

# She's just terrific

Rachael Gootnick is a young entrepreneur with an old soul

By Kathi Gunio



Gootnick in her studio

Sometimes a \$50 savings bond can turn into so much more. It fact, it can lead to something just terrific. That's exactly what it did for Fairport native Rachael Gootnick, owner of the book restoration, book construction, and book jewelry company Just Terrific Handcrafted Goods.

A graduate of RIT in graphic media publishing, Gootnick took the savings bond she had been given at birth—as well as a few extra dollars for supplies—and began her business in 2012, after the fine art printer/book bindery company she worked for as a book designer began to show signs of struggling.

“I saw an opportunity and took it,” says the twenty-nine-year-old, who prefers the tangible form of books. “I have wonderful memories of looking through family

photo albums and reading journals. Most people my age are into all that is digital, but I see so much more value in holding a book in your hands and preserving your story in the physical sense.”

While Gootnick says she learned a lot about iPad development, ebooks, and various aspects of physical printing in college, her interest revolves around constructing, her interest revolves around constructing, repurposing, and restoring books and credits most of her bookbinding craft training from an older gentleman who worked in proximity to her old job.

“He saw that I was looking for more to do, and that I was young and eager and interested in learning more about this craft,” says Gootnick. She began to help with his business overflow, soon learning the intricacies of book restoration

and construction, an art that has become a highly automated industry with fewer and fewer individual craftsmen—especially in this digital age, and especially at Gootnick's age. But while she probably is one of the few younger hand-bindery craftsmen in the business, her love of working with her hands and of books led her to quit her job and become her own boss.

Never being in debt and not wanting to grow too big too fast were focal points of her endeavor. However, she admits it wasn't easy at first. “I had to learn to say ‘no’ at times in order to devote the time I needed to complete each job timely and successfully.”

To help jumpstart her business, Gootnick reached out to area bookstores and book dealers. “They really can't afford to have a

# Explore | On the job



This page: Gootnick's tiny book jewelry



bookbinder on staff, so most of the time they were very receptive, and it ended up being a win-win situation. Most bookstores and dealers often have huge stocks of books on hand, and they know that they can bring in a higher price tag if books are intact."

Gootnick also lent her services to the Monroe County library system, assisting them with books that were in need of restoration and reinforcement. "I felt it was applicable to what I wanted to further myself along." And further her it did.

She now spends her days restoring and constructing various types of books through her own company. Family heirlooms, favorite children's books, photo albums, and family bibles are just some of the types of books Gootnick restores. She enjoys giving books new life by repairing their structure and legacy. "It gives me such pleasure to work on a book that is a family favorite, or has been around for a hundred years, and helping it to last for maybe a hundred more."

Such was the case when Gootnick received the opportunity to repair a first edition Mark Twain, reportedly worth a few thousand dollars. It took twenty hours of her expertise to re sew, resequence, and reinforce the multiple stitch holes of the classic book by hand

Photography by Arielle Kramer



2300° at Corning Museum of Glass

## NOV 17 2300° at Corning Museum of Glass

Named after the temperature in which "hot glass gets interesting," guests dance to live music while enjoying monthly themed glass blowing demonstrations. Third Thursday of each month, 6–8 p.m. Corning Museum of Glass, 1 Museum Way, Corning (800-732-6845 or cmog.org)

## NOV 18 Cirque de la Symphonie

Magical illusions, death defying stunts, and the power of a live symphony orchestra transform Eastman Theatre into a life-size fairy tale. Through Nov 19, Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, 26 Gibbs St. (454-2100 or eastmantheatre.org)

## Holiday Bazaar at RMSC

The Women's Council presents its 46th annual holiday arts and crafts sale. Featuring more than 200 craftspeople and artisans, the bazaar fills the museum and Eisenhart auditorium. Through Nov 20, Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave. (271-4320 or rmssc.org)

## NOV 23

**The Nutcracker**  
The Rochester City Ballet and Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra perform Tchaikovsky's classic ballet. Through Nov 27, Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, 26 Gibbs St. (454-2100 or eastmantheatre.org)

## A Christmas Carol

This musical adaptation of the classic Dickensian fable promises "spectacular magic, heartwarming music and holiday tradition." Through Dec 24, Geva Theatre Fielding Nextstage, 75 Woodbury Blvd. (232-4382 or gevatheatre.org)

## DEC 1

**Through the Garden exhibition**

Original oil paintings by contemporary realist artist David Kerstetter. Through December 31, International Art Acquisitions, 3300 Monroe Ave. (264-1440 or internationalartacquisitions.com)

**My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy**  
Growing up in the Jewish tradition, where "a tetus is not viable until after it has graduated from Medical school," Brad Zimmerman retells his



Through the Garden exhibition

own story of waiting tables for twenty-nine years with the aspiration to become a famous actor. Through December 11, Through Dec 11, Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Ave. (jccrochester.org or 461-2000)

## DEC 3 CMoG Holiday open house

A special glass exhibit where guests may enjoy live music, crafts, and breakfast with Santa (requires registration). With their traditional fourteen-foot-tall tree bearing more than 600 handmade ornaments at its heart, the museum transforms into a winter glass wonderland. Through Dec 4, Corning Museum of Glass, 1 Museum Way, Corning (800-732-6845 or cmog.org)

## Holiday pet photos

Really, what's cuter? Through Dec 10, Lollypop Farm, 99 Victor Rd., Fairport (223-1330 or lollypop.org)

## DEC 4

**A city sings for the season**

Performances by the Hochstein youth singers, the Dunwoody Dancers, the Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Male Chorus, ROC Music Collaborative, the Oratorio Society chorus, and its touring small ensemble Resonanz. WXXI Classical 91.5 host Julia Figueras offers seasonal readings. Donations benefit the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network. 3 p.m., Sibley Building atrium, 228 East Main St. (rossings.org or 473-2234)

## DEC 9

**Comfort and Joy**

The Rochester Gay Men's Chorus sings a range of classics from "Winter Wonderland" to "What Child is This?" along with "pure fun" songs like "Santa Got a Tummy Tuck," "Recycle the Fruitcake," and their own take on "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy." Through Dec 10, 7:30–10:30 p.m., Hochstein Music Hall, 50 N. Plymouth Ave. (rgmc.com)

## DEC 10

**TUBACHRISTMAS**  
The 34th-annual concert unites 150 brass players of all ages and ability levels to perform Christmas carols with audience sing-along encouraged. 4:00 p.m., Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, 26



CMoG Holiday open house

Gibbs St. (454-2100 or eastmantheatre.org)

**Breakfast with Santa at the zoo**  
**Visit with St. Nick over breakfast before enjoying holiday crafts, up-close animal encounters, and hot beverages.** Through Dec 18, Rocky Coasts Gallery at Seneca Park Zoo, 2222 Saint Paul St. (senecaparkzoo.org)

## DEC 12 In War & Peace: Harmony Through Music

Grammy Award-winning Mezzo Soprano Joyce DiDonato, whom the *New Yorker* titled "perhaps the most potent female singer of her generation," performs alongside Baroque ensemble Il Pomo d'Oro. The program reflects upon recent violence throughout the world and the sentiment that harmony through music is possible. 8 p.m., Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, 26 Gibbs St. (454-2100 or eastmantheatre.org)

## DEC 16 RPO presents: Gala Holiday Pops

The Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra presents its annual holiday extravaganza. Promising to brighten everyone's winter season and offering "festive favorites to heartwarming carols," Through Dec 18, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre, 26 Gibbs St. (rpo.org)

## DEC 22 Candlelight nights in Geneseo

This evening explores five different hours d'oeuvres and wine pairing stations. At the end of the night, bring your wine glass home with you. 6:30 p.m., Deer Run Winery, 3772 West Lake Road, Geneseo (346-0850)

## Chanukah Chagigat

Run by the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester. Midnight–7 p.m., Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester, 441 East Ave. (271-6877 or jewishrochester.org)

## DEC 29 Kwanzaa family day in Rochester

The University of Rochester hosts a celebration of African American culture with live music, family art activities, tours, and a Kwanzaa ceremony. Noon, University of Rochester, 240 Wallis Hall



while trying to keep as many original parts of the book as possible. Staying true to the originality of each book is paramount to Gootnick's restoration process.

She is also a big believer in not wasting materials and tries to repurpose as many of them as she can, recycling them in the design and construction of her book jewelry as an additional part of her business. From scratch, Gootnick creates earrings, necklaces, and pins in the form of books, all sewn in a traditional manner, all miniaturized. Within the tiny pages, she encourages people to write a word, an affirmation, or a thought. She is often commissioned to make them as gifts.

"They are a challenge, for sure," admits Gootnick. Every hole, every stitch, every cover, and every page inside is tediously constructed by hand. Because they are so small, there is not a lot of room for error.

Still, Gootnick says she receives immense satisfaction in what she does, from restoring antique books, to creating new journals or sketchbooks, to crafting a book necklace. She confesses that her favorite part of her job is that she is forced to take things slowly and take her time. It is a change from the fast-paced world.

"I feel people are just moving so fast these days. They are so quick to archive their lives digitally in text and photos so they

can have it at their fingertips. But having something tangible, something that does not have to rely on technology to access, means so much more to me. I guess I'm just an old soul." (585)

*Kathi Gumio is a Rochester native who has been freelancing for local and regional publications for more than fifteen years.*