



Commerce and culture combine Community's first Art Day focused attention on the heart of Springs

By Irene Silverman

Commerce and culture have gone hand in hand in the tight-knit community of Springs ever since Jackson Pollock started swapping paintings for potatoes with Dan Miller of the Springs General Store, but probably never more closely than they did on Sunday.

Inaugurating what they hope will become an annual Father's Day event, three longtime food purveyors, a pair of now-kids-on-the-block art galleries, an automobile repair shop, a wine and liquor store, the Pollock-Krasner House and Studio Center, the Springs Presbyterian Church, Ashawagh Hall, and the library and blacksmith shop—all within a stone's vigorous throw of each other—all joined to create an afternoon of music,

family fun and communal celebration they called Springs Art Day.

If people remember afterward that there is an art gallery now where Tomago's garage and machine shop used to be, and another a few steps away in Tim Lee's old photo studio, so much the better.

"The idea is to get people familiar with Springs businesses and galleries and Ashawagh Hall," said Helen Harrison, director of the Pollock-Krasner center, before the event. The artists' house and studio, with the famous paint-splattered floor and broad views of Acoabonac Harbor, is normally closed on Sundays, but not last weekend. It stayed open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., with the usual \$5 admission charge waived. A classical guitar

and flute duo played on the lawn.

Ms. Harrison anticipated that "whoever comes here might go round the corner to get a pizza." That would be to Pizza and Things, at the corner of Springs-Fireplace Road and Fort Pond Boulevard, where, just a few weeks ago, Springs Art Day was conceived.

It began with a brainstorming session. James Kennedy and Bob Bachler, who run the new Surface Library Gallery, sat down with their next-door neighbor Mary Bobek Adragna, whose family has owned the pizzeria for 30 years, "to talk about how to attract more people to our small corner of Springs," Mr. Kennedy recalled.

Pizza and Things is, as they say in the travel industry, a "destination"—but for cars, not pedestrians. And who goes next door to look at art while they've left the motor running while they zip in for a slice?

To change that, and have a lot of fun trying, was the idea. Ms. Adragna planned to cook up a storm, bring in picnic tables, and turn her front and side parking lots into outdoor dining and art-display space for Sunday's event.

The Springs General Store, which also offered al fresco dining out front (homemade tapas, empanadas, fruit salad, more) was the next stop for the gallery owners, a serendipitous one both food and entertainment-wise. "When James and Bob approached me," said Kristi Hood, the store's manager, "I thought of Michael—half my customers play instruments."

In short order, Michael Clark of Crossroads Music, on North Main Street in East Hampton, had four local bands



Springs Arts Day: Clockwise from above, spectators watch James DeMartis at work at Parsons blacksmith building; below, Mary Adragna, left, owner of Pizza and Things, and Elyse Craft outside the pizzeria with some of their specialties; at left, kids watch a puppet show by a group called "Goat on a Boat" in front of the Fireplace Project.

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(among them a teen cover band elegantly named Tequila Mockingbird say it out loud) ready to go, along with a few strolling musicians who were to play from place to place all afternoon. Meanwhile, Mr. Kennedy phoned Vito Sisti, "a great driving force in Springs, great at motivating people," who, when he is not repairing autos, trucks, and commercial landscape equipment, organizes art shows at Ashawagh Hall.

"And after that," said Mr. Kennedy, "everyone jumped on board." Irish Francy was among the jumpers. Her shop, Springs Wines and Liquors, on the other side of Pizza and Things from the Surface Library gallery, offered tastings throughout the afternoon of wines from the North Fork's Castello Borghese Vineyard.

The event started at noon. Parking was available at Ashawagh Hall, where "19 Women" (Ms. Francy is one of them) are showing paintings and sculpture in an exhibit of that name presented by none other than Mr. Sisti.

Steps away on Parsons Lane, a speck of a recently christened street that has yet to appear on maps, the Springs Library held a book sale and James de Marits demonstrated the venerable craft of blacksmithing. (A how-to-do-it website advises that "the iron should be so placed on the anvil and so struck that it can bend down under the hammer blow without being forced against the anvil



and mashed.")

A short walk past Pusy's Pond and the Springs School took hungry families to the Barnes Country Store. Back east, at 845 Springs-Fireplace Road, Mr. Bachler was stationed at a potter's wheel showing how to throw pots, accompanied by the Latin jazz and rock of Arrows of Fire, next door at Hampions Auto Collision. Within the gallery, visitors could see works that explore the technique of wrapping, using packing tape, felt, fiber, tubing, cable ties, and other surprising materials.

On the other side of the auto repair shop, Edsel Williams of the Fireplace Project exhibited work by seven East End artists and supplied a stage out front for the Goat on a Boat troupe to present a puppet show for children.

"This is a major high point here," said Ms. Adragna of the art-and-business complex on the Fort Pond corner. "We have two galleries and the wine-tasting. We'll also have art on display outside [the pizzeria] by local artists, my customers. My closet artists who don't really go to the galleries."