



COURTESY OF AMITY BEANE  
Flowers crafted by paper artist Amity Beane.

## Paper

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Several months ago, Beane found herself living in a new community and with some time on her hands.

“I found myself not working for the first time in my life, and I was on Instagram a lot,” Beane said, adding she discovered several paper flower artists that way. “The pictures just blew me away. I could feel my pulse quicken. I got so excited. After that, I said I’m going to get some paper. I’m going to get some materials, and I’m going to get started.”

She found several free tutorials online at the beginning of the year and started out making paper peonies, but her repertoire grew quickly. Now Beane is doing custom orders and has had steady work from people who have found her shop on Facebook or Instagram. She has been selling three flowers with greenery for between \$25 and \$35 and half a dozen flowers from \$40 to \$60.

On the farm, Beane and Libby are planning to grow and sell real flowers. But in the winters, she will take brightly colored crepe paper and turn the pieces into paper flowers.

“The joy I get working outside in the summer with plants and inside in the winter with paper — it’s intoxicating. I can’t get enough,” she said.

For more information about the Waite workshop or Beane’s paper flowers, visit [facebook.com/Florabeane](https://facebook.com/Florabeane).

## Goats

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and leave happier,” Rolnick said.

With the help of Maine AgrAbility, an organization whose purpose is “to assist owners, operators, managers, employees and family members of farm, fishing or forestry businesses,” Rolnick has started a business that supports her “goat habit,” and gives her new purpose. Maine AgrAbility, a nonprofit collaboration of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, and Alpha One, which is funded by the United State Department of Agriculture and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, offers education for agricultural workers such as Rolnick whose lifestyle and business have been impacted by a disability.

“It’s a completely free resource for people working in production agriculture in Maine,” Lani Carlson of Maine AgrAbility said.

Carlson has been a point of contact for Rolnick and been part of the process to help her make modifications to her farm to help work around her disability.

Rolnick has been featured as one of Maine AgrAbility’s success stories.

“Shea is a great example,” Carlson said. “She’s our star pupil.”

After an initial assessment in which a Maine AgrAbility staff person visited Rolnick’s farm and observed how she worked, Rolnick worked with the programs to implement changes on her farm.

“We provide recommendations based on what we see on the farm,” Carlson explained.

Simple things such as incorporating different heights of milking stations based on the sizes of the goats to prevent muscle strain and taking the advice of staff to carry lighter buckets of water out to her goats were implemented, as well as more significant changes. These helped her adapt the work around her

health issues.

“She took our ideas and made a beautiful work room in her home for her soap,” Carlson said. “It’s very methodically designed in terms of her work flow.”

For Rolnick, the program has been a great help.

“It’s a way of developing a life for me that works around my health concerns,” she said.

Last month at Gentle Meadow Goat Farm in Winterport, her home base and business location, Rolnick demonstrated her process for making her cold process soap containing Bold Coast Coffee from downeast Maine, a duty that requires careful attention, knowledge of chemical processes and patience.

“Soap making is oils and lye and a liquid of some sort,” Rolnick explained. For her, that liquid is goat milk. She milks all her goats by hand, and after milking, she goes to work.

She has created three different lines of soap: Gentle, Just Kidding and NautiGoat. The Gentle line uses common, soothing ingredients such as lemon-grass and lavender essential oil; the Just Kidding line is more adventurous, with ingredients such as coffee, wine, chocolate and bacon fat; and the NautiGoat line is a coastal-themed line that uses ingredients such as kelp powder, sea salt and sea clay. The Gentle and Just Kidding lines are \$6 per bar, and the NautiGoat line is \$7 per bar.

Rolnick has her own proprietary blend of oils, and each oil has a purpose, from lather and hardening to cleansing and conditioning.

Cold process soap is created by mixing fatty acids and sodium hydroxide (oil and lye) which then triggers the saponification process — the process by which lye and oils combine to make soap.

She sell her soaps to wholesale partners in various places such as Silkweeds in Searsport. She also has an Etsy shop and participates in farmers markets and festivals. Rolnick makes about 2,500 bars per year in her



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

A goat from Gentle Meadow Goat Farm in Winterport peeks outside her barn.

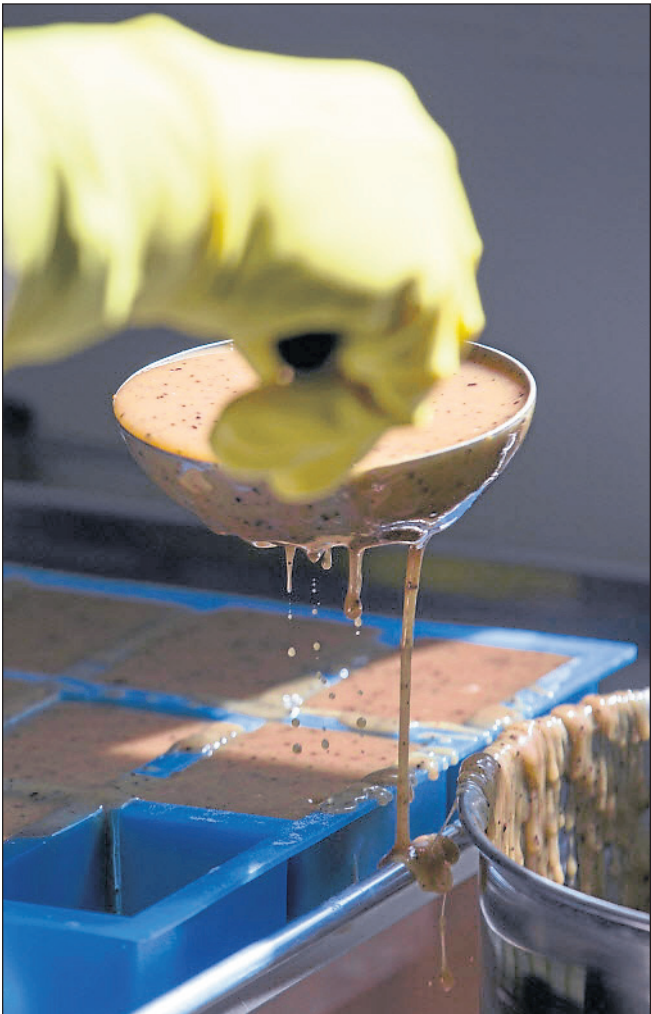
studio and has 16 different varieties along with unique and seasonal batches she concocts on occasion.

“One thing that I discovered upon making my first few batches of soap was that it’s really fun. I really like making soap, so it was very easy to say, ‘well let’s keep doing this’ ... It’s technically challenging, especially when you’re trying something new, you don’t know what’s going to happen. It’s a chemical reaction that takes your ingredients and makes soap. And sometimes it turns into soap and sometimes it turns into a complete disaster. And you have to roll with the punches, and you have to be OK with that. It’s part of the fun of it,” Rolnick said.

With ingredients such as wine, sea salt, blueberry puree and even bacon fat, Rolnick has created soaps with an interesting twist. From products such as Before You Goat-Goat, a soap using Bold Coast Coffee, and Chocolate Milking It, a bar made with cocoa powder and cocoa butter, to Drunken Doe, a soap made with red wine and Greener Pastures, a soothing mixture of eucalyptus and peppermint, Rolnick produces soaps she says really make a difference in people’s skin.

“Your skin really does do better,” she said.

As for the goats, the costs of their upkeep is no



MICKY BEDELL | BDN

Shea Rolnick spoons fresh coffee soap into molds at Gentle Meadow Goat Farm in Winterport.

longer a worry.

“They totally support themselves, 100 percent,” Rolnick said.

And as for her love for them, it’s apparent when

her face lights up as she talks about her herd.

“They are goofy, they are silly, they are naughty little beasts. And I love every minute of it,” she said.

## Dream

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can live in the Dreamship for about \$400 per month including utilities. If they want to partake in a food share, they fork over \$20 per week for fruits, vegetables, olive oil and other kitchen staples.

The dozen people who live here range in age from 22 to 59. And no surprise there is a waiting list.

What is the dream they share? To live simply, create a safe environment and “have an intentional community that prospers,” said Smith, 38.

“Dreamship Community is one venue for practicing generosity and moving away from being completely self occupied,” said Smith’s wife, Jeanette Richelson, who has lived here for two years. “There will always be confusion and conflict in our world, in our community, but the importance and the magic lies in how we deal with confusion and conflict. Living at Dreamship teaches me every day how to be a more compassionate, open and a willing human being.”

The brightly painted space with an elevated library loft with skylights, two bathrooms (one with a claw-footed tub) nine bedrooms and a separate refrigerator for vegans is a warm, enveloping vessel in a sea of uncertainty.

There are ground rules: no drinking. A cleaning checklist tacked to the kitchen wall determines whose turn it is to dust the living room and take out the trash. Through hand-written signs and posters, people are encouraged to live with a low carbon footprint, recycle and support Bernie Sanders. Amid the Buddha sculptures, self-discovery books and faint whiff of wheat-grass, the vibe is hostal meets ashram.

“It’s like a healthier version of the communes of the ’70s,” said Smith’s mother, Gail Smith, who moved in when the recession hit and “jobs were scarce.”

“Living here is a test in growth and change,” admit-

ted the eldest resident, who mixes with the former lobsterman who lives on the first floor and the writer and musician twentysomethings without morphing into a den mother.

Knowing the haven that the Dreamship has become, makes her smile.

“I couldn’t be prouder,” she said of her daughter’s efforts. “She’s always been creative, but what’s going on here is much deeper than what’s obvious.”

One thing that was obvious, amid the jovial party scene last weekend, residents were pitching in, doing dishes, offering drinks (the strongest beverage consumed was cold chaga tea) swapping compliments and digging into healthy heapings of kale and potato salad.

“There are so many places to party in Portland, I wanted to do something different,” said Tina Smith, who has a rent to own lease with the property owner and runs the home as an “inter-generational conscious-living community. It’s important to keep progressing.”

The Dreamship has been steady for six years. Smith’s future plans call for a rural farmstead that may have a similar model. Members would grow and harvest their own vegetables and work toward a more sustainable cooperative living dynamic.

For now the Dreamship feels like a mellow “Real World” minus the backstabbing drama queens. Writer Dan White, who has called the Dreamship home for a year and a half, says the best thing about living here is “the feeling of safety.”

As White prepares to move to Albany, New York, this spring, he knows it will be hard to duplicate the “welcoming feeling and deep level of security” he experienced at the Dreamship.

Similarly, Baker, who moved out a while ago and is about to get married again, returns to be immersed in that aura.

“I loved the cast of characters that came through the space and found a very welcoming community,” he said.

Impromptu group bike rides through the city, pon-

tificating with a “9/11 conspiracy theorist” who cycled through gave him a sense of belonging when he needed it most.

For post-college grads who strike out to Portland from other parts of the state, Maine’s largest city has barriers.

“It’s so hard to find affordable housing here,” said Audrey Maddox, 24, who moved into the Dreamship after graduating from the University of Maine. “You can spend months looking for housing. It’s really a great resource.”

After three months she found lodgings with a garden, but she was back in the living room listening to poetry.

Though privacy is minimized, you don’t have to be an extrovert to live the dream.

Gabriel Bachman, who lived alone most of his adult life, said the Dreamship “is therapeutic.” Living in such close quarters with strangers “has improved my ability to be more social,” he said.

His fellow housemates are interested in improving their quality of life, not as a selfish pursuit, but collectively, together.

“A common factor here is a willingness to work with 10 other people,” he said.

The drawbacks?

“It’s a given you are going to have bathroom issues.”

For the city’s newest immigrants like Tresor, the Dreamship is a place “to relax and have fun with people.”

The Democratic Republic of Congo native arrived in Portland 11 months ago and doesn’t live here. But like many who find their way to this sanctuary of sanity, he feels right at home. Taking the ad hoc stage to perform a few songs in his sunny African lilt, the self-described, well-dressed minister addressed the room: “Love is not about being with someone just because they have money, but don’t treat you right.”

Looking around, the silent, patient crowd nodded knowingly. When the song was over, they cheered him on. And the next person stepped up to take his place.

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## 2016 ANAH SHRINE

# CIRCUS

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