

UP AND DOWN HATTERTOWN



A Social Publication for the Residents of Hattertown | March 2022



*Meet the
Chaudhary
Family*

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CONTRIBUTORS AT LARGE The residents of Hattertown

We are always looking for residents to follow up on leads, find great stories and send us ideas. Let's celebrate the great things happening in our community! No contribution is too small. Please email **cathy.breen@n2pub.com** with your pictures, suggestions, or requests

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HELLO, NEIGHBORS!

Welcome to the March issue of *Up and Down Hattertown* – I hope by now that you are getting used to receiving our publication on a monthly basis and that you are truly enjoying learning about your neighbors. I am having so much fun meeting so many of you and can't wait to meet so many more. I've heard such wonderful feedback, but I'm always open to suggestions and improvements – this is your magazine, so feel free to share. Speaking of meeting more of you – we will be putting on events! Please email me at cathy.breen@n2pub.com to add your name to our list. I hope to have a restaurant review or something of that nature on the calendar soon! Also, be on the lookout for a meet and greet with me, so I can meet more of you face-to-face!

I hope as this reaches you, that we are seeing signs of spring – maybe a daffodil or two, peaking through the ground. There is so much hope and optimism this time of year – and I believe we are coming out of a

long time where that was not the case. Please continue to share your stories with us. We have so many incredible people in our community that we would all love to learn about.

The Chaudhary's – our featured family this month is extremely involved in the community – I'm not sure exactly how they fit it all in – but they do! Our home of the month *may*, in fact, be the oldest house in town! Sharon Cohen shares some of the history of Hattertown and her home in this lovely story. Our first "Making a Difference" article features Love Has a Home, which takes a much more positive stance on inclusion. Lastly, our "Precious Pet," a sweet doberman named Holly, shares her special talents as a therapy dog and more.

As always, our publication cannot exist without our local business partners! Please welcome our newest sponsors, **Kathy Hamilton, Realtor, Elite III Asphalt Services, Robert Morey, Realtor, Pet Town Veterinary, and The Landau Team of RE/MAX Right Choice.** We are so grateful to have them, and as I have said, I have met with them all personally, and feel confident in their abilities to provide the best services in their industries.

Enjoy the issue, and welcome spring!



In Friendship,

Cathy

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We are looking for young writers to contribute each month – we love to hear about our young achievers – whatever they are achieving at – academics, the arts, sports, volunteering, working – we want to celebrate them. Please get in touch with Cathy Breen at cathy.breen@n2pub.com with articles and ideas. (P.S. it looks good on college apps!)

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Making a Difference



Sharon L. Cohen
Home of the Month



Jennifer and Neil Chaudhary
Meet Your Neighbors



Holly Wheat
Precious Pets

meet your neighbors

By Neil and Jennifer Chaudhary
Photography by Kori Andrea Photography

The Chaudhary family



The Chaudhary family has lived on Merlins Lane for nearly three years (having moved from their second Newtown House). Neil and Jennifer have lived in Newtown for almost 19 years. They moved to this beautiful street in search of a “neighborhood” feel that they sought since moving to Newtown. They hope that as the pandemic wanes, they can get back to hosting their (once) annual BBQ in their new home.

The Chaudhary’s are transplants to Connecticut. Jennifer is from a small town in Ohio where she was born and lived there until meeting Neil. Neil grew up on Long Island but was born in Kentucky – the first American born child in his family. Neil and Jennifer were blessed to be able to visit the family home in India a decade or so ago. Jennifer and Neil lived for 10 years in Brooklyn, NY, before moving to Connecticut.

Neil and Jennifer celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in 2021 after meeting online “before it was cool.” There was no online dating 25 years ago when they logged into a gaming site using their landline phones to dial in to the server. The Chaudhary’s first child Evan is a sophomore at Newtown High School. Maya, their daughter, is an eighth-grader at Newtown Middle School. Maya spends time being creative. She loves art and sewing and all things animal-related and even spent several years taking horseback riding lessons. Evan runs. He is on the NHS track team, but his passion is running for the NHS cross country team. This past year he was honored to become the one 11th grade captain for the upcoming 2022/23 school year. Evan is also a bass player and enjoys jamming with his dad on guitar, who is much less talented than Evan. They also have a 7-year-old Havanese named Khaleesi.

The family loves to travel, whether near or far. When the children were younger, they were taken on “mystery rides.”



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Jennifer and Neil put them in the car and took them somewhere without them knowing where – it could have been the Beardsley Zoo, Disney, or Target. Neil once drove them around the block as a mystery ride – they were not pleased.

Neil is the co-owner of a small traffic safety research firm where he uses his Ph.D. in experimental psychology to conduct research aimed at saving lives on the Nation's roadways. Neil is a member of several National Academy of Sciences and Engineering committees on their Transportation Research Board and has enjoyed discussing his research nationally and internationally over the past 20 years. Neil has enjoyed volunteering for both state and town committees. He serves on several state task forces, including the DOT's DUI taskforce and the DMV's safe teen driving taskforce. He started his local volunteerism as a member of Newtown's Tickborne Disease Action Committee. He then became a member of the Town's Legislative Council, where he served as their vice-chairman. Neil served on the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee and is currently a member of the Newtown Police Commission.

Jennifer used to work in NYC in the corporate world for a major telecommunications company but left to

have and raise the kids. About 7-years ago, Neil asked Jen if she could help with managing his offices. So, she took on the office manager role. She manages both of the offices and helps keep the company running smoothly. Jennifer loves this role because it gives her something to do, and a way to contribute to the family while allowing the flexibility to still work from home and be involved with the kids, the schools, and the community. Jennifer served as the chairman of the board for Trinity Day School and as vice-chair for both Middle Gate Elementary School PTA and the middle school's PTA. Jen also served as the parent representative for Middle Gates Safe School Climate Committee and is currently the parent member for the safe school climate committee for both the middle school and the high school. Jennifer served as the chairman for the Edmond Town Hall Board of managers, where she championed the use of the theatre for live music events that so many are currently enjoying today.

The entire Chaudhary family is passionate about volunteerism. The family regularly attends fundraisers for local charities, and all of them donate their time whenever possible—whether it be ringing bells for The Salvation Army, or helping raise money at shredding fundraisers. Both



Maya and Evan volunteered their time this summer helping younger children in local camps. Neil and Jennifer are also members of Newtown's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Chaudhary's love giving back to this community that they love. Whether it's a walk at the Fairfield Hills campus, Edmond Town Hall for a movie or music event, or attending one of the kids' various sporting events. The Chaudhary family enjoys seeing friends and strangers that are willing to stop and chat.



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home of the month

By Sharon L. Cohen



Jean-Henry winding up the clock for the day.



One of two living rooms, by the size of the hearth, it was most likely the original kitchen, or "keeping room."

Stewards of 8 EDEN HILL ROAD

When traveling from a Midwestern city to Connecticut for graduate school decades ago, I was struck by the many differences in terrain. I grew up with sidewalks, rectangular blocks, and flat land with few wooded areas. Although often getting lost in Fairfield County's winding back roads, I was drawn to the forests, unique stone walls, and the much older historic structures.

I moved to Newtown in the 1980s with my husband Jean Mathurin and then toddling son Seth. Several years later, we were happily joined by our second son Jordan. Knowing we liked old homes, the realtor recommended the primitive center-chimney colonial at 8 Eden Hill Road. Never setting foot in a 300+-year-old building, this house went well beyond "old." The house stood empty at the time, the pilot and stewardess owners realizing such a dwelling was not conducive to their lifestyle.

I sat alone in the furniture-less house, getting a feel for its unfamiliar low ceilings, large-beamed ceilings, narrow staircase, and wide chestnut floors. How different from my childhood 1950s ranch-style home. The surroundings provided comfort, and Jean loved the stone walkways and patio, wide-open backyard, and wooded area beyond. This was well before surrounding developments arrived. I also checked the town's list of hauntings, and we've had no sightings!

As a writer, I describe the house in literary terms: Its walls hold memories of residents since circa 1690 – the date on our certificate from the Newtown Historical Society. Past town historian Dan Cruson believed this to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest, Newtown homes. The General Assembly granted Captain Ebenezer Johnson 300 acres, where he was required

to build a house at least 18 feet square. Since he lived in the Borough, the first tenants were likely farmers.

In the 19th century, the Hattertown Green included several hats, buttons, and combs industries and shops, along with a general store, blacksmith, wagon shop, grist mill, and the stench of manufacturing chemicals. The term "mad as a hatter" actually came from the industry's mercury poisoning. When digging out a swampy area by our property a few years ago, we found many scraps from leather shoes. This isn't surprising since shoemakers were much in demand, with many area towns known for the trade. It's easy to imagine the cobblers working by our large hearth. Today, our rooms display Native American photographs and collectibles and early American ephemera, artwork, and furniture. These are befriended by many chiming period clocks that Jean winds up daily. The house's tenants have come from many backgrounds. They included Edith Halpert, who immigrated with her mother in 1906 to escape the Russian Jewish persecution. She became the first woman to own a commercial NYC art gallery. In the summertime, she welcomed friends such as artist Georgia O'Keeffe, photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and client Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. Her attic was filled with collectible samovars. In contrast, another resident supposedly parked his Harley Davidson in the hearth.

I love how our house continually settles around the central chimney, making some rooms uneven like a carnival house of mirrors. To me, it keeps breathing in and out with a life of its own. We even have names for the closet and bathroom doors that open by themselves from air pressure or stepping on certain floor planks. Such an abode is best for anyone enjoying such idiosyncrasies. However, Johnson's house was built incredibly well, standing strong against the New England weather since 1690. It will surely



Left: Edith Halpert hosting NYC gallery opening late 1940s/early 1950s.



House painted by Charles Sheeler, "Portrait of Newtown House" 1932. Charles was a friend of Edith Halpert and visited her at 8 Eden Hill Road.

continue to outlast many others. I'm proud to be one of its stewards and hold it for future generations.

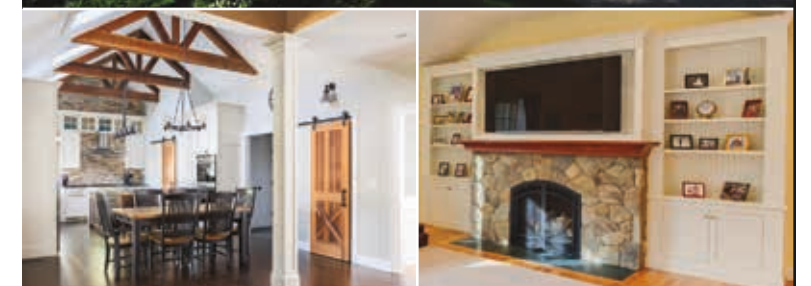


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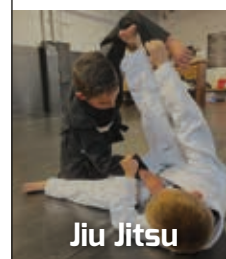
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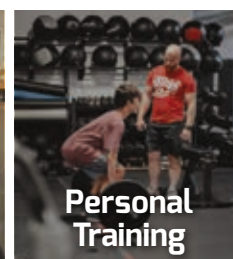
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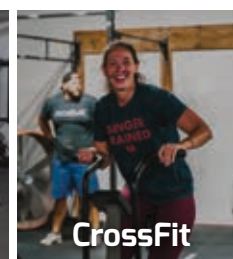
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resident recipe
By Cathy Breen

Nanny's IRISH SODA BREAD



My Grandmother, Catherine Breen, who we called Nanny, made the most incredible Irish Soda Bread – make this, and you won't buy it in a store ever again. The dough is sticky before cooking, and comes out the perfect amount of dense, so butter spreads easily, but still moist and chewy. Try it and let me know what you think! Also, you make it in traditional loaf pans, so it's foolproof! Served warm out of the oven with butter is best – you can also toast it. It can be frozen as well for a later date.

INGREDIENTS

5 cups flour
1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup raisins
1 large handful caraway seeds
½ pint (1 cup) sour cream
3 eggs
½ pint (1 cup) buttermilk
(buttermilk can be substituted with 1 cup milk/2 tablespoons white vinegar)

Preheat Oven to 350 degrees
Grease and flour 2 bread loaf pans

Mix together:
Flour and sugar

Then add and mix:
Baking soda
Salt
Baking Powder

Then add:
Raisins
Caraway seeds

Mix all above together well



Then add:
Sour Cream
3 eggs
Buttermilk

Divide evenly into 2 greased and floured loaf pans
Bake at 360 degrees for 50 minutes – 1 hour

 Have a great family recipe you would like to share with your neighbors? Please send to **cathy.breen@n2pub.com**



Meet **Holly** and her brother, **Gunnie**



By **Holly Wheat**, with help from Mom, **Lara**

I'm Holly!



My brother, Gunnie!

Hi, my name is Holly, and I am excited to share a little of my life with you! I'm a 2-year-old red, doberman pinscher. I came from New Hampshire to live with my family in CT when I was just 10 weeks old! I have boundless energy and I love all people! My family quickly learned that I love to be active, and I love school, too!

I have a big brother Gunnie at home now, too! Gunnie is a 3-year-old red, doberman pinscher. He's as sweet as he is handsome but thinks he's just a little lap dog.

We are both spoiled with a big yard, hikes, training at school to grow our big brains, and LOTS of love. We both enjoy going for runs with my person in the neighborhood. Our breed has a lot of requirements for a physically and mentally balanced, full life. We need a lot of physical exercise and a lot of brainwork, too! Running, hiking, and playing will not tire us out if we are not getting consistent training sessions and using our brains to work, solve puzzles and learn new skills.

For about five months at the end of 2020, my person's grandmother with Alzheimer's came to live with us. I quickly realized that I am gifted, gentle, and eager to love others that need some comfort and support. This started my journey to become a therapy dog through The Exceptional Sidekick Service Dogs and Therapy Dogs (exceptionalsidekick.org). Since my certification, I've had visits to middle schools, elementary schools, high schools, bookstores, charity races, and nursing homes. I have two regular therapy visits weekly. I visit

patients in the memory care unit at our local nursing home every Tuesday, and I go to Bethel Public Schools every Friday to visit with my many friends. Did you know that my visits can help lower blood pressure and help non-verbal people connect to the world? And that is just skimming the surface!

I have a few other AKC titles to add to my therapy certification. I have both my novice and intermediate trick dog titles (TKN, TKI). Additionally, I have my Canine Good Citizen (CGC), Community Canine Advanced (CGCA), and Canine Good Citizen Urban (CGCU) titles. Training and learning are lifelong goals for me, and I hope to add more titles to my name!

My brother Gunnie is an AKC Grand Champion (GCH)! He found his way to our home for some additional training and obedience, while our breeder raises a new litter of Doberman puppies. His stay was supposed to be temporary, but he fell in love with my person's daughter Reese. When the opportunity to have Gunnie rehomed to stay permanently presented itself, we could not say no! We are so happy he will be with us forever! Gunnie is also taking classes and learning every day. He will soon be adding his CGC title to his GCH title. He is my best friend, and I am so glad we can be together.


I have a special surprise to share. We are getting one more puppy, coming Valentine's weekend. She is a black Doberman pinscher and will be 10 weeks old. Her AKC registered name is Mystikos It's Not The Destination, but we will call her "Journey." My brother Gunnie and I cannot wait to see the future she will have in our home. I am sure she'll make big goals for herself.

If you ever see me or my dog brother and sister going for runs down Equestrian Ridge or Poverty Hollow with my person, please stop and say hello to us!



Snuggle time!



 **Do you have a special pet in your family that you would like to share?**
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22
Up and Down Hattertown • March 2022

March 2022 • Up and Down Hattertown
23

monthly musing

MARCH

Let's have some laughs!

March 1st: National Fruit Compote Day (Celebrate the "mixtures" of sweet berries, citrus, and stone fruits to delight the senses.)



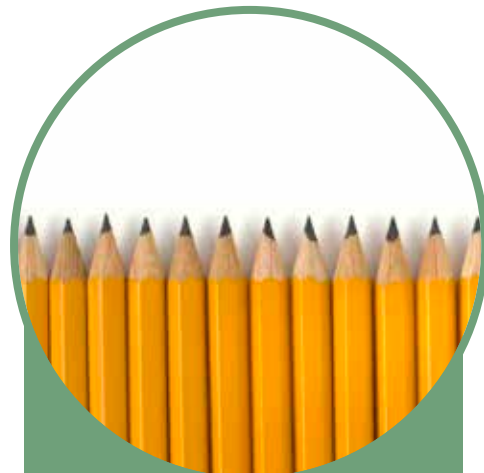
March 12th: National Plant a Flower Day (For all the gardeners out there, this day is dedicated to the planting of flowers and looking forward to the spring season.)



March 13th: National Pi Day (A fun day celebrating the mathematical constant π . Also known as pi, the first three and most recognized digits are 3.14. The day is celebrated by both pi enthusiasts and pie lovers!)



March 25th: National Tolkien Reading Day (Snuggle up with your favorite story, *my precious*.)



March 30th: National Pencil Day (Honoring this writing instrument that Hymen Lipman patented in 1858)



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Love has a Home here



By Rev. Bill Donaldson

In October of 2017, I founded a non-profit company called Love Has a Home, Inc. Its mission was to overcome the increasing separateness and hatred in this country by focusing people's attention away from resistance and toward love. The inspiration came to me after seeing a proliferation of anti-hate messages and wishing there was a pro-love alternative. Since there didn't seem to be one, I trademarked the phrase "Love Has a Home Here" and created a variety of products carrying that message.

Following MLK's famous quote, "Hate cannot overcome hate, only love can do that," I hoped that this message would be a more effective way to help tip the scales in favor of love. Little did I know that this idea was going to be much bigger than a slogan on a lawn sign or t-shirt!

In early 2019, my path led me to Sticks and Stones Farm on Huntingtown Road, where I jumped at an

opportunity to help manage operations and move our office there. It's a 60-acre privately owned property that's been the home of Two Coyotes Wilderness School for over 10 years and has open space for the community to enjoy the natural beauty and tranquility of the land. You may have visited to hike the trails, drop your child off at summer camp, listen to live music, take a yoga class, walk the labyrinth, escape for a weekend in a rustic cabin in the woods, hike with a Llama, or volunteer in the giving garden with Real Food Share. As soon as you enter the driveway, you know you've arrived at someplace special.

After three years at this magical location, a new opportunity to expand our impact far more significant than we could have imagined is upon us. Love Has a Home is negotiating to acquire Sticks and Stones Farm and create a forever home not just for us, but for the community at large. Our mission is evolving from creating a message of love to creating a place of love. Our dream is to see this amazing land preserved and remain a beacon of peace, love, and connection for Newtown and beyond.



Here children happily leave their screens behind and learn to connect with nature and discover their unique gifts. Here anyone seeking an open and loving spiritual community can find a home with our interfaith services. Here an abundance of produce is grown and given to those in need. And here, you can simply unwind and find peace. Let's work together and keep it this way!

We are in the early stages of this process and need the community's support. I encourage you to learn more about us and Sticks and Stones by visiting our websites: www.lovehasahome.org and www.sticksandstonesfarm.com. If you are moved to help us, please reach out to Bill Donaldson at info@lovehasahome.org or 203-915-0718.



Do you or someone you know volunteer or work with a non-profit organization? We would love to highlight the people and organizations that do good in our community. Please email cathy.breen@n2pub.com with ideas and/or nominations!

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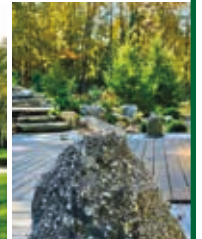
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