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WHAT'S UP? MEDIA'S
HOME
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS
2027

THE MOST EXQUISITE AND COMPELLING PROJECTS IN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN!

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

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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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Arts & Culture

18 EVENTS | 22 SOCIAL | 26 INTERVIEW

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Charity Boat Auction

PG. 20

SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

Take aim for a great cause at the MTBMA Annual Sporting Clay Shoot on Tuesday, September 15, from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at The Point at Pintail in Queenstown. This popular event welcomes both seasoned shooters and first-timers for an afternoon of friendly competition, networking, and outdoor recreation, complete with a catered lunch, oyster station, beverages, raffles, and prizes. Proceeds benefit the MTBMA Scholarship Foundation, helping support students pursuing careers in Maryland's transportation construction industry. Whether you're competing with colleagues or simply enjoying a day on the course, every shot helps invest in the next generation of industry professionals. More info: mtbma.org





ST LUKES ART LEAGUE ART SHOW

Discover the work of talented regional artists at the St. Luke's Art League Labor Day Art Show, held Saturday, September 5, through Monday, September 7, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day under the tent at St. Luke's Church in St. Michaels. This beloved outdoor exhibition features more than 300 original paintings created by St. Luke's Art League members, offering visitors the chance to browse and purchase unique works in a charming Eastern Shore setting. Whether you're an avid art collector or simply looking for creative inspiration, this annual Labor Day weekend tradition is the perfect opportunity to celebrate local talent. More info: stmichaelsmd.com

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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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





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

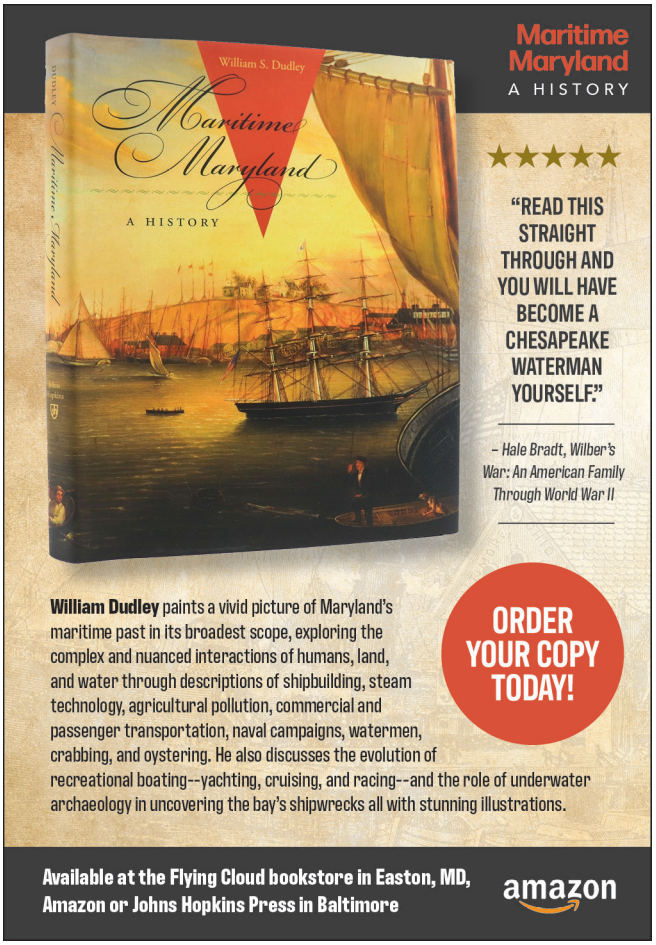


Photo by Jay Strausser



THE WAILERS AT AVALON THEATER FOUNDATION

Feel the rhythm of reggae history when The Wailers take the stage at the Avalon Theatre in Easton on Thursday, September 24, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the landmark album *Rastaman Vibration*, the legendary group will perform beloved classics alongside songs from the iconic 1976 release that helped bring reggae to audiences around the world. With a standing-room dance floor in the orchestra section and reserved balcony seating available, this unforgettable evening promises timeless music, positive vibes, and a celebration of Bob Marley & The Wailers' enduring legacy. More info: avalonfoundation.org











MSO Legacy Award Dinner

The Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra welcomed 120 guests to a sold-out Legacy Award Dinner on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at the Talbot Country Club, honoring internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves and celebrating the future of the Orchestra through a landmark fundraising effort. Guests enjoyed cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a special performance by the MSO String Quartet, four-course dinner, and a live auction. Learn more at midatlanticsymphony.org.

1. MSO Musical Director Michael Repper delivers remarks **2.** Michelle and Michael Roe **3.** MSO Vice President and event emcee Philip Davis **4.** Guests mix and mingle **5.** Guest enjoy the auction **6.** Denyce Graves receives the Legacy Award from MSO Board President Jeffrey Parker **7.** Auctioneer Max Wolf **8.** MSO String Quartet performs











Photographs courtesy Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra.

Call for Entries!









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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.

WHAT'S UP? MEDIA'S

HOME EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2027

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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.


1


2



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7

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.



8


9

Photography by Laura Wiegmann


10


11



12


13



14



15


16


17


18

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

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.

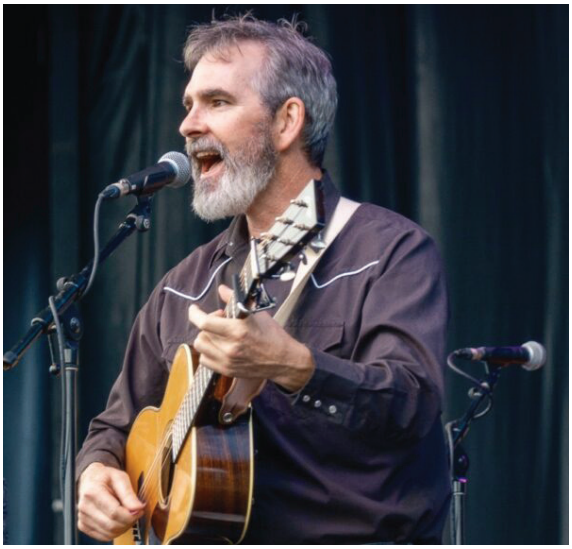
Photographs courtesy John Bolten and Annapolis Baygrass Music Festival

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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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.


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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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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.

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

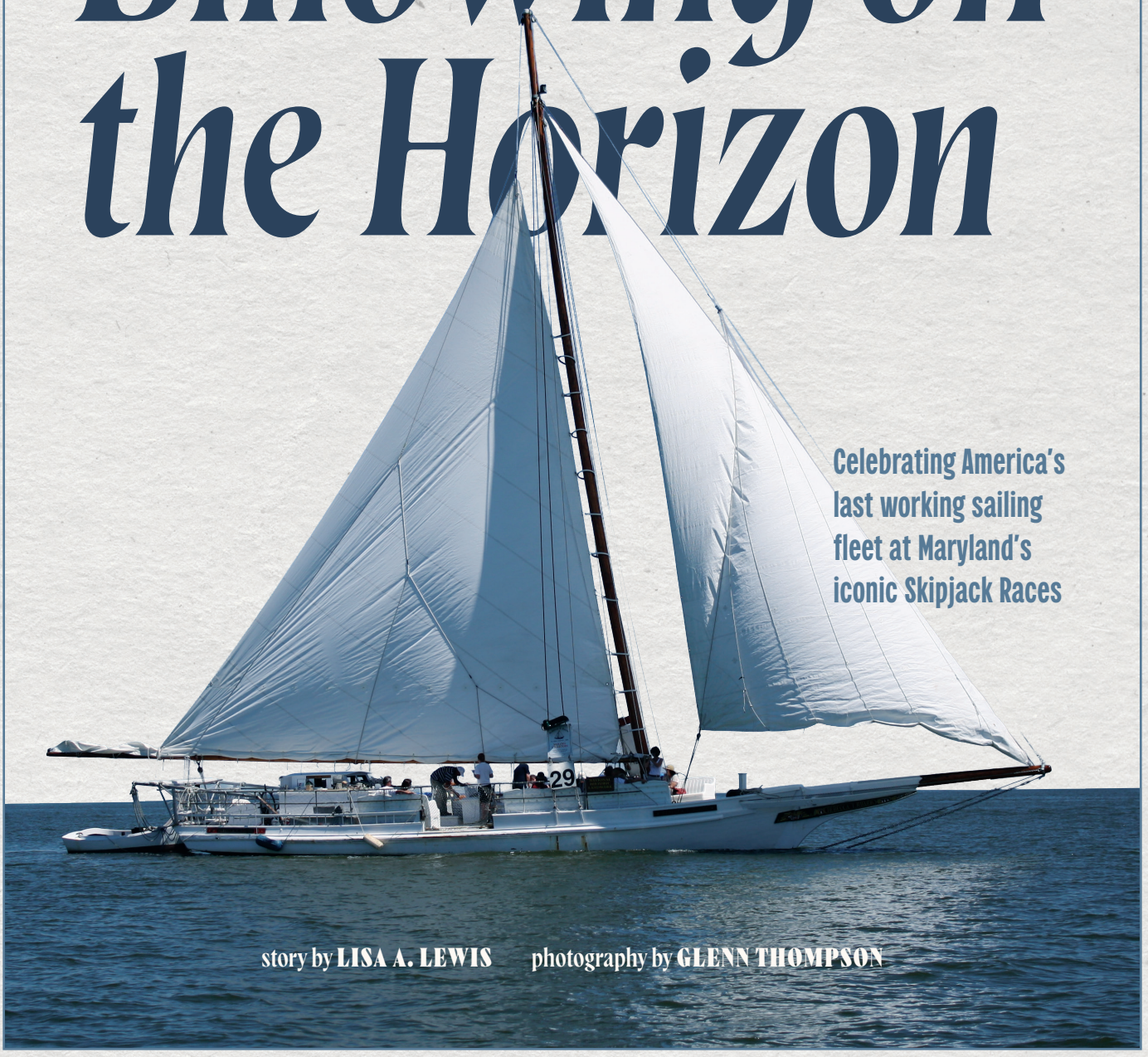
Meet the Care Team. Ask about staff qualifications, training, and CPR/First Aid certification. Learn about child-to-teacher ratios and class sizes. Ask how long teachers have worked at the program and how staff continuity is maintained

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

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.

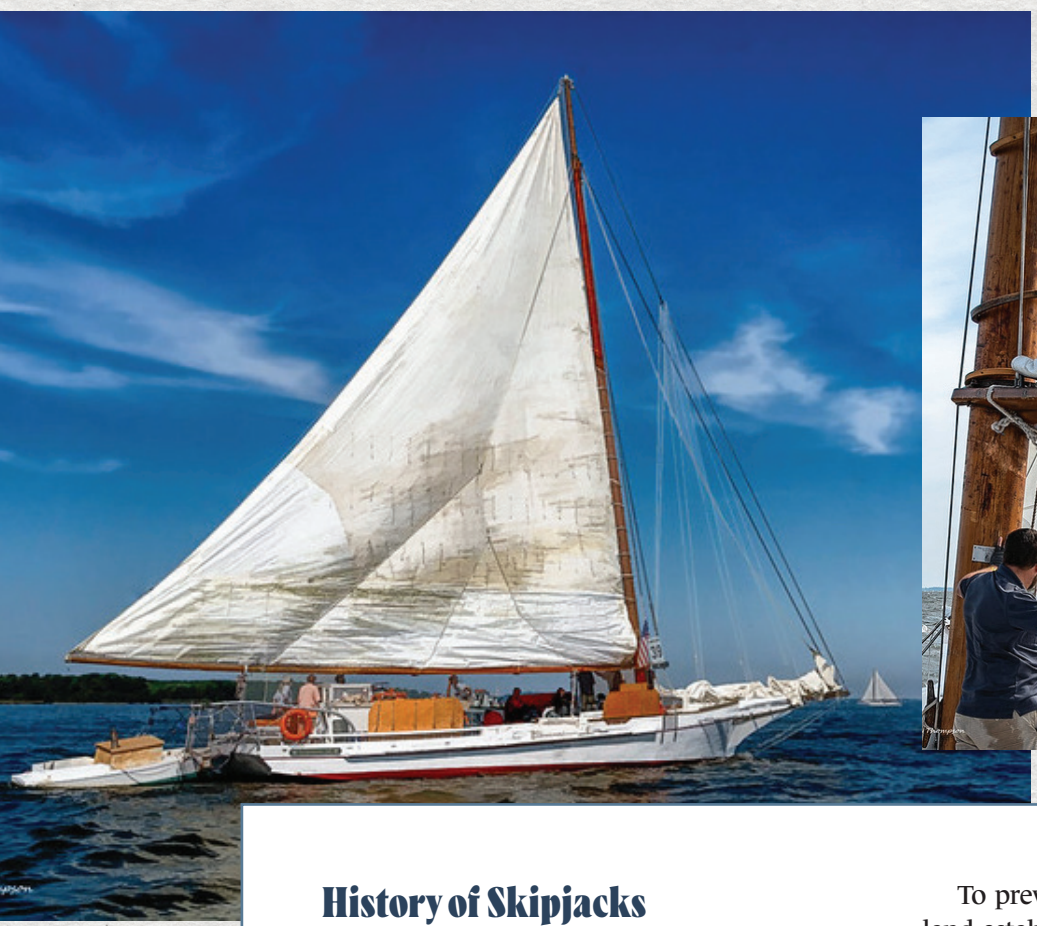
Each September, sailing enthusiasts gather at the renowned skipjack races to celebrate Maryland's rich maritime heritage and pay tribute to the watermen who defined a way of life that still endures today. A palpable sense of excitement fills the air, and a chaotic melee ensues as captains aggressively 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.

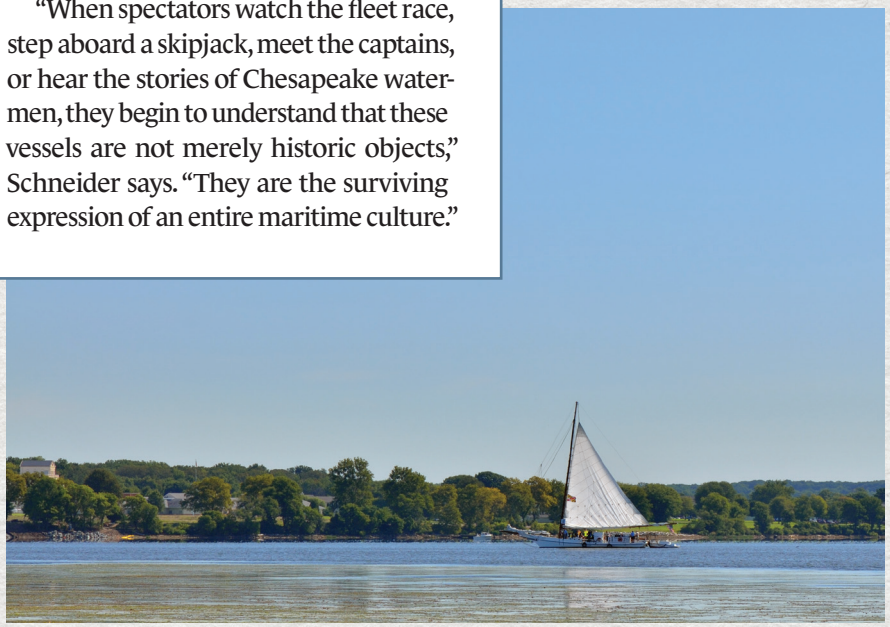


Honoring a Vanishing Fleet

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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Home & Garden

60 THE ART OF FINE AND FUN FURNITURE STATEMENTS

62 TRULY PRIVATE AND TRANQUIL

64 RENOVATED BEAUTY



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

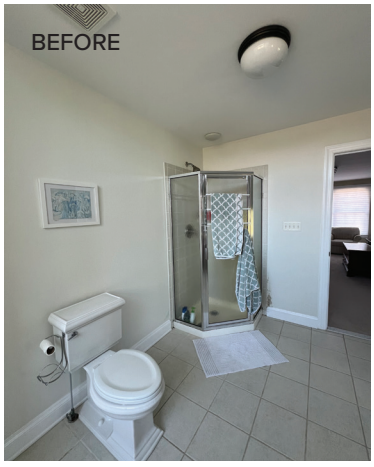


WHERE TO START?

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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Image courtesy of perigold.com

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.



Truly Private and Tranquil

By Lisa J. Gotto

A serene, wooded lot, a highly-desired community, and custom design are all-inclusive in this newer 5,200-square-foot residence located just minutes for historic Chestertown's picturesque downtown.

An abundance of countryside curb appeal greets visitors along with a charming front porch, and all the convenience of primary-level living and open floorplan. The entry leads to an expansive living space with soaring ceilings. Gorgeous walnut-toned hardwood floors flow beneath as you pass a hallway on your left to access the home's first guest bedroom.

Primary Structure Built: 2018

Sold For: $825,000

Original List Price: $867,000

Bedrooms: 4

Baths: 3 Full, 1 Half

Living Space: 5,290 Sq. Ft.

Lot Size: 2.29 acres









Features of the grand primary living space include an attractive floor-to-ceiling fireplace accent wall of stacked stone and a lovely view to the expansive wooded lot through a large window and door series featuring center and side French doors.

The floorplan effortlessly opens to the right to a spacious and light-filled formal dining room that provides easy access to the adjacent modern kitchen. This is a large room with all-white custom cabinetry, luxe granite countertops, an attractive tile backsplash, and all stainless-steel appliances. A convenient center island offers even more prep space, and a charming breakfast nook is surrounded with large windows overlooking the tree line. The entire space is perfectly planned for large, occasional gatherings.

There are two generous guest bedrooms to the left, adjacent to the living space, each with its own bath, and a spacious primary suite on the opposite side of the floorplan. This is a sunny room with an attractive *en suite* bath that features a sleek dual vanity, stone countertops, and a large, walk-in shower with luxe tile treatment.

This home has additional outdoor gathering spaces off the kitchen and living room in the form of a large, screened porch and adjacent patio providing excellent opportunities for an outdoor living room.

The home's lower level is finished, carpeted, and outfitted with a gas fireplace for an extra family fun and gathering space.

Listing Agent: Lona Sue Todd, Taylor Properties, 175 Admiral Cochrane Dr., Annapolis, m. 410-310-0222, o. 800-913-4326, lstodd11@outlook.com, taylorprops.com **Buyers' Agent:** Unrepresented



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Renovated Beauty

By Lisa J. Gotto

This 3,300-square-foot, custom-built home offers everything a homeowner could want when it comes to location, views, and contemporary living.

The striking design of this home makes it a one-of-a-kind beauty in its waterside Stevensville community. A multi-pitch roof line and outstanding exterior elements of stone lend this home particular curb appeal within its tranquil wooded lot.

Inside, the home opens to an inviting light and bright entry and the residence's spacious formal dining room to the left. Handsome beachy hardwood floors flow throughout most of the floorplan which proceeds to a stellar, modern kitchen with awesome immediate water views of Shipping Creek.

Primary Structure Built: 1984

Sold For: $1,200,000

Original List Price: $1,440,000

Bedrooms: 4

Baths: 2 Full, 2 Half

Living Space: 3,345 Sq. Ft.

Lot Size: 1.3 acres







The gourmet chef's kitchen gleams with stainless-steel appliances including a Viking eight-burner gas range, a luxe tile backsplash, and dark, stone countertops. A large center prep island with sink offers much utility and breakfast bar seating. This room also features a waterfront dining option in the breakfast nook and offers access to one of the structure's outdoor decks.

This home features excellent opportunities for family and friends to gather including the elevation above the kitchen where there's an enormous living room outlined with modern window groupings overlooking the waterfront. This space also features an attractive fireplace wall of stacked stone and enough space for multiple seating areas.





CONTINUED ▶

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The home's upper level offers three generous guest bedrooms and a gorgeous primary suite with a separate seating area and large windows overlooking the waterfront. A set of glass French doors provides access to the suite's private balcony. A superb retreat, this room also offers a spa-like primary bath with a large, dual vanity, walk-in shower, and sunken tub.







The lower level of the home boasts a cheery and bright family room with a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows, walk-out access, a wet bar, and a stunning stone fireplace wall. Luxe engineered tile runs underfoot. This level also offers a tiled bonus room and half bath.

With its prime water's edge location, private pier, and substantial amenities, this remodeled beauty offers a sublime quality of life and more to explore.



Listing Agent: DeeDee McCracken, Coldwell Banker Realty, 170 Jennifer Rd, Annapolis, m. 410-739-7571, o. 410-224-2200, dmccracken@cbmove.com, coldwellbankerrealty.com **Buyers' Agen**t: Sue Ellen Herrick, REMAX Executive, 790 Richie Hwy., Severna Park, m. 443-261-2590, o. 410-544-8800, sueherrickrealtor@yahoo.com, remax.com

Health & Beauty

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69 IS IT REALLY HEALTHY?



Heart Health's Evolving Understanding

PG. 70



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.



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

Food & Dining

72 SWEET TREATS AND BREAKFAST DELIGHTS

74 READERS' DINING GUIDE



Fresh donuts at Bay Country Bakery

Photography by Bill Whaley

Sweet Treats and Breakfast Delights

By Lisa A. Lewis

A mainstay in the community, Bay Country Bakery offers a wide selection of fresh, scratch-made menu options and warm Eastern Shore hospitality. Located in Cambridge and owned by David and Gena Levy, who bought the business in 1999 from the previous owners, the bakery celebrates a proud tradition of service and has established a loyal customer base.

"Bay Country Bakery was a long-standing business that was well-known for its donuts," Gena says. "Many generations have grown up as customers, so it was important to respect the bakery's tradition by continuing to make the donuts daily but also expanding the selection of products. We decided to add danishes, croissants, cookies, pies, cakes, breads, and breakfast sandwiches, and we offer weekly and seasonal items that utilize local products."

To learn more, we spoke to Gena.





BAY COUNTRY BAKERY 2951 Coastal Highway, Cambridge
410-228-9111 • thebaycountrybakery.com

What inspired you to buy Bay Country Bakery? David and I had been working in the service industry for a few years and wanted to invest our time in our own business. A friend of my father's had been to an auction for the bakery but did not have much experience in food service. So, David and I decided to go to a second auction, and we bought the bakery. We thought it would be a good opportunity to have our own business and live closer to our families since we were expecting our first child.

Tell us about your background in the restaurant industry. David and I went to culinary school and worked in fine dining for several years before settling on the Eastern Shore. We spent time in New Orleans and Philadelphia, which offered learning opportunities and helped inspire us.

Describe your business philosophy. We pride ourselves on using fresh ingredients and supporting local vendors whenever possible. For example, our milk and cream come from Nice Farms Creamery, a local dairy, and our coffee is sourced from Chesapeake Coffee Roasters (formerly Chesapeake Bay Roasting Company) in Crofton.

What are some of your top-selling baked goods? The donuts are absolutely favorites, while our chocolate and cheese danishes are among our top sellers. We also offer classic items like éclairs and giant cinnamon buns that often spark childhood memories for our customers, reminding them of neighborhood bakeries or treats their mothers and grandmothers used to make. Maintaining a 99 percent scratch bakery is a lot of work, but seeing those connections makes the long days worth it.

Photography by Bill Whaley







What are some of your top-selling breakfast sandwiches? Our croissants are incredibly popular, especially when we use them to make our breakfast sandwiches. We like to keep things simple and high quality and focus on egg, meat, and cheese combinations. One standout is our steak, egg, and cheese sandwich served on our signature Butter Bun. We use a house-made spice rub on flank steak, slice it thin, and serve it hot with your choice of cheese.

The Butter Bun has gained a following of its own. In addition to our own sandwiches, we produce the buns for other local Cambridge businesses, including RAR Brewing and Ocean Odyssey Crab House & Seafood Restaurant. It's an honor to support their success and feature our products on their menus.





What are some of your favorite family recipes? David and I were both influenced by our grandmothers and spent time baking with them. Our Christmas cookies and peach pies are seasonal traditions that we continue to make in honor of them.

Tell us how you expanded the business in 2009. We made the pivotal decision to expand by moving to our own property on Route 50. (The bakery was previously located in Shoal Creek Shopping Center in Cambridge.) We wanted a space that we could truly call our own and invest in for the long term. This expansion allowed us to capture the beach-bound traffic and grow our production capacity to meet the high demand for our scratch-made goods.

Describe the atmosphere and customer experience at Bay Country Bakery. The atmosphere is defined by our hardworking staff and our connection to the community. We serve loyal local customers as well as visitors passing through, including groups from the Hyatt on the Choptank River. As a small-town business, we handle a massive amount of daily production. We strive to provide a consistent, fresh experience that makes Bay Country Bakery a special destination for anyone passing through Cambridge.



Readers' Dining Guide

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Hunter's Tavern
101 East Dover Street, Easton; Tidewaterinn.com; 410-822-4034 $$ ●● Daily Breakfast

Limoncello Italian Restaurant & Wine Bar
200 South Talbot Street, St Michaels; 410-745-3111; limoncellostmichaels.com $$ ●●

Lowe's Wharf
21651 Lowes Wharf Road, Sherwood; 410-745-6684; loweswharf.com/restaurant $$ ●●●● Seasonal

Lu's at the Marina
305 Mulberry St., St. Michaels; 410-745-8029; lusatthemarina.com $$ ●●●

Momma Maria's Mediterranean Bistro and Bar
4021 Main Street, Trappe; 410-476-6266; mommamariasbistro.com $$, ●●●●● Daily Breakfast

Olive Branch
100 S. Talbot Street, St. Michaels; 410-745-8021; ourgreekmarket.com $$ ●●●●●

Our Greek Market
29523 Canvasback Drive, Ste. 101, Easton; 410-690-3611; ourgreekmarket.com $$ ●

Out of the Fire
111 South Washington Street, Easton; 410-205-2519; outofthefire.com $$ ●●

Pho Van Restaurant
219 Marlboro Avenue, Ste. 44, Easton; 410-443-0206; phovaneaston.com $$ ●●

Piazza Italian Market
218 North Washington Street Suite 23, Easton; 410-820-8281; $$ ● Beer and Wine

Ruse
209 N Talbot Street, St Michaels at the Wildset Hotel; 410-745-8011; ruserestaurant.com $$$ ●●

San Miguels
100 S Talbot Street, St Michaels; 410-745-8955; sanmiguelsmd.com $$ ●●

Scossa Restaurant and Lounge
8 North Washington Street, Easton; 410-822-2202; scossarestaurant.com $$ ●●●

Sunflowers and Greens
11 Federal Street, Easton; 410-822-7972; sunflowersandgreens.com $$ ●

T at the General Store
25942 Royal Oak Road, Easton; 410-745-8402; tatthegeneralstore.com $$ ●●



Talbot St. Tavern
209 S Talbot St, St Michaels; 410-745-8005; Talbotsttavern.com $$, Full Bar, Live Music

Theo's Steak, Sides, and Spirits
407 South Talbot Street, St Michaels; 410-745-2106; theossteakhouse.com $$

Tickler's Crab Shack and Restaurant
21551 Chesapeake Houe Drive, Tilghman in the Wylder Hotel; 410-886-2121; wylderhotels.com $$

Tiger Lily
206 N Washington Street, Easton; 410-690-4602; tigerlily-easton.com $$

Tilghman Dining at The Tilghman Island Inn
21384 Coopertown Road, Tilghman Island; 410-886-1170; tilghmandining.com $$$ Seasonal

Two if by Sea
5776 Tilghman Island Road, Tilghman; 410-886-2447; twoifbysearestaurant.net $

Kent County

Blue Bird Tavern
512 Washington Avenue, Chestertown; 410-778-2885; Facebook $

Blue Heron Oyster House and Inn
20658 Wilkins Avenue, Rock Hall; 410-639-4374; blueheronoysterhouseandinn.com $$

Café Sado
870 High St, Chestertown; 410-778-6688; cafesado.com $$

Chester River Seafood
4954 Ashley Road, Rock Hall; 410-639-7018; chesterriverseafood.com $$

Deep Blue at Kitty Knight
14028 Augustine Herman Highway, Georgetown; 410-648-5200; deepbluerestaurant.com $$

Dockside Café on Rock Hall Harbor
21906 Chesapeake Avenue, Rock Hall; 410-639-2478; theblackduckinn.com $, Seasonal

Fish Whistle
100 George Street, Georgetown; 410-275-1603; fishandwhistle.com $$

Flying Decoy Bar + Grill
21270 Rock Hall Ave, Rock Hall; 410-639-2000; flyingdecoy24.com $$

Ford's Seafood Inc
21459 Rock Hall Ave, Rock Hall; 410-639-2032; fordsseafoodrockhall.com $

Harbor Shack
20895 Bayside Avenue, Rock Hall; 410-639-9996; harborshack.net $$

Java Rock
21309 E Sharp Street, Rock Hall; 410-639-9909; Facebook $ Coffee and Breakfast

The Jefas Mexican Grill
100 West Cross Street, Galena; 410-648-7182; the-jefas-mexican-grill.business.site $

The Kitchen at the Imperial
208 High Street, Chestertown; 410-778-5000; imperialchestertown.com $$$

Luisa's Cucina Italiana
849 Washington Avenue, Chestertown; 410-778-5360; luisasrestaurant.com $$

Modern Stone Age Kitchen
236 Cannon Street, Chestertown; 410-996-4776; modernstoneage.com $$

Muskrat Alley Café
5877 Coleman Road, Rock Hall; 410-708-0057; carriagehousemd.com $ Breakfast

Osprey Point
20786 Rock Hall Ave, Rock Hall; 410-639-2194; ospreypoint.com $$$

The Retriever Bar and Oysters
337 ½ High Street, Chestertown; theretrieverbar.com $$

The Shanty Bar
21085 Tolchester Beach Road, Chestertown; 410-778-1400; tolchestermarina.com $

Watershed Alley
337 High Street, Chestertown; 443-282-9797; thewatershedalley.com $$$

Dorchester County

Ava's Pizzeria & Wine Bar
305 High Street, Cambridge; 443-205-4350; avaspizzeria.com $

Bay Country Bakery
2951 Ocean Gateway, Cambridge; 410-228-9111; baycountrybakery.com $ Daily Breakfast

Blackwater Bakery
429 Race Street, Cambridge; 443-225-5948; Blackwaterbakery.com $

Blue Point Provision Company
100 Heron Boulevard, Cambridge; 410-901-1234; hyattregencychesapeakebay.com $$$

Blue Ruin
400 Race Street, Cambridge; 410-995-7559; blueruinbar.com $$

Bombay Social
413 Muir Street, Cambridge; 443-515-0853; bombaysocialmd.com $$

Carol's Kitchen
5263 Bucktown Road, Cambridge; 443-225-5889; Facebook $$

Emily's Produce
2214 Church Creek Road, Cambridge; 443-521-0789; emilysproduce.com $$ Market and Lunch, Beer, Wine and Mead

Lil' Bitta Bull
520 Race Street, Cambridge; 443-205-2219; Facebook $$

The Neck District Grill
1042 Hudson Road, Cambridge; 410;228-3052; Facebook $

New York Style Deli & Pizza
106 Market Square, Cambridge; 443-477-6630;ordernystyledeli.com $

Ocean Odyssey and Crab House
316 Sunburst Highway, Cambridge; 410-228-8633; toddseafood.com $$ Seasonal

Old Salty's
2560 Hoopers Island Road, Fishing Creek; 410-397-3752; oldsaltys.com $$ Locally Sourced

Paul's Pub
1200 Goodwill Ave, Cambridge; 410-901-1212; choptankbowling.com $

Portside Seafood Restaurant
201 Trenton Street, Cambridge; 410-228-9007; portsidemaryland.com $$

RAR Brewing
508 Poplar Street, Cambridge; 443-225-5664; rarbrewing.com $$ Beer

Suicide Bridge Restaurant
6304 Suicide Bridge Road, Hurlock; 410-943-4689; suicide-bridge-restaurant.com $$

Vintage 414
414 Race Street, Cambridge; 410-228-4042; vintage414.com $$ Light Fare

Caroline County

Bullock's Deli, Grill, and Ice Cream
422 N 6th Street, Denton; 410-479-0270; bullocksdeli.com $

Caroline's
406 Market Street, Denton; 410-490-4495; carolinesindenton.com $$ Seasonal

Craft Bakery and Café
12 S 3rd Street, Denton; 410-934-7519; Facebook $

Denton Diner
42 Denton Plaza, Denton; 443-448-7258; dentondiner.com $$ Daily Breakfast

Earth Tones Café
5 N 3rd Street, Denton; 443-448-4355; earthtonescafe.com $$ Beer and Wine

Market Street Public House
200 Market Street, Denton; 410-479-4720; marketstreet.pub $$

Ridgely Pizza and Pasta
204 6th Street; Ridgely; 410-634-9600; ridgelypizza.com $

Shore Gourmet
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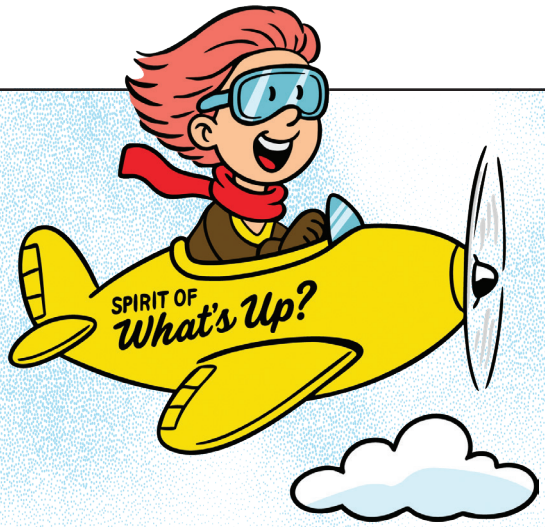

Where's Wilma?



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 Jane R. of Easton, who won a $50 gift certificate to a local business.

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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? Eastern Shore, 900 Bestgate Road, Ste. 202, Annapolis, MD 21401 or fill out the form at **whatsupmag.com/promotions**.

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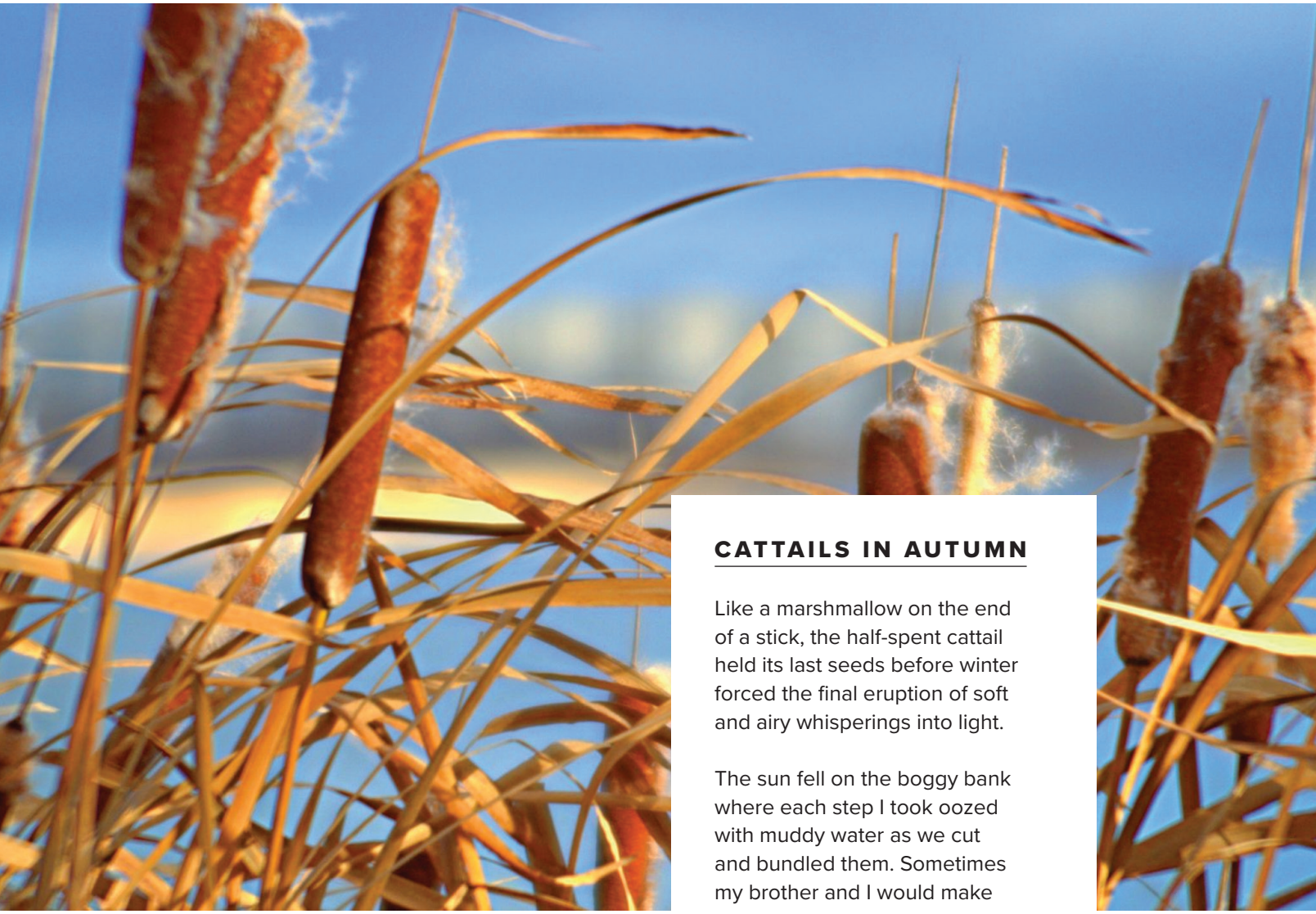


One Verse at a Time

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.

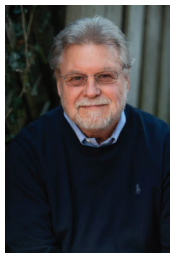
The sun fell on the boggy bank
where each step I took oozed
with muddy water as we cut
and bundled them. Sometimes
my brother and I would make

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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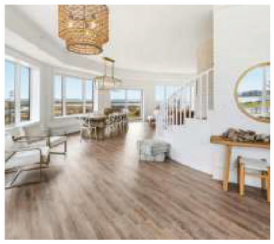
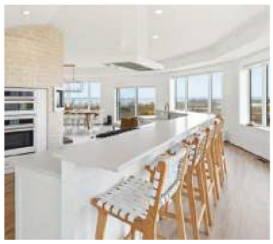









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