



Joe Katz in 2006 (Photo: Donna Bunte)

JOSEPH KATZ

by Jenny Wonderling

Joseph Katz is a forward-thinking, humble, no-nonsense, septuagenarian who cares genuinely about the land, his family, and his community. In the more than 50 years he has lived in Gardiner Joe has created a balanced existence – working a farm, owning a business, raising a family, and serving the public.

While being interviewed for this biography his three cats and a dog wove lazily between his legs and the comfy, over-stuffed furniture, or could be found lying in rooms flooded with light and graced with his wife Pattie's ever-changing art. Enormous trees arced over the lake and grounds surrounding his Bruynswick Road home. As he openly related stories of the Gardiner of his youth it was clear that Joe Katz is as much a part of this place as the Shawangunks, which could be seen looming majestically in the distance.

IN JOE'S WORDS

"My name is Joseph Katz, and I was born March 10, 1934. I've lived permanently in Gardiner since I graduated from college, and have voted in Gardiner in every election since 1956. Our father bought this property in 1939 and we spent summers here and weekends starting in 1940 and '41. I had one sister who was eight years older than I, who retired to Gardiner in the house next to mine. She and her husband are both dead now. Her children still own the property but they don't live here full time. There are three acres on each property. We deeded the development rights to the other sixty-eight acres to the Walkkill Valley Land Trust. Originally there were two hunting cabins, where the existing houses are now. My house was turned into a low barn originally, but in 1960 or so I restructured it back into a house.

FARM LIFE

Back in the early 1950's we raised chickens, calves, ducks, geese, and pigs in this barn. I was the one who took care of them. I loved the work, and I made a lot of money at it during high school and college. I slaughtered the chickens myself. I had a big sign at the end of the driveway that read: "Chickens \$1 Each - Ready for the Oven". I used to buy day-old chicks for 1½ cents. I sold them at eight weeks old. They weighed one and three-quarter pounds. I kept them on the property in big pens, which have since been taken down.

*"My father
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People would ask, "If you have all those chickens how come no eggs?" which gave me a great idea. There used to be an egg auction in Poughkeepsie. I had a Model-A Ford truck and I would drive over every Wednesday. I'd fill the truck with tiny pullet eggs, no more than a couple of inches long. These are the first eggs a chicken lays. I bought cartons at GLF [Great Lakes

Federation], where Kiss My Face is now in Gardiner, and I individually made them into dozen packs. Then I made a new sign for the road: “Eggs - Three Dozen for a Dollar.” I used to have a line of cars on a Sunday!

People said, “Isn’t that cute? Little chickens, little eggs.” My father financed my business. He lent me the money to get started and I had to pay him 4% interest on my loan.

My father manufactured boys’ clothing and was a frustrated farmer. His business was in Manhattan, called Town and Campus Clothes. I wore what didn’t sell. I wore knickers until I was about ten years old!

My father always wanted to buy a farm. During World War I, he won a prize for the best victory garden in NJ; I still have the medal someplace. My parents would visit different areas looking for farm property, stay in a boarding house and then they would find a real estate agent. They went to Massachusetts; they went to Pennsylvania. One time they came to New Paltz. And that’s how they found this place in Gardiner.

BUSTLING WITH COMMERCE

Gardiner was all farms during the forties. But there were two or three grocery stores; there was a lot more commerce then. There was a feed store, a general store, a hardware store, all kinds of things. There was a gas station right here on the corner of Route 44/55, opposite what is now Lombardi’s, where the remnants of that stone building is. And directly across from it, where the little white house is, that was a general store. Where Lombardi’s is, that was Heddon’s Corner Hotel. Oscar Heddon owned it.

“People didn’t get around on horses much when I was a kid, but people would often use their tractors! There were a lot of tractors on the roads.”

People didn’t get around on horses much when I was a kid, but people would often use their tractors! There were a lot of tractors on the roads.

It’s hard to imagine that Gardiner actually had a bigger population one hundred years ago than it does today, but it did; there were three little towns then. Tuthilltown was a whole little town with a bar, meeting hall, and there were lots of little stores. There were many convenient stores. Now to get a gallon of gas, you have to go ten miles.

As a kid one of my favorite things was that in the front of each of the stores, they always had a glass case with penny candies. Every one of them. Where the Bruynswick Inn is now in Shawangunk, Mrs. Anderson had a gas station and general store. Our eyes went huge when we went in there! She had the best selection of penny candies of anybody in the area! They were probably two for a penny then! At the Benton Corners General Store, that was where I had my first charge account. I was twelve years old. I kept a tab. I bought soda, candy, and other things.

Across from Mrs. Anderson’s General Store were Vince Edmond’s Garage and Betty’s Bar and Grill. They were husband and wife. She ran the bar and he had the garage and was also an International Harvester tractor dealer for a few years. He was probably the most unforgettable

character I've ever met. Dad bought a tractor from him. When it had to be serviced, Vince would come over and hold out four stiff fingers in front of him so my dad could see. Dad would immediately go to liquor closet, take out a water glass and take out a bottle of Four Roses or some other rye, and fill it up four fingers high. Vince would chug it down and then say, "Okay, where's the tractor?" Only then would he do the work!

One time there was a gas tank leak in our Model A pick-up truck. Vince put the truck on a lift and said, "I'm going to show you something you should never try." He took out some sand paper and sanded down the spot where the leak was. Then he put a penny on the gas tank, full of gas, and soldered it with some lead! It worked! But that could have been a disaster!

He lost a finger at some point because he put a loaded shotgun down and it blew off his own finger. What a character! You never knew what would come out of his mouth; he was completely unpredictable. And very funny.

This lake next to us here on Bruynswick Road, and which is no longer a lake (since the dam broke), was man-made, built by two men, Oscar Heddon and Hunter Carpenter. Oscar Heddon had the house right opposite the lake here. They were business partners as rum runners during Prohibition and had plans to develop a little community around the lake that was going to be a resort for bootleggers! But they were thwarted in their efforts by the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and the repeal of prohibition. Hunter Carpenter lived at what is now the Widmark Honey Farm on Route 44/55, and he had apple orchards across the road. Those two used to truck booze from Pennsylvania and store the barrels under the trees.



The lake on Bruynswick Road, October 1, 1941 with the Katz property and original house on the left.
(Photo courtesy Joe Katz)

GARDINER'S CHARACTERS

Oscar Heddon had owned all the land from here to Benton Corners south to where the Marakill comes into the Shawangunkkill. From Lombardi's, to the Lake, to all the way down to Midway Park Road and north to North Mountain Road. He owned hundreds and hundreds of acres. He had a few people living in little houses all over the property that were very beholden to him. I would say that the way they lived is as close to slavery as you could get, as my father used to describe it. At least that was what a lot of those workers told my father.

There were all kinds of characters back then! One day in my late teens, on a Sunday, a couple by the name of George and Alice Tice, who lived down by what was later called Midway Park Road and had worked for Oscar Heddon, they came by here. They had done odd jobs for my father.

"We just came to say goodbye," they said.

My father asked, "Well, where are you going?"

"Well, we don't know," they said, "but Oscar just kicked us off the property." Their truck looked like the Joads' (of the Grapes of Wrath) with mattresses and pots hanging off. "Well, it's Sunday," my dad said, "why don't you stay here in the barn for the night?" It did have a bathroom, but no real kitchen to speak of. Well, to make a very long story short, they stayed for five years!

"Well, the concept of eating a gassed woodchuck was too much for even me, and I'm very adventurous! So I went outside and threw up!"

In the interim my father died, and many other things happened. While I was in college, I used to come down and bring them food. The house wasn't winterized then. They had to cut through the ice on the lake for water, and carry it in. There was a big stove. George would go out and hunt for food. You could say that they lived from hand to mouth. They were happy to just live off the land.

One of those times in the middle of the winter, I came down from Cornell where I was going to college, and they insisted I stay for lunch. I remember that on their wood stove was always a pot of fat; who knew from what. And they had white bread, potatoes, and some roasted meat. I ate hesitantly at first, but it was actually really good. I even filled my plate for seconds. When I was just about to leave, I said, "That food was delicious. What kind of meat was it?"

George said, "Woodchuck." Well, that wasn't so bad, people did eat things like that. But he continued, "I saw it going down into the culvert. I gassed it with a gas bomb." Well, the concept of eating a gassed woodchuck was too much for even me, and I'm very adventurous! So I went outside and threw up!

Still, I used to bring them groceries. They were nice; I genuinely liked them. I brought them sardines and high protein foods. One day, I came in and there was a third person there, a young woman in her early twenties who was slightly retarded. I found out she was Alice's daughter and had been in a State Home and was released at twenty-one. So she moved in. Then about two months later, I came home and there was a guy who was there. He walked with a limp and a cane and he had a glass eye, I remember all those details distinctly. He was probably thirty or forty years older than the retarded girl. The next time I came there was a baby there. That's when I panicked.

We used to have a sheriff in Gardiner. His name was Sheriff Keeping, and had been a good friend of my father. I went to him and told him the whole story. He came over and got Social Services involved and the County or whatever. When I came back here they had all left. I was a kid really, college age, and the situation had just gotten out of control. I never heard anything more about them.

I remember a family on South Mountain Road, the names were Emmett, Donald, Uncle John, and some others. They were bums, real bums, and traveled by bicycle. They were drunks and they'd do odd jobs. Lombardi's was Heddon Corners Hotel then and sold draft beer in paper containers to go. Often you'd see that family lying in a ditch with their bicycles and paper cups! Everyone knew them.

One other great character was the man who owned a farm near Shaft Road, Clarence Schoonmaker. The Schoonmakers were direct descendants of a Dutch family who had been given a land grant from the king. They were dairy farmers until dairy became less profitable. He was also very active in the Shawangunk Reform Church. After old Clarence died, his son Spencer stopped dairy farming and went into heavy equipment and earth moving. He sold the farm and I think he moved down to Montgomery or somewhere. I believe he died soon after. But his father, old man Clarence, was a wonderful man who had contracted polio as a child. As a result, he walked straight and stiff. But he did everything – he was out there milking the cows at 4 o'clock in the morning, driving the tractor, and everything else. He would come by here and tell me the most wonderful stories.

It seems that right on this property behind my house there was a barn. I can still find the foundation stones. The barn wasn't here in my lifetime, but it was when Clarence was a kid. And the school where he went then was just up here on Bruynswick Road, on the other side of Route 44/55, on the left. That was still operating well into the fifties, but it's not there anymore. That school was a one-room schoolhouse; there were five in Gardiner then. There were no school busses. Kids walked to school. When Clarence was young, he would walk from his house to ours, stand in the barn near the cows, warm up, and then do the next leg of the journey. The Schoonmakers were wonderful people.



Above: Joe Katz and the black willow tree in front of his House in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy Joe Katz)

Below: Joe with the same tree in 2006 (Photo: Carol O'Biso)



BLUEBERRY MEMORIES

Back then there were whole communities who commercially picked berries in the Shawangunks. They were locals, but they'd stay up there for months. Well, Emmet, Donald, and the others would pick blueberries and then go door-to-door and sell them in Gardiner. This story is special to me because it's one of the clear memories I have of my mother.

When they came to our door, my mom would say, "Let me smell 'em." She wanted to make sure they had washed the beer out of the containers! If she smelled beer she wouldn't buy them! I'm not sure whether my mom

enjoyed life on the farm as much as my father did, since she passed away in 1944 when I was very young. She died of a kidney disease that I'm sure would be curable today.

BACK IN THE DAY

In World War II, I remember we kept maps on the fridge, and every night we moved different color markers to signify where everything was. There was no television, things were very different then. There was rationing. Moran's General Store was where Majestic Hardware is in Gardiner today. And all through the war, whatever you couldn't get anywhere else, you could get it at Moran's. Toilet paper, anything. I remember he had warehouses full. That man could get whatever wasn't obtainable anywhere else! To commemorate the end of the war, we had a big bonfire on this lawn. We roasted corn and hot dogs. People probably drank a lot, I don't know. I was only ten or eleven years old. None of my immediate family was in the service, but there were cousins, and we knew others. But we didn't know anyone personally who died in the war.

My family was not religiously observant, but we did know several other Jewish families in Gardiner. The first was Dr. Sonny Baum who lived on South Mountain Road. My father became good friends with him. His son Peter is still here. And there was Doctor Harold Fink on Blackhawk Trail. One day my father got a call from New Paltz. It was a man named Sam Chaiet. He had a radio repair and appliance shop on Route 32 North. He called that day looking for enough Jewish men to form a prayer group in honor of a memorial for his mother. He looked in the phone book and he found a Katz, and knowing it was a Jewish name, he called my father. My dad scraped together some other men, and then he brought me along. I must have been ten years old. I wasn't really old enough to be considered, but they decided they would count me in anyway because there had to be ten men at a prayer group and there weren't enough around. That's all changed. There's a large congregation in New Paltz now.

MOTHER NATURE



Joe Katz with his grandmother (Ida) circa 1950.
(Photo courtesy Joe Katz)

One year there was a drought. Clarence Schoonmaker came around and said, "Everyone is in a lot of trouble. Can we work out a way to pump out water from the lake to give it to the cows?" My father said yes, and he helped set up a whole system all around here to get the water. I remember they had three pumps going. They would come here with trucks loaded with milk cans to fill with water.

Also, several times, locust or blight hit the mountains. All the green foliage turned black for a whole year. The last time this happened was twenty or twenty-five years ago. That certainly changed the landscape.

THE PACE OF LIFE

What I miss most about the way Gardiner used to be is the same thing I miss about most things, the pace. There's just too much happening too fast. But not just in Gardiner. There's no time to think anymore. That has to do with communication and a lot of other things. I guess you could call me a dinosaur. I think we're going the wrong way as a culture. People can't stay off the cell phone, the e-mail. You don't get a chance to let life just sink in.

What has changed? Communications today – e-mail, TV, text messaging, computer games – make life very different for children now. It just seems to me that there are so many opportunities, there are so many distractions out there, and it's all very fleeting. Our entertainment, when I was a kid, we had to make ourselves. We made up games, we did things together, camping, fishing, gardening.

Thankfully, my own kids know how to do all the things that I know how to. They shared all those things I did. My three children were exposed to just about everything-- from the arts to politics, sports, fishing, gardening. Everything. They went to school in the city, but this has always been my permanent residence. I had an apartment in the city. Then the kids came up on weekends and I commuted to the city so I could see them. When they were younger, they spent whole summers here.

THE KATZ FAMILY

My oldest son, Sandor Ellix Katz, is now forty-four. A lot of people around here know of him from his books on fermentation. His book, *Wild Fermentation*, was a bestseller and he's given talks over the world. His new book is called *The Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved*.

My daughter, Elizabeth (or "Lizzi") is forty-two and lives in Bend, Oregon. She's married with two kids, is an artist, an occupational therapist, and a breast cancer survivor. This past April, Lizzi ended up on the front of the sports pages. There was a photo of her snow boarding and a big interview. It was thrilling that she has come back that far after her bout with cancer!



Joe Katz (center bottom) with members of his family circa 1945. His late sister, Sue Hollander, also a long time Gardiner resident, is at top right. (Photo courtesy Joe Katz)

Jonathan, thirty-eight, is married with one child. His family lives in New York City and has a weekend house in Columbia County. He is a vice president of WEB MD.

My parents' names were Isadore and Elsie Katz. I had a fine relationship with them. My father and I were very close, in part because my mom died when I was twelve. Then he died of a heart attack when I was nineteen. It was a long time ago. My father was only fifty-one. It's very strange but in my family, except for one cousin and myself, no male has lived past the age of

fifty-two for several generations. Not that they died from any one thing. There has been a fear that it was a family curse. But when I turned fifty I realized I should start saving because I might live past fifty-two!

My family was originally from Lithuania. They came here in the late 1880s or '90s. My father was in textiles. From what I know of father's family, some were extremely successful. They formed a foundation whose purpose was to bring everybody from the family over here from Europe. And they did. There was a big push to do this because of the threat of a Nazi invasion. There was lots of anti-Semitism that lasted through the Soviet dominance of that area. When someone would come over, the family here would put them into business.

In 1938, my father's younger brother was in medical school in Vienna. The family sent him with a suitcase full of money to go to two towns in Lithuania and bring any family members that were left back to the States. He found one relative willing to leave. His name was Mones Berman. Somehow my uncle did manage to bring him here from Lithuania and he lived with another uncle. I remember Mones was just a teenager, who went to school in the Bronx. He learned enough English in just six months that he transferred to Stuyvesant High School. He graduated from Stuyvesant, got in to Cooper Union for engineering, and graduated in three years. He went into the army and was an engineer on the first landing craft that went into Normandy on D-Day. He made it through the war and eventually became the head of research in nuclear medicine at Johns Hopkins National Health Center. And besides all that, he was an internationally rated ping-pong player! But he didn't live past fifty-two, either.

GROWING UP



Joe Katz, about 4 years old.
(Photo courtesy Joe Katz)

My earliest memory is from when I was maybe four years old. I got hold of a paintbrush, went to a mud puddle and with the mud I painted the side of a wall. I remember my father bringing out a bucket of water and he said, "You stay out here and wash it off. You can't come in or have anything to eat until it is all clean." I washed it off as my punishment. I got into some trouble like all kids, though being "bad" just wasn't bad the way it is now. Like, I took somebody's hat and threw it, that kind of thing. I know that doesn't sound like much. I never got into bad trouble. I remember that if you talked in school, the teacher would put you in the hall. A good friend of mine and I would arrange to get put in the hall at the same time so that we could play a game of gin rummy!

I also remember my high school typing teacher. It was her first year teaching, and she was as pretty as can be. She would give us these sentences to type like,

"the lazy fox jumped over the moon." My schoolboy friend and I typed "we love you we love you," and made her crazy! You know, I'm talking about a typewriter! Most kids today don't even know what a typewriter is!

I was a good B-plus student, enough to get me into a decent college. I went to Cornell for liberal arts. I was enrolled in the R.O.T.C., Reserve Officer Training Corps, when I was in

college. So I stayed in college. There was a universal draft then. Just because you were enrolled in college, that was not enough. You needed to maintain a C-plus average, otherwise they drafted you. When I graduated I received a commission in the army. But we never even made it to the graduation ceremony. I did graduate, but they needed lieutenants so badly that two weeks before graduation I was called to active duty. I served in the army and was an infantry officer for two years. I protected the State of Virginia for two years and we didn't get attacked once! And I'm proud of that fact.

“He said, “And how many kids are you going to send to the black camp?” (Then they called them the “colored” boys.) I looked at him like he was from Mars. I said, “I’m sending two hundred thirty boys to camp: black, white, purple, they are all going together.”

The army, in its infinite wisdom, took this Jewish boy from New York who had never fired a gun in anger, and made him an instructor of infantry tactics to train would-be killers. It was in 1955, just after the Korean War was over. The most important lesson I learned from that time in my life was that it's better not to be in the military! You certainly cannot maintain an F-U attitude and I've pretty much had one throughout life. That just does not work there because you go to jail or get court-martialed. So I just stayed quiet.

I did accomplish something I'm proud of while in the army. The Commanding General called me into his office. He said, “Lieutenant, I see you have a lot of Boy Scouting experience.” So he had me run the scouting activities for the 10,000 dependants on the base. I went to Richmond, Virginia in early spring to meet with all the scout leaders of the state. At the scout headquarters, I was asked the question, “Lieutenant, how many boys will you be sending to scout camp this summer?”

I don't remember exactly how many scouts we had, but I answered with a number, let's say, “Two hundred thirty.”

He said, “And how many kids are you going to send to the black camp?” (Then they called them the “colored” boys.) I looked at him like he was from Mars. I said, “I'm sending two hundred thirty boys to camp: black, white, purple, they are all going together.”

He said, “Lieutenant, this is Virginia.”

Well, I said, “I hear you. But I am not sending any boys to camp if they are not all going together.”

He said, “Well, I'll have to speak to the General about this.” That was the one time I rebelled in the army. By then, the army was integrated. That happened in 1948 by Executive Order of Harry Truman, but the Boy Scouts were still segregated.

About a week later I got a call from the General. He said, “Did you really mean what you said?”

I said, “Yes.”

He said, "Well, I'm with you." In 1956, because of my insistence, it was the first time the Scouts of Virginia were ever integrated. So that's a good thing I did.

POLITICS TODAY

"My favorite thing about living in Gardiner is a love of the land... its views, the whole area, the rivers, the mountains, the seasons...."

My feelings towards war then were extremely different than they are now. It's hard to explain how; times were very different. We didn't question it. There was no belief, certainly not during World War II or the Korean War, that we were not wanted as opposed to Vietnam or now. I mean this [war] is totally ridiculous.

I was opposed to the war in Iraq since before the beginning. We can spend eighty billion dollars a year on the military but we can't spend money on

education or the hurricane victims in Louisiana and the south? This happens because our values are screwed up. Who made us the keeper of the world?

Let me tell you something really interesting. Russia put up the first sputnik into space. Then John F. Kennedy decided we were going to spend everything it takes to put our people into space and we were going to overtake Russia in terms of aerospace. We accomplished that very quickly. If we focus our energy, we can get anything done. Instead of all this nonsense of worrying about oil, we could have taken the same amount of money that was spent in Iraq and put it into alternative fuel sources. We would have solved the problem, just like that. But no one calls me up to ask my opinion.

I don't think Gardiner was filled with particularly tolerant people when I was growing up. There were plenty of people in Gardiner who had never been to New York City. The politics in Gardiner have been very interesting. Until the last ten years, there was very little correlation between national political parties and what people in Gardiner thought. I believe that in local government there shouldn't be political parties and I campaigned on that basis.

Instead of people being called Republicans or Democrats, you could call them the "ins" and "outs." But the Democrats have mostly been in control for many years in Gardiner, and I am a registered Democrat. We had a Democratic Supervisor for twenty-five years, George Majestic.

I got into local politics a year ago. I'm not sorry I didn't do it sooner, but I got into it because I was very unhappy with the way people were acting on the Town Board. The wise-guy answer is that I thought they needed an adult. There was so much bickering that was going on, I felt it was inappropriate. That has definitely subsided.

OFF THE FARM

I own a company called the Knit Resource Center Ltd. that does technical development, creating techniques for knitting machines. For example, Ralph Lauren might see a tapestry in Belgium that he likes, takes a photograph of it and wants to know how he can make this idea into a men's sweater. His people would come to my company and we would figure out how. We work with about two hundred companies. This morning I was flipping through a stack of

catalogues and I realized that about half were our clients. I've owned the company for thirty-four years; I just saw a need for it. Before that, I had worked for a large knitwear manufacturer. Later, I did consulting on knit product development for manufacturers and for the U.N. I was sent to India and spent six months developing knit products using native raw materials. I wanted to do something for myself and I saw a great need for what my company now does.

I don't plan on retiring. I'm much too young and I still enjoy what I do. I have very competent people working at the company, so I have to be there only two or three days a week. Also, more than twenty years ago I declared a four-day workweek. It was during the fuel crisis in the early 70s that I first had the idea. I had my oldest son do some research. He put together a booklet on the productivity of a four-day workweek. There was actually a lot written about it at that time. It turns out that service businesses – architects, etc. – can implement it successfully. Ever since, all my employees have worked ten-hour days, no Fridays. There are nine employees including me, and I have approximately zero turn-over. Most of my employees have been with me at least twenty years! I offer them four weeks paid vacation and we close two weeks at Christmas and two weeks during the summer. I also offer health care coverage.

REFLECTIONS

Marrying my wife Pattie nine years ago was one of the happiest moments of my life, but I can't say there has been one happiest moment, and I suspect there isn't in anybody's life. There have been a lot of sad moments in my life, too. Deaths are the saddest thing. The deaths of my parents, my sister died, I had a child who died. I'm a non-believer in terms of there being a God, and an after-life. But when I meet *her*, I'll know it!

My life has not been much different from how I imagined it would be. I have always believed that one can make their own decisions and mine have been made based on lifestyle rather than money. My favorite thing about living in Gardiner is a love of the land. I've always had a great love for this land: its views, the whole area, the rivers, the mountains, the seasons. And of course, the people. I am involved with the community, but the thing I like most is the land.

I haven't thought much about how I'd like to be remembered. I guess I would just like to be thought of as a caring person who liked to grow things."

A MAN WHO LIKES TO GROW THINGS

It was a pleasure and an honor listening to Joe Katz tell his story. It seems certain that healthy, vital, growing things will be his legacy. His hands-on approach is evidenced in a house that he has transformed with his family to a thing of lush beauty. The bountiful gardens that he alone tends each summer burst forth with countless vegetables and fruit. Neat borders reveal plump Asian pears, figs, artichokes ("The first crop of it's kind here in Gardiner!"), and many other delicacies that he enjoys with his wife Pattie, family, and friends throughout the year.

While Pattie paints, leads painting classes, and hosts exhibitions in her studio on the property (The Bruynswick Art Studio and Gallery), Joe can be found simultaneously planting and weeding just yards away.

By the end of the summer, the Katzes' cupboards, freezers, shelves, and closets are crammed with neat rows of his gardening efforts. In addition to their prized Dilly Beans, there are pickles, sauces, soups, jams, chutneys, breads, cakes, and frozen berries and vegetables, that Joe and Pattie preserve on the two stoves that sit side by side in their blue and white tiled kitchen.

Then of course, there is Joe's certified tree farm, from which many Gardiner residents choose their Christmas trees each winter. These agricultural and horticultural feats evoke wonder as to how this man could possibly find the time and energy, while still effectively running a company and working as a Town Board member. Yet he does.

Dedication and success may indeed mark the more public aspects of his life, though it is clear where his real ambitions lie. Get him talking about his children's achievements or the raucous family dinners where a few shy of twenty well-fed loved ones gather for the holidays, and it is easy to see that home is where Joe's real heart is. And though this year's annual travel excursion will take Joe and Pattie to Prague, and evidence of previous jaunts around the globe decorate their home, it is the quiet beauty of Gardiner that keeps pulling them home.

Jenny Wonderling

Jenny Wonderling began keeping journals as a young girl. Today she has more than sixty, chronicling her own experiences and overflowing with stories about her unique and colorful family. She has published dozens of freelance articles including interviews with such respected individuals as the renowned photographer Sheila Metzner, the Indie filmmaker Jim Jarmusch, and the world renowned luthier and Gardiner resident, Thomas Humphrey.



Born and raised in Manhattan, Wonderling had married one of the partners of Bubby's restaurant, soon after it's opening. After helping to build this downtown landmark, and then divorcing both her husband and the restaurant business, she moved Upstate with their two children, now ten and twelve. Wonderling alternately wrote freelance articles and edited a book for Bantam Press while restoring her 1860's farmhouse with the help of her two young sons, family, and friends. Wonderling has since opened Nectar, a boutique in the heart of High Falls. Nectar is a rare blend of home décor, art, African tribal artifacts, imported furniture, gifts, and tea salon. Nectar is buzzing with visitors who love all that the store has to offer. And with each new visitor, there is a story...



Barbara Whitney Petruzzelli

Hudson Valley History Project: Gardiner

Editor

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