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STEWARD OF A LANDMARK



Meg Sullivan takes a phone order at Joe's Café in Northampton, Feb. 26. For a story on Sullivan, the first solo owner of Joe's, and the first woman to run the restaurant since Camella and Joe Biandi opened its doors more than 70 years ago, see Page C1.

Belchertown teen dies in Granby crash

By JACQUELYN VOGHEL Staff Writer

GRANBY — A Belchertown teenager died Tuesday in an early morning car crash in Granby, according to Massachusetts State Police. Brendan Conroy, 18, who was a senior at Belchertown High School, was killed when the vehicle he was driving crashed into a stone wall and tree on East State Street (Route 202), according to the Northwestern district attorney's office. Conroy was the only person in the vehicle and he was pronounced dead at the scene. Granby police had responded to a report of a Nissan Xterra "operating erratically" on Monday at around midnight. An officer located the vehicle traveling north on Route 202. The driver then allegedly "sped away from the officer," passed another vehicle, lost control and crashed, state police said. "It's hard for the community and the whole school," said Matt Crutch, head coach of the Belchertown High School varsity hockey team. Conroy was a member of the hockey team, but was not active on the team at the time of his death, Crutch said. "It's been difficult times," Crutch said, adding that the team has to "rely on each other to help each other through it. A difficult time, though." Conroy was due for a court appearance on March 6 af-

SEE TEEN A7

Protecting houses of worship

Faith leaders, police get safety primer

By LUIS FIELDMAN Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — Many churches and houses of worship are uniquely positioned within a community because they welcome people of diverse backgrounds in pursuit of spiritual growth. These institutions, however, have a "unique vulnerability" because of their welcoming nature, Thomas Gillan, an expert on church safety and security, told faith leaders and law enforcement officials at the city's senior center on Tuesday. The



Thomas Gillan, an expert on church safety and security, speaks Tuesday at the Northampton Senior Center.

Northwestern district attorney's office and Northampton Police Department invited Gillan as part of a training conference addressing

safety at places of worship. "Does anybody know the number one vulnerability that places of worship have?" Gillan asked the large crowd on hand. Audience members guessed financial fraud and children, but Gillan said they were wrong. "It's that everybody is welcome," said Gillan, a trainer for the Florida security firm Training Force USA. In recent years, mass shootings at houses of worship have shocked the nation. In Pittsburgh, 11 people were killed in October 2018 at the Tree of Life Congregation. In Sutherland Springs, Texas, 26 people were killed in November 2017 at the First Baptist Church. In Charleston,

SEE CHURCH A7

Border agency sees family migration surge

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of migrant families crossing the southwest border is again breaking records, and the crush is overwhelming border agents and straining facilities, officials said Tuesday. More than 76,000 migrants crossed the U.S.-Mexico border last month, more than double the number from the same period last year. Most were families coming in ever-increasingly large groups — there were 70 groups of more than 100 people in the past few months, and they cross illegally in extremely rural lo-

cations with few agents and staff. There were only 13 large groups during the previous budget year, and only two the year before. The system "is well beyond capacity, and remains at the breaking point," U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said a press conference Tuesday. The new figures reflect the difficulties President Donald Trump has faced as he tries to cut down on illegal immigration, his signature issue. But it could also help him make the case that there truly is a national

SEE BORDER A7

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WEATHER TODAY Cloudy and cold, with a bit of wind thrown in. 24° Page A2 Drawing by Oscar Reich Fort River Elementary School, Amherst



NORTHAMPTON

Dissecting US interest in Venezuela

Speakers decry Trump's bid to rearrange another foreign government

By DUSTY CHRISTENSEN Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — U.S. interventions in other countries' affairs have been numerous over the years, and those gathered at the Northampton Friends Meeting on

Tuesday night had no trouble naming many of them. "From Vietnam to the Dominican Republic, to Grenada, to El Salvador, Guatemala," local activist Marty Nathan began as others began to chime in: "Chile," "Nicaragua," "Honduras," "Somalia," "Iraq" and so on. "Everybody can remember something that made their stomachs turn and made them go, 'Oh, there they go again.'" It was a packed house at the Quaker meeting space, where

dozens came to hear two local experts talk about the latest intervention that has peace activists in the Pioneer Valley saying "there they go again" — Venezuela. Hector Figarella, a local Venezuelan activist, and journalist and scholar Vijay Prashad gave a presentation about the role the United States is playing in that country's current crisis. Figarella began by focusing on

SEE VENEZUELA A7

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A slice of sisterhood



Joe's Cafe in Northampton.

STAFF PHOTO/JERREY ROBERTS

Joe's Cafe owner Meg Sullivan preserves the past while reshaping the culture of a city landmark

Note: This profile grew out of an assignment for a Smith College writing workshop. The class, titled "Writing Women," was taught by journalist and author Susan Faludi.

By KATHERINE KEENAN
For the Gazette

For years, Meg Sullivan, the owner of Joe's Cafe, has lived and worked within the same 50 yards. Her blue house sits next to the restaurant on Market Street, so close, in fact, that Joe's signature, neon sombrero sign shines its light through her upstairs window.

Most mornings, around 8:30 a.m., Sullivan walks to Tart Baking Co. on Main Street to get coffee and a pastry. She then walks back, opens the

door to Joe's Cafe and begins her workday. She calls this her "morning commute." A burst of cold air follows behind her as she makes her way over to the bar and sits down at one of the stools. Piles of receipts and notebooks rest on the counter in front of her. The air carries the distinct smell of lemon-scented cleaning solution.

Sullivan picks up a television remote and mutes the sounds coming from a sports channel. Above the screen hangs a long string of yellow-and-white golf tournament banners.

A figure moves through the dining room with a mop and bucket: Petra "Peggy" Delvalle, who cleans the restaurant every morning. Sullivan,

SEE JOE'S CAFE C2



STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS

Meg Sullivan, owner of Joe's Cafe, gets the cash register ready for a busy night after doing paperwork that morning.



STAFF PHOTO/JERREY ROBERTS

Meg Sullivan talks to Pat Joyce at Joe's Pizza in Northampton.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/JOANNA CHATTMAN

Aelan Tierney.

Kuhn Riddle Architects becomes area's 3rd woman-owned firm

By ANGELA KIRCHNER
For the Gazette

Kuhn Riddle Architects became the third woman-owned business architecture firm in the Pioneer Valley when Aelan Tierney stepped in as majority shareholder and president of the company in 2018.

Tierney said she became interested in the field when she completed an internship program at a local architecture firm in high school. She designed a teen center, a project she cared about as a high school student.

"I got to pick a site, and build a model, and do drawings, and it influenced what I wanted to do when applying to schools," Tierney said.

Tierney said her transition into the role of president at Kuhn Riddle Architects was a very deliberate move. The firm, located in

SEE KUHN RIDDLE C2

'Business shoes in front, party in back'

How two Hampshire grads-turned-businesswomen are leading the charge in co-retailing

By JACQUELYN VOGHEL
Staff Writer

Strada Shoes and Essentials stationery and gift shop have always shared a similar customer base, according to their owners. But since fall 2017, the two shops have grown dramatically closer: They now share the same roof, with Strada occupying the front of the 108 Main Street space and Essentials covering the back.

Or as Essentials owner Colette Katsikas puts it: "Business shoes in front, party in back."

The splitting of the store area — which previously housed an antique store briefly and, before that, The Mercantile gift store — is an example of co-retailing, a rising trend in which two or more businesses operate out of the same space.

Like Katsikas, Strada owner Anna Bowen is an alumna of Hampshire College; both attended the school in the early 1990s, although Katsikas graduated later in 2000. Bowen studied photography, Katsikas feminist theory and film/video production. In the mid-90s, Katsikas worked at the natural food store Cornucopia, while Bowen worked at Strada. They knew of each other but didn't really know each other well.



STAFF PHOTO/KEVIN GUTTING

Strada owner Anna Bowen, left, comes over to say hi to Essentials owner Colette Katsikas as she arrives back at the retail space they share on Main Street in Northampton.

Then, in late 2016, a mutual friend realized that Katsikas and Bowen were both ready to move on from leases that were about to expire — at the time, Katsikas leased the space for Essentials just down the block at 88 Main Street, while Bowen was leasing a space in Thornes — and suggested that the two businesses might be a good fit. Before the two shops came together, Essentials and

Strada were both well-established downtown, with Strada founded in 1994 and Essentials in 1985.

"It happened really fast," Katsikas said. "I feel like I'm telling our courtship story ... I just knew she was the one."

When Strada & Essentials opened at the 108 Main St. space in fall 2017, Mayor David Narkewicz officiated the business union with a ribbon-cut-

ting ceremony. Bowen and Katsikas fed each other cake, and Narkewicz pronounced them co-retailers.

It seemed like a match meant to be. But when their mutual friend first suggested co-retailing, Bowen said she initially had doubts about the idea, as she had been looking forward to leading Strada inde-

SEE TWO BUSINESSWOMEN C3

Joe's Cafe owner Meg Sullivan

FROM C1

Delvalle and the prep cooks will work through the morning, preparing for what likely will be a busy night.

Often, customers start showing up the moment Joe's Cafe opens at 4 p.m.

"It's Northampton's living room," says one customer.

"Not a lot of places have this old-school feel, that hometown feel," says Al Borowski of Easthampton, who says he comes to Joe's Cafe every week.

At another table, four friends proudly boast that they all have Joe's Cafe T-shirts.

"Sundays are for Joe's," says Shelley Smiarowski of Hatfield, one of the women at the table.

Joe's Cafe, or Joe's Pizza and Spaghetti House, has been a city staple since 1938. The menu sports a medley of Italian and American cuisine, featuring, among other dishes, hearty oven-baked lasagna, Spanish clams or mussels, and thin-crust pizzas with toppings that range from the classic to the innovative.

Much of the menu has stayed the same for as long as Sullivan can remember, but a chalkboard of specials — dreamed up, for the most part, by Sullivan — brings fresh concepts.

One special dish, "Linguini Molinari," Sullivan named after Italian golfer Francesco Molinari. After attending the Williston Northampton School in Easthampton, Sullivan went to Amherst College, where she played on the golf team. Her father, Jack Sullivan, has been an avid golfer for years and introduced his daughter to the sport.

It was while studying history at Amherst that Sullivan began working at Joe's Cafe.

"I figured she'd be on Wall Street, not Market Street," one customer says of her. "She doesn't have to Google anything."

History preserved

"How's it goin'?" Sullivan calls out to a couple who just came in. Sullivan's voice has a rough sturdiness to it. She rounds the corner from the kitchen and bustles around, opening bottles, pouring beers and corralling customers. A woman spots Sullivan and turns to her husband, saying quietly that they should talk to Sullivan and see if she can get them a table any faster.

Not only does Sullivan know everyone; she seems to be genuinely friends with them. With her blond ponytail, darting blue eyes and no-nonsense attitude, she has this restaurant wrapped around her finger.

Around her, patrons wait for tables, eager to order their \$5.50 plates of spaghetti and meatballs. Katie Lyons, another waitress at Joe's and one of Meg's close friends, winds through the dining room with steaming heaps of pasta. Customers admire the restaurant's original details: signed dollar bills in frames,

dozens of colorful college pennants, a UMass football helmet from the 1996 national championship, a Silver City jukebox, and, in one corner, a painted sign that reads "JU 4-3229," which old-timers say was the number patrons used to call for a taxi.

Murals line the nicotine-browened walls: sprawling paintings of Argentine gauchos whose faded mouths almost seem to chatter along with the room. Joe's Cafe is famous for them — they were painted in the 1950s by James Waldron, whose work can be seen in numerous restaurants around Northampton. Sullivan says they get two to three questions about the murals every night. A few times a year, customers will come in expecting to get a menu with burritos and tacos on it, she says. Sullivan isn't entirely sure why the gauchos were painted in the first place, but people have their theories.

"It's kinda fun having [them] on the wall for an Italian place. I guess it plays into the Northampton melting pot because I'm Irish and Polish running an Italian place," Sullivan says.

"Me and my friend Katie," she adds, "after a couple of drinks at the end of the night, we make up these scenarios about the gauchos ... kind of like 'Night at the Museum.' Like if the characters came alive, maybe they could all say what they saw that night."

The murals and eclectic decor aren't the only reminders of the past. Sullivan and many others at the restaurant love to tell stories about Mrs. Biandi, one of the original owners of the restaurant.

Mrs. Biandi used to stir the spaghetti sauce in the front window, or so the legend goes.

Many believe that her ghost still haunts the restaurant in subtle ways, like when the jukebox begins to play songs without being touched, or when someone sent to the



STAFF PHOTO/JERREY ROBERTS

Meg Sullivan serves a couple at Joe's Pizza in Northampton.

basement to grab a keg hears an unidentifiable clatter.

"In my younger years, when I was a skittish 20-year-old working here," says Sullivan, "the older waitresses would say 'Oh, Meaghan, don't go down in the basement alone! Mrs. Biandi fell down those stairs. The basement is haunted!'"

When Joe's Cafe first opened in 1938, the restaurant was little more than Camella and Joe Biandi cooking spaghetti for their neighbors. Eventually, the original duo moved on, replaced by brothers Tony and Joe Caruso. Then came Gerry Rainville and Jack Sullivan, business partners who bought Joe's in 1974. When Gerry decided to retire in 2011, Jack offered the restaurant to his only child: a daughter, Meg Sullivan.

While she was in college, Sullivan didn't want to own a business. But the idea grew on her. When Sullivan finally came around, she became the



STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS

After spending the morning doing paperwork, Sullivan checks on supplies in the kitchen.

first solo owner of Joe's Cafe, and the first woman to run the restaurant since Camella and Joe Biandi opened its doors more than 70 years ago.

Sullivan, who has lived next door to Joe's since graduating college, was raised in

Northampton. "Just down the road," she says.

Painted blue with red trim, Sullivan's house follows in a family tradition of blue houses. Her parents, who live a couple miles away in Northampton, also have a blue house. Every year on Christmas Eve, the family gathers there for Wigilia: a traditional Polish celebration characterized by fasting and then feasting. Sullivan is close with her parents, and her father, Jack, frequently comes by the restaurant at night. Sullivan's mother, Ann, was a middle school art teacher while Meg was growing up, and her father coached youth basketball and softball when he wasn't at the restaurant.

Sullivan points to a bar stool. With a laugh, she says, "I grew up there."

'Like family'

There's plenty of personal history wrapped up in the restaurant for Sullivan, who makes it a point to preserve Joe's old-school character. Over the years, she has diligently maintained original features, including having the murals restored and even going so far as to hand-dye new lampshades with black tea when the old ones, browned by years of cigarette smoke, needed to be replaced.

Above one of the doorways hangs a photo of Rose Mumblow, who used to be a waitress at Joe's. In the photo, which was taken in the 1970s, a young Rose stands behind the bar, hands firmly on the counter, her blond hair curling around her smiling face.

"There were no rules when Rose worked," according to waitress Katie Lyons.

As Lyons tells it, Mumblow was an exuberant Polish woman who kept her money in her mattress and used to be the heart of Joe's, embodying old-school Northampton. "Tough as nails, heart of gold," says Lyons.

Every year around Christmas, Mumblow kept herself busy by making a present for every single member of Joe's staff. In each bag, she included a six-pack of beer, a lighter, some flower bulbs and a hand-made ornament. One year, she doused a bunch of pine-wood pieces in chemicals so they'd glow different colors once burned, then threw the pieces of wood into the gift bags, too.

Mumblow's spirit still remains in the way Sullivan runs the restaurant. For the currently all-female waitstaff at Joe's, Sullivan regularly makes adjustments to work schedules in order to accommodate many of the waitresses who have children. She never schedules them on Halloween, says Lyons, so they can go trick-or-treating with their kids.

This undercurrent of female leadership and compassion has helped kept Joe's afloat over the decades. "It's really like family, you know," says Lyons, adding that Sullivan helps make it feel that way. "I'm surprised she doesn't have a degree as a social worker because she's so good to everybody."

As the night winds down, Sullivan sits on top of one of the red-and-white gingham plastic tabletops, her legs dangling off the edge, a pint of beer in her hand.

"I think I'd always kinda secretly been interested in taking the business over," she says with a smile.



STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS

Sullivan talks to cook Maribel Iglesias to make sure they have what they need for the night at Joe's Cafe.

FROM C1

Amherst, discussed how the transition would happen over a few years. As the president, Tierney works with Jonathan Salvon and Charles Roberts, who are principals at the firm. Both Salvon and Roberts expressed confidence in the work that has been done since Tierney took over.

"I think that when Aelan steps away or goes away, there is definitely a missing presence in the office, and it is always a relief when she comes back," Roberts said.

Kuhn Riddle Architects was started by Chris Riddle and John Kuhn in 1988. Riddle is no longer involved in the daily operations of the company, but Kuhn is still involved despite stepping down as a leader in the company.

"With Aelan moving into a full leadership role here, we really have a completely new group of leaders," Salvon said.

The firm sent out postcards to their clients to let them know about the change in leadership. Salvon said the responses to these postcards were almost all positive.

Tierney said that being a female architect does have its challenges as well.

"Even today, I'll bring a younger male staff person on-site, and the contractors will go to them instead of to me," Tierney said.

One in every three new architects is a woman, according to recent statistics from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. There has been little change in the past few years, but the

"Architecture represents who we are as a culture, and I don't feel the architecture we're producing is fully representing who we are in the United States because of the lack of diversity in the profession."

Aelan Tierney

numbers show a slow progression towards a more equal industry. Minorities are even less likely to become architects, accounting for less than one in five of new architects.

"Architecture represents who we are as a culture, and I don't feel the architecture we're producing is fully representing who we are in the United States because of the lack of diversity in the profession," Tierney said.

There are two other women-

owned architecture firms in the Pioneer Valley. Dietz & Company Architects was started by Kerry Dietz in 1985 and is solely owned by Dietz, while Jones Whitsett Architects was opened by Margo Jones in 1984. Jones partnered with Kristian Whitsett in 2014.

Jones said she has been interested in the field since around eighth grade. She found she could draw well and was good at math, some of the technical skills needed in architecture.

"I didn't have the skills to be just an artist," Jones said. "But being an architect, you get to work on buildings, and I really loved architecture in general."

Jones said that starting a family can cause complications when it comes to moving up in the field.

"If you want a family, a lot of the work goes onto the women, and we don't always have very good child care and family support systems," Jones said.

Both Jones and Tierney said they are very happy with the work they are doing and were satisfied with their decision to pursue a career in architecture. Tierney said one of her strongest skills is communication, and she thinks this helps her in the office as well as with clients.

"That is a huge piece of what we do as architects: We listen carefully to our clients, and then we communicate back to them in the form of a design," Tierney said.

Tierney has taken her own steps to increase diversity in the field. She is currently setting up a scholarship fund for the University of Massachusetts Amherst summer architecture program. She hopes to make the program available to students who may not be able to afford it and get them interested in pursuing a career in architecture.

"I think providing opportunities like the opportunity that I had with the internship in high school, where you are exposed to a profession, is so valuable — and it's part of the reason why I do it," Tierney said.

Kuhn Riddle Architects becomes area's 3rd woman-owned firm