

The background of the cover is a photograph of a rustic interior. A large, oval-shaped wicker basket with a complex woven pattern sits on a wooden crate. To its left is a smaller, rounder wicker basket. To its right is a shallow, round wicker tray with a decorative circular pattern in the center. The wooden crate is made of thick, weathered planks. Below the crate is a rough stone wall. A wooden handle, possibly for a shovel or spade, is visible on the left side. The lighting is warm and directional, coming from the left, creating strong shadows.

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# Northern HGL

HOME, GARDEN & LEISURE

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## THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to the third issue of Northern Home, Garden and Leisure. Published monthly by Studley Printing and Publishing, Northern HG&L offers feature articles, tips and information for Clinton County homeowners. Visit unique homes, get home décor and renovation advice from pros, and learn how local homeowners are getting the best out of their North Country living spaces.

This month, **Susan Rohde** and photographer **John Mitchell** visit Keeseville, New York and the home of Jimm and Carol Blakeslee-Collin. The couple moved into the stone home built in 1823 for Richard Keese II and added their own unique touch.

Next, home renovation guru **Robert Pelletier** gives a primer on slate look-alikes. For old home owners, slate roofs are both a blessing and a curse – a blessing because of the classic look; a curse because of they can be prohibitively expensive to maintain. So, an increasing number of manufacturers are producing products with the look and durability of slate without the high price tag.

With temperatures dropping, **Leonard Perry** provides suggestions for selecting hardy indoor plants that will tolerate low light conditions, neglect, and pests.



**Caroline Kehne** pays a visit to the North Country Cultural Center for the Arts for a look at the November Arms & Legs Auction. The auction is the NCCCA's signature fundraiser and provides an opportunity for everyone – regardless of talent, age, or experience level – to contribute a piece to be auctioned. It's fun, funky and raises big bucks for NCCCA art programs.

If you're thinking about selling your home, **Joshua Kretser** presents tips to help "stage" your home for prospective buyers. A "stager" by profession, Josh gives simple tips for getting the asking price from buyers.

Are you a young professional in Clinton County? The Adirondack Young Professionals want you! This group provides socializing, networking and volunteer opportunities for those starting out on the career ladder. Take a look at their recent Beasties & Beer Bash 2009 in this issue.

Congratulations to Heather Barnes for contributing a photo the November Photographer's Journal. Remember: you don't have to be a professional to contribute your favorite seasonal snapshot.

If you don't receive Northern HG&L at home, take advantage of our special introductory price of 12 monthly issues for \$20, available for a limited time only. Contact Bridgette at Studley Printing and Publishing (toll free at 1-866-563-1414 or 518-563-1414) for your home subscription.

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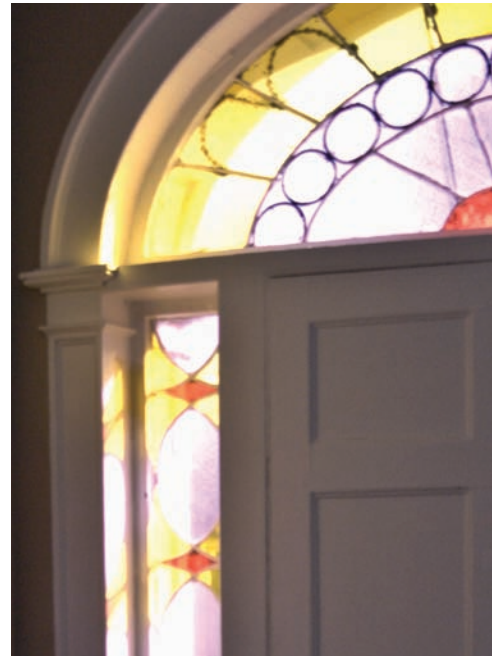
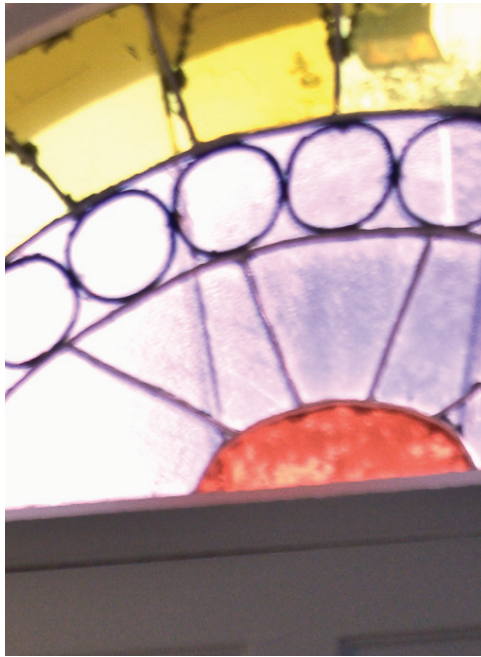
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# Transforming an Old Stone House

After almost two centuries,  
the house at 1760 Main Street  
in Keeseville, New York,  
is starting a new life.

**By Susan Rohde**  
**Photographs by John Mitchell**

It would make a fine museum, but Jimm and Carol Blakeslee-Collin have chosen to make it a living home. In 2004 the couple purchased the oldest intact house in Keeseville, New York: a two-story stone house built in 1823 for Richard Keese II, a member of the family for which the town is named. In setting up house, the new owners have honored the building's heritage but have not been held hostage to it.

On the one hand are the original features of the Keese House: the stern Dutch façade and indoor trim, the elegant pocket doors separating the living and dining rooms, the delicate fanlight above the front doorway, the handsome central fireplace, the graceful balcony at the head of the staircase.

On the other hand, there is now a distinct new presence in the house – a very personal mix of artwork and furniture which reflect the eclectic tastes and family histories of the new owners.

How did the new owners and this stately old house find each other?

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## Preamble

In the 1990s the Blakeslee-Collins started vacationing in the Adirondacks, unwinding and recharging for their fast-paced life in Washington, D.C. – Jimm as a software consultant, Carol as a producer for PBS's NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. They rented a cottage in Keene Valley, the same one each summer, and seemed content to continue this cycle indefinitely.

The turning point came in 2004,

and prepared to relocate. For Jimm, the move would not be as life-altering; as a software consultant, his home base could be anywhere.

## Matchmaking

The question then was where exactly to settle. A short commute to work was important for Carol, but more important was that the house have a sense of history. The home that Jimm and Carol would be leaving in Washington was in the Capitol

The 1823 Keese House was a perfect match.

## The Façade

Approaching the Keese House, one is struck by the stern, angular façade, unusual in the Lake Champlain region. The style reflects the family's roots in the Hudson Valley, where stepped, Dutch-style gables were more common.

The angularity of the gables is softened, however, by the rich tones



**The handsome fireplace makes an inviting centerpiece for the formal living room.**

when Carol taught an Adult Education course on change and growth. The course prompted her to take stock of her own life, to consider whether after 21 years with the NewsHour, she herself might be due for a change.

She put out feelers to Mountain Lake PBS in Plattsburgh, New York, with the upshot that she was offered the position of Executive Producer. She accepted, resigned from the NewsHour,

Hill Historic District, and they hoped to find a home in the North Country with comparable historic interest.

Cooking and entertaining were also a high priority, so the new house would need a substantial kitchen and ample space for guests.

Another requirement was an abundance of sunlight. And finally, the house should have a layout that spoke of "home."

of the stones themselves. According to Steven Engelhart, Executive Director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage, these stones were likely quarried from the banks of the Ausable River just down the hill from the construction site.

The angularity of the façade is also softened by the arched entranceway, with its fan-shaped transom, and the echoing fan design of the attic window above it.



**Photos (this page) Above:** A screened-in porch provides a tranquil setting for summer breakfasts.

**Right:** The stern, Dutch gables are softened by the fan motif of the transom and attic window.

**Photo (opposite page):** The flower gardens around the house brighten the stonework with splashes of color.

Toward the back of the house, the stone wall becomes wood siding. This section is a two-story wood-frame structure that was added on to the original house in the 1870s. The entire house, then, was completed before the end of the nineteenth century.

### Upstairs-Downstairs

The house was designed for an era when owners and their servants shared the same house but led separate, upstairs-downstairs lives. The kitchen was originally in the cellar, and the brick fireplace and oven from that time are still there, though now just a backdrop for a complex modern heating system. The cellar was also the site for the laundry, and one can still see the laundry chute that led from the owners' bedrooms upstairs down to the cellar below.

The two very different staircases in the house speak eloquently of the class distinctions of the day. The owners had the pleasure of the wide, graceful stairway leading up from the foyer to their bedrooms, with sunlight from a diamond-paned window to light their way. For the servants, there were steep,





dark steps at the back of the house which led from the cellar to their cramped sleeping quarters at the rear of the house. Both stairways still exist, though the servants' quarters have become something quite different, merged into one large office.

And at some point in the house's history, the kitchen was moved from the cellar to the ground floor. It is now a

bright and spacious room with a dining alcove flanked by a stone fireplace. A screened-in porch – a tranquil setting for summer breakfasts – opens to one side, and another wall consists of handsome, floor-to-ceiling stone, once the outer wall of the original stone building.

### **Renovating**

When the Blakeslee-Collins first came

to look at the house, they saw not only its charm but its potential. There were changes they would want to make, some to enhance esthetics and some to make the house more comfortable.

In the latter category, there was an urgent need for central heat and better insulation. The couple decided on radiant floor heating for the first floor and old-fashioned steam radiators for the second.

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Modern insulation projects that had been started by previous owners were extended to include more of the house.

To relieve the shortage of closet space and bathrooms, they converted the bedroom adjacent to the master bedroom into a bath and walk-in closet. And they brought new life to one of the existing baths, installing a new sink, new floor, new siding, and a jacuzzi. The old Keese House found itself leaping into

Carol embarked on multiple gardening projects, brightening the views around the house with splashes of color (see accompanying sidebar). Indoors, she brought that same bold sense of color to the paints she chose for the walls: sunshine yellow for a windowless corridor, Mediterranean blue surrounding the jacuzzi, a subtle peach-cream for the dining room, deep red for the library.

corner of an antique shop. And there are eBay™ treasures: a unique Western bench with a buffalo-hide seat and a couch which went from rags to riches with some creative use of fabric.

Some of her favorite things are gifts from her mother: a miniature roll-top writing desk, a sturdy brass bed, a butternut blanket chest.

Antique chairs have a special place in Carol's heart; they are to be found



**Carol has a knack for finding and giving new life to old furniture.**

modern times.

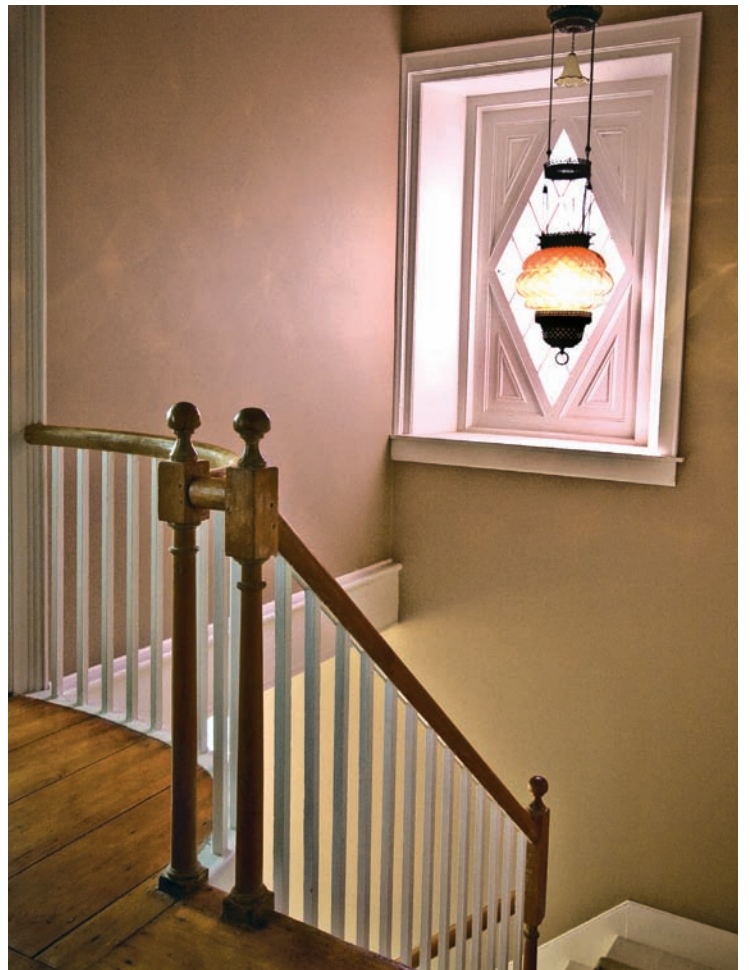
Downstairs, they balanced the formality of the living room and dining room with two informal family rooms: the "Collin Café," furnished with a flat-panel television and Eames table and chairs and, adjacent to it, a miniature library, lined with bookshelves and furnished with a classic Eames lounge chair.

### Collecting

When Carol gives you a tour of her home, it is clear that each piece in it – each piece of furniture, carpet, work of art – has a personal connection for her, a history.

Sometimes the history is the triumph of a good find. The log-cabin quilt hanging at the head of the stairs was a bargain she unearthed from the back

in all shapes and sizes in almost every room in the house. A delicate corner chair resides in one of the guest rooms, a sturdy upholstered rocker in the master bedroom, a wagon-seat bench beneath the hanging quilt. Two bedrooms share a pair of cane-seat roseback chairs. Many of the chairs in the house have been a part of Carol's life since her childhood.





The china cabinet glows with Carol's collection of flow blue.

Carol also has a weakness for fine china, particularly flow blue (so named for the glazing technique that creates a fine blurring when fired); the china cabinet glows with her collection. She is partial, too, to antique lamps, a number of which came from her family's home.

The artwork in the house reflects the taste of both Carol and Jimm. Between the two, they have brought together a wide range of styles, providing a provocative counterpoint to the traditional architecture of the house itself. The works are from around the world and spanning centuries – from historical to contemporary, from Adirondack to international.

### Home vs. Museum

The Keese House has had the good fortune to find owners who treasure its history but have brought fresh life to its halls and grounds.

At the same time, Carol's interest in historic homes has led to an unexpected twist in the direction her own life has taken. When she decided five years ago to seek change, she could not have anticipated how great those changes would be. Since her move to the North Country, she has left public broadcasting and is now the Director/Curator of the Clinton County Historical Museum. How appropriate that someone who sought and found a home with the fine qualities of a museum should now have the pleasure of running one.

*Susan Rohde is an interior designer and professional organizer, and owner of Plattsburgh-based Quiet Designs. Contact her at (518) 561-2594 or [susanrohde@charterinternet.com](mailto:susanrohde@charterinternet.com).*

## Carol's Green Thumb

When Carol first saw the state of the Keese House grounds, she knew her work was cut out for her. But this was her element, her kind of challenge: creating welcoming lawns and gardens out of land that had gone to seed.

She began by planting trees to redefine the property's perimeter and then set about creating flower gardens. The extent of the transformation is evident from a list of her plantings: bird's nest spruce (*Picea abies*), hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*), heritage birch (*Betula nigra* 'heritage'), ninebark (*Physocarpus*), arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), mugo pine (*Pinus mugo*), as well as monarda, primrose, lupine, tickseed, stokia, delphiniums, centaurea, columbine, aconitum, peonies, clethra, hydrangea, spirea, and poppies.





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# find your green thumb

## ***Easy Houseplants***

By Dr. Leonard Perry

**If you're like me and don't have time  
to fuss with houseplants,  
or are beginning and don't know  
where to begin, or just feel  
you have a brown thumb,  
there are some easy houseplants  
you might give a try.**

No matter which you grow, the key is to not over-water. If in doubt, don't water. I like to "train" my plants (leafy ones such as peace lily) to be dry to the point of starting to wilt before watering. Other tips for success: keep from drafty areas, keep from touching cold windows, keep low light plants from direct sun, and don't move from one extreme to the other without a transition period of several weeks (such as low light indoors to a full sun window).

Other than proper watering, and keeping plants warm (above 50 degrees Fahrenheit, preferably above 60 degrees Fahrenheit for most), proper light is perhaps most important. You either can choose plants to fit your light levels, or move plants to various light conditions. Low light plants do well in the interior of homes, or by a north-facing window. Medium light plants like bright, indirect light as a foot or two from west- or south-facing windows or under a lamp fixture. High light plants really need to be near (but not touching) west- or south-facing windows, or in a sunroom.



One of the most traditional plants for low light is the wide-leaved, leathery-leaved cast iron plant (*Aspidistra*) - appropriately named as it is tough as nails. It grows about two feet high and tolerates cool. There is a dwarf form you may find, also one called 'Milky Way' with white spots against the dark green leaves.

As tough as the cast iron plant, amazing plants that adapt to low light or full sun (but not quickly or at the same time), are the snake plants (*Sansevieria*). These have very tough, thick leaves, usually upright from the base to two or three feet tall. They can be green, green with gold edges, or squat with wide

**Left: The cast iron plant (*Aspidistra*) is appropriately named as it is tough as nails.**

**Opposite page: *Schefflera* drops its lower leaves with sudden changes in light or moisture, and easily gets pests.**

**Spider plant (*Chlorophytum*) is common in hanging baskets, and easy to grow.**

**Photos by Caroline Kehne.**

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green leaves. I have one in the corner of a bathroom, getting little light except from the overhead fixture, lasting for years with almost no water - just the ambient humidity.

Another of the all-time favorite low-light houseplants is the rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*). This plant can get quite large with time, and has large, thick glossy leaves. Some selections have green leaves, others are reddish. It too can adapt amazingly to full sun over time.

One of the more popular low-light and easy houseplants is the Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema*), about one to two feet high. The long, somewhat narrow leaves from the base are variously variegated, depending on cultivar, from green with some white to mostly white.

For a low light vine you might consider the Devil's ivy (*Epipremnum*), also known as pothos from a former name. There is a green form, but more commonly found are the variegated ones with either white or gold in leaves. Variegated cultivars need high light to retain this coloring, or they may turn mostly green. It is usually seen in hanging baskets, but can be trained to



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grow over and around objects such as shelving and windows.

Philodendrons are one of those indoor plants that do well in lower light, even though they grow more vigorously and denser in medium light. There are many forms, either with upright self-supporting stalks or vining types. The philodendron vines don't really climb, rather they hang from baskets or are supported to posts. The heart-leaf philodendron, with relatively small heart-shaped leaves, is one of the more commonly found.

One of my favorites for medium light (although it adapts to low light) is the peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*). The leaves on long stems reach about two feet, and another benefit is the unique and occasional white flowers on long stalks. There are several selections of this you may find, including one with white streaks in the leaves.

I use peace lily as my indicator plant for watering. Once it starts wilting I know it's time to water all my plants! I've been amazed how far it can wilt and still recover upon watering.

A popular and easy flowering houseplant many have is the African violet. Keys to success with this plant are to not get water on the leaves, water with lukewarm water and not let the pots sit in water (plants don't like to be waterlogged), and to give correct light. African violets love bright, indirect light - not direct sunlight. They grow well under grow lights, but need at least eight hours a night of darkness to bloom.

Some other commonly listed and seen easy houseplants for medium light may have some issues, such as ornamental figs (*Ficus*) getting some insects and dropping lower leaves if any changes in culture or climate. *Schefflera* also drops lower leaves with sudden changes, and easily gets pests. The dumb cane (*Dieffenbachia*) and Norfolk Island Pine are common, but over a few years often drop lower leaves getting leggy. Some of the palms can be easy, but watch closely for spider mites. Spider plant (*Chlorophytum*) is common in hanging baskets, and easy to grow, but will get brown leaf tips in low humidity.

Some high light plants include aloe (the sap is good for burns), cactus, and ponytail palm. A key to success with all these is to let them go dry between waterings.

*Leonard Perry is Extension Professor in the University of Vermont's Department of Plant and Soil Science.*





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**Above: Recycled rubber slate by Crowne on  
the Gilmore residence in Bedford, Quebec.**

In the past, when it came to roofing materials, nothing came close to the look or durability of slate. Formed from sedimentary deposits of clay and silt subjected to intense heat and geologic pressures, slate comes in a variety of colors, ranging from grey, green, black, deep purple, red and mottled purple and green. In the North Country, the slate deposits in Granville, New York and Poultney, Vermont yield a rough-surfaced slate that typically have a life expectancy of 125 or more years. However, the “aristocrat of roofing materials” does have serious drawbacks.

First, it is heavy, up to 1,200 pounds per square (a ten-foot by ten-foot area). Roof rafters and trusses have to be heavier to support the extra weight. Hence, it is unwise (and possibly dangerous) to install slate on a roof that was originally built to only support the 200 to 300 pounds per square of asphalt shingles. Second, roofing slate is extremely fragile and breaks easily when walked on. Third, repairs require specialized tools and professional roofers, which can get pricey. Because slate is so durable, it will often outlast other roofing components such as galvanized

lives. Today, replacement cost is \$1,000 per square and up.

Because of the disadvantages, many homeowners may opt for replacement with the “plain Jane” of domestic roofing, the three-tab asphalt shingle with a 20-year-plus lifespan. However, new roofing materials are now on the market that emulate the appearance of slate, but at a fraction of the cost and weight. Some “slate pretenders” have a tried-and-true performance records, others have definite problems, while some of the newest products have been on the market for only

- Is the product is compatible with your conditions? Concrete tiles with weight-reducing materials may be okay for southern states, but may fall apart in harsh North Country winters. Homes on mountain ridges that are subject to high winds may not be suitable for asphalt slate look-alikes or even the heavier recycled rubber synthetic slates that may clatter in high wind.
- Is the material fire-rated?
- Is color applied to the surface only or is it integrated into the material. Surface color may weather and fade badly over time.



**Above: Hatteras asphalt shingles by CertainTeed on Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Swanton. Natural slate is at right. In photo at right, natural slate is at left.**

flashing. Unscrupulous roofers may recommend replacing a slate roof when only the corroded metal ridge caps or valley flashings need replacement (preferably with long-lived copper) and replacement of broken slates, which are still readily available (see Sources). However, even slate has a limited lifespan, and many of the roofs installed in the early twentieth century, when slate reached its peak in popularity, are nearing the ends of their functional

a fraction their touted life expectancies. Here's the run-down of the slate look-alikes that today's homeowner can choose from.

### **Tips for Choosing Slate Look-Alikes**

Here is a checklist of things to consider when selecting a roofing material.

- Does your alternate match your old slate shingles in size and color?

- The weight of concrete tiles can rival that natural slate. Will roof reinforcement be necessary?
- What is the expected longevity?
- What kind of product warranties apply?

### **Clay Tiles**

Highly popular in Europe, clay tiles are gaining popularity in the US. They are hard, strong, have integral color or glazing and are generally interlocking. However they



**Hatteras asphalt shingle by CertainTeed on Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Swanton.**

do not have the irregular edges of real slate. Weight varies from 500 pounds to 960 pounds per square. Celadon Ceramic slates (from *CertainTeed*) have the same color and texture of natural slate plus the durability of fired ceramic.

#### **Fiber Cement Slate**

These have been manufactured since the early 1900s and have a good endurance record. However, the substitution of asbestos fibers with cellulose (wood fibers,

newsprint) or perlite resulted in premature product failure in the 1980s and 1990s. Water absorbed by the fibers expands upon freezing, causing the tiles to fall apart. Wide temperature swings could result in tile delamination. Although the material is cheaper, the installation cost can be similar to true slate.

Most of the fiber cement products of past decades have been withdrawn from the market. At 570 pounds per square, these are roughly half the weight of natural

slate. Like natural slate and other roof tiles, fiber cement tiles require a layer 30-pound roofing felt (at a minimum) because they cannot resist driving rain or snow. Storm anchors may be required in high wind areas to prevent lifting.

#### **Concrete Tiles**

Composed of cement, aggregates such as sand and perlite, and sometimes metal reinforcement, these are thicker than fiber cement and extremely heavy, from 600 to

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1320 pounds per square. They are less likely to delaminate than fiber cement because they contain no added fibers that can absorb water. They are less well-suited for steeply sloped roofs and require special installation on high wind (125 m.p.h.) areas. As for clay tiles concrete tiles are installed over battens of pressure-treated 1-inch by 2-inch lumber.

### Asphalt Shingles

Unlike the regular single-layer three-tab shingle, asphalt slate look-alikes employ two or more layers of roofing material to create softer lines and deeper shadows. These “architectural” or laminated shingles create the appearance of thick slates by careful placement

on each tab, and the Carriage House Shingle with chamfered-edge tabs. Hatteras is more subdued in color variation and has one of the highest wind warranties (110 mph) and weighs only 235 pounds per square. The Berkshire line by Owens Corning also has a limited lifetime warranty, as does Iko’s Crowne Slate line of shingles. Elk Corporation produces the Capstone line of slate look-alike shingle. While none of the asphalt slate look-alikes are as convincing as fiber cement, concrete or recycled rubber slates, they have the advantage that they can be installed by the homeowner without specialized tools. Some brands purposefully have great variability in color between tabs to create an informal, animated surface. This busy harlequin effect is suitable for informal country



**Left: Recycled rubber slate by Ecostar comes in a variety of shapes and colors.**



**Right: Recycled rubber slate by Inspire has built-in color variations.**

of layers and applied shadow lines. The extra thickness usually prolongs lifespan from the 20 years of regular shingles to 40 or 50 years. Some manufacturers also incorporate copper into the surface granules to prevent growth of algae and lichen.

Weight varies from 270 to 450 pounds per square. They are relatively easy and inexpensive to install. CertainTeed produces the extra heavy Grand Manor Shingle (425 pounds per square) with a limited lifetime warranty, Centennial Slate with random colors

cottages and cabins, but may be out of place for more formal Federal and Victorian house styles.

### Embossed Metal

This material has a long history as a roofing material, and in fact one manufacturer (W. F. Norman) still uses its nineteenth-century dies to stamp out interlocking galvanized steel or copper shingles with a chamfered edge shingle pattern. Metal is both lightweight

and fireproof. Galvanized metal (\$3.50 per tile, 145 tiles per square) is about half the cost of slate, while copper at \$10.50 each is comparable with the advantage over galvanized that it does not require periodic painting. W.F. Norman also produces an array of stamped ornamental metal (zinc, copper or brass) ridge caps, valleys, brackets and cresting that can be used with other slate look-alikes or even real slate roofs.

Interlock produces the lightest of the look-alikes. The interlocking sheets of slate-patterned embossed aluminum tip the scales at a mere 50 to 70 pounds per square, do not rust, resist weathering, cool down fast after sunset and are recyclable.

### Recycled Rubber

The newest class of “slate pretenders” is made from recycled car tires and polypropylene plastic. The material is injected into molds that copied exactly the surface texture and edge roughness of real slate. Unlike slate, they are flexible and can be walked on, but they can be murderously slippery. Some brands come only in uniform colors, which results in a slightly artificial appearance

when compared to the slight color variations of real slate. Recycled rubber slates were pioneered in Canada by Crowne Building Products, which offers realistically-molded slates in a variety of solid colors. The MajesticSlate line from Ecostar is available in a variety of shapes, such as plain edged, chamfered edge, rounded edge (“beavertail”) and chisel point to create a diamond pattern. Tiles by Inspire Roofing incorporate color irregularities and blended colors to add visual interest. One of the most convincing synthetic slates are made by DaVinci Roofscapes.

Recycled rubber slates are generally rated for a 50-year life expectancy, but since they are relatively new to the market, only time will tell if they live up to expectations. Some recycled rubber products are sold as panels instead of individual slates. Although these panels install quickly, differences in fading between panels can result in large square blocks of mismatched color after a few years. Differential fading is much less apparent when it is randomly distributed over individual slates. The author has also noted a certain amount of edge curling after five years on a house with a southern exposure and inadequate attic



**W.F. Norman produced a similar galvanized steel chamfered slate as on this 1800s cottage.**

ventilation, which underlines that performance of any of these roofing materials will depend on whether the manufacturers' installation recommendations are followed. Although well-rated for high winds, some clattering of slates has been noted under these conditions. (This can be alleviated by applying a dab of adhesive caulk under the slate at installation.) These range in weight from 188 to 300 pounds per square. As for real slate, one can create polychromatic designs. Unlike the fiber cement slates of decades past, recycled rubber slates have not been the subject of widespread customer complaints or recalls.

### **Slate-Resin Composites**

Vande Hey-Raleigh produces a lightweight (245 lbs per square) molded slate composed of ground slate, resin and fiberglass reinforcement. It is a convincing slate substitute with all the surface irregularities of the real thing. This is a relatively new type of product on the market. "Distinction" composite slates by Trimline Building Products come in pairs and have the thick profile of natural slate and a track record of seven years that so far appears to be living up to its 50-year warranty.

### **Final Comments**

The choice of materials will be partly dictated by taste, which is highly subjective, and whether the appearance is appropriate with the color of body of house and style. Other considerations are cost and whether roof framing strong enough. If in doubt, consult a structural engineer or building inspector before committing to a heavy roofing material.

Because all the "slate pretenders" have longer life spans than regular three-tab asphalt shingles, it makes little sense to skimp with short-lived roofing accessories such as underlayment, fasteners (preferably stainless steel or copper) and flashing (terne-coated stainless steel or copper) that will fail before the slates do. Many older natural slate roofs fail not because of the slate deterioration, but because cheap iron nails have corroded. The slates on such roofs can be salvaged and reinstalled with more durable materials. Don't mix metals: copper flashing requires copper nails and preferably copper gutters to prevent galvanic corrosion. To properly evaluate the condition of an existing slate roof and get tips on proper installation techniques, consult the invaluable brief produced by the National Park Service at [www.nps.gov/history/nps/tps/briefs/brief29.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nps/tps/briefs/brief29.htm).

When choosing a roofing material, try to find actual installations to view. Roofing contractors and hardware stores can often suggest local examples to examine. Talk to the homeowners on their degree of satisfaction. Otherwise, try to examine store samples from a distance outside in natural sunlight. For best results, mix the slates from three or four different pallets upon installation to avoid any obvious color discrepancies resulting from slight tint differences between batches.

When it comes to choosing a brand new product, remember that you are participating in an experiment and that you cannot rely necessarily on manufacturer warranty to ensure performance. Unfortunately, some warranties are legal documents that are used as a marketing tool that are more for the protection of the manufacturer than the consumer.

## **RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

### **Natural Slate:**

Greenstone Slate Co. 325 Upper Road, P.O. Box 134.  
Poultney, VT. 05764. 802-287-4333.  
[www.greenstoneslate.com](http://www.greenstoneslate.com)

Hilltop Slate Co. Rt. 22A, P.O. Box 201.  
Middle Granville, NY. 12849. 518-642-2270.

### **Fiber Cement:**

Re-Con Building Products. Portland, OR.  
1-877-276-7663. [www.re-con.com](http://www.re-con.com).

### **Concrete:**

Auburn Tile, Inc. Ontario, CA. 1-888-984-2841.  
[www.auburntile.com](http://www.auburntile.com).

Columbia Concrete Products. Canada.  
1-877-388-8453. [www.crooffile.com](http://www.crooffile.com).

Monierlifetile. Irvine, CA. 1-800-273-7663.  
[www.Monierlifetile.com](http://www.Monierlifetile.com).

Richmond Precast Concrete Products.  
Richmond, VA. 1-800-276-8262.

### **Asphalt Shingles:**

CertainTeed Corporation. P.O. Box 860.  
Valley Forge, PA. 19482. 1-800-345-1145.  
[www.certainteed.com](http://www.certainteed.com).

Elk Corp. 14643 Dallas Parkway. Dallas, TX.  
1-800 945-5545. [www.elkcorp.com](http://www.elkcorp.com).

Iko. Wilmington, DE. 1-888-456-7663. [www.iko.com](http://www.iko.com).

Owens Corning. Toledo, OH. 1-800-438-7465.  
[www.owenscorning.com](http://www.owenscorning.com).

### **Embossed Metal:**

W. F. Norman Corp. 214 North Cedar. P.O. Box 323.  
Nevada, MT. 64772. [www.wfnorman.com](http://www.wfnorman.com).

Interlock Roofing Ltd. 1-888-766-3661.

### **Recycled Rubber:**

Crowne Building Products. Ontario, Canada.  
905 529-6818. [www.authentic-roof.com](http://www.authentic-roof.com).

DaVinci Roofscapes. 1413 Osage Ave. Kansas City, KS.  
66105. 1-800-328-4624. [www.davinciroofscapes.com](http://www.davinciroofscapes.com).

Ecostar. 104 Terrace Drive. Mundelein, IL. 60060.  
1-800-211-7170. [www.ecostar.carlisle.com](http://www.ecostar.carlisle.com).

Inspire Roofing Products. 1-800-971-4148.  
[www.InspireRoofing.com](http://www.InspireRoofing.com).

Royal Building Products. Ontario, Canada.  
604 291-8171. [www.royplas.com](http://www.royplas.com).

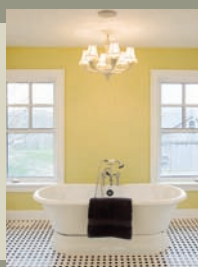
### **Slate-Resin Composite:**

Trimline Building Products. 705 Pennsylvannia Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN. 55426. 1-800-438-2920.  
[www.trimline-products.com](http://www.trimline-products.com).

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which took place Saturday, November 7  
at the Strand Theatre in Plattsburgh.**



**Above: Rustic lovers may want to settle into "Forest Reflections", a creation of Dana Dupell.  
Right: A mandala table, hand-painted in UV and weather-resistant acrylic paint by Amanda Palmer.**



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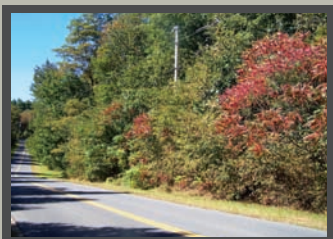
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**T**he Arms & Legs Auction has become the NCCCA's signature event, says Leigh Mundy, NCCCA Board President and Event Chair. Each year, the organization extends an invitation to area artists, artisans, and creative noodlers to submit an original piece of decorative art. Although repurposed chairs and tables are perennial favorites, this year's selection included a personal tool box, a display box, shelf and mirror made of driftwood, a handmade quilt, plant stands and hand-knitted gloves and socks. Some are serious pieces of home décor, while others are pure whimsy, such as the "Adiron-Duct Chair" (made



Clockwise from left: "Sitting Pretty" created by Gisele Hanson using acrylic, pastel, and pencils and coated with a clear acrylic varnish for protection.

A driftwood display box by Bill Crosby.

"The Queen" by Sally Booth transforms a family heirloom into a piece of Adirondack whimsy.



**It's all in good fun for a good cause. Proceeds benefit the NCCCA's art education programs, providing material costs and providing art scholarships.**

with duct-tape webbing), "The Queen" (a chair suitable for even non-royal posteriors), or "Raquette River" chair (combining badminton rackets and Adirondack landscapes).

It's all in good fun for a good cause. Proceeds benefit the NCCCA's art education programs, providing material costs and providing art scholarships. Over forty items were included in this year's catalog and auctioned off by guest auctioneer Stephen Martin.

On November 7, 2009, the NCCCA also opened its 2009 Regional Juried Exhibition, which will run November 7 through 28, 2009. Stop by and see an exhibition of photography, jewelry, painting, sculpture, ceramics and more by a selection of the area's outstanding artists and artisans.



The North Country Cultural Center for the Arts (NCCCA) is now located in the former Federal Building at 23 Brinkerhoff Street in Plattsburgh. Fall hours (September through November) are Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. For more information, call the NCCCA at (518) 563-1604.

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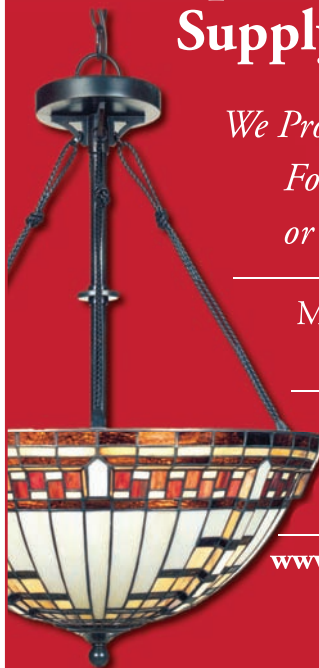
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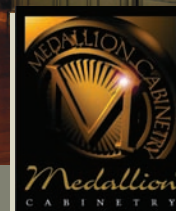
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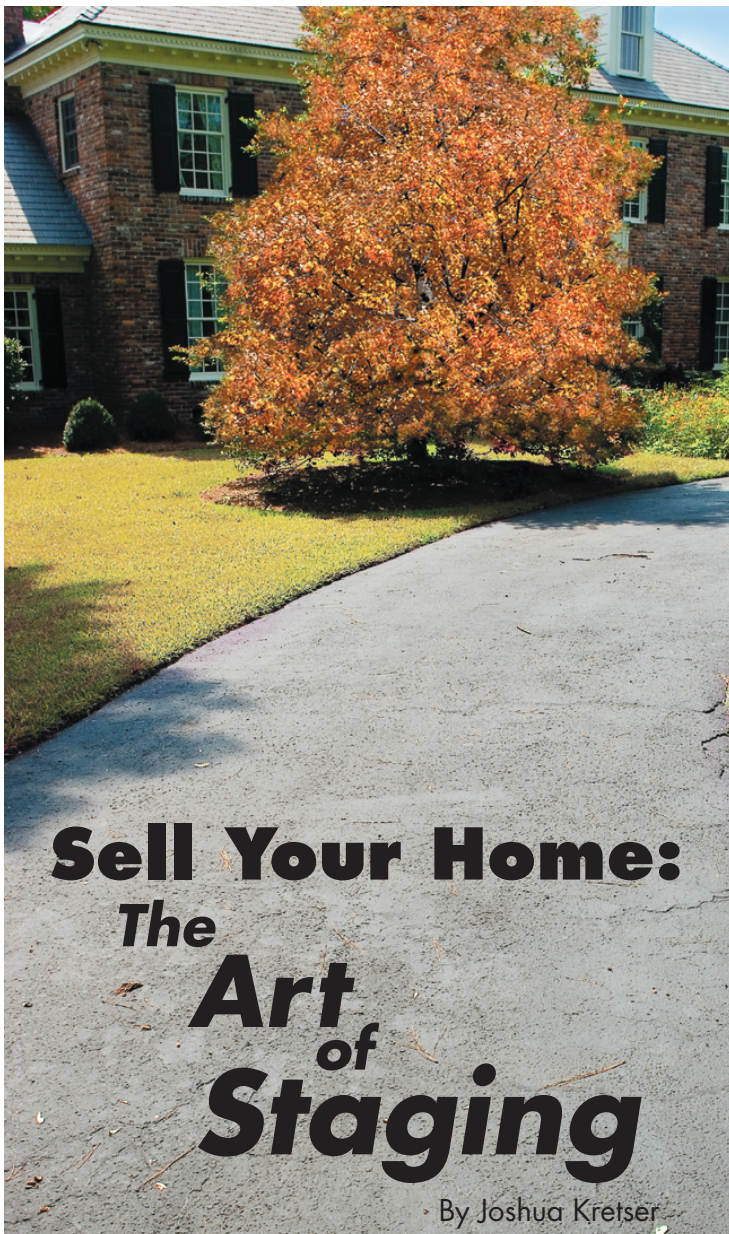
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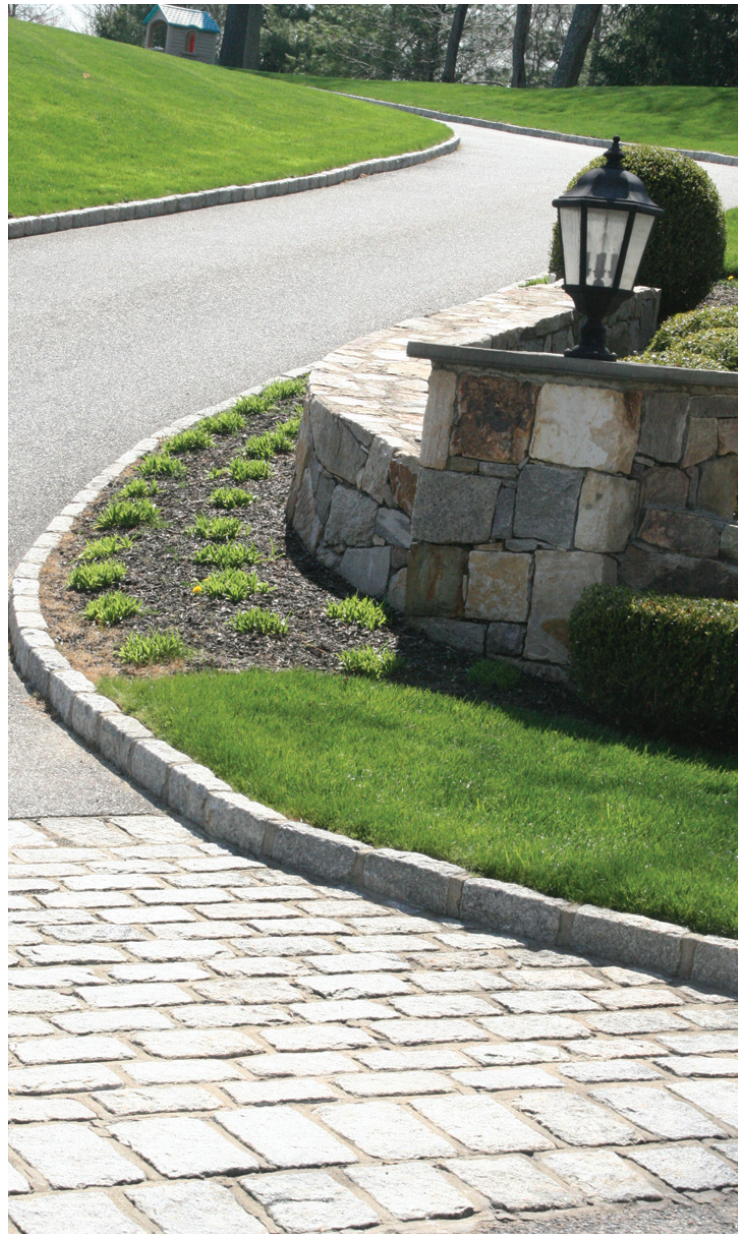
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# Sell Your Home: The Art of Staging

By Joshua Kreiser



Andy begins his weekend by sitting in his kitchen sipping his morning cup of coffee. He dreams of packing away his life in boxes and totes and transporting his memories to a new place, where he and his family will begin to grow roots for a new chapter in their lives.

In his vision, his new home is slowly becoming reality. That practically perfect rambling ranch home with the meticulously manicured yard, wraparound porch and views of Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains is nearly within reach. He sees himself driving down a long driveway, casting his gaze upon a dwelling that he is excited and proud to call his home. At that moment, the dog barks and abruptly snaps Andy back to reality.

He scans his kitchen for Gunther's leash and finds it on a chair beneath two jackets and some empty shopping bags. He shakes his head in disgust at the amount of clutter in his 1980s-vintage kitchen. He exits the kitchen and takes notice of the missing baseboard molding at the foot of the door. The 20-year-old

linoleum in the hallway leading to the front door is cracked, and the wallpaper depicting chickens standing in various poses has peeled at the corners.

Gunther pulls his owner out the front door and Andy notes the faded stain covering the boards on his front porch. As the dog pauses for a moment to sniff an overgrown juniper bush, Andy stares at the "For Sale" sign near the road at front of his home. It leans toward the ground. Andy remembers back one year ago when the realtor tapped the sign into the ground with a mallet and a smile. As he surveys his property he begins to think that he and his family will never find someone who will want to buy their home. Andy knows he needs to take action; but he has no idea what to do.

Andy is not alone in his dilemma. Making property desirable to prospective home buyers can be a daunting task. If the owner has lived in their home for a number of years, many details that have the potential of dissuading buyers will go overlooked. Here are a few suggestions on how to successfully "stage" your home for an open house or buyer visits.



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## Curb Appeal

First impressions play a major role during any prospective buyer's visit to your property. Take a drive around your community and pay close attention to the homes you pass. Which homes catch your attention? What is it about these homes that make you want to pull into the driveway? The answer is curb appeal. Now, walk to the road facing your home and look at your property in the same way you view other homes in your area. How does your property compare?

a few new bags to freshen the entrance to your home. Mow your lawn. Any peeling paint or fading stain can be easily addressed with a trip to your local home improvement store and some good old fashion elbow grease.

## Clean the Clutter

During a home visit prospective buyers will look in your closets! Let's start by emptying your favorite closet. Create a few different staging areas such as: items to keep, items to give away and items to throw away. You

unload those unwanted items while making some money in the process. If the idea of a garage sale does not appeal to you, then call an area auction house. Many of them will come to your home, take away your unwanted items, sell them and then bring you a check (minus their commission). By removing the clutter, you have visually increased the size of your closets and storage areas while also deciding what you will take with you when you do move to your new home.



Left: Be sure that any hedges are trimmed evenly; and if you have landscaping material such as mulch, buy a few new bags to freshen the entrance to your home.



Right: Any peeling paint or fading stain can be easily addressed with a trip to your local home improvement store and some good old fashioned elbow grease.

Start with looking at your driveway. If it is paved asphalt, when is the last time you had it sealed? Get rid of those few cracks that you may have become accustomed to. A smoothly paved driveway will make a great first impression to someone pulling onto your property for the first time.

Do you have any landscaping in the front of your home? If so, be sure that any hedges are trimmed evenly; and if you have landscaping material such as mulch, buy

may want to call in an impartial second party who has no emotional attachment to your belongings to help you decide what stays and what goes.

Once you have completed your first closet move on to the other storage areas in your home. Remember that one person's trash is another's treasure. Once you have decided what you need to give/throw away plan a garage sale before your first buyer's visit or open house. It is a great way to

## Remove/Replace/Rearrange

When preparing your home for sale, remember that you are trying to appeal to the largest possible number of people whom all have varying tastes in home décor. In this case, less is more. Take down all framed personal photographs from the wall or any tables or stands and pack them away in boxes for your move. Homebuyers want to see themselves living in your home, not you and your family.

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**Clean your closets and storage areas. Remember: during a home visit prospective buyers will look in your closets!**

Also pack away your collectables. Not everyone will love your Hummel's as much as you do and they can be distracting on a buyer's visit to your home. Repair any issues your home may have such as missing switch plate covers or moldings. Survey your home looking for out dated features such as wall coverings, window treatments and light fixtures. Buyers are, in most cases, looking for a home that is "move in" ready.

When choosing replacement home accents remember to bring in neutral items that would appeal to most buyers. If you have outdated or worn furniture or appliances, consider replacing them. The new furniture you purchase will be taken with you to your new home and new appliances will most likely give you a positive return on the investment. An easy and inexpensive way to freshen up out-of-date cabinets is by replacing the knobs and pulls with more contemporary fixtures.

Now that some simple changes and repairs have been made, it is time to assess the configuration of your home furnishings. Again, it may be wise to bring in an impartial and knowledgeable second party to assist with this portion of your home's transformation. To start, be sure that you do not have too many furniture pieces in any given room. Too much furniture will visually decrease the size of a room. Move any excess furniture out of the house and into temporary storage. You do not want to take up space in your garage or basement with these pieces. Try moving your furniture into different configurations until you find the position that best capitalizes on things such as views from windows or a fireplace.

During this process, remember to try to view your property through prospective home buyer's eyes. Although a great deal of effort and some financial expenditures may be necessary to prepare your home to be viewed by home buyers, your hard work and financial expenditure is sure to pay off. Following these guidelines will help aid you in selling your home and will help you to take the next step in home ownership.

*Joshua Kretser returned to Plattsburgh after a decade of studying design and working in Manhattan. He is the owner of pod studio in Plattsburgh specializing in Interior Design, Home Staging, Event Planning and Organization.*



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# BEASTIES AND BEER for Young Business Professionals



Text Caroline Kehne  
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**Left: Amy Kretser of Plattsburgh, NY**

The noise coming from Court Street on Halloween Eve was enough to wake the dead, but this October 31 fundraiser for Adirondack Young Professionals Organization (ADKYP) was full of life. The Beasties and Beer Bash 2009, a costume party organized and hosted by Josh Kretser, owner of pod studio, brought out youthful ghouls, vampires, beasties and beauties from the area's professional and artistic communities for a night of mid-autumn revelry.

**Below: Alisha Alexander of Studley Printing & Publishing; Keri Mack, Workforce Investment Board; Jeremiah Papineau, Editor of the Free Trader; Stacie Papineau of the Plattsburgh City School District.**





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ADKYP (not to be confused with the Adirondack Young Professionals of the Glens Falls area) was founded in the fall of 2007 with a mission "to create opportunities for young professionals to network, socialize, and serve the greater Adirondack community." The result of a group project sponsored by the Workforce Investment Board's Leadership Class of 2007, the group aids and encourages young professionals starting out in the community. VP Keri Mack says that despite its name, there are no age limits for membership, though typical member age falls in the range of 21 to 45 years.





**Opposite page:** Erica Exner of Plattsburgh, NY; Suzanne Fountain, Glens Falls National Bank; Sean Frey of Elfs Farm.

**Above:** Norman Jabaut from Rouses Point; Michael Lavigne of WPTZ Channel 5; Josh Kretser, pod studio.

**Below:** ADKYP guests mingle.

The group offers both individual memberships for \$20 per year and corporate memberships for \$100 per year. Members are admitted free or at a discount to group events and receive a discount card good at area businesses.

Events are monthly or twice-monthly and include networking, social and volunteer activities. Mack says that even social events incorporate community involvement through

small acts such as donations a non-perishable food item for a local food bank or items for a local humane society.

The ADKYP extends thanks to Plattsburgh Distributing for donation of spirits, to Price Chopper and Hannaford for Supermarkets for treats, Foster's Rental for donation of the tent, and Westaff and ETS for monetary donations.



The next event is tentatively set for December 10, when volunteers will wrap presents for the Christmas Bureau. Whether you're new to the area or a native getting a foot in the door of the business community, ADKYP wants you! Check them out on Facebook or Twitter, or check them out soon at their new website (currently under construction) at [www.adkyp.com](http://www.adkyp.com). Reach them by email at [info@adkyp.com](mailto:info@adkyp.com) or call (518) 335-8125.

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NORTHERN HOME, GARDEN and LEISURE

# Photographer's Journal

NOVEMBER



Point au Roche  
By Heather Barnes-Bradt

Heather writes: "I was born in the Bronx, continually moved north and finally settled in Plattsburgh 20 years ago. As with many area transplants, I fell in love with the Adirondack Mountains. Every time I go hiking in Point au Roche I feel like I've come home."

Each month we invite our readers to submit a photo that illustrates life in the North Country through the months and seasons. Photos may be landscapes, abstract or portraiture. The photo that best illustrates the season or month or mood will be published in an upcoming issue.

Submissions should include the photographer's name, address, phone number or email address. Entries may be submitted as color prints or digital files, but no originals, please. Images must be 300 dpi and a minimum (approximate) size of 5 inches by 7 inches. Submission is open to professionals and amateurs. Please include a brief description of subject

matter/location and a brief bio of photographer. Submissions MUST be received by the deadline to be considered. Digital files may be sent to [production@studleyprinting.com](mailto:production@studleyprinting.com), "Attention NHGL Photo Journal". A hard copy can be dropped off at Studley Printing & Publishing, 4701 Route 9, Plattsburgh, Monday-Friday 8am to 5pm.

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