Annual Meeting Recap

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Annual Meeting of the Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District on October 26th, and to the Berkshire Food Co-op for hosting us in their Community Room!

Attendees learned more about our activity over the past year, and what we have in store for FY24 and beyond, including increased investments in ArtWeek Berkshires, Berkshire Busk!, and in the social media management that helps us serve as a megaphone for all the downtown activity that your organizations are producing. If you’re interested in joining our work, please email culturalgb@gmail.com.

Holiday Stroll December 9th

**What:** Holiday Shop, Sip, and Stroll  
**When:** December 9  
**Where:** Downtown Great Barrington

**Details:** All stroll activities are FREE thanks to the generous support of many event sponsors! Everything from face painting and kid's crafts, games, and balloon animals to ice sculptures, wreath making, and fireworks. This event has it all! Click on the image to the left to access and download a Holiday Stroll Activity Flyer PDF. Plan to make a day of it!
Get to know a little bit about Susana and Rudy, owners of Familiar Trees:

Tell us about yourselves – major elements of your career histories, what led you to open Familiar Trees together?

We both worked in the film industry (Susana still does). I (Rudy) worked as a production designer and Susana still works as a costume researcher. Since I was in my teens, I have been obsessed with collecting books and over the years, Susana and I would scour flea markets, tag sales, auctions and library sales to find interesting and uncommon books and objects. So it made sense that when I began to segue out of the production design world selling art and design books was the thing to do. It’s what we know.

How long have you been in the Berkshires? How did you first discover the region?
We began looking for a “weekend” house 10 years ago. We were mainly looking in upstate New York because that's what people from New York City do, right? Luckily, someone suggested that we look in the Berkshires. We did and we fell in love. We ended up buying a house here close to nine years ago and haven’t looked back.

What informs your decisions regarding the books, art, and objects you feature in your store? What is the balance between newly published and rare specimens like what’s shown on your website?

The books and objects that we feature in the store reflect our own tastes and interests. We wanted to open a store that WE would want to shop in. Being able to find books, art and objects that somebody wouldn’t necessarily be able to find at most other shops was important to us. We wanted the process of discovery to rule at Familiar Trees. We’re both art and design brats, so that is obviously reflected. While we think that it’s important to offer a roster of new releases, we mainly focus on uncommon and interesting vintage titles.

Tell us about your customers – where are they from, how do they find you, and what are people most enthusiastic about when they visit you for the first time?

Our customers are largely creatives and people who are interested in the arts. We have customers from as far as Boston and NYC as well as Upstate NY, and of course Berkshire locals!

One of the things that drove us to settle down in this area was the fact that it is full of so many artists, writers, and other creative people. Familiar Trees has become a place where people can come, exchange ideas, and hopefully learn something new with each visit. So far, we haven’t advertised, so people mainly find out about us and our events through word of mouth and social media.

Moving Pittsfield to Great Barrington offered more space and less overhead cost. How are you settling into business operations in the new location and in the surrounding downtown community?

Moving to GB from Pittsfield actually increased our overhead but brought us closer to our customer base and greatly increased our foot traffic. Downtown GB is a perfect central location for us… Close to Connecticut, Upstate NY, and the Pioneer Valley.

What would be the best thing Great Barrington could do to support businesses in the downtown area?

The most important thing that GB can do to support its downtown area is to encourage its residents to shop locally!

Creative Economy Jobs

Find Berkshire County in-person, remote, and hybrid jobs that pay a minimum of $40K a year in all fields, including arts, education, nonprofits, and related, at 1Berkshire’s The Jobs Thing. Among some of the current openings of interest are:

- Director of College Counseling, Miss Hall’s School
You can also find exclusively creative economy jobs, including remote and hybrid opportunities, at MCC's HireCulture. Several sample postings are below.

- Curator of Exhibitions, Norman Rockwell Museum
- Deputy Director of Development, Barrington Stage Company
- Creative Producer and Senior Manager of Public Programs, MASS MoCA
- Membership Coordinator, MASS MoCA
- Senior Manager of Membership, MASS MoCA
- Communications Coordinator (Assets for Artists), MASS MoCA
- After School Leader, Flying Cloud Institute

Arts Funding and Resources

Curated information about funding and financial assistance for those working in the creative economy.

Resources for Arts Organizations - November 2023

An overview of MCC’s FY24 Programs and Funding Opportunities is available HERE. Be sure to check out NEW programs including Grants for Creative Individuals and Operating Grants for Organizations.

Creative Capital

Creative Capital is a nonprofit, grantmaking organization funding artists in the creation of groundbreaking new work, amplifying the impact of their work, and fostering sustainable artistic careers.

Artist Opportunities for November and December 2023

Upcoming opportunities include The Goethe-Institut Boston Studio 170 Residencies, open to New England artists as a laboratory for ideas. (Deadline: November 17) and the Fine Arts Work Center Writing Fellowship in Provincetown, MA (Deadline: December 15).
NEFA cultivates and promotes the arts in New England and beyond.

Check the NEFA website for a wide range of resources, including:

- Recent Publications
- Arts & Accessibility
- Community Initiatives
- Racial & Social Justice Resources

The ArtsHub site regularly updates with opportunities, events, news, and more.

See profiles and list yourself here and learn about promoting yourself on NEFA’s related site: CreativeGround.

ArtsHub is an ever-evolving idea designed to highlight and bring together the amazing artists, organizations, and events that are happening within the creative communities of Western Mass.

Mass Creative advocates for a well-resourced and equitable creative sector essential to the economic and civic vibrancy of Massachusetts.

MASSCreative’s Organizing and Advocacy Fellowship is a stipended year-long advocacy leadership development cohort for artistivists, creative workers, and emerging cultural leaders to sharpen their organizing skills and grow their advocacy capacity for a more equitable and inclusive creative sector.

What | When | Where

What: Matt Kearney - Acoustic Trio
When: November 17 at 8 pm
Where: The Mahaiwe
Details: Nashville-based, Oregon-born Mat Kearney is back with January Flower, which sees Kearney in his rawest form, distilling the songwriting process and rediscovering the joy of making music.

What: Samantha Bee - Your Favorite Woman
When: November 18 at 8 pm
Where: The Mahaiwe
Details: Two-time Emmy Award-winning comedian and former host of Full Frontal with Samantha Bee is coming to The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center for what promises to be a hilarious night of stand-up comedy.
Samantha Bee, Samantha Bee, is going on tour with a new live show, Your Favorite Woman.

**What: MPZ Productions: The Tony Bennett Songbook**
**When:** November 19, 3 pm and 7 pm  
**Where:** Saint James Place

**Details:** Michael Pizzi brings his NYC cabaret to Great Barrington to sing The Tony Bennett Songbook with special guest Laura Patinkin Urken.

**What: Met Opera Live in HD: Anthony Davis's X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X**
**When:** November 19 at 1 pm  
**Where:** The Mahaiwe

**Details:** Anthony Davis's groundbreaking opera, which premiered in 1986, arrives at the Met at long last.

**What: Mary Poppins (1964)**
**When:** November 25, 3 pm  
**Where:** The Mahaiwe

**Details:** Mary Poppins is an American musical fantasy classic starring Julie Andrews as a magical nanny with a knack for adventure.

**What: GBAM: Delightful and Delectable Holiday Market**
**When:** December 2 and 3  
**Where:** Saint James Place

**Details:** Admission is FREE! The Holiday Market features the best of the Berkshires' handmade gifts and delicious giftable treats. Get ready for a stunning lineup of local artists.
Mass Office of Travel and Tourism

The Massachusetts Official Travel and Tourism (MOTT) website includes a FREE business database where you can list your business! To get started, visit their website, where you can sign on as a new business or update your information if you are already registered.

Are you making the most of the #mylocalMA campaign? Submit Your Story for a chance to be featured on social media and in MOTT's My Local MA e-newsletter. You can find more information and resources at Lovemylocalma.com.