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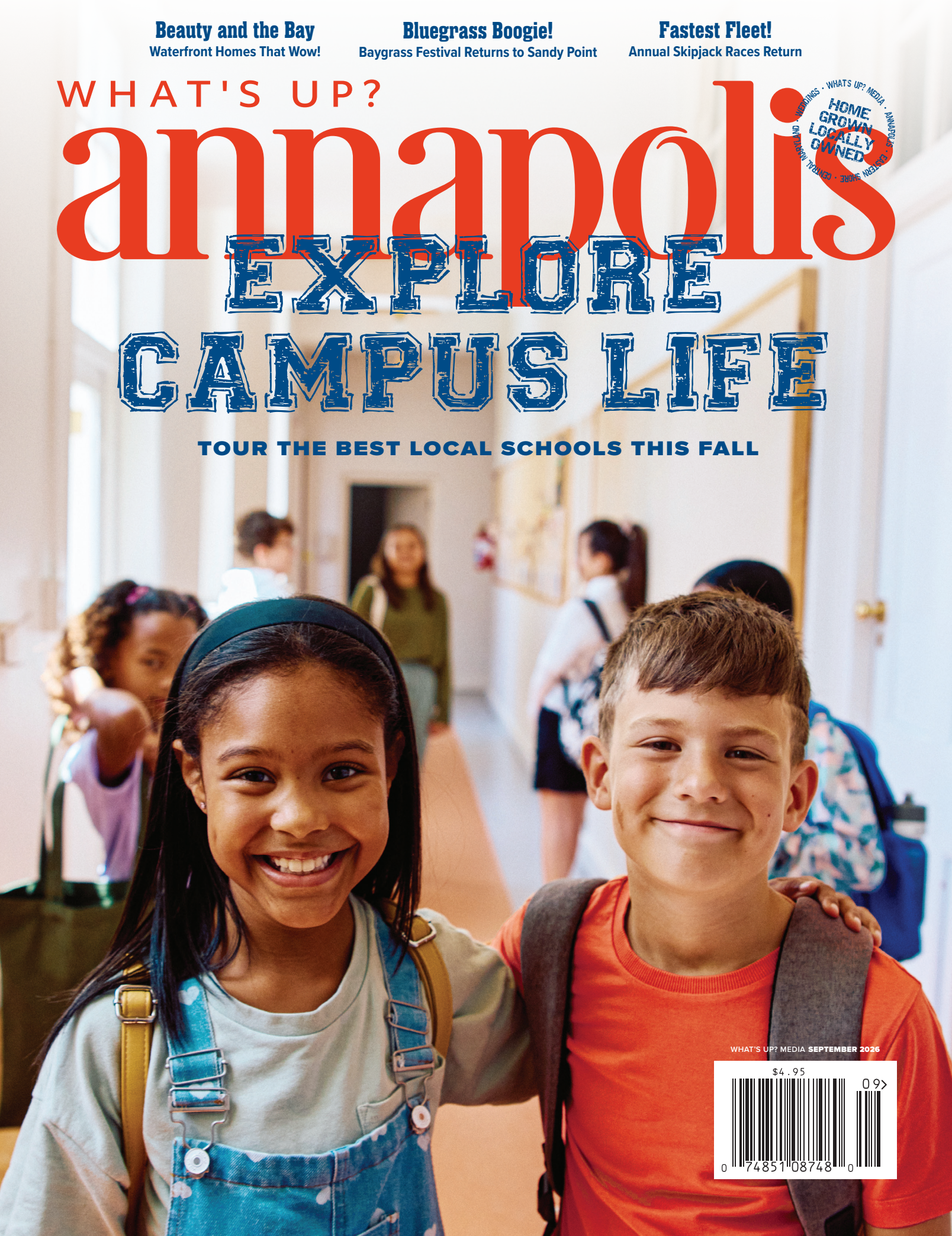
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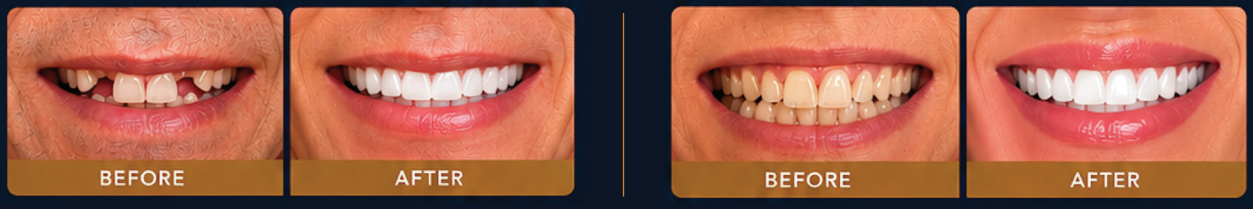


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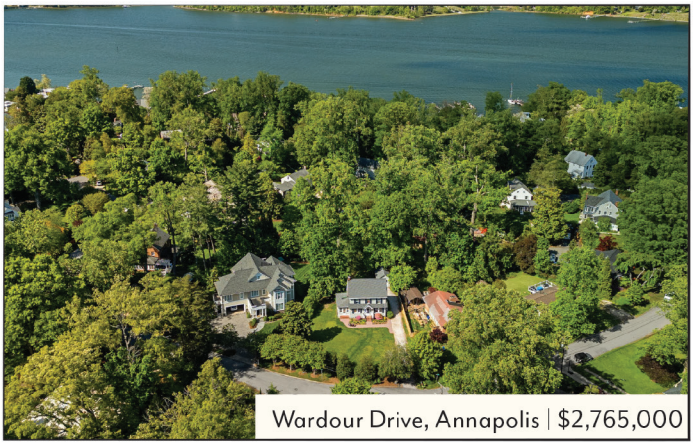


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Brickworks Lane, Severna Park | $1,550,000



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Hendler Road, Severna Park | $5,995,000



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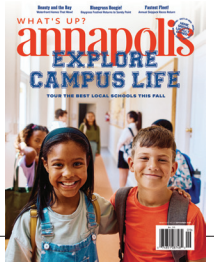
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Contents



SEPTEMBER 2026

On the Cover: Schools are in session and you can take a peek at the very best of them. Design by August Schwartz. *What's Up? Annapolis* online at whatsupmag.com.
♻ Please recycle this magazine.

Arts & Culture

24 Events highlights special celebrations and activities BY CALI SCHWERDTFEGER

36 Arts: The Muralist showcases renown artist Jeff Huntington BY CAROL DENNY

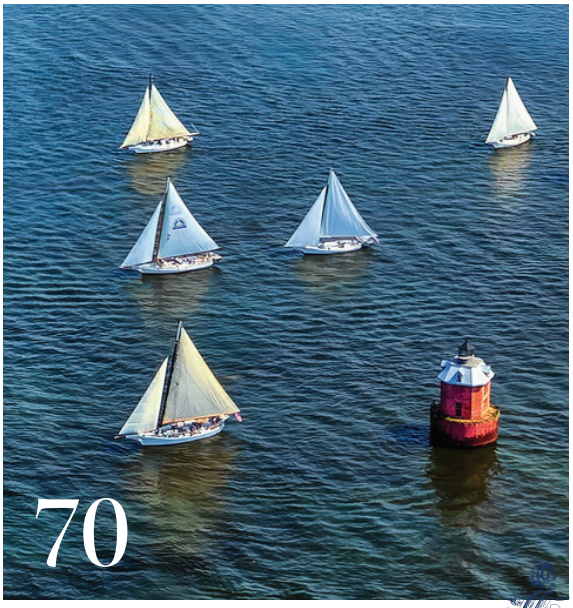
38 Social showcases photographs of recent charity events

46 Business & Community features local business and community news

50 Interview: Playin' in the Sand discusses the Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival with John Bolten of the band Geraldine BY JAMES HOUCK







Features

55 Visit Cool Schools is your autumn guide to touring local private schools, learning academies, and select colleges

63 Your Little One's First Year of Childcare offers a parents primer to navigating options and expectations for the transition to third-party childcare

70 White Sails Billowing on the Horizon offers an insider experience of the "Triple Crown of the Bay," the iconic Chesapeake skipjack races taking place this month BY LISA A. LEWIS

81 Orchestrating the Symphony shares the perspective of Annapolis Symphony's leadership and what it takes to pull together a season of performances and programs BY GARY JOBSON



Home & Garden

88 Featured Home: Everyday Reasons to Stay showcases a reimagined interior design for a dated Colonial waterfront home in Stevensville BY LISA J. GOTTO

98 Interior: The Art of Fine and Fun Furniture Statements features exemplary pieces that could add wow-factor to your home BY LISA J. GOTTO

100 Garden: Your Garden's Soil May Need a Spa Day has the recipe for revitalizing your property's topsoil BY JANICE F. BOOTH

102 The Charm of a Foursquare Character Home profiles the recent $1.4 million sale of an Annapolis home in a desirable community BY LISA J. GOTTO

104 Turn-key Farmhouse Charm profiles a Harness Creek waterfront build that recently sold for $3.95 million BY LISA J. GOTTO



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Contents

COMING UP IN OCTOBER 2026
Thomas Point Lighthouse, 2026 Top Dentists Winners, First Response Healthcare



Health & Beauty

BY DYLAN ROCHE

110 Inconspicuously Cosmetic
111 Is It Really Healthy?
112 The Importance of Playing
114 Heart Health's Evolving Understanding



Food & Dining

118 Tasty Treats with a French Flair is our interview with the owner of Sweet Hearts Patisserie in Annapolis BY LISA A. LEWIS

120 Readers' Dining Guide offers local restaurant listings for your consideration

In Every Issue

20 From the Editor shares James' thoughts on this month's issue

127 Where's Wilma? Find the *What's Up? Media* mascot and win

128 One Verse at a Time is our monthly, finale poem BY JANICE F. BOOTH

e-contents

WHAT'S UP? MEDIA'S
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What's Up? Media's 2027 Home Excellence Awards program will honor elite home builders, architects, designers, and professionals serving the greater Chesapeake Bay region. Home industry professionals and firms may submit their completed projects for evaluation and vetting in 11 award categories. Entries—consisting of a project description and accompanying photographs—will be accepted through the October 31st deadline.

whatsupmag.com/homeexcellenceawards2027

Awards will be published in the February 2027 issues of What's Up? Annapolis, What's Up? Eastern Shore, and March 2027 issue of What's Up? Central Maryland.

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With the trade winds of summer transitioning to autumn northerlies, sailors and boaters of all kinds will excitedly make haste along Chesapeake tributaries for both play and work. The maritime community is as alive as ever, soaking in every minute of waning sunlight before the big chill arrives. We see this river dance play out within our many communities from Western Shore to Eastern. Festivals and friendly sailing, boating, and fishing competitions celebrate nautical ambitions and legacies, which are very much of kith and kin.

Generations of watermen and women exemplify this camaraderie and culture, perhaps none more active and respected than those who sail the last remaining wooden skipjacks of the Bay. This fleet of aging vessels—some a century or older—is skippered by fathers, sons, mothers, and daughters, who have kept the oyster trade's influence alive by restoring and racing the boats.

Stewarding this heritage and educating the public about the fleet is the Skipjack Heritage Museum in Chance, Maryland, just a half mile ahead of the two-lane bridge that connects mainland Eastern Shore to Deal Island (the once-illustrious home port for this fleet). This September, the nonprofit organization is abuzz with co-coordinating the annual Skipjack Races—the "Triple Crown of the Bay"—consisting of three weekend races hosted in Deal Island, Annapolis, and, lastly, Cambridge. The sight of the fleet's expansive, triangular white sails gliding across the horizon and their low-slung, hardwood hulls slicing through waves is majestic.

I invite you to get a taste of this living, racing history by reading this month's article "White Sails Billowing on the Horizon." Even better, visit the museum or experience the skipjack races as a spectator this month!

Adjacent to this exciting tale are more articles and columns in this September issue that offer suggestions to experience autumn on the Chesapeake and beyond: enjoy a bluegrass fest overlooking sandy shorelines; the arc of a well-thrown football at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium; treasure hunting at flea markets; merriment that's nearly 500 years in the making; cattails swaying in the wind; and, even, campus tours of premier local schools (if you're in the market).

All of this before leaves fully change color and winds sweep in a new season.

James Houck,
Editorial Director



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Expert of the Month



Heidi Stevens

Heidi Stevens
Director of Fine Arts | Rockbridge Academy

After teaching visual arts at Rockbridge Academy for 20 years, then leaving the classroom to serve on the school board for four more years, Heidi Stevens accepted her current role as Director of Fine Arts. She studied music at Concordia College in Ann Arbor and theology at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis. For much of her adult life, she has studied drawing and painting with teachers in the greater Annapolis and Baltimore area.

How did your background and experiences prepare you for this role?

I grew up in a family that valued the arts. My parents worked hard to give my brother and me every opportunity to pursue creative outlets. I was a theater kid in high school, and I also participated in choir and marching band. In college, I studied music, but I couldn't seem to keep myself out of the ceramics studio. And I've always loved drawing and painting. This eclectic love of the fine arts has served me well as I guide the programs at Rockbridge Academy.

What excites you about Rockbridge Academy's view of the arts?

The founders of Rockbridge Academy believed strongly that a robust arts program is an integral part of educating the whole person. Music and art are seen as co-curricular, and I'm amazed at our students' caliber of work. Whether it's a performance by one of our orchestras, a musical production by our upper school, or an art exhibit featuring our senior painting students, the response I often hear is, "I can't believe kids can do this!" I not only credit their amazing teachers but also the impact of classical Christian education. Our students are curious, disciplined, and motivated in a way that spills over into their creative endeavors.

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Arts & Culture

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24 EVENTS | 36 ARTS | 38 SOCIAL

46 BUSINESS & COMMUNITY | 50 INTERVIEW



Maryland Seafood Festival

PG. 24



21ST ANNUAL BOATYARD BEACH BASH

Escape to the islands without leaving Annapolis at the Annapolis Maritime Museum & Park's 21st Annual Boatyard Beach Bash on Saturday, September 19, from 4 to 10 p.m. This all-inclusive waterfront celebration features performances by world-class musicians and members of Jimmy Buffett's legendary Coral Reefer Band, including Peter Mayer, Doyle Grisham, Nadirah Shakoor, John Frinzi, Scott Kirby, and more. Guests will enjoy six hours of live music, handcrafted cocktails, gourmet bites, and a laid-back Key West atmosphere, all while supporting the Annapolis Maritime Museum & Park's educational programs. It's the ultimate end-of-summer celebration for Parrotheads, music lovers, and anyone looking to enjoy an unforgettable evening on the Chesapeake Bay. More info: amaritime.org

Maryland Seafood Festival

Celebrate Maryland's rich maritime heritage at the Maryland Seafood Festival, returning to Sandy Point State Park on Saturday, September 12, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, September 13, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. This beloved annual tradition features fresh local seafood, live music, artisan vendors, family-friendly activities, contests, and an impressive selection of local beverages. Running alongside the festival, Skipjack Heritage Days invites visitors to experience the Chesapeake Bay's working waterfront through hands-on exhibits, educational demonstrations, public skipjack sails, and a thrilling skipjack race on Sunday. Whether you're coming for the crab cakes, waterfront entertainment, or to celebrate the Bay's enduring traditions, this weekend festival offers something for every member of the family. More info: mdseafoodfestival.com




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ANNAPOLIS RUN FOR THE LIGHT HOUSE - HALF | 5K | WALK

Lace up for a meaningful cause at the 17th Annual Annapolis RUN for The Light House on Sunday, September 20, from 8 to 11 a.m. at Quiet Waters Park. Participants can choose from a half marathon, 5K, or walk while enjoying scenic routes through the park and the waterfront community of Hillsmere Shores. Having sold out for the past five years, this popular event brings runners, walkers, and supporters together to raise funds for The Light House, the Annapolis nonprofit dedicated to ending homelessness and poverty in the community. Whether you're chasing a personal best or simply walking in support of a great cause, every mile helps make a difference. More info: annapolisrunforthelighthouse.org

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Enjoy an evening of music, storytelling, and Chesapeake Bay tradition when the Eastport Oyster Boys return to Historic London Town & Gardens on Wednesday, September 9. Beginning at 6 p.m., the beloved Annapolis group will fill the gardens with their signature blend of maritime folk, island rhythms, and good-natured humor, celebrating life along the shores of the Chesapeake. Named the Musical Goodwill Ambassadors of Annapolis and the Maritime Republic of Eastport, the quartet has entertained audiences for more than two decades with an eclectic mix of instruments, lively performances, and tales inspired by the region's rich maritime heritage. Pack a chair or blanket and enjoy an unforgettable evening of local music in one of Anne Arundel County's most scenic outdoor venues. More info: oysterboys.com









Navy Football Kicks Off September 5

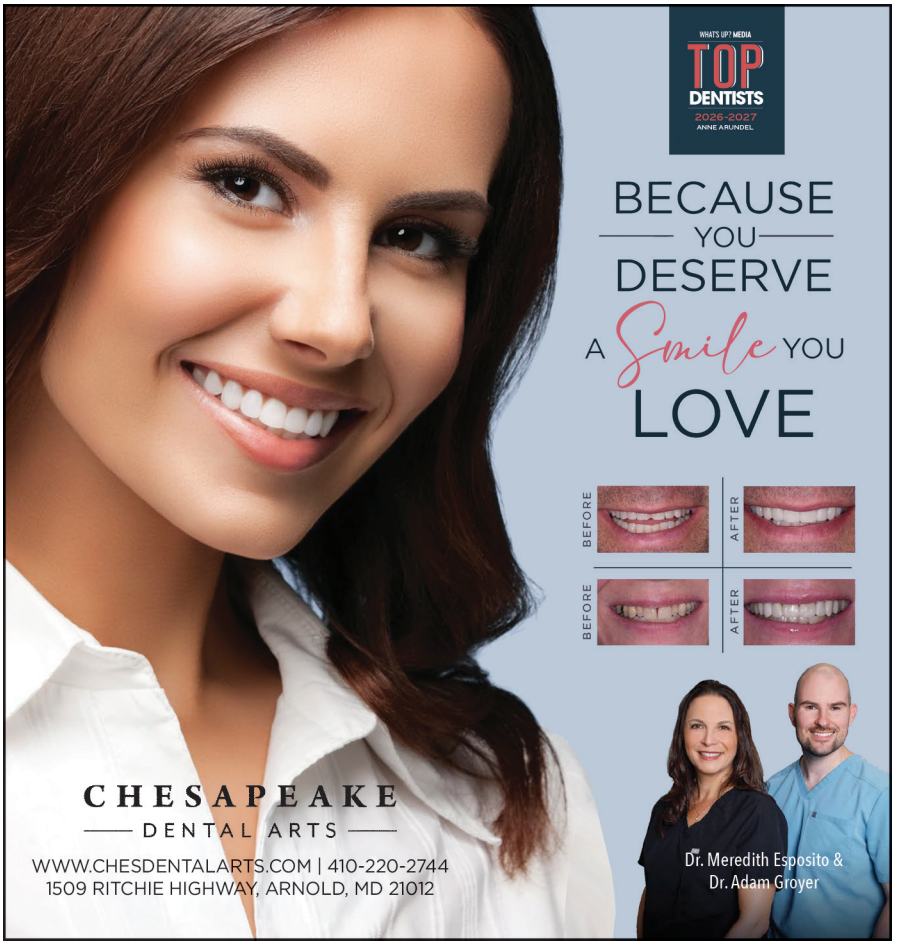
Experience one of Annapolis' most cherished traditions as Navy Football returns to Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium on Saturday, September 5, when the Midshipmen kick off the 2026 season against Towson University at 3:30 p.m. Fall Saturdays in Annapolis come alive with pageantry, patriotic pride, and the excitement of college football as fans from across the country gather to cheer on the Midshipmen. Whether you're a lifelong Navy supporter or experiencing the game-day atmosphere for the first time, the pregame traditions, Brigade of Midshipmen, and electric stadium environment make for an unforgettable start to football season in Maryland's capital. More info: navysports.com



YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN

Step into the beloved world of Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, and the entire Peanuts gang in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, presented by Compass Rose Theater at Annapolis Mall. Running weekends from September 18 through October 4, the award-winning musical features Friday evening performances at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday matinees, with additional Saturday evening performances. Filled with heartwarming songs, humor, and timeless life lessons, this family-friendly production celebrates friendship, imagination, and finding joy in everyday moments. Whether you're introducing a new generation to these iconic characters or reliving childhood memories, this charming musical is sure to delight audiences of all ages. More info: compassrosetheater.org






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NAPTOWN FLEA

Browse, shop, and celebrate local creativity at Naptown Flea on Sunday, September 13, as Maryland Avenue transforms into a vibrant open-air marketplace from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. This special collaboration with Lucky Girl Market features more than 60 vendors offering vintage finds, handmade goods, art, and one-of-a-kind treasures, along with food trucks, live music, and tattoo artists. Whether you're searching for unique pieces or simply soaking up the lively atmosphere, this community market is the perfect way to spend a Sunday supporting local makers and small businesses. More info: instagram.com/naptownflea

ANNAPOLIS PAINTING SERVICES



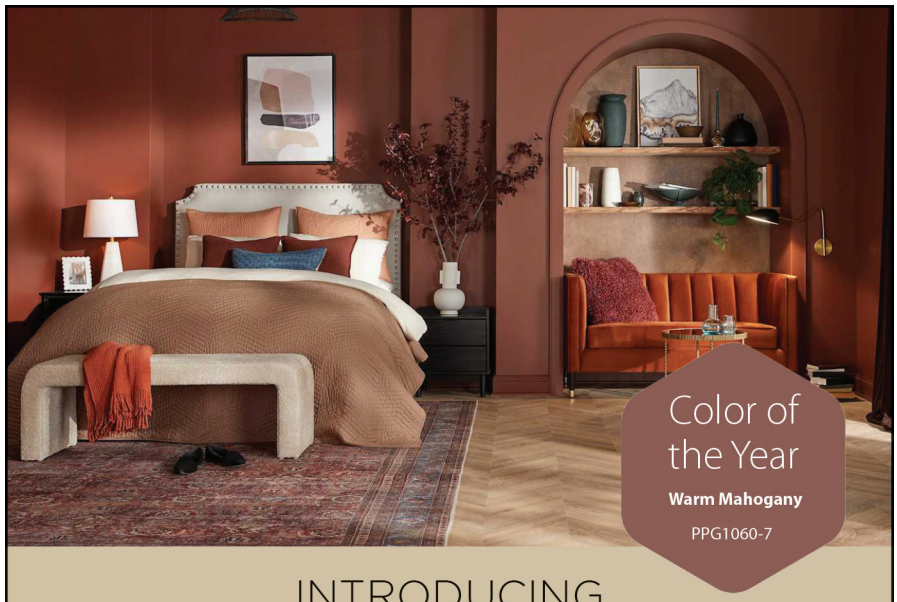


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INTRODUCING
2026 COLOR TRENDS

This forecast offers a full-spectrum view of where design is headed. In it, we discuss four distinct themes brought to life through directional palettes, material choices, and interior applications across both residential and commercial spaces.

DELICATE WHITE PPG1001-1	GARLIC CLOVE PPG18-09	BLANK CANVAS PPG1085-1	QUAKING GRASS PPG1121-4	AQUA SMOKE PPG1034-5
GHOST WRITER PPG1007-3	MOTH GRAY PPG1024-4	DUSTY TRAIL PPG1097-4	SMOKY SLATE PPG1028-4	DEEP EMERALD PPG1148-7
SHARKSKIN PPG1025-4	WELCOME HOME PPG1092-5	STONY CREEK PPG1097-5	MOMENTUM PPG1028-6	OAKWOOD BROWN PPG1054-6
STONE GRAY PPG1023-5	SLIPPERY STONE PPG1080-7	COPPER BEECH PPG1067-5	CHARCOAL SMOKE PPG1033-7	PURPLE BASIL PPG1046-7
STOLEN ROCK PPG0999-6	FALLINGWATER® RED PPG13-02	SPICED CIDER PPG1068-7	HIGH SALUTE PPG1039-7	MOSTLY METAL PPG1036-7
INTRIGUE PPG1019-7	RUBY LIPS PPG1052-7	RED CLAY PPG16-32	STARLESS SKY PPG0995-7	CAVALRY PPG1041-7
SILVER SCREEN PPG1014-3	SANDY BEACH PPG1072-2	TOFFEE CRUNCH PPG1207-4	JITTERBUG PPG1118-4	LOVELY LILAC PPG1167-4

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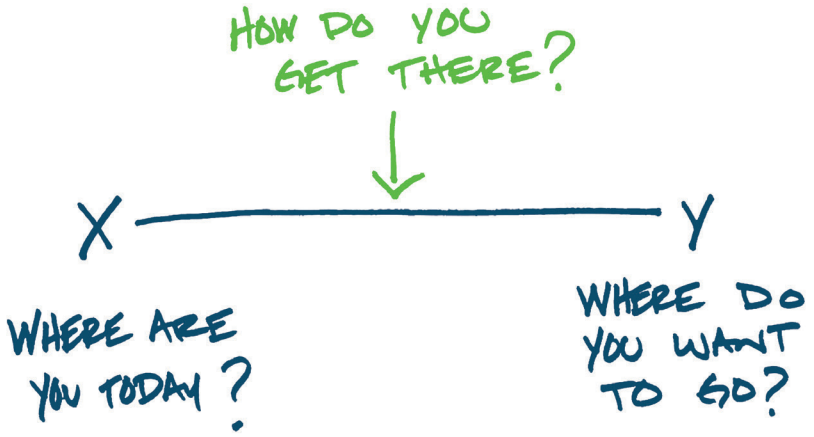
Pops in the Park

Celebrate Labor Day weekend with the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra's annual Pops in the Park, a free outdoor concert series bringing inspiring American music to two Anne Arundel County parks. The festivities begin Saturday, September 5, at 11:30 a.m. at Downs Park in Pasadena before continuing Sunday, September 6, at 5 p.m. at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis. Inspired by the spirit of America 250, this family-friendly program features works by celebrated American composers, a special performance of Aaron Copland's Lincoln Portrait narrated by Maryland Poet Laureate Lady Brion, and an opening performance by the Annapolis Symphony Academy Aries Youth Chamber Orchestra. Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets, and a picnic while enjoying food trucks, beautiful park settings, and an unforgettable celebration of music, history, and community. More info: annapolissymphony.org



33RD ANNUAL BOB FERRY GOLF CLASSIC

Support the Boys & Girls Club of Annapolis & Anne Arundel County at the 33rd Annual Bob Ferry Golf Classic on Monday, September 14, at The Golf Club at South River in Edgewater. Named in honor of former NBA player and Washington Bullets General Manager Bob Ferry, the tournament celebrates his lasting commitment to mentoring young people and strengthening the local community. Participants will enjoy a day on the course while helping fund programs that empower area youth through education, leadership, and opportunity. Whether you're registering a foursome or participating as a sponsor, this annual fundraiser is a meaningful way to honor Bob Ferry's legacy while making a lasting impact. More info: bgcaa.com



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CHARITY BOAT AUCTION

Browse for your next adventure at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's annual Charity Boat Auction on Saturday, September 5, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in St. Michaels. A Labor Day weekend tradition for more than 20 years, the event features dozens of donated boats and watercraft available to the highest bidders, with the auction beginning at 11 a.m. Visitors can also explore a flea market-style tag sale filled with used boating gear before or after viewing the vessels. Proceeds from every purchase support the museum's mission to preserve and share the history, culture, and environment of the Chesapeake Bay. More info: cbmm.org

Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival

Experience two unforgettable days of live music, waterfront views, and Chesapeake Bay culture at the Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival, returning to Sandy Point State Park on Saturday, September 19, and Sunday, September 20, beginning at 10 a.m. each day. This beachside festival brings together nationally acclaimed bluegrass, jamgrass, Americana, and roots artists for performances across two stages while celebrating the beauty and preservation of the Chesapeake Bay. Beyond the music, festivalgoers can enjoy fresh local seafood, craft beverages, yoga classes, family activities, artisan vendors, and educational workshops focused on Bay conservation and mental wellness. With a mission of giving back to both the environment and the community, Baygrass offers a one-of-a-kind festival experience where every jam truly helps save the Bay. More info: baygrassfestival.com



Photo by Jay Strausser



ANNAPOLIS SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL

Music takes over Maryland's capital September 10–13 as the Annapolis Songwriters Festival returns for four days of performances throughout downtown Annapolis. Modeled after the renowned Key West Songwriters Festival, the event transforms the city's intimate theaters, bars, and gathering spots into stages where music lovers can discover the artists, voices, and stories behind the songs. This year's festival is headlined by Young the Giant, adding another major name to a weekend devoted to live music and the art of songwriting. From intimate performances to bigger shows, the festival offers a unique opportunity to experience Annapolis through music while getting closer to the people who create it. More info: annapolis-songwritersfestival.com





The Muralist

ARTIST JEFF HUNTINGTON SEES THE BIG PICTURE

By Carol Denny

You know Jeff Huntington's art, even if you don't know his name. His arresting, super-scaled portraits grace 39 public spaces throughout Annapolis. His career as an accomplished mural painter, which started here, now takes him around the world.

Huntington maintains that there's a difference between his work and other kinds of fine art. "A public mural is more of a temporary thing," he explains. "It can be affected by many factors: weather, vandalism, new development, a change of property owners. It's impermanent. For that reason, I sort of divorce myself from it more than I do with my personal studio work."

Annapolis, with its abundance of historic buildings, might seem to be an unlikely backdrop for his murals, but Huntington has proved coexistence is possible. "Contemporary art can definitely exist in historic towns," he says, pointing to examples in Frederick, Westminster, and Easton. "I'd rather see murals raining down instead of big corporate signs. They've actually been proven to help build communities, rather than tear them down. So why push them into the shadows?"



On Church Circle, portraits of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Thurgood Marshall celebrate their work for social justice.



The Breonna Taylor Mural Project in Chambers Park became a potent image of the national Black Lives Matter movement.

Growing up in Prince Georges County, Huntington was inspired by his father and grandmother, both of whom were avid amateur painters. "Everyone was painting, and that's what I wanted to do," he recalls. "My father worked nights as a nurse then went to art school during the day, and he'd bring me with him. I was in the middle of it all, playing with drawing pads, going to the sculpture room, going to the Smithsonian for free."

At 15, Huntington dropped out of high school to follow the Grateful Dead tour. When he turned 16, friends bought him a GED workbook and urged him to get a diploma so he could apply to art school. "So, I did one painting a day for a year to prepare, then sent slides of 120 of them to schools. I got a scholarship to the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design at George Washington University, and later got my master's at the Art Institute of Chicago."

In 2018, a commission to create a mural on the exterior of Tsunami restaurant on West Street landed the artist in a dispute with the City. "The city sued, not to remove the mural, but to have the owner retroactively apply for permission to have it. So he did, to which they said yes," Huntington relates. The work wove abstract elements into a traditional portrait, a style which became a Huntington trademark.

While that case moved through the courts, artist Jason Liggett, with an assist from Huntington, painted another mural, this one Mayan-themed on a wall facing a parking lot at 110 Cathedral Street. It was planned to be the first in a series of mentorship projects. After the city told the owner it had to go through the approval process, Huntington and Liggett decided to paint over the mural, instead. They threw a "mural funeral" accompanied by New Orleans-style second line music.

"Boy oh boy, did people show up! Adults, kids—all kinds of people joined in," recalls Huntington. "That's when we said, 'This is beautiful, think about what's happening here! Let's turn our focus to young people.' And that was the birth of Future History Now." The nonprofit, founded with Huntington's wife, Julia Gibbs, has facilitated collaborative mural projects with youth facing adversity in underserved communities in Annapolis and across the world. It's taken the couple as far as China and India.

Photographs courtesy Jeff Huntington



Huntington's most recent commission was a mural of Chinese-American suffragist Mabel Ping-Wah Lee in Washington, D.C.'s Chinatown.

Future History Now made national headlines in July 2020 when it organized young artists and volunteers to paint the Breonna Taylor Mural Project at Annapolis's Chambers Park. (Taylor, a 26-year-old woman in Louisville, Kentucky, had been shot and killed in her home by police executing a "no warrant" search for narcotics, which were not found.)

Completed only months after her passing and just weeks after George Floyd's death, the 7,000-square-foot portrait of Taylor on an outdoor basketball court quickly became a potent image in the Black Lives Matter movement. "The mural was featured in *Time* magazine on July 27," Huntington says. "It was a wild summer as the coverage went viral." His reputation skyrocketed, and clients with commissions began calling.



Huntington and his wife, Julia Gibbs, founded Future History Now, an art collective that engages underserved youth in mural creation.

"We pick and choose our projects now," Huntington explains. "For the first time since 2019, we're not scheduled through the end of the year." He's currently working on long-postponed 10-story mural in Jersey City, and in conversations with the NOMA mural festival for a project in D.C.

Recently, Huntington completed a mural of Mabel Ping-Wah Lee, a Chinese-American suffragist, next to the Friendship Arch in Washington's Chinatown. Again, his aim was to give voice to people who have suffered injustice. "Mabel worked to pass the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. But she wasn't able to vote because of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese residents from citizenship," he explains.

Huntington continues to imbue his art with social consciousness, pairing it with his technical skills to create extraordinary impact. He paints with purpose, and audiences are responding. "It's the best compliment—and rare in mural production today—to hear a client say, 'We want you, your work, your vision,'" Huntington says.

Learn more renown local artist Jeff Huntington at jeffhuntington.com.

Spring Bash

On April 18, The Summit School held its annual Spring Bash at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Davidsonville. The festive evening's theme was "1960s Summer" as guests enjoyed dancing to retro tunes by the live band The Wave, cocktails, dinner, and yard games all in support of the school's students and programs. Learn more at thesummitschool.org.

1. Joshua and Whitney Hinshaw **2.** Jay and Anne McConnell, Nancy Rhodes **3.** Dr. Kim Simpson, Anna Fick, Elaine Levit, Rob Levit, Jennifer Turner, Mark Turner **4.** Carolyn Flexner, Ursula Flexner, Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy, Kevin McCarthy, Turner Sothoron, Elizabeth Sothoron **5.** Tyler and Lauren Mulcahy, Scott and Heather Marsden, Carol Salvatori **6.** Gus and Susan Perrotta, Mona and Ken Szekretar **7.** Nancy Rhodes, Tiana Johnson, Jennifer O'Brien, Becky Brunelle, Kassie Sherry **8.** All attendees


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Photography by Laura Wiegmann

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Best Of Party

The annual Best Of Party took place on June 9th at the Doordan Institute at Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis. Hosted by What's Up? Media and presented by Porsche Annapolis, the evening was a celebration of the best businesses in the region! Local restaurants, shops, services, entertainment, and businesses were all rolled up into one fantastic fundraising event supporting Charting Careers. This year's event also honored America's 250th birthday, and featured special performances by the Naptown Brass Band, All You Need, The Edge Dance Complex, and Annapolis' renown Squire Fred! Learn more at whatsupmag.com.



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Photography by Laura Wiegmann


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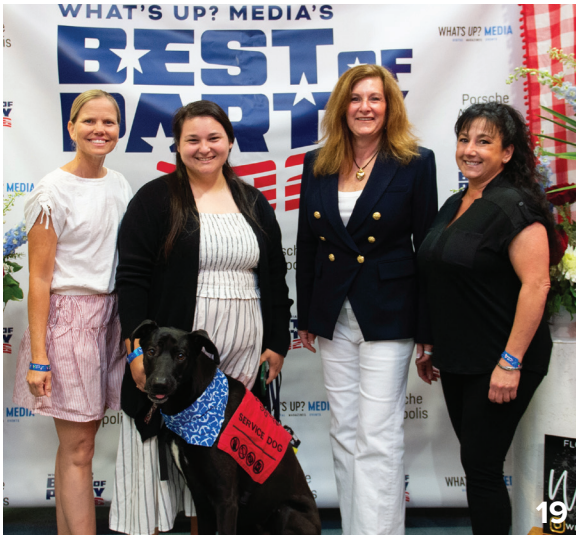
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1. Cali Schwerdtfeger, Katie Mosic, and Elizabeth Caropreso in front of a Porsche at the VIP reception area **2.** Chris Barber, Catherine Brady, Gene Condon **3.** Rob and Becky Bontempo **4.** Steve Adams, Veronica Tovey **5.** Steve Arentz, Steven Arentz, Biana Arentz **6.** David Orso, Olivia Orso, Dawn Orso **7.** Catherine Brady, Victoria Zelefsky, Fayth Ribeiro, Amy Berry, Lacey Snyder, Patrizia Risi, Maddalyn Kunst **8.** Brooke and Kevin Silard,Brenda Kooken **9.** Colin Lennon, Lauren Burleigh **10.** James Houck, Karla Wagner, Mandy Cole, Alfred Kamal, Justin Cole **11.** Naptown Brass Band performs **12.** Lauren Ropel, Kathy Sauve, Beth Kuhl **13.** Squire Fred, Veronica Tovey, and Milo Mason **14.** Katie and Joe Guido, Lauren Thompson **15.** Ross Westholm, Erin Bleacher, John Rosso, Brooke McAdam, Tyler Barnett, Ryan Brant, Colin Lennon **16.** Kim Denis, Ashley Raymond, Liz Stoll **17.** Crighton and Heather Chase, Norman and Danielle Randall **18.** Erin and Jeff Jacobs



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Photography by Bill Whaley



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19. Kimberly Abusakran, Alexa Waltz, Nicole Cox, Lisa Beagan **20.** Veronica Tovey and Annapolis Town Crier Frederick Taylor **21.** Miss Shirley's Cafe team **22.** Allie Blanton, Christine Guenther, Abby Bauer **23.** Always Ice Cream team **24.** Fisherman's Inn team **25.** The Edge Dance Complex team performs **26.** Treats at Gluten Free Bakery Girl **27.** All You Need performs **28.** Seasalt restaurant **29.** What's Up? Media's Art Director, August Schwartz **30.** Enjoying the 360 photo booth **31.** Gianna Scotto, Amy Fleming, Trey Gerard **32.** Jeff Kirby dressed as Uncle Sam **33.** Katie Hedges, Susie Salinas, Sarah Jansen, Crissy Brase **34.** Megan Flahive, Camille Bulte-Choudhry, Molly Walterhoefer, Jamie Stodd

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The Bowie-based practice of **Edward Zebovitz D.D.S. Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery** is joined by **Dr. Injamamul "Inja" Niloy**, a board-certified Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon dedicated to providing compassionate, patient-centered surgical care. His extensive training encompasses the full scope of oral and maxillofacial surgery, including dental implants, wisdom teeth removal, bone grafting, office-based anesthesia, facial trauma, corrective jaw surgery, pathology, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders. Learn more about Dr. Niloy by visiting drzebovitz.com.

MARMO AND ARMADA RESTAURANTS OPEN IN ANNAPOLIS

Atlas Restaurant Group recently celebrated the July 16th opening of two new waterfront concepts, Marmo and Armada, in the Annapolis Waterfront Hotel, Autograph Collection. Following an extensive rebuild, the openings in Ego Alley expand the group's investment in Annapolis alongside existing concepts, The Choptank, The Admiral's Cup, Boatyard Bar & Grill and Annapolis Waterfront Hotel Banquet space.

Marmo, an Italian chophouse open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, features hand-cut prime steaks, fresh hand-rolled pastas, charcuterie, and seafood, complemented by an extensive wine program highlighting Italy's renowned wine regions. The restaurant accommodates approximately 350 guests, including 150 outdoor seats overlooking the Annapolis Harbor, and features a second-floor terrace with panoramic waterfront views. Marmo will be open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. **Armada**, a dockside cantina open for lunch and dinner, offers a vibrant waterfront tequila bar designed to bring the flavors of Mexico to Ego Alley. Armada's menu will feature an extensive taco selection, fajitas, quesadillas, signature Armada nachos alongside a selection of tequila, mezcal, and agave spirits. The restaurant will seat 200 guests including 100 outdoor waterfront seats.

Atlas Founder & President Alex Smith stated, "We saw how special Annapolis is from day one, and we're excited to continue investing in the city with the opening of Marmo, Armada, and our new event space. This is one of the most iconic locations on the Chesapeake Bay, and we look forward to welcoming the Annapolis community and visitors alike." Learn more about the restaurants and hotel at atlasrestaurantgroup.com and annapoliswaterfront.com. *Photographs courtesy Atlas Restaurant Group*.







LASH MOI CELEBRATES 17TH ANNIVERSARY

Lash Moi recently marked 17 years of elevating beauty across Maryland. Since opening its doors in 2009, the studio—now with locations in Crofton, Annapolis, and Bowie—has become a trusted destination for lash extensions, permanent makeup, and advanced medspa treatments. To celebrate, guests enjoyed exclusive promotions this past spring, and can now experience Lash Moi's new VIP MedSpa loyalty program, offering tiered perks for longtime clients. The festivities also highlight collaborations with fellow local favorites, bringing together a shared spirit of small business support. Learn more at lashmoi.com.

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WHAT'S UP? MEDIA

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Playin' in the Sand

JOHN BOLTEN OF THE ROOTS BAND GERALDINE DISCUSSES THE ANNAPOLIS BAYGRASS MUSIC FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

By James Houck

This September 19th and 20th, the Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival returns to Sandy Point State Park for its fifth incarnation, a testament to the regional community's love for live bluegrass and roots music, Chesapeake Bay conservation, and the festival experience. The two-day event will be a summer swan song for attendees, with top tier performances by Little Feat, Yonder Mountain String Band, Bela Fleck, Sam Bush, and many more. Among them is the local roots-based string band Geraldine, led by singer/songwriter, guitarist, and banjo player John Bolten. The band has gained a following in recent years among Appalachian and American-folk music aficionados. So much so, that Geraldine was tapped to play the inaugural Baygrass Festival in 2022. In fact, the band is the only performer to have been invited back *and perform* at each of the five festivals.

To learn more about Geraldine and the Baygrass Festival connection, we talked with Bolten.



The band Geraldine performs for the fifth year in a row at the Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival.

John, could you tell us a bit about your history with the Baygrass Festival and how you first connected with Ron Peremel (founder of Baygrass)? Sure! I was in Annapolis watching some friends play a show and I ran into Ron. He was telling me about his plans for Baygrass and its mission to 'Save the Bay'. He also mentioned that he would love to have a festival song highlighting the importance of protecting the bay. I mentioned that I am a hydrologist and serve as Chief of NASA's hydrological sciences lab, and enjoy writing songs. He asked me if I would work on a song for the festival, and I went home that night and started working on it. Actually, I started working on a melody while driving home from the show!

I sent him a recording of Geraldine playing 'In The Water' a couple weeks later and asked him to come watch us perform. The timing of the song was perfect because Geraldine was in the studio recording our *Paw Paw* album. We were able to get Cris Jacobs in with us to play on the song. The rest is history!

What was that first Baygrass Fest experience like as a performer, both on stage and off stage? The first Baygrass at Sandy Point State Park was such a wonderful experience. Geraldine played two sets and sang 'In The Water' during a special 'tweener' set before the headliner, and the crowd loved it.

What sticks out about this festival is the amount of care that goes into making the experience fun and meaningful for both the artists and the audience. I was very impressed with the thoughtfulness that went into having a diverse set of bands, and the very visible focus on educating people about conservation and preserving our water resources.

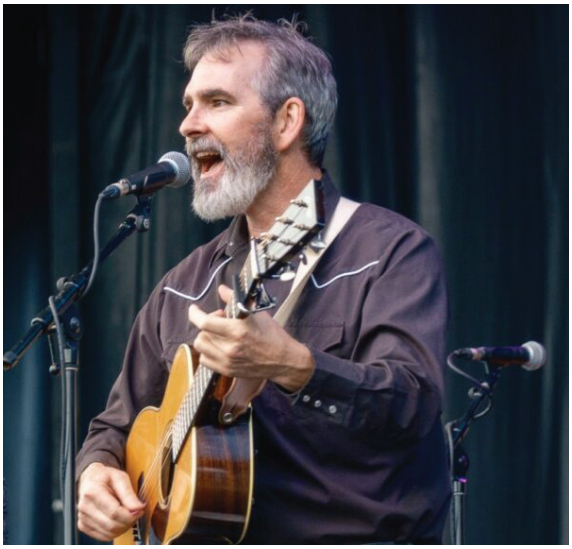
Photographs courtesy John Bolten and Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival

Geraldine has been invited back every year to perform; why do you think that is and what makes that fact special to you? We are extremely grateful to be a part of the Annapolis Baygrass family. Geraldine plays the festival song each year, of course, which always helps bring the focus back to healing the bay. And the 'In The Water' theme is evident on the posters and even the water stations around the festival.

Over the past eight years Geraldine has steadily built an audience from our original take on old time and bluegrass music. We focus on creating something different, and writing new songs that resonate with people, plus, we just enjoy having fun and putting on an entertaining show for folks.

Our friends Jan and Kim from Step Jam dance with us during our sets, which is always a crowd pleaser and brings another unique element to our shows. I'm passionate about protecting the Chesapeake Bay and watershed and have been working with several nonprofits and organizations that share that mission. This theme is woven throughout our songs and helps amplify the message. It really is a festival with a purpose!**When you and the band are in 'Baygrass mode,' what's the anticipation like—are you dreaming up setlists, meet-ups with other artists, sit-ins, etc.?** Yes! Baygrass is our favorite festival to play in the region because we get to play a few sets, show off new songs, and talk with other artists and the nonprofits about the Baygrass mission. We enjoy having the artists-at-large sit in with Geraldine and it is always a blast. Each year we try to polish our set and think of new ways to make the most exciting show we can. It's our homecoming every year!

Looking at this year's lineup, what or who is getting you excited for the weekend? Oh my, so many cool bands this year. We will be playing a short set before Little Feat, so that will certainly be a feather in our cap! I'm a big Béla Fleck fan…Sister Sadie is a must see, the Melody Trucks and the Fitzkee Brothers will certainly be a highlight, and I'm on a mission to see Sam Bush play as many times as I can!



John Bolten of Geraldine.

How would you describe the Geraldine approach to live music and community? Geraldine is 'Good Time Old Time'. We really just want to make the best music we can and put on an entertaining show for folks. I like to say that we are on a 'slow burn' by just taking our time and slowly growing an audience. Geraldine is not in a hurry to be anywhere. By that I mean that we are focused on crafting fun original songs and sharing them wherever we can. And it's worked! We've had eight songs from our first two albums selected by national song contests (and two more for our upcoming album).

But it's not just about crafting songs—we play square dances, concert halls, house concerts, and festivals, and I also enjoy playing solo shows. We try to stay involved in the community as much as we can through supporting other bands and regional festivals. I also run songwriting classes at a few regional festivals, which I greatly enjoy.

What do you and the band enjoy most about the Baygrass Festival experience at Sandy Point State Park overall? In short, it is the good vibes, clean and carefully planned festival, and the incredible cast of musicians that we get to share the stage with. For Geraldine to play the festival each year, it feels like a 'local boy makes good' homecoming. All our friends are there cheering us on and we are cheering the festival on!

Visit baygrassfestival.com for the Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival lineup, times, tickets, and more information.



Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival returns to Sandy Point State Park on September 19 and 20.



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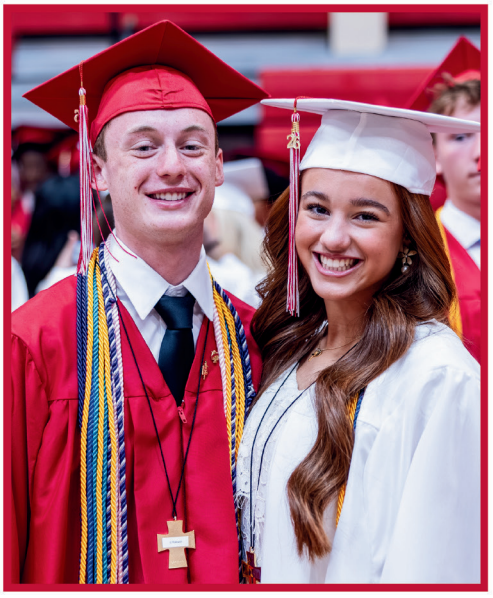
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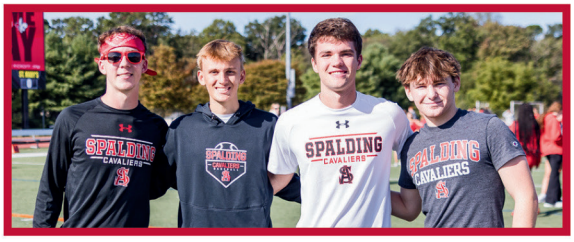
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VISIT COOL SCHOOLS!

OUR 2026 SCHOOL VISITATION GUIDE OFFERS AN OVERVIEW OF OPEN HOUSE DATES AND HOW TO HANDLE PRESCHOOL, GRADE SCHOOL, AND COLLEGE VISITS!

Researching and touring schools or universities may be transformative experiences for both parents and students. Meeting the administrations of possible schools, getting firsthand knowledge, and using on-site optics are all crucial stages in selecting the best school, one of the most significant decisions in life. In addition to a thorough list of regional schools, universities, and learning centers that offer open houses, campus tours, online seminars, and programs for students of all ages, this directory offers advice on how to conduct a successful school search.

If you're considering school visitations this fall, or in the near future, here are several tips and considerations when planning.

1 MAP OUT ALL OF THE SCHOOLS AND MAKE A LIST

Make a list of all the possible schools, conduct some research on them, and then select a few before the application process starts. When your selection has been narrowed down to the best candidates, it's time to begin organizing your campus visits. Plan ahead and map out each school you are seriously considering because you should ideally visit them all.

2 ORDER IS IMPORTANT

Make an effort to visit your top school or schools last. You'll start to have a clearer understanding of your preferences as you visit additional campuses. By the end of the process, you will have a better idea of what to look for and what questions to ask about the campus you wish to tour.

3 TIMING MATTERS

Plan your visit while school is, hopefully, in session. Observing student life will give you an authentic view of the school and will (hopefully) help you envision yourself as a student there.

4 KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Your priorities during your initial school search may completely shift once you start touring, so remain open minded. Walk onto every campus with a positive attitude and save your judgments until the end of the tour

5 MAKE EXTRA TIME TO EXPLORE ON YOUR OWN

Make sure you take extra time to explore areas of campus that were not covered in your trip because the official campus tour will showcase the school's best characteristics. This is the ideal time to sit in a class or lecture, observe students, or visit any department that interests you.

6 TALK TO CURRENT STUDENTS AND STAFF

Your tour guide may be a biased source because it is their responsibility to present the best possible image of their school. Your guide's knowledge is important, but you might wish to speak with existing students to get a more honest impression. If the tour didn't cover anything, ask the students: What is everyday life like for students? Is meeting people and forming friendships easy? On campus, is there a lot of diversity? Are you having trouble adjusting?

7 DOCUMENT EVERY VISIT

If you plan to visit several schools, make sure to document each visit. Take pictures, jot down some notes, or record a voice memo to highlight your favorite—or least favorite—aspects of each school. Going on several tours within a short period of time can be chaotic, so this will help you separate and compare each visit.

8 SHADOW DAYS

Shadow days provide prospective students with a firsthand experience of a school's daily life—academics, social dynamics, and campus culture—helping them make informed decisions, ease transition anxiety, and determine if the environment is the right fit for their personal and educational goals.

If you're considering *childcare options* for your youngest ones, please see the article "Your Little One's First Year of Childcare" adjacent to this guide for tips and best practices when prospecting potential childcare centers and professionals.



DISCOVER

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Severn is more than just a school—it's a community where every student is known and valued not just for who they are today, but for what they aspire to be. But don't just take our word for it. Register for a fall event and come see for yourself what a Severn education can do for you.

FALL ADMISSION EVENTS

Chesapeake Campus Open House for Preschool—Grade 5 October 9 @ 9:00 am

Teel Campus Open House for Grades 6—12 October 15 @ 7:00 pm

Middle School Parent Information Session for Grades 6—8 September 22 @ 9:30 am

Learn more at
severnschool.com/open-house

Severn School

Regional educational institutions, learning centers, and schools that advertise in the *What's Up? Media* family of publications are listed below. For program availability, visitation instructions, and open house dates, please think about giving them a call directly. The listing of schools is alphabetical.

Annapolis Area Christian School – Annapolis Area Christian School
Lower School Annapolis Campus – 710 Ridgely Avenue, Annapolis; 410-846-3504; aacsonline.org; October 2 and November 13, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Lower School Severn Campus - 61 Gambrills Road, Severn; October 7 and November 20, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Middle School - 109 Burns Crossing Road, Severn; October 15 and November 19, 9:00 a.m. Upper School - 109 Burns Crossing Road, Severn; October 19 and November 16, 9:00 a.m. K-12 Evening Information Nights - 109 Burns Crossing Road, Severn; –Inside the Kerr Center; September 17, and April 22, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Anne Arundel Community College
101 College Parkway, Arnold; 410-777-2222; aacc.edu; October. 7, 2026, 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. A virtual tour is available on the school website.

Archbishop Spalding High School
8080 New Cut Road, Severn; 410-969-9105; archbishopspalding.org; October 25, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., sign-ups are available online.

Benedictine School
14299 Benedictine Lane, Ridgely; 410-634-2112; benschool.org; Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

Chesapeake College/Eastern Shore Higher Education Center
1000 College Circle, Wye Mills; 410-822-5400; chesapeake.edu; Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

DeMatha Catholic High School
4313 Madison St, Hyattsville; 240-764-2200; dematha.org; November 1, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Holy Trinity: An Episcopal School
Primary – 13106 Annapolis Road, Bowie; 301-262-5355; The Daisy Lane School & High School Prep – 11902 Daisy Lane, Glenn Dale; 301-464-3215; htrinity.org; October 15, November 11, February 4, April 8, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Indian Creek School
1130 Anne Chambers Way, Crownsville; 410-923-3660; indiancreekschool.org; Lower School – November 12, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Middle School – November 19, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Upper School – November 5, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Kent School
6788 Wilkins Lane, Chestertown; 410-778-4100; kentschool.org; Kent School Discovery Day - November 15, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Key School
534 Hillsmere Drive; 410-263-9231; keyschool.org; Middle School Sports Clinics – September 19, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Lower School Information Session – October 8, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.; Middle School Information Session – October 20, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Upper School Information Session – October 29, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; First School Open House – November 7, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.; Contact school directly for daily tours.

Lighthouse Christian Academy
931 Love Point Rd, Stevensville; 410-643-3034; lcacademy.org; October 24, 10 a.m; November 18, 9 a.m.; January 9, 10 a.m.; February 17, 9 a.m.

Monsignor Slade Catholic School
120 Dorsey Road, Glen Burnie; 410-766-7130; msladeschool.com; Pre-K3 to Grade 8; November 11, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. January 30, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Montessori International Children's House
1641 N. Winchester Road, Annapolis; 410-757-7789; montessoriinternational.org; Tours are held on Wednesday mornings by appointment only.

Polaris Village Academy
31 Jowite Street, Easton; 410-714-0275; polarisvillageacademy.org; Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

Radcliffe Creek School
201 Talbot Boulevard, Chestertown; 410-778-8150; radcliffecreekschool.org; Contact school to schedule an in-person tour. A virtual tour is available on the school website.

Right Start Academy
331 Gambrills Road, Ste. 1, Gambrills; 890 Airport Park Road, Ste. 119, Glen Burnie; 410-923-7575 (main line for both locations); rightstartacademy.org; Tours are typically held Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.; Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

Rockbridge Academy
680 Evergreen Road, Crownsville; 410-923-1171; rockbridge.org; All Grades – October 19, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten – October 23, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Preview Night (open to all prospective families) – November 6, 7 p.m.; The Paideia School (K-6th Grade Hybrid Program) – November 2 and February 19, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

St. Andrews Day School
4 B Wallace Manor Road, Edgewater; 410-266-0952; school.standrewsum.org; Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

St. Anne's School of Annapolis
3112 Arundel on the Bay Road, Annapolis; 410-263-8650; stanneschool.org; Messtival Preschool-aged children (up to age 5) – September 26, 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m; Lower School and Middle School Open House November 11, 9 a.m.

St. John the Evangelist Catholic School
669 Ritchie Highway, Severna Park; 410-647-2283; stjohnspschool.org; - Fall Open House – September 29, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. A virtual tour is available on the school website.

St. Margaret's Day School
1605 Pleasant Plains Road, Annapolis; 410-757-2333; stmargaretsdayschool.org; October 16 and January 15, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

St. Martin's in the Field Episcopal School
375 A Benfield Road, Severna Park; 410-647-7055; stmartinsmd.org; October 13, January 13, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Registration for Open Houses and/or private school tours (available most school days) through their website.

St. Martin's Lutheran School
1120 Spa Road, Annapolis; 410-263-4723; stmartinsonline.org; Contact School for personalized campus tours throughout the year by appointment, Monday through Thursday, for families interested in learning more about our PreK–8 programs; Fall Open House – September 21, 9–11 a.m. and 4–6 p.m.

St. Mary's Annapolis
109 Duke of Gloucester Street, Annapolis; 410-263-2869; stmarysannapolis.org; Elementary (Pre-K through Grade 8) – October 23, 9 a.m. High School – October 24, 9 a.m. Athletic Open House (Pascal Field) – October 27, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Sts. Peter and Paul High School and Elementary School
High School – 1212 S. Washington Street, Easton; 410-822-2275; hs.sspeaston.org; October 25, 12 p.m. Elementary School – 900 High Street, Easton – Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

St. Vincent Pallotti High School
113 St. Mary's Place, Laurel; 301-725-3288; pallottihs.org; Lady Panther Pink Out Admissions Event – October 21, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Open House – November 8, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Arts, Sciences & Learning Center Open House – December 1, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Spring Open House – April 22, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

School of the Incarnation
2601 Symphony Ln, Gambrills; 410-519-2285; schooloftheincarnation.org; November 7, 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Severn School
Lower School – Chesapeake Campus: 1185 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard, Arnold; 410-862-3684; severnschool.com; October 9, 9 a.m. Middle and Upper School – Teel Campus: 201 Water Street, Severna Park; October 15, 7 p.m.

The Country School
716 Goldsborough Street, Easton; 410-822-1935; countryschool.org; Contact school directly for guidance on visitations, tours, etc.

The Gunston School
911 Gunston Road, Centreville; 410-758-0620; gunston.org; October 18 and November 1, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; January 24 and May 2, 11 a.m.

The Summit School
664 E. Central Avenue, Davidsonville; 410-798-0005; thesummitschool.org; October 7, November 12, December 8, January 13, February 18, March 23, 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Wye River Upper School
316 S. Commerce Street, Centreville; 410-758-2922; wyeriverupperschool.org; Open House – November 3, January 27 and March 3, 9:30 a.m. Virtual Open House – February 22.



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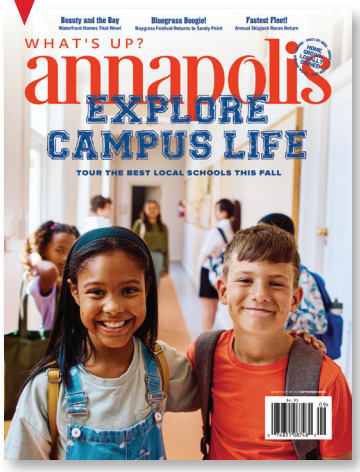
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FALL OPEN HOUSE EVENTS

Upper School	Middle School	Lower School
(Grades 9-12)	*(Grades 6-8)*	*(PK3 - Grade 5)*
Thur., November 5	Thur., November 19	Thur., November 12
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.	9:00 - 10:30 a.m.	9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

indiancreekschool.org

Fall Admission Events

8 OCT



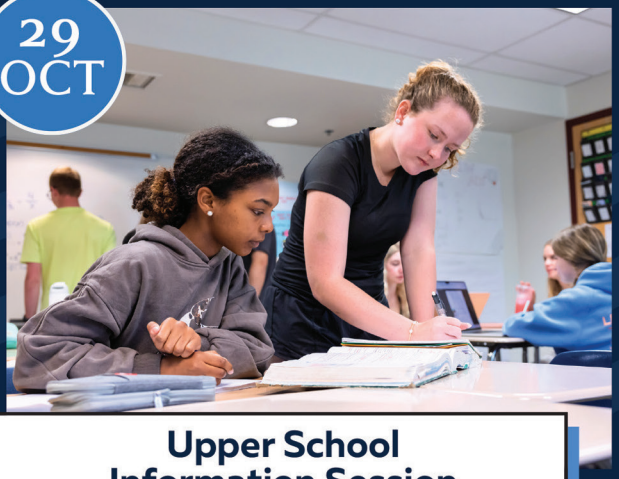
Lower School Information Session
9:00–11:00 a.m.

20 OCT



Middle School Information Session
1:30–3:30 p.m.

29 OCT



Upper School Information Session
6:30–7:30 p.m.

7 NOV



First School Open House
9:00–11:00 a.m.

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YOUR LITTLE ONE'S FIRST YEAR OF CHILDCARE

A PARENTS PRIMER TO NAVIGATING OPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

BY WHAT'S UP? MEDIA

Kids need to be cared for, and sometimes it takes a village. Whether you're returning to work, seeking social opportunities for your toddler, or simply looking for a trusted partner in your child's early development, choosing childcare is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a parent. The good news? Maryland offers strong oversight of licensed childcare providers, along with resources to help families make informed decisions. Here's what to know before your little one's first day.

START WITH LICENSING

Your first step should always be confirming that a childcare center or family childcare home is licensed or registered through the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care. Licensed providers must meet state requirements for staff qualifications, child-to-teacher ratios, health and safety standards, emergency preparedness, nutrition, sanitation, and ongoing inspections. Don't hesitate to ask a provider about its licensing status, inspection history, and safety procedures. High-quality programs welcome these conversations and are happy to answer parents' questions.

LOOK BEYOND THE BASICS WITH MARYLAND EXCELS

Licensing establishes the minimum standards, but many Maryland families also look for programs participating in **Maryland EXCELS**, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System. Participating programs receive ratings on a scale of 1 through 5, with higher ratings reflecting continued investments in staff development, curriculum, family engagement, administrative practices, and nationally recognized quality standards. A level 5 program has achieved the highest quality rating and state or national accreditation. While an EXCELS rating isn't required, it offers parents another valuable tool when comparing childcare options.

TOUR WITH A CRITICAL EYE

A brochure can tell you what a program says it offers. A tour shows you how it actually operates. As you visit programs, look for: Warm, attentive teachers who interact positively with children. Clean, organized classrooms with age-appropriate materials. Secure entrances and visitor check-in procedures. Safe indoor and outdoor play spaces. Calm, engaging classrooms where children appear comfortable and involved. Clearly posted emergency plans, health policies, and daily schedules

Pay attention to how staff members greet children and communicate with families. Those everyday interactions often reveal the culture of a program better than any marketing materials.



ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Parents should feel comfortable asking detailed questions before enrolling. An experienced provider will appreciate your interest and answer openly.

Consider asking: What is your child-to-teacher ratio? How long have your teachers worked here? What training do staff members receive each year? How do you comfort children during difficult transitions? How do you communicate daily updates with families? What is your illness policy? How are emergencies handled? How do you support each child's developmental milestones? Can parents tour the facility and observe classrooms before enrolling?

PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION

The first few weeks of childcare can be emotional for children and parents alike. Some toddlers adapt immediately, while others need several weeks to become comfortable with a new routine.

You can make the transition easier by:

- Visiting the classroom together before the first day
- Talking positively about "school" and new friends
- Establish consistent bedtime and morning routines
- Sending a favorite blanket or comfort item if allowed
- Keeping goodbyes short, calm, and reassuring

Remember that tears at drop-off are common and usually temporary. Most children quickly settle into their daily routine once parents leave.

EXPECT PLENTY OF LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

The best childcare programs understand that toddlers learn through exploration, not worksheets. Experiences build social, emotional, language, and motor skills that prepare children for preschool and beyond. **Daily activities could include:** Story time and early language development, Music, movement, and singing, Sensory play, Outdoor recreation, Creative art projects, Opportunities to practice sharing, problem-solving, and independence

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

A quality childcare program views parents as partners. Many Maryland providers use secure apps or daily reports to share activities, meals, nap times, diaper changes, and photos throughout the day. Regular communication helps families stay connected and allows caregivers to better understand each child's individual needs. Don't be afraid to ask questions or share concerns. Open communication benefits everyone, especially your child.

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EXPECT A FEW SNIFFLES

One surprise for many first-time childcare families is how often children catch common colds during their first year. Exposure to other children naturally increases encounters with everyday viruses. While frequent minor illnesses can be frustrating, they're a normal part of building young immune systems. Ask prospective providers about handwashing practices, cleaning procedures, immunization requirements, and illness policies. Strong health protocols help reduce the spread of infections while keeping children and staff safe.

TRUST BOTH RESEARCH AND INSTINCT

Choosing childcare isn't simply about finding an available opening—it's about finding the right fit for your family. Review licensing information, compare Maryland EXCELS ratings, ask thoughtful questions, and observe how caregivers interact with children. Then trust your instincts. When you walk into the right program, you'll likely notice children who are engaged, caregivers who are patient and attentive, and an atmosphere that feels warm, safe, and welcoming. Your child's first year in childcare is filled with milestones: making new friends, building confidence, developing independence, and discovering the joy of learning. By doing your homework before enrollment, you'll be setting the stage for a successful beginning that benefits your entire family.

STATE CHILDCARE RESOURCES

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care. The Office of Child Care licenses childcare centers and family childcare homes throughout Maryland. Parents can learn about licensing requirements, health and safety regulations, and consumer education resources to help evaluate providers. More info | earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org. **Maryland EXCELS.** Maryland EXCELS is the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System for licensed childcare and early education programs. Participating providers earn quality ratings on a scale of 1 to 5, giving families another way to compare programs beyond basic licensing requirements. More info | marylandexcels.org. **Check Child Care Maryland.** Before enrolling your child, review a provider's licensing status, inspection reports, and compliance history through Maryland's online childcare search tool. More info | checkccmd.org. **LOCATE: Child Care.** Operated by Maryland Family Network, LOCATE: Child Care is a free referral service that helps parents find licensed childcare programs based on location, a child's age, schedule, and other family needs. Childcare specialists can also answer questions about choosing quality care. More info | marylandfamilynetwork.org/programs/locate

BEFORE YOU ENROLL CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as you compare childcare providers and prepare for your child's first day.

Verify the Basics. Confirm the program is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care. Review the provider's licensing and inspection history. Ask whether the program participates in Maryland EXCELS

Visit the Program. Tour the classrooms during normal operating hours. Observe how caregivers interact with children. Check that classrooms, playgrounds, and common areas are clean, organized, and secure. Ask about daily schedules, meals, naps, and outdoor play

Meet the Care Team. Ask about staff qualifications, training, and CPR/First Aid certification. Learn about child-to-teacher ratios and class sizes. Ask how long teachers have worked at the program and how staff continuity is maintained

Understand the Policies. Review tuition, payment schedules, and vacation or holiday closures. Ask about illness policies, medication administration, and emergency procedures. Understand the program's approach to discipline, guidance, and positive behavior support

Prepare Your Child. Schedule a visit before the first day so your child can explore the classroom. Label all personal belongings, including clothing, bottles, blankets, and comfort items. Complete required enrollment and health forms, including immunization records. Establish consistent bedtime and morning routines before your child's start date

Stay Connected. Learn how teachers communicate with families through daily reports, emails, or parent apps. Share your child's routines, allergies, preferences, and comfort strategies. Plan to check in regularly with caregivers during the first few weeks as everyone adjusts



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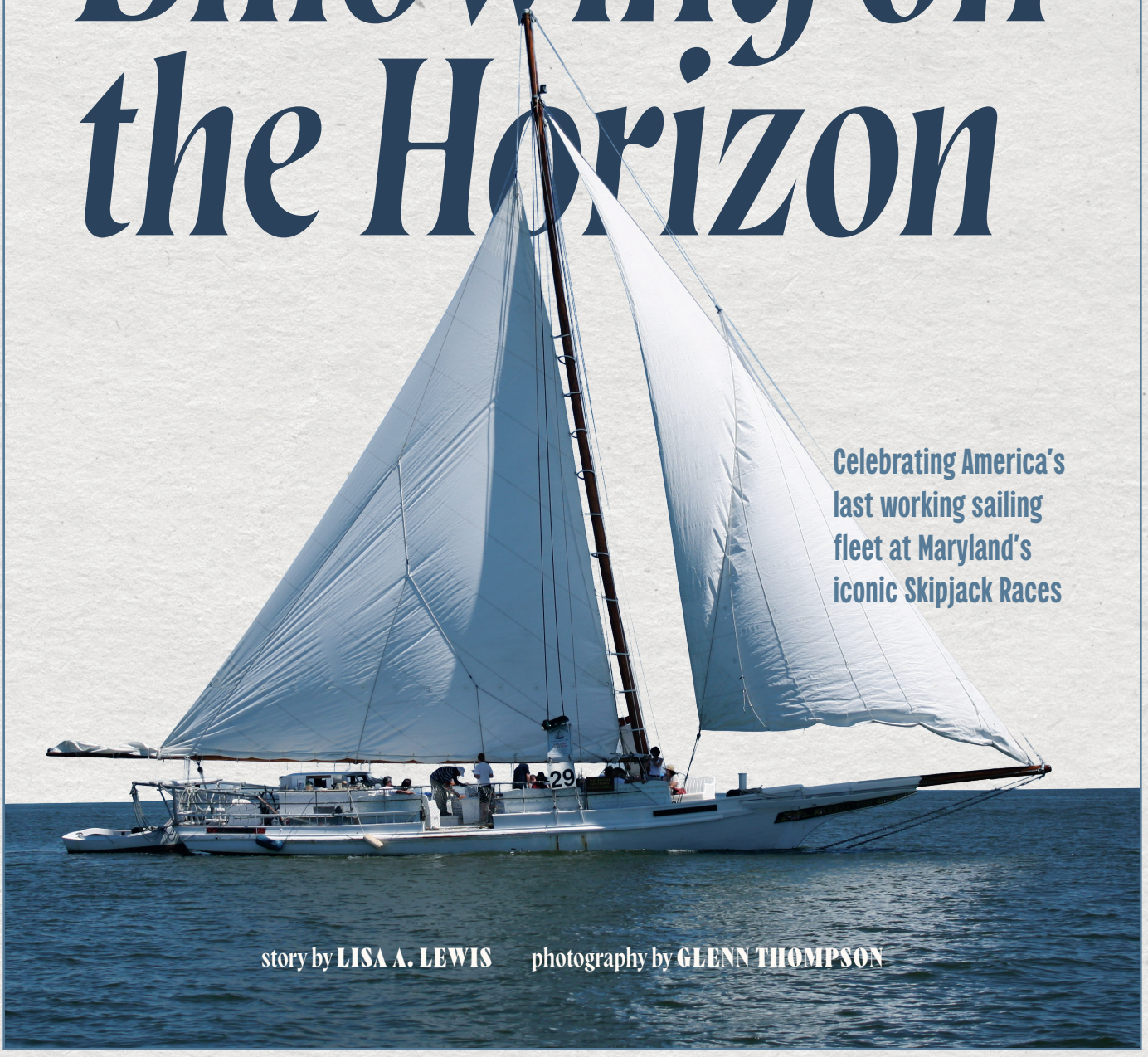
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White Sails Billowing on the Horizon



Celebrating America's last working sailing fleet at Maryland's iconic Skipjack Races

story by **LISA A. LEWIS** photography by **GLENN THOMPSON**



Left page photo: The historic oyster fishing skipjack *Rebecca T. Ruark* under sail near Tilghman Island on the Chesapeake Bay. Right page photo: Skipjacks were designed in the late 1800s for oyster dredging in the Chesapeake Bay. By the 2000s, about 40 skipjacks remained in existence, some of which are still actively used for dredging and racing.

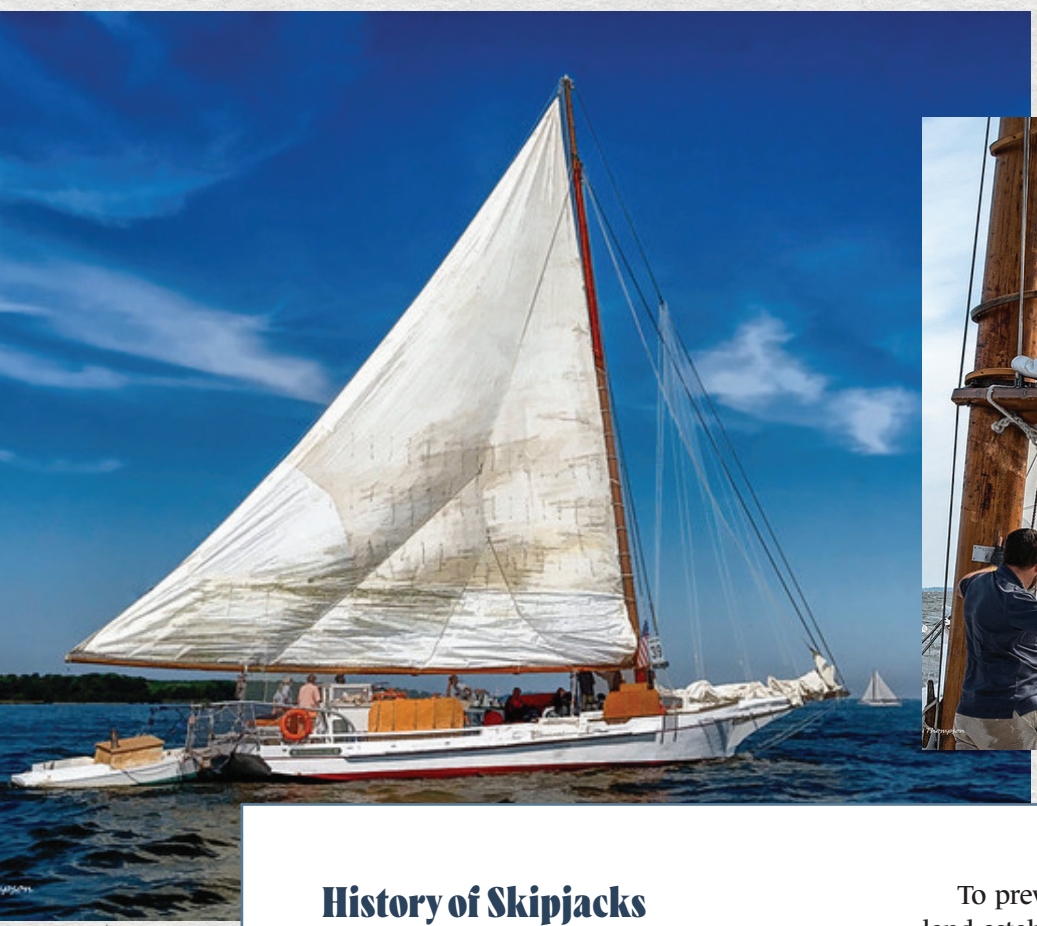
Each September, sailing enthusiasts gather at the renowned skipjack races to celebrate Maryland's rich maritime heritage and pay tribute to the watermen who defined a way of life that still endures today. A palpable sense of excitement fills the air, and a chaotic melee ensues as captains aggressively position their vessels at the starting line, preparing to battle the wind and outmaneuver the rest of the fleet. Designed in the 1890s to dredge for oysters, skipjacks are sturdy, wooden workboats—not racing machines. But on race day, these historic vessels glide across the water, their beauty and classic elegance on full display, as they vie for victory.

"The lead up to the race as we're checking our rigging and preparing to compete is an adrenaline rush for me," says Shawn Ridgley, the captain of *Ida May* (built 1906). "Once the starting gun goes off, and we're out on the water under sail, it's a familiar feeling. The races are more about strategy than speed, so we focus on tactical maneuvers and harness the wind to gain a competitive edge."

Not only do the races demonstrate the competitive spirit of the sailing community, they also preserve a tradition that dates back generations. According to Skipjack Heritage, Inc., informal races began during the late 1800s. To test their boats before the start of the oyster season, watermen held "shakedown sails," which eventually evolved into friendly, yet highly competitive, races. The first official Skipjack Sailing Workboat Race was held in June 1927.

A nod to watermen, the sailing community continues to celebrate Maryland's proud skipjack racing tradition at the **Deal Island Skipjack Festival**, **Skipjack Heritage Days** at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis, and the **Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race** in Cambridge. The races pay tribute to skipjacks and their legacy—shining a light on the importance of preserving these iconic boats for present and future generations.

"The races are a great way to raise awareness about skipjacks and their history," says Wade Murphy, III, a fifth-generation waterman and the owner and captain of *Rebecca T. Ruark* (1886). "Everyone wants to win, so the races are definitely competitive. But they are also friendly. I love being on the water, feeling the wind on the sails, and my blood pumping."



Left: Push boat and skipjack at Sandy Point. Courtesy Glenn Thompson. Right: Skipjacks racing. Courtesy Glenn Thompson.



History of Skipjacks

Skipjacks are shallow-draft, wooden sailing vessels with a single raked mast, two sails, and a V-shaped hull. Built for power, ease of sailing, and affordability, watermen developed skipjacks to harvest shallow oyster beds. Since deeper-draft vessels had exhausted the more accessible beds during the late 19th century, skipjacks were born of necessity.

According to Maryland Sea Grant, during their heyday (the late 19th and early 20th centuries), these majestic boats dominated the Chesapeake Bay, with historians estimating a fleet of thousands of skipjacks dredging for oysters. However, due to oyster overharvesting, pollution, and disease, the number of skipjacks steadily declined. By the late 20th century, about two dozen were still actively working. Today, they are regarded as a vanishing fleet, and only a few skipjacks continue to dredge for oysters.

Like all sailing vessels, skipjacks depend on the wind to propel them. But since the wind is highly variable, dredging under sail is not always possible. So, sometimes, skipjacks need a "boost" from a push boat (also known as a yawl boat). These small, motorized boats push the vessels to the oyster beds and back to port and provide power for dredging when there is no wind.

To prevent overharvesting, the State of Maryland establishes regulations to dictate the use of push boats. Currently, watermen can use push boats two days of the week. During the rest of the week, they must dredge under sail. Dredging season runs from November through March. More than a historic boat, the skipjack is one of the defining cultural symbols of Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay. To honor its legacy, the Maryland General Assembly named it the official state boat in 1985.

"Dredging for oysters is in my blood, and I love being on the water," Wade Murphy, III says. "My grandfather did it. My father [Wade Murphy, Jr.] did it, and it goes back even further. I started on a crab boat when I was 13 years old, and I have been on the water ever since. I stopped dredging for oysters for a few years and did carpentry work, but I missed it and got back on the water. I always come back to the water."

"Being a waterman has been very important to me," adds Stoney Whitelock, a fifth-generation waterman and the owner and captain of *Han Em Harv* (1981). "When I was a kid, the older men would talk about these old boats—which one was fast, pretty, good, bad. That's all they talked about at Sunday dinner, and I guess some of it rubbed off on me. I fell in love with boats, and I'm still in love with them."

The Triple Crown

The time-honored tradition of skipjack racing continues this September at three historic races, known collectively as the Triple Crown—showcasing the boats and serving as an enduring reminder of a once-thriving fleet.

In addition to the races at Deal Island and Cambridge, skipjack racing returns to Sandy Point State Park again this year after a highly anticipated race in 2025, which marked the end of a 35-year hiatus. Originally known as Chesapeake Appreciation Days (1965–1990), the event, now called Skipjack Heritage Days, was previously sponsored by the Maryland Watermen's Association and served as a major fall gathering for the Chesapeake Bay skipjack fleet for decades.

"With fewer than two dozen surviving vessels remaining, Skipjack Heritage Days represents far more than a festival," says Susan Schneider, manager, Skipjack Heritage Days. "It is the restoration of a cultural gathering place for working watermen, wooden boat preservationists, maritime historians, and the public to celebrate a way of life that shaped the Chesapeake Bay for generations."

Perhaps one defining feature of skipjack races that distinguishes them from other types of races is the distribution of "show-up" money. Each boat that participates receives funds for maintenance and preservation. Other perks include trophies for the winners and, of course, bragging rights.



Sandy Point Skipjack Race in 2025. Courtesy Glenn Thompson.



Skipjack race trophies await the winners. Courtesy Skipjack Heritage.



Bow sprits of the *Wilma Lee* and *Messenger*. Courtesy Glenn Thompson.

Milestones and Memorable Moments

Whether they are multigenerational watermen who dredge for oysters or skilled skipjack captains and their crews, the sailing community is passionate about the races. The following is a snapshot of a few individuals who made a name for themselves in the world of skipjack racing.

Stoney Whitelock: A Living Legend

Dredging for oysters has always been a way of life for Whitelock—a proud family tradition that is in his blood. When he retired after a 40-year career as a lineman, he began rebuilding skipjacks to keep them alive for future generations. A "savior of skipjacks," he resurrected *Kathryn* (1901), *Helen Virginia* (1948), *Minnie V* (1906), and *Han Em Harv* (1981), previously *Anna McGarvey*, to their former glory. His son, David, currently owns *Kathryn* and continues the family tradition of dredging for oysters. In 2013, Whitelock and three other buyers bought *Helen Virginia*, which he gave to his wife, Katarina Ennerfelt, as a Valentine's Day gift. Ennerfelt, who was also a co-owner, captained the boat in the Deal Island race in 2014, sailing to victory with an all-female crew and making sailing history. "The race kind of just happened," Whitelock says. "Katarina trained the women—some of whom had never sailed before. Since *Helen Virginia* was still being restored, they practiced on *Rebecca T. Ruark* and *Nathan of Dorchester*. And everything just came together that day." A legendary captain who has attended nearly every skipjack race, Whitelock currently owns *Han Em Harv*, which he named after his grandchildren, Hannah, Emily, and Harvey. He also serves as the president of the board of directors of Skipjack Heritage, Inc. and the chairman of the Skipjack Heritage Museum. A staunch advocate of skipjack preservation, he played an active role in the revival of skipjack racing at Sandy Point State Park. "The races are a great way to keep these historic boats alive," Whitelock says. "It was great to see so many people at Sandy Point last year, and I hope we can continue this tradition every year."





Top: Captain Stoney Whitelock, Deal Island Skipjack Race winner in 2025. Courtesy Skipjack Heritage. Right: A skipjack's sailing boom and folded sails at Deal Island.



Captain Wade Murphy, Jr., with his son Wade, III, owner of the *Rebecca T. Ruark*. Photo by Christopher White and Greg Bassett / Salisbury Independent.

The Murphy Family: A Racing Legacy

When Wade Murphy, Jr. bought *Rebecca T. Ruark*, the oldest surviving skipjack, in 1984, he established himself as a racing legend. He owned her for nearly 40 years, sailing her as a dredge boat, but, perhaps, the races were where Murphy truly shined. Indeed, since 1988, he sailed *Rebecca* to victory at the Deal Island race 12 times—more than any other captain in the history of the race. He also won the Cambridge race four times from 2010 to 2014. *Rebecca's* story is defined by resilience, and she can perhaps be likened to a phoenix rising from the ashes. She sank, was raised, and has been repaired and rebuilt several times. She even survived being hit by a pickup truck while docked in 2022. After the accident, Murphy decided that it was time to pass the torch to his son, Wade Murphy, III, who bought her and made extensive repairs. "*Rebecca T. Ruark* is so special," Wade Murphy, III says. "I raced with my dad for years. But I'll never know as much as he does. He'd still be racing if he could, but he's getting older. So, I've got big shoes to fill." In 2025, *Rebecca* took first place in the Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race. Just as Wade Murphy, III followed in his father's footsteps and became a waterman, he also hopes to establish a winning streak at the races—just like his dad. "*Rebecca* is still dredging, still racing, and still winning," he says. "She's a good boat, and I hope she lasts the rest of my lifetime—and even longer."

Shawn Ridgley: A Changing of the Guard

Although he grew up sailing and working with boats, Ridgley didn't develop a passion for skipjacks until he held positions at Annapolis Sailing School, Living Classrooms Foundation, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). These roles sparked his interest in skipjack racing, and he began competing around 2005, which ultimately led to his association with *Ida May*. Through his work, Ridgley had met *Ida May's* owners, Elbert Jr. and Gordon Gladden, who had inherited the boat from their father, Elbert Gladden, Sr. But at the time, he couldn't have imagined that he would one day become the captain of *Ida May*. When *Ida May's* captain passed away, the Gladden family—thanks to a good word from Stoney Whitelock—asked Ridgley to become the captain. He took the helm in 2016 and immediately started an impressive winning streak. *Ida May* won the Deal Island race in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2025. She also won the race in Cambridge in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023 as well as the race in Sandy Point in 2025. (*Ida May* didn't race in 2021 or 2024.) "The skipjack races are a lot of fun, but they are also about camaraderie and fellowship with the sailing community," says Ridgley, who is the captain of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) icebreaker, *Eddie Somers*. "The sailing community takes care of each other, and their love of skipjacks keeps these historic vessels going for future generations."



Captain Shawn Ridgely (right) and 1st mate Keith Whitelock on the *Ida May*. Courtesy Skipjack Heritage.



Captain Kate Dumhart. Courtesy Schooner Sultana.

Kate Dumhart: A Steward for the Next Generation

When Dumhart began working at the Calvert Marine Museum (CMM) in 2013, the museum had just acquired *Dee of St. Mary's* (1979). And the timing couldn't have been better. Since Dumhart had experience teaching in an outdoor setting, CMM offered her a unique opportunity. If she learned to sail, she could teach aboard *Dee of St. Mary's*. And so, at the age of 26, Dumhart learned how to sail a skipjack and obtained her dream job. Not only did Dumhart gain sailing experience at CMM, but she also became an avid skipjack racer—blending the high-stakes world of racing with her competitive spirit. The first race that she competed in was the 2014 Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race as a crew member on *Dee of St. Mary's*. "The year that I first participated in the Cambridge race was the year that *Helen Virginia* won the Deal Island race," says Dumhart, also the captain of Schooner *SULTANA*, a floating classroom that delivers educational programs at the Sultana Education Foundation in Chestertown. "Since the entire crew was female, their victory was inspirational to me. A rare female in a male-driven world is the norm, but *Helen Virginia* was the exception and the inspiration. It's great to see women continue to make strides in skipjack racing, which has primarily been a male-dominated sport." A staunch advocate of Chesapeake Bay heritage and preservation, Dumhart continues to compete regularly in the skipjack races aboard *Messenger* (1975).

Cyndy Carrington Miller: A Skipjack Enthusiast and Documentarian

When Miller moved to Maryland's Eastern Shore from Pennsylvania in 1999, she began doing volunteer work at Richardson Maritime Museum in Cambridge. While working for the museum, she met Captain Frank Newton, one of the captains of *Nathan of Dorchester* (1994), in April 2022. He invited her to start crew training, and she immediately accepted—even though she knew nothing about boats. "From the moment I saw *Nathan of Dorchester* and learned about how to sail her, I fell in love," Miller says. "They couldn't get me off the boat that summer. I went out for every crew training and signed up for as many trips as possible." Miller was a crew member on *Nathan of Dorchester* from 2002 to 2015 and participated regularly in the races in Deal Island and Cambridge. Her experience sparked her interest in skipjacks and inspired her to create **The Last Skipjacks Project** in 2009. Born from a simple question—"How many skipjacks are left?"—Miller embarked on a journey to track and document the status and condition of every surviving skipjack. She created an online database of her findings, updating it on a regular basis and encouraging website visitors to submit information. "The Last Skipjacks Project is a labor of love," Miller says. "It represents a vital part of our maritime heritage and highlights the importance of preserving skipjacks to ensure that they are not lost forever."



Cyndy Carrington Miller at the mast of *Nathan of Dorchester*. Courtesy Preservation Maryland.

To learn more, visit lastskipjacks.com.

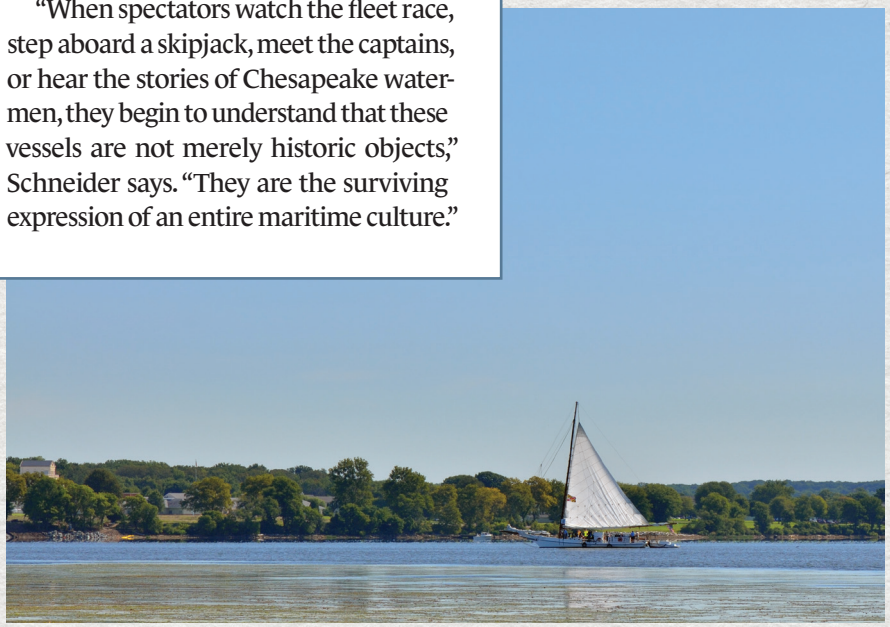


Honoring a Vanishing Fleet

The last working sailing fleet, skipjacks are much more than historic vessels that helped shape Maryland's rich maritime heritage. They are also a symbol of a resilient fleet that may be vanishing but is still very much alive. The celebrated skipjack races pay tribute to these majestic boats. Not only do they offer a thrilling, competitive experience for the captains and their crews, but they also help raise public awareness about the importance of preserving skipjacks for future generations.

"When spectators watch the fleet race, step aboard a skipjack, meet the captains, or hear the stories of Chesapeake watermen, they begin to understand that these vessels are not merely historic objects," Schneider says. "They are the surviving expression of an entire maritime culture."

Top: The historic skipjack *Dee of St. Mary's* at the Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons, Maryland. Bottom: The skipjack *Martha Lewis* that belongs to the Chesapeake Heritage Conservancy.



Triple Crown of Skipjack Racing

67th Annual Deal Island Skipjack Festival

Sunday, September 6
Live music, Chesapeake Bay educational exhibits, local artisans, and vendors. Skipjacks arrive throughout the day.

Monday, September 7
Blessing of the Fleet – 8 a.m.
Parade of Skipjacks – 9 a.m.
Skipjack Race – 9:30 a.m. Best viewing: Deal Island Harbor and along the shoreline of Tangier Sound

Sponsor: Deal Island-Chance Lions Club. Info: lionsclub-dic.org

2nd Annual Skipjack Heritage Days at Sandy Point State Park

Saturday, September 12
Public sailing aboard historic skipjacks at no cost from 1–5 p.m. from Sandy Point Marina (with Maryland Seafood Festival admission)

Sunday, September 13
Parade of Skipjacks to Sandy Point Lighthouse – 11 a.m. Skipjack Race – 12 noon. Best viewing: East Beach inside Sandy Point State Park

Sponsors: Skipjack Heritage, Inc. in partnership with Maryland Seafood Festival. Info: mdseafoodfestival.com

30th Annual Choptank Heritage Skipjack Race at Cambridge

Saturday, September 26
Parade of Skipjacks – 10 a.m.
Skipjack Race – 11 a.m. Best viewing: Long Wharf Park

Sponsor: Dorchester Skipjack Committee. Info: skipjack-nathan.org

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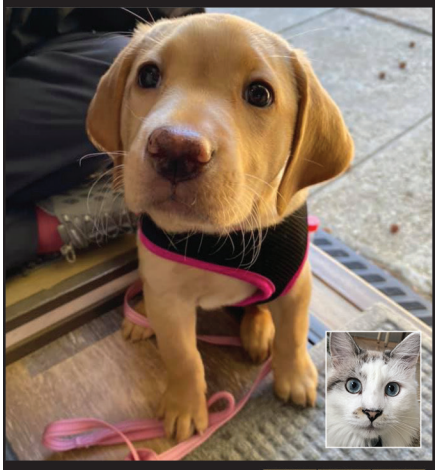
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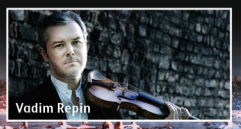
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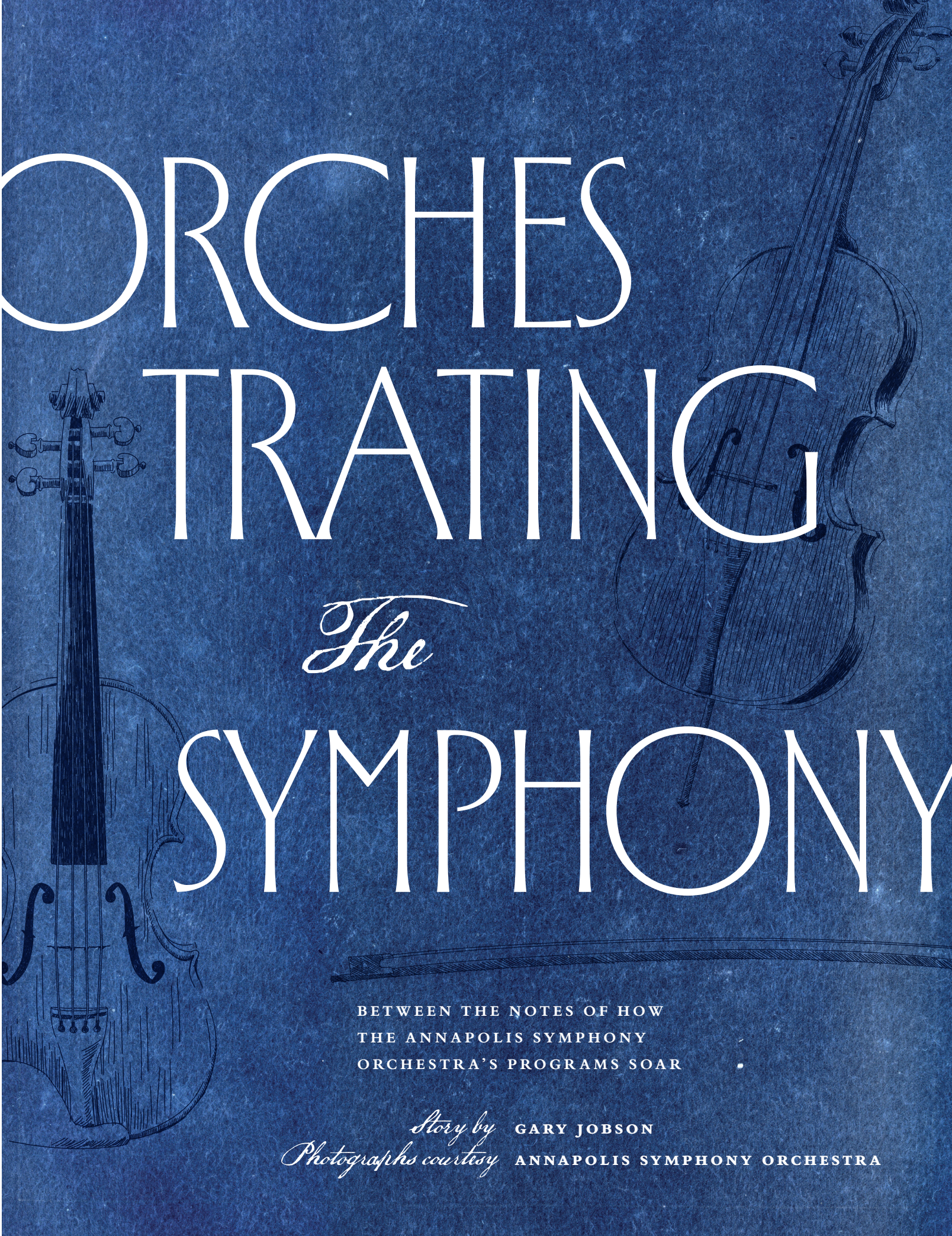
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ORCHESTRATING *The* SYMPHONY

BETWEEN THE NOTES OF HOW
THE ANNAPOLIS SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA'S PROGRAMS SOAR

Story by GARY JOBSON
Photographs courtesy ANNAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The scene at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts suddenly gets quiet. The first violinist has played a musical note, and the full orchestra responds with a single note. The musicians are ready. The audience is sitting in anticipation. After several seconds the door to the stage opens and the conductor, Jose-Luis Novo walks out at a fast clip. The audience applauds. Maestro Novo takes a deep bow, smiles, and turns toward the orchestra. He waits for silence, raises his hands, and his classic music selection begins. I look around the hall and notice a slight smile on everyone's face. Listening to classic music is one of the joys of life, which the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra (ASO) superbly provides.

To get to this point, Maestro Novo carefully selected each member of the orchestra following a rigorous audition. The theme for the 2026–2027 season of the ASO is titled "In Nature's Realm." This is the 65th season of the ASO and the popular conductor is beginning his 22nd year at the helm. We spoke in early July about the upcoming Signature Series, and I can report the Maestro was enthusiastic about his repertoire. The names of the nightly concerts include inspiring titles: "Echoes of the Earth," "Forces of Nature," and "Myths & Mountains." When asked about his process for selecting the works he starts with a pragmatic approach. "The programming process needs to fit in with many parameters," he explains. "We work with the budget that is available. We consider what the audience wants to hear, and we add some experimental things. We try to create a theme for the whole season."

The Executive Director of the ASO is Erica Bondarev Rapach who played violin in college and spent two years with the Volgograd Academic Symphony Orchestra in Russia after graduating from Illinois Wesleyan University. She works closely with Maestro Novo and appreciates his mythology. "Jose-Luis is the visionary behind what pieces are played," she says. "He is very thoughtful about the pieces he puts on for each concert. He thinks about the journey is he's going to take his audience members on." Erica explained a surprising practice of Novo's, "He will ask special guests and soloists what they would like to play and then builds his program around that."

Maestro Novo explains his thinking about asking special guests for their preferences, "We are getting the best out of the soloist," he says. "They play better with something that works for them."

Rapach gives high credit to the very first chair of the ASO Board, Anna Greenberg, and the first executive director, Patricia Edwards. "We have to thank them for taking the orchestra from an ensemble that was more about getting folks together and loving music to a bona-fide professional 501c3 organization."



ANNAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



ANNAPOLIS SYMPHONY ACADEMY

Many years ago, I became intrigued by classic music while watching Leonard Bernstein's "Young People's Concerts" live broadcasts from Lincoln Center in New York City. Bernstein made the music interesting to me, as did the Beatles and many other popular bands of the era. Erica confirms the value of my early introduction to classical music. "There is research that shows most people became interested during childhood and became patrons later in life. Getting young kids exposed to music and giving them opportunities and access to music at a young age is important." She continues, "We have an academy that we started nine years ago. About half our students are on a need basis scholarship so money is not a barrier to participation." Maestro Novo is enthusiastic about the youth program. "We prepare two concerts every year—one at the end of the winter semester and one at the end of the spring semester. We have a side-by-side concert, so they get to play with the professional musicians. It provides a very strong connection with our own community in Annapolis and the surrounding area."



ERICA BONDAREV RAPACH



NETANEL DRAIBLATE

"Getting young kids exposed to music and giving them opportunities and access to music at a young age is important."

The founder and director of the Annapolis Symphony Academy is violinist, Netanel Draiblate. He is a versatile and passionate musician and serves as the ASO concertmaster. This means he is the first violin and tunes the orchestra before the conductor walks onto the stage. Draiblate is the liaison between the members of the orchestra and the conductor.

Maestro Novo is originally from Spain. He came to the United States in 1988 as a Fulbright Scholar and earned a master 's degree of Music and a master's degree of Musical Arts from Yale University. After each concert the conductor and leadership hold a debriefing session to discuss what went well and what could be improved. The team works with the marketing group to learn what attracts an audience to buy tickets.



"The moment the concert starts I am perceiving how things are going and where do I want to push. Like a [sports] coach I am inspiring the team to do their best."

Going back to the moment when the Maestro walks on stage, I asked him if he gets nervous. "I'm not nervous, I'm thinking about the music. I like to get a sense of the audience and what they are feeling. I'm perceiving, taking the temperature of the audience and the orchestra at the same time. The moment the concert starts I am perceiving how things are going and where do I want to push. Like a [sports] coach I am inspiring the team to do their best." Connecting with the listener is a fundamental part of the performance.

Managing a symphony orchestra, providing a suitable venue, commissioning solo artists and special guests is an expensive endeavor. Rapach explains the challenge of funding an orchestra. "Our ticket revenue is never going to be enough to cover the cost of musicians, renting the hall, paying the staff, and marketing. So, contributed income is our lifeblood."

Maryland Hall was once the auditorium for Annapolis High School. The school was built in 1932 and moved to its current location on Riva Road in 1979. That same year Maryland Hall was created at the original high school location. The auditorium has received important renovations that include comfortable seating and excellent acoustics for the orchestra. Compared to a cavernous Broadway theater where the seats are squeezed in tightly, Maryland Hall allows enough room to breathe and, more importantly, listen to the music.

For the best experience, I find it helpful to listen to the music of the program before attending the concert. The sound of an orchestra brings the music alive in a way a stereo never can. When you are somewhat familiar with the cadence of the music it is more enjoyable. I also like to read about the composer and understand the time frame that the music was written. I subscribe to satellite radio, which includes channels specifically for classical music. When driving gets stressful, a dose of classical music makes the ills of traffic fade away.

Maestro Novo says, "I often talk from the podium to explain to the audience why we have chosen a piece of music; it is not by chance." Novo was inspired by Bernstein, "He was the best. He knew how to talk to people about music, and you could tell that his passion for music was palpable and he was eloquent. It is relatively easy to share that with other people, and that's the best we can do as professional musicians."



JOSE LUIS NOVO

Gary Jobson is a world-class sailor, television commentator, author, philanthropist, longtime resident of Annapolis, and pre-eminent ambassador for sailing of the United States.

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106 FARMHOUSE CHARM



Photography by Peake Visuals

Everyday Reasons to Stay

By Lisa J. Gotto

To stay and make improvements or to pull up stakes and start over? This common conundrum faced by many homeowners at one time or another, is at the heart of this month's home feature upgrade.

He wanted to stay. Their waterfront location was ideal. She wanted to go. Their kids were grown and were leaving the nest. Plus, she had already been working around their home's design snafus for years and could not imagine how any amount of remodeling could change an uninspiring and downright counterproductive floorplan into something that really worked for them.

THE PROJECT: A traditional, circa 2000 colonial that the couple purchased knowing it would require a decent amount of work. From its woefully average primary bath to its dysfunctional kitchen layout, to an awkward main level retrofitting project, the home would require a modern remodeling miracle to keep the owners at the same address.

THE PLACE: An idyllic waterfront location in Stevensville where a trip out to the Bay was mere minutes by boat. A setting so beautiful, the homeowners went for a number of years in the home with a just a few tweaks while they were busy working and raising their three kids.

EXECUTING THE PLAN: The homeowners chose Taylor Hart Design, an Annapolis-based custom interiors and home renovation firm to transform an, in essence, builder-grade house that had already undergone some less-than-advantageous previous owner upgrades into something better suited to their current lifestyle.

Photography by Peake Visuals



WHERE TO START?

While the entire home needed a solid redressing, Laurie Hart, Founder and Principal of Taylor Hart Design, says there was one thing the homeowner insisted be resolved sooner rather than later: Their primary bedroom and *en suite* bath.

The re- imagining of this space would comprise the first phase of renovations…and that re-imagining would be substantial, to elevate what initially was very basic design right down to its one-piece glass shower surround. The room was also dark, and the commode actually had too much pride of place in the room, which resulted in a complete do-over attitude on part of the homeowners. Their wish list included more natural light, a view out to the water if possible, and a more thoughtful approach to the vibe, which, in the homeowner's opinion, should be more holistic and relaxing.













The new version of this room has become more of an oasis for the homeowners with its opulent, free-standing soaking tub, luxurious Herringbone porcelain tile from Compass Tile, a gorgeous walk-in shower with a view to the water, and a fresh approach to the overall aesthetic by employing an arched doorframe to the shower entry, providing elevation that the space required. Luxe details such as an over-the-tub Talia glass bubble chandelier from Visual Comfort and a touch of color courtesy of a light blue Raphael style wallpaper by Sandberg results in the type of *en suite* experience the couple had wanted all along.

"IT'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING LIKE IT WAS BEFORE AND THEY GOT SO MUCH MORE IN THE SAME SPACE."

"We basically just reconfigured the entire layout," Hart explains. "It's absolutely nothing like it was before and they got so much more in the same space."

POINT OF ENTRY

As Hart describes it, this home's first impression was a lackluster one. "When you walked in the house, it was just walls with all these bank doors," says Hart of the vintage doors the previous owner had retrofitted and installed on the main level.

"That's all you saw. They had closed all the walls up. The living room and dining room walls were closed in with these bank doors, so you couldn't see into them. Everything was painted a yellow color. So, we took all those walls back to actually the way it was originally built."

While the homeowner described the main level as "livable" prior to its renaissance, the frustration Hart sensed coming from her told a different story.

"She hated the doors. They're really dark and heavy," says Hart, who recalls her client lamenting that she just wanted to see something beautiful when she walked down her staircase into the foyer, but that hadn't been happening.





"The foyer was really important to her and then their kitchen, the way it was [originally] designed, they had so many windows in the kitchen—the previous owners, they just had windows everywhere," Hart adds.

Knowing how traditional her clients were, Hart says her on-staff interiors expert, Deanna Gurri, leaned into a classic "black and tan" color story to pull the look of the main level together, which included a formal living room, family room, and a kitchen with an inspiring waterfront morning room.

The resulting renovation took the foreboding entry to a place of refinement and good taste. The opening of the walls, swapping out old-school staircase spindles for modern, black iron spindles, the addition of subtle hints of trim, and the laying of a sandy-colored hardwood floor throughout most of the main level, allows the eye to flow seamlessly from the entry and into its adjacent rooms.





HERE TO STAY

The kitchen, before it was addressed, was also a frustrating space for the homeowners. Too many windows in this room along one wall limited the amount of functional storage space it could provide. A smaller center island with a built-in sink and dishwasher feature became a focal point for family clutter, and the original mudroom was less than the epitome of functionality.

All that would change. Taking a page from the primary bath's playbook, Hart replaced a series of windows along one wall with one, large arched style window, which now perfectly frames a cherished gazebo outside on the grounds. Custom cabinetry was added on either side and the counter below it would now provide a home for a sink and dishwasher, allowing a new larger island to take its place in the center of the room. A continuing scheme of black, tan, and white keeps the look crisp and continuous throughout. And a thoughtful re-envisioning of the kitchen's square footage, allowed a mudroom upgrade to include coveted office space with a view for her, and a walk-in pantry was added to the floorplan, making clutter a mere pre-reno memory.

Finishing touches abound in these spaces including their dining room where their heirloom table now has the rarified surroundings to complement its vintage, including the stunning Regina Andrew Echo chandelier. And off the kitchen in the morning room, a special space was created for the couple where they could reflect and just appreciate the journey to create the home they ultimately wanted.

"We wanted to give them a place to sit and have coffee and eat, or if they didn't want to have to go sit at the island, or go into the dining room," explains Hart of the modern café table by Dovetail Furniture.

"So, we put a little bistro table with chairs in [the morning room]. And that was like a huge thing for them because now they sit in there every day together, which is a huge change from the way they were living before."




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The Art of Fine and Fun Furniture Statements

By Lisa J. Gotto

The concept of the **statement piece** has been a long-standing approach employed by interiors professionals and homeowners that helps define a room's personality by drawing attention to it. Generally, characteristics of its scale, shape, color, craftsmanship, materials, or historical significance are what help set the piece of furniture apart.

What does change with the times is the attitude given to these pieces *vis-à-vis* the culture and contemporary trends. Right now, we're loving these seven examples of statement furniture pieces on the rise!



Image courtesy of jonathanadler.com

Sculptural Curved Sofa

This incredible sofa by Jonathan Adler gets high marks as a statement piece because of its flowing silhouette, its ability to be a visual anchor, its reflection of the trend toward organic, soft-edged interiors, and the movement and visual interest it will create even if placed in a neutral color scheme.



Image coutesy of CB2.com

OVERSIZED BURLWOOD DINING TABLE

You can identify this burlwood dining table from CB2 as a statement-maker because it features dramatic wood grain patterns that are naturally unique. Pieces like this command attention by combining a sense of natural luxury with contemporary design. It also scores points in the function category because it all at once serves as furniture and artwork.



Image courtesy of worldmarket.com

HANDCRAFTED CREDENZA OR SIDEBOARD

Displays of exceptional craftsmanship and unique detailing sets these pieces apart and provide pleasing focal points in dining rooms, entryways, or great rooms. Handcrafted furnishings also always align with the growing preference for investment pieces over disposable furnishings.

Artistic Accent Chair

This upholstered Judarn chair from Anthropologie works as a statement piece for several reasons: It acts as a functional sculpture, it offers a contrast against your more conventional furniture pieces, it's a great way to introduce texture, pattern, or color, and it's a workhorse fitting in well into a living room, bedroom, or reading nook scheme.



Image courtesy of anthropologie.tif



Image courtesy of wayfair.com.

A VINTAGE-INSPIRED CABINET IN A BOLD COLOR

The saturated color of this statement piece will provide contrast to any of its surrounding furnishings by adding personality and a collected-over-time feel. This distressed hand-painted mango wood vintage reproduction cabinet from Wayfair provides a focal point while providing an attractive storage option and by introducing a jewel-box effect to your room.



Image courtesy of maisonreves.co

A STONE OR TRAVERTINE COFFEE TABLE

This little stunner plays on its substantial visual weight and rich natural texture and veining to make its statement. The La Cantera Organic Travertine Coffee Table by Richmond Interiors works because it creates contrast from furnishings with softer upholstery and reflects the ongoing popularity of natural materials.

A MONUMENTAL FOUR-POSTER BED

Nothing lends an architectural presence to a bedroom better than a four-poster bed. This example from Classic Furniture may appear simple in form, but it becomes the defining feature in the space by creating a room-within-a-room feeling and by adding visual sense of height and drama.



Image courtesy of classicfurniture.com.

More than establishing a mood, expressing personality, and becoming a visual focal point, around which a room is designed, a well-intentioned statement piece can beautifully blur the line between mere furnishings and art.

Your Garden's Soil May Need a Spa Day

By Janice F. Booth



"The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all…the healer and restorer…"

OBSERVES WENDELL BERRY, AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALIST AND POET.

As autumn arrives, we look to our gardens and consider what we may need to do to prepare for spring's glory. And it is the earth, the soil in which our plants grow, that can benefit from our attention now.

I'D LIKE TO REVIEW HOW WE CAN IMPROVE THE SOIL WE RELY ON:

- The characteristics and types of soil
- The benefits of soil conditioning
- Soil testing: types of tests
- Treatment options for our tired soil
- Revisiting the fallen leaves option

We need not be master gardeners or horticulturists to look after the health of the soil we rely on in our gardens. We dig in it, plant in it, and enjoy the bounty of it.

Soil is made up of minerals, organic matter, and micro-organisms: Mineral content can be sand, silt, or clay in differing ratios (seldom is earth completely one type of mineral But your garden's earth may have one type predominating). The organic matter may include decomposing plants and animals, which eventually break down completely becoming humus. Micro-organisms are the earthworms, bacteria, and fungi that help loosen soil and maintain aeration

Keeping track of our soil's health includes: Testing the soil make-up regularly. Adding organic matter regularly. Deep but infrequent watering to encourage strong root-systems

Signs of problems in your soil: Yellow leaves. Poor or slow growth. Root balls that are too small and/or too frail (as you dig among your plants you can see the condition of their roots. You're looking "under the hood"

My experience has been that our garden's soil almost always can use some attention. Consider the benefits of conditioning: Encourage roots and plant growth by aerating, improving drainage, and increasing moisture retention. Plants need nutrients too, and we can improve the availability of nutrients. Balancing the pH levels in the earth keeps the root systems happy

NOW, PERHAPS YOU'RE WONDERING HOW TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOUR SOIL IS LACKING. YOU MAY WANT TO MAKE TESTING PART OF YOUR SEASONAL "TO-DO" LIST. HERE ARE THE BASIC TYPES OF SOIL TESTS:

Nutrient: measuring oxygen, phosphorous, potassium, and magnesium sulfur. **pH:** measures acidity and alkaline levels. **Texture**: the "Squeeze Test," identifies sandy, silt, or clay soil. **DIY Kit:** purchased at your favorite garden center. **Professional Testing:** done by your county agriculture extension office

There are four basic types of conditioners we can use to improve the soil in our gardens:

Compost: rich, organic material (I'm coming back to this later, specifically using fallen leaves). **Peat Moss:** great for water absorption and retention. Since peat moss is slightly acidic, it's useful for lowering alkaline soil pH. **Gypsum:** inorganic material that reduces compaction and neutralizes soil acidity. This is particularly helpful for soil that is predominantly clay. **Lyme:** raises the pH level and adds nutrients to the soil

We're all familiar with those simple methods for conditioning our soil. But let me just review:

Add **Sulphur** to improve the pH level to an optimum level of 6.0–7.0 for most gardens. Apply **Mulch** to a depth of 2–4 inches if you're trying to improve water retention and provide organic matter. **Aerate** the soil by poking holes with a garden fork or roller-tool designed for the purpose of aeration. Add **bone meal**, **blood meal**, and/or **fish emulsion** if organic matter is needed. Choose a **commercial product** and carefully follow the application directions to avoid damaging the plants or root systems





Finally, let me make my case for *fallen leaves* as organic mulch. Don't rake those leaves into bags or bins! Add to the leaves your veggie scraps and grass clippings, and you'll have a super mulch. Rake that onto your flower beds and under your trees. Your garden will thank you! (and so will she or he who is responsible for raking.)

The usefulness of crumbled, rotting leaves are numerous:

- They'll serve as a warm coverlet over your tender roots during the cold, winter months
- The leaves will retain moisture, and aid against parched, cold weather
- The piles of leaves are wildlife friendly. Worms, bugs, and other garden critters will be delighted to burrow down into the leaf-mulch as protection from the cold
- Avoids the wasteful bags and bins of leaves collected, adding to our gardens' sustainability

Hang up that rake! If you have a mulching-mower, fire it up! (Mulching the fallen leaves will help them decompose quickly and make it easier for you to evenly distribute the chopped-up leaves.)

Now, sit back and watch the brilliant display of oak and maple leaves as they fall. You'll put them to good use with a few easy hours of mulching or raking them onto your flower beds and under the trees.

The soil you work to strengthen now will awake in the spring ready to feed your plants and their roots…and dazzle you!

The Charm of a Foursquare Character Home

By Lisa J. Gotto

A picture-perfect, classic four-square, craftsman-style home proves investing in Annapolis real estate remains a sound practice, coming in at $175,000 over ask. This impeccable and impressive residence located in the desirable Homewood section of Annapolis provides 2,800 square-feet of living space and the charm of a character home.

Squeaky clean curb appeal and a welcoming front porch with picket fence appeal makes a solid first impression. Many of this residence's fine original details remain and were augmented with a thoughtfully designed addition conceived for modern-day living.



Primary Structure Built: 1936

Sold For: $1,400,000

Original List Price: $1,225,000

Bedrooms: 4

Baths: 3 Full, 1 Half

Living Space: 2,844 Sq. Ft.

Lot Size: .16 acres







Knotty white oak floors grace the entry and mostly all of the home's main level. A gorgeous architectural staircase leads the eye forward as does the handsome wood trim gracing the entry to the home's formal living room to the right. This room is highlighted with the structure's original brick fireplace, bright, sunny windows, and entry into the home's sleek, modern kitchen.

This room is punctuated with a luxe waterfall island flowing down the center of the space. Hardware-less, all-white custom cabinetry and gleaming white Caesarstone quartz work surfaces abound. A stunning modern hood range of complementary white oak planks rivals the island for attention. The gourmet of the house will love this room's Miele oven, Wolf gas cooktop, and porcelain tile backsplash.











An arched entryway conveys traffic to the sunny, open dining room, and then into a charming and bright family room with sleek sliding doors to the patio, and an amazing central, stacked stone fireplace console with built-in craftsman-style cabinetry.

All of the home's four bedrooms are located on its two upper levels, which includes a dormered attic level with window bench seat. The primary suite is modern and minimalist with clean lines and a sparkling en suite bath with dual vanities and a large, glass walk-in shower.

The home's lower level offers a generous finished flex space and outdoors there's plenty of room for entertaining on the gorgeous Ipe deck with stainless cable railing and convenient in-deck hot tub.

Listing Agent: Liz Dooner, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, 3 Church Circle, Annapolis, m. 410-725-8973, o. 410-263-8686, ldooner@cbmove.com, cbmove.com **Buyers' Agent:** Joy Bray, TTR | Sotheby's International Realty, 209 Main St., Annapolis, m. 410-936-8904, o. 410-280-5600, jbray@ttrsir.com, sothebysrealty.com



Turn-key Farmhouse Charm

By Lisa J. Gotto

Primary Structure Built: 2021

Sold For: $3,950,000

Original List Price: $3,950,000

Bedrooms: 2

Baths: 3

Living Space: 3,602 Sq. Ft.

Lot Size: .66 acres



It took just four days on the market for this like brand-new classic, modern farmhouse residence to move from a "for sale" to a "sold!" listing.

Perfectly located and well situated on its lot perched above Harness Creek, this 3,600-square-foot home offers remarkable water views and comes with the convenience of a turn-key move. "The value of this property really revolved around the Harness Creek address and the incomparable views of Quiet Waters Park," says Listing Agent Reid Buckley.

"With a coveted boathouse, this home met exacting LEED Platinum standards while retaining a clean, coastal vibe. The minute you walk inside, you can feel the stress melt away. One of my favorite features is sitting under a blanket on the screened porch in the winter with a blazing fire and friendly conversation."

Photography by Chesapeake Home Images

A gorgeous stone accent wall greets visitors to the covered front entry as a double glass-paneled door provides straight ahead views to the waterfront. Once inside, the space opens and flows along handsome blonde hardwood floors complemented by crisp white walls with accents of black trim throughout.

The great room features a series of floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the creek like a work of art. The adjoining modern kitchen offers everything the contemporary chef could want, plus the ability to easily connect with guests while cooking and entertaining. Sleek, black custom cabinetry pulls the whole space together, along with its



CONTINUED ▶



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central island that offers additional prep space, an apron sink, and breakfast bar seating for four. The floorplan also provides for an adjacent catering kitchen/pantry to help keep the clutter and noise under control.

Gleaming stainless-steel appliances, white stone countertops, and an attractive hardware and finishings package layer the icing on this cake of this room. Nearby, guests can dine on the waterfront in the spacious dining area.

A covered porch off the great room features handsome in-laid wood ceiling detail and great views of the backyard extending to the water. Also outside, this home features an amazing three-season screened in porch with a gorgeous floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace wall.





The main level of this home offers a flex room that can be used an office or another bedroom. The primary suite is located on the upper level and is a complete waterfront retreat with floor-to-ceiling glass doors that lead out to the upper deck. This room also features a fireplace and spa-like primary bathroom with a soaking tub, a large, glass panel shower, and a pair of his and hers vanities topped with luxe white stone.

This floor of the home offers another flex space that can be used as an office or TV room, and a large second bedroom suite overlooking the creek.



Listing Agent: Reid Buckley, Long & Foster Real Estate, 320 6th St., Annapolis, m. 410-279-1843, o. 410-266-6880, reid@waterfronthomes.org, waterfronthomes.org **Buyers' Agent:** Colleen Smith, EXP Realty, 222 Severn Ave., Annapolis, o. 443-995-2409, colleensmithrealtor.com, cmsrealtymd@gmail.com

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Health & Beauty

110 INCONSPICUOUSLY COSMETIC

111 IS IT REALLY HEALTHY?

114 HEART HEALTH'S EVOLVING UNDERSTANDING





Inconspicuously Cosmetic

By Dylan Roche

"You look great. Have you been getting extra sleep? Did you go on a long vacation?"

That's the kind of greeting most people want to get. Nobody (or at least, very few people) want to be asked, 'What work did you get done?"

When cosmetic procedures look too dramatic, it can be distracting. In a worst-case scenario, you might even worry you don't look like yourself anymore. That's why lately a big trend in aesthetic medicine is to move away from these dramatic transformations and focus instead on less detectable changes. You don't want to look like a different person—you just want to look healthy and vibrant.

IF THAT SOUNDS APPEALING, CONSIDER THESE FIVE NON-INVASIVE, LESS CONSPICUOUS COSMETIC OPERATIONS:

1. Microdose Botox. Also known as "baby Botox," this procedure is exactly what it sounds like—it's a smaller amount of Botox. You get less of the botulinum toxin injected in your face, so it still reduces creases and lines without freezing your facial movements.

2. Conservative dermal fillers. You don't need to go heavy on the dermal fillers to get volume back in your cheeks, temples, and under eyes. Conservative dermal fillers are sparer compared to the traditional filler treatment, so you can still offset age-related volume loss in your face without getting that "full" look.

3. Injectable hyaluronic acid hydrators. You can improve skin hydration and texture without adding too much unnecessary volume by injecting these skin boosters. They'll enhance your skin quality, so you look more refreshed without changing your facial shape.

4. Intense pulsed light therapy (IPL). Treating your skin with IPL will target redness, broken capillaries, and brown spots to remove discoloration and create a more vibrant complexion people will perceive as healthier, all without any other change to your appearance.

5. Microneedling. These ultra-small needles go into the skin to create micro-injuries, which stimulates collagen production to repair them. After doing this a little bit over the course of months, you'll start to slowly but surely see improved skin texture and reduced lines. It's gradual, so there's no obvious overnight change that will take your friends and family by surprise the next time they see you.

Bonus: Medical-grade skincare programs. Maybe you don't even need a procedure at all. Prescription-strength retinoids, antioxidants, and pigment-correcting products dramatically improve your complexion and skin texture for a natural-looking anti-aging appearance.

When Less Is More. Sometimes you might be tempted to make a more dramatic transformation—if that's the case, talk it over with your doctor or surgeon. But some reasons you might find doing less is more effective: **These treatments preserve movement:** You don't get the overtreated look associated with older cosmetic trends. **You can make changes gradually:** Small changes over time are less likely to be noticed immediately. **It's easier to slow down that reverse:** Subtle improvements over time give you a chance to be more considerate about the changes you're making



Is It Really Healthy?

By Dylan Roche

We've all heard the hype: Some of your favorite indulgences, long considered to be unhealthy, actually have some small benefits to them, such as disease-fighting antioxidants. Not so fast though—the cons can still outweigh the pros. Consider this breakdown of chocolate, wine, and coffee ▼

Chocolate. Pros: Cocoa—as in the seeds that are dried and ground to make chocolate—is rich in flavanols, which are good for blood pressure and blood vessel function. It's also a source of magnesium, iron, and copper. **Cons:** Cocoa is an ingredient in chocolate, but so is lots of sugar. The average milk chocolate bar often contains less than 30 percent cocoa, so there's a marginal amount of cocoa compared to the less nutritious ingredients. **The least you should know:** If you enjoy very dark chocolate (made with 70 percent cocoa or more) in modest proportions, there's a nutritional upside. But don't consider the average Hershey bar to be a health food.

Wine. Pros: Studies have shown that red wine contains polyphenols from the grapes it's made with. This antioxidant protects the body from cellular damage and lowers risk of disease. **Cons**: Alcohol consumption increases risk of disease, including cancer, liver disease, and hypertension. It also increases risk of accidents, disrupts sleep, and contributes to weight gain. **The least you should know:** Even when consumed moderately, alcohol doesn't offer real health benefits—and no amount of alcohol is completely risk-free. Simply eating unprocessed grapes would be a better source of polyphenols.

Coffee. Pros: Coffee is a source of antioxidants and consistently associated with lower risk of disease, including type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and liver disease. **Cons:** Too much caffeine leads to anxiety, insomnia, palpitations, and digestive upset. Many sweeteners and flavorings added to coffee drinks can be a source of empty calories. **The least you should know:** As long as you're watching your overall caffeine consumption and sticking to black or lightly sweetened coffee, its benefits are worthwhile.

BUT THERE'S GOOD NEWS...

Potatoes: The low-carb craze villainized potatoes because they're high in starch, which converts to glucose and spikes blood sugar. But complex carbohydrates like those in potatoes are the body's preferred source of energy. Potatoes are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and even a moderate amount of protein. Just be smart about preparation methods—opt for potatoes that are baked or roasted rather than deep-fried or slathered in rich toppings.

Eggs: You might be wary because they're high in cholesterol (they are!), but they're also rich in protein, as well as vitamins D, A, B, and E. Although the American Heart Association once suggested limiting your egg consumption to no more than three per week, guidance now says heart-healthy adults can have an egg a day.

Cheese: While cheese is high in saturated fat, it's also a good source of protein and calcium. Softer cheeses, such as mozzarella and ricotta, tend to be lower in fat and calories than their harder counterparts. Some research has even shown that moderate consumption of cheese (1.5 ounces per day) lowers risk of heart disease and boosts brain health.

Peanut butter: Peanut butter is high in fat, but it's the unsaturated fat that improves heart health. While its fat content makes it calorically dense, it's still a good source of protein, fiber, and vitamin E. Choose natural peanut butter, which is made without sugar and hydrogenated oils.

The Importance of Playing

By Dylan Roche

When it comes to a child's health, you could probably rattle off a list of the most common concerns: nutritious food, regular physical activity, a consistent sleep schedule, and socio-emotional support. When it comes to their academic success, you might be thinking about their ability to read or their understanding of multiplication.

Then there's recess. It's a common part of a child's day. Now the American Academy of Pediatrics is saying it might be more important than a lot of people realize. The association recently released a policy statement titled *The Crucial Role of Recess in School*, the first update to its position since 2013, and made its stance clear: Recess isn't frivolous "extra" time. The opportunity for unstructured play is a crucial part of development—improving a child's physical, social, and cognitive health. Here's why:



1. THEY LEARN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Playtime's physical benefits are obvious—when a kid has the chance to run around on the playground with their friends, they're getting the kind of movement they need for strong growing bodies. This is especially important in an era of TVs and tablets, when children are more likely to be sedentary, even during non-school hours at home. What might be less obvious to us are the ways play can benefit the social and emotional health of children. The AAP explains that playtime with their peers is when children learn how to communicate with one another and form relationships. They learn not only self-regulation of their emotions but also conflict resolution when they have any kind of problem or disagreement (big or small) with their friends.

2. IT IMPROVES THEIR EDUCATION

In addition to physical and social health, play is good for cognitive health. Recess is a crucial part of the school day because it gives children a break from structured educational activity—and breaks are necessary if children are going to be good students. A break in the day improves their focus and manages their energy so they behave better during structured times.

3. IT'S NOT THE SAME AS GYM CLASS

Because playtime is a part of the day when children run around and engage in physical activity, it's easy to think it's like physical education—both are focused on exercise and movement. But the AAP emphasizes that recess is different from phys ed. In class, children are receiving instruction and structured activities to understand motor skills and fitness. They might enjoy the games or activities they're doing, but

it's not the same as unstructured, self-directed play, which is different from play that's organized and directed by adults. When children's play is unstructured, they gain a sense of autonomy, and they learn to cooperate and solve problems among themselves.

That's not to say recess or playtime should be entirely unsupervised—having a responsible adult supervising and ready to intervene is what ensures playtime remains safe and healthy for all involved.

This is especially true when it comes to being inclusive, because adults can encourage children to make accommodations for their peers with physical, medical, behavioral, or special needs. Learning to be inclusive is another key component of a child's social-emotional health.

4. TIME MATTERS

One of the parameters the AAP recommends for recess is that it's a sufficient amount of time. Children should have *at least* 20 minutes of cumulative unstructured playtime throughout the day, but ideally, children should have a short 15- to 20-minute break after 45 minutes to an hour of instruction. Too much instruction time without recess can cause a kid to suffer cognitive fatigue; it's easier to prevent this fatigue with frequent breaks than it is to recover from it after children have already reached that point.

One of these recess periods throughout the day should come before (not after) lunch. When recess is scheduled after lunch, excited children could be inclined to rush through eating or throw their lunch away without finishing it. Recess *before* lunch gives children the full opportunity to enjoy this time of day without risking nutritional deficiency.

5. RECESS SHOULDN'T BE WITHHELD

Taking away a child's recess time because they misbehaved or because they need to make up missed classwork seems like a harmless or even reasonable practice, but the AAP says you shouldn't do this. Given the importance of playtime, taking it away for disciplinary or academic reasons is counterproductive. In fact, a child who is struggling behaviorally or academically needs playtime the most!

6. SOME DEGREE OF RISK ISN'T ALWAYS BAD

Playtime should always be safe, but that doesn't mean it should be risk-free. Playing will always involve an appropriate level of risk—climbing, running fast, swinging, and rough-and-tumble play all carry some chance that a child could be hurt. By engaging in these activities, a child learns self-regulation and risk assessment. In other words, it's not good for children to be helicoptered by adults. Adult supervision should be appropriately hands-off and ready to intervene only if there's a serious risk to safety or well-being.

7. PLAYTIME IS FOR EVERY CHILD

Despite the benefits of play, the AAP acknowledges that under-resourced schools and students from marginalized groups might not have the same opportunities. For example, an under-resourced school might not be able to offer the same kind of playground equipment, or a marginalized student is more likely to face disproportionate disciplinary actions that keep them off the playground. Therefore, the AAP calls for policies that make sure access to playtime is equitable and inclusive.

How About for Adults? Sure, playtime is great for kids—but how about adults? Yes, planning some time into your schedule for unstructured play is good for you no matter how old you are. So, if you're tired of adulting and wishing you could bring the joy of recess back into your life as a grown-up, consider these benefits: Having fun reduces your stress levels and promotes positive emotions. This could be as simple as playing a board game or doing a puzzle, but you could also engage your dog in fetch or sign up for a recreational sports league. Playing with your adult peers fosters the same sense of cooperation, trust, and communication that it fosters in children. Visit an escape room or attend trivia night with a group of people from work or your neighborhood so you all can work together toward a common goal in a low-stakes environment. Friends and/or romantic partners who engage in playful activities together often feel closer because they share positive experiences. It could be as simple as a bike ride or a hike.



Heart Health's Evolving Understanding

WHAT'S DIFFERENT? WHAT'S THE SAME?

By Dylan Roche

Heart disease isn't something that develops overnight—it develops over years through a combination of factors. Similarly, the medical community's understanding of heart disease itself continues to develop. Common wisdom from 20 years ago or even 10 years ago isn't as specific as what doctors recommend now. (And no, you're not necessarily bound to end up on cholesterol medication to manage your heart health.)

RISK FACTORS TO KNOW

In the past, medical understanding of cholesterol came down to how much LDL ("bad" fat) and HDL ("good" fat) you had in your bloodstream. Thanks to medical advances, there's more to consider if you want the full picture, explains Dr. John Martin, vascular surgeon with University of Maryland Medical Center.

Martin points to the understanding of **lipoprotein(a)**, a genetically determined particle largely independent of diet and lifestyle. Often referred to as Lp(a), it's now recognized as a causal risk factor for atherosclerotic disease and calcific aortic valve disease, affecting roughly 1.5 billion people worldwide. "Twenty years ago, almost nobody was tested for it; now it's increasingly part of standard risk assessment, and several RNA-based drugs designed specifically to lower it are in late-stage clinical trials," Martin says.

He also points to **inflammation** as a risk factor that's now understood to be more influential than once thought. Our bodies can suffer chronic inflammation—an immune response to injury or stress—because of obesity, diabetes, poor nutrition, or lack of exercise. "It's the inflammatory state that actually creates some of the damage to the lining of the vessel that obviously allows the entry of cholesterol into the wall of the vessel," Martin explains.

START EARLY

Your best prevention is early intervention. "Most people don't start thinking about their heart until, most likely, their 50s, 60s and 70s," Martin says. "The problem is cholesterol starts in your teens and 20s, particularly if you have genetic problems or family history."

If you're at risk, waiting until middle age can be too late. If you know you're susceptible when you're in your 20s, you can take preventative measures. "Newer risk calculators, along with tests such as lipoprotein(a) and coronary artery calcium (CAC) scans for some patients, help identify people who may appear healthy today but are quietly accumulating cardiovascular risk over time," Martin says.

UNDERSTANDING STATINS

You may have heard of statins, the prescription medications that prevent your liver from producing cholesterol. They can help people who can't bring their cholesterol into a normal range through lifestyle factors alone. But like GLP-1s for weight management, they aren't miracle workers—adopting healthy habits is most important. "Even promising medications for weight loss or cholesterol work best when paired with lasting lifestyle changes rather than replacing them," Martin says.



And on that note...

Lifestyle Is Most Important. Most of the tried-and-true healthy lifestyle habits you've heard before remain the foundation of heart disease prevention. These are practices, Martin emphasizes, we should all be observing regardless of whether you're susceptible and regardless of whether you're starting a statin: Focus on a Mediterranean-style eating pattern rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, olive oil, nuts, and fish. Limit ultraprocessed foods, added sugars, excess sodium, and saturated fats. Get regular physical activity. Maintain a healthy weight, avoid tobacco products, get seven to nine hours of sleep, manage stress, and limit alcohol

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Macaroons and coffee at Sweet Hearts Patisserie

Photographs courtesy Sweet Hearts Patisserie

Tasty Treats with a French Flair

By Lisa A. Lewis

Located in Clock Tower Place in Annapolis, Sweet Hearts Patisserie offers scratch-made baked goods in a warm, inviting atmosphere—beckoning customers to escape from their day-to-day routine and enjoy a decadent treat. The patisserie, which opened in 2012, expanded to double its original size in 2023 and has grown into a beloved staple in the community.

"We strive to create a lovely experience that transports you to a patisserie in Paris, where you can spoil yourself and indulge a bit, celebrate a special occasion, or buy a gift for a loved one," says Kristen D'Angelo-Rowell, owner/executive pastry chef, Sweet Hearts Patisserie. "And we're dedicated to the belief that treats should be as visually stunning as they are delicious."

To learn more, we spoke to D'Angelo-Rowell.





SWEET HEARTS PATISSERIE
1410 Forest Drive, Annapolis • 410-263-6513 • sweetheartspatisserie.com

What inspired you to open Sweet Hearts Patisserie? Food was central to my Italian-American upbringing in Staten Island. I developed a passion for France during a semester abroad in Aix-en-Provence and became enchanted by the local patisseries. After graduating from Hawaii Pacific University with a degree in travel industry management, I pursued a career in travel. But I found myself drawn to the kitchen, where I began experimenting with baking.

Tell us about your background in the bakery industry. I attended the Culinary Institute of America in St. Helena, California, where I studied pastry arts. I enhanced my skills by working in restaurant and bakery kitchens in New York and Northern Virginia before launching Sweet Hearts Patisserie as a farmers' market business that sold handcrafted petit fours and macarons. In 2012, I relocated to Annapolis and opened Sweet Hearts' flagship location.

Describe your wide selection of menu options. While we're best known for our French macarons and petit fours, we also specialize in cakes, with a menu of 15 flavors that range from basic buttercream to gourmet mousse cakes. We offer a large variety of breakfast pastries, including classic croissants, scones, coffee cakes, specialty croissants, and quiche. Our pastry case is filled with French pastries, such as éclairs, mousse entremets, tarts, and slices of cake, and we offer American classics like chocolate chip cookies, salted caramel brownies, and cupcakes.

Photographs courtesy Sweet Hearts Patisserie

Why is it important that your baked goods are made from scratch in the French tradition? I believe that you can really taste the difference when baked goods are made the traditional way with quality ingredients. When simple, classic recipes are executed well, you don't need to add a lot of sugar or artificial flavors or ingredients to make them excellent.

What are some of your top-selling items? Our best sellers are French macarons, almond croissants, petit fours, Amour Chocolat Cake, and brown butter toffee shortbread cookies.









Sweet Hearts offers macarons, petit fours, and cupcakes in year-round and seasonal flavors. What are your customers' favorite flavors? The classics always win. Salted caramel and creme brulee macarons are the top flavors, but passion fruit (seasonal) has a cult following. Favorite petit four flavors are triple chocolate and strawberry champagne. And our most popular cupcake is the Chocolate Silk, but some of the seasonal flavors, such as our peach cobbler and Ferrero Rocher, are also popular.

Tell us about your cakes and your wedding cake consultations. We offer gourmet flavors and fillings that make our cakes more of a dessert than just a cake. The Amour Chocolat Cake is filled with dark chocolate mousse, milk chocolate creme brulee, and port wine ganache. The Versailles Cake is almond cake, cognac ganache, salted caramel buttercream, and pecan praline. They are absolutely decadent.

Sweet Hearts also specializes in elegant and soft designs for custom cakes and weddings. We offer wedding cake packages and full desert table packages, which include cake tastings, delivery, and setup.

Describe the customer experience at Sweet Hearts. We want you to walk in our door and feel transported to another time and place as you listen to the soft French music playing in the background. Our staff is extremely kind and helpful, and we offer samples. You can dine in our beautiful space indoors or on our large patio. Or, if you take your treats to go, we offer beautiful packaging that makes any pastry gift-worthy.



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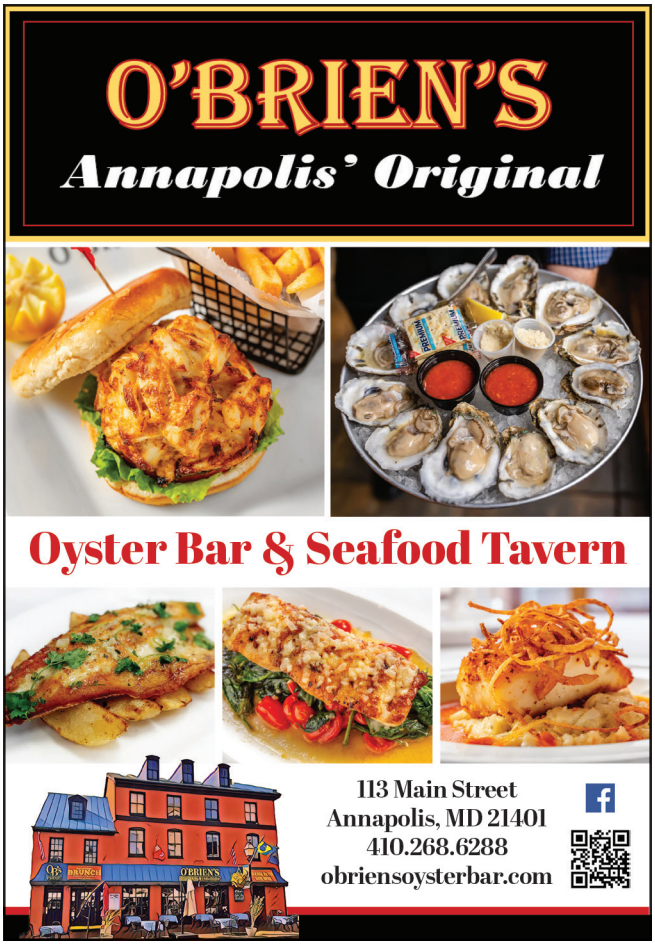
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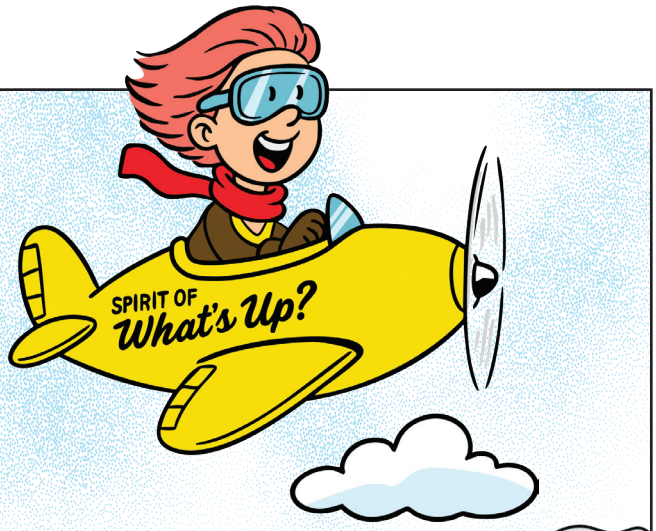
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FIND WILMA AND WIN!

It's a good thing that our flying mascot Wilma soars the skies by plane because street traffic will be extra busy this month as school buses return to the road. And Wilma needs to shop, dine, and visit all the wonderful business and towns throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. 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.

Congratulations to Sigrun O. of Annapolis, who won a $50 gift certificate to a local business.

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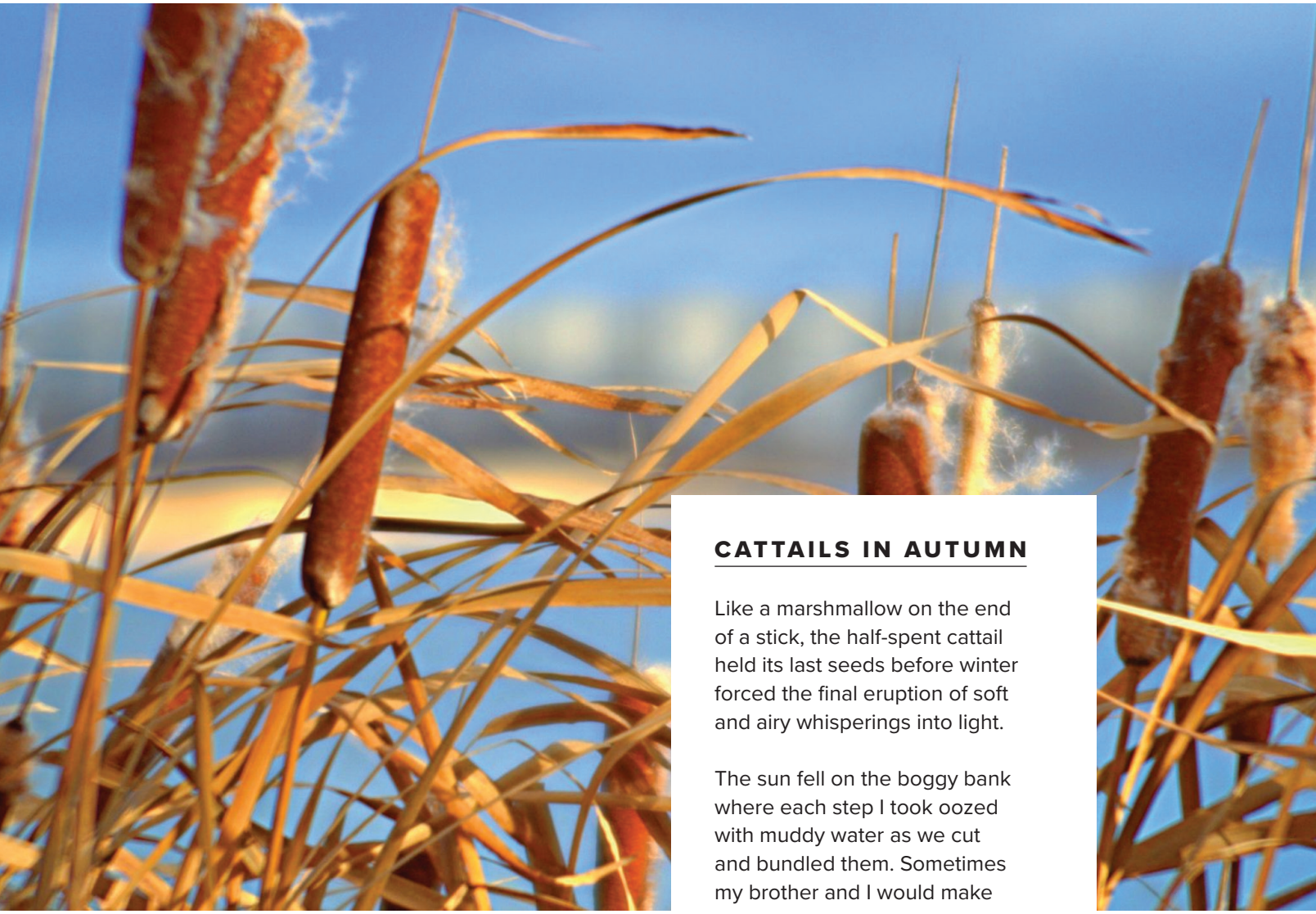
Yes, please! No, thanks

Entries must be received by September 30, 2026. Winner will receive a gift certificate to a local establishment and their name will appear in an upcoming issue of What's Up? Annapolis. **Mail entries to:** Where's Wilma? Annapolis, 900 Bestgate Road, Ste. 202, Annapolis, MD 21401 or fill out the form at **whatsupmag.com/promotions**.

Advertiser INDEX

IFC = Inside Front Cover
IBC = Inside Back Cover
BC = Back Cover

84 Lumber - Kitchen & Bath Design Studio 96
Ace Home Improvements LLC 96
Adoro Medical Spa 17
All Star Pain Management and Regenerative Medicine 68
Alternative Pet Care 49
Annapolis Area Christian School 52
Annapolis Hand Center 47
Annapolis Maritime Museum & Park 68
Annapolis Opera 53
Annapolis Painting Services 31
Annapolis Symphony Orchestra 80
Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. 78
Anne Arundel County Public Library 60
Anne Arundel Medical Center - Fish For A Cure 108
Archbishop Spalding High School 52
Bayview Builders ..... BC
BayWoods of Annapolis 48
Bittner Blacktop 49
Boatyard Bar & Grill 116
Brad Kappel Team, TTR Sotheby's International Realty 2
Burnett Injury Group 29
Cabinet Discounters 12
Capo Italian Deli 122
Carpaccio Tuscan Kitchen & Wine Bar 25
Carrol's Creek Cafe 116
Chesapeake Dental Arts 29
Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating 69
Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra in Annapolis 65
Ciminelli's Landscape Services, Inc 107
Compass Studio Tile & Flooring 49
David Orso 4
Della Notte 124
DeMatha Catholic High School 65
Djawdan Center for Implant and Restorative Dentistry 1
Fichtner Home Exteriors 86
Fishpaws Marketplace 27
Friends Of The Light House 26
Ginger Cove At Home 47
Harvest Thyme Modern Kitchen & Tavern 125
HF Advisory Group 18
Historic Annapolis, Inc./William Paca House 79
ICSI 126
Indian Creek School 61
Jalapenos 125
Key School 62
Koslow Law Firm 35
Lash Moi 39
Law Offices of Kendall B. Summers 8
Lewnes' Steakhouse 123
Lima Group Positano 124
Live Arts Maryland 48
Living Health Integrative Medicine, LLC 45
Long & Foster Baltimore Regional Center 6
Luminis Health AAMC 13
Lundberg Builders and 314 Design Studio 97
Mahon Outdoor Living 105
Mahon Plumbing 126
Main & Market 125
Maryland Paint & Decorating 32
Miss Shirley's Cafe 121
Mobile Pet Vet 80
Modera Wealth Management 39
Nancy Hammond Editions 80
O'Brien's Oyster Bar and Seafood Tavern 122
Olmo Brothers Construction & Landscaping 11
On The Green Inc 105
Osteria 177 116
Outdoor Room Store at Affordable Outdoor Kitchens 107
QWP Arts & Music Festival 48
Rockbridge Academy 22, 66
ROSM Regenerative Orthopedic Sports Medicine 30
Saint Andrews Day School 66
Saint John the Evangelist Catholic School 60
Sandel Duggal Center For Plastic Surgery ..... IFC
Scarborough Capital Management 33
School of the Incarnation 65
Scott Schuetter and Crew 19
Severn School 57
Shipley's Dental Care 15
Skin Wellness MD 10
Sparkle Squad 35
St. Martin's Lutheran School 66
St. Martin's In the Field Episcopal School 65
St. Mary's Parish and School 53
The Annapolis Boat Shows 25, 30
The Gunston School 54
The Jaklitsch Law Group 44
The Wellness House 115
Tri-State Marine 21
Tribe Cycle 126
University of Maryland Medical Systems ..... IBC
Wade Pools & Landscape Design, LLC 97
WRNR 28



One Verse at a Time

V. P. Loggins is the author of several poetry collections, most recently *The Wild Severance* (2021), where "Cattails in Autumn" first appeared. *The Wild Severance* is the winner of the 26th Annual Bright Hill Press Poetry Book Competition as well as many other awards. His poems and articles have appeared in *The Baltimore Review*, *Chiron Review*, *Crannog* (Ireland), and many other national and international publications. He and his wife reside in Annapolis.—**JANICE F. BOOTH**

CATTAILS IN AUTUMN

Like a marshmallow on the end
of a stick, the half-spent cattail
held its last seeds before winter
forced the final eruption of soft
and airy whisperings into light.

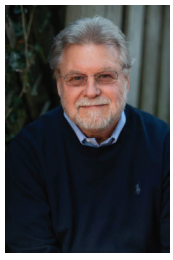
The sun fell on the boggy bank
where each step I took oozed
with muddy water as we cut
and bundled them. Sometimes
my brother and I would make

swords of the stems and lance
each other in mock battles
where the seeds would break
away. Sometimes all it took
was for us to blow on the ends

like candles and the chill air
would burst with white fireworks
that floated on the endless breeze.
And always I felt a little sadness
as I watched with a child's joy

the air take the seeds. So many
I couldn't count them. So bright
in the September sun. Dispersing
beyond my reach, my vague desire
to keep what could not be kept.

BY V.P. LOGGINS





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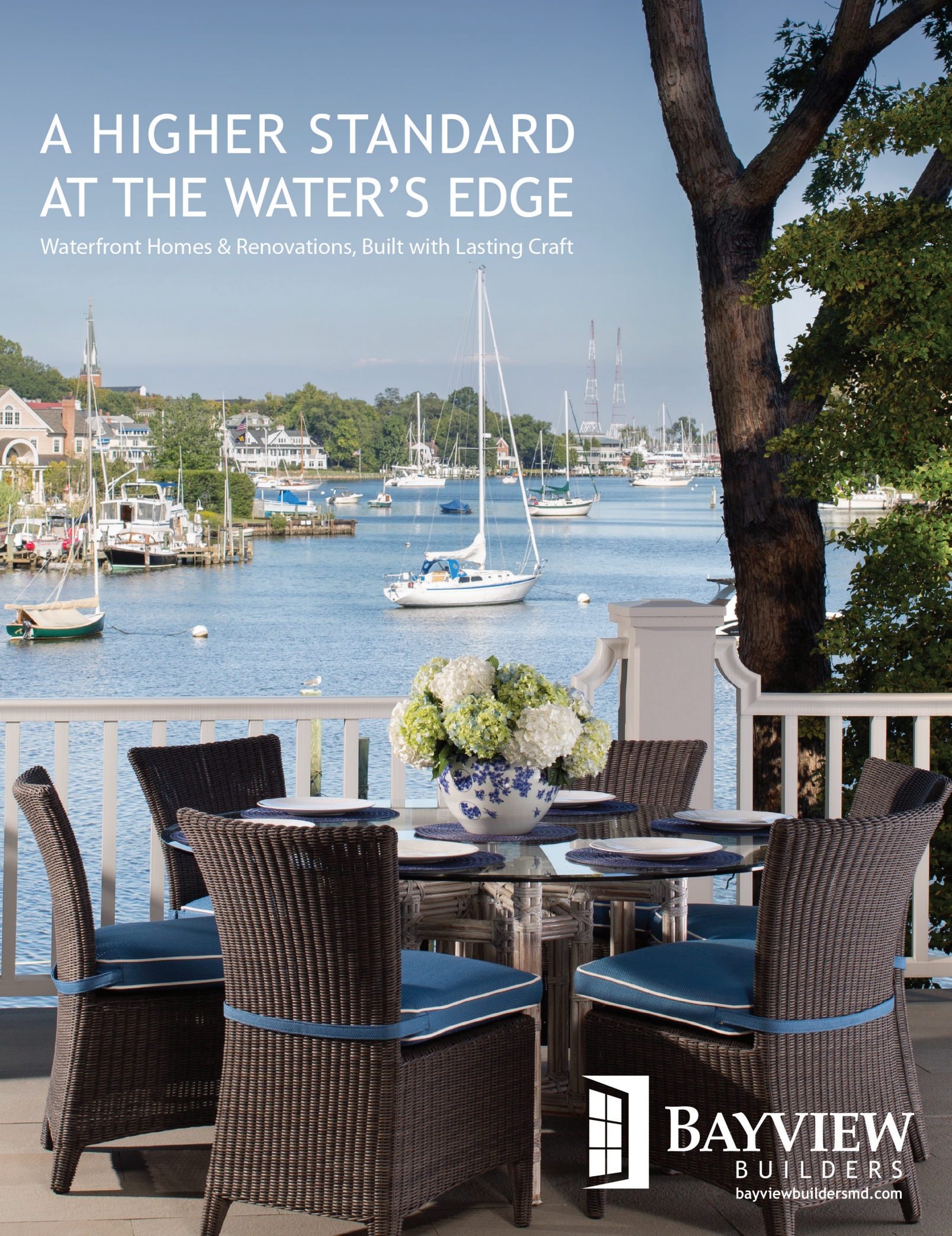
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