can help us and those around us.

We hope that future issues will provide a space where we can sustain a dialogue about strengthening our community, developing community programs, and caring for and helping those who live around us. If you would like to contribute an article or suggestion for that future dialogue, please contact us.

The Gardiner Gazette is in its infancy. Current thinking is that it will be published quarterly, and though we have mailed this first issue to every home in Gardiner and would prefer to continue doing that, we may consider keeping costs down by sending future issues via email and providing hardcopies at local stores. If you have suggestions we'd love to hear your thoughts ...

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## Change Sweeps Through Gardiner Library

by: Nell Boucher

Autumn winds brought sweeping change to the library this past fall. Started 35 years ago when a group of women created a book exchange, the library was tended by Peg Lotvin as well as many volunteers and employees until Peg's retirement in September. I was hired by the Library Board in July, and worked with Peg, preparing for the library's move to its beautiful new building. The new library was designed by architect Paul Mays to resemble the old Gardiner train station. His aim was to evoke a sense of Gardiner's history and symbolize the library's function as a main connection to the world beyond, much the way the railroad once did.

I fell in love with this community the day we moved books in a human chain stretching from the old library to the new one. Over 200 people volunteered—and hats off to the local businesses and volunteers who provided snacks and drinks for the book-movers. The move saved \$8,000.



*A human book-moving chain of over 200 volunteers moving the Gardiner Library*

Peg continues to be a presence at the library, holding "Tea With Peg" every Wednesday at 3 o'clock. I clearly have big shoes to fill and believe I'm up to the task. A native of the Hudson Valley, I started my first library job as a page at the Newburgh library more than 15 years ago, subsequently worked at various libraries in the Hudson Valley, New York City and Long Island, and earned a Master's Degree in Library Science from Pratt Institute.

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## Don't Just Buy Local Think Local!

by: Ajax Greene

We've all heard of "buying" local," but we're suggesting a larger role for all of us: by thinking local we can make choices that have dramatic impact on our local communities, economies, and environments. Obviously it's rarely possible to buy everything we need from local independent businesses—I'm writing this on a non-locally produced computer and will soon drive to Gardiner's transfer station in a non-locally produced vehicle—but by first thinking locally we can maximize the impact of our daily actions and purchasing decisions.

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## Emergency Management And Community Safety

by: Greg Finger, Gardiner Director of Emergency Services.

When you hear the term emergency management, perhaps what comes to mind are the efforts to recover from a major disaster such as a severe winter storm or a major hurricane or flood. But the work begins long before the disaster strikes, and the most important steps all of us can take are those which mitigate the impact of disasters and, on the micro level, help keep our community safe.

This winter, we've heard a lot about the home heating fuel crisis, and other economic factors that are making the winter a hard one, but there are things you can do to help stay safe and help your neighbors too:

- Watch out for your elderly relatives and neighbors (hypothermia kills over 350 senior citizens each year in the US); call the UC Office for Aging at 340-3456 for more information
- Help those who might need it utilize the assistance that is available. There is an Ulster County Winter Watch pamphlet available in the town hall which lists other phone numbers for agencies which can assist.

- If your local church, synagogue or faith-based group has a "helping hands" type of program, volunteer to assist
- Be safe in your own home and auto; pick up a Winter Safety Tips flyer available at the town hall and learn how to be prepared for winter emergencies
- If you are aware of any winter hazards in the town, report them to the proper authorities.

If you have questions or suggestion, please feel free to reach out to us.

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Greg Finger   | 895-2974<br>926-7560 (cell) |
| Main # for all Ulster County Problems   | 2-1-1                       |
| HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) Provides funding to help pay heating bills for low-income | 334-5436                    |
| Office for the Aging (individuals age 60 and over)  | 340-3456                    |
| Family of Woodstock, New Paltz  | 255-8801                    |
| United Way of Ulster County   | 331-4199                    |
| American Red Cross  | 338-7020                    |

The number for emergencies continues to be 9-1-1.

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**Maplestone Bed & Breakfast**  
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**Library**, from page 1 ...

Nicole Lane, a Gardiner resident, is also new, and serves as our children's librarian. She attended Bank Street College, earning a dual master's degree in education and literacy. Nicole has been busy creating and launching new programs: currently there are three story times on Tuesdays, aimed at different age groups, a program where children read to dogs, and a community playgroup. Volunteer coordinator and veteran library staffer Melissa Fairweather, who coordinated the move from the old library, has been busy too, managing over 100 volunteers, many also new.



*New Gardiner Librarian Nell Boucher*

Since the opening of the new library, more than 100 people have signed up for new library cards. Why the interest? We like to think it's the big, beautiful, energy-efficient windows, professional circulation desk, spacious community room and art gallery, the work/computer tables and comfortable reading chairs, or the computer with learning games in the children's library. According to the American Library Association though, U.S. libraries have seen a large spike in usage since the economic downturn. Not surprising given the value they offer.

Please stop by! The library is a good place to borrow cook books for winter baking, DVDs, videos magazines and books for indoor entertainment when it's cold outside.

In November, voters approved an operating budget which allowed us to extend our hours. to: Mon. through Thurs, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Fri., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sat., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sun., noon to 4 p.m. Also visit our website [www.gardinerlibrary.org](http://www.gardinerlibrary.org) to view our online catalog and order materials for pick up at the library.

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## How Clean Is Too Clean?

Advisory Against Use Of Anti-Bacterial Soap  
And Cleaning Products

Virtually every known kind of disease-causing bacterium has mutated to survive some or all of the drugs that once proved effective against it. Hand soaps and cleaning products that contain an "antibacterial" ingredient are linked to this health problem. Warm water and soap are as effective as the anti-bacterial soaps and should be used instead.

Antibiotic hand soaps contain the antibiotic-like chemicals triclosan and triclocarbon, and send some two million to 20 million pounds of the compounds into sewage streams each year. In addition, studies indicate that these compounds show up in more than half of the nation's rivers and streams. These chemicals are found in sewage sludge destined for reuse as crop fertilizer. Groundwater and wells can also be affected by these products and by the use of antibiotics in livestock.

This advisory recommends that consumers refuse to purchase these products, which reports indicate European retailers are pulling off their shelves. According to scientific studies, the products don't prevent the spread of sickness any better than ordinary soap and water. Therefore, using these products provides no benefit and increases the risk of increasing bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics.

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Think Local, from page 1 ...

So, what does "local" mean? Proximity is one factor. If you need something, start in Gardiner first. If it's not available in Gardiner, think New Paltz or Walden. And if you have to go as far as Poughkeepsie or Kingston, consider the other factor: who owns the business you are considering doing business with? Does the majority of the ownership reside in the Hudson Valley? With a little thought we can get the majority of our needs met locally. Many local businesses have websites; supporting them with an internet purchase is acceptable, too.

The goal is to maximize the potential of local businesses, and transfer market share (business, government, and consumer purchases) from non-locally owned businesses to local, independently owned businesses. Nations import goods and services, but so do communities and regions. In addition to increased self-reliance there are many economic and environmental benefits when a community reduces its imports.

As large companies struggle during this time of great economic turmoil, independent businesses will be our future in terms of new job creation and innovation. And, unlike a homogenized Anyplace, USA, a community with vibrant independent businesses retains its unique character as a great place to live and visit.

***Need a holiday or birthday gift? Gardiner has several antique stores, a jewelry store, a florist and a liquor store, all with a good selection of gifts. Try them first!***

Confused about how to get started? It's simple: support your neighbor before you support a stranger from China or Arkansas. We all eat so go check out the local food article on this page. Locally produced food is a great place to start. Remember, none of us is perfect with our local purchasing. The point is to gradually develop the habit of trying to find it nearby first.

*Ajax Greene is Co-founder of On Belay Business Advisors Inc [www.youonbelay.com](http://www.youonbelay.com)*

*Additional resources: "Think Local First" a trademarked term developed by BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies), a national net-work of networks. It educates consumers about the economic and social advantages that independent and local businesses bring to a community. Visit [www.livingeconomies.org](http://www.livingeconomies.org). The Sustainable Business Xchange (the regional Hudson Valley Balle Network) visit [www.sustainablebusinessxchange.org](http://www.sustainablebusinessxchange.org)*

## The Local Food Choice

by: Sharon Richards, founder of [eatlocalfood.org](http://eatlocalfood.org)

You've heard it before: eat local food. So, is this another food fad with a trendy environmental twist, or something worthy of our consideration? At the root of the matter is this: if we choose to ignore our ability to grow our own food locally, and instead buy the bulk of our nourishment from distant sources, the local farm and it's regional knowledge will go away. Ok, so what's the big deal you ask?

No local food systems means that food has to be mass-produced (and controlled) by relatively few, then shipped from afar, passing through many hands before it reaches you. The repercussions of that may be loss of open space, less healthy food with chemical preservatives, overuse of pesticides along with depleted mono-cropped soils, loss of food security and the over-extension of fossil fuels as well as all of the earth's natural resources. However far off it may seem, ultimately, this type of pending food system has a strong potential to leave our fast growing population—with little earth-based knowledge—needing to feed itself and hopelessly dependent on...who?

This does not sound very cheery. Alas, take a deep breath and smile, things are not so bleak and we as humans have an amazing capacity to embrace change. Right here in Gardiner there is EatLocalFood.org, a strong local food network to counter some of the unbalanced potentials of an industrialized food system. Although eating locally does not hold all the answers, it does empower our right of choice, the choice to maintain open space, preserve the land, steward the earth, directly influence how our food is produced and know exactly what we are eating.

EatLocalFood.org makes this choice even easier and more convenient. Everything related to eating locally has been gathered into one place—find local food from local farmers, join a CSA, grow a garden, save your seeds and relearn skills like food preservation or cooking from scratch. Neighbors helping neighbors. Now, that not only sounds hopeful, it's inspiring, rooting and a whole lot of fun as well.

Take a moment to visit EatLocalFood.org. Help maintain all of the riches Gardiner and the surrounding area have to offer. Local food is not a fad, it is a choice filled with great positive potential for the future—a promising, empowering choice worth our consideration.

### Tuthilltown Tots

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## Economic Development in Ulster County

by Lance Matteson, President of UCDC

Two tools New York State provides to assist in economic development are Local Economic Development Corporations (LDCs) and Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs). Ulster County has both an IDA and an LDC—the Ulster County Industrial Development Agency (UCIDA) and the Ulster County Development Corporation (UCDC). These organizations help secure funding and tax incentives for local businesses and development projects. Gardiner's library was bonded by UCIDA, helping to reduce the cost of the building, the Gardiner Town Board received a matching grant to study the possibility of extending the sewer district to the Commercial Light Industry area, and Minnewaska Lodge was a participant in UCIDA's Pilot program.

As businesses face a crushing economy, UCDC will be more important than ever. UCDC is charged with marketing Ulster County and works in partnership with the Hudson Valley Economic Development Corporation to disseminate information and work to attract new businesses. While attracting new businesses

is often considered the holy grail of improving local economic development, the reality is that growing and retaining businesses provides the bulk of the growth in the local economy. So it is equally, if not more, important to work with local businesses to help address their needs. UCDC not only does this through its funding and tax incentives but also works with local and new businesses to help identify sites, advocate for the businesses and/or site owners to local municipalities, partner with workforce development (e.g. the Ulster County Workforce Development Board and Department of Labor), identify other sources of funding and provide information. We work closely with the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) which provides free business counseling to area businesses. For more information about how UCDC might be able to help your business, go to the website: [www.ulsterny.com](http://www.ulsterny.com)

UCDC welcomes your comments and suggestions and looks forward to working with you to help create our vision of broad-based prosperity throughout Ulster County. Feel free to contact us at 845 338-8840.

## News From Town Hall

by: Nadine Lemmon

2008 was a busy year at Town Hall. In March, the Gardiner Town Board passed the final installment of its revised zoning law and map for the town. This action completed a process that was started in 2002 and included the adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan, the establishment of the Shawangunk Mountain Protection District and new regulations for Open Space Developments in town. Given the volatility of oil prices and the increased demand for wood-fueled heating, the Board also developed legislation overseeing timber harvesting and outdoor woodburning furnaces—trying ensure environmental protections while providing residents with viable economic solutions.



*The Kiernan Farm at the base of the Shawangunk Mountains.*

In 2008 the Town Board continued its efforts to improve infrastructure in the town. Plans for sidewalks for the central hamlet have been submitted to the DOT for review; the incredibly controversial cell tower on Steve's lane was extensively reviewed and finally approved; renovations for the Transfer Station (which was damaged in a fire) should be completed by the summer of 2009; and a proposed extension to the sewer system in the commercial light industry area is in the planning stages. The Open Space Planning and

Finance Commission worked hard to establish a new program in town that will help to preserve open space and working farms. In conjunction with the Open Space Institute and the Walkkill Valley Land Trust, an application was submitted to the state for the preservation of the Kiernan Farm, a grass-fed beef operation located at the base of the Shawangunk Mountains. Notification about this grant is expected in the spring.

Foremost on everyone's minds for 2009 is assuring that costs are contained while providing residents with the services they need. Several new initiatives were discussed at the January kick-off meeting, including the development of an Emergency Management Plan, an effort to attract new businesses and support existing businesses, the web-casting of Town Board meetings, and an effort to explore new ways to support and promote regional agriculture.

We're always looking for help. If you have any interest in getting involved, please send me an e-mail: [Nadine@gunk.org](mailto:Nadine@gunk.org). I'd love to hear from you!

*Nadine Lemmon is a Councilwoman on  
the Gardiner Town Board*

## New Jobs, Lower Taxes

That's the goal of a new group that's being formed to attract new business to Gardiner. Most of us love to live in Gardiner and would love to work here, too. One of the town's key projects in 2009 is attracting new companies and helping existing companies to expand. The result of this business-building will be more jobs and lower taxes for homeowners.

In order to get the new biz project off to a fast start, we're looking for volunteers to help identify ways to attract or build companies. We'll start with a brain-storming session in February. If you can spare a couple of hours, we could use your help.

Please contact Warren Wiegand at [townofgardiner.org](http://townofgardiner.org) or at 255-7915.

## The Best Kept Secret in Ulster County

Did you know that you can get a bus to pick you up right outside your home and take you to work, or grocery shopping, or to a doctor's appointment? And, if you are 60 or older, you may give a voluntary contribution in lieu of the normal fare for one round trip service per week. The driver will even help you on and off the bus with packages, though they can't bring them into your home. And if you're commuting to work, you may even be eligible for a free



bus pass! There are also free shuttle buses leaving from park-and-ride lots in New Paltz and Highland that can link you up to Metro-North trains, and help you cut down on the hassle of commuting.

Many people don't know about Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT). You may have seen their buses around, but not known anyone who uses them. These buses are convenient and the service is user-friendly. It is indeed the best kept secret, and may be especially helpful to families with limited transportation options or with handicap requirements (wheelchair lifts are available). Bike racks are also available on most buses. If you're interested, please contact UCAT directly [www.ulstercountyny.gov/ucat](http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/ucat) or 888-827-UCAT(8228). They can let you know how their service can work for you.

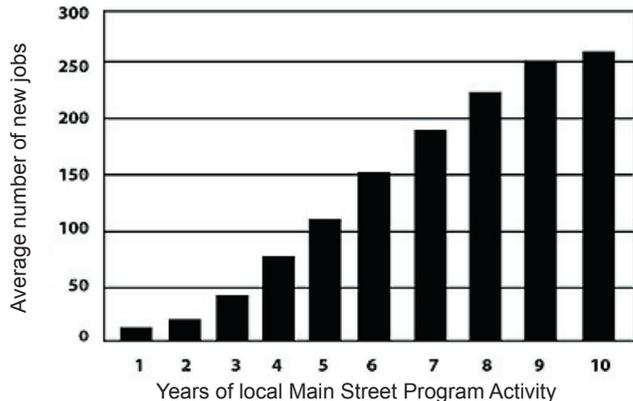
## The Ulster County Main Streets Program

by: Jennifer Schwartz

As the "ex-urban" area of the New York City Region, Ulster County has faced the challenge of rapid change in its natural and built environment. The post-war patterns of development combined with automobile dependency and existing land use regulations have not encouraged "walkable" communities and compact development.

Anticipating changes in energy and transportation costs, and the impact of Wall Street on our Main Streets, we believe that strengthening the centers of our communities will benefit everyone by utilizing our existing assets and infrastructure and offering more lifestyle and economic choices to residents and businesses in Ulster County.

**Job Growth from the Main Street Program**  
Cumulative net jobs in participating communities



The UC Main Streets Program was initiated with a 2007 grant from the NY State Department of State's Quality

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**Main Streets**, from page 6

Communities Program to provide technical assistance to communities for planning on our Main Streets. In the past two years, the program has worked with many stakeholders (including Gardiner) that recognize the importance of their Main Streets and wish to implement improvements. We have successfully helped several of them create community consensus on goals, develop and adopt plans, and seek grants for Main Street revitalization. The cumulative success of Main Street programs has earned a reputation as one of the most powerful economic development tools in the nation.

Thriving Main Streets are often characterized by local ownership of businesses, a pedestrian-friendly environment, the preservation of distinctive architecture and a sense of place and community. In line with the Main Streets philosophy, Gardiner has taken concrete actions to ensure the continued vitality of the central hamlet, including the Master Plan, Open Space Plan, purchase of the rail trail, recent rezoning, restoration of Town Hall, new Gardiner Library, improvements to Majestic Park, steps to improve sewer and water supply and the sidewalks grant. These have been accompanied by over \$1 million in new private investments that have markedly increased activity and quality of life on Main Street.

A strong hamlet becomes an asset to the entire town—it can help a community build local jobs and become more

self-reliant in an increasingly uncertain world. However, it is important to remember that creating a strong hamlet will take time and a sustained community effort. The graph on page 6 shows that those communities participating in a Main Street program often reap the most economic benefits after five or six years of continuous effort. Gardiner has great potential, and needs to continue building on the steps already taken. What is next for Gardiner's hamlet? Now is the time to reevaluate the goals the community established back in 2004, and determine the best next steps.

*Jennifer Schwartz is the Deputy Director of Ulster County Planning*

**Buy a Tree!**

The proposed sidewalk plan shows 18 trees lining Main Street in the hamlet. Street trees make a commercial district feel welcoming and picturesque, but their function is not just to be pretty. Trees provide shade, absorb water to remediate run-off into our streams, and help to slow down traffic—the canopy gives the sense of a tighter space and encourages slower traffic. A contribution can help create a great hamlet. Please make checks payable to Town of Gardiner and mail to PO Box 1, Gardiner, NY 12525. Any amount is fine but with a \$500 contribution, a permanent plaque will be placed on a tree in your honor.

**The State of Real Estate**

by: Laurie Willow, Willow Realty

For a few years at the peak of the market most home values in Gardiner went up 20%-30%. Some actually doubled. The rise was so steep and so fast that many in real estate felt that there would be a correction. That time has come. In 2007, the 47 homes that sold in Gardiner looked like this. The median price was \$359,000.

|                | High        | Low       | Average   | Median           | Total Price  | Listing Count |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| List Price     | \$1,800,000 | \$164,900 | \$469,661 | <b>\$379,000</b> | \$22,074,100 | 47            |
| Sold Price     | \$1,655,000 | \$157,500 | \$445,319 | <b>\$359,000</b> | \$20,930,000 |               |
| Days on Market | 376         | 2         | 144       | <b>126</b>       |              |               |

In 2008, 32 homes sold in Gardiner. The median price was \$311,000. This is the trend that is continuing at present.

|                | High        | Low      | Average   | Median    | Total Price  | Listing count |
|----------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| List Price     | \$3,950,000 | \$89,900 | \$457,934 | \$327,495 | \$14,653,889 | 32            |
| Sold Price     | \$3,200,000 | \$88,000 | \$417,692 | \$311,000 | \$13,366,165 |               |
| Days on Market | 249         | 55       | 136       | 131       |              |               |

The market in Gardiner is down, but it isn't as extreme as in many other area of the country. It *has* shifted from a seller's market, where a seller could get multiple offers on a property, to a buyer's market, where offers may be tendered well below the asking price. It is a good time to buy. Because of the beauty of Gardiner, its proximity to New York City, and its still-rural quality, Gardiner property has maintained value relative to other towns in New York State and Ulster County.

**Inclusionary Housing:** The average home in Gardiner sells for around \$400,000, so to buy a home here would take 10% down (\$40,000 cash) and a monthly payment of about \$3,000 (\$1,932 mortgage and \$1,000 in taxes and insurance). This cost is way above what many residents can afford. The town board is currently

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**Real Estate**, from page 7

have that addresses the problem; it requires new developers to offer a very small percent of a development at an affordable cost. If you want to learn more email Ray Smith at [raydsmith@gmail.com](mailto:raydsmith@gmail.com) or Laurie Willow at [LWillow@aol.com](mailto:LWillow@aol.com).

Property taxes have also become a major obstacle to home ownership in Gardiner. There is a movement underway to abolish property taxes, and a strong contingent is right here in Gardiner. Contact Gioia Shebar 845 256 0082 or go to the website for further information: [www.taxnightmare.org](http://www.taxnightmare.org)

**About This Newsletter**

Further issues of the Gardiner Gazette will only be possible with support from the community. Each issue costs about \$3,000 (postage, printing, layout and editing). The advertising in this issue is free. Contact [lwillow@aol.com](mailto:lwillow@aol.com) for rates for future issues. And, if you have a question or would like to submit an article, contact us at [gazette@earthlink.net](mailto:gazette@earthlink.net).

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