LIVELIHOOD
A GUIDE TO OUR LOCAL ECONOMY
BY THE HUDSON VALLEY CURRENT

MEDIA KIT
2020
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Livelihood Magazine is the Hudson Valley’s resource for keeping money local, sharing abundance, and strengthening our communities.

Publisher: Chris Hewitt
Editor: Molly Lindsay
Layout: Melissa Hewitt

Livelihood welcomes your feedback, submissions, and subscriptions.

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The Hudson Valley Current (HVC) is a Kingston-based nonprofit organization that strives to keep money local, strengthen Main Streets, and highlight the abundance that’s all around us. HVC has three primary projects: 1) The Current is a local currency and barter exchange; 2) Livelihood magazine is our guide to the local economy; and 3) The Satisfy Hunger campaign allows us to use the Current to secure local foods, prepare farm-to-table meals, and share them with our neighbors in need.

Hudson Valley Current
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Country Wisdom News was born in 2010 as a newsletter for my caretaking clients and soon evolved into a broadsheet.

Broadsheets have a proud history; they began in 18th-century England as a way to share more information without having to pay an exorbitant price for it. I wanted that Revolutionary feel. And people like reading about orchards and foraging and beekeeping and local business.

To make everybody’s life easier, we switched to a handier tabloid format in 2014. We changed the name to Livelihood once I donated the for-profit publication to the non-profit Hudson Valley Current; we also made the switch to a high recycled content white paper instead of newsprint. Our focus shifted slightly from good news about community, the land, and the home to cultivating abundance in our new economy.

Now we’re about to evolve again into a magazine format. We’re documenting an amazing community at an historic moment, telling evergreen stories that last. We want Livelihood Magazine to be passed from hand to hand. Preserved. Library-worthy. Joy-inducing. Useful.

Each change has felt like pulling the ship into drydock to upgrade her sails. The core has remained seaworthy throughout: a talented team telling good news well. Every month, we’re weaving the web of connection among the growers, thinkers, teachers, and doers.

Thanks for letting me tell you a bit about our adventure. The format’s changed, the stories are fresh (and lively!) every time, but the core mission—a permaculture of shared abundance and mutual aid—stays as rich and real as soil. That is Country Wisdom. That’s our Livelihood.

Sincerely,

Chris Hewitt, Publisher
Livelihood Magazine

Letter from the Publisher

Years ago, soon after Nicole and I moved here, I was fired from a small local press and hired to dig ditches for a much better salary the next day. Through working in the soil, I unearthed a talent. I was trained as a Master Gardener and launched a business taking care of estates.

I got groceries from Hawthorne Valley Farm Store using Currents! I couldn’t be happier. Long live local currency.

Mark, Facebook
Contributors

Amber Barton
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To be a contributor to Livelihood, contact us!
We’re always looking for new ideas.
There have been times when revolution’s ridden on the backs of books, when the words that matter in speeches resound—seemingly eternally—via the written word.

Head back a half century into the years of Abbie Hoffman’s Steal This Book, the Whole Earth Catalog, and Foxfire books, and a monolith of raw cultural change rises into view: a series of books by black revolutionaries, many of them in jail at the time they were writing, that sold millions of copies, briefly raised an entire new alternative publishing industry into existence (along with similar phenomena in film, radio, and theater), and suggested that the revolution long threatened had actually occurred, and possibly even succeeded.

It all started in the latter half of the 1960s with the publication of The Autobiography of Malcolm X and Black Power: The Politics of Liberation, by Stokely Carmichael. A zenith rose and sustained with Eldridge Cleaver’s epic Soul on Ice and the hugely influential Amiri Baraka/Larry Neal anthology Black Fire, pulling together 200 essays, stories, poems, and plays from the Black Arts Movement of the day, in 1968. Seize The Time: The Story of The Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton was a 1970 book by Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale, recorded in prison and a best seller as soon as it came out a few months later. By 1971, George Jackson was a household word for Soledad Brother, which became a bestseller while he was shuffled around on death row (his Blood in My Face, published the next year, came out weeks after his death while supposedly attempting escape).

The movement continued with If They Come in the Morning... Voices of Resistance, a compilation of writings by and from Angela Davis about the young intellectual’s indictment, flight, arrest, and eventual imprisonment for having helped the Black Power movement, including a number of key figures in prison. It then included such works as Revolutionary Suicide, by Seale’s fellow Panther co-founder, Huey Newton; Davis’ autobiography in 1974, and the combination of the great James Baldwin’s summing-up essays in No Name in the Street, then his 1975 novel, If Beale Street Could Talk. After which came a pause before the arrival of Alex Haley’s Roots and the great works of Toni Morrison, Walter Mosely, and Alice Walker.

So where do we stand now in this age of beautiful memoirs such as Saeed Jones’ new How We Fight for Our Lives, the history-revealing novels of Colson Whitehead and Jesmyn Ward, and Ta-Nehisi Coates amazing output chronicling the meaning of what it is to be black in America these days?

Consider this a time of normalization, as it were, where the radicalism of those works from the 1960s and 1970s have gone mainstream enough to dominate the literary world’s top prizes, demonstrating a sense of craft that’s miles beyond the raw power of their earlier forebears. Although, in their refined lyricism and broad use of a Baldwin-like level of analysis, they also may lack something of the cut-through-everything radicalism of the great Panther works.

Could that future be now, at least in cultural terms? Check out Damon Young’s new What Doesn’t Kill You Makes You Blacker, A Memoir in Essays, as a guide. And keep mulling.
We address a fairly complex and broad issue this month, inequality. There is economic inequality, but there are also inequalities in key facets of human development—health, education, dignity, and human rights—to mention a few. This is how it is stated in the most recent report on the human development of the United Nations.

Here in the United States we are in an election year, primary and presidential. All the various platforms of the candidates highlight the importance of a question: how can inequality—which weakens the country’s social, economic, and political fiber—be remedied?

It is true that the poverty rate in the United States has been reduced to 11 percent, but if we measure inequality in terms of health, for example, the image we see is different. 40 percent of the poorest mothers have a life expectancy lower than their mothers, according to the conclusions in a study conducted by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, and which The New York Times reported in 2019.

There is a relationship between racism and the health system in the high mortality rate of black mothers. They are three to four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related diseases than any other mother—regardless of their social or economic status—National Public Radio also reported in 2019.

Inequality goes beyond monetary income. It is based on our way of thinking, acting, and living together.
a person to excel with so many pre-established disadvantages. We can say that this is the reality of millions of people.

Remember Pele, from Brazil, who played with mangoes and balls of socks long before reaching the World Cup; or Egan Bernal, who rode hours by bicycle to get to his school in Colombia. Afterwards, we saw him on the Champs Elysees as the champion of the Tour de France. You may have heard of Lorena Ramírez, the young Rarámuri athlete from Mexico, who runs ultra marathons in her plastic sandals and traditional skirts.

Pelé and Bernal are known for their soccer and cycling uniforms; Ramírez for her simplicity among the hundreds of runners in shorts. She represents the potential that her generation puts forth, and that often develops without basic state support.

**Without sneakers in the case of Ramírez**

“I don’t think I’m going to use them,” she says in the Netflix documentary titled, Lorena, Light-Footed Woman, when she shows us some red sneakers she has saved. “The people who do use them, always go before me.” The good news the UN has for us is that it has already seen results in reducing inequality in and among countries. This is goal number 10 of the 17 sustainable objectives that it has set out to meet by 2030.

Its website, un.org notes that “fortunately, income inequality has been reduced both within and within countries. Currently, the per capita income of 60 of the 94 countries, for which data are available, has increased faster than the national average. Some progress has also been made in creating favorable access conditions for exports from the least developed countries.”

The quality of life in a country that is supposedly advanced is something we must study. It is true that in her homeland a grocery store is days away on foot for Ramírez. But she does not need to go as many times as we do. There are other things in the beautiful Sierra Tarahumara that make her feel satisfied. Maybe that’s why she does not need to wear sneakers to win races.

We must take into account the factors for true happiness if we want to find practical solutions to eradicate inequality. Here, those who can go to the polls this year will have to take into account what they want to preserve and what they consider authentically important for the happiness of society with their votes.

*Angélica Medaglia, translator of classic texts of Tibetan Buddhism into Spanish and English and freelance writer, is born in Colombia and lives in Woodstock.*
The first target was a neighborhood dubbed “the devil’s acre” by Charles Dickens built on swampland near the Thames, a breeding ground for germs, and the kind of place that scared the cops. After the building of Victoria Street in 1851; observant souls remarked that tearing down “concealed labyrinths of lanes and courts, and alleys, and slums, nests of ignorance, vice, depravity, and crime, as well as of squalor, wretchedness, and disease; whose atmosphere is typhus, whose ventilation is cholera; in which swarms of huge and almost countless population, nominally at least, Catholic; haunts of filth, which no sewage committee can reach–dark corners, which no lighting board can brighten,” as per a Cardinal Wiseman, had simply displaced the poor and not resolved the underlying issues, although those labeled “deserving” were resettled in “social housing” built by London-based American banker George Peabody, flats with shared bathrooms that featured evening curfews and “moral codes” for residents to abide by.

Peabody Trust still exists as a London housing and anti-poverty organization. Still, you’d think the basic lesson—that demolishing poor neighborhoods didn’t in and of itself solve urban problems—might have been taken to heart almost a century later.

You’d think. But beginning between the two world wars, municipalities in the United States were busy doing “slum clearance” and urban redevelopment. In 1949, the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Act, also known as the Housing Act, directed millions in federal funding to cities and private developers to redevelop economically challenged areas by razing existing

The Devils Acre was located in what is currently the heart of Westminster.
In the 60s, thousands of people were displaced from the Rondout, their homes seized by eminent domain.

structures and building large public housing projects. In 1954, the federal government doubled down with more money and FHA mortgages, and the term “urban renewal” was coined.

Major cities were major adopters; New York “benefitted” from the tender ministrations of Robert Moses, who’s the guy to thank when you wonder why the island of Manhattan ended up surrounded by vast industrial hellscapes. Close observers were noting that cities were not reliably improved by the destruction of neighborhoods and the intrusion of superhighways, on which potential customers for urban businesses zoomed by on their way to the suburbs, in their stead. Neighborhoods where African Americans and recent immigrants lived were the ones destroyed, and residents were offered little to no help in finding new homes. James Baldwin would dub urban renewal “Negro removal” in the 1960s.

American-Canadian author Jane Jacobs had published The Death and Life of Great American Cities in 1961, calling out the whole mess. But the juggernaut of funding and development was on a roll, fattening developers’ pocketbooks, and by the time organized opposition developed, it was too late for the organic streetscapes of the Hudson Valley’s great river cities.

Kingston’s Rondout neighborhood was established as a 17th-century trading post where, thanks to the convergence of the Rondout and Esopus Creeks and the Wallkill River, goods from what was then the wild west of the interior could be assembled for transport to what was then New Amsterdam and the rest of the world. In 1828, the eastern terminus of the D&H Canal added even more energy: bluestone, brick, coal, and cement and the humans required to manage their transport crowded the waterfront and the rocky hillside.

In the 1960s, thousands of people were displaced, their homes seized by eminent domain, occupants relocated to housing projects that were nothing special to begin with and have not improved with age. The process was recorded through the lens of local Gene Dauner, who shot over a thousand slides while delivering flowers for his father’s shop, recognizing something special in the neighborhood and many of the almost 500 structures that were being razed.

Dauner’s slides were the spark that inspired Lost Rondout: A Story of Urban Removal, a documentary film by Stephen Blauweiss and Lynn Woods that chronicles both the city’s loss and the determined efforts to salvage and reinhabit the city’s waterfront.

You can rent or buy Lost Rondout on Amazon, or


Gene Dauner
If urban renewal had a prayer of success, it would have been in Poughkeepsie, which received more funding per person than any other city.

Newburgh and Poughkeepsie are equally scarred by the brew of supposedly well-intended (it is rather hard to think that way of people whose method was taking people's homes by eminent domain, bulldozing them, and packing them like sardines into substandard prison-style apartment buildings) redevelopment. My own mother, who grew up on Johnson Street in the city's historic East End, often spoke of the thriving waterfront neighborhood that was gone forever. Shopping on Water Street, she said, was not just a retail experience but a festival. Everybody and everything you could want was there.

Newburgh’s “renewal” was particularly brutal, in keeping with its politics at the time. Reverend Nelson McAllister, speaking to Lynn Woods for a three-part article entitled Lost Newburgh, remembers families strong armed out of perfectly workable houses. While my grandparents, second and third-generation European immigrants, managed to hang onto their property, Newburgher Lily Howard’s grandmother’s home was gone forever, backyard with fruit trees and all. Forced out, her grandmother bought a place on Lander Street, but didn’t live long. Broken heart, says Howard. Her son Phil grew up knowing the stories. “A lot of people who were displaced went from being homeowners to renters,” he told Vick. “That changes the family structure. It tore a lot of families apart, because [their home] was their nest egg.”

If the concept of urban renewal had a prayer of success, it surely would have been in Poughkeepsie, which received more funding per person than any other city. A massive, aggressive master plan implemented in 1958 sought to create something more suburbanite-friendly and...well, have you been to Poughkeepsie? The result was the maddening arterial system that “replaced” Main Street, still struggling to recover from its Main Mall era, and vast expanses of parking lots in between. In March 2018, Architect Magazine detailed the history in a story entitled The Problem with Poughkeepsie.

There’s a cautionary tale here, maybe. All three cities are worth exploring today, and have indeed always been a lot better and more fun than the very snobs urban renewalists sought to appease give them credit for. (Said snobs have an alarming tendency to blame the results of urban renewal on the working class folks who took it on the chin; being a snob is, we know, not compatible with intelligent analysis of, well, anything.)

But as we savor farm-to-table and toast each other with local craft bevs, let’s take a minute and think—and support the efforts of smart people to make revitalization a rising tide that lifts all boats rather than a slick gentrification that’s in style, like brutalist architecture was in the 1960s, but doesn’t age well at all. We’ve got 400 years of recorded history here; only by including everyone in this wave of post-industrial renaissance can we hope to avoid some future wiseass analyzing the Problem With (your city’s name here) and concluding that part of the problem was us.
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help people in need and embrace the new economy.

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