

ON THE MARKET

Theater lies in its bones

The whole town's talking about the Haybarn Players. That was certainly once the case for the Litchfield Hills acting troupe that thrived in the former half of the 20th century, a cast whose main venue was a barn built before 1830, converted to an unpredictably popular theater in 1925, converted to a single family residence in 1986. In the earliest days of the United States, what is now a barn-style home complete with a silo entryway for added rural effect, began its existence as an actual barn. It was part of New Milford's expansive but hidden Western View Farm, which almost a century ago was bought by a wealthy New Yorker as a resort for other wealthy New York-



This barn-style home began life as a real 19th century barn, then became a 1925 playhouse, then, in 1986, was developed into an actual house.

ers. The barn became a playhouse, and there the Haybarn Players would show off such plays as "The Whole Town's Talking" for such notables as cosmetics magnate Helena Rubinstein or silent film icon Gloria Swanson. "The Western View Farm has received wide publicity," stated a 1927 article in the New Milford Times. "The reason for this was the establishment of one of the most unusual little theaters in the country." Decades later it became a camp, but by 1967 the whole of it was abandoned.



As seen here in the kitchen, the structure is held together by its original chestnut beams.

Bought as a derelict in 1981 by Gerard and Eileen Monaghan, its final transformation from a playhouse in the style of a rustic barn to a three-story dwelling in the same style was perhaps as unlikely as turning a hilly farm into a destination resort. According to the Monaghan patriarch, at first glance even an engineer deemed the structure irreparable. Then he saw the original chestnut beams, holding the structure with determination by pegs instead of nails, and changed his mind. "We kept the bones," the owner said of the antique chestnut support system, "and tore it down to the frame...connected the silo." The house of three bedrooms and two bathrooms may not be entirely original, but it is still the same footprint, the same skeleton, and the same soul. Some could argue it is better now, with an open floor plan reminiscent of its time as a barn—something listing agent Rich Pomerantz called "way ahead of its time in that respect"—a wood-burning masonry furnace, a greenhouse with hot tub, and 23 skylights for a passive solar design. And of course, as the name of the farm implied, the western view is spectacular.

—Jack Coraggio

ers. The barn became a playhouse, and there the Haybarn Players would show off such plays as "The Whole Town's Talking" for such notables as cosmetics magnate Helena Rubinstein or silent film icon Gloria Swanson. "The Western View Farm has received wide publicity," stated a 1927 article in the New Milford Times. "The reason for this was the establishment of one of the most unusual little theaters in the country." Decades later it became a camp, but by 1967 the whole of it was abandoned.

IN THE DETAILS

Listing: William Pitt Sotheby's Realty
Price: \$349,000
Bedrooms: 3 **Baths:** 2
Acreage: 1.3
Year built: Pre-1830

Do you have a home for sale with a story? We'd love to tell it. Share with Alec Johnson at ajohnson@rep-am.com.

Fairy tale comes to life in Southbury

The Chase Collegiate Upper School's Highlander Theater Company will be presenting selections from Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" at the Southbury Public Library on Friday April 8, at 6 p.m. The interactive storytelling format will invite children in the audience to become part of the story and join

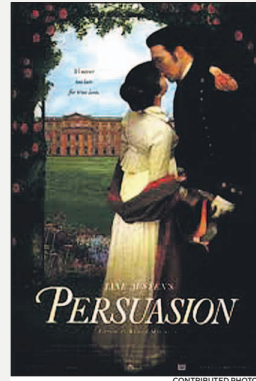


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

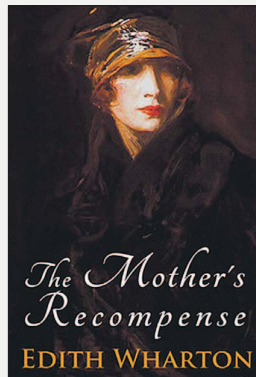
the dancers on stage, as scenes from the show are acted out as well. This production features Southbury resident Jess Cocomazzi as Cinderella, and Newtown resident Matt Auerbach as the prince. Registration for the free program is required. Details, registration: 203-262-0626, ext. 3.

Literary food for thought

Former educator and advertising executive, and perennial avid reader, Kathy Kehoe, of Washington CT, will lead two



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



book discussions on "Strong Women, Bad Choices" at Washington's Gunn Memorial Library: "Persuasion" by Jane Austen on Tuesday April 19, at 4:30 p.m., and Edith Wharton's "The Mother's Recompense," on Tuesday June 14, also at 4:30. The novels by two of classic literature's most revered female authors show how two women deal with the consequences of their questionable choices, and group input on the topic is welcome. Book copies available at the circulation desk. The program is free, with registration requested. Details, registration: 860-868-7586; www.gunnlibrary.org.

Animal Care They Depend On You To Stay Happy & Healthy

CUSTOMER REFERRAL PROGRAM

"Do you own a POODLE or GOLDEN? Get the area's lowest pricing, guaranteed!"

SPRING SPECIAL!
 10% OFF New Customer Discount!
 exp. April 30, 2016

Call THE DOG HOUSE GROOMING SHOP Now! **203-263-8549**
 ...or check us out on the web at:
TheDogHouseGroomingShop.com

JUST OFF RT. 6 WOODBURY, CT

Promote Your Pet Related Products & Services On This Page
 Contact A Classified Advisor 203.574.3636