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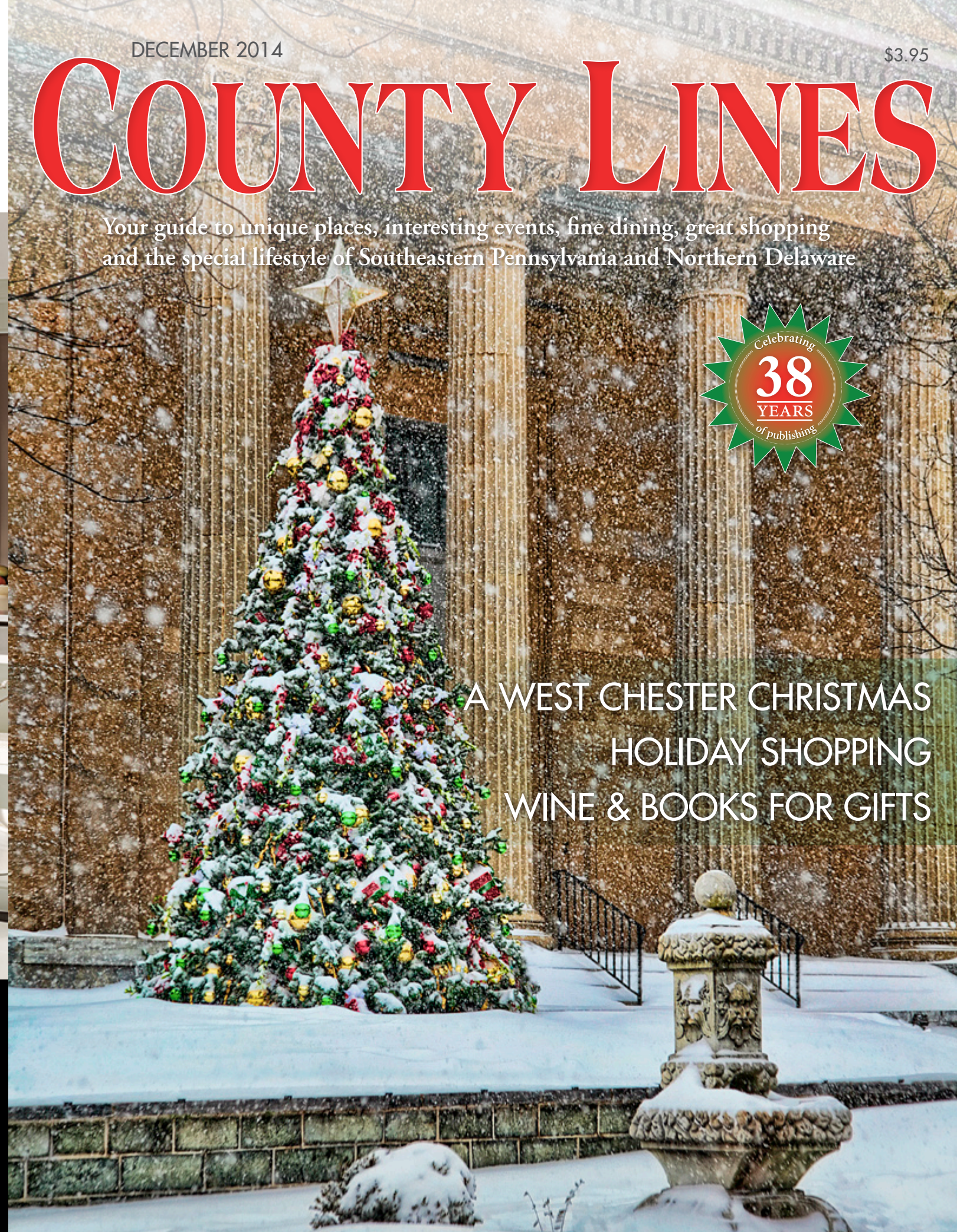


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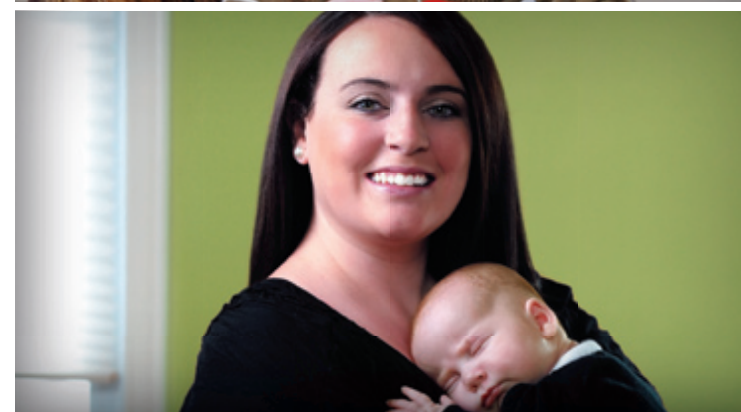
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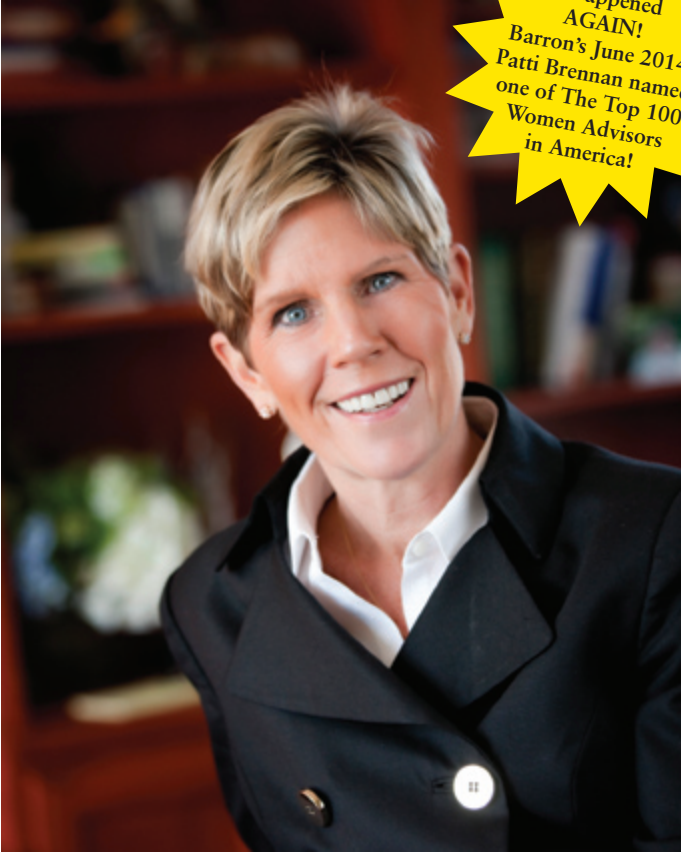
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Worth – One of the Nation's Top Wealth Advisors (2009, 2010, 2011)
The 50 Top Women in Wealth – Wealth Manager Magazine (May 2010)
Philadelphia Business Journal – #2 Top Wealth Advisor (2010)
Registered Rep – Top 50 Independent Broker/Dealer Women Advisors (2011)
Barron's – Top 1,000 Financial Advisors (2006-12) Only 40 Recognized in Pennsylvania (And the Only Woman in 2012!)
March of Dimes Recipient of the Ellen Ann Roberts Award for Excellence in Business.

Raised in Radnor, PA, Patricia Brennan has been providing Wealth Management advice right here in West Chester for over 25 years. She is a Georgetown University graduate and earned her CFP® designation in 1990. She is a recognized leader in her industry and serves as the first Chairwoman on the National Advisory Board for Royal Alliance. Patti has just been selected as one of 400 Top Advisors by The Financial Times, another leading global brand and highly respected worldwide. On a local level, Patti, her husband, Ed, and their four children reside in West Chester, where she is also active in her community. Patti currently serves as a board member for the Chester County Economic Development Council, Cuddle My Kids, and for The Chester County Hospital and Health System.



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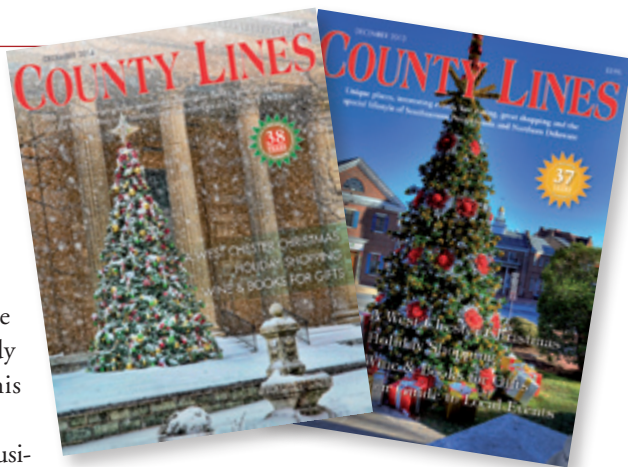


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From the
Editor



Ho, ho, ho, holidays! Here they come, and we're ready to be your guide to this happy season.

First tip: Shop small businesses and shop local for the best selection and service. You'll find art to give from the Wayne Art Center, and new shops to scope out in Malcolm Johnstone's West Chester tour. Our Holiday Style page and Holiday Window Shopping section will guide you to unique gifts throughout *County Lines* country that don't require an assault on The Maul. I mean Mall.

Tip two: For book-lovers and wine-drinkers on your list (does that cover everyone?), Andrea Thatcher gives us "Books That Look Good Under the Tree" and Moira O'Neal adds "Wine for the Holidays," with suggestions for all tastes and price points.

In a DIY mood? Brandywine Table sees Laura Brennan cook up "Gifts from the Kitchen," with tasty treats like Curried Pecans. For the truly practical, Ed Malet shares the scoop on generators in "Who's Got the Power?" and Dr. John DeStafeno gives insight into LASIK eye surgery in our Being Well column.

Next tip: If the holidays mean family time, our pages are filled with ideas of things to do. From the Family Fun page, to Here Comes Santa, to On With the Show, our local events coverage is the best around! Plus we cover Brandywine Ballet's *Nutcracker* performances, the Holiday Panto at People's Light, Old-Fashioned Christmas in West Chester, and A Brandywine Christmas at the Brandywine River Museum, complete with holiday critters.

And a final Tip: For our Talking With column, we scored an interview with Santa ... or one of his local helpers. Read how things have changed, yet stayed the same.

All of us at *County Lines* wish you the very best of the season! Thank you for supporting our advertisers and for reading our monthly magazine.

Jo Anne Durako
Editor

COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

December 2014

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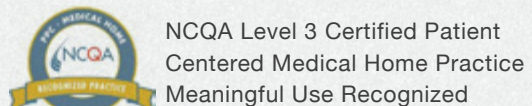
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CONTENTS

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 4 December 2014



DECEMBER 2014

<p>33 BRANDYWINE BALLET 35 Years of Sugarplum Fairies Mary Irene Dolan</p> <p>34 ARTHUR AND THE TALE OF THE RED DRAGON A Holiday Panto at People's Light Gina Pisasale</p> <p>36 A BRANDYWINE CHRISTMAS ... Hillary Holland</p> <p>38 WAYNE ART CENTER'S CRAFTFORMS 2014 Zoey Mills</p> <p>40 CHRISTMAS IN THE SWEET SPOT Check Out West Chester this Holiday Season Malcolm Johnstone</p> <p>49 BOOKS THAT LOOK GOOD UNDER THE TREE Andrea Kiliany Thatcher, Chester County Book Co.</p>	<p>52 WHO'S GOT THE POWER? Want to Keep the Lights on this Winter? Ed Malet</p> <p>54 HOLIDAY WINDOW SHOPPING</p> <p>61 WINTER STYLE</p> <p>62 HOLIDAY TABLE SETTINGS</p> <p>64 WINE FOR THE HOLIDAYS Moira O'Neal</p> <p>69 BRANDYWINE TABLE Gifts from the Kitchen Laura Muzzi Brennan</p>
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DEPARTMENTS

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 16 BEING WELL | 21 OF SPECIAL NOTE | 77 TALKING WITH ... |
| 19 GOOD TO KNOW | 22 BEST LOCAL EVENTS | 78 INDEX |
| | 67 FOOD NEWS | |

Cover photo of West Chester for the holidays by Timlyn Vaughan, TimlynVaughanPhotos.com

Am I a Candidate for Laser Vision Correction?

John DeStafeno, M.D

Since the 1990s, over 12 million people worldwide have had this surgery.

Many people would enjoy a life less dependent on glasses and contacts. No more cloudy glasses in the rain; no more running out of contact lenses or solutions. Some of my happiest patients are those who've undergone laser vision correction (LVC, which includes LASIK, the most common technique, and other procedures).

LVC continues to be one of the most sought-after elective surgeries. Many patients who've had the procedure have greatly reduced their dependency on glasses and contact lenses. And recent studies have found more than a 95 percent satisfaction rate.

What is Laser Vision Correction? LVC uses a specialized laser to reshape the front part of the eye—the cornea—to improve the focus of the eye. Lasers can be used to correct nearsightedness and farsightedness as well as astigmatism.

LASIK can be performed in the office and typically takes 7 to 10 minutes per eye. Topical anesthetics are used, and the procedure is virtually pain-free. Vision will improve the next day but may take a few weeks to stabilize. Patients often return to full activities the next day.

Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK), or surface ablation, is another option and may be recommended for patients who aren't candidates for LASIK. PRK has a longer visual recovery and longer healing than LASIK but the same positive results.

Can everyone have LVC? Most patients are candidates for LVC. A thorough eye evaluation—including diagnostic testing to examine the overall health and shape of the eyes—is required by an eye-care professional to determine if you're a good candidate.

Patients with certain eye conditions—dry eye, corneal scars, thin corneas, cataracts, very high glasses or contacts prescription—may not be good candidates. But there may be other procedures your eye care provider can recommend.

Am I too young or old for LVC? Patients are typically 18 years or older before having LVC and must have a stable eye-glass prescription for at least one year. This minimum age results from near- and farsightedness being more likely to increase in our teen years.

There's no maximum age for LVC. Many patients in their 50s to 70s have successful LVC and enjoy the benefits. Although eye diseases, such as dry eye and cataracts, increase with age, LVC can be performed safely if the eye has no significant conditions.

What are the risks and side-effects? The safety of LVC has been studied for many years and has been consistently shown to be one of the safest medical procedures performed today. In fact, the risk of eye infection from contact lens wear is much greater than infections after LVC.

As with any surgical procedure, there are risks and side-effects. With advances in diagnostic tools and the use of faster and safer lasers, the risk of visual problems after LVC has been minimized. However, each eye is unique and a full discussion should be planned with your eye care professional.

Will I ever need to wear glasses or contacts again? LVC corrects vision in many patients so that no glasses or contacts are needed. If your vision changes over time, a "touch-up" can be performed to improve your vision. Most patients have a less than 5 percent chance of needing this over their lifetime.

Patients over 40 may need reading and computer glasses for best vision. Or these patients have the option of a procedure call monovision, which corrects one eye for distance vision and the other eye for near vision.

The Future. LVC has improved markedly since the 1990s, most notably with the introduction of Wavefront and All-laser-LASIK. New laser treatment patterns, specifically those to improve near vision,

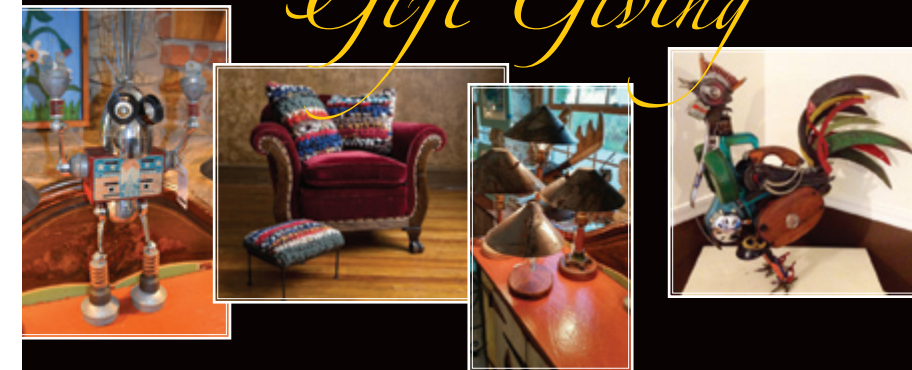
are being investigated to allow even more patients to enjoy the benefits of LVC.

Are you ready to see life more clearly? ♦

Dr. John DeStafeno, M.D., a board-certified ophthalmologist, has provided eye care to Chester County patients since 2007. Trained in Cornea, Cataract, and Refractive Surgery at Duke University, he's the current Director of Refractive Surgery at Chester County Eye Care Associates and Clinical Instructor at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. ChesterCountyEyeCare.com.

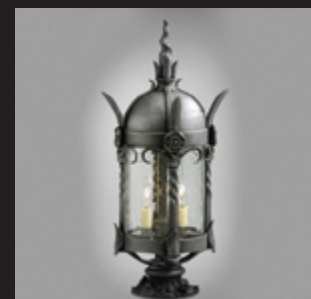


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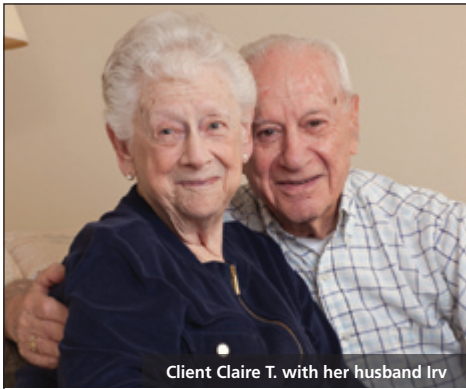
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Good to Know

Just a few things we thought you’d like to know this month

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Wild Wrappings. Want to make your holiday gifts stand out? You could wrap presents with the usual Santa or snowflake paper, or ... show your wild side with Luckies of London’s **Animal Gift Wrap Kits**. These kits transform ordinary packages into adorable animal-like presents. Complete with ears, noses, eyes and tails, the kit comes with 24 options ranging from mice to penguins to tigers and bears. Find it on AnimiCausa.com/shop.



The Gift of Giving. Christmas is a chance for pure generosity. Here’s a local story. **Howard Lutnick**, an alumnus of Haverford College, recently demonstrated his spirit of giving with a \$25 million gift to the College, the largest in its history. Having lost both parents by his freshman year, Lutnick was given a full ride by the College. Going on to become CEO of Cantor Fitzgerald, Lutnick has given back with over \$65 million in donations. His most recent gift will launch the renovation of Magill Library and transformation of the campus. Read more about the Lives That Speak campaign at Haverford.edu/news.



Christmas Continued. To friends and families who want the Christmas festivities to stay for another day, you’re not alone. Although it’s less celebrated in the U.S., **Boxing Day** takes place December 26th and gives folks in other countries a chance to shop, relax and celebrate after the hullabaloo of the huge holiday. Originating in Medieval times, Boxing Day was when servants were given the day off after working hard on Christmas and got a box filled with presents. *Google* your heart out to find how you can celebrate this year.



#GivingTuesday. We have one day for giving thanks and more day for getting great shopping deals. Now, we have a day for giving back. On **#GivingTuesday**, December 2nd, give back to nonprofit organizations and share what you care about. One choice—the nonprofit National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum in Coatesville—will be accepting donations to continue preserving and educating the public on the iron and steel history of Coatesville and the nation. Where will you give back? SteelMuseum.org/Donate!GivingTuesday.cfm.



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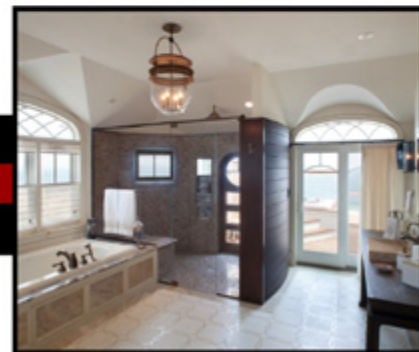
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Holiday Concerts
In December

Handel’s Messiah: Dec. 5, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 22 E. Chestnut Hill Ave., Chestnut Hill, 7 p.m. **Dec. 7,** Daylesford Abbey, 220 S. Valley Rd., Paoli, 4 p.m. **Dec. 19,** Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul, Philadelphia, 7 p.m. **Dec. 21,** St. Katharine of Siena Church, Lancaster & Aberdeen Aves., Wayne, 4 p.m. **Renaissance Noël, Renaissance Christmas Music of Old Europe: Dec. 12,** St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 22 E. Chestnut Hill Ave., Chestnut Hill, 8 p.m. **Dec. 14,** Bryn Mawr College, 256 N. Merion Ave., Bryn Mawr, 4 p.m. \$10-\$25. 610-688-2800; VoxAmaDeus.org



The Nutcracker
December 6–31

A holiday tradition with many performances around *County Lines* country. **Dec. 6–31,** Pennsylvania Ballet, 215-551-7000; PABallet.org. **Dec. 11, 13 & 14,** Chester County Ballet, 610-431-2333; HarrisonDanceStudios.com. **Dec. 12–21,** Brandywine Ballet (see article in this issue), 610-696-2711; BrandywineBallet.org. **Dec. 20–21,** Wilmington Ballet Academy of the Dance, 800-338-0881; DuPontTheatre.com. **Dec. 20–21,** Central PA Youth Ballet, 717-534-3405; HersheyTheatre.com. **Dec. 20–21,** First State Ballet Theatre, 800-37-GRAND; TicketsAtTheGrand.org.



Phoenixville’s Firebird
Festival



Lighting of the Firebird, 8:15 p.m., Friendship Field, 203 Fillmore St., Phoenixville. FirebirdFestival.com.

December 6
This festival just keeps growing. There are live performances in businesses and on Bridge Street plus a Crafts Bazaar at the Firebird site from 3 to 7 p.m., followed by a lively parade at 7:30 from Bridge Street to Friendship Field, featuring drummers, dancers, giant puppets and the torch that lights the Firebird.

Spirit of Christmas & “A Dickens Experience”
in Historic New Castle
December 13

Celebrate the season in Historic New Castle where you’ll find street theater, characters from Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, live music and tours of historic homes. Events held throughout town and New Castle Presbyterian Church, 25 E. Second St. and The Arsenal, 30 Market St., 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. NewCastleHistory.org.



best Local Events

FAMILY FUN

THROUGH DECEMBER 30
Yuletide at Wheatland
Presents "Tiny Tim's Christmas Present."
 Join Tiny Tim from Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," as he tries to recapture the spirit of Christmases past. The story unfolds in the Presidential mansion as visitors travel from room to room. 230 N. President Ave., Lancaster. 717.392.4633; LancasterHistory.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 14
Classic Fairytale: "Little Snow White."
 The Nat'l Historic Landmark Corbit-Sharp House is transformed into a special holiday exhibit from the classic children's tale. Candlelight Tours and Storybook Trees Exhibit. 201 Main St., Odessa, DE. Tues-Sat, 10 to 4:30; Sun, 1 to 4:30. \$8-\$10. 302-378-4119; HistoricOdessa.com.

DECEMBER 4, 10, 13
Brandywine River Museum Family Events.
Dec. 4, Polar Express Read-Aloud PJ Night—bring the children in their pjs to enjoy hot chocolate, cookies and this beloved holiday tale, 7 pm, \$6-\$12. **Dec. 10,** Children's Christmas Party—visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus and enjoy entertainment and goodies, 6 pm, \$5-\$15. **Dec. 13,** Breakfast with the Trains—all aboard for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at the extensive layout and breakfast. 8:30, \$25. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 5
Phoenixville Christmas Parade. The parade starts at 7, between the 100 and 300 blocks of Bridge St., then along Bridge St. for the tree lighting at Bridge & Main Sts. at 8 pm. 610-933-8801; Phoenixville.org.

DECEMBER 5-6
Malvern's Victorian Christmas. Events begin in Burke Park, for the lighting of the town tree. Then stroll King Street, stop at vendors and visit shops offering complimentary refreshments. Musical performances, children's shows, carriage rides, Santa and more through Sat. Fri, 6 to 9; Sat, 11 to 3. 610-296-9096; Malverns-Victorian-Christmas.org.

DECEMBER 5-6
Old-Fashioned Christmas in Wayne. On Fri., from 5:30, enjoy strolling carolers on

N. Wayne Ave., face painting and ornament decorating at Radnor Fire House, horsedrawn carriage rides on S. Wayne Ave. and, at 7:30, the Christmas Tree Lighting at Wayne Train Station led by 6ABC reporter Vernon Odom. Parade on Sat. begins at 10 am, travelling along Lancaster Ave. to the Wayne Hotel where snacks, marching bands and Santa will greet you. WayneChristmas.com.

DECEMBER 5-14
Gnome for the Holidays. Celebrate the holidays at Christmas at the Ironmasters. Come out and see the beautiful grounds and 18th-century mansion decorated for Christmas by local businesses and charities. Historic Poole Forge, 1940 Main St., Narvon. \$5, children free. Fri, 4 to 8; Sat, 12 to 8; Sun, 12 to 5. 717-445-0472; HistoricPooleForge.org.

DECEMBER 6
Pops Goes the Holiday—Kennett Symphony Children's Chorus. Join the Kennett Symphony and conductor Michael Hall for their annual holiday concert featuring sounds of the season and the Kennett Symphony Children's Chorus. Kennett High School, 100 E. South St., Kennett Square. 7:30. \$10-\$45. 610-444-6363; KennettSymphony.org.

DECEMBER 6
Coatesville Christmas Parade. Lively with bands, floats, antique cars, cartoon characters and entertainment. Strode Ave. to 11th St. 10 am. CoatesvilleChristmasParade.com.

DECEMBER 6
Elves for the Shelves 5K Road Race and 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk. The race begins and ends at the Radnor Memorial Library, 114 W. Wayne Ave., Wayne. Benefits the library. 9 am. \$10-\$25. 610-687-1124; Radnor-Library.org/Elves.

DECEMBER 6, 13
Holiday Events in Downingtown. **Dec. 6,** come visit Santa at the Historic Log House, 15 E. Lancaster Ave., 1 to 4. On **Dec. 13,** the town is decorated for the Good Neighbor Christmas Parade featuring floats, cars, music, Mr. & Mrs. Claus and lots of fun. 3 pm. DtownChristmas.com.

DECEMBER 7
Holidays at The Willows. Entertainment, refreshments, music, crafts, face-painting and Santa. Willows Mansion, 490 Darby-Paoli Rd., Radnor. 2 pm. Fireworks follow at 4:45. Free. Inclement weather date, Dec. 14. 610-688-5600; RadnorRecreation.com.

DECEMBER 12
Holiday Crafts & Fun Night at Brandywine Valley Association. Children age 6-13 will create homemade gifts, a natural ornament and play games. Later, snack on popcorn and watch a seasonal movie. Bring a bag supper and drink; pajamas and a blanket optional. Registration by Dec. 10. 5 to 9 pm. \$20-\$30. 610-793-1090; Brandywine-Watershed.org.

DECEMBER 13
Colonial PA Plantation's Christmas on the Farm. Get into the holiday spirit and visit the Plantation on its closing day for the year and enjoy the decorations, tea tasting, wassailing, textile, woodworking and long rifle demos. Ridley Creek State Park, Media. 11 to 6. \$8-\$10. 610-566-1725; ColonialPlantation.org.

DECEMBER 13
A Sugartown Christmas. Get into the holiday spirit as you explore the historic village and hear about Victorian Christmas traditions. Kids get a chance to decorate cookies and gingerbread houses, try their hand at making Victorian-style ornaments and Christmas cards, visit with Santa and enjoy holiday treats and hot cocoa. 273 Boot Rd., Malvern. 11 to 4. \$3-\$5. 610-640-2667; HistoricSugartown.org.

DECEMBER 13
Ballet 180 Presents "A Charlie Brown Christmas." This family friendly production will be sure to leave you in the spirit for the holiday season. Wayne United Methodist, 210 S Wayne Ave, Wayne. 3 and 7 pm. Tickets \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, under 18, half-price. 484-639-9571; Ballet180.org.

DECEMBER 13, 20, 21
Holiday Events in Kennett Square. Holiday movies at The Flash: **Dec. 13,** "Elf," **Dec. 20,** "A Christmas Story," movie starts at noon, free. **Dec. 21,** Breakfast with Santa, sponsored by Kennett Fire Company at Red Clay Room, 423 Dalmatian St., Kennett Square, 610-444-4810. 8 to 11 am, \$6-9, \$1 off with donation of non-perishable food item. 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com.

See "Holiday Events & Tours" for more things to do with the family.

ART & CRAFT SHOWS.....

THROUGH DECEMBER 21
"Treasures and Tales of Italy's Guardia di Finanza Art Recovery Team." For the first time in the U.S., these famous art pieces will make their debut in Wilmington. A groundbreaking exhibition of recovered works will be on display at this event. Grand Opera House, 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. 12 to 5. \$15. VisitWilmingtonDE.com/Weekends/Treasures-AndTales.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31
A Curiosity of Cabinets. If you like to think creatively, this is the place for you. Cabinets of all design are on display at the exhibit. Last year's winners were called Jellyfish Wall Cabinet. See website for details. 610-644-5822; WhartonEsherickMuseum.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 25
Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital Art Ability Exhibit & Sale. Artists from around the world with physical, cognitive, visual and hearing disabilities submit their work to this juried exhibition and sale. 414 Paoli Pk., Malvern. Daily, 8:30 to 5. 484-596-5710; MainLineHealth.org/ArtAbility.

DECEMBER 5-6
38th Annual Craft Show and Artisan Village. This annual craft show offers useful and beautiful handcrafted objects. Organized and run through a whole-community volunteer effort. Benefits the Kimberton Waldorf School scholarship fund. Kimberton Waldorf School, 410 W. Seven Stars Rd., Kimberton. **Dec. 5,** Preview Night (adults only) 6 to 10; **Dec. 6,** Shopping & Children's Activities, 10 to 5. \$5-10. 610-933-3635; Kimberton.org/Craft.

DECEMBER 5-JANUARY 31
Wayne Art Center Presents the 20th Anniversary of Craft Forms. See article in this issue.

DECEMBER 6-13
Community Arts Center's 11th Annual Holiday Sale. In cooperation with the Potters Guild, the holiday tradition continues with fine, handcrafted work by juried artisans. **Dec. 5,** preview, 7 to 9:30 pm, \$5; **Dec. 10,** Men's Night Shopping, 5:30 to 8:30. 414 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford. Mon-Fri, 10 to 8; Sat-Sun, 10 to 5. 610-566-1713; CommunityArtsCenter.org.

DECEMBER 6-JANUARY 5
Main Line Art Center Members Exhibition. Features a range of works from photography, sculpture, painting, jewelry and much more. Food and beverages are provided and members are encouraged to bring desserts. Opening reception Dec. 12, 5:30. 746 Panmure Rd., Haverford. See website for details. 610-525-0272; MainLineArt.org.

DECEMBER 8
Holiday Crafts Fair in Kimberton. Collectibles and crafts for sale for the holidays. Kimberton Fire Company, 752 Pike Springs Rd.,



Kimberton. 9 to 2. Free. 484-645-9033 or 610-917-2270.

FUNDRAISERS.....

DECEMBER 4-5
Women's Committee of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Presents A Holiday Boutique. The area's finest boutiques participate to benefit CHOP. Merion Cricket Club, 325 Montgomery Ave., Haverford. Preview Thurs, 5 to 9. \$125-\$1,000 (includes Fri); Fri, 9 to 3, luncheon available, \$30. 267-426-6489; Giving.CHOP.edu.

A BRANDYWINE Christmas



NOVEMBER 28 – JANUARY 4



This holiday season enjoy the heartwarming magic of *A Brandywine Christmas*. From the amazing Brandywine River Museum of Art Railroad to the thousands of whimsical Critters displayed throughout the festively decorated museum, it is a beloved family tradition. Featuring the special art exhibition *Enchanted Castles and Noble Knights*, young princesses and gallant knights will be thrilled by the richly imagined world of chivalry created by Howard Pyle, N.C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish and others.

A Brandywine Christmas is made possible by M&T Bank.

Additional support is provided by Otto's BMW, Herr Foods Inc., and the Frelinghuysen Foundation.



BRANDYWINE RIVER MUSEUM OF ART

U.S. Route 1
 Chadds Ford, PA
 19317
 610.388.2700

brandywine.org

Above: N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945), *Old Kris* (detail), circa 1925, oil on canvas. Collection of the Wyeth Foundation



Be sure to look in our special West Chester section for events there.

DECEMBER 6
Jingle Fest. A fundraiser that invites family, friends and dogs out to visit with Santa and enjoy shopping, dining and activities included. Benefits Horse Power for Life, a therapeutic horsemanship program. Greater Phila. Expo Center, 1601 Egypt Rd., Oaks. 10 to 3. Free. 484-228-8358; HorsePowerForLife.org.

HOLIDAY EVENTS & TOURS.....
THROUGH DECEMBER 31
Nemours Mansion & Gardens Holiday Tours. A guided walking tour with a gingerbread house

of the mansion along the way. Includes Christmas trees, paper filigree quilting, original toys, ornaments and more. Reservations required. Alapocas Dr., Wilmington. \$10-\$15. 302-651-6912; NemoursMansion.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 4
Morris Arboretum's Holiday Garden Railway. Thousands of sparkling lights adorn a miniature village surrounded by a ¼-mile track with model trains zipping in and out of tunnels, over bridges and through the woods—all outdoors in the winter garden. 100 E. Northwestern Ave., Phila.

10 to 4. \$7-\$16. 215-247-5777; Morris Arboretum.org.



THROUGH JANUARY 4
Yuletide at Winterthur. Experience the traditions of the past and entertaining displays in this wintertime tour. Recall the Staff Sitting Room where staff were able to relax and entertain. 5105 Kennett Pk. (Rt. 52), Winterthur. Tues-Sun, 10 to 5. \$5-\$20. 800-448-3883; Winterthur.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 6
Holidays at Hagley. Programs based on early du Pont family holiday and New Year's traditions including an exhibit inspired by the winter pastimes of the property's former residents. Rt. 141, Wilmington. 9:30 to 4:30. \$10-\$14; under 14, free. 302-658-2400; Hagley.org.



THROUGH JANUARY 11
Longwood Gardens Garden Railway. This is a whimsical display set into motion with G-scale model trains traveling in and out of bridges, tunnels and special water features. 1001 E. Baltimore Pk., Kennett Square. Through Jan. 12, 9 am to 10 pm. Mon-Fri, \$8-\$18; Sat-Sun, \$11-\$25. Timed admission tickets are required. 610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org.

DECEMBER 4-13
Holiday Highlights Tour. Enjoy local shopping, food and fun for the holidays. Features 15 festive shops with holiday decorations, unusual gift ideas, coupons and more! Enter to win one of two \$375 sprees. Mommy Forward, LLC., Honey Brook. Mon-Sat, 10 to 6; Fri, 10 to 7. \$8. 484-551-5180; ShopChesterCounty.com.

DECEMBER 6
Christmas in Marshallton. Have breakfast with Santa at the West Bradford Fire Department, 7 to noon, then stop by the United

Local Farm Markets

Booths Corner Farmers Mkt., 1362 Naamans Creek Rd., Garnet Valley. Year-round, Fri, 9 to 9; Sat, 9 to 8. 610-485-0775; Booths-Corner.com.

Downingtown Farmers Mkt., Kerr Park, 1 Park La. Year-round, Sat, 9 to 1. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Eagleview Farmers Mkt., Town Ctr., Wellington Sq. Year-round, Thurs, 3 to 7. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Lancaster County Farmers Mkt., 389 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Year-round, Wed, Fri, 8 to 6, Sat, 8 to 4. 610-688-9856; LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com.

Malvern Farmers Mkt., Burke Park, Roberts Rd. & S. Warren Ave. Year-round, Sat, 9 to 1. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Newtown Square Farmers Mkt., Mostardi Nursery, 4033 West Chester Pk. Through Dec., Wed, 2 to 6. 610-353-1555; PRC.org.

West Chester - Artisan Exchange Indoor Artisan Foods & Farmers Mkt., 208 Carter Dr. Sat, 10 to 2. Artisan ExchangeWCPA.com.

West Chester Growers Mkt., Chestnut & Church Sts. Through Dec., Sat, 9 to 1. Jan-Apr., 1st & 3rd Sat, 10 to noon. 610-436-9010; WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

Methodist Church, 9 to 2, where you'll find homemade cookies, unique holiday gifts from local artists, music and lunch at 11:30. Then, the Christmas tree lighting will take place at Martin's Tavern between 4 and 6 pm. MarshalltonChurch.org.



DECEMBER 6
Historic Yellow Springs Holiday Stroll. Lots of activities including an art and ceramic art exhibition and sale, story time in the library, refreshments and Santa. Art School Rd., Chester Springs. 6 to 8 pm. Free. 610-827-7414; YellowSprings.org.

DECEMBER 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-28
Brandywine Valley Wine Trail Holiday Open House. The wineries will be decorated



in their holiday finery and will be hosting carolers, holiday musicians and special holiday sale pricing. All wineries, weekends, noon to 5. Free. Wineries may be charging regular price for tastings. 866-390-4367; BVWineTrail.com.

DECEMBER 7, 21
Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides in Kennett Square. Ride through town, from the corner of State & Union Sts. \$5. Noon to 3. 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com.

DECEMBER 12
Holidays at Landis Valley: A Pennsylvania

VoxAmaDeus Concert Season **28**
 Valentin Radu, Artistic Director & Conductor

HANDEL
MESSIAH

Friday, December 5 at 7 PM
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill

Saturday, December 6 at 7 PM
 Nassau Christian Center, Princeton, NJ

Sunday, December 7 at 4 PM
 Daylesford Abbey, Paoli

Friday, December 19 at 7 PM
 Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter & Paul, Philadelphia

Sunday, December 21 at 4 PM
 St. Katharine of Siena Church, Wayne

RENAISSANCE
Noël

December 12 at 8 PM
 ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
 CHESTNUT HILL

December 14 at 4 PM
 BRYN MAWR COLLEGE
 THOMAS GREAT HALL

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in·i·ti·a·tive
 noun
 1. One's personal, responsible decision: to act on one's own initiative.

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On With The Show ...

THROUGH JANUARY 11

Arthur and the Tale of the Red Dragon: A Musical Panto. The holiday tradition continues with the world premiere about the adventures of young Arthur, Merlin and the Dame of the Lake. Peoples Light, 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Call for curtain times and tickets. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 11

Les Miserables. An unforgettable story of heartbreak, passion and resilience of the human spirit. Featuring timeless songs such as "I Dreamed a Dream," and more. Media Theatre for the Performing Arts, 104 E. State St., Media. Call for curtain times. \$25-\$42. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.



DECEMBER 5-7

Trial By Jury and Carol Sing, presented by the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Chester County during West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas. Courtroom 1, Chester Co. Courthouse, Market & High St., West Chester. Fri, 6 pm; Sat, 2 and 8; Sun, 2 pm. \$5-\$12. 610-269-5499; GSS-ChesCo.org.

DECEMBER 5-6, 7, 12-14

The Theatre at Yellow Springs Presents **Miracle on 34th Street, The Musical.** Salt Performing Arts group performs at The Theatre at Yellow Springs, 1645 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. Enjoy hot chocolate, Norman Rockwell carolers, and pictures with Santa after every performance. For show times and tickets, visit SaltPA.com/Live-Theatre or YellowSprings.org.

DECEMBER 9-14

Cirque Dreams Holidayze. An international cast of over 30 artists costumed as holiday ornaments come to life and perform astonishing feats of disbelief. DuPont Theatre, DuPont Bldg., 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. Call for curtain times. \$55-\$79. 302-656-4401; DuPontTheatre.com.

German Christmas. You're invited to spend an evening celebrating a PA Dutch Christmas, tour historic buildings, huddle around a bonfire, sing carols and enjoy refreshments. Landis Valley Village & Farm Museum, 2451 Kissel Hill Rd., Lancaster. 6 to 8:30. Free with non-perishable food item to donate to Lancaster Food Bank. 717-569-0401; LandisValleyMuseum.org.



DECEMBER 12

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum Holiday Open House. Stroll through candle-lit grounds, enjoy holiday refreshments, listen to carolers and the Lukens Band, tour beautifully decorated, historic buildings, shop at the museum store, share your child's delight at the train display. 50 S. 1st Ave., Coatesville. Suggested donation of a canned good for the Coatesville Emergency Food Cupboard. 5 to 8. 610-384-9282; SteelMuseum.org.



MUSEUMS.....

THROUGH MARCH 15

Delaware Art Museum Exhibits & Events. *Through Jan. 11,* "From Houdini to Hugo: The Art of Brian Selznick." *Through Mar. 15,* "Portable Fire: A History of Match Safes." 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Wed-Sat, 10 to 4; Sun, noon to 4. \$6-\$12. Free Sun. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT.....

DECEMBER 3

Kennett Flash Presents "Sip and Savor with the Serafins." Performing a collage concert titled "Viennese Classical Roots" featuring

Mozart's *Quartet in D Minor* with music samples from Haydn and Beethoven. 102 Sycamore Alley, Kennett Square. 7:30. \$18. BYOB. 484-732-8295; KennettFlash.org.



DECEMBER 4-19

Sounds of the Seasons Concerts at Brandywine River Museum. Choral concerts by local schools and community groups: *Dec. 4,* Springfield High School, 10:30 and 11:15; *Dec. 9,* Pequea Valley High School; *Dec. 12,* Prospect Park School; *Dec. 18, 19* Octorara Senior High School. All concerts after Dec. 4 are at 10 am. Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. \$6-\$12. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 5

Christmas Concert at Neumann University— "My Favorite Christmas Songs." A concert of holiday favorites sure to get you into the holiday spirit. Meagher Theatre, Aston. 8 pm. \$5-\$8. 610-558-5626; Neumann.edu/Arts.

DECEMBER 5, 18

Holiday Concerts at The Colonial Theatre. *Dec. 5,* City Rhythm Orchestra: Holiday Style, 8 pm, \$10-\$25. *Dec. 18,* Charlie Brown Jazz: An Evening with the Eric Mintel Quartet, 7:30, \$15-\$20. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.



DECEMBER 6

Hometown Christmas Show at Kennett Flash. A great way to get the season started with four of regional artists performing their favorite holiday songs: Lori Citro, Rob Dickenson, Todd Chappelle and Jessica Graae. 102 Sycamore Alley, Kennett Square. 8 pm. \$20-\$24. 484-732-8295; KennettFlash.org.

DECEMBER 6, 13, 20, 27

JANUARY 3
Carols Concert at Brandywine River Museum of Art. International opera

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singer, Peter Campbell, accompanied by pianist, Laura Cilia. Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. 2 to 4. \$6-\$12. 610-388-2700; Brandywine Museum.org.

DECEMBER 7
Immaculata Symphony Christmas Concert. Christmas Concert featuring a selection of holiday favorites. Alumnae Hall, Immaculata University, King Rd., Immaculata. 3 pm. \$10, under 12, free. ImmaculataSymphony.org.

DECEMBER 7
Delaware County Symphony Concert. The music of Armondo Bayolo, Carl Maria

VonWeber, Dmitri Shostakovich. \$15-\$18. Neumann University, Meagher Theatre, Aston. Concerts, 3 pm. 610-879-7059; DCS Music.org.

DECEMBER 13-14
Chester County Choral Society Presents "Miracles at Midnight." Get in the holiday spirit with Schubert's *Magnificat* and Charpentier's *Midnight Mass* for Christmas. **Dec. 13,** Avondale Presbyterian Church, 420 Pennsylvania Ave., Avondale, 7:30 pm. **Dec. 15,** Church of the Good Samaritan, 212 W. Lancaster Ave., Paoli. 3 pm. \$10-\$20. Chester CountyChoralSociety.org.



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Here Comes Santa Claus

An at-a-glance guide ... where to find Santa in County Lines country.

- Dec. 5,** Phoenixville Christmas Parade
- Dec. 5-6,** Malvern's Victorian Christmas
- Dec. 5-6,** Old Fashioned Christmas In Wayne
- Dec. 5-7,** MARSdrinks Old-Fashioned Christmas Celebration in West Chester
- Dec. 6,** Historic Yellow Springs Holiday Stroll
- Dec. 6,** Coatesville Christmas Parade
- Dec. 6,** Christmas In Marshallton
- Dec. 6,** Jingle Fest at Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, Oaks
- Dec. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21,** West Chester Railroad's Santa's Express
- Dec. 6, 13,** Holiday Events in Downingtown
- Dec. 7,** Holidays at the Willows, Radnor
- Dec. 7,** Winter Festival at Oakbourne
- Dec. 10,** Brandywine River Museum Children's Christmas Party.
- Dec. 12,** National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum Holiday Open House
- Dec. 13,** Santa Arrives by Helicopter at The American Helicopter Museum
- Dec. 13,** A Sugartown Christmas in Historic Sugartown

DECEMBER 15
Pennsylvania Symphonic Winds Holiday Concert at Exton Mall. Premiere wind bands play beautiful holiday selections to brighten your season. 260 Exton Sq. Pkwy., Exton. 7 pm. Free. PennsylvaniaSymphonicWinds.org.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....

DECEMBER 6
5th Annual Festive 5K Run/Walk in Coatesville. All ages and fitness levels are welcome to participate in this fundraiser for the Coatesville Youth Initiative. Scott Middle School,

800 Olive St., Coatesville. 8 am registration, race starts at 9. \$25. 610-380-9080; CoatesvilleChristmasParade.com.



DECEMBER 6
Stroud Water Research Center Moonlit Stream Stomp. Wear sturdy shoes and warm clothes for a moonlit stomp along White Clay Creek. You'll see in the dark using sounds, smells and the moon to lead the way. This night hike will conclude with a campfire, s'mores and hot chocolate. For ages 9-15. Stroud Water Research Center, 970 Spencer Rd., Avondale. 5 and 7 pm. \$5. 610-268-2153.

DECEMBER 14
25th Annual Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis. Wear a holiday-themed costume and run or walk a 5K route with your team members and celebrate the season by giving. This is a dog-friendly event. Great Valley High

School, Phoenixville Pk., Malvern. Registration, 8 am; run at 10. \$15-\$25. JBRPhilly. Kintera.org.



TOWNS, BOROUGHS & SPECIAL EVENTS.....

DECEMBER 5, JANUARY 2
First Fridays. Stroll through area towns to find exhibits, galleries, restaurant specials, entertainment and extended hours. **Berwyn,** 610-203-4543; BerwynDevonBusiness.com. **Kennett Square,** 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com. **Lancaster City,** 717-509-ARTS; LancasterArts.com. **A Main Line ARTitude,** 610-642-4040; FirstFridayMainLine.com. **Oxford,** 610-998-9494; DowntownOxfordPA.org. **Wayne,** 610-687-

7698; FirstFridayWayne.com. **West Chester,** 610-738-3350; DowntownWestChester.com; **Wilmington,** 302-576-2100; ArtLoop WilmingtonDE.com.

DECEMBER 13, JANUARY 10
Media's Second Saturdays. Media's version of First Fridays. 610-566-5210; MediaArtsCouncil.org.

DECEMBER 15
Chester County Historical Society Presents History on Tap. CCHS President, Rob Lukens, talks about how figures from our local history inspired him during difficult times. Doc Magrogan's Oyster House, 117 E. Gay St., West Chester. 6:30 pm. Free. DocMagrogan.com. ♦

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Send a description of your activity to Info@ValleyDel.com by the first of the month preceding publication.

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Chadds Ford Historical Society Tour



West Chester Holiday Tour includes Tanglewood



Holiday House Tour, Delaware Art Museum



Media Historical Society, Candlelight Tour

Homes at the Holidays

GET IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT
WITH A HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR.

Chadds Ford Historical Society's Candlelight Christmas Holiday House Tour

The 29th year of this self-guided tour includes over 15 beautiful homes and historic sites in Pennsbury and Kennett townships. Read a stop-by-stop guide to the tour at CountyLinesMagazine.com under Features. *Sat., Dec. 6, 1 to 6. \$20 advance; \$25 day of tour at the Chadds Ford Historical Society. 610-388-7376; ChaddsFordHistory.org.*

West Chester Public Library Holiday Home Tour

West Chester Public Library presents a walking tour of ten beautiful homes in the southwestern neighborhood of West Chester. A special stop this year, Tanglewood, the home of West Chester University Presidents. Benefits the Library. *Sat., Dec. 6, 10 to 3. Tickets at the Library, 415 N. Church St. or online. \$30; \$40 day of tour at the Library. 610-696-1721; WCPublicLibrary.org.*

Phoenixville's Candlelight Holiday Tour

Beautifully decorated homes and churches, crafts, music and refreshments. Benefits Children and the Arts Scholarship programs at Firebird Children's Theatre and Phoenix Village Art Center. *Sat., Dec. 6, 2 to 6. Tickets and programs available after 1:30 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 121 Church St. \$20-\$25. 610-933-9181; PhoenixvilleHistoricalSociety.org.*

Friends of Chester Springs Library 25th Anniversary House Tour

Five beautiful homes are on the tour this year. *Sat., Dec. 7, 1 to 4:30. Holiday reception at The Montgomery School, 4 to 5:30. Tickets available at the Library, 1685 Art School Rd., Chester Springs and Gardner's Landscape Nursery, Chester Springs. \$45. 610-724-2925; CCLS.org.*

Holiday House Tour and Winter Arts Festival at Delaware Art Museum

This year's tour will focus on historic Brandywine Valley barns bedecked for the holiday season. You'll visit a stylish guest-house barn built in the 1790s, an "entertainment" barn built in 1821, a newly built "green" barn with a western flair and a rustic 1870 barn made of original wood and Wilmington Blue Rock. (Note: the barns are not wheelchair or walker-friendly.) The Winter Arts Festival at the Museum offers artisan shopping on Dec. 12 and during tour day. *Sat., Dec. 13, 10 to 4. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. \$30 in advance, \$35 day of tour. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.*

Media Historical Society Candlelight Holiday House Tour

Beautiful homes in Media and the surrounding area will be open for tour. *Sat., Dec. 13, 1 to 6. Tickets available at Earth and State, Quincy Marqueting, and Media Florist, all on State St., Media. \$25. 610-891-9929; MediaHistoricalSociety.org.*

Candlelight Holiday Home Tour in Kennett Square

Historic homes will be decked out for the holidays and open to visitors. This year's tour will visit homes and public buildings that highlight the unique and varied history of Kennett Square. *Sun., Dec. 14, 4 to 7. \$20. 610-444-8141; KennettSquareHistory.org.*



Chester County Choral Society

42nd Season
Gary Garletts
Conductor

Ann Marie Ellis
Accompanist

Saturday
December 13, 2014
7:30 p.m.
Avondale
Presbyterian Church
420 Pennsylvania Ave.
Avondale, PA 19311

Sunday
December 14, 2014
3:00 p.m.
Church of the
Good Samaritan
212 W. Lancaster Ave.
Paoli, PA 19301

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at Midnight**

Schubert's
Magnificat

and
Charpentier's
**Midnight Mass
for Christmas**

for tickets and information visit
www.chestercountychoralsociety.org

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20th Anniversary Gala: Fri, Dec 5 6 - 10 pm
Tickets 610-688-3553 or craftforms.org



Judith Kaufman Pin

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& Gallery Shop Open Mon-Sat 9 - 4



wayne art center
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Chester County Hearth & Home



THE SIMPLE STORY OF A GIRL, A GIFT AND A FANCIFUL DREAM COMING TO LIFE.

What's your favorite holiday tradition? For some it's decorating the Christmas tree, baking cookies from family recipes, or tearing into to pile of holiday gifts. For many area families, their favorite thing is going to *The Nutcracker*.

Brandywine Ballet invites you to join Clara and her beloved Nutcracker on an enchanted journey to the Land of Sweets for their 35th production of *The Nutcracker* at West Chester University. This signature holiday event has been a wildly popular tradition of Chester County for many years, and for good reason!

Brandywine Ballet Company has brought together pre-professional, professional and special guest dancers from diverse artistic backgrounds since 1979. The Ballet's annual performance of this Christmas classic remains a highlight of the season and a delightful experience for the entire family.

For over 100 years, people of all ages have enjoyed having *The Nutcracker* transport them to a magical place where toy soldiers battle mice, dolls turn into princes, and the Sugar Plum Fairy reigns in splendor. Tchaikovsky's whimsical melodies mesmerize while the set transforms from a family Christmas party to a dazzling snowy forest. Clara and her Prince are welcomed along with viewers to enjoy performances fit for royalty—from dancing snowflakes, delectable desserts, and the Sugar Plum Fairy herself!

Everyone can be a kid in a candy store as each scene unfolds with more sweets and treats. From chocolates, coffee, tea and candy



Nutcracker Tea

canes, to marzipan, gingerbread, dewdrops and sugarpilums, Clara's voyage with her Nutcracker Prince allows the audience to connect with their inner child and enjoy the wondrous spirit of Christmas.

Brandywine Ballet stages this timeless production with stunning choreography, gorgeous costumes and talented dancers. The eight performances feature David Kloss and Donna Muzio's traditional choreography integrated with new elements by Nancy Page.

In addition to the ballet, families are invited to attend the special *Nutcracker Tea*, Brandywine Ballet's unique brunch of party delights. Tea,

sandwiches, fruit trays, cookies and favors are part of the celebration. Members of the company will be on hand to greet guests, sign autographs and give partygoers an up-close look at the beautiful details of the show's costumes.

Don't miss this holiday magic! ♦ *- Mary Irene Dolan*

IF YOU GO:

The Nutcracker: Dec. 12–21, check website for times
Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St., West Chester

Nutcracker Tea: Dec. 13 & 20 at 2:30, Dec. 21 at 12:30
Philips Autograph Library (next to the Concert Hall)
700 S. High St., West Chester

Tickets: \$25-\$42 for performances, \$25 for the tea
Box Office: 610-696-2711; BrandywineBallet.org



This holiday season People's Light once again turns their stage into an enchanting world where children from ages 5 to 105 gather to marvel, cheer for heroes, boo at villains, laugh and share a memorable time together. In other words, it's time for the much anticipated Holiday Panto!

As part of People's Light's 40th Anniversary season, the theater presents *Arthur and the Tale of the Red Dragon: A Musical Panto*, which follows the British Panto tradition of taking a well-known tale and turning it on its ear to the delight of the audience.

The scene is set in the magical Panto-land of Nrevlam. (Hint: like Merlyn's life pattern, the solution is puzzled out backwards.) It's a world full of jousting knights, stag hunting parties, a Questing Beast and magical wizards. But the dreaded Red Dragon, controlled by the evil Sorceress Morgana, threatens the land. Nrevlam must find a king to unify and lead them, and fast!

Enter Arthur, or "Wart" as he's been nicknamed. Consigned to be a squire, but destined to be much more, young Wart comes under the tutelage of the wizard Merlyn and his magical animal friends. With the help of the Dame of the Lake, they guide Arthur through quests involving beliefs, burdens, a certain sword in a stone, plus audience-pleasing references to Bob Dylan, Barry Manilow, *The Sound of Music*, one-hit-wonder Tag Team's "Whoop! (There It Is)," *Hamlet* and *Star Wars*.

When Morgana makes a decisive grab for Excalibur and rule of the land, Arthur must take what he's learned and fight for the good of Nrevlam. You'll want to see what happens!

Becoming King: Arthurian Legends

Once co-authors Pete Pryor and Samantha Bellomo settled on King Arthur as inspiration for this year's Panto, they confronted the wonderful but vexing problem of which tale among a vast range of Arthurian legends to explore. The historical existence of King Arthur continues to be debated by historians. So, how have we become familiar enough with Arthurian legends to name a Las Vegas hotel Excalibur and call JFK's administration "Camelot"?

Sources about this late 5th- and early-6th-century king are comprised mainly of folklore and literary invention and vary widely. The earliest reference to King Arthur is in a 6th-century poem by court poet Aneirin in elegies for the warriors of Britain's Early Middle Ages. Later influential versions include a 12th-century tale by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Medieval romance literature by 12th-century French poet Chrétien de Troyes.

Perhaps more recognizable are *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory published in 1485, Alfred Lord Tennyson's 1859 poem *Idylls of the King*, and T.H. White's famous 1958 fantasy novel *The Once and Future King*.

From these sources, we've come to know tales of Excalibur, the Sword and the Stone, the magician Merlyn and his owl Archimedes, Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, the Knights of the Round Table, Sir Galahad, Sir Gawain, and quests for the Holy Grail.

Of these renowned tales of King Arthur, Pryor and Bellomo became most intrigued by young Wart in T.H. White's work. Pryor explains, "Arthurian legend is rife with great stories. There are many narrative threads to choose when creating a Panto from such rich material. However, the tale of young Arthur and his journey to become King is what interested us the most. Using the nascent leader's mentoring process from Merlyn as a jumping-off point, we've created a Panto that will be unlike any other."

Composer and Lyricist Michael Ogborn adds, "This Panto is different from all the others because we are playing with stage craft in a way we've never done in the past. All the essential Panto elements [music, dance, slapstick, audience participation, a candy bit, etc.] are a bit more magnified. Also, this one has a dragon."

This One Has a Dragon

As the title suggests, this story involves a Red Dragon. To create such a terrific and terrifying monster, the production team enlisted the talents of Robert Smythe, one of the foremost puppet artists in the country.

The design process involved a five-day workshop this summer where, Smythe describes, "I built stage prosceniums, shields, flags and horses out of corrugated cardboard and played with shadows, two-way mirrors and a French-singing dinosaur (don't ask), all the while absorbing [Pryor and Bellomo's] telepathic signals about what a Panto is and can be. Since then, with the help of a special effects workshop in tentacle design, I've been refining those rough ideas into one of the largest puppets I've ever made!"

This year, People's Light is excited to present a captivating, visually stunning, and rollicking Panto experience—with a dragon—and adding a new, fantastical version to sit among the varied stories that have and continue to construct the legendary figure of King Arthur.

Come join in the fun! ♦

—Gina Pisasale

IF YOU GO:

Where: People's Light, 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern

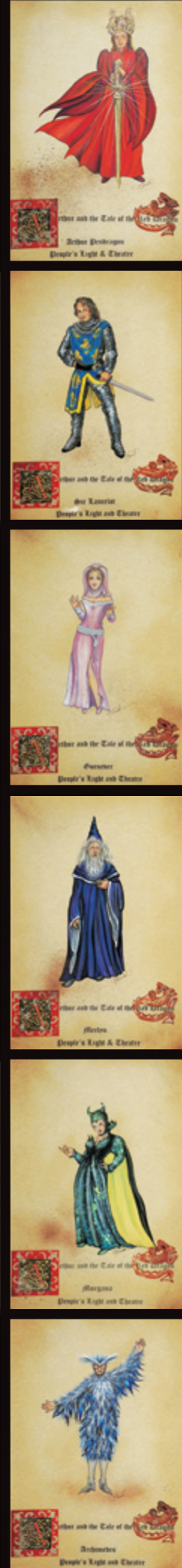
When: Through January 11

Box Office: 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org

Next: *The Cherry Orchard*, Feb. 1 - Mar. 8;

Jason and the Argonauts, Mar. 12 - Apr. 8;

Biloxi Blues, Apr. 29 - May 24; and more.



A Brandywine Christmas...

Is the Best Kind of Christmas

Hillary Holland

Be sure to enjoy some favorite holiday traditions this year.

The chug-chug of model trains traveling along their tracks and the whimsical charm of “critter” ornaments decorating Christmas trees are familiar sounds and sights of “A Brandywine Christmas.” The young and young at heart are enchanted by the annual train display, the festive trees, and, new this year, a fascinating art exhibition celebrating knights!

Unforgettable, iconic paintings and drawings that bring to life the romance and daring stories of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and other tales of quests and chivalry will be on view in “Enchanted Castles and Noble Knights.” These legends were immensely popular in the late 19th century, and artists of America’s Golden Age of Illustration (1880-1930) took up brush and pen to create art as dramatic as the stories.

This exhibition will include a selection of Howard Pyle’s intricate, compelling pen drawings depicting Arthurian legends, and, of course, N.C. Wyeth’s gorgeously colored, romantic paintings for illustrated editions of *The Boy’s King Arthur* and *The White Company*. You’ll also see work by Walter Crane, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Maxfield Parrish, Louis Rhead, Frank Schoonover and others on view. Over 35 works of art are drawn from private collections and from the rich holdings of the Brandywine River Museum of Art.

Another highlight: The exhibition will also feature a model medieval castle owned by Andrew Wyeth. Made for him in 1927 by his brother Nathaniel and painted by their father N.C. Wyeth, the castle reminds us that such tales did indeed spark imaginations.

Louis Rhead, from *Idylls of the King*

N.C. Wyeth, from *The White Company*



N.C. Wyeth, from *The Boy’s King Arthur*

Trains, Trains and More Trains

With a collection of trains including 150 locomotives and 300 freight cars that run on nearly 2,000 feet of track, the model train display at the Brandywine River Museum of Art is a popular holiday tradition, delighting visitors of all ages. Toy trains in the collection are mostly Lionel products dating from 1915 to the present, often supplemented with trains loaned by visiting engineers.

A few facts about the trains: The number of trains running at one time is five, and the longest train is more than 70 feet long, pulled by two locomotives. The trains are O-gauge (the distance between the rails is 1¼ inches). It takes seven people six days to build the display each year! But it’s well worth the effort.

Holiday Critters

Each year, the “glue gun gang” of volunteers begin way back in March crafting the ornaments and tabletop decorations made from natural materials. Seed pods, dried corn cobs, dried yarrow, statice, cornflowers and egg shells are just a few of the “ingredients” that go into making Brandywine critters.

By the end of November, the more than 100 volunteers have made nearly 9,000 critters for display in the museum and for the annual critter sale during the first weekend in December. Proceeds from the sale of critters benefit the Volunteers’ Art Purchase Fund. ♦



Critter ornaments are a Brandywine tradition.



Seven people take six days to build the train display.



IF YOU GO:

A Brandywine Christmas, through Jan. 4, 2015
Brandywine River Museum, Rt. 1, Chadds Ford
610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org

In 2015, you may also want to stop by Andrew Wyeth’s Studio, which was recently designated a National Historic Landmark.

PHOTOS BY CARLOS ALEJANDRO AND MARK GORMEL

CRAFTFORMS 2014



Wayne Art Center celebrates the 20th Anniversary of this holiday exhibition and sale.

Give something made by hand this year to a special person on your holiday list. And there's no easier way to find a unique gift than at the Wayne Art Center as they celebrate the 20th year of Craft Forms, an international juried exhibition of fine contemporary crafts, December 5 to January 31.

This eagerly anticipated exhibition will include items such as the finest works of ceramics, woodworks, hand-crafted jewelry and hand-sewn pieces of clothing from nationally and internationally recognized artists. Treat yourself to something special and one-of-a-kind as you multi-task and combine some last-minute Christmas shopping for others.

After Craft Forms kicks off, over 25 local artists will display their distinctive works for sale, alongside local restaurants offering tasty treats—to sample and purchase—at The Holiday Shopping fundraiser, December 13.

See a wide range of crafts from unique hand blown glass to 3D prints to exotic woodwork on display, including Pittsburgh Glass Center works, fine hand-dyed textiles, ceramic art, plus many fine jewelry pieces. You'll also find a special selection of crafts available for purchase at the Gallery Shop, available only at the Wayne Art Center, making the pieces extra special.

“Living with Craft,” this year’s companion exhibition, features lifestyle vignettes—master works staged with idealist furniture, lighting and decorative and functional objects. Expect works from local artists, like Nakashima Woodworkers of Bucks County, known for their organic, free edge, styled furniture. Thomas Moser, with showrooms in Philadelphia and Devon, will be promoting natural, American black cherry wood works. “Living with Craft” is part of the Wayne Art Center’s mission of expanding the public’s awareness of fine contemporary crafts by demonstrating how crafts can be aesthetically integrated into contemporary living spaces.

The December 5th Preview Party will welcome 200 artists, patrons and guests with festive cocktails, a martini bar ice luge, hors d’oeuvres from Jeffrey Miller Catering and live music. Get to know the artists whose work will be on display at Craft Forms and support The Wayne Art Center by attending Craft Forms’ 20th year. Make art part of your life. ♦

-Zoey Mills

Proceeds from the Holiday Shopping event benefit the Wayne Art Center and the educational and outreach programs for children and adults. Call 610-688-3553 for tickets to the Preview Party. For other events, check the website. Wayne Art Center, 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. 610-688-3553; WayneArt.org; Monday–Friday, 10 to 5, Saturday, 10 to 4.



Christmas

in the

Sweet Spot



CHECK OUT WEST CHESTER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Malcolm Johnstone § Photos by Timlyn Vaughan



The Christmas season has a special sweetness, with holiday cookies baking, candy canes hanging and sugar plum fairies dancing. And West Chester, with its well-known Old-Fashioned Christmas celebration, is the place where shoppers can experience this season as it was meant to be. Fresh garlands trim the storefronts, strolling carolers sing classic seasonal favorites, and stores are stocked with the fashionable, the curious and the sweet.

This year, you're likely to find that downtown is just a little bit better than usual with new offerings in the sweet treats department. Luscious chocolates, delectable gelato, tasty pastries and fresh-made desserts of all varieties are available throughout downtown West Chester. And it's still a sweet place to shop for presents.

Delight Your Palate

Looking for delicious stocking stuffers? [Éclat Chocolate](#) (24 S. High St.) is embarking on a world tour of chocolate with Destination Bars. Try the Pennsylvania Dutch Pretzel—milk chocolate with Lancaster County pretzels—or Caramelized Hazelnuts—dark chocolate and hazelnuts from Tarragona, Spain. Unique and rare flavors to buy singly or in flights of six.

Rich chocolate pairs well with [Kreutz Creek Vineyards'](#) dessert wines (44 E. Gay St.). Try Ruby "K" Port to complemented dark chocolate or the seasonal choice, Holiday Wassail, with pumpkin, cloves and cinnamon—serve warm or cold. Or sip late harvest Vidal Blanc with flavors of honey and fruit, a great white dessert wine. Check out the handmade Corkage Nuts, Christmas tree ornaments made with wine corks.

[Judy's Just Desserts](#) serves up not just bakery items but ice cream, custom cakes, gourmet Italian coffees, breakfast sandwiches, plus whatever else inspires Judy. House faves are chocolate roll cake with white buttercream icing and the eight-layer chocolate coffee torte. Don't miss the bacon maple ice cream, a customer favorite (237 E. Gay St.).

If you're looking for a place to sit and chill, try [Kiwi Yogurt](#) (22 S. High St.). Choose from 20 flavors of premium yogurt and over 60 fresh, flavorful toppings to create your own delicious cup of Kiwi.

Then there's Vincenzo, born and raised in Ferrara, Italy. His favorite dessert is a hometown artisanal gelato. When he moved to West Chester to be with Julianne, he thought ahead and brought the recipe along. So now he has it all. And he's sharing the gelato—all 18 flavors—which is what [Gemelli Artisanal Gelato & Dessert Café](#) is all about (12 W. Market St.). How sweet it is!

And finally, fans of the recently reopened [Lincoln Room](#) will be happy to warm up with a restorative cup of tea and a little something sweet. New owner Amy Hamlet will be baking cinnamon croissant bread pudding, petits fours and more. Order your favorite sweet treat or enjoy a sampler plate (yum!) before heading back for round two of holiday shopping (28 W. Market St.).



Holiday Happenings

Victorian carolers, decked out in their period costumes, will stroll through the shops and eateries on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons in December. Sponsored by the West Chester Downtown Foundation, it's become the holiday tradition that sets the tone of the season's spirit while browsers fill the charming shops.

Another great West Chester tradition, **Old-Fashioned Christmas** is on December 5-7 this year. Find the best spot to greet Santa and read more about the parade in the article in this issue.

House tours are yet another holiday highlight and several are featured in our Events Section in this issue.

West Chester's Holiday Home Tour showcases ten beautiful homes, each with its own charm and history.

As a bonus, Tanglewood, home of West Chester University presidents, will be open. December 6, 10 to 3; snow date December 8.

Benefits the West Chester Public Library. For details, visit WCPublicLibrary.org.

Also on December 6, **WCU Live!** and the **National Marionette Theatre** present *Pinocchio* a beloved tale of a puppet who wants to become a real boy. For family audiences ages four and up, 2 p.m., running about an hour. WCU Live! also presents *Vertical Current* on Friday, December 12, at 7:30 p.m., bringing the appeal of pop music, charisma of jazz, groove of funk, and soul of gospel to West Chester. Tickets at WCUPA.TicketLeap.com or call 610-436-2266.

And finally, be sure to catch a performance of *The Nutcracker*, the timeless ballet performed by the **Brandywine Ballet Company**, December 12-21, and be transported to the "Land of Sweets." Brandywine-Ballet.org. Read more in the article in this issue.

There are even more family and holiday events following this article.

Sweet Shopping

Don't miss the latest on the retail scene as you shop local for the holidays. Enjoy your holiday shopping in all your favorite shops and boutiques, plus new spots to check out. Stroll the historic streets of West Chester rather than wandering in circles in the mall!

West Chester University has extended the ol' college spirit with **The Ram Shop** (134 N. High St.). Family, friends and alums can all celebrate their pride with a wide selection of sports and casual logo apparel—from polo shirts and sweaters to jackets and hats in distinctive purple and gold. Check out their great collection of novelty items for the Ram fan on your list.

As the new owner of **Kaly**, the popular women's clothing boutique, Polly Zobel proudly took over from her mother Holly Brown and put her own stamp on the shop (37 W. Gay St.). After

finishing an extensive make-over for the space, Polly keeps the focus on accessories, plus high-quality artisanal items and fun, unique clothing. You'll find sustainable, fair trade and "green" gifts, like Archipelago, a natural fragrance line of soy candles.

Carol Giblin and John Suplee recently opened **Church Street Gallery**, a traditional gallery with solo exhibitions by select regional artists. During December, John himself will be the featured artist. Located, not surprisingly, at 12 South Church Street, the gallery features the region's most popular original artists in a setting that evokes the ambiance of an art museum.

A great new gift idea this year is historical maps, and **Visual Expansion Gallery** (126 N. High St.) carries a wide selection of original and reproduction maps of nearly all the boroughs and townships in Chester and Delaware Counties, dating to the 18th century, available with exquisite frames. Of special interest is a Barclay Rubincam map of the Battle of Brandywine and the Christian Sanderson Chester County map drawn by Andrew Wyeth.

As a personal trainer, Shane Gordon has a passion for fitness. And this passion led him to open **Reload Nutrition** (141 W. Gay St.) where major sports supplement and nutrition brands are available, including Country Life Vitamins and Greens First Super Foods. If you're looking for a gift for someone who is into fitness and health, talk to Shane about products that work.

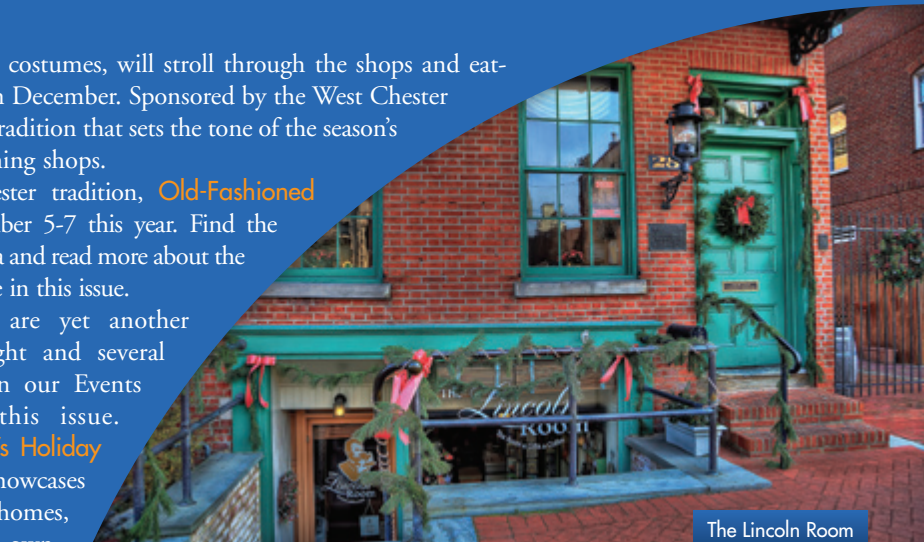
Downtown West Chester now has a local electronics store with a wide selection of new and used phones and tablets. **On The Go Mobile** (136 W. Market St.) actually lets you check out your favorite handheld device before you buy. Browse their selection of tablets and iPods along with cool accessories. Perfect for traveling or the kids. Service and repairs are also available.

For the foodie on your list check out **5 Senses** (133 W. Market St.), now with a selection of native Pennsylvania cherry wood utensils by Jonathan's Spoons, portion control devices where just a squeeze will give you the exact amount, and Incred' a Brew—a great alternative to the French press for perfect one-cup serving. Owner Karen Cavin also stocks Joseph Joseph functional and space saving everyday kitchen utensils made with the contemporary cook in mind.

Finally, during this busy season, why not take time and treat yourself? Try a personalized approach to beauty and wellness from **Remedi Day Spa**, at its new location, 16 S. Church Street. Owner Victoria believes the combination of quality skin care and an active fitness routine provide the best results for maintaining a healthy, youthful appearance. You'll also find products like Sesha, PCA Skin, Mlis, and Infinity Sun for skin care. RemediDaySpa.com. ♦



Éclat Chocolate



The Lincoln Room



Sweet Shopping



The Ram Shop



5 Senses



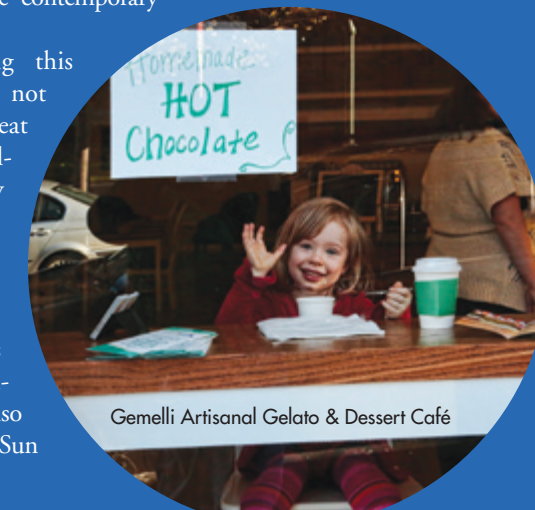
Judy's Just Desserts



Church Street Gallery



Remedi Day Spa



Gemelli Artisanal Gelato & Dessert Café

HOLIDAY FUN in West Chester



Through December 24
16th Annual Miniature Show. See 29 favorite Chester County artists display at Sunset Hill Gallery, 23 N. High St. Mon, 9:30 to 5:30; Tues-Fri, 9:30 to 7; Sat, 10 to 6. 610-692-0374; SunsetHill-Gallery.com.

December 5-7
MARSdrinks Old-Fashioned Christmas Celebration in West Chester. Dec. 5, 6th Annual "Jingle Elf 5K Run" at 6:30. Parade begins at 7:15. Dec. 6, Breakfast with Santa at Chester County Hist. Soc., 8:30 & 10 am, \$14, res req, 610-436-9010. Dec. 6, Drop, Shop & Wrap, West Chester Municipal Bldg, 2 to 5 pm, \$12. Dec. 5-7, Trial By Jury, Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Chester Co., Courtroom 1, Chester Co. Courthouse, Market & High St. Fri, 6 pm; Sat, 2 & 8; Sun, 2 pm. \$5-\$12. 610-696-4046; GWCC.org.

December 6
West Chester Library Holiday Home Tour. See Events page in this issue.

December 6
West Chester Charity Ball. Dinner, dancing and auction. Benefits The

Friends Assoc. for Care and Protection of Children, Emergency Family Shelter and the Homeless Prevention Program. West Chester Golf & Country Club, 111 West Ashbridge St. Cocktail chic or black tie. 6:30 to 11. \$175. 610-431-3598, ext. 219; FriendsAssoc.org.

December 6
Uptown! Entertainment Alliance Presents A Christmas Carol ... More or Less. A retelling of this beloved holiday classic, appropriate for all ages. 225 N. High St. 6 pm. \$5 donation. After the show, join the PA Academy of Performing Arts Singers for candlelight carolling. 610-738-3350; UptownWestChester.org.

December 6-7
"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" by Barbara Robinson. A hilarious Christmas tale of a couple struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant faced with casting the Herman kids—probably the most inventively awful kids in history. The Chester County Hist. Society, 225 N. High St. 12:30. WestChesterStudio.com.

December 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
West Chester Railroad's Santa's Express. Join Santa for a 90-minute journey to



Glen Mills, singing holiday songs along the way. Trains depart Market St. Station, 230 E. Market St., 11 am, 1 & 3 pm (5 pm last two weekends). \$6-\$22; under 2, free. 610-416-1794; WestChesterRR.com.

December 6, 12
WCU Live! Presents ... Dec. 6, National Marionette Theatre Presents "Pinocchio," 2 pm, \$5-\$8. **Dec. 12,** Vertical Current, 7:30 pm, \$15-\$20. Madeleine Wing Adler Theatre, Performing Arts Center, 817 S. High St. 610-436-2266; WCUPA.Edu/VisitingArtists/VAS.asp.

December 7
Winter Festival at Oakbourne. Carols, arts and crafts, hot chocolate, cookies and Santa in the mansion, which will be beautifully decorated for the holiday season. 1014 S. Concord Rd. 3 to 5. Free. 610-692-1930; WesttownPA.org.

December 7
37th Annual Brian's Run. A 5-mile race through West Chester and North Hills benefits Homes for Our Troops. Hen-

derson High School, 400 Montgomery Ave., 1 pm. \$25-\$30. Brians-Run.org.

December 11-14
The Forty-Niners Present "Lights, Camera, Christmas!" Divas, stage moms and drama, oh my! See what happens in the original holiday show at Stetson Middle School, 1060 Wilmington Pk. Good-will offering. Thurs-Sat, 7:30; Sat-Sun, 2 pm. 49ersChorus.org.

December 12-21
Brandywine Ballet Presents The Nutcracker. See "Of Special Note."

December 13
SantaFest at the American Helicopter Museum. Bring your camera to see Santa arrive by helicopter. 1220 American Blvd. Santa arrives at 11 and 1:30. Helicopter Rides from 11 to 3. \$40 includes holiday activities and snacks. 610-436-9600; HelicopterMuseum.org.

December 21
Brandywine Singers Holiday Concert. Messiah. Julianne Baird & Tempesta di

Mare Baroque Orchestra. West Chester United Methodist Church, 129 S. High St., 3 pm. \$20-\$40. TheBrandywine-Singers.org. ♦



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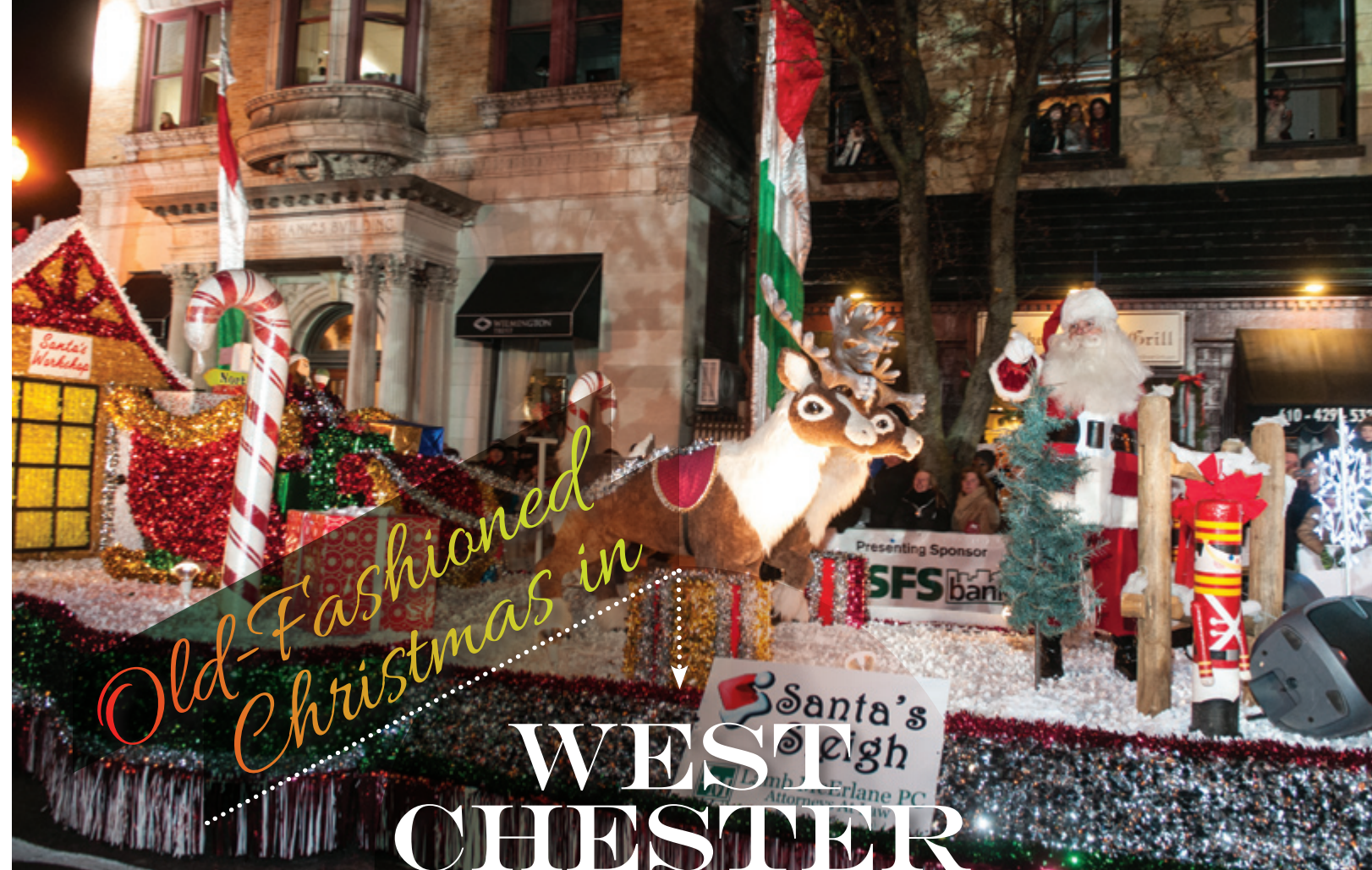


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On December 5th, the 35th Annual MARS Drinks Old-Fashioned Parade goes National!

It's time for another edition of the MARS Drinks Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade presented by QVC in downtown West Chester! Now in its 35th year, the Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade is pulling out all the stops. This year the parade will broadcast live, with on-site updates and cutaways from the parade broadcast nationally on Christmas Day! Be a part of the fun and help share our small-town's holiday spirit with the rest of the United States!

The parade kicks off on Friday, December 5th at 7:15 p.m. and promises a spectacular mix of holiday cheer and favorite attractions. Local schools, businesses, volunteer fire companies, restaurants and other groups will join the many marching bands, floats and antique cars from across the country that celebrate the history and spectacle of Old-Fashioned Christmas.

"The Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce is proud to partner with MARS Drinks and QVC on this project," says Chamber President Mark Yoder. "Their continued investment in the parade demonstrates their support, not only for the Chamber, but the entire West Chester community." MARS Drinks North America returns for a sixth year as Title Sponsor, with QVC as the parade's Presenting Sponsor for the second year, along with Under the Sun Productions, the production company behind the Miss America "Show Us Your Shoes" Parade, the National

Memorial Day Parade, and Philadelphia's Wawa Welcome Independence Day Parade.

Before the parade, local businesses and organizations throughout downtown West Chester will host Holiday Open Houses featuring delicious holiday treats and entertainment to get everyone in the holiday spirit. And for those with extra energy, there's the 6th Annual Jingle Elf Run through town to add to the fun.

So pick your spot to watch the fun. The parade heads out from New and Market Street, before traveling east on Market Street, then north on Matlack Street, west on Gay Street, and finally, finishing by heading south down New Street. Family Tip: the best early view of Santa is on West Market Street, so save your spot early!

The Chamber can't wait to celebrate the holiday season with the West Chester community and keep this tradition thriving! ♦

For a complete list of events for the weekend, check out GreaterWestChester.com.



Chamber President Mark Yoder with ABC's Adam Joseph

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- ★ Private Parties — Birthdays, Bridal & Baby Showers & Holiday Celebrations
- ★ Fondue Fridays are back, December 5th & 19th 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Call for reservations

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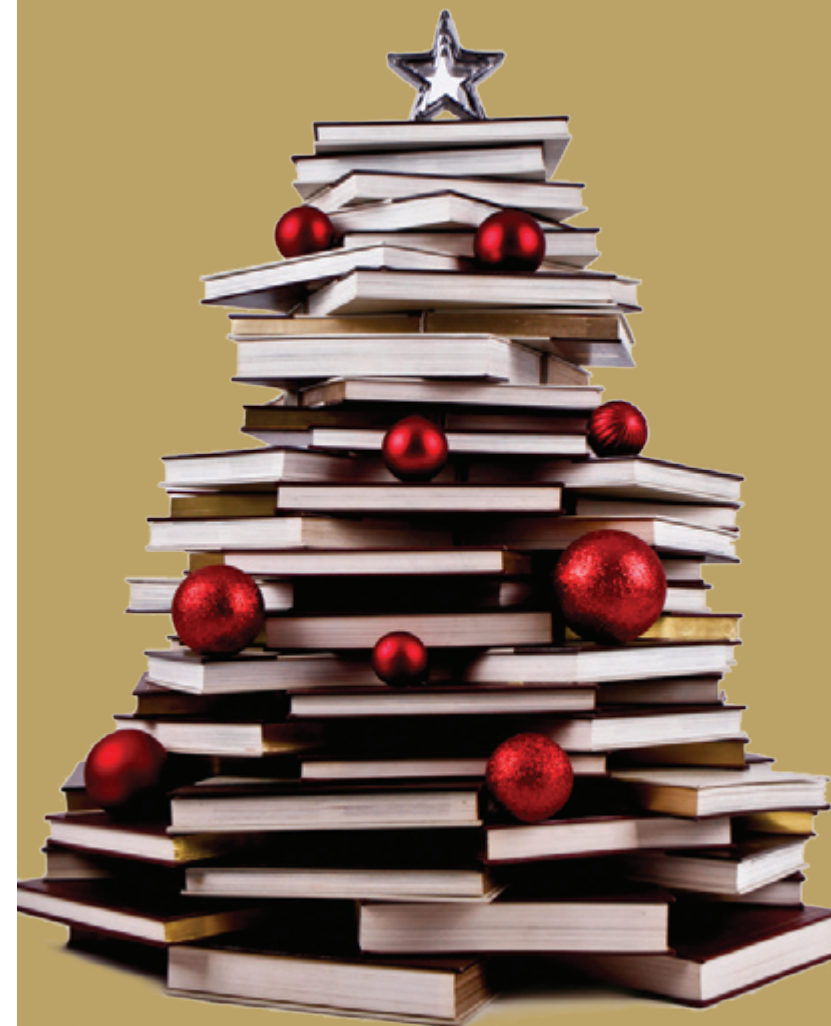


PHOTO BY NINA MATTHEWS

The holiday season is a great time to buy books. Not just because we're feeling spendy and gift giving is an excellent excuse to foist our literary taste onto our friends and relatives. But don't discount the power of those motivations.

The fall season has been chock-full of novels to sink your teeth into, plus books by big-name authors. This happy circumstance is partially because publishers like to release "blockbuster" titles likely to be big sellers before the holidays. But it also has to do with prizes. Just like movie release dates are scheduled to position films for the awards season, so too are book release dates calculated to coincide with some of the bigger literary prizes.

All these factors lead to a veritable wonderland of fall and winter reading and book buying. And don't forget that although it may be better to give than to receive, it's also good to pick up something for yourself as long as you just happen to be in a bookstore.

Here's your map to this season's reading wonderland.

Celeb Memoirs

There are lots of celebrity memoirs out this season. Here are the three we're most excited about.

Not That Kind of Girl

by Lena Dunham

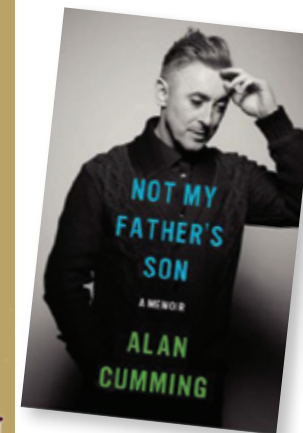
Anyone who is familiar with Dunham's oeuvre—her HBO series *Girls* or pre-*Girls* film *Tiny Furniture*—knows what they're getting into with her new book *Not That Kind of Girl: A Young Woman Tells You What She's "Learned"*. And that is mainly bawdy and irreverent stream-of-conscious prose that is as surprising as it is predictable.



Not My Father's Son: A Memoir

by Alan Cumming

Of the "funny people" memoirs on this list, this one is the least amusing. It's not because Cumming's usual wit and charm don't leap off the page as they do the stage or screen—from his return to Broadway for *Cabaret* or his long run as Eli Gold on *The Good Wife*.





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Rather it's because this performer's life proves to be much more tragic than his on-stage persona generally implies. In the framework of a British genealogy reality show, Cummings reveals bits about his life "then" and "now" in alternating chapters. "Then" bits revolve mostly around his cruel upbringing in Scotland, with "now" providing insight and inspiration that past demons can be overcome.

Yes, Please

by Amy Poehler

Hearing that Amy Poehler has written a book should be all you need to put it on your must-read list. Anyone who binge-read Poehler-pal Tina Fey's *Bosypants* in one sitting is probably already queueing up for this one. It's also worth noting that fans of Poehler's *Ask Amy* Web series won't be surprised at how much poignant and practical advice the funny lady can dole out.

Novels of Note

Winter reading has to include some fiction. If you're not sure whether those on your list prefer strong stories, characters, settings, language or mood, here are recommendations that should satisfy broadly.

The Paying Guests

by Sarah Waters

This book was released at the end of summer, and so the smitten literati will have had just enough time to whip the masses into a frenzy with rave reviews by holiday shopping time. This compelling '20s-era story starts out as a novel-of-manners—Waters is known for her Victorian narratives—but turns into a sexy murder mystery.

The Bone Clocks

by David Mitchell

This is one of those books that takes sci-fi/fantasy fiction out of the realm of genre fiction and elevates it to the collective consciousness of the more literary crowd. Psychic phenomena and time travel are resurrected from the shallow graves Nicholas Sparks buried them in. This page-turner spans decades of a woman's life as her initial encounters with "the radio people" reverberate through the years and all of her important relationships.

The Laughing Monsters

by Denis Johnson

With this post-9/11 story of international intrigue, Denis Johnson proves that spy thrillers aren't just pulp. A love triangle develops in the Uganda-Congo borderland with timely overtones of shifting military and political loyalties.

Don't Forget the Nonfiction

Every list includes readers who seek meaty, substantive ideas to keep them warm in winter. Try these.

On Immunity

by Eula Biss

This book is generating almost as much conversation as the controversial issue at its center—vaccination. Biss makes no bones about the fact that she came down on the side of the recommended immunization schedule for her own child, and while the book is balanced, it also comes down on the side of vaccination. Biss mixes personal narrative, science and folklore to give a very well-rounded look at the history of immunization.

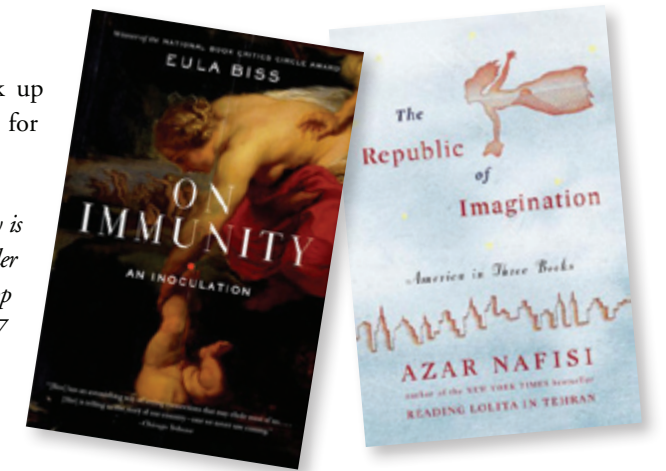
The Republic of Imagination: America in Three Books

by Azar Nafisi

From the author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* comes a literary exploration of how to combat what Nafisi sees as burgeoning problems for the Western world—insular thinking, bias and a utilitarian mindset. She suggests that making certain classic books required reading would help combat some of the social ills that have developed.

And don't forget to pick up something great to read for yourself! ♦

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WHO'S GOT THE POWER?

Ed Malet

Want to keep the lights on this winter?

During a February snowstorm last winter, over 39,000 homes—a fifth of Chester County—were without power. For many, that outage lasted several days. For some, it was one of several cold and dark times last winter.

Others, however, only experienced a temporary flicker, and the lights, heat, refrigerators, appliances ... continued unabated. What sorcery did they possess? *Magic?* No. *Foresight?* *Planning?* *Investment?* Yes.

In general, the empowered ones had a *stand-by generator*. Their units kicked on automatically. Having spent about six to ten thousand dollars initially, and followed up with annual maintenance, those homeowners merely heard about the outage. Or perhaps a neighbor came by with a tale of woe, seeking information, a cell phone charge or a warm place to stay.

Others had *portable generators*: not an optimal solution—usually less powerful, and thus unable to run their “whole house”—but more economical than a stand-by, and, everything considered, better than nothing. Typically for the portable variety, the owners had to throw a switch, plug it in, press a button or yank a starter cord. They sacrificed some convenience and power quality. Once

going, though, the unit, more or less, performed the same and kept the lights on.

Who Needs a Generator?

Anthony Guerrero of Guerrero & Sons installs generators professionally. So does George Goglia of Southern Chester County Electric, among others in our area. Not surprisingly, both report a substantial increase in installations following the winter of 2013-14. And both Guerrero and Goglia say that “anyone who can afford one” should get one. Many homeowners, however, are flummoxed and a bit hesitant given the cost.

As the interest in home generators soars, Guerrero suggests caution may be appropriate to those doing their research. “Buy American,” he advises. Not out of jingoism, but practicality. He’s thinking about replacement parts: you’ll need them ultimately. Your supply chain—think China—can be very, very long.

Both he and Goglia advise that the engine and the warranty for the generator are important. The name brands—Briggs & Stratton, Honda, Kohler—are key. For warranties, two to five years is suggested. Although ideally, you’d like the warranty to last as long as your house...



Honda 5000 Watt Generator

Plan B: Go Portable

If you’ve decided a stand-by generator is not for you, you may want to consider the portable option. George Goglia cautions, though: you’ll need more than the generator itself. You need a proper transfer switch—that’s not just a light switch, it’s a \$500-plus panel. You can’t just plug it in and sit back.

Your first step is to determine how much wattage you’ll need from the generator. Second, what appliances and systems you’ll do without. Typically, you’ll forego energy sucks, like central air conditioning.

Even after you’ve narrowed down the size you need, you’ll still find a wide choice of brands. Honda, Westinghouse, Briggs & Stratton, Generac ... and the differences may not be obvious. Honda, for example, makes a 5 kW unit for about \$2500. Briggs & Stratton meanwhile makes the same size for \$650. Both carry a three-year warranty, use gasoline and have about the same fuel efficiency and capacity. So why is there a three-fold price difference?

One difference is the Honda has an ignition switch; while the B&S model needs its cord pulled to start—think lawn mower. Another difference is the “surge wattage”—the power needed largely to start an appliance or other power-user, like sump pump, garage door opener. The Honda has more.

Other features missing in the B&S model are the “ground-fault circuit interruption” and “low-oil shutdown”—technical sounding, but they’re key safety features. The Honda may be quieter as well—ranked at 72 dB, while B&S’s level is not advertised. The cost is \$1850 more, though, not to mention about 50 more pounds in weight—it’s over 220 pounds.

All this for something that probably won’t be used and will have to take up room in your shed until then ... Why not think about it tomorrow?

Installation Counts

After you buy your generator, the next step is to comply with the warranty’s conditions, including installation by factory-certified, experienced, code-compliant professionals. Installation counts! (Though less so for a portable generator than a stand-by.)

Guerrera says that at least four specialist skills may be needed in an installation, and it’s rare to find one person, or even one company, that has them all.

For one, a plumber is necessary for the pipes that tie your generator to the natural gas line (or propane, diesel or gasoline).

Second, a small engine specialist must tune the engine—it’s “not a lawn mower,” says Guerrero. The tuning is based on the unique combination of local site conditions including load, load sensitivity, fuel pressure, gas pressure, atmosphere, etc.

Third, wiring and other connections must be handled by a master electrician.

And finally, the installer must be

trained and authorized by the specific manufacturer of the unit. The generator will require technical adjustments, which can only, under the warranty, be made by the factory-authorized provider.

This is all part of that initial investment.

As Does Maintenance

Similarly, the plan for maintenance counts. Goglia observes that a typical generator must be run at least 250 hours every year, even if not used. Once installed, a unit must be run weekly all year. Most are set up to do this automatically. And, each year, a technician will have to visit it to change the filters, plugs and oil. Think of this maintenance as similar to what you do for your heating and other systems.

With the season upon us, we all hope that this winter won’t be like last winter. We can hope. But, if there is a repeat, or if next summer Hurricane Sandy’s sister rolls up the coast, or if ... Wouldn’t you like to have power? ♦

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This Window Shopping Guide also will help. Save time. Save gas. Save your sanity as you shop local.

At *County Lines*, we want to convey our sincerest gratitude. To our readers and advertisers, we say a heartfelt thank you. We wish you the happiest and most wonderful of holidays. Your season, we hope, will bring you great joy.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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"critter" ornaments and jewelry, you'll be sure to find something for everyone on your list. Or, consider giving the gift of membership, which includes free admission to the Museum, shopping and dining discounts, and more, all year long. Don't miss the annual "Critter Sale," Dec. 6–7. Located on Rt. 1. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

CHESTER SPRINGS

Limoncello Ristorante, 499 Uwchlan Ave. 610-524-3112; LimoncellosCS.com. See entry under West Chester.

COLLEGEVILLE

Holiday shopping stressing you out? Relax for a day at **Eden Day Spa and Salon**, named the 2014 Best Day Spa in the Philadelphia region by Philly HOT LIST. This suburban oasis promotes well-being through relaxation, pampering and beautifying experiences in an inviting and calming environment. From Warm Stone Massage and Keratin Hair Smoothing to expert Brazilian Waxing, the spa offers a wide range of specialty services designed to make you feel balanced and beautiful. 378 W. Main St. 610-489-0800; EdenDaySpaAndSalon.com.

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Shere-E-Punjab, Drexelline Shopping Center, 5059 State Rd. 484-452-8041; ShereEPunjab.com. See entry under Media.

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Yoga and fitness classes; bestselling novels and puzzles; a makeover or a spa treatment; gourmet dinner, delectable breakfast; or elegant lamps ... these are a few of our favorite things. Satisfy all your holiday needs this year as you shop amongst the twinkle lights and cool crisp air at the **Eagleview Town Center**, 510 Wellington Square. InEagleview.com.

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Shere-E-Punjab, Concordville Towne Center, 301 Byers Dr. 484-841-6345; ShereEPunjab.com. See entry under Media.

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MALVERN

Enjoy a glass of wine and watch the snow fall from the comfort of the heated front porch at **The General Warren Inne**. Newly renovated but retaining every ounce of historic charm, this country inn, circa 1745, still offers its much-loved table-side classic dishes. But lighter, healthier choices are now available, like short rib flatbread, chicken roulade and quinoa tacos. A holiday treat. Lunch, Mon.–Fri., 11:30 to 2:30; Dinner, Mon.–Sat. 5 to 10. Live Music Thursdays in the Warren Tavern. 9 Old Lancaster Rd. 610-296-3637; GeneralWarren.com.

Mark your calendar for **Malvern Retreat House's Art Show 2015**, on February 4-8, 2015. Here you will find original juried artwork by more than 100 professional artists. Come to the complimentary wine and cheese reception, Friday, Feb. 6, 5 to 8 p.m. The show will be open Wed. through Sat. 10 to 7, Sun. 10 to 4. A portion of the sales benefits

Malvern Retreat House. McShain-Horstmann Family Life Center, 315 S. Warren Ave. 484-321-2562; MalvernRetreat.com/ArtShow.

There's something special at **Nota Bene Boutique** for you and other style lovers on your Christmas list! They offer clothing, gifts and accessories for women of all ages who dare to be different and stand out from the crowd. Treat your friends and family to something as beautiful as it is unique. Stop in at their downtown boutique and enjoy a fun day of shopping in a friendly and helpful atmosphere. 117 W. King St. 610-644-5016; NotaBeneBoutique.com.

MARSHALLTON

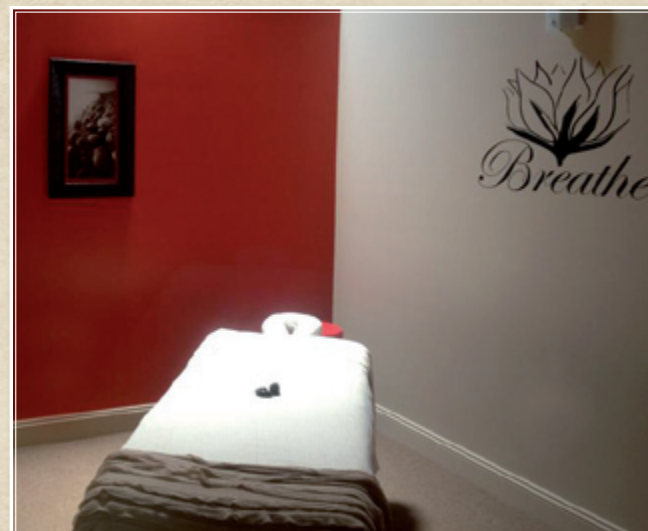
This holiday season, why not introduce some creativity, art, innovation and fun to your gift giving? Visit the **Merchant of Menace Re-Imaginers Gallery** and check out all sorts of whimsical and inventive items that will delight everyone on your list! Their artists see possibilities everywhere and create amazing works from a variety of reclaimed materials. You will find furniture crafted from New England barn wood, animal sculptures made from antique tractor parts, jewelry created from silverware and much more! 1351 W. Strasburg Rd. 215-704-7410; TheMerchantOfMenace.net.

MEDIA

If you're a fan of Indian food, we have just the restaurant for you—newly expanded and now with a full bar at the Media location! With a family of chefs and over 20 years' experience, **Shere-E-Punjab** in Media (plus Drexel Hill and Glen Mills), boasts fragrant spices blended in a centuries-old craft. Savor classics like flavored naan and roti flatbreads, chicken tikka masala and lamb korma along with vegan/vegetarian dishes. Just the place to warm up with a soul-satisfying meal this winter. 208 W. State St. 610-891-0400; ShereEPunjab.com.

NEW HOLLAND

There's nothing better than wrapping up in a cozy quilt after Christmas dinner, so give the gift of warmth this year. No two quilts are alike at **Witmer Quilt Shop**, 1076 W. Main St. Choose from over 100 creative



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options or get your own custom designed quilt. Emma Witmer, owner for 34 years, hand sews and designs authentic Pennsylvania Dutch quilts. And because each quilt has a story, Emma will surely tell you when you visit her charming shop. Mon. & Fri., 8 to 8, Tues., Thurs. & Sat., 8 to 6. 717-656-9526.

NEWTOWN SQUARE

Exceptional gift baskets and luscious fine chocolates are two great reasons to stop at **Christopher Chocolates**, celebrating more than 28 years of making life sweeter! They have a great selection of gourmet foods, candies and fine chocolates to create a customized gift basket to delight all on your gift list. Pick up a brochure for your gift-giving needs. They ship and deliver. 3519 West Chester Pk. (Rt. 3): 610-359-1669; Christopher-Chocolates.com.

Get your Christmas plants and flowers at **Mostardi Nursery**. Featuring distinctive plants for every season, Mostardi's offers a selection that will have your home looking greener and even better than last Christmas. The Christmas Shop features trees, wreaths, poinsettias and more. You'll even find garden accents, ornaments and accessories to delight anyone on your shopping list. Mostardi is dedicated to providing avid gardeners and everyday homeowners with plants for every season and every reason. 4033 West Chester Pk. (Rt. 3): 610-356-8035; Mostardi.com.



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NOTTINGHAM

For a tasty and educational adventure for you and the kids, visit **Herr's Free Snack Factory Tour**. Watch in awe as the potato chips you've enjoyed since childhood are made before your very eyes. Sample tasty chips, fresh and warm from the cookers, and share family fun during guided tours. Stop and shop at the gift shop—as well as in your local grocery stores—and check out Chipper's Theater for the inside scoop on the history of Herr's. Good for groups; handicap accessible. 285 Old Baltimore Pk. 610-932-6516; 800-637-6225; Herrs.com.



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PAOLI

Specializing in fun and trendy fashions, **Polka Dots** is dedicated to making every woman feel special and look fabulous. With all types of clothes, jewelry, shoes and accessories at attractive price points, this boutique has that special look for everyone, whether for polo matches, soccer sidelines or holiday parties. This award-winning shop makes customer satisfaction their primary mission—so you know you'll find what you're looking for. 29 Leopard Rd. 610-640-2714; Stores.ShopAtPolkaDots.com.

For fine jewelry, artisan gifts and collectibles, visit **Walter J. Cook Jeweler** in Paoli. This season everything sparkles with SUNA Brothers' beautiful heirloom quality diamond and colored stone jewelry, Italian jewelry designer, Mattioli, and the newest collection from Lika Behar and William Schraft. Michael Cook and his knowledgeable staff will help you select the perfect gift for a person near and dear to your heart. Serving the Main Line area since 1946, Walter J. Cook Jeweler is located in the Chestnut Village Shoppes, 36 Chestnut Rd. 610-644-5347; WalterJCookJeweler.com.

PHOENIXVILLE

Rejuvenate, refocus and remove the knots and stresses holiday planning has caused you this season with a visit to **Mindful Body and Soul**. The spa offers a variety of services from craniosacral therapy to reiki to yoga classes, and, of course, traditional massage therapy. Treat someone special to one of Mindful Body and Soul's events this coming New Year and relax and recharge together. Finish up your holiday shopping at their gift shop. 321 Bridge St. 610-933-6563; MindfulBodyAndSoul.com.



The Merchant of Menace Art Gallery
610.344.7774 • TheMerchantOfMenace.net

POTTSTOWN

Get an early start on your New Year's Resolutions by updating your home's look with some key new pieces of furniture. **Alegacy Furniture** offers Amish hand-crafted hardwood furniture, guaranteed to last for decades. There are plenty of opportunities to customize the size, height and finish of their American-made furniture. You can even bring in a sketch, and Alegacy Furniture will recreate the piece. Visit the showroom at 1486 S. Hanover St. 610-970-4340; AlegacyFurniture.com.

WAYNE

Give a one-of-a-kind holiday gift from the **Wayne Art Center**. Stop by for the 20th Anniversary of Craft Forms and Living with Craft exhibitions and sale, and browse the selection of jewelry, ceramics, glass, silver and hand-crafted furniture. Along with the show craft pieces, the Gallery Shop offers hand-made clothing, jewelry and accessories, plus you'll find even more at the Holiday Shopping event, December 13, 10 to 4. Art class gift certificates are also available for family and friends. 413 Maplewood Ave. Mon.–Sat. 9 to 4. 610-688-3553; WayneArt.org.

WEST CHESTER

To add sparkle to the holidays, visit the ultimate Jewelry store—**Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry**, 15 W. Gay St., specializing in Ideal Cut Diamonds, engagement rings and wedding bands, all at wholesale prices. Come see their big and unique engagement rings and fashion jewelry collection for 2015. They are also a full-service jeweler, including in-house repair, custom design and appraisals. You will also receive 30% off on all in-store jewelry for mentioning this article. 610-692-7707; BigsDiamonds.com.

For a memorable Italian meal you won't find anywhere else, **Limoncello Ristorante** has exactly what you're yearning for. With satisfying Southern Italian cuisine and a full-service bar, these popular family-owned restaurants in West Chester and Chester Springs will have you coming back

for more. Their award-winning lunch buffet (Mon.–Sat., 11:30 to 2) is a favorite, and Happiest Hour specials are a hit. If you don't stay for dinner, you can bring their special menu right to your home or preferred venue with their catering service. 9 N. Walnut St. 610-436-6230; LimoncelloWC.com.

Take a break from the hubbub of holiday shopping with a soothing cup of tea at **The Lincoln Room**, now under the ownership of Amy Hamlet. The tea room features old favorites, like butternut squash soup, as well as new dishes: Boursin Cheese Spread and an updated Waldorf Chicken Salad. Fondue Fridays are back. BYOB. Call for reservations. Open Tues. through Sat., 10:30 to 2:30. Closed Sun. & Mon., but open for private celebrations. 28 W. Market St. 610-696-2012; LincolnRoomWestChester.com.

Experience a fiesta you won't forget as you order from the extensive menu at **Más Mexicali Cantina**. With fresh ingredients that make flavorful entrées, their authentic Mexican dishes will make you glad you came. From flavorsome fajitas, tantalizing tacos and brag-worthy burritos, their enticing selection offers more than your typical meal. And with a Tequila bar, Velvet Lounge and West Chester's only rooftop dining destination, Mas's unique, lively atmosphere is a fitting complement to their flavorful cuisine. 102 E. Market St. 610-918-6280; MasMexiCali.com.

Visit **Matlack Florist** for all your holiday needs. Centerpieces and fresh flower arrangements make a great holiday gift. The Greenhouse is bursting with Poinsettias, Noble Trees and Holiday Garden Baskets. Fruit and Gourmet Baskets with local gourmet items are sure to please. Stop by the gift shop for a wonderful selection of home décor items, accessories and holiday giftware. Same day local delivery is available throughout the holiday season and year round! 210 N. Chester Rd. 610-431-3077; MatlackFlorist.com.

You don't want to miss **Sunset Hill Fine Arts Gallery's 16th Annual Miniature Show**. This show features over 30 Chester County artists' small pieces of art. There will be hundreds of paintings on display to purchase just in time for the holiday gift giving season. While you're there, stop in to see Sunset Hill Jeweler's unique collection of fine



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jewelry. Show runs through Dec. 24., 23 N. High St. 610-692-0374; SunsetHillGallery.com.

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The holidays mark winter registration at **West Chester Studio for the Performing Arts**, with classes beginning January 10. Perfect your performing abilities with professionals, who provide high-caliber training to all ages in a nurturing environment. Classes this year range from Acting to Improvisation to Musical Theatre. There's no better time than the holidays to encourage your performer to "Put their voice out in the world" with some new classes. 225 N. High Street. 484-995-2915; WestChesterStudio.com.

★ Delaware ★

NEWARK

It doesn't quite feel like the holidays without the festive decorations to match. And **National Decorative Distributors** can help you with all the seasonal and holiday items you can dream of ... and more. With

custom and pre-made arrangements, fresh plants and flowers, large display pieces and much more, this newly renovated treasure trove is sure to delight all who visit. Come see why it's called "the best kept secret in Newark!" Holiday hours are Mon.–Sat., 10 to 8; Sun., 10 to 6. 200 Happy Ln. 302-366-1722; NationalDec.com.

WILMINGTON

For the artsy friends and family members on your shopping list, the **Delaware Art Museum's Store** is sure to offer something unique to satisfy their standards this holiday season. Browse the Museum's curated selection of treasures, including handcrafted jewelry, vases, ceramics, textiles and books. Visit their website to shop online or find out more about the Museum's festive holiday offerings, events and special exhibitions for all ages. Don't miss "The Art of Brian Selznick," through January 11. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

Wondering what to get the young ones on your shopping list for the holidays? **Hansel & Gretel** has you covered. Specializing in fine high quality children's clothing, they have the latest and best in fashion for all kids—from infants through size 12 boys and girls. They carry many unique, hard-to-find items for all your special occasions, including clothing, toys and gifts for the holiday. Open Mon.–Sat., 10 to 5. Concord Pk. and Silverside Rd. 302-478-0383; HanselAndGretelOfDe.com.

Looking for something to add sparkle and pizzazz to your holiday wardrobe? Visit **Rags to Riches Upscale Resale**, specializing in designer, luxury and vintage goods for women at surprisingly affordable prices. You'll find just what you didn't know you needed for all occasions—from casually elegant to black-tie sophisticated. The inventory comes from the area's best dressed who shop in premier boutiques coast to coast and in stores from around the world. 5712 Kennett Pk. 302-654-5997; RagsToRichesResale.com. ♦



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The holiday table ... it's the gathering place to sit back and relax with special people and enjoy a beautiful meal laid out on a gorgeous tablescape that creates a warm and inviting atmosphere.

Now is the time to think about how to add holiday style to your table or buffet, before your home starts to fill with family and friends.

You'll find inspiration from many sources: area shops, museums and even private homes on one of the house tours this month. Here are a few.

Setting the Holiday Table



Winterthur Museum



The Little House Shop



Candlelight Holiday Home Tour in Kennett Square



Wine for the Holidays

Moira O'Neal

Some wags say we're heading for the most wine-derful time of the year.

With the holiday season in full swing, there are plenty of parties to plan and attend, gifts to give, and family gatherings to enjoy. Plus, there are even more occasions to open a bottle yourself, since most things go better with a glass—or two—of wine.

And for the many reasons you may want to share a glass, open a bottle or give a gift, here are some special wines to share, enjoy and discover.

Entertaining on a Budget

With a little direction and a few suggestions, there's no need to break the bank when entertaining. If you're hosting a holiday party and want to keep on budget, try these affordable choices.

Everyone needs a sparkler for holiday toasts, and *Treveri Cellars Brut NV* (\$13.99) is a delicious choice. From Washington state's Columbia Valley, this elegant and crisp Blanc de Blanc (made with a 100 percent Chardonnay grapes) offers pear notes with brioche and spice, plus a lovely, long finish. It pairs beautifully with lobster bites or fresh strawberries. It's so versatile, you won't want to save it just for the toast!

Another choice from the Columbia Valley, *Charles and Charles Chardonnay 2012* (\$10.99) is the happy result of a collaboration between two fantastic wine-

makers, Charles Bieler and Charles Smith. This donnay exhibits a nose of tropical fruits, apple and lemon, with warm spices and the flavors of apples, mango and vanilla. A tremendous white with just a touch of oak, this wine pairs well with seafood appetizers and cheese plates.

A fleshy Spanish red, *Lorca Monastrell Bullas 2009* (\$9.99) offers something different but is another excellent value. It shows aromas of dark fruit and blueberries with a hint of herbs, and the palate gives notes of spicy, dark fruit with a solid structure. This grape—known as Mourvedre—is full-bodied and tastes wonderful with hearty foods, like beef appetizers and portobella mushroom tarts.

Smaller Groups, More Serious Wine

For more intimate gatherings when you want to dedicate a little more to the wine budget, look for these elegant choices. Added bonus: Pick up extra bottles because these wines make great hostess gifts!

A gorgeous Spanish sparkler, *Raventos I Blanc Cava de Nit 2011* (\$26.99), has a

bouquet of rose petals, brioche and sweet herbs. A crisp acidity, along with red berry notes that finish dry, rounds out the palate. Made with Macabeu, Xarel-lo, Parellada and Monestrell grapes, this bubbly is a perfect aperitif.

California wine fans will love *Decoy Chardonnay 2013* (\$17.99), a fantastic Sonoma chardonnay. The nose offers scents of lemon, white flowers and vanilla, while citrus and tropical fruit flavors delight the palate and pair with excellent acidity and a lingering finish. Try this delicious white with crab cakes or creamy chicken dishes.

For a classic wine from Bordeaux, a memorable choice is *Clarendelle Pessac-Leognan 2008* (\$26.99). The nose shows fresh, dark fruits, while the palate is exquisite, delivering spice and black fruits with velvety tannins and a long finish. A blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petite Verdot grapes, this Bordeaux blend pairs well with meals featuring rack of lamb, roasted duck or prime rib.

Gifting Wine

Choosing a bottle of wine as a gift for the wine connoisseur can be daunting. Just ask my brother! So a little help is in order. If you're trying to find the perfect gift for the wine aficionado in your life, these exceptional wines should bring on the compliments!

Who doesn't appreciate a truly elegant rose champagne? Try *Billecart-Salmon Brut Rose* (\$74.99). With a nose of brioche, roses and strawberry, this timeless rose offers flavors of strawberry and spices, with hints of mineral and wonderful acidity. Made with Pinot Noir, Pinot Meu-

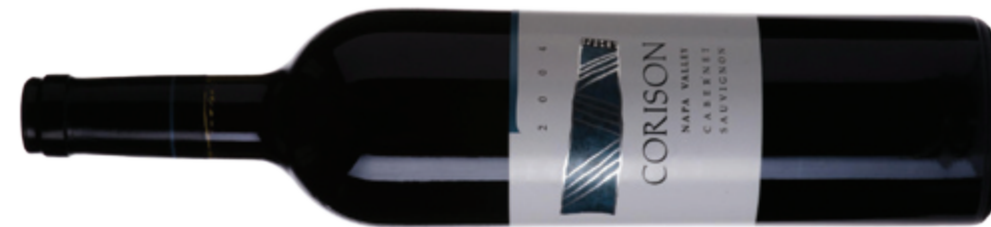
nier and Chardonnay grapes, this champagne is vinified.

If your aim is to add something special to the wine cellar, *Rebholz Riesling Im Sonnenschein 2010* (\$75.99), will age for at least a half decade more. Aromas of tart apples and citrus show on the nose, while flavors of lemon, peach and mandarin orange combine with notes of white pepper on the palate. There's a hint of sea salt and minerals, and lots of acidity balances this wine perfectly!

Another choice that will last—this one for five or six years—*Corison Cabernet Sauvignon 2010* (\$81.99) is a big Napa Valley cabernet. Black fruit, currants, and licorice aromas lend to flavors of dark plum, spice and more licorice. This wine ends with a long finish and velvety tannins. A special wine!

The holidays are such a joyous time of year. Celebrate and enjoy your friends and family with toasts and memorable meals. These suggestions just may help remove some stress over what wines to serve and give as gifts. Cheers! ♦

Moira O'Neal, a Chester County native, has 15 years of experience in the wine industry. She's grown wine grapes in McLaren Vale in South Australia and The Finger Lakes in New York. In 2002, she became an assistant winemaker at The Chaddsford Winery and is now a Retail Wine Specialist at the Fine Wine & Good Spirits West Goshen Store.



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Food News

A few of our favorite things to share this month about local food and drink



Beer at the Bistro.

Missed out when Allagash Brewing Company took over the taps at Bistro on Bridge in Phoenixville last November? Not to worry—Allagash returns to Phoenixville's beer mecca on December 11th.

"The Return to the Odyssey" will feature plenty of full-flavored brews such as Allagash's Confluence, Odyssey and White beers. The Limited edition Allagash Interlude 2013 is even making a return. Join the crowd for live music, delicious food and Allagash beer. 7 p.m.; 610-935-7141; 212 Bridge St., Phoenixville; BistroOnBridge.com.



Brew Your Own.

Jason Kohser, owner of West Chester's Boxcar Brewing Company, started as a home brewer, so why can't you? The dream of owning your own microbrewing company could be a reality when you test the waters with Hopbox Homebrewing Kits. Much more portable than the usual full home brewing kits, the

Hopbox kit eliminates the hassle of the cumbersome equipment and resembles a chemistry set. A perfect gift for that craft beer lover in your life. Check them out at BoxBrewKits.com.

Classic Breakfast.

Malvern's Classic Diner is taking over an historic Gay Street site in West Chester and dishing up the same soul-satisfying breakfast favorites, like eggs Benedict and homemade waffles. Their signature sticky buns will be baked on site, so there's no doubt the delectable aroma will draw you in from the street. An opening that will get foodies out of bed early! 16 E. Gay St., West Chester; 610-725-0515; TheClassicDinerPa.com.



Cheers to Hot Chocolate.

Celebrate this year's National Hot Chocolate Day on December 12th by visiting Chocolate World of Hershey Park, open year round. Or if you don't want to make the long drive, stay home and spice up some regular hot chocolate. Add a splash of Bailey's Irish Cream to make Irish Hot Chocolate or add some peppermint schnapps, perfect for the holidays. For the kids, add nutmeg and cinnamon to make Mexican Hot Chocolate. There are countless recipes to experiment with. Try Pinterest.com or Foodily.com.



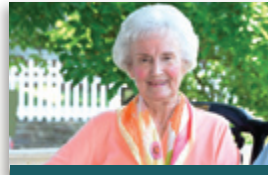
Born in Italy.

More Italian cuisine was served up at West Chester's restaurant scene when Alfredo's opened their new location in October. The menu at Mercato Ristorante and Bar includes favorites like hand-rolled gnocchi and mortadella meatballs. But the highlight is their wine cellar, perfect for private parties. With 12 craft beers on tap and the brick oven imported straight from Naples, your dining experience will be worth repeating. 33 W. Market St., West Chester; 610-701-6326; Mercato33.com.

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Gifts from the Kitchen

Laura Muzzi Brennan

Food Good Enough to Gift!

Here's what I love about Martha Stewart: she sets the bar high and everything she cooks looks pretty. Here's what I hate about Martha Stewart: she sets the bar high and everything she cooks looks pretty. When I read her holiday calendar—*Nov. 29: Hand forge tins for Christmas cookies. Dec. 1: Restock sanding sugars*—my conflicting feelings intensify.

I want the gifts from my kitchen to wow the eye as well as the palate, but I don't have unlimited time, money or staff (like someone else) to devote to the project. Besides, I forgot to start macerating my vanilla beans in July.

For all my kindred spirits, I offer this humble article. I'm hoping the advice and recipes from some of my favorite food professionals and home cooks will help you produce edible gifts that rival Martha's and leave you with time to settle down for a long winter's nap.

Throughout December, Art Roman of **The Kitchen Workshop** in Paoli teaches hands-on cooking classes including "Holiday Bake-Up Call," "Sweet and Savory Food Gifts from the Kitchen" and "Parent and Child: Crazy for Holiday Cookies." One thing he knows for sure: Everyone likes sweets especially ones with traditional flavors, so a tin of cut-out cookies and a quick bread studded with fruit are sure to please.



Slow Cooker Lemon Cheesecake



Wolff's Apple House

made pimento cheese? And who wouldn't love a quart of hearty soup or chicken potpie to heat up while wrapping gifts?

For the time-pressed DIYers on your list, Roman suggests taking some of the prep work off their plate. Give a log of frozen cookie dough, wrapped in parchment paper tied with a ribbon. That way, your friends can slice and bake at their own convenience. Or measure the dry ingredients for pop-

overs into a Mason jar and present it along with a popover pan and cooking instructions. For creative packaging ideas, see "Pretty as a Present" sidebar.

If you count yourself among the time-pressed, follow the route I call "store bought with love." My new go-to shop—**Wolff's Apple House** in Media—has been around for over 100 years. I visited Wolff's this fall and was blown away when I found so many favorite high quality locally-made goods under one roof.

Wolff's carries pasta from Vera Pasta, sauces from Vesper Bros. and jams by Christina Maser. Baked goods come courtesy of My House Cookies (pies, cakes, scones, quiches and yes, cookies), Jerome's European Breads, Le Bus and Abruzzi Bakery. (You can order holiday baked goods ahead of time.) You'll also find fresh produce plus soups and prepared foods made in-house by Chef Charles Smith.

Whether from scratch, semi-homemade or store-bought with love, remember that a gift given with a generous heart always tastes delicious.



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Cardamom-Pear Bread

Part of the ginger family, cardamom is an essential ingredient in Northern European Christmas baked goods including German Stollen (dense sweet bread packed with dried fruit and nuts) and Danish Brunkager (brown cookie). Recently, cardamom has gained popularity in the U.S. Here's Art Roman's recipe highlighting this warming spice.

1 2/3 C. all-purpose flour
 3/4 C. sugar
 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
 3/4 tsp. salt
 1 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
 1 1/2 C. chopped, unpeeled pears
 1/2 C. vegetable oil
 1/4 C. milk
 2 large eggs

For the topping:

1 Tb. sugar
 1/4 tsp. ground cardamom

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease bottom of a loaf pan. Set aside.

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cardamom together in a bowl.

In a separate bowl, mix pears, vegetable oil, milk and eggs. Combine dry and wet ingredients and mix only to combine.

Pour batter into loaf pan and sprinkle with topping. Bake in the center of oven for 50-65 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Remove bread from pan and place on a wire rack to cool completely.

Makes 1 loaf.

Pepper Jelly Thumbprint Cookies

By toasting the cornmeal first, Art Roman amps up the flavor of these cookies from Recipe.com. He says blueberry or raspberry—"any jam really"—would work well.

2/3 C. yellow cornmeal
 1 C. butter, softened
 1 C. packed brown sugar
 1/2 tsp. baking powder
 2 egg yolks

Pretty as a Present: Creative Packaging for Gifts from the Kitchen

Since we eat with our eyes first, what's on the outside counts. Here are easy ideas for gussying up edible gifts.

- Nestle biscotti or breadsticks in a colorful mitten lined with plastic wrap.
- Line pint and quart baskets (the kind tomatoes come in) with a holiday-themed tea towel. Fill with cookies. Wrap with cellophane tied with butcher's twine.
- Fill jelly jars or recycled tea tins with spiced nuts or granola. Cut a square of fabric using fancy-edged scissors and tie with a piece of raffia ribbon. Note: Bonne Maman jelly and fruit preserves come in jars with red and white checked lids. I save them all year to use at Christmas.
- Handwrite recipes and serving suggestions on cards you decorate yourself or recycled Christmas cards.
- Roll a silpat baking mat around a log of frozen cookie dough wrapped in parchment paper. Tie with a pretty ribbon.
- Tuck a jar of real vanilla extract or cardamom inside a bag of cookies made with those ingredients. Besides saffron, they're the most expensive spices around.

1 tsp. vanilla
 2 C. all purpose flour
 1/4 C. red or green jalapeno jelly (or cook's choice)

Preheat oven to 350°. Spread cornmeal on a rimmed baking sheet and toast in 350° oven for 5-10 minutes, until it starts to smell "corny." Allow to cool slightly.

Meanwhile, using a stand or hand mixer, beat butter on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Beat in brown sugar and baking powder. Add egg yolks and vanilla. Beat until combined. Mix in cornmeal and flour.

Shape dough into 3/4-inch balls. Place 1 inch apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Lightly press the tip of your thumb into the center of each ball of dough. Fill each center with about 1/8 tsp. jelly.

Bake for 10 minutes or until bottoms are lightly browned. Cool on cookie sheet for 1 minute. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool.

Makes approximately 8 dozen.

Flourless Apple Oat Bread

Dense and hearty, this quick bread paired with a steaming cup of tea turns any winter night from chilly to cozy. Recipe courtesy of Wolff's Apple House.



1 C. sugar
 1/4 C. maple syrup
 1 C. unsweetened applesauce
 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
 2 C. old-fashioned oats
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1/4 tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. salt
 1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/4 tsp. ground ginger or cardamom
 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
 1 C. cooked neck pumpkin purée (or 1 C. canned pumpkin purée)

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, beat together sugar, maple syrup, applesauce and vanilla. Set aside.

Grind the oats finely in a food processor. Add in baking soda, baking powder, salt and spices and combine.

Add oat mixture to sugar mixture and mix until well combined. Add in pumpkin purée.

Pour batter into a greased 8"x4" loaf

pan. Bake for 50-60 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out mostly clean (it will still have some applesauce on it). Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes in the pan. Remove from pan to cool completely.

Makes 1 loaf.

Slow Cooker Lemon Cheesecake with Spiced Wafer Crust

Anyone who's lived near Philadelphia knows fall has officially arrived when Sweetzel's Spiced Wafers appear on grocery shelves. The problem is I always get overly enthusiastic and buy more boxes than my family can eat. A delicious solution: use the wafers to create a gingery crust and then call on another local food icon—Philadelphia cream cheese—to make the lemony filling for this cheesecake.



3 Tb. butter
 1 C. spiced wafer crumbs
 2, 8-oz. packages Philadelphia Cream Cheese
 1/2 C. sugar
 2 eggs
 1 Tb. lemon juice
 1 tsp. lemon zest
 1/2 C. sour cream
 Pinch of salt

Place a 6-7-inch (2-3-inch deep) springform cake pan on top of two 12-inch squares of aluminum foil. Wrap foil securely around the pan.

Melt the butter. In medium bowl, combine butter and cookie crumbs. Press the crumbs into the bottom and 1 inch up the sides of the pan.

Using a stand or handheld mixer, beat together the cream cheese and sugar on medium-high speed until smooth. Add in eggs, lemon juice and lemon zest and beat until combined. Add sour cream and salt and beat until smooth. Spoon the batter into crust.

Place a rack into the slow cooker

and fill with 1/2 inch water. (If you don't have a rack, borrow this tip from the Taste of Home website: layer two 24-inch pieces of aluminum foil. Starting with a long side, roll up foil to make a 1-inch wide strip. Shape the strip into a circle and place in the bottom of your slow cooker.)

Set the cheesecake on the rack. Cover with a triple layer of paper towels and the lid. Cook on high for two hours. Do not peek! Turn off the heat and let

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cake stand until the slow cooker has cooled, 1-2 hours. Wrap in aluminum foil or plastic wrap and refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Note: The beautiful thing about cooking cheesecake in a slow cooker is that the filling steams, leaving a completely smooth top.
Makes 6-8 servings.

Smoked Gouda-Parmesan Biscotti

Making these biscotti requires a good deal of hands-on time—and a knowledge of kneading—but I was so intrigued by the flavor combination, I had to include the recipe. Art Roman of The Kitchen Workshop recommends serving these savory biscotti with chili.

2¾ C. flour
½ C. shredded smoked gouda or cheddar cheese
⅓ C. freshly grated Parmesan cheese
¼ C. sun-dried tomato pieces

3 Tb. yellow cornmeal
3 Tb. pine nuts, toasted
2 tsp. baking powder
¾ tsp. salt
½ tsp. dried basil
⅓ C. milk
1 Tb. olive oil
3 large eggs

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Combine flour and next 8 ingredients (through basil) in a large bowl.

In another bowl, combine milk, oil and eggs, then stir with a whisk. Add milk mixture to flour mixture, stirring until well blended. (Dough will be crumbly and slightly dry.)

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface; knead 7 times. Divide dough in half. Shape each portion into an 8-inch-long roll. Place rolls, 6 inches apart, on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Flatten to 1-inch thickness.

Bake for 25 minutes. Remove from

baking sheet. Cool 10 minutes on wire rack.

Reduce oven temperature to 325°. Cut each roll on the bias into 12 (½-inch) slices. Stand slices upright (not on their sides) on baking sheet.

Bake 25 minutes. (Cookies will be slightly soft in center but will harden as they cool.) Remove from baking sheet and cool completely on wire rack.

Makes approximately 24 biscotti.

Mrs. Wolff's Cranberry Relish

Recipe courtesy of Wolff's Apple House.



12 oz. fresh cranberries
1 C. sugar
1 C. water
1 navel orange with peels, diced
¾ C. walnuts, finely chopped

Place all ingredients in a saucepan. Boil gently for 10 minutes.

Transfer to a bowl and cool completely to room temperature. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Sauce will thicken as it cools.

Makes 3 servings.

Curried Pecans

Art Roman created his own spice blend for these addictive pecans. Eat them out of hand with cocktails, toss them in salads or grind them finely and use in place of breadcrumbs.

1 lb. pecan halves (about 4 cups)
½ C. sugar
2½ Tb. corn oil
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
1¼ tsp. ground cumin
¼ tsp. ground coriander
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground cloves
½ tsp. chili powder

Preheat oven to 325°. Blanch the pecans in boiling water for 1 minute and drain well. While still hot, put the pecans in a bowl and toss them with the sugar and corn oil. Let stand 10 minutes.

Arrange in a single layer on a rimmed baking pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes, turning every 10 minutes. When pecans are brown and crisp, put them in a bowl.

In another bowl, combine the seasonings and toss with the still warm nuts. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Makes 1 lb.

Stella's Stellar Granola

Last Christmas, my neighbor, Stella,

dropped off a bag of this sweet, crunchy snack. We gobbled it up before she got back to her house!

3 C. rolled oats
¼ C. uncooked quinoa
1 C. unsweetened pecans or walnuts
1 C. slivered almonds
1 tsp. sea salt (plus more for sprinkling)
1 C. unsweetened pumpkin seeds
1 C. sesame seeds
1 C. unsweetened coconut flakes, optional
1 Tb. cinnamon
¼ tsp. nutmeg
¾ C. sweetener*
½ C. coconut oil
1 C. dried fruit (suggestions: sweetened Montmorency cherries, raisins, or blueberries)
* Stella uses a combination of honey, agave and maple syrup to sweeten.

Preheat oven to 300°. Combine oats, quinoa, nuts, salt, pumpkin and sesame seeds, coconut and spices together in



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a large bowl. Add sweeteners and oil, and mix well.

Spray a large baking sheet with deep edges or glass Pyrex pan with a non-stick spray, then spread granola evenly in the pan. Sprinkle more sea salt (about ¼ tsp.) over the granola.

Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring well after 30 minutes. (You'll know your granola is finished when it looks toasted and smells wonderful!) Let the granola cool off a bit before you transfer it to another bowl. Then add the dried fruit.

After granola cools completely, scoop it into glass jars. A pretty square of fabric tied around the top with a bow makes this a lovely gift!

Makes about 10 servings.

Chipotle Pumpkin Soup

The chipotle's heat balances the pumpkin's sweetness in this warming soup shared by Chef Chuck Smith of Wolff's

Apple House. Despite its creamy texture, this soup contains no dairy products, so it freezes well. Note: Smith encourages cooks to adjust quantities of spices, lime juice and salt to taste.



- 3 Tb. olive oil
- 1½ med. yellow onions, chopped
- 1 Tb. ground cumin (or to taste)
- 1 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce
- 1 Tb. dried oregano (or to taste)
- 1½ C. brown sugar, firmly packed
- 7½ C. pumpkin puree
- 1 gallon chicken stock
- 2½ Tb. lime juice (or to taste)

1 Tb. salt (or to taste)

Heat olive oil over medium high heat. Saute onions, cumin, chipotle pepper, oregano and dark brown sugar until onions are tender and brown sugar has completely melted. Add pumpkin and chicken stock.

Cook until the soup has reduced enough to thickly coat the back of a spoon. Puree in a blender or food processor. Add lime juice and blend. Add salt and additional lime juice to taste.

Makes 1 gallon.

Chicken Pot Pie

Every winter, I experiment with chicken pot pie with the goal of cutting prep time without sacrificing taste. Here's my latest go-to recipe—one I'd be proud to give as a holiday gift.

- 5 Tb. butter, divided
- 1 Tb. olive oil

- 1 large onion, medium dice
- 2 stalks celery, medium dice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ C. flour
- ½ C. chicken broth
- 1 C. half-and-half
- 2 tsp. dried herbs (parsley, chives, dill, basil and tarragon.)
- 2 C. cooked shredded chicken breasts
- 3 C. frozen mixed vegetables (carrots, peas, corn, green & lima beans or cook's choice), rinsed and drained
- 2 sheets store-bought puff pastry or pie crusts
- 1 egg, plus 1 tsp. water

Heat oven to 400°. In a large skillet or Dutch oven, melt 1 Tb. butter with olive oil. Add onion, celery and a pinch of salt. Cook over medium heat for 5-10 minutes until vegetables soften. Stir frequently to prevent caramelization. Set vegetables aside and wipe out skillet.

In the skillet, melt 4 Tb. butter over medium heat and with a whisk, mix in flour a little at a time to form a roux. (You'll feel as if you have too much flour, but don't worry, after 2-3 minutes, it will all be incorporated into the butter.) Add broth, half-and half and dried herbs. Cook until sauce thickens, stirring frequently and breaking up any lumps. Sauce will be ready when it coats a spoon.

Mix in chicken and partially thawed vegetables. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Divide filling between two pie dishes. Top with puff pastry or pie crust. Trim extra dough and, if desired, roll it out and cut holiday shapes to decorate tops of pies. Make a few slits in the pastry.

In a small bowl, whisk egg and water together. Brush egg wash over tops of pies. Bake for 20 minutes until crust is golden brown. Check after 10-15 minutes; if crust is browning on edges but not in the middle, place strips of aluminum foil on edges and continue baking.

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To freeze, allow the filling to cool completely before putting the crust on top. Do not brush with egg wash. Wrap in plastic wrap and then aluminum foil. To cook from frozen, remove plastic and foil, brush with egg wash and cook at 375° for 35-45 minutes.

Makes 2 pies.

Bourbon-Soaked Cherries

My friend Kath offers this take on one of Martha Stewart's easy recipes. Serve over ice cream or spoon into an Old-fashioned or a Manhattan.

- 1 C. good quality bourbon
- ⅛ C. simple syrup
- 1 long strip of orange peel
- ¾ C. dried organic cherries

In a small saucepan, bring bourbon, simple syrup and orange peel to a simmer over low heat. (Note from Martha: Watch carefully, since bourbon may ignite.) Simmer for 2-3 minutes.

Add cherries to a 12-oz. glass jar. Pour in bourbon mixture. Screw on lid and let stand overnight.

Makes one jar. ♦

Laura traces her love of all things culinary to the first time she leafed through her mother's Betty Crocker's Cooky Book—which still occupies a place of honor among her 600+ cookbooks. A passionate supporter of local food, she co-founded a farmers market, judges area food contests, and anticipates restaurant openings with the excitement most people reserve for winning a Mega Millions jackpot.



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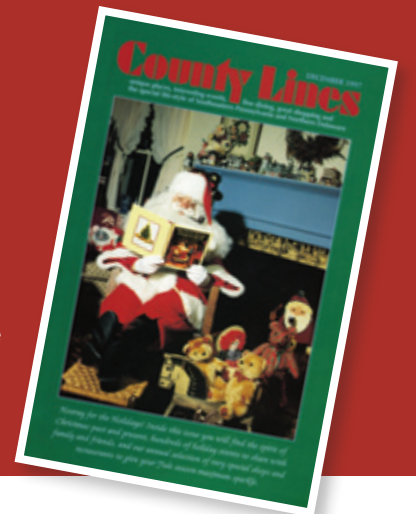
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talking with

Santa

We all know Santa has many helpers during the hectic holidays. With appearances at malls, visits to hospitals, and, of course, being the finale of Christmas parades, his To-Do list is the longest around! Luckily, he has helpers. For 30 years, the same helper has been part of West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas parade and he graced our 1997 cover! We sat down with that very special helper for this story.



What's it like being Santa's helper?

This has to be the best job in the world! That's one reason I've been doing it for so long, almost 40 years since my first appearance. Being in parades and seeing kids at this happy time of year is pure holiday magic. I do enjoy meeting so many kids—talking with them, urging them to be good—and seeing the wonder in their faces. Not to mention all the cookies!

Is there a Santa school? To teach you how to ho-ho-ho appropriately?

Yes, there are Santa schools to train helpers. But that's all I'll say about that. I was inspired by a truly great helper, Warren Mercer, who was part of the Old-Fashioned Christmas parade before I joined. I think there are folks who were born to be Santa because of their love and understanding of children and appreciation of the holiday. Some of that spirit is captured in the book *The Real Santa Story*, another inspiration for me.

Santa hangs out with some interesting characters. Who have you appeared with?

I've gotten to know the Phillie Phanatic, Sally Star (former cartoon show host), Dick Vermeil (former Eagles coach), Tug McGraw (Phillies pitcher when they won the World Series in 1980). But my favorites are still the kids who believe.

There has been a big change, though, in how kids relate to Santa. Years ago, kids kept their special relationship with Santa until 5th or 6th grade. Today, it's often gone after kindergarten.

What are some of the unusual gifts kids asked for?

I remember one child asked for a visit from his grandparents—who lived in heaven. And a little girl with big saucer eyes and braces was brought to sit on my lap so she could ask to ride a pony. I was able to help make that happen.

Kids used to ask for a doll or a truck—a general request. Now they ask for a specific brand of American Girl doll (even a specific name, like Felicity!) or an iPhone 6. You'd think Santa was their personal shopper! Times have sure changed ...

Is there a hard part to being Santa?

There's not much that's hard. Most kids have been good—a few say "Santa, I've been *trying*." Santa and helpers often say they can hear kids through the picture that hangs over the sofa (every home has one). Now the Elf on the Shelf helps as Santa's eyes and ears.

It *is* challenging, though, keeping the spirit of Christmas alive—everyone is too busy for holiday traditions—baking cookies, putting up the trains, having family time. And keeping the focus on the meaning of Christmas—not about gifts but about the spirit of the season.

And sometimes, the suit does get a little hot!

What do you do after Christmas?

There's still plenty to do even after Christmas. I work with charities, participate in adopt-a-grandparent day at senior communities, and visit the troops. And then it's time to get ready for the *next* Christmas! Ho, ho, ho ... ♦

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