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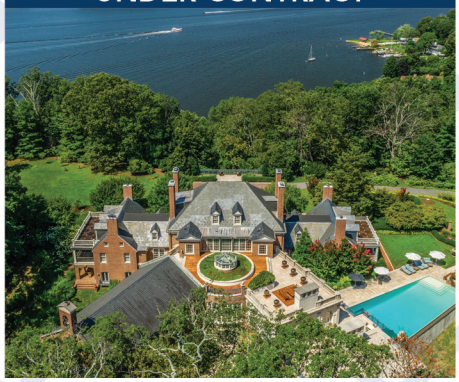

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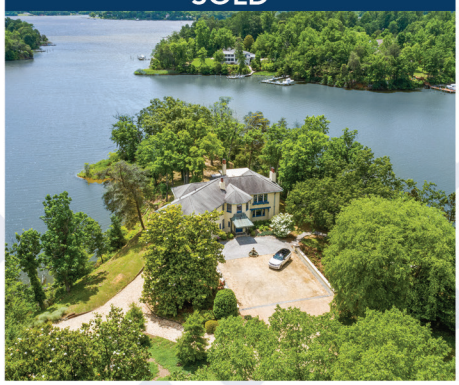

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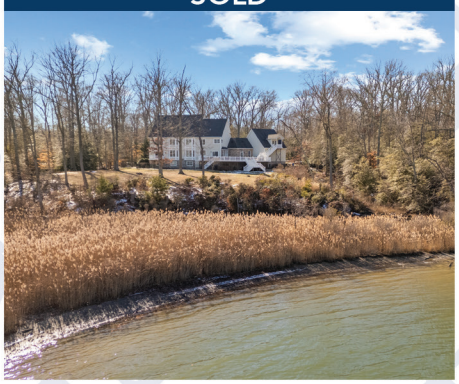

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BEST OF ANNAPOLIS 2025

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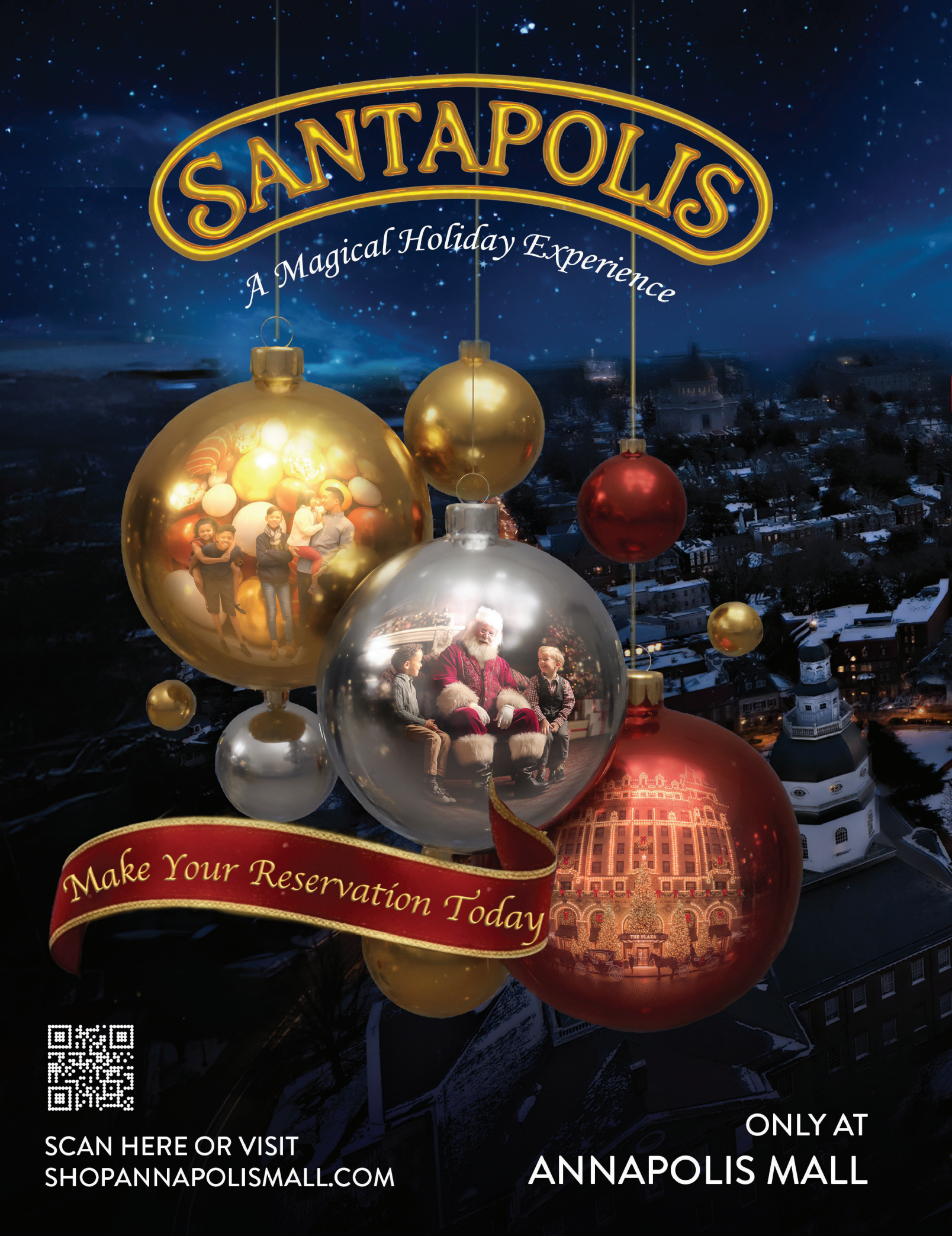
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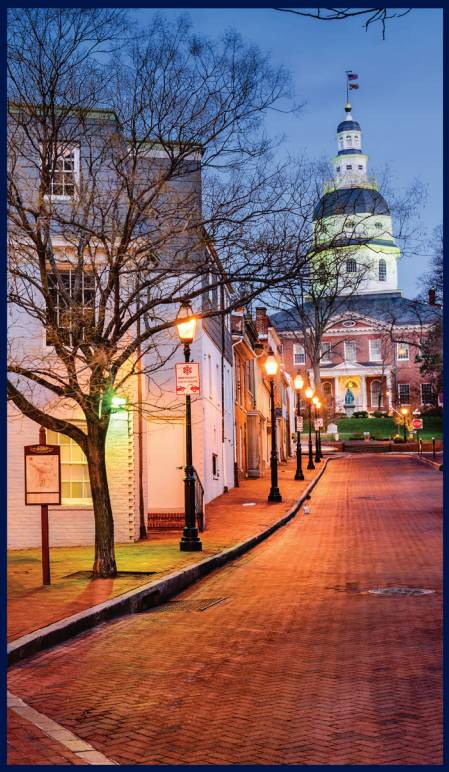





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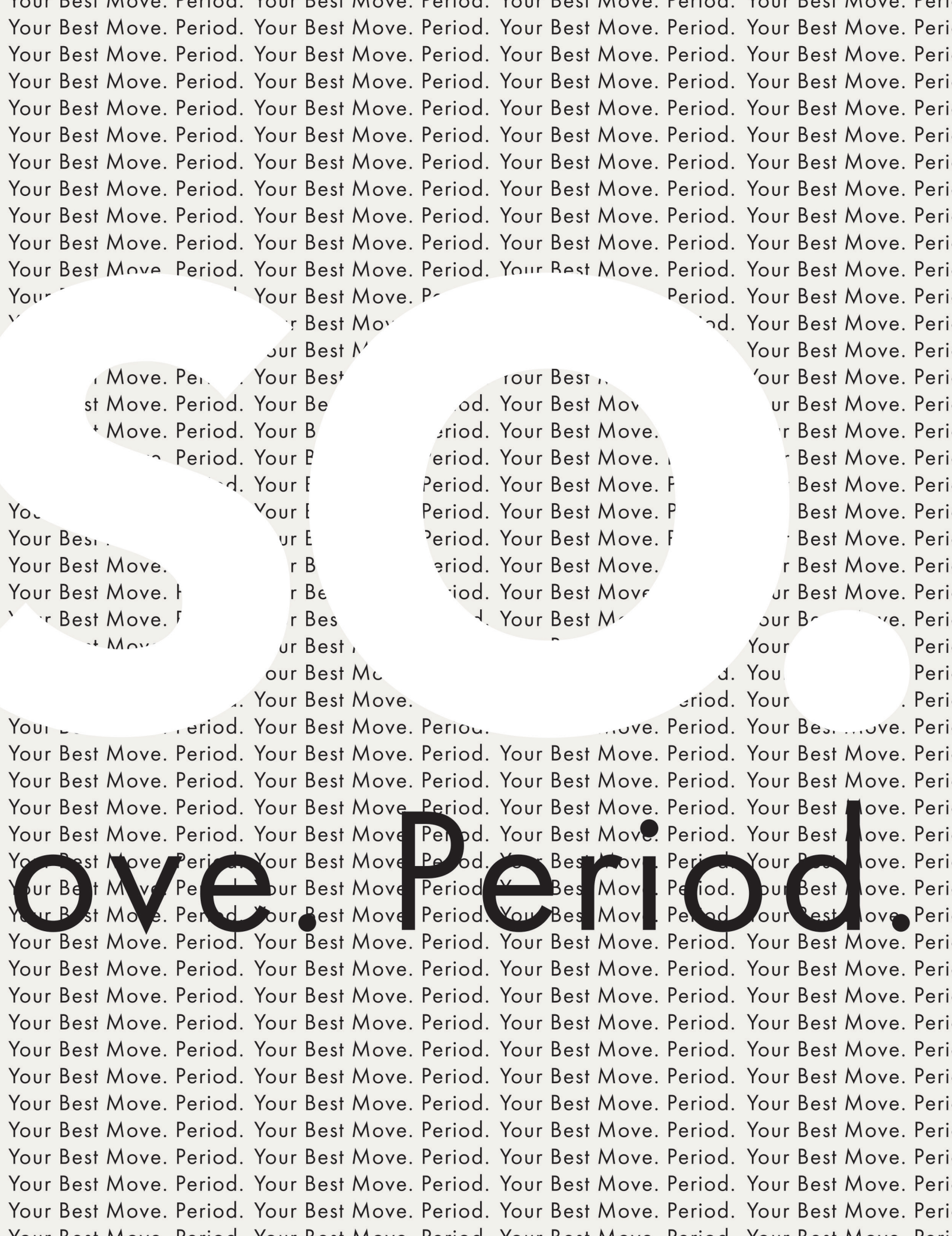
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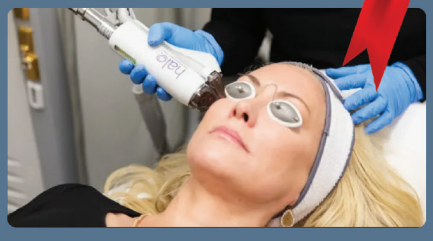



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2024



MARCO BICEGO

ZACHARY'S
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DECEMBER 2025

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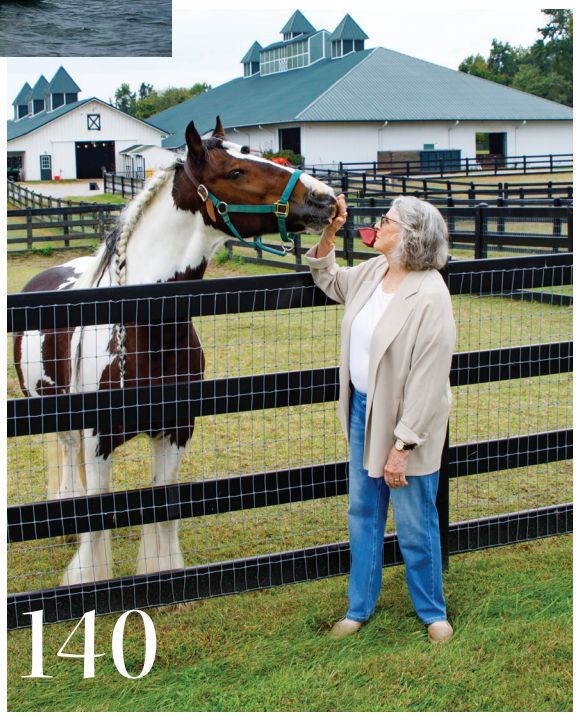

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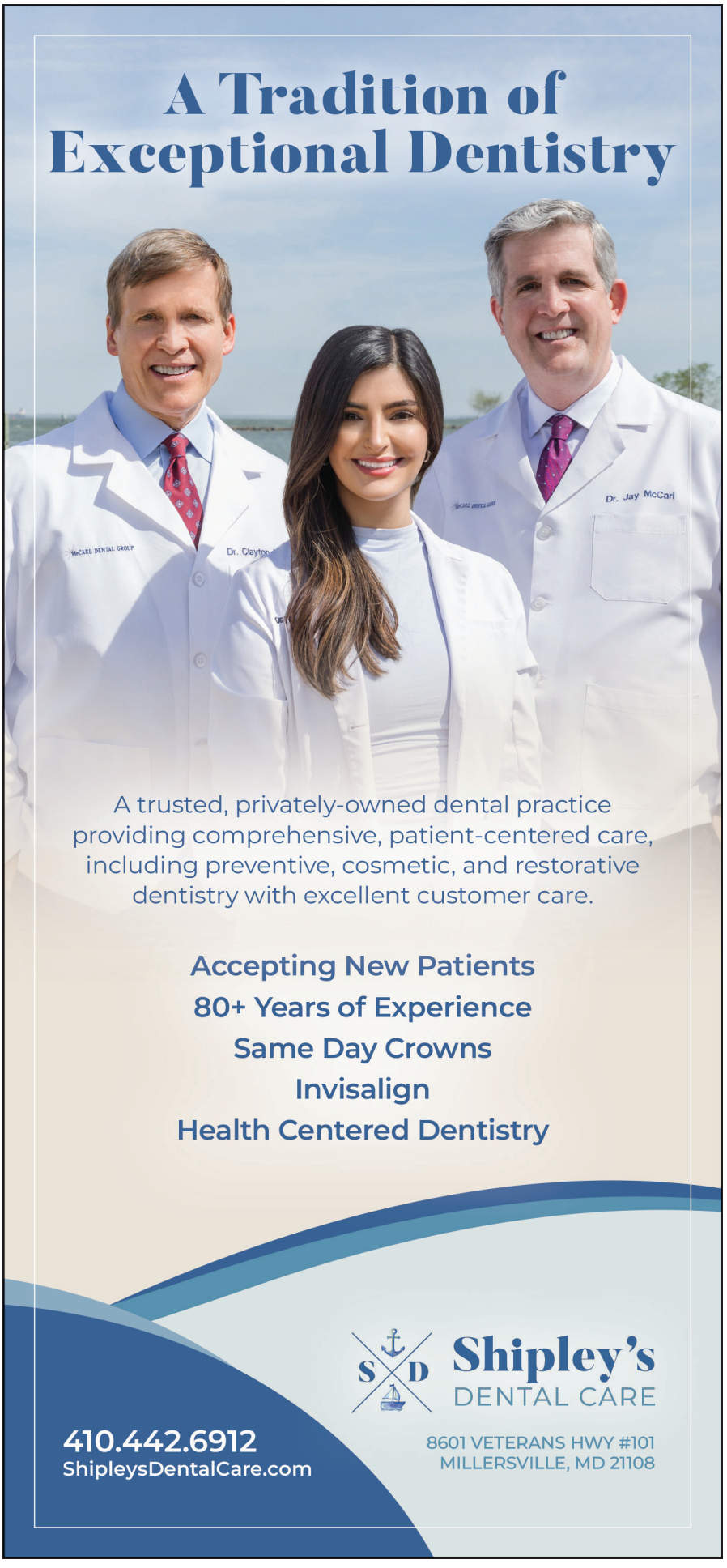

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The nomination survey for the 2026–2027 Leading Lawyers is open to all legal professionals in the Chesapeake Bay region. Lawyers (and judges) currently practicing law are encouraged to nominate their legal peers in more than 35 legal specialties for this distinguished honor that recognizes the best local lawyers. This is your opportunity to nominate which lawyers should be acknowledged as leaders in their various areas of practice. We thank you in advance for participating in this valuable service. Nominations will close December 31, 2025. Results will be published in our May 2026 issues.

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Expert of the Month



Marc Weber, Jr.

Dr. Marc Weber, Jr., DDS

Board-certified Orthodontic and Dentofacial Orthopedic Specialist, Diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics | Family Orthodontics of Annapolis

Dr. Marc Weber, Jr. is dedicated to creating an inclusive, welcoming environment where patients can gain confidence in their smiles. Committed to staying at the forefront of his field, he actively participates in the Spear Study Club, collaborating with other providers in his community to deliver comprehensive, interdisciplinary care. Guided by a deep passion for service, Dr. Weber co-founded a global outreach program that provides oral hygiene education and preventive care to at-risk communities around the world. He brought his compassion and expertise to Family Orthodontics of Annapolis earlier this year and is thrilled to serve the community that he has proudly called home for more than ten years.

What inspired you to pursue a career in dentistry?

I studied media production at UNC-Chapel Hill and am passionate about directing and storytelling. After moving to Los Angeles, I realized that I wanted to make a more personal impact. Dentistry offered the same creativity and artistry while transforming lives. Inspired by my mother, who is a dentist, I found my purpose in creating confident, beautiful smiles.

What is your favorite part of your career?

I enjoy being part of my patients' treatment journeys. Watching them transform—not just physically but emotionally—is incredibly rewarding. As their smiles change, I often see a new sense of confidence emerge. To play even a small role in that transformation makes my work so meaningful and fulfilling.

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What's your best advice for anyone considering orthodontic treatment?

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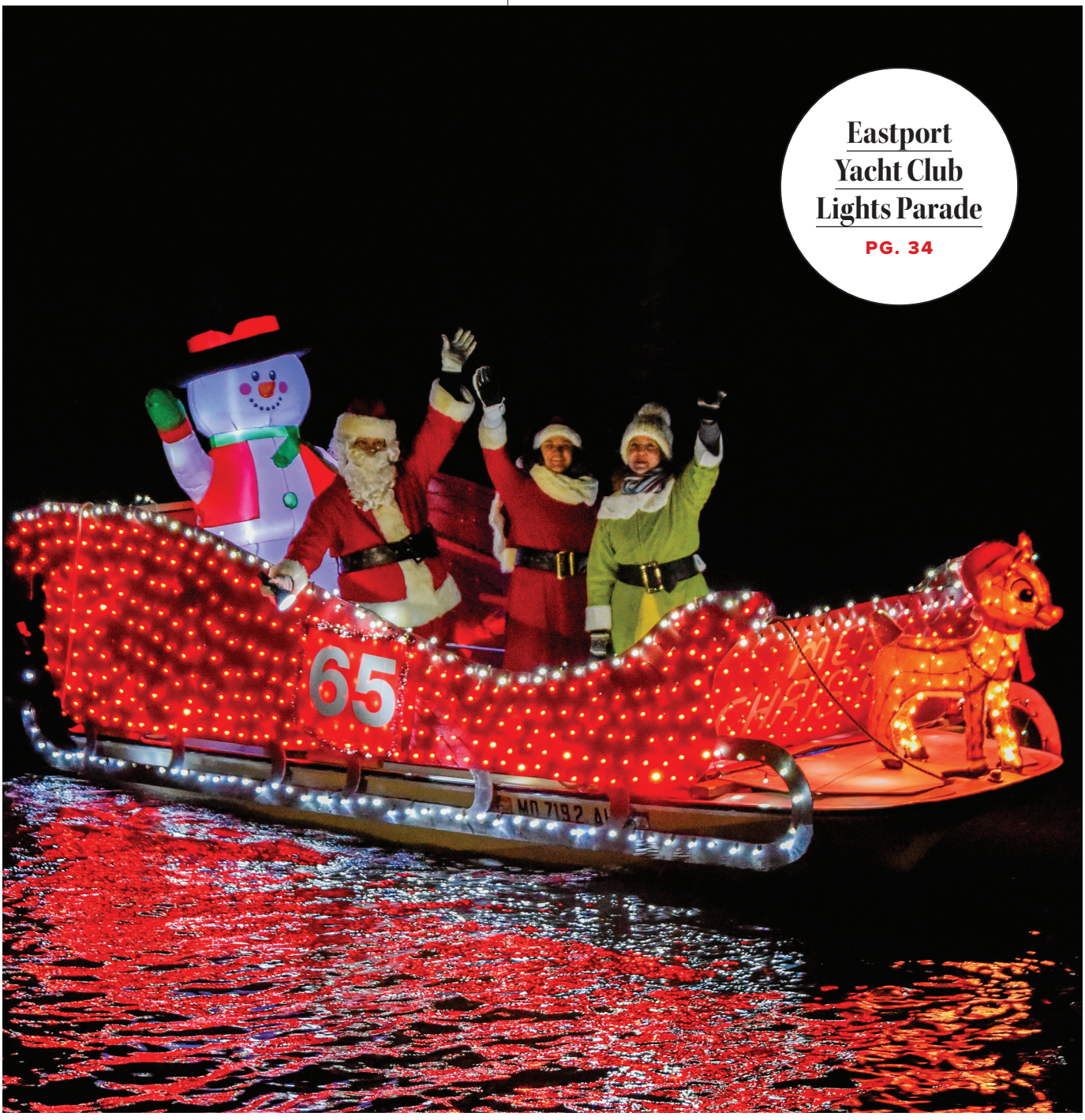

Eastport Yacht Club Lights Parade

PG. 34

Photo by John Parsons

Holiday Greetings!

The annual compendium of the season's best events, attractions, and shopping. From shore to shore, across the Chesapeake Bay and back, we've organized the following events chronologically. Enjoy!



Christmas at Gaylord National

Experience the wonder of the season at Christmas at Gaylord National, running throughout the holiday season with dazzling displays, festive activities, and holiday shows for the whole family. Step into ICE!, where scenes from The Polar Express™ are brought to life through massive, hand-carved ice sculptures and colorful lights. Enjoy sweet treats, wintertime fun, and countless photo opportunities as you wander through a world filled with Christmas magic. Whether you're visiting for the day or planning an overnight getaway, it's the perfect way to make lasting holiday memories together. More info: christmasatgaylordnational.com



Photo by Russ Brown Photography

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE IN BALTIMORE

Step into the festive charm of a traditional German-style market right in the heart of Baltimore. Through December 24, the Christmas Village transforms the Inner Harbor into a glittering holiday haven, open Sunday–Thursday from 12–8 p.m. and Friday–Saturday from 12–9 p.m. (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). Stroll through more than 65 vendors offering handcrafted gifts, ornaments, and seasonal treats, then warm up with mulled wine or hot chocolate as twinkling lights dance along the waterfront. It's a merry mix of European tradition and Baltimore spirit—perfect for a holiday outing with family and friends. More info: baltimore-christmas.com



RIVERARTS ANNUAL HOLIDAY SHOW & SALE

Celebrate the season and shop local at the RiverArts Holiday Show & Sale continuing through December 22 in downtown Chestertown. Both the RiverArts Gallery and the Store at RiverArts will be filled with beautifully handcrafted works by local artists and makers—featuring fine art, pottery, jewelry, textiles, ornaments, and more. With a festive opening reception on December 5, this annual event invites you to find meaningful, one-of-a-kind gifts while supporting the creative community that makes the Eastern Shore shine. More info: mainstreetchestertown.org/event/riverarts-annual-holiday-show-sale



Lights on the Bay

Lights on the Bay returns to Sandy Point State Park through January 1, illuminating the shoreline with a spectacular drive-through light display that captures the magic of the season. This sparkling tradition features dazzling scenes, whimsical animations, and festive designs that delight visitors of all ages—all while supporting the SPCA of Anne Arundel County. Bring your family, friends, and even your furry companions, slip on a pair of 3D glasses to make the lights come alive, and enjoy an evening of holiday wonder along the Chesapeake Bay. More info: lightsonthebaymd.org



WINTERFEST OF LIGHTS OCEAN CITY MARYLAND

Step into a twinkling wonderland at the Winterfest of Lights, where dazzling displays and holiday magic fill the air. Wander along the illuminated path through Northside Park, surrounded by thousands of sparkling lights and whimsical, animated scenes that celebrate the season. Warm up with a cup of hot chocolate, gather around the bonfire, or snap a festive photo with Santa before exploring the charming gift shop for one-of-a-kind finds. Families can enjoy crafts, games, and interactive displays scattered throughout the park—plus, pets are welcome on Wednesday evenings! Don't miss the grand centerpiece: a breathtaking 50-foot Christmas tree that lights up the night with spectacular color and music. More info: ococean.com/Winterfest



40TH FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Tidewater Inn's Gold Room in Easton transforms into a winter wonderland for the 40th Annual Festival of Trees, running Saturday, November 29 through Tuesday, December 2. Stroll through a dazzling forest of designer trees and wreaths, each one twinkling with creativity and community spirit. This beloved Eastern Shore tradition supports Talbot Hospice, offering a heartwarming way to celebrate the season while giving back. With festive displays, special events, and plenty of holiday cheer filling the weekend, it's a shining example of how art, generosity, and tradition come together. More info: festival-of-trees.org



Central Maryland Chamber Holiday Mixer & Silent Auction

Kick off the holiday season with a night of networking and goodwill at the Central Maryland Chamber Holiday Mixer & Silent Auction on Wednesday, December 3, beginning at 5 p.m. at 8600 Foundry Street in Savage. Enjoy an evening of festive mingling with local business leaders, bid on exciting auction items, and toast to another year of community success. Proceeds from the event support the Chamber's Educational Foundation scholarships, helping future leaders thrive. It's a perfect blend of celebration, connection, and giving back—holiday spirit at its best. More info: web.centralmarylandchamber.org



SEVERNA PARK ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING

Ring in the season with neighbors and friends at the Greater Severna Park & Arnold Chamber's Tree Lighting at 1 Holly Ave. Expect sweet treats, festive tunes, and a quick, high-energy countdown to a sparkling evergreen that lights up the heart of town. It's a simple, joyful way to kick off the holidays—bring the whole crew and keep an eye on the Chamber's calendar for the exact time in December 2025. More info: gspacc.com/happenings-each-year



Annual Dickens of a Christmas

Chestertown transforms into a scene straight from a Dickens novel on Friday and Saturday, December 5–6, as its historic downtown comes alive with old-fashioned charm and holiday cheer. Friday evening kicks off from 5 to 9 p.m. with twinkling lights, festive tunes, and cozy gatherings around fire pits, while Saturday brings a full day of merriment. Enjoy carriage rides, live music, local oysters, and appearances by Father Christmas himself as High Street fills with laughter and good cheer. It's a magical celebration of community, tradition, and the timeless spirit of the season. More info: mainstreetchestertown.org/dickens-festival

Midnight Madness

Downtown Annapolis comes alive under the glow of holiday lights during Midnight Madness, happening Thursdays, December 4, 11, and 18. From 4 p.m. to midnight (and until 11 p.m. on the final night), local shops open their doors late for an evening of festive fun and community spirit. Stroll the historic streets as carolers fill the air with music, twinkling décor sets the scene, and one-night-only specials make it the perfect time to check off your gift list. Whether you're shopping, dining, or simply soaking up the small-town magic, Midnight Madness is Annapolis at its most charming. More info: downtownannapolispartnership.org/midnight-madness



THE FESTIVAL OF TREES

Celebrate the spirit of giving at Compass's Festival of Trees (in loving memory of Mr. Bill Towers), taking place Friday through Sunday, December 5–7, at the Towers Family Historical Museum in Denton. The weekend begins with a festive Preview Party on Friday from 6 to 9 p.m., followed by free open houses on Saturday and Sunday that fill the museum with dazzling trees, community warmth, and holiday cheer. Proceeds benefit hospice and grief support services across Caroline, Kent, and Queen Anne's counties, making this event as meaningful as it is beautiful. It's a touching Eastern Shore tradition that celebrates life, memory, and the true heart of the holidays. More info: visitcaroline.org/event/festival-of-trees-2025





CENTREVILLE CHRISTMAS PARADE

Bundle up for a small-town celebration as Centreville's Christmas Parade steps off downtown on Friday, December 5, at 6:30 p.m. This year's theme, "Bright Nights and Holiday Lights," sets the stage for a festive evening of glowing floats, spirited marching units, and hometown pride in the heart of Queen Anne's County. Gather along the route, cheer on your neighbors, and soak up the season's magic as the community comes together for a holiday favorite. More info: townofcentreville.org



THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride

Climb aboard for a magical journey to the North Pole with THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride, running December 6–7, 13–14, and 19–23, with multiple departures each day. Families can sip hot chocolate, nibble on cookies, and enjoy live performances that bring this beloved story to life. Every passenger receives Santa's First Gift—a shiny keepsake bell—as part of this immersive, pajama-friendly adventure that captures the wonder of the season. It's a heartwarming holiday tradition sure to delight both the young and the young at heart. More info: borail.org/polar-express



A Charlie Brown Christmas with Eric Byrd Trio

Relive the timeless charm of the Peanuts holiday classic as the Eric Byrd Trio brings Vince Guaraldi's iconic A Charlie Brown Christmas score to life. Performances take place at Maryland Hall in Annapolis on Friday, December 5 at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Saturday, December 6 at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. This soulful, swinging jazz concert captures the warmth and nostalgia of the season, making it a perfect outing for families, music lovers, and anyone ready to embrace the holiday spirit. Experience the magic of Guaraldi's melodies in a live performance that's as heartwarming as the original special itself. More info: marylandhall.org



FESTIVAL OF TRAINS

The Queen Anne's Railroad Society will host it's annual Festival of Trains at the Kent Narrows Outlet Center in Chester on consecutive weekends, December 6–7 and 13–14. The event brings together many model train displays in several gauges, family activities (including a visit from Santa), and refreshments to enjoy. More info: facebook.com/qarrs

Glen Burnie High School Winter Craft Fair

Get into the holiday spirit while supporting local talent at the Glen Burnie High School Winter Craft Fair on Saturday, December 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The school will be buzzing with creativity as artisans and makers showcase unique handmade gifts, perfect for everyone on your list. Shoppers can browse a bustling vendor hall filled with crafts, décor, jewelry, and seasonal treasures, all while enjoying delicious concessions and live music from the GBHS Music Boosters. It's a festive day of shopping, community, and holiday cheer—where every purchase helps support the next generation of student musicians. More info: sites.google.com/aacps.org/glen-burnie-music/craft-fair





VINTAGE CHRISTMAS MARKET AT WILDBERRY

Soak in the sights, sounds, and flavors of the season at the Vintage Christmas Market at Wildberry Farm + Market on Saturday, December 6. This charming outdoor event captures the cozy magic of the holidays with artisan vendors, live music, and festive bites set against a rustic countryside backdrop. Stroll through stalls brimming with handcrafted gifts, sip something warm (or something spirited) from the beer and wine garden, and take in picture-perfect holiday scenes around the farm. Whether you're shopping for loved ones or simply savoring the season, this market is the perfect way to spend a December day. More info: wildberryfarmmarket.com

EASTON'S HOLIDAY PARADE

Downtown Easton glows with holiday spirit on Saturday, December 6, as one of the Shore's most beloved traditions takes center stage. The evening begins at 5:30 p.m. when Santa makes his grand entrance in Thompson Park, followed by the tree lighting at 6 p.m. and the parade stepping off at 6:30 p.m. More than 60 floats, marching bands, and community groups fill the streets with lights, music, and cheer, creating a night that captures the true magic of the season. Bundle up, bring the family, and join the crowd for this joyful Eastern Shore celebration. More info: discovereaston.com





Photo by Historic Annapolis

A Colonial Yuletide

Step back in time and celebrate the season 18th-century style at A Colonial Yuletide on Saturday, December 6 from 2 to 5:30 p.m. at the William Paca House & Garden and Hogshead sites. Wander through beautifully decorated historic settings alive with period music, costumed interpreters, and the sights and scents of a colonial Christmas. Families can enjoy hands-on crafts, sweet seasonal treats, and a festive atmosphere that captures the charm of Annapolis's past. It's a delightful way to experience holiday traditions of another era while making new memories in the heart of downtown. More info: annapolis.org/events/yuletide-2025

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TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

For more than half a century, the Bowie Holiday Tree Lighting has brought neighbors together to celebrate the warmth and wonder of the season. On Saturday, December 6 at 7 p.m., the Bowie Senior Center will glow with festive lights, cheerful carols, and the excitement of Santa and Mrs. Claus arriving in style with help from the Bowie Volunteer Fire Department. Families can enjoy the countdown to the city's sparkling tree, enjoy food and drinks, and share in a true community moment. Admission is free, but guests are encouraged to bring non-perishable food donations to help spread the holiday spirit to those in need. It's a classic hometown celebration filled with joy, generosity, and plenty of seasonal sparkle. More info: cityofbowie.org

Gingerbread Festival

Sweeten your holiday season with the Gingerbread Festival, kicking off the Christmas in St. Michaels weekend from Thursday, December 11 through Sunday, December 14, 2025. Step into a sugary wonderland of whimsical creations as local bakers, artists, and families showcase their most imaginative gingerbread designs. Stroll through the displays, cast your vote for your favorite confection, and soak in the festive spirit that fills St. Michaels' charming waterfront. It's a delightful blend of creativity, community, and classic holiday cheer in one of the Shore's most picturesque towns. More info: christmasinstmichaels.org





ANNAPOLIS CHOCOLATE BINGE FESTIVAL

Experience the sweetest celebration of the season at the Annapolis Chocolate Binge Festival, happening Sunday, December 7, 2025. Let your taste buds lead the way as the first block of West Street fills with chocolate vendors offering everything from truffles and caramel to brownies, cupcakes, and chocolate martinis. Stroll through the holiday market to discover handmade jewelry, pottery, candles, ornaments, and more from local artisans. Enjoy live music, festive entertainment, and the twinkling West Street Holiday Light Canopy as you treat yourself and shop for loved ones. Admission is $5 in advance, and tickets are expected to sell out—so don't delay. More info: iwsannapolis.com

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE AT THE BELAIR MANSION

Step into the season at the historic Belair Mansion during Bowie's annual Holiday Happenings celebration. This festive open house welcomes visitors to explore the beautifully decorated 18th-century estate, filled with the sights, sounds, and scents of the holidays. Families can enjoy seasonal crafts, refreshments, and a touch of local history while taking in the elegant charm of Old Bowie in December. It's a cozy, community-centered way to celebrate the season surrounded by tradition and holiday spirit. More info: cityofbowie.org/holidayhappenings





NUTCRACKER TEA 2025

Sip, savor, and celebrate the magic of the season at What's Up? Media's annual Nutcracker Tea on Sunday, December 7 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Annapolis. This elegant family event features a festive buffet, enchanting excerpts from The Nutcracker performed live on stage, and a special storytime with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Each seating is filled with holiday sparkle, delicious treats, and heartwarming moments that make it one of Annapolis's most treasured holiday traditions. Perfect for families, friends, and anyone ready to revel in the beauty of the season. More info: whatsupmag.com/nutcracker-tea-2025



Annapolis Arts Alliance Toy Drive

Join the Annapolis Arts Alliance in spreading holiday joy now through December 20. The Alliance invites you to participate in its annual Toy Drive benefiting local children in need. Simply bring a new, unwrapped toy and drop it off during gallery hours at Gallery 57 West. Let your act of giving be part of something beautiful, because art lifts spirits, and so can you. More info: annapolis-arts-alliance.com

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Elves for Elders

Spread a little extra holiday joy this season by joining Partners In Care's heartwarming Elves for Elders program. On Thursday–Friday, December 11–12, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., volunteers are invited to deliver filled stockings to the Anne Arundel office and help brighten the holidays for local seniors. Each stocking—stuffed with thoughtful gifts, cozy treats, and personal touches—reminds recipients that they're remembered and valued. It's an easy and meaningful way to give back, whether you gather friends to assemble stockings together or make a solo delivery that sparks a smile. Community care has never looked (or felt) so festive. More info: partnersincare.org/elves



MAGIC ELF HUNT AT BELAIR MANSION

Embark on a festive adventure at Belair Mansion's annual Magic Elf Hunt on December 12 from 12 to 4 p.m. Santa needs help rounding up his mischievous elves, and young detectives are invited to join the search through the beautifully decorated halls of this historic mansion. Along the way, families will uncover hidden surprises, soak in the holiday cheer, and enjoy the joy of earning "official elf-hunter" status. Blending local history with playful imagination, this beloved tradition offers a merry afternoon of laughter, discovery, and Christmas magic for all ages. More info: cityofbowie.org

OXFORD HOLIDAY MARKET 2025



Celebrate the season Eastern Shore–style at the inaugural Oxford Holiday Market, running Friday–Sunday, December 12–14. This charming waterfront market invites visitors to shop juried artisans, discover one-of-a-kind gifts, and enjoy the cozy ambiance of this beloved small town. Hours are Friday 4–8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., and Sunday 11 a.m.–4 p.m., giving you plenty of time to browse, dine, and soak up the spirit of the holidays. With delicious local food, festive tunes, and a visit from Santa himself, the Oxford Holiday Market is sure to become a new favorite tradition. More info: visitmaryland.org/events/oxford-holiday-market-2025

CHRISTMAS IN ST. MICHAELS 2025

The charming town of St. Michaels comes alive with holiday spirit during Christmas in St. Michaels, returning December 12–14. This beloved Eastern Shore tradition fills the waterfront streets with festive cheer, welcoming Santa, seasonal shopping, and joyful community events that capture the magic of the season. Visitors can also look forward to the release of the annual Limited Edition Collector's Ornament, available in late September, with proceeds supporting local nonprofit organizations. Celebrate the spirit of Christmas, the beauty of giving, and the warmth of a community that shines brightest during the holidays. More info: christmasinstmichaels.org




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Photo by John Parsons

EASTPORT YACHT CLUB LIGHTS PARADE

Get ready for one of Annapolis's most dazzling holiday traditions—the Eastport Yacht Club Lights Parade—on Saturday, December 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. Watch as a fleet of brilliantly illuminated boats glides through Spa Creek and Annapolis Harbor, transforming the waterfront into a twinkling winter wonderland. Bundle up and find your perfect viewing spot along City Dock or Ego Alley, where nautical creativity shines bright against the night sky. It's a sparkling celebration of community, craftsmanship, and Chesapeake cheer that truly defines the season. More info: eyclightsparade.org

The Nutcracker



Step into a world of magic and music with Ballet Theatre of Maryland's enchanting production of The Nutcracker, running Saturday–Sunday, December 13–21, with multiple showtimes. This beloved Annapolis tradition brings Clara's dream to life through fresh choreography, stunning costumes, and the unforgettable score of Tchaikovsky. With charming local touches and breathtaking performances, it's a holiday favorite that delights audiences of all ages. Whether it's your first time or a cherished annual outing, The Nutcracker promises an evening of elegance, wonder, and pure seasonal joy. More info: balletmaryland.org/nutcracker



Heroes Holiday Market

Find the perfect gift and support local makers at the lively Heroes Holiday Market, returning to Heroes Pub on December 14. This festive neighborhood favorite brings together 30-plus artisans offering handmade goods, holiday décor, and plenty of last-minute treasures. Guests can also enjoy tastings from Cane Collective and Gray Wolf Spirits, making it a true local experience filled with community spirit and holiday cheer. The event benefits The Chesapeake K9 Fund. More info: whatsupmag.com/events/heroes-holiday-market-0/



MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS PARADE

Baltimore's holiday spirit takes to the streets at 1 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, when the 52nd Annual Mayor's Christmas Parade marches down Falls Road and up The Avenue. Expect high-energy marching bands, colorful floats, neighborhood groups, and a wave from Santa as the route fills with music, laughter, and hometown pride. It's big-city holiday energy with a beloved neighborhood feel—bundle up, grab a hot drink, and join the tradition. More info: themayorschristmasparade.com



ANNUAL KWANZAA CELEBRATION

Honor tradition and community at the Annual Kwanzaa Celebration on Saturday, December 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This vibrant event brings people together through music, storytelling, artmaking, and interactive cultural experiences centered on the Nguzo Saba principles. Families are invited to learn, create, and celebrate the values of unity, purpose, and creativity in an atmosphere filled with joy and reflection. It's a day to honor heritage, strengthen community bonds, and carry forward the true spirit of Kwanzaa. More info: bdmuseum.maryland.gov

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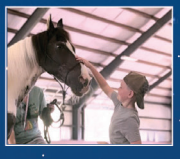

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Photo by Cory Royster, courtesy of Military Bowl Foundation

Military Bowl 2025

Celebrate one of the region's favorite college football traditions at the Go Bowling Military Bowl, kicking off at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium on December 27, at 11 a.m. This exciting postseason matchup pits teams from the Atlantic Coast Conference and the American Athletic Conference in a spirited game that honors and supports America's service members. Organized by the Military Bowl Foundation, the event benefits Patriot Point, a retreat on Maryland's Eastern Shore that provides rest and recovery for veterans, active-duty military, and their families. Enjoy high-energy football with a purpose as the community comes together to cheer, celebrate, and give back. More info: militarybowl.org

ASO'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY POPS CONCERT

Let the sounds of the season surround you at the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra's Annual Holiday Pops Concert, a cherished musical tradition filled with festive cheer. Choose your perfect performance: Friday, December 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Maryland Hall in Annapolis; Saturday, December 20 at 3 p.m. at Severna Park High School; or Sunday, December 21 at 3 p.m. at Bowie State University. Each concert features holiday favorites, carols, and orchestral gems brought to life by the ASO's world-class musicians. Expect sparkle, warmth, and a joyful celebration of music that captures the spirit of the season. More info: annapolis-symphony.org



SANTA'S SECRET: LAST MINUTE HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Wrap up your holiday shopping in style at Santa's Secret: Last Minute Holiday Extravaganza on Sunday, December 21, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Cult Classic. This free, family-friendly event features more than 20 local vendors offering unique gifts, crafts, and treats—perfect for those final touches on your holiday list. Kids can sip cocoa while adults enjoy a little seasonal "additive" as they browse and mingle. With a laid-back vibe, great finds, and community spirit, it's the perfect way to end your holiday prep on a merry note. More info: visitqueenannes.com





New Year's Eve Annapolis Yacht Party

Ring in the new year with style aboard Watermark's New Year's Eve Annapolis Fireworks Cruise on December 31. This family-friendly evening on the water features music from DJ Lampdawg, a complimentary glass of bubbly for adults, cocoa for kids, and unbeatable views of the city's fireworks display. Enjoy dancing, celebration, and the sparkling beauty of the Annapolis skyline as you toast to 2026. A full-service bar will be available with both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Even if the fireworks are canceled due to weather, the cruise will sail for a memorable night on the bay. More info: watermarkjourney.com



RING IN 2026! NEW YEAR'S EVE EVENTS

As of press time, most details were still being finalized. Check with each municipality for updates. All events listed are for December 31.

Annapolis: 7 p.m. family fireworks, and midnight fireworks at Susan B. Campbell Park; annapolis.gov

Baltimore: midnight fireworks and drone show at the Inner Harbor; baltimore.org

Cambridge: New Year's Boat Drop, midnight at the downtown waterfront; choosecambridge.com

Columbia: Symphony of Lights display and family friendly NYE fireworks at 7 p.m. at Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods; visithowardcounty.com

Easton: New Year's Eve Crab Drop during First Night Talbot, 9 p.m. and midnight; eastonmd.gov

National Harbor: many restaurants, resorts, and attractions offer NYE specials and parties; nationalharbor.com

Rock Hall: New Year's Eve Rockfish Drop and Hat Parade at Main Street and the Bulkhead; rockhallmd.com

Salisbury: live music, entertainment, activities, and more throughout downtown. Midnight ball drop; salisbury.md

Ocean City: midnight fireworks at Northside Park and on the beach at Dorchester Street; oceancitymd.gov

Washington, D.C.: entertainment and midnight fireworks on the National Mall; dc.gov

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4-7pm – Big Oyster Brewing



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6
1-4pm – Sagamore Tasting & Bottle Etching & Beer Farm Brewing



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11
3-6pm – Crooked Crab Brewing



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12
3-6pm – Wine Tasting & Angel's Envy Whiskey
4-7pm - Union Brewing



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13
1-4pm – Atlas Brewing & Galway Egg Nog

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19
12-3pm - Brown Forman Bottle Etching
3-6pm – Wine Tasting
4-7pm – Nepenthe Brewing





SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20
12-6pm – All Store Bottle Etching - Debra will be here engraving any wine or spirit. This is an opportunity for a one-of-a-kind gift. If you can't make the event, you can preorder the product. Speak to the manager on duty. All preorders must be paid for in advance.

BEST OF ANNAPOLIS 2025



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* If you can't make the event, then you can preorder the product by stopping in store or calling 410-647-7363

Shop Local This Holiday Season… and Beyond

By Dylan Roche



Very soon—if you aren't already—you're going to be seeing festive decorations and holiday displays in every business you set foot in. Yes, it's definitely the holiday season, and that means many of us are in shopping mode.

There's a reason these businesses decorate for the holidays, and it's not just to lift your spirits (though that's always nice). They want you to *shop*. After all, a big part of the holiday season is about the joy of giving gifts, hosting parties, and offering tokens of gratitude. It's why most businesses see a bump in revenue throughout November and December, helping them make up for shortfalls they might've had earlier in the year.

This is especially true for small, locally-owned businesses.

"For many small businesses, the holiday season isn't just busy—it's essential," says Christine McPherson, assistant director and Main Street state coordinator for the Maryland Division of Neighborhood Revitalization. "Sales from November and December often help sustain them through the slower months of January to March."

These small businesses face bigger challenges than big-box chains, which have scale advantages that let them price products more competitively or market more aggressively to a wider customer base. And they face bigger challenges than online shops, which have little to no overhead costs.

But even up against such challenges, these small businesses are a crucial part of a vibrant community.

WHY SHOP LOCAL?

You might have heard that small businesses are the backbone of the economy. When you shop with a small business, more of what you spend stays local in the form of employee wages, taxes, rent, and charitable giving, compared with spending at a chain or an online business.

"We should consider that every time we spend money at a local business, we are voting for a vibrant local community," says Erik Evans, executive director of the Downtown Annapolis Partnership.

A more vibrant community is also about people—and you're probably already aware that your local businesses are owned by local residents who are invested in the well-being of where they live. "These small business owners are the very people who support local charities, youth sports, community events, and so much more," says Christina Wingate-Spence, executive director of Downtown Cambridge. "Small business owners also support their communities through sponsorships and charitable giving—these are the very people who sponsor local Little League and youth soccer teams, local dance troops, school fundraisers, local nonprofit organizations, and more. They're often the first to say yes when asked to assist with a community project or initiative."

Not only are those businessowners philanthropic but also, they're likely to be more in touch. "When you shop local, you get to experience something larger chain stores can't always offer: personalized service," McPherson explains. "Local shop owners often go the extra mile to help you find the perfect gift, and that attention makes the experience feel more meaningful."

Plus, a local business is just good for local pride. An appealing commercial corridor and plenty of jobs, even part-time and seasonal jobs, mean higher property values, reduced crime, and increased tourism.

TIPS FOR SHOPPING LOCAL

So, what does shopping local look like during the holiday season? There's no one-size-fits-all way to do it, and your approach might be as unique as the small businesses you're patronizing.

For example, **start your shopping early**. The holiday season is a mad rush when everyone needs to get everything on their lists, but starting earlier in the year (or, even, the day) and spreading your purchases out over weeks or months isn't just easier on your wallet but also much easier on businesses trying to manage inventory and staffing.

Free marketing and promo for local businesses is helpful, too. When you patronize them, give them a shoutout on social media, or recommend them to a friend you think would be a good fit for what they offer. "Many small businesses don't have big marketing budgets, so your support outside of making a purchase goes a long way," McPherson explains. "Follow them on social media, like and share their posts, and encourage your friends to do the same. Leave a positive review or tell others about your great experiences—word of mouth is incredibly powerful for small shops."

And remember that **many local businesses offer online ordering and local delivery**. You get the convenience of online shopping but without giving your money to large corporations. And if there's a problem with delivery or your purchase arrives damaged, you're going to face much less stress because you can go resolve the issue in person. "Returns, exchanges, repairs, and warranty issues, are almost always easier to resolve in person versus trying to reach an out-of-area company," Evans says. "There is also an increased chance of online scams if you are shopping from a company you are not familiar with."

With all of that in mind, let this be the holiday season you support a local business for what's on your list—you'll be giving yourself the gift of a better community to call home.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING DATES

In addition to local shopping sites, town centers, and malls hosting holiday festivities, many of our towns promote seasonal shopping campaigns, including:

Annapolis Midnight Madness. December 4th, 11th, and 18th. Late-night holiday shopping downtown and around the harbor with twinkling lights, special discounts, seasonal treats, and unique gifts in one of the city's most festive traditions.

Starlight Shopping in Easton. December 4th, 11th, and 18th. Stores will be open until at least 7 p.m. to meet all your holiday shopping needs, with live music adding to the festive atmosphere. The Hot Chocolate Trail returns this year, featuring restaurants and bars to enhance the seasonal stroll.

Christmas in St. Michaels. December 12th to 14th. A long weekend of holiday festivities throughout town, including the "Marketplace and Sweet Shoppe."

Mistletoe on Main in Cambridge. December 14th. An all-day event with holiday festivities and shopping throughout downtown Cambridge.



Think of the locally-owned businesses you know and love. There's a good chance that these businesses...

- ...are owned and managed by somebody you know personally, maybe even a neighbor.
- ...provide more personalized customer service that you wouldn't find with a big business where corporate sees you as one in a million.
- ...offer products or services that are specialty-curated for the unique needs of their local customers.
- ...have more flexibility to adopt to the wants and needs of their community.
- ...donate money, products, or services to local causes, such as charities, youth sports leagues, arts organizations, and fundraisers.
- ...add to a community's local character (in other words, they're where you recommend the tourists visit to get a true sense of what your town or city is like).



This Holiday, Wrap Up Art Experiences

GIFTS OF LOCAL PERFORMANCES ARE JUST A CLICK AWAY

By Carol Denny

Here's a new way to look at your holiday shopping list. Rather than buying more stuff, how about giving more experiences? The Annapolis arts scene is filled with opportunities to treat your loved ones to live music, theatre, dance, lessons and more – gifts they'll enjoy and remember long after the tinsel gets tossed.

We've compiled a few suggestions right here in town (no expeditions to the big city required), from performances to classes that unlock creativity. Purchase and tuck these tickets or gift certificates in a stocking. We guarantee you'll see genuine glee under the tree. Bonus: you'll be supporting the artists and organizations who enrich our community all year long.

Does your list include a film lover? Make their day with the gift of a pass to the **Annapolis Film Festival**. The annual event celebrates cinema with dozens of dramas, documentaries, and short features at four Annapolis venues, March 26–29. With nearly 70 titles ranging from mainstream releases to intensely individual creations, movie lovers will find plenty to discover. Purchase passes at a special rate through December 24 at annapolisfilmfestival.org.

At **Rams Head On Stage**, Annapolis' number one venue for contemporary music, powerhouse performers entertain audiences all year long. During the last week of January, the lineup will feature talented tribute bands paying homage to legends like Johnny Cash, Bruce Springsteen, and Dave Matthews. Salutes to the Rolling Stones and Linda Ronstadt follow in February. Odds are good that hearing live versions of these superstars' hits will delight your favorite fan. Shop for seats at ramsheadonstage.com.

If you've seen *The Nutcracker* and loved it, maybe it's time to dip a toe shoe in contemporary ballet. Maryland Hall's resident classical company, **Ballet Theatre of Maryland**, will present *Momentum* on February 13 and 14. The program, just right for a Valentine date night, spotlights a bevy of bright new dances choreographed by members of the BTM company, who say it's their favorite show of the season. Buy tickets at balletmaryland.org/momentum.

Also in February, **Compass Rose Theatre** will partner with **Anne Arundel Community College's Department of Fine Arts** to present *Rent*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning rock musical that celebrates love and loss among struggling young artists in New York City. The heartfelt toast to creativity, resilience, and living an authentic life will be performed at the Humanities Little Theatre on the AACC campus February 6–March 8. Visit compassrosetheater.org for tickets.



Rams Head On Stage, photo courtesy of Rams Head Group





Top: Annapolis Film Festival party, photo by Karen Lee Anderson.
Bottom: Olga Kern, photo courtesy of Olga Kern

While we're at it, here's one more for musical theatre fans: **Colonial Players'** production of *City of Angels*, a clever spin on a film noir plot line. The show captures the snappy dialogue of a Raymond Chandler novel and the glitzy showmanship of classic Hollywood, with a score by Cy Coleman. It runs February 27 through March 28, and you can get seats online at thecolonialplayers.org.

Maybe you're on the hunt for a gift to ignite someone's creative spark. If so, **Art Farm** has an out-of-the-box answer: a class in improvisation. The six-week session teaches the fundamentals of improv comedy, and no acting experience is needed. Good for a laugh, right? Art Farm's catalog also offers instruction in photography, painting, and many other visual arts. Choose one or more for kids, teens or grown-ups. And if you're looking for a present that combines an art adventure with the chance to mix and mingle in a social setting, there's Art Farm's new Art for Adults program. Learn more at artfarm.org.



Branford Marsalis, photo courtesy of Branford Marsalis

As always, **Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts** lives up to its name with a full slate of spring classes for new, intermediate and accomplished artists of any age. Check their website for offerings in media arts, movement, studio classes and much more. You can also purchase tickets for exciting performances—for example, the acclaimed Branford Marsalis on March 1 or the electrifying Step Afrika on April 17. Find gift certificates for classes and tickets for shows at marylandhall.org.

The Hall's resident orchestra, the **Annapolis Symphony**, will serve up one of the most beloved works in the piano repertoire from February 27 to March 1: Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, played by Olga Kern. The classical pyrotechnics promised in this performance could delight an amateur keyboardist on your holiday list—and wannabes, too. Visit annapolissymphony.org.

Are you inspired? You can start shopping right this minute. With just an hour and a laptop, you'll be ready to box up an art-filled new year for family, friends—and maybe even yourself.



Maryland Terrapins' Quarterback Malik Washington

By Tom Worgo

Coming off an 4-8 record and having its streak of three straight bowl games snapped, University of Maryland Football's Coach Mike Locksley wanted stability at quarterback. Locksley gambled and handed the starting position to freshman Malik Washington instead of going with a veteran.

The 19-year-old Washington, an Archbishop Spalding graduate and Glen Burnie resident, is not just any rookie. ESPN named him the top freshman in the country in late-September. Washington has delivered, leading Maryland to tie last year's win total in the first month of the season. He gives Locksley a player to build around and is now the face of the program.

"There is a calmness that you see about him," Locksley says. "The demeanor that you see. He is a little bit older than his years. We are seeing what a very good quarterback could be here."

In addition to Locksley, Washington raves about working with first-year offensive coordinator Pep Hamilton, who coached in the NFL for 15 seasons. "He has shown me a lot on how to be a pro," Washington explains.

"MALIK IS ON A TRAJECTORY TO BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPACTFUL FOOTBALL PLAYERS IN COUNTY HISTORY"

Washington possesses the skills coaches covet: He's accurate, a great leader, has a cannon for an arm, can scramble for big chunks of yards, and shows outstanding poise under pressure. He earned a national ranking of the No. 5 quarterback in his class while at Spalding, and the 50th best prospect overall, according to 247 Sports. He led the Cavaliers to three consecutive Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association championships after throwing for more than 5,000 yards and a combined 46 touchdowns passing and running.

"Malik is on a trajectory to be one of the most impactful football players in county history," Spalding Football Coach Kyle Schmitt says.

We recently talked to Washington about his strengths, Coach Locksley, why he picked Maryland, and much more.

What does it mean for you to play so close to home? It means everything. Part of the reason I came here is to be close to home, have my friends and family come out and support me, and show

Photographs courtesy University of Maryland Athletics

me the love they have my whole life. It just gives me confidence and stability knowing that whatever happens on the field, my family will always be there to support me. Coach Locksley and I have had a great relationship for so long. That mattered. He understands and relates to me. Coach Locksley is a great mentor and male role model. I can talk to him about a lot of things, and not just football.

Do you mind being the face of Maryland football? From the outside looking in, people notice the quarterback because it is the most highlighted position on most teams. I just don't think it's me as the face of the team. I think it's the team and what we are doing this year and what we are trying to accomplish. I think people are just starting to notice what we are doing.

Does being ranked among the best freshman quarterbacks in the country bring some added pressure? No. I think it's been a slow buildup since really my sophomore year of high school with more media coming around each year wanting to talk. Being able to manage it and understand it, I can say no. I don't have to do every interview, and whatever my time permits I will do.

How would you describe your game? I really like to push the ball down the field. We have so many great playmakers of offense. I try to distribute the ball as best as possible, but I can make plays with my legs. I think I have to use my running ability more when things aren't available down the field. I just want to pick up some extra yards for the team.

What have you learned from offensive coordinator Pep Hamilton, who coached in the NFL for 15 years? He has shown me how to attack the work that we must get done. That's from long hours in the meeting room to extra time on the field. Those are the things that he has seen with the pro guys that he is able to pass onto me and what it is going to take to get there.

What are the differences between college and high school football? There are so many great players on both sides of the ball in college that you must out scheme opponents. In high school, there were games where you were better than your opponents and your team had better athletes. So, the scheme didn't have to be as complex. But now, everybody is a good player

You started immediately at Maryland. Why did you feel you were ready to do that? I think it's the evolution of sports. Players have been getting better at younger ages. Being ready and more mature are part of the ways the game has evolved. In high school, we were preparing to play at the next level early. I think it's all about who you have in your circle. You are preparing to go to college and play. In college, you are just not preparing for college opponents. You are preparing to go to that next level.

"BEING READY AND MORE MATURE ARE PART OF THE WAYS THE GAME HAS EVOLVED."

Can you talk about getting the marketing deal with Pepsi and Ledo Pizza. How instrumental has Maryland been playing a role in that? It's been an amazing experience. They have done a great job helping me out and facilitating things. They have introduced me to some local brands. As long as I can remember, my mom and I used to eat Ledo all the time. And my great grandmother loves Pepsi. She drinks it all the time. They are brands that have had an impact in my life that I have been able to work with.



Your high school basketball coach, Josh Pratt, said he felt you had the talent to play the sport at Maryland. When did you decide to go with only football? Really [laughing]? I got more attention from colleges after my sophomore season. I thought I could take football pretty far. Basketball has always been a lot of fun for me, but I didn't have the same love for it as football. I let it be known early that I was going to play football in college. I never really pursued college basketball [offers].

CHESAPEAKE BAY SPECIES SERIES

Beloved Yellow Perch



A limit of nice sized yellow perch.

BY LISA A. LEWIS

A living symbol of Maryland's cultural heritage

A harbinger of spring, yellow perch represent the changing of the seasons and new fishing opportunities for recreational anglers in Maryland. Often referred to as the "first fish"—since they are among the first species to migrate into the Chesapeake Bay's tributaries to spawn in late winter or early spring—yellow perch's early arrival signifies a time of excitement. Although the yellow perch fishing season is open year round in Maryland, the highly anticipated spawning runs have become a cherished tradition among recreational anglers—signaling the end of winter and ushering in the spring fishing season.

Yellow perch are semi-anadromous, meaning they live in fresh or brackish water and spawn in shallow freshwater streams. Adults migrate from the lower parts of the Bay tributaries to the upper regions to find suitable spawning habitat. Spawning occurs in late February to March. Females lay long, gelatinous strands of eggs, which stick to underwater vegetation, branches, or other debris, and are then fertilized by males. After spawning, adults migrate back downstream.

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), many yellow perch are caught during these popular spawning runs, which are one of the first major fishing events of the year in Maryland. During this time, yellow perch are easier to catch since they congregate in the upper tributaries, travel in large schools, are accessible from the shore or a boat, and bite on a wide variety of baits and lures—making them a popular catch among recreational anglers of all skill levels.

"Yellow perch are one of Maryland's favorite fish," says Jim Uphoff, fisheries biologist, DNR Fishing and Boating Services. "They are a cultural symbol of our state—a fish that lives in our waters and is extremely popular. Not only are they fun to catch for sport, but they are also delicious to eat. Since yellow perch are so beloved, their issues are our issues. As a community, we need to address these issues and tackle the challenges they face."



Photo by James Houck

A Robust Fishery Management Plan

The DNR Fishing and Boating Services manages both the commercial and recreational yellow perch fisheries under the authority of the Maryland Tidewater Yellow Perch Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which was adopted in 2002.

This FMP serves as a blueprint to manage the tidewater yellow perch stocks in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and provides a framework for restoring and conserving the species. The ecosystem-based approach focuses on issues besides fishing regulations alone (size limits, creel limits, and seasonal closures) and evaluates productivity from an ecological perspective while ensuring sustainable commercial and recreational fishing opportunities.

"We conduct yellow perch monitoring efforts, including surveys and stock assessments, and set fishing regulations," says Carrie Kennedy, division director, Tidal and Coastal Monitoring and Assessment, DNR. "In the upper Bay, the Patuxent River, and the Chester River, we manage commercial harvest and quotas. Recreationally, we manage throughout the tidal waters of the state.

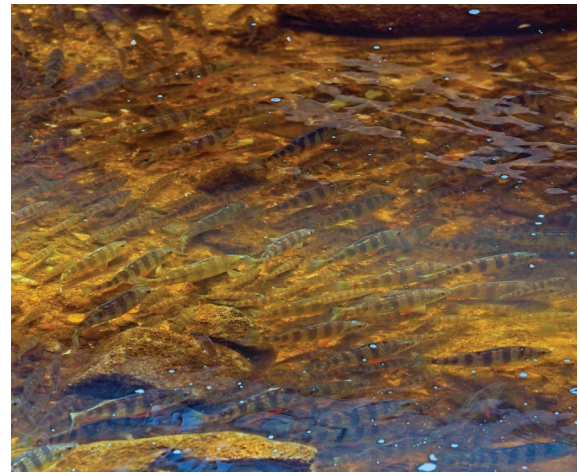
"The Plan was designed to be adaptable to changing conditions. DNR reviews and updates the plan and reports on progress made in achieving our goals. As the status of yellow perch stocks changes over time, our management strategies are adjusted as needed. This flexibility allows our management team and our restoration partners to utilize our ecosystem-based approach and address issues that negatively impact yellow perch."

Several restoration partners play a critical role in helping DNR achieve its goals. Coastal Conservation Association Maryland (CCA Maryland) actively supports efforts to manage yellow perch populations, including advocacy for science-based management strategies, habitat conservation, and public awareness.

"Our overall mission is to conserve, promote, and enhance the present and future availability of coastal resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public," says David Sikorski, executive director, CCA Maryland. "Our organization has a long history of encouraging people to participate in the management of important species like yellow perch and working to balance conserving the resource and providing future fishing opportunities."



Ribbons of yellow perch eggs cling to branches in the Magothy River watershed. Photo by Sally Hornor for Magothy River Association.



Yellow perch congregate in river headwaters to spawn in mid-winter. Photo by Tom Caperna for Magothy River Association.

Threats to Yellow Perch

Easily recognizable among nature enthusiasts, conservationists, and recreational anglers, yellow perch are golden or greenish yellow with six to eight distinctive dark vertical bands on their sides and reddish-orange fins. Since the species holds such a special place in Maryland's culture, it's important to protect its population by identifying and mitigating threats to its survival.

Kennedy says based on data collected in the waters monitored, it's reasonable to extrapolate that the yellow perch population is down from 10 to 15 years ago. Although fisheries biologists and resource managers may not know the exact reason for the population decline, the accumulation of multiple stressors may be a contributing factor.

One of the most serious threats to yellow perch is development, which creates impervious surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, that prevent rainwater from soaking into the ground. This causes increased stormwater runoff, flooding, increased sedimentation, high levels of nutrients and contaminants, erosion, warming water temperatures, and hypoxia. These factors lead to poor water quality and habitat degradation.

Impervious surface indices track development and serve as a valuable tool to manage its impact on the environment. Uphoff says conserving watersheds at or below 5 percent impervious surface would be a viable fisheries management strategy. However, at above a 10 percent threshold, productivity worsens.

"Maryland's yellow perch fishery (and many others) is dependent on production from rural watersheds (agriculture, forests, and wetlands with low development)," Uphoff says. "Increased development is followed by degraded fish habitat and lower production. Stormwater BMPs [Best Management Practices] and Environmental Site Design have not been shown to offset the disruption of ecological functions important to fish production.

"Maryland's portion of the Bay watershed has reached the 10 percent (suburban) threshold, where offsetting lost production is beyond the ability of traditional management (harvest regulations and stocking). Conservation of remaining low development watersheds is vital for maintaining recreational and commercial fisheries and the ecological role of yellow perch into the future. There are two very simple messages: 'More development equals less fish,' and 'land conservation equals fish conservation.'"

Predation is also a threat to yellow perch, and the species is a food source for a variety of fish, including striped bass, chain pickerel, walleye, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern snakehead, and blue catfish. Opportunistic predators, blue catfish are an invasive species that has greatly expanded its range in the Chesapeake Bay. The combined threat of blue catfish and northern snakehead, another invasive species, can contribute to a decline in the yellow perch population.

Since yellow perch are most vulnerable to predation when they are small, it's critical to focus on habitat protection and conservation efforts, especially in existing high-quality habitat and spawning areas. It's also important to understand multispecies interactions, which refer to the relationships between two or more different species living in the same habitat. Creating scenarios, known as multispecies models, can help fisheries biologists and resource managers make more informed management decisions and forecast future conditions.



Shallow streams in the headwaters of rivers such as the Magothy, Severn, Choptank, and more are prime spawning grounds for yellow perch. Photo by Sally Hornor for Magothy River Association.



An angler holds up her quarry of yellow perch. Photo by Tyler Leonardi, courtesy Maryland DNR.



Thomas Dembeck, Jr. holds the Maryland state record yellow perch he caught in February this year in a stretch of the lower Susquehanna River. The perch weighed 2.3 pounds. Photo by Lee Haile, courtesy Maryland DNR.

Recruitment, the process by which young fish survive the early stages of life and transition into the later stages, also impacts yellow perch. In short, successful recruitment ensures that young fish replenish the number of yellow perch lost naturally to fishing and other factors. This is critical to maintaining Maryland's commercial and recreational fisheries. Poor recruitment can lead to declines in the population, which is not only detrimental to yellow perch directly but can also affect the overall health of the Bay ecosystem.

"We know poor recruitment is an issue because there aren't as many young yellow perch as there used to be," Kennedy says. "But it's difficult to get a sense of why this is happening. There are several possible causes, such as development, temperature fluctuations, rainfall, salinity levels, or climate change. Multiple stressors could also contribute to poor recruitment of yellow perch.

"From a management perspective, we can consider enforcing specific harvest restrictions, such as changing yellow perch size limits for the commercial or recreational fisheries—or both. Or we can protect more females, so they survive to spawn. Our restoration partners can also implement strategies to address ecological issues. The good news is that we have many partners and a lot of tools in the toolbox. So, with the right strategies, yellow perch can rebound—possibly in just a few years."

And, of course, climate change is a serious, ongoing threat to yellow perch. Uphoff says the species needs a period of low water temperatures, called a "chill period," to spawn. Warmer temperatures due to climate change can interfere with the timing and success of spawning. In addition, long-term weather patterns, such as El Niño, La Niña, and the North Atlantic Oscillation, can also affect yellow perch—disrupting spawning and recruitment, which can impact population size and fishery harvests.

Yellow Perch Studies

Since the 1960s, the Magothy River Association (MRA), a nonprofit all-volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the Magothy River and its watershed, has led efforts to restore the yellow perch population. In the 1980s, the MRA partnered with Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) to undertake an innovative project to help reestablish yellow perch in the Magothy River. According to Paul Spadaro, president, MRA, after collecting yellow perch sperm and eggs from the Sassafras River, fertilizing them in Magothy water, and transplanting them upstream of Catherine Avenue, a resurgence of yellow perch occurred.

During the past several decades, the MRA has continued to study yellow perch. Since 2015, the organization has partnered with AACC to conduct yellow perch surveys. Volunteers count egg sacs



Ice fishing for yellow perch is popular at Deep Creek Lake in western Maryland. Photo by Matt Sell, courtesy Maryland DNR.



Photo by James Houck

every spring, typically during the last week of February and the first week of March. The stretch of the Magothy River from Catherine Avenue upstream to Lake Waterford Dam is the main spawning area. This 3,300-foot area is designated as a protected yellow perch spawning corridor. Fishing is not permitted in the corridor from February to May.

"Our surveys provide useful information to help protect yellow perch in the Magothy River," Spadaro says. "We are fortunate that the river still has a robust yellow perch population and the habitat to support it. The spawning area in the upper Magothy has low imperviousness, and it deserves to be preserved. Our volunteers are passionate about the Magothy River, and the work we do is definitely a reason to wake up in the morning and keep moving forward."

In addition, the MRA partners with the DNR on numerous research, monitoring, and restoration projects.

Recreational Fishing Opportunities

Yellow perch are highly sought-after fish in Maryland, and they are readily available to recreational anglers. Since the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem sustains them year round, the species offers many opportunities for fishing.

For anglers who are excited to head out to the water and cast their lines, Sikorski recommends the following yellow perch hotspots: the Patuxent, Choptank, Tuckahoe, Wicomico, and Chester rivers, and Deep Creek Lake.



▲ A happy angler makes a catch along Tuckahoe Creek. Photo by Keith Lockwood of Maryland DNR.

In addition, the DNR has partnered with Anne Arundel County Public Library to provide fishing poles for loan from the Deale, Eastport-Annapolis Neck, Edgewater, Mountain Road, and Severna Park libraries—a great opportunity for first-time recreational anglers who don't have fishing gear.

"Yellow perch are beautiful fish," Sikorski says. "Their vibrant colors—various shades of yellow and reddish orange—look amazing when set against the drab, brown shore. For many Marylanders, fishing for yellow perch is an important part of their childhood memories, so it's exciting for them to pass this tradition on to their children. We need to conserve this species—not only to protect the future of our fisheries but also to ensure anglers' access to this beloved fish."

To Learn More...

- About CCA Maryland, visit ccamd.org
- About the MRA, visit magothyriver.org
- About loaner fishing poles, visit aacpl.net/library-of-things/fishing-poles.
- About fishing licenses, visit dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/service_license.aspx

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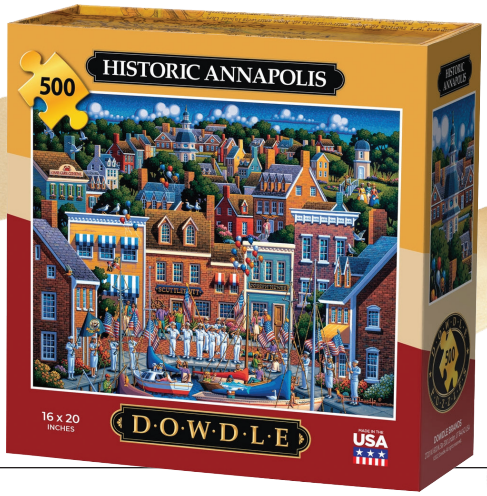

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Holiday Sparkle Crate. Prices vary, Maher's Florist, 8095 E Edwin Raynor Blvd. Pasadena, MD 21122, 410-255-8181, www.mahersflorist.com



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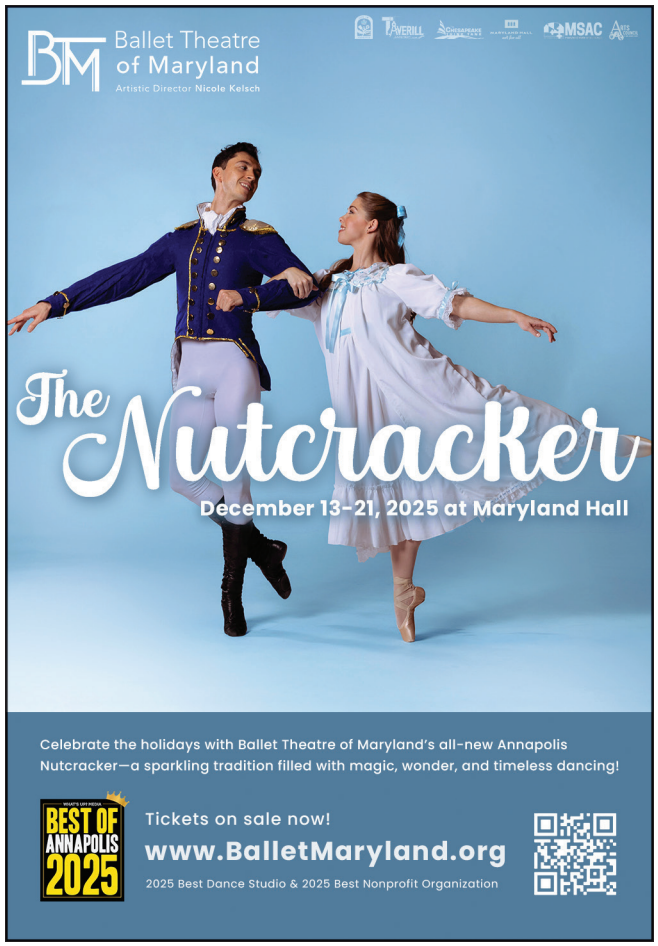
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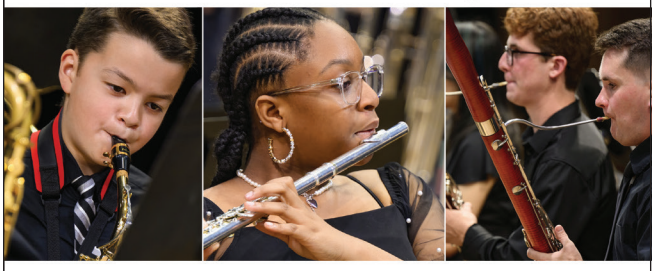

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The Warmth from Frostbite Sailing

Story by Gary Jobson

Photography by Scott Williamson

It's cold outside. Most people are hunkered around the fireplace on Sunday afternoons reading the papers or watching a football game. Some adventurous souls might take a brisk walk to get some fresh air. For a few hundred hardy sailors racing on the Severn River when the weather is frigid, frostbite racing is the preferred activity. The Annapolis Yacht Club, like many sailing organizations around the country, hosts frostbite racing every Sunday throughout the winter months.

The theory is that frigid winds sharpen the senses. The reward is a sense of accomplishment. During the winter months harbors are open and free of anchored or moored vessels. Disturbing power boat wakes are rare. Sailors enjoy this time of year because they have the rivers and the Chesapeake Bay to themselves.



A group of frostbite racers sail through the Annapolis Harbor in the dead of winter.

A fleet of ILCA dinghies, (formerly known as Lasers), are on the water regardless of the weather forecast. These sailors, of all ages, are the hardiest of the hardy.





As mentioned, frostbite sailing is popular for the racing zealot while bundled up passersby look sideways at the people on the water. They likely wonder, why do they go out there? Annapolis is a sailing town with three noted yacht clubs along with the U.S. Naval Academy providing competitive events year around. A fleet of ILCA dinghies, (formerly known as Lasers), are on the water regardless of the weather forecast. These sailors, of all ages, are the hardiest of the hardy.

Race committees make safety a high priority for frostbite sailors. The biggest danger is falling into the freezing water. Every sailor is required to wear a lifejacket. The Annapolis Yacht Club also requires every boat to race with three or more crew members. Adding to the list of safety protocol, sailors are required to stay in the cockpit and not venture on to the foredeck. Officials on patrol craft keep a close eye on every boat. Wearing the proper clothing makes frostbiting tolerable. If you keep your feet, hands, and head warm and dry, frostbite sailing is comfortable. I like to wear disposable heating pads in my boots and gloves. Once you are on the water and working to steer, trim the sails, or grind the winches, the physical activity keeps the sailors warm.

Hypothermia is a serious issue. People do not survive for long in frigid water. If someone goes over the side, it is essential to pull them out immediately.

The water looks different in the winter because the sun is low in the sky and shadows from the shore mask the shades of the ripples on the water. The trees are bare of leaves allowing wind to blow across the racecourse unimpeded by the trees. I find it easier to read the wind on the water without confused waves crossing the racecourse created from speedy power boats.

Normally, sailors spend most of the day on the water but in the winter, the Annapolis Yacht Club conducts one race that takes about 45 minutes, and then every competitor returns to shore for lunch and hot drinks before heading back out for a second race. I'm amazed how quickly sailors recover from the cold. The break is a good time for socializing, discussing strategy, and catching up on football scores. Soon the fleet heads back out to the racecourse. I think the sailors are more competitive during the second race because the leaders get back to shore early and can be the first to haul their boats out of the water and put them away for the week.

Other than getting fresh air, frostbite racing keeps sailors sharp for the upcoming summer season. A few years ago, the ILCA (Laser) fleet was in the middle of a race when a cold front approached the fleet from the northwest. There were fifty boats on the water as the wind suddenly built to well over 40 knots (miles per hour). Most of the fleet capsized. Among the competitors was a three-star admiral Dixon Smith. He reports that the chase boats got all the competitors out of the water within two minutes. Smith said everyone had lifejackets and wore dry suits. Most importantly, he added that every sailor accounted for each other. The fleet of boats made it back to the Severn Sailing Association dock. About 30 minutes later the front had passed and the zealous dinghy sailors headed back out for another round of races.





ILCA dinghies are ready to launch at the boatyard, even in the middle of winter.





Launching and racing the dinghies is laborious exercise that keeps the body warm during the coldest days.

I keep my 32-foot day sailor, *Whirlwind*, in commission all winter to go for a sail anytime the weather is reasonable. My comfort zone is when the temperature is above 40 degrees and the wind 18 knots or less. A few years ago, Naval Academy graduate, and now United Airlines pilot Dan Kirschner and I sailed *Whirlwind* from Spa Creek to Oxford, Maryland. When we arrived at the boat at 0630 there was odd white stuff on the deck. It took me a minute to realize it was snow from the night before. A brisk 12–17 knot wind blew from the south, and we sailed to windward from Tolly Point all the way to the south end of Tillman Island. Finally, we set a spinnaker and picked up speed to 9 knots and arrived at a boatyard in Oxford seven hours after sailing through the Spa Creek bridge. It felt like a special accomplishment. During our sail, we encountered exactly three other sailboats and a handful of power craft. I'm willing to bet they also enjoyed the solitude, which is defined by Websters as, "The state of being alone."

A frostbite fleet on Long Island Sound proudly displays a flag with a polar bear facing with his backside toward the wind. I like the humor of the New York fleet. Occasionally, snow flurries will fall on the boats during a race. This creates a surreal atmosphere. It gets eerily quiet, and the deck is slippery as the snowflakes dance about. The sun goes down early in the winter, but the races conclude well before dark. As they return from racing, every sailor seems to be smiling and looks refreshed for the upcoming busy week. Maybe they are happy because they have achieved something few would dare.



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Portraits
OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Along the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, stories of dedication, vision, and craftsmanship unfold every day. What's Up? Media is proud to share these stories—of leaders and innovators whose work reflects the spirit of the region itself: steady, resilient, and ever-inspired by the water's edge. In Portraits of the Chesapeake, we honor those whose talents and integrity have shaped our communities, celebrating the entrepreneurs and enterprises that keep the Bay's legacy vibrant and alive.

All photography by Bill Whaley, except ones credited otherwise.

WHAT'S UP? MEDIA

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OF THE CHESAPEAKE

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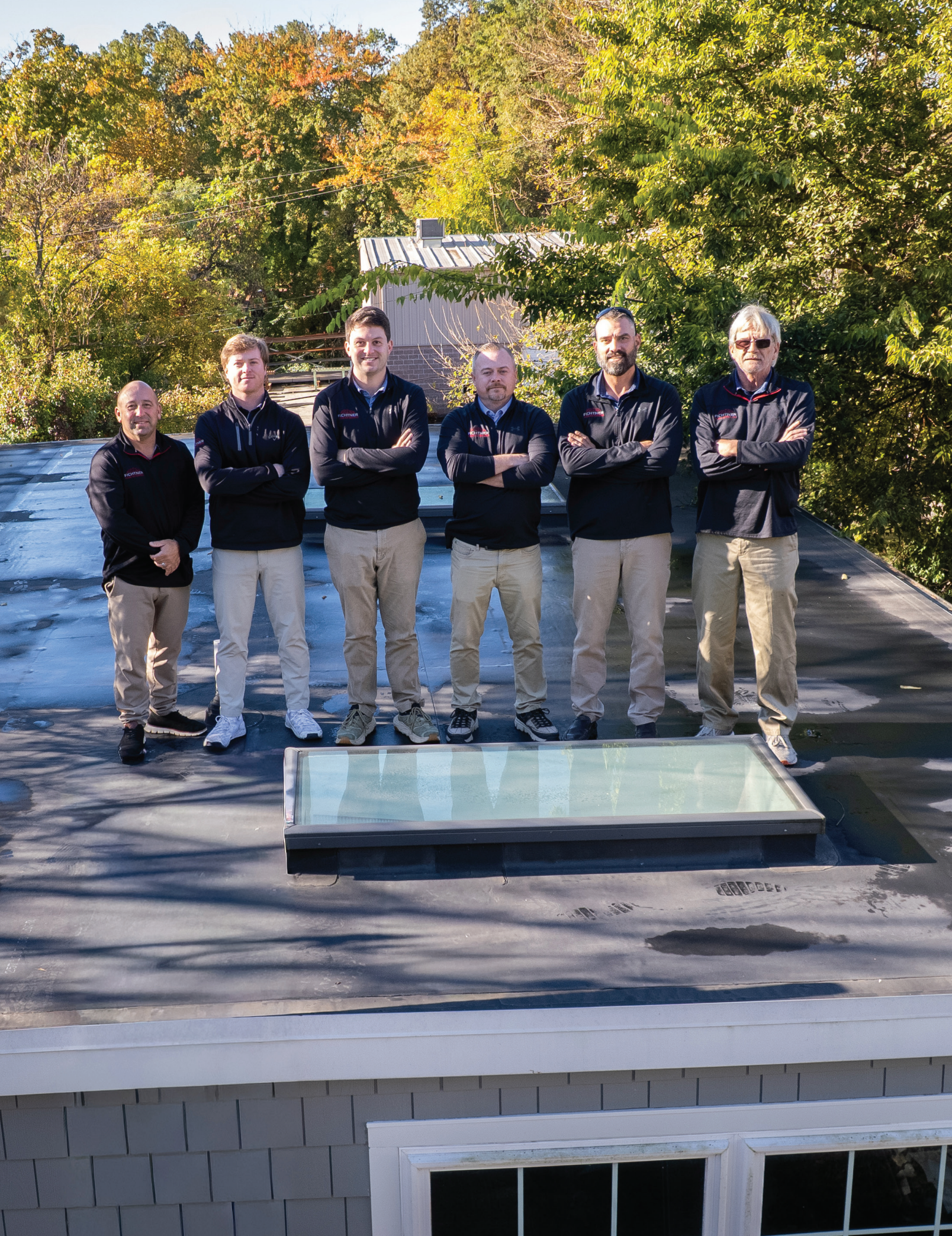



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Roger Hitchner and Gail Poe from Bethesda Maryland area moved to BayWoods of Annapolis this summer. Gail and Roger are very active in the community lending their expertise to many ongoing projects. Roger and Gail enjoy being active and like to travel. They enjoy the amazing waterfront property overlooking the Chesapeake Bay as well as the convenience of being in close proximity to Washington DC, Downtown Annapolis and Baltimore. They enjoy the surrounding Marinas and watching the sailboat races on the Bay.

WISE WORDS: "Anchored by community, carried by the tide of new adventures."



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SUSAN S. MAHAFFEE

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
PEOPLE RISE LLC

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At People Rise LLC, leadership starts with people—not paperwork. Founder and President Susan S. Mahaffee helps small to mid-size businesses turn workforce challenges into opportunities for growth. A former global HR executive turned entrepreneur, she partners with business owners to navigate tough employee issues, streamline and automate HR systems, and strengthen leadership through practical training and coaching. Over the past year, she has launched The Employee Help Desk podcast and two signature programs: the People Power Masterclass for business owners and BOOST™ for new and developing leaders. Next up, a collaborative book featuring trusted HR and business owner voices, coming in 2026.

WISE WORDS:

"Lead from the inside out. When you help people rise to their challenges, your business rises with them."



JACK PAPALEONTI GRI

THE ANCHOR TEAM OF
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Jack Papaleonti has built his life around service — to his clients, his community, and now, to the city he loves. As managing partner of Academy Realty, he's guided over a thousand successful real estate transactions, earning a reputation for trust and integrity. Beyond business, Jack's heart lies in giving back. From leading the Annapolis Optimist Club's annual "Shop with a Cop" program to serving as President of the Annapolis High School Sports Boosters and on his church's Parish Council, Jack's commitment runs deep. Public service is the next passion he's eager to proudly add to his lifelong record of community service.

WISE WORDS:

"Serving others has always been my foundation. Whether through business, faith, or public service, I believe strong communities are built by those who give back."

– Jack Papaleonti



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Prostatis Financial Advisors Group focuses on accountable retirement, tax, and estate planning, paired with clear and consistent personal contact with clients. The Prostatis team emphasizes diversification and conservative long-term asset allocation strategies. Working side-by-side with clients, Prostatis develops comprehensive financial plans that provide peace of mind as they transition toward retirement. Prostatis aims to help clients implement investment strategies that allow them to maintain their lifestyle throughout retirement, ensuring a lasting income. Whether clients are approaching retirement or already retired, Prostatis provides sound plans to protect their investments, guide them through financial transitions, and achieve financial freedom.

WISE WORDS: "It's not about how much you make — it's about how much you keep, protect, and grow for the retirement you deserve."



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Burnett Injury Group, founded by husband-and-wife team Andrew and Suzanne Burnett, is an Annapolis-based law firm devoted to helping people rebuild after life-changing injuries. The Burnetts and their team bring compassion, skill, and determination to every case—whether involving personal injury, car crashes, medical malpractice, or nursing home abuse and neglect. They understand that behind every case is a person, a family, and a story that deserves to be heard. With empathy and unwavering advocacy, they stand by their clients, fighting for accountability, recovery, and justice when it matters most.

WISE WORDS: "Lawyers for the injured—guided by compassion, driven by justice."



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Connect Wealth was founded on the importance of relationships. Many of the advisors' bonds date back as early as elementary school here in Annapolis. The connection shared among the advisors and staff translates directly into the experience their clients receive. They believe that life's big decisions should not be made alone but in partnership with people you trust. The advisors walk side by side with clients, helping them navigate life's important moments with confidence. Connect Wealth offers to serve as a personal CFO, taking the time to understand each client in order to help them win both personally and financially.

WISE WORDS: "Trust is earned in the smallest of moments. It is earned not through heroic deeds, or even highly visible actions, but through paying attention, listening, and gestures of genuine care and connection."

– Brené Brown

MELISSA CORBIN

OWNER, FOUNDER, PA-C
CORBIN COSMETICS

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Easton, MD
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Melissa Corbin, PA-C, is the founder and visionary behind Corbin Cosmetics, a luxury aesthetics practice in Annapolis, MD. With over 14 years of experience, she is passionate about delivering natural, refined results that enhance confidence. Melissa combines advanced injectable techniques with a deep understanding of facial aesthetics to ensure treatments are highly personalized. Her philosophy is rooted in authenticity, helping patients look refreshed and lifted without ever feeling "overdone." She has grown Corbin Cosmetics into a trusted practice where luxury, expertise, artistry, and compassion come together to create a welcoming environment where patients feel confident and cared for.

WISE WORDS:

"Aesthetic medicine should be seen as self-care; an empowering, modern way to prioritize ourselves, enhance confidence, and feel our best inside and out."



Photo by Ksenia Pro Photography



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Corbin Cosmetics was founded on the belief that aesthetic medicine should be approachable, natural, and patient-centered. Led by Melissa Corbin, PA-C, the practice enhances each individual's unique features while highlighting natural beauty with subtle precision. The Corbin Cosmetics team includes three exceptional aestheticians, an aesthetic registered nurse, and a microblading and spray tan expert, together bringing a century of combined experience. Services include injectables, collagen stimulation, medical-grade skincare treatments, chemical peels, spray tans, and semi-permanent makeup. Voted Best of Annapolis in 2024, Corbin Cosmetics is a premier destination where patients feel celebrated, supported, and naturally radiant.

WISE WORDS: "Our team's unparalleled depth of expertise in luxury aesthetic medicine ensures every patient receives safe, personalized, and exceptional care that enhances natural beauty."



LEEANN MENTZER

FOUNDER, APRN, CRNA
NOUDE AESTHETICS + WELLNESS

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Noude Aesthetics + Wellness, founded by LeeAnn Mentzer, APRN, CRNA, blends science, artistry, and compassion to help clients feel their most radiant and confident selves. With over a decade of experience as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, LeeAnn brings advanced medical expertise, meticulous attention to detail, and a deep commitment to patient-centered care. Noude offers medical aesthetics, IV hydration, customized facials, wellness treatments, and non-surgical vaginal rejuvenation—all designed to enhance, not change, your natural beauty. Through personalized consultations and thoughtful care, Noude empowers confidence from the inside out.

WISE WORDS: “Noude is where energy + injectables blend to create beautiful, natural results.”



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Originally from Germany, Cornelia moved to Talbot County in 1989 and quickly became a leading real estate agent. Known for her warmth, expertise, and dedication, she excels in all areas, from starter homes to luxury waterfront estates. With 30+ years of international experience, Cornelia combines her natural listening skills with award-winning marketing strategies and skillful negotiation, helping sellers achieve top-dollar results and buyers find their ideal homes. Connected to the Forbes Global Network, Cornelia brings global reach to her clients, delivering unparalleled service and results across the Eastern Shore as a trusted advocate.

WISE WORDS: “Every house tells a story. Let’s start yours.”



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WISE WORDS: "Early detection saves lives. Screening prevents disease. Awareness empowers action. Know your history. Protect your future. Love yourself—get screened." *–Dr. Melanie Jackson, MD, FACG*

ELIZABETH BENNETT

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Elizabeth is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and fiduciary dedicated to serving her clients' best interests. She takes a consultative, educational approach—listening, guiding, and creating a clear picture of each client's financial life. From defining goals to developing actionable plans, she collaborates with estate attorneys, CPAs, and other trusted professionals for a comprehensive strategy. Based in Annapolis, MD, and Boca Raton, FL, Elizabeth supports clients nationwide, combining expertise with genuine care to help them confidently take control of their finances and achieve lasting peace of mind.

WISE WORDS:

"A goal without a plan is just a wish. Handling money wisely enables you to do what you want, from giving generously to retiring comfortably."

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WISE WORDS:

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WISE WORDS: "Your future starts today. Plan for it."



GREG FERRA

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Greg Ferra knows that estate planning is about far more than drafting documents – it is about protecting what matters most. As a Partner at Liff, Walsh & Simmons, Greg brings a wealth of experience and a calm, reassuring presence to every client he serves. He takes pride in helping families create thoughtful plans that protect their assets, carry out their wishes, and uphold their values for generations to come. Known for his depth of knowledge and practical insight, Greg makes even the most complex estate and trust matters achievable, guiding clients with clarity and care every step of the way.

WISE WORDS:

"Estate planning is about protecting what matters most – your family, your values, and your peace of mind.."

JESSE WALSH

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Jesse Walsh believes clarity and peace of mind comprise the foundation of effective estate planning and administration. As an Associate with Liff, Walsh & Simmons, she helps individuals and families craft personalized plans that safeguard their futures and honor their legacies. Jesse's background in public health and dedication to her community equip her with a holistic perspective, viewing her clients as more than the sum of their assets. Admired for her approachable style and ability to make complex legal concepts easy to understand, she ensures every plan reflects her clients' goals, values, and the people and causes they cherish most.

WISE WORDS:

"Thoughtful estate planning and administration ensure your loved ones are protected and your legacy endures through generations."





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WISE WORDS: "We don't even know how strong we are until we are forced to bring that hidden strength forward."

— Isabel Allende

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WISE WORDS:

"The best part of life is when you can slow down, savor the moments, and share them with neighbors who become friends."



Photo by Karena Dixon Photography



KEVIN MEAD

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Kevin has spent the last decade producing digital experiences that stir audiences to action. As the owner of Nor'easter Digital, he and his team have brought websites, apps, games, and other custom interactive projects to life for businesses across the country. Kevin's education in the arts paired with his professionally-honed skills in user experience design offer a unique perspective for clients, ensuring that their stories are being told faithfully while keeping audience needs at the forefront of every decision.

WISE WORDS:

"Never sit still. Technology and customer needs are constantly evolving, and so should your brand's digital presence."



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Sinclair Prosser Gasior is a premier law firm concentrating in Estate Planning, Elder Law, and Estate Administration. More than just document preparation, the firm delivers a comprehensive, full-service approach. Every estate plan is carefully designed to function seamlessly — aligning assets, minimizing probate exposure, and easing the administrative burden during times of grief. Recognized among the best in Annapolis, Sinclair Prosser Gasior continues to set the standard for excellence in estate planning — securing peace of mind for Maryland families.

WISE WORDS: "Plan early, review often, align assets, and communicate your wishes to protect your legacy and ease the burden on family."



Left to right - Head of School, Nicole Sophocles, four WRUS students, Board Chair, Nikki Williams

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410-549-4444
MuellerHomes.com

Over the past 30 years, Mueller Homes has developed a unique approach to custom home building that includes a dedicated project management team, full-service interior design, and the finest craftsmen to create the home of your dreams. This seamless integration of services demonstrates why Mueller Homes is at the forefront of innovation when building luxury homes. The company now includes three divisions: Mueller Homes for custom home construction, Ella Lee Interiors for design, and Charles Henry Fine Woodworking for custom cabinetry. With this framework, Mueller Homes provides a more sophisticated approach to the entire custom home building process.

WISE WORDS:

"We believe in crafting homes that inspire your lifestyle. Our relentless dedication to quality, design, and communication allows us to provide truly memorable client experiences."

–P.J. Mueller, Jr., President







Portraits

KENNETH FAGAN

OF LONG & FOSTER
REAL ESTATE

Baltimore Regional Center
1312 Bellona Avenue
Lutherville, MD 21093
410-583-9400
LongandFoster.com

Countless buyers and sellers have shared their concerns about market conditions with Kenneth Fagan, senior vice president and regional manager for Long & Foster Real Estate in Maryland. His answer: "we create the conditions for success." While interest rates, inventory and the economy all matter, working with a professional like those at Long & Foster is far more essential. With Long & Foster, you're backed by a financially strong and ethically driven brokerage, which invests in its agents and clients. You get in-depth local expertise, plus access to industry-leading partners in mortgage, insurance, inspection, moving, property management and more.

WISE WORDS:

"You can't control the outside world, but by putting in the effort and choosing the right partners, you can drive a positive outcome."

- Kenneth Fagan, Senior Vice President & Regional Manager, Long & Foster Real Estate | Maryland



OMNIA REAL ESTATE

EXPERIENCE, STRATEGY, AND HEART

Main Office: 152 Ritchie Hwy #100-9692
Arnold, MD 21012
DC Office: 500 Connecticut Ave NW #500
Washington, DC 20036
202-430-6337
www.omniareal.com

At Omnia Real Estate, expertise meets authenticity. Founder and broker Claire Buchner brings years of legal and real estate leadership to guide her agents and clients with precision and integrity. Leslie Shafer, a lifelong Washingtonian, channels her hospitality-honed instincts into winning strategies and genuine client care. Ashley Sebastionelli, an MBA and entrepreneur, combines sharp business insight with a passion for helping families find home. Together, these three women deliver a boutique real estate experience built on ethics, responsiveness, and results—right here in the heart of Annapolis.

WISE WORDS: "If you don't have a plan, any plan will take you there."

— Paraphrased from the words of Lewis Caroll



CovingtonAlsina

ANN M. COVINGTON, CFP®, CPWA®
FOUNDER & FINANCIAL ADVISOR

NICOLE MULEA, CFP®
ASSOCIATE ADVISOR

410-457-7165
67 West Street, Suite 200
Annapolis, MD
Info@CovingtonAlsina.com
CovingtonAlsina.com

Take control of your financial future with Ann M. Covington and her team, including Nicole Mulea and three other CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professionals. Since 2012, CovingtonAlsina has made it their mission to empower clients with the knowledge and tools to make informed financial decisions. Ann and her team aim to prioritize your needs and create meaningful connections—so that you can navigate today's challenges while planning for a secure tomorrow.

WISE WORDS: "Financial planning is not about the money; money is just a tool. Planning is about living the life your money enables."

— Ann M. Covington



SCOTT SCHUETTER

OF BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HOME SERVICES
PENFED REALTY

1997 Annapolis Exchange Pkwy
Suite 100
Annapolis, MD
410-266-0600 (O)
410-900-7668 (M)
scottschuetter.com

Personal and Professional ~ Scott Schuetter has always focused on people, not houses. Every transaction, whether buying or selling, involves a series of complex personal decisions layered with emotions, finances and stress. Scott's military background and training taught him to be calm in any and all circumstances. He states that when things are most chaotic, it is even more important to be the calm and guiding voice. Buying or selling a house is not as stressful as a stormy night carrier landing, but to his clients, it may feel like it. While marketing trends, advertising, community connections, staging a home, market expertise are a huge part of his business, he expresses that in the end it all comes back to people and being there for them when it matters most.

WISE WORDS:

"If you work really hard and are kind, amazing things will happen."

–Unknown



ARCHBISHOP SPALDING THEATRE

8080 New Cut Road
Severn, MD 21144
410-969-9105
www.archbishopspalding.org

The Archbishop Spalding High School Theatre Department consistently impresses with vibrant productions, talented performers, and imaginative storytelling that bring the stage to life year after year. With a proud tradition of excellence, students shine both onstage and behind the scenes, showcasing teamwork, creativity, and professionalism. This fall's production of You Can't Take It With You highlighted the department's signature mix of humor, heart, and artistry, celebrating love, family, and individuality. Through every performance, Spalding Theatre demonstrates the passion and dedication that make it a cornerstone of the school's creative community.

WISE WORDS: "Follow your passion, embrace creativity, and always leave your heart on the stage — that's where the magic truly happens."

— Archbishop Spalding Theatre



CHESAPEAKE BAY BEACH CLUB

180 Pier One Road
Stevensville, MD
410-604-5900
www.baybeachclub.com

For over 25 years, the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club has defined weddings, events, and hospitality on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Its award-winning service, culinary excellence, and waterfront setting have created unforgettable memories for guests and couples alike. In 2026, the Beach Club expands its legacy with Wilson's Cove, a boutique waterfront hotel, and Vue, a rooftop destination with sweeping Chesapeake Bay views. At the core of its success is an unwavering passion for people—its team, guests, clients, and couples—who inspire every detail. Experience luxury just over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

WISE WORDS: "Hospitality is not what we do—it's who we are. Every guest, client, and couple is at the heart of everything we create."

JOANNA DALTON

REALTOR®
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

Serving Anne Arundel County
& the Eastern Shore
3 Church Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401
O: 410-263-8686
M: 410-980-8443
Joanna.Dalton@CBMove.com

Joanna is an award-winning, top-producing Realtor® known for her professionalism, market expertise, and genuine care for her clients. Tech-savvy and financially astute, she combines creativity, energy, and integrity to deliver seamless results from consultation to closing. A Maryland native, she grew up along the Wye River and later captained Loyola University Maryland's Division I Women's Lacrosse team, skills that honed her leadership and communication. Now rooted in Annapolis, Joanna leverages her deep local knowledge and powerful network to help clients achieve success.

WISE WORDS:

"Heart, hard work, and integrity drive my success. I'm grateful every day to work in real estate and help people, it's who I am."

— Joanna Dalton



Photo by Maureen Porto


COASTAL POOLS
SALES & DESIGN CENTER



COASTAL POOLS

500 Saddler Rd
Grasonville, MD 21638
410-873-8464
coastalpoolbuilders.net

Coastal Pools is redefining luxury outdoor living across Maryland and Delaware. Founded on a commitment to craftsmanship, innovation, and exceptional service, the company has grown into the region's premier custom pool builder and service provider. From concept to completion, Coastal Pools delivers tailored designs that transform backyards into stunning escapes, while their award-winning service team ensures pools are maintained and enjoyed for years to come. Recognized for excellence and trusted by families throughout the Chesapeake region, Coastal Pools continues to raise the standard—offering not just pools, but enduring spaces where memories are made and lifestyles are elevated.

WISE WORDS:

"Pools are more than water and stone—they're where families connect, laughter echoes, and memories last. We build spaces that enrich lives, one backyard at a time."

Portraits

ERICA BAKER

VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSOCIATE BROKER
TTR SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

209 Main Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
c + 410-919-7019
o + 410-280-5600
ericabaker.co

Erica Baker, Vice President and Associate Broker at TTR Sotheby's International Realty, represents a refined standard in luxury real estate, where strategy meets sincerity. Rooted in a lifetime along Maryland's waterfront, Erica blends deep market intelligence with an intuitive instinct for artful positioning, shaping each home's legacy with care. Known for her discretion, thoughtful presentation, and ability to translate complex markets into confident outcomes, she approaches every sale with integrity, intention, and the same precision and care she would give her own.

WISE WORDS:

"A home deserves representation rooted in clarity, strategy, and intention, where every move forward is guided by purpose."



WADE POOLS & LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Annapolis, MD
410-349-9507
WadeLandscapes.com

Imagine stepping into your backyard and feeling like you've arrived at a luxury resort. That's the experience Shaun Wade and his father Wayne have delivered for over 20 years across Maryland. Their family-owned firm, Wade Landscape Design, blends custom pools, elegant landscapes, outdoor kitchens, and tailored masonry into timeless retreats. Known for precision, creativity, and five-star service, the Wades bring each client's vision to life with care and craftsmanship—from concept to completion.

WISE WORDS: "A great space begins with listening—then shaping vision into something lasting."



MANOR TITLE, LLC

STEVE McCLUNG
CHRISTOPHE LOWTHER

111 Forbes Street
Suite 100
Annapolis, MD 21401
ManorTitle.com
443-440-5200

Attorneys Steve McClung and Christophe Lowther started Manor Title with the #1 focus being the client experience from contract to close. They believe that every home buyer and seller should be secure that their real estate transaction is being handled professionally and with care. Veterans of the title industry, Steve and Christophe have extensive knowledge of the intricacies of Maryland properties, and the experienced team at Manor Title provide all clients a closing experience tailored to their unique needs. Located in West Annapolis, we are your local title company now, and for years to come.

WISE WORDS: "Customer service should not be a department, it should be the entire company."

COURTNEY CHIPOURAS

TTR SOTHEBY'S
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

410-200-1224 Mobile
410-673-3344 Office
courtney@mychesapeakehome.com
mychesapeakehome.com

Courtney Chipouras has built a life and career around the place she loves most — Maryland's Eastern Shore. As Vice President with TTR Sotheby's International Realty, she helps clients find their perfect place by the water while celebrating the lifestyle that makes the Shore so special. A Rock Hall native and community advocate, Courtney pairs her business expertise with a deep local connection, championing both her clients and the region's small-town spirit. For her, life on the Chesapeake is about connection—between people, place, and purpose.

WISE WORDS:

"The most meaningful work happens when you love the place you serve and the people who call it home."





EWING, DIETZ, FOUNTAIN & KALUDIS, P.A.

16 South Washington Street
Easton, MD 21601
410-822-1988
ewingdietz.com

Ewing, Dietz, Fountain & Kaludis, P.A. is an "AV" rated general practice law firm based in Easton, Maryland—the historic capital of the Eastern Shore. For over 60 years, we've served individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and local governments throughout the Mid-Shore. Our attorneys focus on practical solutions, listening closely to clients, setting realistic goals, and working efficiently to deliver results. We take pride in our long-standing roots and commitment to the community. Ewing, Dietz, Fountain & Kaludis supports local businesses such as the iconic Trippe Gallery where this photo was taken. To learn more about our team and areas of practice, please visit the "Firm Profile" section on our website www.ewingdietz.com.

WISE WORDS: "Trusted legal guidance begins with listening. We help clients set realistic goals—and deliver results with integrity, experience, and a deep commitment to our community."

TRICIA WILSON

WILSON REALTY & STAGING

3033 Kent Narrows Way S - Ste 4
Grasonville, MD 21658
410-304-2250
getthedaisy.com

From waterfront estates to historic gems, Tricia Wilson has built a reputation for helping clients find their place on the Eastern Shore. After years as a top-producing agent, she launched Wilson Realty & Staging at Kent Narrows and is now celebrating her second year as broker and owner.

Known for her approachable style and sharp marketing expertise, Tricia blends creative strategy with market insight to deliver standout results. With over $100 million in career sales, she continues to raise the bar—not only in real estate, but in the lasting personal connections she builds with every client.

WISE WORDS:

"Success is a journey, not a destination—walk forward each day with intention, gratitude and faith."




DAVID ORSO
BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
SERVICES PENFED REALTY



DAVID ORSO

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HOME SERVICES
PENFED REALTY

1997 Annapolis Exchange
Annapolis, MD
8 Evergreen Road
Severna Park, MD
443.372.7171
David@DavidOrso.com

With over 22 years in real estate, David Orso has earned a reputation for excellence as Anne Arundel County's #1 agent since 2013. With 1,000+ home sales and over 300 five-star reviews, his unmatched market knowledge, strategic marketing, and expert negotiation skills give clients a clear advantage. David's proven systems deliver consistent, superior results across all market conditions—not just the boom years. Whether you're buying or selling, trust an experienced professional with a long-standing record of success. You deserve the best—so hire the best.

WISE WORDS:

"When my clients win, I win. Always in that order."



CHUCK MANGOLD

BENSON & MANGOLD
REAL ESTATE

31 Goldsborough St
Easton, MD 21601
410-822-6665 | Office
shoreluxury.com

With over 1,500 completed transactions and $922 million in total volume as both a buying and selling agent, Chuck is recognized as one of the Eastern Shore's top real estate professionals. Since 2001, he has specialized in waterfront, inland, and commercial properties across Talbot, Queen Anne's, Caroline, and Dorchester Counties. A longtime Talbot County resident, Chuck supports local organizations including the Academy Art Museum, Habitat Choptank, and Talbot Mentors. His management background and customer service expertise sharpen his negotiation skills and commitment to clients, strengthening Benson & Mangold's nearly 60-year legacy.

WISE WORDS:

"Real estate is about more than transactions—it's about relationships, trust, and helping clients find the right home for the next chapter of their lives."



LANE NEIDIG, MD

MODERN DERMATOLOGY OF MARYLAND

2568 A Riva Road #102
Annapolis, MD
410-216-0993
moderndermatologymd.com

Modern Dermatology of Maryland is a locally owned medical dermatology practice in Annapolis, founded by board-certified dermatologist, Dr. Lane Neidig, M.D. in 2023. Born and raised in the Annapolis area, Dr. Neidig recognized the need for a traditional physician owned dermatology office where patients, staff, and providers of care are valued and treated with respect and integrity. Our office offers the most advanced non-surgical skin cancer treatment available and a comprehensive surgical and phototherapy suite. Modern Dermatology offers an authentic and reliable haven for the dermatology patients of Annapolis and surrounding areas.

WISE WORDS: "Treat others how you want to be treated."



SARAH GARZA

FOUNDER AND PRINCIPLE AGENT
OF THE PCS HOME TEAM
MILITARY RELOCATION
SPECIALIST

www.thepcshometeam.com
@annapolispcsrealtor
2077 Somerville Rd, Ste 200
Annapolis, MD 21401
Office: 410.429.7425
Mobile: 443-717-3631

Sarah Garza is your go-to PCS and relocation real estate expert in Anne Arundel County. A military spouse of 30 years with nearly 20 moves herself, she truly understands the journey of service families. As a Military Relocation Specialist and founder of The PCS Home Team, Sarah guides buyers and sellers with clarity, care, and strategic expertise. Her team serves military families stationed near the Naval Academy and Fort Meade, as well as those relocating to and from Anne Arundel and surrounding counties. Sarah combines personal experience, deep market knowledge, and a client-first approach to make every move seamless.

WISE WORDS: "It's not goodbye — it's see you soon."
— Common Saying in Military Communities

STEPHANIE ROSE TIPPETT

OWNER, CLINICAL DIRECTOR, MSN, CRNP, FNP-C, CANS
BELLA ROSE MEDICAL AESTHETICS & WELLNESS

2 Chester Plaza
Chester, MD 21619
443-249-3232
bellarosemedicalaesthetics.com

Stephanie Rose Tippett, MSN, CRNP, FNP-C, CANS, is the owner and clinical director of Bella Rose Medical Aesthetics & Wellness on Kent Island. With over 20 years of experience in healthcare and 16 years specializing in aesthetics, Stephanie blends artistry and science to help patients feel confident and refreshed, never overdone. Her holistic approach integrates advanced injectables, laser technology, skincare, wellness, and hormone therapy for transformative, natural results. Stephanie leads her team with compassion, precision, and a deep commitment to excellence in patient care.

WISE WORDS:

"Confidence begins when you invest in yourself, inside and out. Subtle, thoughtful care today creates timeless beauty for years to come."



Photo by Madison Berlin Photography



NOTHING BUNDT CAKES

LUXURY GOURMET RETAIL BAKERY

Annapolis - 443-775-7979
1901 Towne Centre Blvd, Ste 130

Crofton-Gambrills - 410-695-9197
1404 S. Main Chapel Way, Ste 114

Severna Park - 410-421-1250
580 Ritchie Hwy, Ste I

nothingbundtcakes.com

After living abroad for 18 years, Rhonda and Glenn Rogers repatriated to the US. Glenn, a pilot, and Rhonda, driven by her entrepreneurial spirit and passion for community, sought to build something meaningful. Bravely navigating the global lockdown, in December 2020, Nothing Bundt Cakes Annapolis was born. Together, with their son John and girl-wonder Samantha Colletti, they've realized a multi- bakery business. Nothing Bundt Cakes is more than just a bakery, it's a little "bundt'ique" of joy! Spreading smiles across Annapolis, Crofton, Severna Park, and soon Easton and more, Nothing Bundt Cakes is sweetening up their communities one bundt at a time.

WISE WORDS: "The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud."
— Coco Chanel

BECKY MILLER

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

John & Cathy Belcher Campus
90 Ritchie Highway
Pasadena, MD 21122
410-987-2003
www.hospicechesapeake.org

At Hospice of the Chesapeake, we do more than provide care—we become part of each person's journey. Every story has a beginning, an end and meaningful moments in between. Our team walks alongside patients and families with compassion and clarity, helping them navigate challenges and find hope. We focus on what matters most: comfort, dignity and quality of life. Because when care is focused holistically, every day holds the potential for peace. We want every patient and family to be able to say, with confidence and heart, "I'm having a good day."

WISE WORDS:

"Some people cannot be cured, but everyone can heal."





FELLO

TOGETHER, WE ARE FELLO.
TOGETHER, WE BELONG.

fello.org
410-269-1883
999 Corporate Blvd, Suite 300
Linthicum, MD 21090

Fello champions the rights of people with disabilities and invests in what matters most: real opportunities, strong relationships, and inclusive, equitable communities. At Fello, we believe in the power of choice and community. We partner with people with disabilities to provide support services, develop inclusive and accessible housing, and create spaces where people feel genuinely connected—not just accommodated. Founded in 1961, Fello continues to lead and create change, removing barriers, meeting people where they are, and addressing overlapping needs to make a lasting impact in our communities. Learn more at fello.org.

WISE WORDS: "Everyone deserves access, opportunity, and community, allowing each person to shape their own path."



Pictured: Indian Creek School's Outdoor Education team (L-R): Upper School Humanities Teacher Mr. Garth Robinson, Director of Outdoor Learning Ms. Stephanie Chambers '00, Upper School Science Teacher Dr. Michael Roswell, Dean of Community & Well-Being Mr. Danny Haley; Not pictured: Sarah Allen '01, Anne Engles '97, Tyler Larkin, Jennifer Malachowski, Tricia Roth, Lindsey Seynhaeve;

INDIAN CREEK SCHOOL OUTDOOR EDUCATION TEAM

CHESAPEAKE AREA
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

1130 Anne Chambers Way
Crownsville, MD 21032
410-923-3660
indiancreekschool.org

At Indian Creek School, learning doesn't stop at the classroom—it thrives across the School's 114 acres of forests, fields, and gardens - and beyond. Creek's Outdoor Education team has designed a comprehensive environmental education program that uniquely integrates academics, wellness, and environmental responsibility across every grade. From daily, all-weather campus exploration in Pre-K, to Middle School cultivation of a 2,500 square-foot garden that nourishes local families, to Upper School outdoor adventure field trips and community partnerships, Indian Creek's outdoor learning program inspires confident, compassionate thinkers ready to make a difference.

WISE WORDS: "At Indian Creek, students don't just study nature—they learn from it, through it, and ultimately, for it."

Portraits

BRAD KAPPEL

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
TTR SOTHEBY'S
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

M: 410-279-9476
O: 410-280-5600
brad.kappel@sothebysrealty.com
bradkappel.com
Annapolis Brokerage
209 Main Street
Annapolis, MD

Rooted in the Chesapeake Bay region, Brad Kappel has become a trusted leader in Maryland's luxury and waterfront real estate markets. As founder of the Brad Kappel Team, he combines local expertise with global reach to deliver refined, results-driven representation. The team's recent milestones—surpassing $315 million in annual sales year-to-date—reflect both the strength of the market and their dedication to strategy, storytelling, and service. With more than $1.5 billion in total career team sales, Brad remains focused on what matters most: guiding clients through every stage of the luxury real estate experience with integrity, precision, and care.

WISE WORDS:

"Our success stems from trust, precision, and purpose. We don't just sell homes—we curate the Chesapeake lifestyle for those who value it most."







THE JAKLITSCH LAW GROUP

THE BIG DOGS FROM
THE SMALL FIRM

Annapolis / Upper Marlboro
410-268-2801 | 855-Big-Dog1
www.BigDogLaw.com

The Jaklitsch Law Group stands as one of the most recognized personal injury firms in the country. Led by four distinguished attorneys - Rick Jaklitsch, Christine Murphy, David Jaklitsch, and Thomas Brimmer - the firm combines the resources and expertise of a large practice with the personal attention of a boutique firm. Having earned numerous national accolades, including "Best Personal Injury Trial Law Firm - USA," the Jaklitsch Law Group has built its reputation on handling the most serious catastrophic injury and wrongful death cases. Affectionately known as the "Big Dogs from the Small Firm," their long track record of substantial settlements and verdicts makes them the unmistakable Face of Personal Injury Law, as again confirmed by *What's Up? Media.*

WISE WORDS: "Be the Best — in every case, with every client, every day!"
— The Maryland Lacrosse motto, and our mission at Jaklitsch Law Group



Photo by Tony Lewis Photography

ANCHORED HOPE THERAPY

170 Jennifer Road, Suite 202
Annapolis, MD 21401
443-291-8090
anchoredhopetherapy.com
info@anchoredhopetherapy.com

At Anchored Hope Therapy, healing starts with the right client-therapist connection. Their team of trauma-informed providers understands that trauma impacts each person differently and believes in treating the whole person — not just the symptoms. With a focus on mind-body integration and community collaboration, they offer personalized, compassionate care. Anchored Hope partners with local professionals to support holistic healing and values accessibility, accepting Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance plans and working to expand care options. Their approach honors both individual and collective healing, creating a safe space where clients can feel seen, supported, and empowered to grow. Healing happens here — together.

WISE WORDS: "Trauma changes you, but it doesn't define you. Healing is possible. You don't have to do it alone. We're here."



COMPASS STUDIO TILE & FLOORING

302 Harry S. Truman Pkwy
Suites A-C
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-224-0700
cst-studio.com

For over four decades, Compass Studio Tile & Flooring has been a trusted name in Anne Arundel County and beyond. Built on a foundation dating to 1978, the partnership of CarpetBagger, Compass Stone & Tile, and Finme unites generations of craftsmanship. Led by Brian Dieterich, the company is known for integrity, attention to detail, and a customer-focused approach. Offering elegant hardwood, luxury vinyl, distinctive tile, and natural stone, Compass Studio delivers quality, creativity, and value—guided by expert design consultants who help clients achieve their vision with tailored solutions for every space and budget.

WISE WORDS: "We shape our homes, and then our homes shape us."
–Winston Churchill



ICSI

International Computer Services
1612 McGuckian St
Suite 200
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-280-3000
www.icsi.com

For over 35 years, International Computer Services (ICSI) has delivered trusted, enterprise-grade IT solutions to organizations in Maryland. Specializing in managed services, cybersecurity, and cloud infrastructure, ICSI empowers clients to operate securely and efficiently in a rapidly evolving digital environment. The firm's consultative approach, technical expertise, and commitment to responsive service have earned it a reputation for excellence. ICSI remains dedicated to helping businesses scale with confidence by aligning technology with strategic goals. We manage your IT. You manage your business.

WISE WORDS: "Technology is a powerful catalyst for growth; an investment that drives innovation, efficiency, and long-term success."



AMANDA S. DENISON, ESQ.

FOUNDER
SALLEE LAW

443-355-4200
www.annapolislawyer.com
adenison@annapolislawyer.com

Founder of Sallee Law, Amanda brings over a decade of experience in both litigation and legislation to her practice. A former prosecutor turned defense and family law attorney, she's known for her sharp advocacy and compassionate counsel. Beyond the courtroom, Amanda offers political consulting to organizations shaping meaningful change through policy. Her approach blends precision, empathy, and strategy—hallmarks of her boutique firm's modern edge. When she's not arguing a case or drafting legislation, you'll likely find this mom of four on the sidelines of a soccer field, cheering just as fiercely as she advocates.

WISE WORDS:

"I'm redefining advocacy by rewriting its standards."

— Amanda S. Denison, Esq.



Drs. Chris Chambers, Neil Sullivan, Kurt Jones, Borek Hlousek, Cliff Walzer, and Kenneth Kufta

ORAL SURGERY SPECIALISTS

Annapolis, Pasadena
Kent Island, Waugh Chapel
410-268-7790
annapolisoss.com

Drs. Walzer, Sullivan, Hlousek, Jones, Chambers, and Kufta are Board Certified Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons dedicated to providing exceptional surgical care in a compassionate, patient-centered environment. Their expertise spans dental implant surgery, wisdom tooth removal, corrective jaw surgery, and facial reconstruction. Utilizing advanced technology and techniques, they achieve outstanding functional and aesthetic results while prioritizing patient comfort and safety. With state-of-the-art facilities and the ability to administer IV general anesthesia, they deliver comprehensive care under one roof. Their long-standing commitment to excellence, innovation, and integrity has earned them recognition as trusted leaders in oral and maxillofacial surgery throughout the region.

WISE WORDS: "Our focus is always on the patient, combining advanced surgical expertise with compassionate care to maintain comfort, restore confidence, and quality of life through every stage of treatment."



ELIZABETH ARENTZ

MILLENNIAL SPECIALIST
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

Cell 443-988-3495
Office 410-263-8686
Elizabeth.Arentz@cbrealty.com
SellingMarylandSunsets.com
3 Church Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Elizabeth seamlessly integrates her unique background in healthcare consulting and neurobiology with negotiating deals and helping people achieve their real estate goals. This unconventional foundation equips her with exceptional empathy, analytical skills, and an understanding of complex systems, all vital in navigating the nuanced real estate sector. Named an international Coldwell Banker 30 Under 30 and *What's Up's* Best Residential REALTOR, Elizabeth is taking the real estate world by storm. Raised in a REALTOR family, she now brings a blend of personal experience and academic expertise to her thriving career, alongside her husband, Jake, dogs, Jinx and Beretta, and bearded dragon, Mushu.

WISE WORDS: "We will get through this purchase or sale, together. One step at a time." – *Elizabeth Arentz*



BIANA ARENTZ

LUXURY PROPERTY SPECIALIST
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

Cell 410-490-0332
Office 410-263-8686
Biana.Arentz@CBMove.com
SellingMarylandSunsets.com
3 Church Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Biana Arentz is a recognized leader in luxury real estate, specializing in waterfront properties on the Eastern Shore and in Annapolis. With twenty-two years of experience and deep community involvement, she's known on both sides of the Bridge. Named Best Waterfront Realtor in 2024 and 2025 by *What's Up Magazine* and The Shore Update, Biana embodies luxury across all price points. Biana combines local expertise with dedication and personalized service, guiding clients through one of life's most meaningful decisions—buying or selling their dream home. Biana lives in Queenstown with her husband, Steve, and their dog, Harley. She is blessed to have their daughter Elizabeth share her passion for real estate.

WISE WORDS: "Don't wait to buy real estate. Buy real estate and wait."
– Will Rogers

DR. KELLY SULLIVAN MD, FACS

OWNER, SULLIVAN SURGERY & SPA

BOARD CERTIFIED PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGEON

FELLOW IN THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Locations in Annapolis, Downtown Annapolis and Easton
443-782-4847 - Annapolis
443-221-2700 - Easton
sullivansurgery.com

For over 20 years, Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon Dr. Kelly Sullivan, MD, FACS, and her team at Sullivan Surgery & Spa have been recognized as Annapolis' premier destination for surgical and medical-grade aesthetic care. At Sullivan Surgery & Spa, we provide an intimate and relaxing environment where you'll receive the highest level of care for all your facial rejuvenation, breast and body contouring, and reconstructive surgery needs. Dr. Sullivan believes that true beauty begins from within—and that overall health and wellness are essential to the success of every surgical and non-surgical treatment.

WISE WORDS:

"Surgery is both science and art—the science ensures safety; the art ensures beauty."



Photo by David Hartcorn



Photo by David Hartcom

SULLIVAN SURGERY & SPA

DR. KELLY SULLIVAN, MD, FACS

Locations in Annapolis, Downtown Annapolis and Easton
443-782-4847 - Annapolis
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WISE WORDS: "When you feel good in your skin, it shows everywhere else."



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WISE WORDS: "Movement is not only key to both physical and mental health, it is a big part of what makes life fun."

JUDY BUDDENSICK

PRESIDENT & FOUNDER
FRANCES MARKETING GROUP

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Judy Buddensick, founder of Frances Marketing Group, leads a full-service agency recognized for its personalized, results-driven approach. For nearly a decade, the firm has helped businesses grow through strategic marketing, branding, digital media, and sponsorships. Judy's deep community ties and hands-on leadership set her apart—she co-chairs the Annapolis Police Foundation and serves on the boards of the Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Annapolis Partnership. She also manages sponsorships for major U.S. Naval Academy Alumni events. Her creativity, integrity, and local insight earned Frances Marketing Group the title Best Marketing Agency in *What's Up? Annapolis!*

WISE WORDS:

"Named to honor my late mother, Frances — her values built its foundation, and her spirit still drives it forward."





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Kim McNew manages Hope Warehouse, a thrift store operated by Haven Ministries in Queenstown, MD. She has transformed the warehouse into a welcoming space, offering quality furniture at affordable prices. Hope Warehouse accepts donations of gently used furniture, home décor, small appliances, and tools and offers pick-up services for larger items. The revenue generated supports a seasonal homeless shelter, resource center, day center, two food pantries, and a voucher program assisting those in need with furniture and household goods. Haven Ministries also runs Our Daily Thread, a thrift store in Chester that sells clothing, jewelry, and books, with proceeds benefiting Queen Anne's County residents.

WISE WORDS:

"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day."



THE EDGE TEAM

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WISE WORDS: "Buying a home isn't just about numbers—it's about finding your place. Plan smart, stay patient, and trust the process."



CHARLOTTE POTTER KASIC

DIRECTOR
ACADEMY ART MUSEUM

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Charlotte Potter Kasic is the Director of the Academy Art Museum in Easton, Maryland, where she brings a rare blend of artistic vision, strategic leadership, and community engagement. An internationally celebrated conceptual artist and trained glassblower, her practice shapes her ethos as a museum leader. "As a glassblower, you're always working in concert with others," she says. "That spirit of collaboration guides how I lead—championing creativity, arts advocacy, and a broader understanding and appreciation of the arts." Kasic previously held director roles at the Chrysler Museum of Art, the Barry Art Museum, and Yestermorrow Design/Build School.

WISE WORDS: "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."



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WISE WORDS: "Your story matters. It's time to make your mental health a priority."



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CRISTY MORRELL

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As Executive Director of Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers, Cristy Morrell is building on the nonprofit's 55-year legacy of high-quality childcare and educational excellence. With a passion for early literacy, she has introduced literature-based STEAM programs that spark curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning in children ages two through twelve. With five sites and deep roots in the Mid-Shore, Critchlow believes early education isn't just child's play, it's an investment in the community's future. Thanks to generous donors and foundation partners, every family—regardless of income—can access this enriching care. You can learn more at www.cacckids.org.

WISE WORDS:

"Books are mirrors and windows to the world–in them, children see themselves, their potential, and dreams, and explore far-off places, real or imagined."

– Adapted from Rudine Sims Bishop



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WISE WORDS: “Nothing makes us happier than helping you live well.”



Photo by Tony Lewis Photography



CHRISTINA PALMER

OF KELLER WILLIAMS FLAGSHIP OF MARYLAND

Associate Broker, Team Leader,
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Christina Janosik Palmer, Associate Broker with Keller Williams Flagship of Maryland, brings over 30 years of real estate expertise to Anne Arundel County and beyond. In 2016, she expanded her solo practice into a ten-member team offering more than a century of combined knowledge. Christina and her team are known for unique marketing strategies that sell homes quickly and secures strong prices. They lead with integrity and professionalism, guiding clients through traditional residential home purchases as well as land and site work, builders, engineers, and other complex transactions. Christina and her team protects her clients' interests to achieve remarkable results.

WISE WORDS:

"Work hard and with purpose, honor commitments, and care deeply for those you serve. Success is measured not only by results, but the impact you have on others"



MIKE NALLY

FOUNDER & CEO
NALLY VENTURES LEADERSHIP

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Mike Nally believes great leadership transforms organizations and communities. As founder and CEO of Nally Ventures Leadership, Mike partners with companies and nonprofits across the Chesapeake region to strengthen their leadership, refine their strategies, and develop purpose-driven cultures. Through personalized coaching, team development, and specialized consulting, his firm empowers leaders at every level to see more clearly, manage with confidence, and drive meaningful results. As a veteran, entrepreneur, and coach, Mike draws on real-world experiences to facilitate growth in all aspects of life. His comprehensive approach builds strong leaders who build stronger communities. *Serving Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and DC.*

WISE WORDS: "The most important person you will lead is you. Excellence in leadership is built one choice at a time."



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WISE WORDS: "The best advice feels like a conversation, not a calculation. Good planning begins with listening—because your story, not your numbers, is where every great plan starts." – *Ray Hobson, CFP®*

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Fulfilling a Lifelong Vision

Janet Richardson-Pearson has cultivated a legacy of local philanthropy and unique endeavors

Story by **LISA HILLMAN**
Photography by **LAURA WIEGMANN**

In the end, it will be the land that defines her.

Living on property her great-great-grandfather once walked as a POW, Janet Richardson- Pearson is as controversial as she is revered. How she overcame lean years, juggled multiple careers, faced family tragedies, and still succeeded in serving thousands of patients and their families is the stuff of heroines or historical fiction. But the real story, yet evolving, is even more remarkable.

Texas Born, Annapolis Bound

On the southeastern edge of Annapolis, just off Forest Drive, lies a vast, rolling plot of land enclosed by a crisp, white fence. On approach, the gates open like two gracious arms. Beyond where the land slopes, stands a massive stable, impressive for its size and circus-like dome. Across the road a two-story farmhouse overlooks surrounding pastures.

These two structures, both housing nonprofit organizations, make unusual neighbors: one a haven for horses, the other for humans. In sharing this property, The Wellness House of Annapolis and the Chesapeake Dressage Institute fulfill a vision its owner has taken a lifetime to realize.

That life began in Victoria, Texas, a place young Janet was happy to leave before high school. By age 10 she had moved several times, including a year living with relatives after her dad lost his job. Ultimately, her family landed in Annapolis.

"I went to high school in Maryland and usually that's where it feels like your home. Annapolis is my home. I am very grateful my kids got to grow up here."

Kids came fast. Married at age 19, a year later she had her first child, Brian. Siblings Jennifer, Andrew, and Matt were born over the next 18 years. Raising her family, she earned a degree in Housing and Interior Design from the University of Maryland, part-time.

Janet describes those early years as a blur of child-rearing, work, and studies for both her and husband David. "I got married young and had kids. I never got to leave home. David encouraged me to go. I slept in bunk beds. Did dish duty. Toured historic homes. I loved it."





"Over the years I've been approached by different developers. Houses. Big box stores. I wanted to save as much of the land as possible. But I realized to save it, I needed to pay for it." —Janet Richardson-Pearson

Eventually she attended graduate school towards a degree in Historic Preservation and American Studies. One of her fondest memories is a six-week semester she spent in England.

And so began her first career. Feeding her interest in historic preservation, she worked as an interior designer for 17 years, including with the H. Chambers Company in Baltimore. Numerous projects attest to her talent. She names a few favorites: the Imperial Hotel in Chestertown and the Mt. Airy Plantation, the former hunting lodge of Lord Calvert. She also served on the Board of Historic Annapolis, Inc.

Meanwhile David, whom Janet describes as an "entrepreneur," had started an industrial staffing agency. Hard work paid off. He eventually sold the company and the stock split "a couple of times." Even as she recalls this success, Janet restates that her origins were "shabby genteel" and that she and Daivd both came "from modest backgrounds."

For many years, the couple lived on a small farm near the property she now owns. Then one day David heard about a massive housing development planned for the acreage behind their home.

Saving the Land

In the mid-1990s Janet and her neighbors were "horrified" at the size of a proposed development on the nearly 200-acre property "across the creek." It included two huge tracts of land: Crystal Springs Farm and Mas Que Farm. Fortuitously, David discovered that the contract with U.S. Homes had expired.

"He bought Crystal Spring Farm on a handshake with the Iliff family," Janet says, "and gave it to me."

Then tragedy struck. In news that shocked Annapolis, David was killed when the 40-foot boat he was remodeling on a pier behind his home fell off its lift and pinned him beneath. It was September 1996. He was only 58.

"He was always doing risky things," Janet says, with the pain of that September day forever fresh.

With the resilience she learned in childhood, she kept an eye on the property. A year later, "I bought Mas Que Farm on my own." Now nearly 180 acres were hers.

"Over the years I've been approached by different developers. Houses. Big box stores. I wanted to save as much of the land as possible. But I realized to save it, I needed to pay for it." And so began her search for the "right" project.

Wellness House Finds a Home

Kelly Sullivan, M.D., knew they needed more. A successful Annapolis surgeon who performed plastic and reconstructive surgery, she was—and still is—highly skilled at helping cancer patients. But she knew their families, especially the children, needed more.

With a clear vision to establishing a place where cancer families could gather and find supportive services, Sullivan founded Wellness House in 2007. Two years later, operating mostly out of church basements with an early donation from the Rotary Club of Annapolis, the program found a home, thanks to Anne Arundel Health System CEO Martin L. "Chip" Doordan.

"As soon as Chip introduced us," Sullivan says, "Janet was all in. She's been incredibly supportive of Wellness House giving us the most bucolic environment for the community we serve."

"Janet was always so gracious in wanting to do something with the property," says Doordan, a former neighbor. "All I had to do was introduce her to Kelly. It was the right project at the right time."

In 2009, Janet turned over the two-story farmhouse near her property's entrance to the Wellness House for its permanent

home, rent-free. She also underwrites much of its upkeep. The organization fundraises for ongoing program support from a growing cadre of grateful supporters.

Patients and their families access counseling, individual therapy, massage, Reiki, art and music therapy, and an array of services and activities to serve nearly every need. All are free. Mary Jermann, who has served as Executive Director since 2019, fairly gushes about the impact the House has for its more than 2,000 members and for the woman who makes it possible.

"You feel her presence here," Jermann says, "almost like an aunt. She has a way about her. She knows what she wants. She's very direct, but very complimentary. I think she's proud of the organization today."

What attracted Janet most was the program's mission. Two of her sons have had cancer, both as adults, and both are survivors of related, serious conditions. As she says, "I would love to have had all this available to me, the support, the counseling, the grief therapy."

Because of her sons, Janet calls this her "gratitude house." She maintains an office on the first floor and often stops in. But Wellness House is not the only charitable organization on the land.

Chesapeake Dressage Begins

When Janet was 35, her 13-year-old daughter Jennifer began horseback riding. "I'd never been on a horse in my life," Janet says, laughing. "It's not like tennis. You have to seek it out."

Her daughter eventually moved on; Janet didn't. In the 1970s, she began owning horses and recalls her first, Chloe, a five-year-old Buckskin quarter horse. She took lessons from renowned equestrian and Olympic judge Linda Zang and her second "career" began.

With her innate curiosity and pursuit of the best, she researched stables because "what I wanted wasn't here," she says. Inspired by Hilltop Farm in Colora, Maryland, Janet built her own stables and established the Chesapeake Dressage Institute (CDI) in 2003. A nonprofit organization, CDI seeks to "promote classically correct dressage training, aiming for the highest standards of care for the horse, and striving for excellence on the part of the rider."



Wellness House Executive Director Mary Jermann with Richardson-Pearson, who donated a two-story farmhouse to be the nonprofit's home (founded by Kelly Sullivan, M.D., in 2007).

CDI boards up to 18 horses and is typically full. The emphasis is on education. Boarders are required to take two to three lessons per week and attend an annual clinic. Now well known in the equestrian world, Janet also is a founding sponsor of the Global Dressage Institute in Wellington, Florida. Another Annapolis-area charity, Maryland Therapeutic Riding, also owes its roots to Janet as its founding sponsor. Currently, she serves on the board of Talisman Therapeutic Riding in Grasonville, Maryland.

At age 84, she still rides four times weekly and recently completed her "Century Ride," in which the age of the horse and rider equal 100. Two years ago, Janet acquired a stunning horse named Whiskey who is fast gaining notoriety for a new Wellness House service.



Richardson-Pearson is active at the farm property, home to the nonprofit Chesapeake Dressage Institute, which she founded in 2003.

Down at the Stables

Emma Rogers long dreamed of combining her training as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and therapist with her love of horses. Today, she is the Consulting Clinical Director of Counseling for Wellness House and a certified Equine Gestalt Coach. Rogers' considerable talent was on full display during a recent demonstration at the CDI stables for Wellness House members and guests.

All eyes were on Whiskey, a two-year old Gypsy Vanner. The breed resembles a Clydesdale with a smaller body and free-flowing mane. As the 1,500-pound horse stood off-center, Rogers gently guided a former cancer patient into the ring. Whisky moved slowly toward her as the woman reached up to softly stroke the giant muzzle. Not a whisper from the audience. The moment lasted just seconds. But the memory for everyone there—forever.

Teaching resilience, a strength its participants may not know they have, equine therapy under the skilled hands of Rogers brings a new level to what Wellness House now offers. Seated in the audience among the onlookers was Janet, watching her Whiskey give such solace to another human being.

Says Rogers, "Janet is deeply passionate about the life and care of her beloved horse. She recognizes the importance for horses to find purpose and connection after their riding days are over. For the Wellness House, she provides a healing sanctuary for those experiencing cancer—prioritizing the beauty, safety, and preservation of the space."

Preserving the Space

In her office Janet stores papers and transcripts documenting the history of Mas Que Farm from 1673 to the present. She finds it extraordinary that her great-great-grandfather likely walked the property as a prisoner after the Civil War.

Over the years pressure to develop the land has only increased. Janet knew early on that to save the land she needed money. While the two nonprofits fulfilled much of her dream, they can hardly help sustain the property.

The concept of a continuing care retirement community grew from her mother's experience. Janet's father died one month after her husband David. She moved her mother from Texas to Maryland and then to a series of facilities.

"You feel her presence here…almost like an aunt…I think she's proud of the organization today."—Mary Jermann, Wellness House Executive Director

"I loved the concept of continuing care on the property and having nature be part of it. Both of my kids convalesced here, too."

Plans to build a retirement community with National Lutheran Communities began more than 15 years ago. Through her development company, Katherine Properties, Janet endured major controversy surrounding the project. Lawsuits by environmental groups and others forced delays and changes to the plans.

"When it became obvious the development wasn't going to happen, the Lutherans took over," she says, adding that a few hurdles remain before construction on The Village at Providence Point can begin.



Of the property set aside for a planned senior living community, Richardson-Pearson says, "I loved the concept of continuing care on the property and having nature be part of it."

Longtime friend Chip Doordan says Janet was "maligned because people thought she would make a lot of money. Any growth in that area always would be challenged, rightly or wrongly."

A Philanthropist By Any Other Name

In 2000, Janet married William Pearson, retired as a Rear Admiral of the U.S. Public Health Service. "Bill" was operating a wellness shop in West Annapolis. According to Janet, their courtship was "fast." He proposed at the top of the Eiffel Tower.

The couple, who enjoy ten grandchildren together, splits their time between homes on the Crystal Springs property and Wellington, Florida, known as the "winter equestrian capital of the world." Despite her senior years, concerns over her family's health, and local legal battles, Janet gives no sign of slowing down. Her personal goal is "to get back into the ring when both the horse and I are sound."

As she says, "Some of us want to compete just to get better." Asked if she considers herself a "philanthropist"—given that she shares the property where she, Bill, and their three dogs live with two major nonprofit organizations—she shrugs off the question.

But perhaps the founder of Wellness House, Kelly Sullivan, MD, says it best. "There is no end to her generosity. In what she is doing she is touching so many lives, so many families, children, and individuals… for today and for future generations."

The Annapolis Holiday Tradition

WHAT'S UP? MEDIA'S

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Home & Garden

152 ADVICE TO THE WEED WEARY

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Front & Center

PG. 148

Front & Center

STYLING THE HOLIDAY MANTEL

By Lisa J. Gotto

Along with the Christmas tree, a festive Hanukah tabletop, and boughs of greens gracing the front door, the fireplace mantel is perfect place to display your connection to and love for the holiday season. That's why we're deep diving into some inspirational mantel looks for every style of home.



Photo courtesy of hipandhumblystyle.com



Photo courtesy of littlehouseoffour.com

CLEAN FARMHOUSE MODERN

A scheme of simple black and white is the hallmark of the modern farmhouse aesthetic. To this, toss in some soft neutral elements, small wooden houses or bead garland, and then garnish with simple white, neutral, or buffalo check stockings and add a boxwood wreath or large mirror above as an anchor to invoke a feeling of calmness, approachability, and timelessness.

Making it work: Layer light faux or real evergreen garland, using simple flat thumbtacks to keep them in place toward the front of the mantel so you will have room to add your wooden homes and candlestick bases toward the mantel back. Add wooden bead garland and subtle white lights, if desired, atop the evergreens.

RUSTIC LODGE

The buzz words for this look are natural, cozy, and woodsy—think pine, burlap, large pinecones, aromatic branches, berries, and simple indoor accent pieces.

Making it work: Drape a chunky real or faux pine garland atop the mantel and weave in other natural elements such as eucalyptus branches and real or faux white berries in between. You can even tuck in large pinecones and then accent the branches with subtle silk or satin bows. Knit stockings add texture and taper candles add flair. **Styling tip:** Always vary the heights of accent items like tapers to create greater visual interest.

MINIMALIST *A LA* SCANDINAVIAN STYLE

Known for their clean lines, natural textures, and a less-is-more ethos, Scandinavians are fans of tones found in nature, rich wooden accents, white or cream ceramics, and negative space.

Making it work: No greens are used in this serene mantel scene, but they are inferred using the natural tones of the stone and the painted wood above. The minimalistic wood mantel base shows through beautifully and then plays off the sculptured wooden tree collections alongside elemental brush trees in deep green and neutral colors. Monochromatic taper holders in two heights lend balance and polish. **Styling tip:** A basket rich in character hung above makes the perfect, simple anchor for the entire wall.



Photo courtesy of thecraftyblogstalker.com



Photo courtesy of flowermag.com

CLASSIC COLONIAL ELEGANCE

Luxe, period-appropriate color and a layered and refined approach to elements and design give this classic colonial mantel scheme its richness and creates an atmosphere of historical Christmases gone by.

Making it work: In Colonial times, many homeowners of means had orangeries—light-filled greenhouses of sorts that not only became winter homes for plants but were also warmed environments in which their owners could take in the light and fragrance of the greenery. Oranges are used as purposeful décor in this scheme that utilizes its few elements in a remarkable way. Lush natural garland is carefully secured into place and threaded with orange groupings throughout. Again, a gorgeous portrait is dressed in perennial greens for the holidays and pulled together with a complementary shimmery bow. **Styling tip:** Classic figurines and sconces used throughout the year are not moved for the holiday, rather embraced and dressed appropriately.

VINTAGE ROMANCE

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Advice to the Weed Weary

BRUSHING UP ON OUR WEEDS AND HOW THEY GROW

By Janice F. Booth

We've put our gardens to bed, now we're anticipating a few months of seed catalogues and online seminars in preparation for spring gardening. Well, here's a little added aid, a *Weed Primer*. I know, I know. We're all too familiar with garden weeds, but perhaps we can save ourselves some serious weeding later by looking now at the weeds we're fighting.

Here's a simple review list of the common weeds we see in mid-Maryland and a brief review of how we might keep them from running wild in our gardens. I'm not going to spend time on the weeds that attack our lawns. You can discuss those weeds with your lawn service. What I'm offering is a guide for year-round weed control. You might want to snip out these few pages and tack them in your garden shed or wherever you keep your tools.

I'll review **general information** about our ubiquitous weeds and the **simple treatments** we've probably tried again and again. I'll review the basic **categories** weeds fit into; then I'll list the weeds that are **the most common culprits** and a few handy hints for each type. So, here we go!

GENERAL INFORMATION

Weeds sprout all year long! (Sorry, starting with the tough stuff.) So, if there's no snow covering them, you can pull a weed or two any time you get lonely for gardening.

Common weeds have three types of *roots*: **fibrous** (thin, shallow, hairy), **rhizomes** (spread horizontally beneath the surface, thick and very tough.), and **bulbils** (small, round globs that appear atop a stem or are attached with tiny veins to the base of the weed.)

Manual weeding is the hardest on the back but the kindest for the environment. However, there will be weeds that demand harsh treatment with herbicides.

Hints for weeding by hand:

◆ Get a few tools: a long handled, hand weed-puller or digger, a narrow trowel with reasonably sharp edges, and a small pail in which to immediately dump weeds you've pulled. (Do not let the pulled weeds fall onto the flowerbed. They're sneaky plants and will send down new roots from the dying roots.)

◆ Try to weed when the soil is damp. It's much easier to lift the roots—deep taproot, bulb roots, or long rhizomes, from the soft earth.

◆ Familiarize yourself with the type of root systems of the weeds you're tackling. (See previous hint.)

◆ If the weed has matured, pull it carefully to avoid spreading its seeds, which are often in the weed's flower.

For stubborn and out-of-control weeds you may have to use Pre- or Post-Emergent Herbicides:

◆ Pre-emergent herbicides can be used as soon as the soil temperature approaches 55 degrees Fahrenheit; that's when the weeds begin to germinate.

◆ Post-emergent herbicides must be used according to the instructions given with the herbicide; they're usually granules which you'll spread or liquid which you'll spray. When you've treated all the weeds in an area, water that area lightly to activate the herbicide.

WEED CATEGORIES

Horticulturalists commonly refer to 3 types of weeds: grassy, broadleaf, and woody.

Grassy weeds are what you might expect—those annoying weeds that sneak into the lawn and, at first, seem invisible. But soon they're taking over and killing the more fragile grass we enjoy as lawns. Bermuda, Crab, and Quark grasses are just a few of the types. But we'll leave those to the lawn specialists.

Broadleaf weeds are the most annoying and common in our flowerbeds and garden paths, in my experience. They usually have innocuous looking round or oval, flat leaves and you can usually see their veins; they often produce flowers—to lull us into false admiration for such *pretty little things*! I'll go through a list of some of those. We can tackle them as soon as the ground begins to warm and the snow disappears.

Woody weeds are those vines, shrubs, and trees that can takeover and choke out indigenous plants. I'll list them briefly, but they're not weeds you can pull quickly or easily. Some common troublemakers are Tree of Heaven, Kudzu, Mulberry, and Bradford Pear.







Top left: Henbit Deadnettle. Top right: Bindweed. Bottom: Dandelion

So, let's get to it. Broadleaf Weeds and what we can do about them in a capsulized explanation.

Bindweed: deceptively delicate tendrils with spear-shaped leaves; they wind up the stems of shrubs and plants, their rhizomes are tough to pull out, and the dying stems can send out new rhizomes if pieces are left in the flowerbed!

Creeping Thistle: dense plants with purple flowers, spread quickly when seeds are dispersed by wind; 2–5 feet tall, rhizomes go deep and any portion left in the soil will regenerate an entire plant!

Chickweed: flourishes and spreads in winter, single plants can live 10 years, star-shaped flowers.

Clover: bright green, 3 or 4 lobed leaves with tiny pink or white flowers in spring and fall, spreads along the surface.

Crabgrass: low-growing with spiky leaves that surround and choke out other plants.

Dandelions: jagged leaves sprouting from center, yellow flowers, deep tap root, seeds on the wind.

Henbit Deadnettle: easily winter-over; round, scalloped leaves form mats, very active from early springtime; short, purple, cylindrical flowers in autumn.

Poison Ivy: 3-leaf clusters; leaves turn red in autumn, send out invasive vines, both the vine and the leaves are toxic.

Star of Bethlehem: tiny, white flowers appear in spring, in tufts of thin, green leaves, die back after blooming but bulbils remain in the soil until next spring. (I must confess to allowing them to flourish in my lawn.)

Wild Garlic: thin, grass-like leaves with small, white flowers. Grows in clusters. Bulbils roots. Distinctive odor when crushed.

Well, after reviewing these pesky plants in our gardens, I hope you'll keep an eagle eye out for early weeds that try to get a head start. I'm sharpening my weed puller and maybe buying a few pullers as gifts, to which I'll add red ribbons in keeping with the holiday spirit.



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Up Above Weems Creek

By Lisa J. Gotto

Primary Structure Built: 1957

Sold For: $1,400,000

Original List Price: $1,600,000

Bedrooms: 4

Baths: 4

Living Space: 4,100 Sq. Ft

Lot Size: 1.59 acres

While this home was originally built in 1957, you would never know it, as it has been expertly re-imagined over the years to create a contemporary dwelling full of natural light and modern amenities.

At its core are mid-century modern bones now combined with 21st century attitude. The wooded lot that this residence is sited has "up-in-the-tree-tops-type" vibes and a secluded feel of a leafy, mature lot. Its updated shingle and stone exterior plays off an earthy palette blending well into its natural, elevated setting above Weems Creek.

An open and airy feeling begins at the front door revealing an abundance of light from a series of floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors that frame the main living area. This space flows



along attractive hardwood floors placed on the diagonal. The eye draws to those tree-top views from a distance, while glimpses of the creek below poke through leaves and branches.

At the center of this open-plan living space there's an attractive two-sided fireplace feature with a rustic chimney leading the eye upward to the space's soaring vaulted ceiling with beams. A column of red brick faces the kitchen's side of the fireplace. A palette of taupe and browns lends warmth to the space that is outfitted with a stainless-steel appliance package, attractive wood cabinetry, and a speckled granite countertop.

The kitchen's views extend past its adjacent formal dining area and out to the home's upper deck that graces the length of the back of the residence. The dining space flows effortlessly into the main living area making this an exceptional home in which to entertain.

The living area features a fireplace front of stone and additional views to the deck and beyond. The square-footage in the space also makes it an excellent place to create the ultimate home office with a view.

This residence offers four bedrooms including the tranquility of the primary suite that features its own wall of windows, and glass sliding doors to the deck, as well as skylights, and a gorgeous *en suite* bath with a dual vanity, soaking tub, and separate shower.

On the home's lower level, there's also space to gather in the roomy family room which extends to a refreshing walk-out patio. The new owners will also find refreshing views from the home's amazing rooftop deck where they can survey the landscape, creek, and the short distance to downtown Annapolis.



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160 3 MAJOR REASONS TO DRINK LESS



How to Handle a Panic Attack

PG. 162

3 Major Reasons to Drink Less (And How to Do It)

HOLIDAY SEASON IS HERE—AND IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A SEASON OF BOOZING

By Dylan Roche

You might think, whether fairly or unfairly, of young people as being a little bit reckless or experimental when it comes to substance use. If you're reading this at a certain age, you might recall being a little bit less than responsible with alcohol a few times when you were young.

So, it's probably surprising to find out that Americans are consuming less alcohol than ever before, and this is a trend that's actually being led by younger generations. Organizations like the American Addiction Centers, the Cleveland Clinic, and the National Public Health Information Coalition point to studies and surveys that show young people are just not that into drinking—and sobriety is mainstream cool. The American Addiction Centers reports that 57 percent of millennials and gen Z would rather work out at the gym than drink at a bar.

From a health perspective, this is good news. While some research has shown health benefits of moderate drinking—for example, the antioxidant resveratrol in red wine can improve heart health and cognitive function, or prebiotics in beer can boost digestive health—the reality is that drinking does more harm for our health than it does good. Even if you don't go completely sober, your health will be improved by drinking less.

Need more convincing? Here are three key reasons you should consider less booze:

1. There are better ways to protect your mental health. There's a reason that "self-medication" is a phrase associated with alcohol use. When you're stressed or upset, alcohol helps you stop thinking about those problems—but those problems don't go away, and alcohol makes them worse. Alcohol is a depressant that negatively affects your mood and could even increase your feelings of anxiety. This might even explain why younger generations are drinking less: Mental health is becoming less stigmatized, and young people are more likely to pursue healthier coping mechanisms like therapy or meditation rather than drinking.

2. Cutting back reduces your risk of disease. Alcohol overuse or abuse wreaks havoc on your body. Alcohol can lead to heart disease, liver disease, stroke, or digestive disorders, and because it's a carcinogen, it increases your risk of many forms of cancer. Plus, alcohol weakens your immune system, so you're more susceptible to viruses and infections when you've been drinking. Many people also find that alcohol makes it difficult to manage a healthy weight, as many drinks are high in empty calories and drunkenness can lead to poor dietary choices.

3. You'll be more pleasant to be around. Many people are under the impression they're more fun to be around when they've been drinking—but ask their friends and family, and you'll likely hear a different opinion. Under the influence of alcohol, most people can get rowdy, argumentative, irritated, withdrawn, sloppy, or disconnected. They're also more inclined to make reckless, unsafe decisions. When people drink less alcohol, they're able to be themselves. And in the long term, as they adopt sobriety and other healthy habits, they'll gain confidence—and confident people are always much nicer to be around.

OKAY…BUT HOW DO I CUT BACK?

It's easy enough to acknowledge alcohol is bad for us. But taking the steps to reduce our intake can be harder in practice, especially around the holidays when you have so many social functions where alcohol will likely be a fixture. Does this mean you're doomed to spend December as an Ebenezer Sober? Cutting back on alcohol could actually make your holiday season *better*. Here's how:

Be conscious about the amount you're drinking. Most people overindulge because they aren't even paying attention to how much they drink. They walk into a social situation, get a drink, and keep refilling their glass all night long. You can cut back on drinking without giving it up by telling yourself you're only going to have a specific amount. For example, if you're going to a holiday party this season, commit to having only one or two drinks. Maybe you intersperse those two drinks with water in between, or you have one drink with dinner but stick to soft drinks before and after. If you find yourself struggling to stick with this resolution, it might be a sign that there's a more serious problem with alcohol.

Try out sobriety for a temporary period. Plenty of people try out Dry January to give themselves a reset after a holiday season of indulgence. That's always a great idea, but you could also tell yourself that December, not January, is going to be your sober season. Spending the holidays without consuming alcohol could help you focus on what's really important and make better memories. Telling yourself that you can have a drink again in the new year (and during every other holiday season in your life) will make you feel less like you're missing out. Who knows though? You might even find that you like the holidays a lot better without alcohol!





Experiment with mocktails. Let's face it: Drinking feels festive, and it can be hard to go through the whole holiday season without a cocktail in hand. So why not try making a drink that tastes just as sweet and celebratory without the alcohol? It doesn't have to be complicated. Even something as simple as a splash of cranberry juice in ginger ale or a warm mug of mulled cider will put you in the holiday spirit without the mind fog of alcohol.

Socialize differently. Sometimes it feels as if every social function is centered on alcohol. You show up at the party and everyone has a glass in hand. So, why not offer up other forms of entertainment? Bring a new board game to share, propose a holiday-themed movie viewing, gather everyone around the piano to sing carols (even if you're all off key), or involve everyone in a group bake-a-thon. Once everyone is engaged in another activity, you won't even miss the fact that you're not drinking.

Keep a journal. Writing out your thoughts and reflections every day will take away some of your mental load, but more importantly, it helps you stay focused on your goals. You can reflect on some of the alcohol-free memories you made that day, think through some of the stressors that made you want to self-medicate, or even hold yourself accountable by tallying the one or two drinks you had at a social function. You don't have to keep up the journal long term (unless you want to!), but once January rolls around, you might be able to read back on some of the entries and feel proud of the alcohol-free season you enjoyed.

How to Handle a Panic Attack



By Dylan Roche

Panic can be a normal reaction—when we're in a crisis, for example, it's natural to panic. But when panic arises seemingly out of nowhere or is disproportionate to the situation at hand, it can be a serious problem. Panic disorder is common among people of all ages, and for young people, it can have serious negative effects on relationships, schoolwork, and normal development, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. And even though panic disorder usually first appears in childhood or adolescence, many adults struggle with it undiagnosed—about 3 million Americans experience panic disorder at some point.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT A PANIC ATTACK IS

When you panic in a crisis, your reason for panicking is often obvious. When it comes to a panic attack, it's not always as clear. There can be triggers, but a panic attack can usually come on without any kind of warning, and can last for only a few minutes or for a few hours. If you're prone to panic attacks, you may start to associate certain places and situations with panic, which can lead to increased feelings of overall anxiety. Such situations could be social (for example, a party or large gathering), professional (a meeting or presentation), or academic (an exam). They could also be more specific, such as boarding an airplane or being stuck with a needle.

PANIC SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- An intense feeling of fear
- Racing heartbeat and shortness of breath
- Lightheadedness or feeling detached from your body
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling like you are dying or might die

HOW TO HANDLE IT

In the long term, panic disorder often needs therapy or medication. But in the moment, when a panic attack comes on, you need coping mechanisms to help you there and then. Here's what you should do:

Take deep breaths. Breathe in slow and steady—try to count to five as you inhale, hold your breath as you count to two, and count to five as you breathe out. Placing one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest as you inhale and exhale can help you ground yourself. **Practice 5-4-3-2-1.** Redirecting your focus will take your mind off the feelings of panic. Take note of five things you see, four things you feel, three things you hear, two things you smell, and one thing you taste. **Change your environment.** Move away from where you are. If you're inside, try to go outside. If you're outside, try to get to a place that feels enclosed and safe. Splashing cold water on your face or putting on white noise or relaxing music can give you other sensory distractions. **Remind yourself that you're safe.** It sounds simple, but it's important. A panic attack feels intense and scary in the moment. Tell yourself that you aren't in danger and that this feeling is temporary—it will pass in time.

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Banana Bread French Toast at Miss Shirley's Cafe

Photography by Laura Wiegmann

Southern Comfort Cuisine

By Lisa A. Lewis

Strongly influenced by Southern culinary traditions, Miss Shirley's Cafe offers beloved dishes, such as shrimp and grits, fried chicken, and biscuits and gravy. But perhaps what makes the restaurant truly unique is its creative twist on these classic dishes—reimagining comfort food with a distinct Southern flair.

Conveniently located adjacent to The Westin and The Residence at Park Place in Annapolis, Miss Shirley's Cafe has become a highly sought-after dining destination for both locals and tourists. The family-owned and operated business serves breakfast, brunch, and lunch in a welcoming setting where guests feel at home.

"At Miss Shirley's, we take pride in our beautifully presented plates, flavorful aromas, festive cocktails and mocktails, and prompt and professional service," says David Dopkin, managing member, Miss Shirley's Management Company. "We offer Southern hospitality, attention to detail, and an upscale-casual award-winning dining experience for our guests."

In addition to Annapolis, Miss Shirley's Cafe also has locations in Roland Park, Baltimore's Inner Harbor, and BWI Airport.

To learn more, we spoke to Dopkin.





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What makes the Annapolis location special? It's ideally located in the heart of downtown Annapolis and offers Southern charm. I took the best elements from our Roland Park and Inner Harbor locations to help design an efficient operation that our team and our guests would want to experience on a regular basis.

Tell us about your background in the restaurant business. My mom says I was standing in a pack 'n play when I was six months old, lining up the canned goods on the shelves at The Beef Inn, our family's first venture into the restaurant business. When I was six years old, I traveled to College Park, Annapolis, Rockville, and D.C. with my dad [the late Eddie Dopkin, who founded Miss Shirley's Cafe in 2005] on weekends to help at The Bagel Place. At 16, I spent weekends working on the back of The Classic Catering People truck.

After graduating from the University of Maryland and teaching fifth grade for five years, I served as the Director of Food Service for the Baltimore Ravens with The Classic Catering People. When my father relocated the original 42-seat Miss Shirley's location in Roland Park across the street to a much larger footprint in 2007, my wife, Brandy, and I came on board to help grow our upscale, casual cafe and later expanded to the Inner Harbor in 2008 and Annapolis in 2011.

How did it feel to celebrate Miss Shirley's 20th anniversary this year? We felt a sense of pride in our creativity, consistency, and perseverance, as well as great appreciation for our loyal guests and for the dedication of our passionate team. The majority of our management team has worked with Miss Shirley's for over 10 years—and many are close to 20 years, such as Corporate Executive Chef Zuri Coles! We've been celebrating all year!

Photography by Laura Wiegmann

What are some of your top-selling dishes? One of our top-selling dishes is our Blueberry & White Chocolate Chip Pancakes, which are on our menu under our Griddle Cakes listing of Best Pancakes in the Country by Food Network. The Cy Young Omelet with egg whites, applewood-smoked bacon, spinach, and white cheddar is also a crowd pleaser. Gluten-free guests opt for our Fresh Banana, Pineapple, Strawberry, Blueberry, or Chocolate Chip Gluten-Free Pancakes, which were voted best gluten-free pancakes by *The Baltimore Sun*.

Which dishes truly showcase your Southern-inspired cuisine? Guests travel from near and far to try Get Your Grits On, which includes jumbo blackened shrimp on fried green tomatoes, stone-ground grits with diced bacon, tomato, and chives, and roasted corn emulsion, dusted with Cajun spice (as seen on Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*).

If I didn't have your attention at shrimp and grits, explore our other dishes, including Pimento Cheese Biscuits; Grandpa's Cornbread; Hot Honey Fried Chicken Deviled Eggs; Pineapple Upside Down Griddle Cakes; Fried Chicken, Biscuit & Gravy Omelet; Shirley's Gumbo; and our signature Chicken 'N Cheddar Green Onion Waffles (also seen on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*).

What is one of your most popular cocktails? The Spicy Shirley, our version of a Bloody Mary, is made with our house-made Bloody Mary mix and vodka and garnished with a skewer consisting of a green tomato slice, green olive, lemon and lime wedges, peppadew, bourbon-infused pickled okra, and a jalapeño slice, along with a celery stalk and an Old Bay rim. It's like a drink and a salad all in one! The cocktail won "Best Bloody Mary" in *What's Up? Media's* Best of Annapolis.

Why is it important for Miss Shirley's to offer options for guests with food allergies? We want our guests to feel included at the dining table. We're proud to have peanut, tree nut, and sesame-free kitchens and "CONTAINS" statements on our menus to make the dining experience safer for our guests.





MISS SHIRLEY'S CAFÉ "GRANDPA'S CORNBREAD"

Yields 1 loaf or 8–10 each muffins

Ingredients

2 large eggs
1.5 cups buttermilk
4 ounces unsalted butter, melted
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup flour
1 cup cornmeal
1/2 cup (4 oz) chopped peppadew
1 tablespoon fresh chives, finely chopped
2 each fresh white corn

Method

Remove husk from corn and remove cornsilk. Rub corn with tiny bit of olive oil and place on oven-safe sheet tray. Sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper. Bake in 350 oven for about 15–20 minutes. Remove from oven when cooked and slightly browned. Let cool and then cut corn off cob carefully. In large bowl place dry ingredients – cornmeal, flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Stir together to mix. Add eggs, buttermilk, sugar, and melted butter. Mix together until it just comes together—scraping sides of bowl well. Add chives, peppadews, and roasted corn. Stir just to incorporate evenly. Do not over mix. Heat oven to 350 degrees. If using bread loaf pan, spray with pan spray and scrape mix into pan. If using muffin pan, spray muffin pan or use muffin cups. Scoop batter into each hole about half full. For loaf, bake for about 40–45 minutes, rotating halfway through. Loaf is done when toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. For muffins, cook for 18–20 minutes, rotating halfway through. Muffins are done when toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. Once removed from oven, let cool and serve. Bread will keep for 3 days covered at room temperature or refrigerated for 4–5 days (may also freeze for up to 1–2 months in sealed Ziploc bag).



Readers' Dining Guide

Welcome to your regional dining. We include many restaurants for many tastes and experiences. Don't see your favorite on the list? Email editor@whatsupmag.com and let us know! And for the full guide, visit whatsupmag.com.

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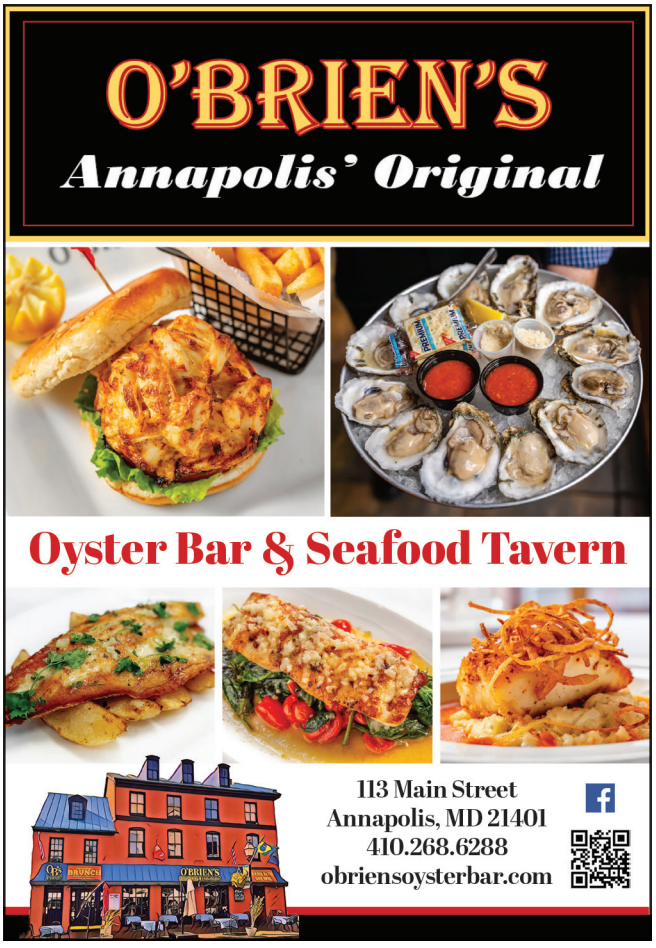

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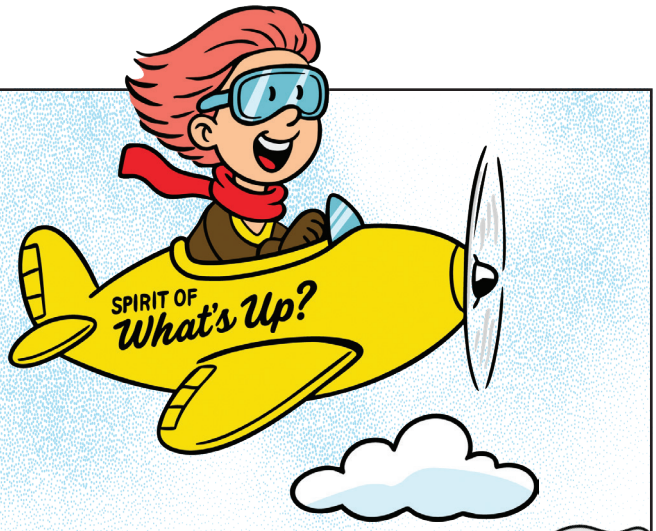

Where's Wilma?



FIND WILMA AND WIN!

Wilma is shopping, dining, and enjoying the very best services and entertainment this December has to offer. And she's doing it all on the fly, as she zips from town to town in her super single prop plane. Our faithful flying mascot is soaring this holiday season! Where 'o where will she land next? Here's how the contest works: Wilma appears next to three different ads in this magazine. When you spot her, write the names of the ads and their page numbers on the entry form online or mail in the form below and you'll be eligible to win. Only one entry per family. Good luck and don't forget to submit your restaurant review online at whatsupmag.com/promotions for another opportunity to win a prize.

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