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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.

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, The Chester County Hospital and Health System, and for the Brandywine Valley YMCA.

Patricia Brennan in 2015 –
“A Top 400 Advisor in the Nation”

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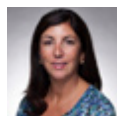
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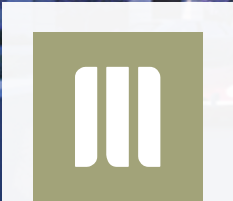


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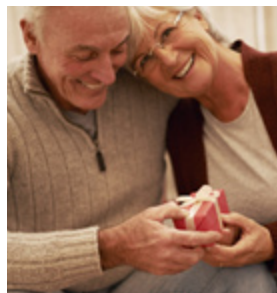
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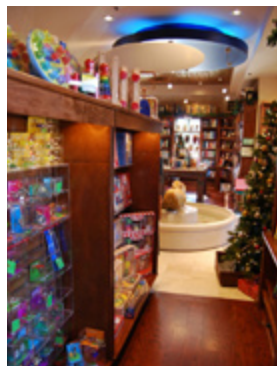
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This December issue is a virtual Christmas stocking stuffed with goodies. We've rounded up great ways to spend the holidays and tips to make shopping fun.

Read where to watch the *Nutcracker*, hear the *Messiah*, join a holiday house tour, and watch a performance of this year's holiday Panto at People's Light. We show you where to see glorious trees decked with more than boughs of holly and how four local towns—West Chester, Malvern, Wayne and Phoenixville—celebrate the season in “Christmas in *County Lines* Country.” And our Best Local Events section will keep you busy into the New Year.

Plus, we wrapped up some end-of-the-year tax tips in our Worth Knowing column and health tips on the flu vaccine in this month's Being Well feature—it's not too late.


To make shopping a pleasure, check out what's new in “Holiday Shopping Is Moving Up in West Chester” and how to support the community when you “Shop Local This Season.” Then enjoy some armchair browsing as you flip through “Holiday Window Shopping” and our “Holiday Style” section.

We've got book and wine fans covered, too, with eight must-read picks for under the tree and wine pairings with *Game of Thrones* characters in “Winter Is Coming.”

For your holiday gatherings, Brandywine Table says “Bring on the Apps.” What's not to love about dips and small bites packed with flavor?

And if you're hoping to spend more family time around the fire this month, “Tired of Chopping Wood?” shares some ideas for making that easier, as well as more economical and environmentally responsible.

Finally, the very best of the season to you! Thank you for reading *County Lines* in 2015. We hope you'll continue reading next year, starting with our Annual Dining Guide.


Jo Anne Durako
Editor

COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

December 2015

Volume XXXIX, Number 4

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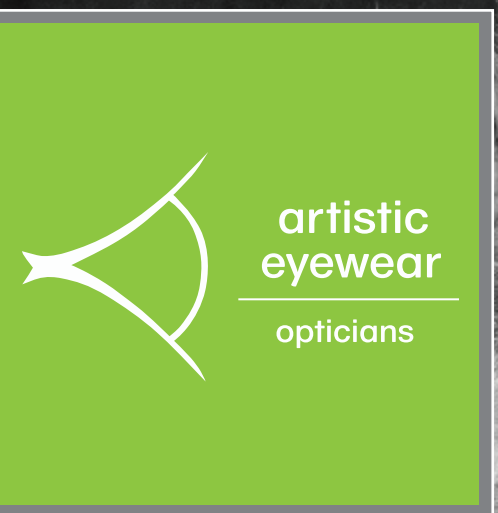
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Cover photo of West Chester Old-Fashioned Christmas, by Timlyn Vaughan Photography

Year-End Tax Planning Ideas for 2015

Peter K. Hoover, CFP®

AS YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE HOLIDAYS, IT'S essential to set some time to ensure you're ready for your 2015 tax filing so you won't miss opportunities to reduce your tax payments.

To help, here are a dozen ideas to consider for your year-end tax planning. Of course, please consult your tax professional or financial advisor about tax-saving strategies.

1. Consider deferring income into 2016 if you're in a higher tax bracket in 2015. Income is taxed in the year received.
2. Review the amount of capital gains realized in 2015 and determine if any capital losses are available to offset the gains. If your capital losses exceed gains in 2015, you can deduct up to \$3,000

of the losses from taxable income. Talk with your financial advisor about tax-loss harvesting to help minimize taxes.

3. Consider donating appreciated securities to a qualified charity. This provides a valuable income tax deduction, and you don't pay any capital gains tax in 2015.
4. For taxpayers over age 70½, make sure required minimum distributions have been withdrawn from all retirement accounts. Withhold monies for paying federal and state taxes to avoid a tax penalty for missing required quarterly tax payments.
5. For working taxpayers, make sure you've maximized before-tax contributions to retirement plans. In 2015, you can contribute \$18,000 to retirement plans and \$6,000 in additional catch-up

contributions if you're over 50. Check your Flexible Spending Account balance and use it by the end of the year. If you don't think you'll use it all, check with your employer to see if your plan allows a roll-over (up to \$500) into 2016.

6. If you're eligible to contribute to a Traditional or Roth IRA, you have until April 18, 2016—the deadline for 2015 tax returns—to do so.

7. If you have children or grandchildren who have earnings in 2015 and you want to help them start on the road to a secure retirement, consider setting up a Roth IRA for them. Contributions are limited to the lesser of their earnings or \$5,500.

8. Consider making some last-minute tax deductions if you're planning to itemize and you're in a high tax bracket. For example, prepay your mortgage payment, make a bigger charitable donation or pay a medical or tax bill early to help increase your deductions in 2015.

9. If your children are over 24 and in the lowest two tax brackets, consider a gift of appreciated securities. You can give up to \$14,000 per person annually without filing a gift tax return. If the child sells the securities while in the lowest two tax brackets, there's no capital gains tax on the sale.

10. If you're going to invest in a mutual fund in December, inquire about projected timing and size of capital gains distributions from the fund. If you invest right before a capital gains distribution, you'll be liable for the distribution taxes.

11. If you contribute to a college savings 529 Plan for a relative, you can deduct contributions up to \$14,000 per person (you and your spouse) and per beneficiary to reduce Pennsylvania taxes. Income generated in the 529 Plan can be withdrawn tax-free, if the money is used for qualified education expenses.

12. Make sure you pay the correct amount of taxes. If 2015 taxes are more than \$1,000, you'll be subject to a penalty unless 2015 payroll withholdings and estimated tax payments equal the lesser of 1) 90% of your 2015 tax liability, or 2) 100% of your

2014 tax liability (110% if 2014 adjusted gross income exceeds \$150,000 for married taxpayers). ♦

Peter K. Hoover, CFP, has more than 30 years of experience as an independent financial advisor. He founded Hoover Financial Advisors, PC, in 2005 and the company has quadrupled since then. HFA was selected by Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry as the 2012 Small Business of the Year. Contact him at 610-651-2777; PeteHoover.com.



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This Flu Season, You Call the Shots!

Flu season runs from September to May—so December is right in the middle of it.

Jeanne Casner, Director, Chester County Health Department

THE SCHOOL YEAR IS WELL UNDERWAY, WORK schedules are crazy, and there isn't even enough time to catch up on weekends. Every minute is precious, so it's easy to see why getting a flu shot just doesn't seem to fit into your schedule. But flu is a very serious disease that even strikes healthy people, and the single most effective protection is getting the flu vaccine—either a shot or the nasal spray (for the needle-averse).

For the holidays, the last thing you want for yourself or your family is to come down with the bug! And the number one way to protect yourself from the flu is to get a vaccine—and to get it every year.

There are actually many opportunities to fit the few minutes it takes for a flu vaccine into your tight timetable. Schools, pharmacies, libraries—even churches—offer vaccine clinics, plus the vaccine is available at doctors' offices and the Chester County Health Department. And the recommendation is that *everyone* from six months on up should be vaccinated every year.

While the flu causes mild illness in many people (think fever, sore throat, body aches), it can lead to serious health complications and even death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the tally is millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands of deaths

throughout the U.S. every season. Young children, older adults, pregnant women and people with certain chronic health conditions are at greater risk for serious complications.

So, if you usually don't get the flu vaccine because you've decided to be "stoic" and tough it out, please consider getting the vaccine this year because you care about those close to you. You don't want to spread the virus to them. (And make sure they get the vaccine too!)

A Few Flu Facts

- It bears repeating: **you can't get the flu from the flu vaccine!** The vaccine viruses are killed or weakened so they can't replicate.
- Any side effects you may feel are **not actual flu infection**, but a response from your immune system to the flu germs in the vaccine. Side effects are merely a mild initial response and resolve in one to three days.
- The flu vaccine takes about two weeks to produce protective antibodies, so during that time, practice good health habits to avoid getting the flu.
- Taking pain relievers will not interfere with the vaccine. Feel free to take them to relieve side effects.
- Each year's flu vaccine protects against different flu viruses, so a new immunization is required every year.

Prevention Reminders

- The best prevention is to **get a flu vaccine!**
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- If you're sick, stay home for seven days after your symptoms begin, or until you're symptom-free for 24 hours—whichever is longer—to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus.

Remember, flu vaccines are widely available. Get yours as a holiday gift to your family and friends. ♦

Vaccines are available at the Chester County Health Department on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Make an appointment at ChesCo.org/flu or call 610-344-6252. The Health Department is able to bill most insurance companies for the vaccine.

Jeanne Casner, MPH, PMP, the Director of the Chester County Health Department, has 20

years of health-related experience at the federal, state and local government levels, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Fulton County, GA Department of Health. She holds a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Michigan.



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Good to Know

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

Fabulous Firs. December is here, which means Christmas is right around the corner. If you haven't bought your Christmas tree yet, consider getting it from the same tree farm as the Obama family! **Bustard's Christmas Trees** in Lansdale earned the honor of presenting Michelle Obama with a 19-foot Fraser fir for the White House's Blue Room. While you may not need a tree *quite* that tall, you can still find a fabulous fir for your family. Bustards-ChristmasTrees.com.



Malvern Murals. While strolling through Malvern on Third Thursdays or other times, we've all admired the striking murals along King Street. Ever wanted one of your own? Well, you're in luck! Mural artist, **Carrie Kingsbury**, doesn't just paint town walls. She'll design and paint a unique mural for your home and work with you to make your vision come to life! More at PromiseLandArt.com. See more on Malvern's murals at the **Malvern Community Arts Program** Facebook page.

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Gift Horse. Need a holiday gift for your equestrian friends? Ginny Jenkins created a perfect choice—her new book, *Horses Naturally*, filled with over 100 photos of different breeds with most photos featuring local Chester County horses! As a companion gift, pick up Ginny's *Horses of Chester County* poster, packed with even more local horses. At 16 by 20 inches, the poster is a great addition to any horse-lover's barn. At Amazon.com.


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Vox Ama Deus: **Dec. 4**, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 22 E. Chestnut Hill Ave., Chestnut Hill, 7 p.m. **Dec. 6**, Daylesford Abbey, 220 S. Valley Rd., Paoli. 4 p.m. **Dec. 20**, St. Katharine of Siena Church, Lancaster & Aberdeen Aves., Wayne, 4 p.m. \$10-\$25. 610-688-2800; VoxAmaDeus.org.
Ursinus College: **Dec. 5**, Bomberger Hall Auditorium, 601 E. Main St., Collegeville. Sat., 7:30 p.m., Sun., 2:30 p.m. Adm. 610-409-3000; Ursinus.edu.

Ballet 180 Presents "A Charlie Brown Christmas"

December 20

A holiday production set to Vince Guaraldi's classic soundtrack. Rosemont College, McShain Performing Arts Center, 1400 Montgomery Ave., Rosemont. 3 pm. \$15-\$30. 484-639-9571; Ballet180.org.

Midnight in the Square & Mushroom Drop

December 31

Historic Kennett Square drops a 700-pound, 8-foot, lighted, steel mushroom to welcome in the New Year! 888-440-9920; MushroomFestival.org.



The Playhouse on Rodney Square & The Grand Opera House

Through December

The Playhouse on Rodney Square: **Dec. 1-6**, *Annie*, directed by original lyricist and director Martin Charnin and choreographed by Liza Gennaro, this is a new incarnation of the iconic original, \$40-\$95. **Dec. 9**, *Swing'n the Holidays*, energetic renditions of Christmas classics and fresh arrangements of swing/jive/R&B classics by The Jive Aces from London, 2 p.m. \$39. **Dec. 20**, *Mannheim Steamroller Christmas* by Chip Davis, a holiday tradition of Christmas music with dazzling multimedia effects performed in an intimate setting, 3 and 7:30 p.m., \$55-80. The Playhouse on Rodney Square, 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. 302-888-0200; ThePlayhouseDE.org.

The Grand Opera House: **Dec. 12**, *Charlie Brown Christmas*, the Eric Mintel Quartet returns with their special Charlie Brown Jazz Holiday concert, 7 p.m., \$26. **Dec. 16**, *Cherish The Ladies Celtic Christmas*, an evening that includes a spectacular blend of virtuoso instrumental talents, beautiful vocals and arrangements and stunning step dancing, 8 p.m., \$27-\$33. 818 N. Market St. Wilmington. 800-37-GRAND; TheGrandWilmington.org.

best Local Events

FAMILY FUN

THROUGH DECEMBER 20

Delaware Children's Theatre Presents Mary Poppins. Young and old will delight in a visit with the irresistible Mary Poppins. This show includes all your favorite Disney songs. A treat for all! See website for times. 1014 Delaware Ave., Wilmington. \$16. 302-655-1014; DEChildrensTheatre.org.

DECEMBER 3

Read-Aloud Tours at Brandywine River Museum of Art. For *The Polar Express* Pajama Night, children are invited to wear their pajamas and enjoy hot chocolate and cookies. Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. 7 to 8 pm. Reg. requested. \$8–\$15. 610-388-8326; BrandywineMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 3–6

MARS Drinks Old-Fashioned Christmas in West Chester Presented by QVC. See article in this issue.

DECEMBER 4–5

Malvern's Victorian Christmas. See article in this issue.

DECEMBER 4–5

Wayne Hotel's Old-Fashioned Christmas. See article in this issue.

DECEMBER 5

Woodland Winter Wonderland & Greens Sale at Tyler Arboretum. Celebrate winter at Tyler with a Reindeer Scavenger Hunt, craft-making, hayrides and have a family photo taken in an antique sleigh. 515 Painter Rd., Media. 9:30 to 1:30. \$7–\$11 (greens sale, free). 610-566-9134; TylerArboretum.org.

DECEMBER 5

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

DECEMBER 5

12th Annual Firebird Festival. Burning of the Firebird (Phoenix) will be at Friendship Field (Franklin Ave. & Fillmore St.). The fun begins at 3, burning of the Phoenix at 8:15. See article in this issue. 610-933-9199; FirebirdFestival.com.

DECEMBER 5–6

JANUARY 9–10, 16–17, 23–24 Schuylkill Valley Model Railroad Club Open House. Fun for kids of all ages with four different railroads, hundreds of buildings, vehicles, people and trees to create realistic scenes. You'll also see Thomas the Tank Engine and can go on a scavenger hunt. 400 S. Main St., Phoenixville. 1 to 5. Free. 610-935-1126; SVMRRC.com.

DECEMBER 6

Tree Lighting Ceremony at Wellington Square in Eagleview. Carolers, story or craft time, pictures with Santa and tree lighting finale. 3 to 4:30. 800-851-2779; InEagleview.com.

DECEMBER 9

Children's Christmas Party at Brandywine River Museum of Art. Holiday event for the entire family, with Santa and Mrs. Claus, magicians, costumed characters, cookies, music, face painting, trains and more. Rt. 1 Chadds Ford. 6 to 8 pm. \$5–\$15. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 10

Family Theater at The Grand Wilmington. Grades K–5 will enjoy *Frosty*, from the beloved holiday song "Frosty the Snowman." 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. 9:30 and noon. \$7. 800-37-GRAND; TheGrand-Wilmington.org.

DECEMBER 11

Holiday Crafts & Fun Night at Brandywine Valley Association. Children age 6–13 create 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. Reg. req. 1760 Unionville-Wawaset Rd., West Chester. 5 to 9 pm. \$20–\$30. 610-793-1090; BrandywineWatershed.org.

DECEMBER 12

Jingle Fest. A fundraiser that invites family, friends and dogs out to visit with Santa and more. Shopping, dining and activities included. Benefits local families battling cancer. Greater Phila. Expo Center, 1601 Egypt Rd., Oaks. 10 to 3. Free; fee for some activities. 484-228-8358; HorsePowerForLife.org.

DECEMBER 12

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum Brunch with Santa. Enjoy a full pancake breakfast and visit with Santa. 50 S. 1st

Ave., Coatesville. 10 to 1. \$5. 610-384-9282; SteelMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 12

Holiday Cookie Tin at Wayne Art Center. Kids ages 8 & up join Chef Chiwishi Joy Abney baking delicious goodies. Bring a tin from home and plan on filling it. 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. 1 to 3. \$45 for 1 adult, 1 child; \$20 ea. add'l child. Reg. req. 610-688-3553; WayneArt.org.

DECEMBER 12

Holiday Events in Downingtown. The town is decorated for the Good Neighbor Christmas Parade featuring floats, cars, marching bands, Mr. & Mrs. Claus and lots of fun. W. Lancaster Ave. 3 pm. 610-269-4203; DtownChristmas.com.

DECEMBER 12

A Sugartown Christmas. Learn about Victorian Christmas traditions as you explore the historic village. Kids decorate cookies and gingerbread houses, make Victorian-style ornaments and enjoy holiday treats. 690 Sugartown Rd., Malvern. 11 to 4. \$4–\$6. 610-640-2667; HistoricSugartown.org.



DECEMBER 12

Firebird Theatre's Holiday Revue, Elf The Musical Jr. This family-friendly show features holiday songs and skits to get you in the Christmas spirit. Firebird Theatre's Holiday Revue is performed by kids and teens from their fall workshop. *The Colonial Theatre*, 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 2 pm. \$11–\$15. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

DECEMBER 17

"Popcorn & Pictures" at Delaware Art Museum. Families enjoy art making, popcorn and a film, *The Muppet Christmas Carol*. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 4:30–7:45. \$3. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

See "Holiday Happenings" for more things to do with the family.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS.....

THROUGH DECEMBER 30

Yuletide at Wheatland Presents Tiny Tim's Christmas Present. A holiday thematic play that unfolds on the first floor in the Presidential mansion as visitors travel from room to room on a holiday adventure. 1120 Marietta Ave., Lancaster. Fri–Sat, 1 to 7 (last performance begins at 6). \$6–\$12. 717-392-4633; LancasterHistory.org.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31

Historic Odessa Foundation Presents "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." The National Historic Landmark Corbit-Sharp House is transformed into a holiday exhibit adapted from Lewis Carroll's book. 201 Main St., Odessa, DE. Tues–Sat, 10 to 4:30; Sun, 1 to 4:30. \$8–\$10. 302-378-4119; HistoricOdessa.com.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31

Holidays at Hagley Museum. Bring the family to explore Hagley's holiday traditions. Sample 19th-century holiday dishes like roast duck, play parlor games and make Victorian Christmas ornaments. Kids and adults alike will enjoy a day of activities, crafts and games. Main entrance, off Rt. 141, Wilmington. 10 to 5. \$10–\$14; free to US Military personnel and families. 302-658-2400; Hagley.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 3

A Brandywine Christmas. See article in this issue.

THROUGH JANUARY 3

Nemours Mansion & Gardens Holiday Tours. Rooms are beautifully decorated with historical artifacts. Enjoy Christmas trees decked out with hand-painted ornaments and decorations from the early 1900s to the present. Res. req. Alapocas Dr. & Rt. 141, Wilmington. Tues–Sat, 9:30, noon and 3; Sun, noon and 3. \$15. 302-651-6912; NemoursMansion.org.



THROUGH JANUARY 3

Yuletide at Winterthur. Tour Henry Francis du Pont's home decorated in holiday style. Enjoy visions of holidays past and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the dried-flower tree, featuring 60 varieties of flowers. 5105 Kennett Pk., (Rt. 52), Winterthur, DE. Tues–Sun, 10 to 5. \$5–\$20. 800-448-3883; Winterthur.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 4

Morris Arboretum's Holiday Garden Railway. Thousands of sparkling lights adorn a mini-

ature village surrounded by a ¼-mile track with model trains. 100 E. Northwestern Ave., Phila. 10 to 4. \$7–\$16. 215-247-5777; Morris-Arboretum.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 10

Holiday Tours & Victorian Christmas at Pennypacker Mills. Old-fashioned Christmas traditions and decorations light up the mansion with an added holiday touch of a bell choir and Santa. 5 Haldeman Rd., Schwenksville. Tues–Sat, 10 to 4; Sun, 1 to 4. 610-287-9349; Montcopa.org/PennypackerMills.



A BRANDYWINE Christmas

NOVEMBER 27 – JANUARY 3



SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

HOLIDAY LIGHTS FAMILY WORKSHOP
Saturday, November 28, 10 to 11 a.m.

THE POLAR EXPRESS READ-ALoud PAJAMA NIGHT
Thursday, December 3, 7 to 8 p.m.

ANNUAL CRITTER SALE
Saturday, December 5 & Sunday, December 6, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
Wednesday, December 9, 6 to 8 p.m.

BREAKFAST WITH THE TRAINS
Saturday, December 12, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

NUTCRACKER "DANCE ME A STORY" FAMILY WORKSHOP
Saturday, December 12 & Sunday, December 13, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE DOLLS
Saturday, December 19, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Tickets are available at brandywine.org/events or by calling 610.388.8326.

A treasured family tradition with model trains, dolls and critter ornaments.



BRANDYWINE RIVER MUSEUM OF ART

Chadds Ford, PA brandywine.org

Be sure to look in our special West Chester section for events there. And *Christmas in County Lines Country* for events in Malvern, Wayne and Phoenixville.

THROUGH JANUARY 10

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. Timed admission tickets required. 610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org.

DECEMBER 4

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 4-6

Hay Creek Historical Assoc. Christmas at Joanna Furnace. Enjoy an evening in the parlors of Colonial and Victorian families as they celebrate Christmas. Horse-drawn carriage rides, a market, live nativity and walking tours. Rt. 10, 3 mi. N. of Morgantown. Fri & Sun, 5 to 9 pm; Sat, 3 to 9. \$7; 12 and under, free. 610-286-0388; HayCreek.org.

DECEMBER 5

Christmas in Marshallton. Get into the holiday spirit—visit this quaint village and enjoy

breakfast with Santa, cookie sale, art show and estate sale, caroling, lunch, tours of the Blacksmith Shop, tree lighting and carols at Martin's Tavern at 4. 1282 W. Strasburg Rd., West Chester. Fun starts with breakfast at 8 am. 610-696-5247; MarshalltonChurch.org.

DECEMBER 5

Holiday Greens Sale & Festival at Scott Arboretum. Gorgeous greens, holiday accents, wreaths, living gifts and fun for the whole family. 500 College Ave., Swarthmore. 1 to 3. Free. 610-328-8025; ScottArboretum.org.

DECEMBER 5

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, woodworking and long rifle demos. Ridley Creek State Park, Media. 11 to 4. \$8-\$10. 610-566-1725; ColonialPlantation.org.

DECEMBER 5-6

Brandywine River Museum of Art Annual Critter Sale. Handcrafted, environmentally friendly ornaments always make distinctive gifts and benefit the Museum Volunteers' Fund for Art Education Programming. Rt. 1, Chadds

Ford. 9:30 to 4:30. \$6-\$15. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 5-6, 12-13

Country Christmas Village at Landis Valley Museum. Experience a Pennsylvania German celebration as you tour decorated buildings and a Civil War winter camp, see traditional holiday foods prepared in the tavern and meet "der Belsnickel." Make seasonal crafts and enjoy wagon rides. 2451 Kissel Hill Rd., Lancaster. Sat, 10 to 4; Sun, noon to 4. \$8-\$12. 717-569-0401; LandisValleyMuseum.org.

DECEMBER 6, 13, 20, 27

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 11-12

Winter Arts Festival at Delaware Art Museum. Celebrate the holiday season at the museum as you browse handmade items by local artisans, tour festive works in the collection, enjoy holiday music and more. Cash bar and snacks available. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Fri, 5 to 8; Sat, 10 to 4. \$5. 302-571-9590. DelArt.org.

DECEMBER 11

National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum Holiday Open House. Come see the historical mansions decorated for the season. Visitors can stroll through candle-lit grounds, listen to carolers, enjoy refreshments and see a wonderful train display. Canned goods donations are welcome for a local food shelter. 50 S. 1st Ave., Coatesville. 5 to 8. Free. 610-384-9282; SteelMuseum.org.



ART & CRAFT SHOWS.....

THROUGH DECEMBER 20 WEEKENDS

Brandywine River Museum of Art Holiday Shops. Regional artisans showcase their crafts in the museum's courtyard. Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. 9:30 to 4:30. \$6-\$15. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 31

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. 484-596-5710; MainLineHealth.org/ArtAbility.

DECEMBER 3-12

Community Arts Center's Holiday Sale. Featuring handmade work by members of the Potters Guild with over 20 vendors. Refreshments served. Preview party Friday, December 5th. \$5; free for CAC benefactors. 414 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford. 610-566-1713; CommunityArtsCenter.org.

DECEMBER 4-JANUARY 30

2015 Craft Forms & Craft + Technology. **Craft Forms:** A juried, international exhibition of fine contemporary craft with over 100 works by 100 craft artists. **Emergence: Craft + Technology:** Over 30 professional craft artists whose work exemplifies the intertwining of advanced digital processes with traditional handmade craft. **Dec. 4,** Opening Gala, 6 to 10, tickets start at \$75. Wayne Art Center, 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. Mon-Fri, 10 to 5; Sat, 10 to 4. 610-688-3553; WayneArt.org.

DECEMBER 5

Holiday Craft Fair in Kimberton. Crafts and collectibles for the holidays. Benefits the fire company. Kimberton Fire Company, 752 Pike Springs Rd., Kimberton. 9 to 2. Free. 484-645-9033 or 610-917-2270.

FUNDRAISERS.....

DECEMBER 3-4

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. Preview Thurs, 5 to 9. \$125-\$1,000 (includes Fri); Fri, 9 to 3, luncheon available, \$30. 267-426-5339; CHOPHolidayBoutique.org.



Malvern Business

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Professional Association

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Malvern's Victorian Christmas

Fri., Dec. 4 6:00 to 8:30
Sat., Dec. 5 10:00 to 2:00

2015

MalvernsVictorianChristmas.org

DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

POETRY
IN BEAUTY

THE PRE-RAPHAELITE ART OF
MARIE SPARTALI STILLMAN

NOV 7, 2015 – JAN 31, 2016

See this landmark exhibition at its only US venue! This is the first-ever retrospective of Marie Spartali Stillman, an important female Victorian artist known for her landscapes, portraits, and Renaissance-inspired paintings.

Poetry in Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelite Art of Marie Spartali Stillman is made possible by the Emily du Pont Memorial Exhibition Fund and the Friends of Rockwood. Additional support is provided by grants from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency dedicated to nurturing and supporting the arts in Delaware, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. I Love's Messenger, 1885. Marie Spartali Stillman (1844-1927). Watercolor, tempera, and gold paint on paper mounted on wood, 32 x 26 inches. Delaware Art Museum, Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935.

2301 Kentmere Pkwy | Wilmington, DE
302.571.9590 | delart.org

MUSEUMS.....

THROUGH DECEMBER

The Wharton Esherick Museum. Special children's tours every Saturday. 1520 Horse-shoe Trail, Malvern. Tours by res., 11 am. \$6-\$12. 610-644-5822; WhartonEsherick-Museum.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 3, 2016

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library Exhibits. Colorful folk art, in "A Colorful Folk: Pennsylvania Germans & the Art of Everyday Life," and "Tiffany Glass: Painting with Color & Light," some of Tiffany's most iconic works. 5105 Kennett Pk. (Rt. 52), Winterthur, DE. Tues-Sun, 10 to 5. \$5-\$20. 800-448-3883; Winterthur.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 31

The Delaware Art Museum. *Through Jan. 3,* "Reconstructed Elements: Richard H. Bailey, Helen Mason, Stan Smokler," regional contemporary sculptors. *Through Jan. 10,* "Helen Farr Sloan, 1911-2005," painter, printmaker, and art instructor. *Through Jan. 31,* "Poetry in Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelite Art of Marie Spartali Stillman." 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Wed, 10 to 4; Thurs, 10 to 8, free after 4 pm; Fri-Sun, 10 to 4; \$6-\$12. Free on Sun. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 10

Delaware Museum of Natural History Presents "Tiny Titans: Dinosaur Eggs and Babies." Remarkable hands-on exhibit featuring authentic dinosaur eggs and nests collected from all over the world. 4840 Kennett Pk., Wilmington. Mon-Sat, 9:30 to 4:30; Sun, noon to 4:30. \$7-\$9. 302-658-9111; DelMNH.org.

THROUGH JANUARY 31

Brandywine River Museum of Art Exhibits & Events. *Through Nov. 15,* "Things Beyond Resemblance: James Welling Photographs." *Through Jan. 31,* "Natural Selections: Andrew Wyeth Plant Studies." Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. Daily 9:30 to 4:30. \$6-\$15, free Sun mornings. 610-388-2700; BrandywineMuseum.org.

MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT.....

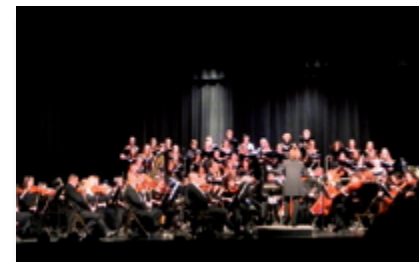
THROUGH DECEMBER 2

Performances at The Grand. See "Of Special Note for more. *Dec. 1,* superstars Itzhak Perlman, Evgeny Kissin and Mischa Maisky; *Dec. 2,* a cappella group Straight No Chaser; *Dec. 6,* Dawes, featuring special guest Hiss Golden Messenger; *Dec. 9,* Whitehorse, featuring Aaron Lee Tasjan; *Dec. 11,* Punch

Brothers with Chris Thile; *Dec. 12,* An Intimate Evening with Matisyahu. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Check website for times and tickets. 800-37-GRAND; The-GrandWilmington.org.

DECEMBER 5

Kennett Symphony Orchestra Presents "Pops Goes the Holiday." The Kennett Symphony Children's Chorus and First State Ballet Theatre are featured in this program of holiday favorites. Unionville High School, 750 Unionville Rd., Kennett Square. 7:30 pm. \$30-\$53. 610-444-6363; KennettSymphony.org.



DECEMBER 5

Vox Ama Deus. Handel's Messiah. See "Of Special Note." **Renaissance Noël,** Renaissance Christmas music of Old Europe: *Dec. 11,* St.

Local Farm Markets

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

* **East Goshen Farmers Mkt.,** E. Goshen Park, 1580 Paoli Pk. **Thurs, 3 to 7.** EastGoshenFarmersMarket.org.

* **Kennett Square Farmers Mkt.,** E. State St., between Broad and Union Sts. **Fri, 2 to 6.** 610-444-8188; Historic-KennettSquare.com.

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

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

Media Farmers Mkt., State St. b/w Monroe & Gayley. **Thurs, 3 to 7.** 610-566-5039; MediaFarmersMarket.com.

* **Phoenixville Farmers Mkt.,** 200 Mill St., under Gay St. Bridge. **Sat, 9 to 1.** PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org.

* **Rosemont Farmers Mkt.,** 1149 Lancaster Ave. **Wed-Sat, 9 to 7.** 610-527-4800; RosemontFarmersMarket.com.

* **West Chester Growers Mkt.,** Chestnut & Church Sts. **Sat, 9 to 1.** 610-436-9010; WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

* *Some markets have winter markets at least once a month during the off-season or are indoors. Check their websites for details.*

Paul's Episcopal Church, 22 E. Chestnut Hill Ave., Chestnut Hill, 8 pm. *Dec. 13,* Thomas Great Hall, Bryn Mawr College, 256 N. Merion Ave., Bryn Mawr, 4 pm. \$10-\$25. 610-688-2800; VoxAmaDeus.org.

DECEMBER 6

Immaculata Symphony Orchestra Christmas Concerts. The Immaculata University Chorale performs a variety of holiday favorites, 3 pm. 1145 King Rd., Immaculata. \$8-\$15. 610-316-1731; ImmaculataSymphony.org.

DECEMBER 6

Theatre Organ Society of the Delaware Valley's Annual Holiday Concert. Lots of great songs presented by various individuals on the TOSDV 3/24 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ. The Colonial Theatre, 227 Bridge St. 2 pm. \$6.50-\$11.50. 610-917-1228; TOSDV.org.

DECEMBER 6, 13, 20

Carols Concerts at Brandywine River Museum of Art. Listen to international opera singer Peter Campbell, accompanied by pianist Laura Cilia. Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. 1 to

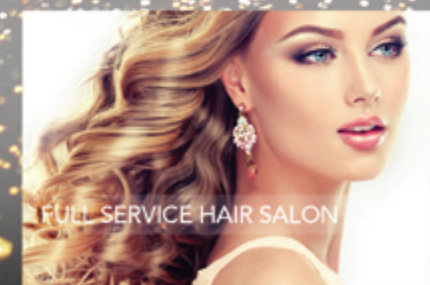
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Grammy Award®-winner
SHERYL CROW

Directed and Choreographed by
three-time Tony Award®-winner
KATHLEEN MARSHALL

Tickets On Sale Now!
302-594-1100
www.DelawareTheatre.org

December 2-27
2 shows already sold out!

3 pm. \$6-\$15. 610-388-2700; Brandywine-Museum.org.

DECEMBER 11

Point Entertainment presents Wendy Liebman and Dan Naturman at The Colonial Theatre. Stand-up comedians who made it to the semi-finals of last season's *America's Got Talent*. 227 N. Bridge St., Phoenixville. 8 pm. \$19.50-\$32. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

DECEMBER 12-13

Chester County Choral Society Presents "Joy to the World." Get in the holiday spirit with Haydn's *St. Nicholas Mass*, traditional carols and more. **Dec. 12**, St. Joseph's Church, 460 Manor Rd., Downingtown, 7:30 pm. **Dec. 13**, Church of the Good Samaritan, 212 W. Lancaster Ave., Paoli. 3 pm. \$5-\$18. ChesterCountyChoralSociety.org.

DECEMBER 12-13

Wolf Performing Arts Center Presents James and the Giant Peach. Based on the book by Roald Dahl, performances will be held at The Rotwitt Theatre at McShain Performing Arts Center, Rosemont College, 1400 Montgomery Ave., Bryn Mawr. Sat, 11 and 3; Sun, 3. \$15-\$20. 610-642-0233; WolfPerformingArtsCenter.org.

DECEMBER 13

A Performance by the U.S. Army Chorus. In addition to traditional military music and patriotic standards, the repertoire also includes pop, Broadway and classical music. Main Line Unitarian Church, 816 S. Valley Forge Rd., Devon. 4:30 pm. 610-688-8332; MLUC.org.

DECEMBER 17

Charlie Brown Jazz: An Evening with the Eric Mintel Quartet. Performing "Charlie Brown Jazz" in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and music of Vince Guaraldi. 227 N. Bridge St., Phoenixville. 7:30 pm. \$15-\$20. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

DECEMBER 19

Pennsylvania Symphonic Winds Holiday Concert at Exton Mall. Premiere wind bands play beautiful holiday selections to brighten your season. 260 Exton Sq. Pkwy., Exton. 2 pm. Free. PennsylvaniaSymphonicWinds.org.

DECEMBER 19-20

The Brandywine Singers Perform Magnificat, by Jonathan Willcocks including pieces by Rachmaninoff, Gabrielli, Victoria and Praetorius. **Dec. 19**, Christ Church, 20 N. American St., Phila., 7. **Dec. 20**, Church of the Holy



Trinity, 212 N. High St., West Chester, 4. \$15-\$20. TheBrandywineSingers.org.

DECEMBER 23

The Forty-Niners Chorus 2015 Christmas Show at Longwood Gardens. *It Feels Like Christmas!* inspired by many of the classic Christmas movies and specials that everyone knows and loves. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. 7 and 8 pm. \$10-\$20. Timed tickets must be ordered from Longwood in advance. 49ersChorus.org.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....

DECEMBER 22

Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk at Delaware Art Museum. A chance to slow down and step into the quietude of the Museum's Labyrinth in the Anthony N. Fusco Reservoir. 2301

Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 1 to 2 pm. Free, donations accepted. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

THEATER.....

THROUGH JANUARY 3

Billy Elliot: The Musical. Based on the hit film and featuring a score by the legendary Elton John, this is the story of a boy's passion for ballet rather than the boxing ring. A Philadelphia professional premiere at The Media Theatre, 104 E. State St., Media. Phone or check website for show times. \$25-\$42. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

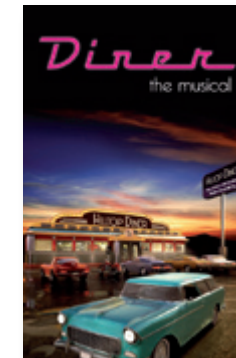


THROUGH JANUARY 10

The Three Musketeers (The Later Years): A Musical Panto. See article in this issue.

DECEMBER 1-6

Annie. Directed by original lyricist and director Martin Charnin and choreographed by Liza Gennaro, this is a new incarnation of the iconic original. The Playhouse on Rodney Square, 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. \$40-\$95. 302-888-0200; ThePlayhouseDE.org.



DECEMBER 2-27

Diner. Book by Barry Levinson, music and lyrics by Sheryl Crow. Delaware Theatre Company, 200 Water St., Wilmington. \$30-\$45. 302-594-1100; DelawareTheatre.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....

DECEMBER 4, 12, 17

First Fridays, Second Saturdays Third Thursdays. Stroll through area towns to find exhibits, galleries, restaurant specials, entertainment and extended hours. **Dec. 4, First Fridays: Kennett Square**, 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com. **Lancaster City**, 717-509-ARTS; LancasterArts.com. **Oxford**, 610-998-9494; Downtown-OxfordPA.org. **Wayne**, 610-687-7698; FirstFridayWayne.com. **West Chester**, 610-738-3350; DowntownWestChester.com; **Wilmington**, 302-576-2100; ArtLoopWilmingtonDE.com. **Dec. 12, Second Saturday: Media**, 484-445-4161; MediaArtsCouncil. **Dec. 17, Malvern Stroll**, MalvernBusiness.com. ♦

Stay in the know with everything going on in *County Lines* country. Sign up for our monthly Events Newsletter at Newsletter@ValleyDel.com

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

For more events visit:

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Sunday, Dec 13 at 3:00 PM Church of the Good Samaritan 212 W. Lancaster Avenue Paoli, PA

for tickets and information visit
www.chestercountychoralsociety.org
A 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization
tickets may be purchased at the door



Taste of Phoenixville

GOOD SAMARITAN SHELTER will again host the Taste of Phoenixville at the **Phoenixville Foundry** on Thursday, **January 21, 2016**. Be a part of a delicious event benefiting Good Samaritan Shelter featuring amazingly creative cuisine, an incredible silent auction, live music, complimentary full bar including local beer.

The event is from 6:00 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Ticket prices are \$100, \$105 at the door.

For tickets visit www.TasteofPhoenixville.com
For sponsorship contact Robyn@GoodSamShelter.org



Chester Springs Library
Christmas House Tour



West Chester Public Library House Tour

Holiday House Tours

Chadds Ford Historical Society's Candlelight Christmas Holiday House Tour. Enjoy this self-guided tour of beautiful homes and historic sites in Chadds Ford and Pennsbury townships. Visit CountyLinesMagazine.com for a description of the houses on this year's tour. *Dec. 5, 1 to 6. \$20 advance; \$25 day of tour at the Chadds Ford Historical Society, 1736 N. Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. 610-388-7376; ChaddsFordHistory.org.*

Newtown Historic Association Holiday House Tour. Visit five private residences on the tour, all dressed up in their holiday best. *Dec. 5, 10 to 4. \$30. For tickets visit NewtownHistoric.org.*

West Chester Public Library's Holiday Home Tour. The library presents a walking tour of ten elegant homes in the northeastern section of the borough, all beautifully decorated for the holidays. *Dec. 5, 10 to 3. Tickets at the Library, 415 N. Church St., West Chester or online. \$30-\$40. 610-696-1721; WCPublicLibrary.org.*

Candlelight Holiday Tour in Phoenixville. Homes and churches decorated for the season, plus crafts, music and refreshments. Benefits programs at Firebird Children's Theatre and Phoenix Village Art Center. *Dec. 5, 3 to 7 pm. Tickets and programs, after 2:30 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 121 Church St., Phoenixville, \$20-\$25. 610-933-9181; PhoenixvilleHistoricalSociety.org.*

6th Annual Strasburg Holiday Tour of Homes. Visit decorated homes in Historic Strasburg and stroll down Main Street to enjoy the shops, craft market and light fare and bid on silent auction items. Benefits restoration of historic buildings. *Dec. 5, 10 to 4. First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 101 S. Decatur St. \$20. 717-687-9039; StrasburgHeritageSociety.org.*

Friends of Chester Springs Library Christmas House Tour & Holiday Reception. Tour beautifully decorated homes followed by a holiday reception at The Montgomery School, 4:30 to 6. Includes holiday cheer and light supper. *Dec. 6, 1 to 4:30. Tickets at the library, 1685 Art School Rd., and Gardner's Landscape Nursery, Chester Springs. Advance sales only. \$45. 610-724-2925; Friends-CSL.com.*

The Spirit of Christmas in New Castle, DE. A full day of concerts, house tours, re-enactments, crafts, shopping, refreshments and sharing the Christmas Spirit. *Dec. 12, 9:30 to 5:30. Brochures at New Castle Presb. Church, 25 E. Second St., New Castle, DE. Free. 302-328-3279; NewCastlePresChurch.org. ♦*



Candlelight Holiday Tour
in Phoenixville



The Spirit of Christmas in New Castle, DE
PHOTO: ANDREW HAYES

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'Twas the Night Before Christmas
by N. C. Wyeth

Christmas with the Wyeths



Christmas morning at the Wyeths, 1918

N.C. WYETH'S FAME AS AN ILLUSTRATOR came from his ability to infuse his pictures with an extraordinary sense of romance, drama and adventure. His illustrations inspired the imaginations of generations of readers.

Not surprisingly, he incorporated these qualities into family life as well, particularly holiday celebrations. For the Wyeth children—Henriette, Carolyn, Nat, Ann and Andrew—Christmas was the ultimate experience in excitement and magic.

"My father made Christmas joyous—the house was just loaded with Christmas," Andrew Wyeth recalled in a 1971 interview with *Life Magazine*. "But it was a serious matter. Everything was made a great deal of."

From Henriette's first Christmas in 1908 until the late 1920s, the Wyeth children were visited early on Christmas mornings by "Old Kris"—actually their father, who, disguised in a Santa cos-

tume, would stomp along the roof and shake sleigh bells. In the shadowy morning light, Wyeth would wish his children a Merry Christmas before secretly returning the costume to a closet and joining his excited family, satisfied in the pleasure of fostering nascent imaginations.

Presents for the children encouraged their individual interests—books for Henriette, model making tools and plans for Nat (the family's non-artist who became a successful inventor and engineer), miniature barn animals for Carolyn, dolls for Ann and toy soldiers for Andrew. These provided the backdrops for imaginative play throughout the year.

Visitors to this year's "A Brandywine Christmas" exhibit will see the most famous of Wyeth's painted images of Old Kris, the classic Santa with a full sack of gifts, first published on the cover of *Country Gentleman Magazine*. N.C. Wyeth's iconic illustrations for *Treasure Island* will also be on view. Featuring pirates and buried

treasure, the paintings are so vivid and dramatic that even children who don't know the novel can create their own stories using their imaginations. N.C. Wyeth would be delighted.

Several of Ann Wyeth McCoy's dolls from her collection will be on view in an enchanting new display depicting a sledding party on the hill in front of N.C. Wyeth's home. And of course, the miniature train display, a Brandywine Valley holiday tradition, will delight visitors of all ages. ♦ ~ Christine B. Podmaniczky

IF YOU GO: *Brandywine River Museum of Art, Rt. 1, Chadds Ford.*
Daily, 9:30 to 4:30; \$6–\$15. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org.



A Brandywine Christmas Miniature Train Display
PHOTO: CARLOS ALEJANDRO



Ann Wyeth McCoy's Dolls
PHOTO: DAVE JENSEN



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It's Panto Time!

The most wonderful time of the year!

VOICES SOAR AND LAUGHTER FILLS THE AIR AS PEOPLE'S LIGHT GEARS UP FOR THE 12TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY PANTO.

SINCE 2004, THESE ANNUAL SEND-UPS OF FAMILIAR stories and fairytales—filled with original music, dancing and vaudeville-style comedy—have become a celebrated event for audiences ages 5 to 105. This year's Panto artists are putting their unique and hilarious spin on the swashbuckling adventures of *The Three Musketeers: The Later Years*.

Playwright Kathryn Petersen took her cue from the second of Alexandre Dumas' famous historical novels, the d'Artagnan romance trilogy: *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After* and *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later*. Petersen says that although the novels "did not give [her] a clear and memorable plot," they offer "rich characters, swashbuckling adventures, a group of friends who have each others' backs," and, of course, the famous call: "All for one and one for all!"

Armed with these essential ingredients, Petersen explored the historical backdrop of Dumas' novels—the reigns of Louis the XIII and XIV. The novels provided her with great plot inspiration—"a young king being shaped by his mother, a powerful Cardinal (Richelieu and later Mazarin), a *coup d'état*, the existence of a Grand Falconer, and a host of other details woven through."

Transported by the Panto form, we're in the 17th-century-inspired kingdom of Malvaria, where Dame Queen Agnes has just returned from abroad to find that her son, the child King Houghton "Hughy" Charles, son of the House of Bourbon with a Twist, is being manipulated by his malicious advisor and Grand Falconer, Lord Guido Mazarotti, who has a cast of fierce falcons to carry out his dastardly doings.

As in the Dumas novel, the famed Three Musketeers are initially MIA and others must heed the call. "The question emerged," Petersen explains, "if our heroes are absent, feeble or even dead, who will take their place? The Panto form allowed me to answer with 'why, a girl, a dog and a chicken of course!'"

This kind of outrageous narrative adaptation is a perfect example of People's Light's Panto traditions that audiences have come to relish, including:

- The Dame: a boisterous yet benevolent matriarch played by a man
- A hero, a heroine and a stock villain
- A basic story of good vs. evil
- A "candy bit": the actors throw candy into the audience
- A "messy bit": a mucky slapstick routine
- Music, dance and slapstick

But the most important element that brings the Panto to life is audience participation. Audiences are encouraged to boo the villains, cheer and guide the heroes, sing along, and even take part in some of the action on stage.

Audiences are invited—if not required—to help shape the joys, concerns and highs and lows of the characters' journeys. Much like the puppets that nationally renowned puppet designer and performer Robert Smythe will be designing, the real magic of the Panto relies on the synergy of the audience infusing their imaginative life force onto what's on stage.

Pete Pryor, Panto director since 2008 who will direct and perform this year, offers that "The Panto is a beloved multi-generational event—something that families look forward to doing together every year. We want to bring them our best work, so we push ourselves to keep innovating within the Panto form."

And so we invite your many generations to participate in the best of what we have to offer and to be a part of what makes Pantos

a truly memorable experience. ♦

—Gina Pisasale



Mark Lazar in *The Three Musketeers (The Later Years): A Musical Panto*, 2010

PHOTO: MARK GARVIN

If You Go:

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

WHEN: Through January 10

BOX OFFICE: 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org

NEXT: *Sense and Sensibility*, Feb. 10 – Mar. 20;

Richard III, Mar. 16 – Apr. 24;

A Single Shard, Apr. 27 – May 29; and more.

By Kathryn Petersen

Music & Lyrics by
Michael Ogborn

Directed by Pete Pryor

Books Make Great Gifts

Andrea Kiliany Thatcher, Chester County Book Company

DELIGHT THE BOOK LOVER ON YOUR LIST WITH A GREAT HOLIDAY PICK

EVERY YEAR THERE ARE A SPATE OF WELL-RECEIVED books and personal favorites to consider for gift-giving around the holidays. But this year the diverse selection of bold and inspiring titles released into bibliophiles' loving arms has been a gift unto itself.

Here are the books we think you'll want to share with loved ones this festive season.

A Little Life

by Hanya Yanagihara

For the reader who counts on you to give the book everyone's talking about, raise a cup of cheer to *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. It fits the bill with rave reviews and nominations for the Man Booker and Kirkus prizes and was recently shortlisted for the National Book Award. Three decades in the lives of four friends from an elite educational institution are explored with depth and nuance. This is a page-turner for the reader who isn't afraid of a hefty tome under the tree.

Fates and Furies

by Lauren Groff

This is one of my favorite books of the year, and I can't say enough good things about it. And neither can the National Book Award committee, which put the title through to its short list for the award. *Fates and Furies* is an absorbing and thought-provoking read, but manages to avoid any overwrought gravitas. The romantic drama manages to be interesting without feeling melodramatic and is set against the interesting backdrop of an

upper class boarding school and Vassar and, then later, the New York theater scene. These characters may at first appear to live charmed lives, but that facade begins to crack beautifully the deeper you go into their lives.

Shopaholic to the Rescue

by Sophie Kinsella

For a chick-lit-loving friend who always needs a beach read or something for a flight, this light-hearted continuation of Sophie Kinsella's juggernaut *Shopaholic* series will slide right into the Christmas stocking. In *Shopaholic to the Rescue* we follow the flighty but big-hearted Becky Brandon, nee Bloomwood, on a road trip to Las Vegas with the familiar characters we love, and those we love to hate. While this is a sequel, book number six to be exact, the plot isn't exactly intricate and first-time Kinsella readers can easily jump right in.

Hunger Makes Me a Modern Girl: A Memoir

by Carrie Brownstein

Rock around the Christmas tree with memoirs released this fall by some of music's legendary ladies. Carrie Brownstein is a founding member of '90s Riot Grrrl band Sleater-Kinney, which also released an epic new album this year. You may also know her from the popular satirical television series *Portlandia*.

But if grungy, feminist noise-rock doesn't light your menorah,

there's plenty of musical lady memoirs to choose from: *M Train* by Patti Smith, *Reckless: My Life As a Pretender* by Chrissie Hynde, *I'll Never Write My Memoirs* by Grace Jones, and if you missed it earlier this year, *Girl in a Band: A Memoir* by Kim Gordon. For something a little different, there's *The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic* by Jessica Hopper.

Between the World and Me

by Ta-Nehisi Coates

When Toni Morrison calls something required reading, you listen. Ta-Nehisi Coates is known for his thoughtful and influential writing on race in America in *The Atlantic* and other publications, so it's not surprising that his book *Between the World and Me* is nominated for the National Book Award in non-fiction. Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis, and is likely to become a touchstone book for future generations. It was even part of President Obama's summer reading list.

Ms. Marvel Volume 1

Hardcover Edition

If you know any comic-book nerds, they'll geek out over the hardcover edition of the new *Ms. Marvel Volume 1*. But anyone who follows the We Need Diverse Books campaign will be rooting for Kamala Khan, an ordinary Muslim girl from Jersey City who discovered there is *No Normal*. This wry, insecure superhero has taken the comic world by storm and has been lovingly championed by NPR on several occasions. If you need a strong female role model for a youngster or to see Rumi quoted by a masked crusader, this is your read.

Other graphic novels and comics worth noting: *Honor Girl* by Maggie Thrash, *Lady Killer*—billed as Betty Draper meets Hannibal—by Jamie S. Rich and Joelle Jones, and Volume 3 of *The Walking Dead* by Robert Kirkman.

Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking

by Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook

From one of Philadelphia's most-beloved restaurants comes a cookbook that allows you to combine the flavors that patrons come back for time and time again in your home kitchen. Chef Michael Solomonov's dishes have attracted the glowing notice of the *New York Times*, *Bon Appétit* and *Eater* and will have your dinner guests just as excited. It includes recipes for the restaurant's popular fried cauliflower, a hummus so ethereal it put Zahav on the culinary map, and a pink lentil soup with lamb meatballs that one critic called "Jerusalem in a bowl."

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone: The Illustrated Edition

by J.K. Rowling

Illustrated by Jim Kay

This is going to be on a lot of wish lists. Kate Greenaway-award-winning artist Jim Kay has created over 100 stunning illustrations, making this deluxe format a perfect gift as much for a child being introduced to the series, as for the dedicated fan. A double-page spread on trolls, an extract from Newt Scamander's *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, and an illustration of the various types of dragon eggs are sure to delight. For the Potter super fan, there are also four new full-series sets from Juniper Books with lavish covers that come in their own traveling trunk. ♦

Chester County Book Company has many more recommended titles, along with Christmas cards, calendars, stationery and other gifts to make holiday shopping easy—plus free gift-wrapping. Chester County Books, an independently owned bookseller, hopes you shop small, shop local, and shop Chester County. 967 Paoli Pk., West Goshen Center, West Chester. 610-696-1661; CCBMC.com.



TIRED OF CHOPPING WOOD?

Edwin Malet

TURN YOUR FIREPLACE INTO A CLEAN AND EFFICIENT SOURCE OF HEAT.

THE BEAUTY OF THE FIRE: FLAMES DANCING UPWARD, crackling, flashing. The aroma of the wood. The warmth on my feet and face. I couldn't wait.

I spent the morning chopping wood. The temperature was in the 40s, but my sweatshirt was wet with sweat and the pile of split logs was growing more slowly than I wished. Earlier, I'd wanted a fire. Now I only wanted a cold glass of water. And something for the blisters.

I looked at the whole logs, then the splits; then thought about the smoke and ashes. There had to be a better way.

The worst part of using our fireplace was the heat loss. The flames were certainly pretty. But, no matter what I did, the fire sucked the heat out of my house, increasing—not decreasing—the burden on my heating system. For all my work, I'd earn a negative-return: the larger the fire, the greater my loss.

The lost dollars and BTUs were really only secondary. Worse was that we hadn't used the fireplace for years. Between the log-cutting, stacking, hauling and the nasty job of sweeping the ashes, plus our concerns about pollution, we'd found it more convenient to burn candles in the hearth. Effectively, we had a candelabra in our wall.

As I studied the woodpile, I wondered why I spent the time. Year after year.

I dropped my axe, went up to the house and tended my wounds.

FIREPLACE INSERTS

The next morning, I went shopping to learn about fireplace inserts. On principle, I was initially hesitant. I still harbored a "back to the land" self-image, though I'd tarnished that when I'd abandoned charcoal for my gas grill.

Bob Smith of Chester County Hearth & Home and Bill Ryan of The Stove Shop were particularly helpful during my education. Shawn Koberg of Halligan's Hearth & Home and Dan Hagan of Gas Works were, too. I visited the shops, reviewed catalogs and websites.

From my crash course, I learned there are four kinds of inserts: wood, gas, wood pellets and electric. Electric, I immediately dismissed. The electric "flame" was really not. It was more a picture of a flame. And a bad one.

Similarly, I rejected pellets. They were factory-fabricated, mainly from sawdust, came in 40-pound bags, and were fed through a hopper—essentially a bin. On the plus-side, they were efficient. Still, they didn't capture my imagination.

That left the options of wood or gas inserts. "They are both safe," according to Bob Smith. Ultimately, I leaned toward gas, primarily for convenience. The initial costs would be about the same: five to eight thousand dollars. But the wood-powered insert required the same old train that powers the fireplace: chopping, transporting,

burning, cleaning and disposing. I'm over that.

Both kinds of inserts come in a variety of styles, ranging from cast-iron to metal or tile, called "surrounds" and both have glass or glass-and-screen fronts.

A few had a more open appearance, increasing the view of the fire. Some fit flat into the existing fireplace. Some wood-fired units protrude into the room, offering a kind of cooktop for tea or coffee.

The gas inserts offer a wide choice for the firebed—stones, glass beads, "gems" or imitation ceramic logs. And with gas, the flame is instantly on/off and adjustable in size, usually by a remote control, but this requires an electronic starter or a pilot light: the latter a safety concern.

The wood inserts require, well, wood.

INSTALLATION

Bill Ryan walked me through the installation process. The threshold question for installation is whether gas is already coming into your house—that makes the job easier. Without gas, you're limited to wood or have a bigger project.

The next question is whether there's an existing fireplace. Without it, you're not thinking about an insert, you're thinking about building a fireplace—a big undertaking—or about a free-standing stove. The technology, manufacturers and retailers of stoves are basically the same as for fireplace inserts, but the appearance and installation are different. And writing about them is a different article.

The third question is how to get gas to the fireplace. This may be easy or expensive depending on where your existing gas line is. In any case, consult a licensed plumber for this step. I'm among the semi-lucky: I've got a gas line, but in an inconvenient location. I'm awaiting the estimate.

Similarly, running electricity to the fireplace generally requires some work, especially to hide the wires. In addition to the starter on a gas unit, virtu-

ally every unit, wood or gas, requires current for a fan to circulate heat into the room.

Still, another issue involves the chimney. A vent—one for wood, two for gas—has to be snaked through the chimney. One admits air; the other exhausts fumes. And the top of the chimney needs a cap. None of this is exotic, but all is necessary, along with a thorough cleaning of your chimney.

Finally, there's the selection and installation of the insert itself—the fun part. As I mentioned, there are many decisions. Size—of height, width and depth—is critical. The blowers may be two-speed or more. Some townships require a permit.

For wood-burning units, you'll also need to think about a catalytic converter. Basically, this reduces emissions and extracts additional heat from the wood by slowly re-burning wood particles that would otherwise go up the chimney. It's more efficient, but only certain units have them.

Maintenance is the last issue to consider. Manufacturers recommend having your installed system inspected once a season, though my impression is that few—especially occasional users—do that.

In short, the decision is not as simple as picking out an attractive insert. You'll have to consider contractors, cost, aesthetics. On the other hand, chopping wood is a chore, especially when most of your work goes up the chimney.

Gas, at least for now, is clean, efficient and cheap. Smith and Ryan both say that gas inserts have grown dramatically with the decrease in gas prices. A wood insert will greatly augment heating power of the wood you burn, though the heating efficiency is generally greater with gas. On balance, as a supplemental heat source, I think you'll benefit from either.

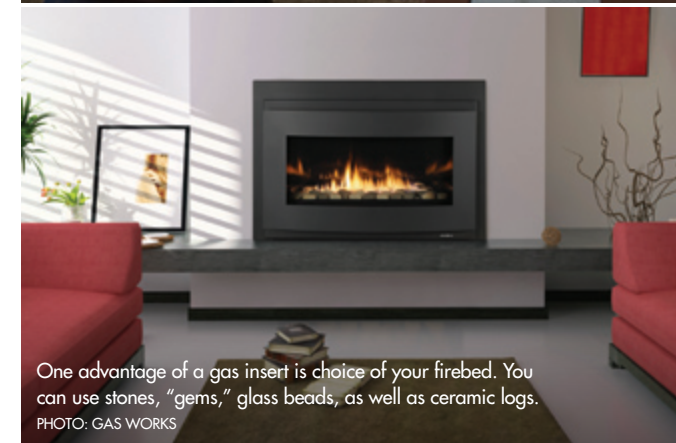
Both will greatly enhance that hole in the wall we call a fireplace. And you may just find you and your family will enjoy many more cozy evenings around the fire. ♦



A gas fireplace is low maintenance. There are no ashes to clean up. And when you want it on or off, just flip a switch.
PHOTO: CHESTER COUNTY HEARTH & HOME



With a wood insert, you'll heat with wood but use less of it.
PHOTO: THE STOVE SHOP



One advantage of a gas insert is choice of your firebed. You can use stones, "gems," glass beads, as well as ceramic logs.
PHOTO: GAS WORKS

Area Dealers

- Chester County Hearth & Home, Elverson
- The Stove Shop, Phoenixville
- Halligan's Hearth & Home, Malvern
- Gas Works, Frazer
- Chadds Ford Fireside Shop, Glen Mills
- Dreifuss Fireplaces, Paoli
- Brandywine Patio & Fireplace Center, West Chester
- Grate Fireplaces, West Chester

Holiday Shopping
is Moving
in

DOWNTOWN WEST CHESTER

THE PLACE TO FILL YOUR HOLIDAY WISH LIST

☆☆☆

Story by Malcolm Johnstone

Photos by Timlyn Vaughan

IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN IN DOWNTOWN WEST CHESTER in a while, it's time to get into the holiday spirit, hit the historic sidewalks, and check out new offerings in boutique-land.

Many downtown merchants are helping to make giving gifts that someone actually wants much easier by using Holiday Wish Lists. These helpful lists—complete with the name and location of participating stores—let the wisher write in desired items and then place in a strategic spot for a potential gift giver to discover. Win-win and wishes fulfilled!

Now is the time to explore ...

NEW TO TOWN

Brand new to downtown West Chester is **Old Soul Décor**, 119 W. Market St.; OldSoulDecor.com. The shop, owned by PA Academy of the Fine Arts grad Krystal Reinhard and antique furniture dealer Josh Unruh, occupies a sunny, gallery-like space with walls of bead-board and brick. Period antiques occupy the welcoming gallery space alongside early-1980s furnishings and accessories. The showroom's specialties include mid-century modern furniture, throw pillows made onsite, and old chairs and settees reupholstered in vintage grain sacks, linen or cowhide. Plus fair-trade Kenyan hand towels, Brooklyn-made soy candles and vintage jewelry.

Another exciting store is **Beau Étre**, 148 W. Gay St.; BeauEtre.com, the intimate and beautiful apothecary bed and bath store that embodies the essence of cozy comfort and luxurious relaxation. The name means “beautiful being” and captures the spirit of femininity for the modern woman who has a “refined sense of wellness.” You'll find products like Silvanus, Beau Étre's very own organic line of body care products customized and formulated right inside the store. With more than a dozen products and 44 scents, the aromatic possibilities are endless.

CHANGES TO CHECK OUT

“I have a passion for jewelry and enjoy working with people to help them design or purchase jewelry that fulfills a personal need in their lives,” says Lisa Kaplan, co-owner of **Kaplan's Fine Jewelry**, 111 W. Market St.; KaplansFineJewelry.com. A downtown destination for decades, the jewelry store suffered a brief closing after a fire in an adjoining structure, but Kaplan's is back and open full-time. “I love the feeling that we can offer an expertise that helps define a customer's momentous occasion





and can even become an heirloom passed to future generations,” says Lisa. A goal Kaplan’s achieves every day.

For those who love to browse for treasures, **Greene Street Consignment** will fill the bill, now at a new location, 106 W. Gay St.; *GreenStreetConsignment.com*. Items are seasonal and reflect a wide range of current styles from affordable, quality brands to high-end luxury labels. There are men’s and women’s clothing, jewelry, handbags, shoes and other accessories, so shop, recycle, consign.

Visual Expansion Gallery has also moved to a new location, but it’s only right next door, 132 N. High St.; *VisualExpansionGallery.com*. It’s there that Mary

Manning and Elizabeth Taylor, both professional framers, continue to produce high quality custom framing for art and that family heirloom that can now become the centerpiece of a room. There’s an expanded selection of works from local artists that truly take the Brandywine tradition to new levels. And for your favorite map collector, check out the large selection of regional and local antique and reproduction maps.

After an extensive remodeling that nearly doubled its space and selections, **Mainline Custom Clothiers** is ready for your holiday shopping, 129 W. Market St.; *MainlineCustomClothiers.com*. Owner Larry Albert has designed a store for men who desire the best in formal and professional menswear at affordable prices. He offers quality lines for business suits, tuxedos and custom dress shirts by Loro Piana, Robert Graham and Bugatchi for the timeless style and excellent custom fit that will last years instead of a season.

VISIT SOME FAVORITES

West Chester University’s off-campus gift store, the **WCU Ram Shop**, 134 N. High St.; *WCURamShop.com*, has great new merchandise! For your favorite WCU alum, find a warm Pioneer Vantek fleece or cozy Nantucket Toggle Zip Jacket. Future alums will love a new line of baby clothing—cozy polar fleece vest, striped, footed rompers and a Ram diaper bag for carrying the important stuff. Golfers want Titleist Golf Bags, club covers, Ram-faced golf balls and performance golf tees, while tailgaters will appreciate logo chairs, tents, wine glasses and serving trays to be topped off with decadent sea salt caramels—great stocking stuffers. For the student who has it all, you can’t go wrong with the award-winning Ugly Christmas Sweaters!

If you haven’t noticed **Chester County Historical Society’s** recent improvements, check out the newly expanded patio, the perfect warm-weather party place, and the renovated auditorium for events with up to 200. Check inside for an often-overlooked retail spot, the Museum Shop, with the biggest selection of Chester County-made items including local honey, candles, jewelry and pottery for those holiday wishes. Plus Chester County and West Chester ornaments, mugs and glasses. Is someone on your list a history buff? The museum shop is a treasure trove of books and prints of the history of the Brandywine Valley.

While you’re there, check out the current exhibits including “The Sixties! The

Age of Aquarius”—it’s far out, dude. And remember, a gift of an annual Chester County Historical Society membership can be enjoyed throughout the year and also supports the area’s greatest museum.

Remember to check out the many seasonal events in downtown West Chester at *DowntownWestChester.com* including children’s art and gift making classes by West Chester Parks & Recreation, Santa’s Express on the West Chester Railroad, and the extraordinary Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade on December 4 at 7:15 p.m. Read more about the parade in this issue.

Plus more events in this issue and on *CountyLinesMagazine.com*. ♦



SOME FAVORITE BOUTIQUES

- **Blink** specializes in trendy apparel and premium denim from a variety of contemporary designers. 136 W. Gay St.; *ShopBlink.com*.
- A women’s boutique and a vintage jewelry store, **Green Eyed Lady** features unique items from fashion apparel to vintage wedding accessories. 132 W. Gay St.; *ShopGreenEyedLady.com*.
- Kiki travels each season to Europe, California and New York bringing back the newest fashion to **Jane Chalfant/Kiki Boutique**, with everything from sweaters to accessories to stylish wraps. 123 N. High St.; *JaneChalfant.com*.
- An eclectic women’s boutique focusing on clothing made in the U.S., **KALY** offers sustainable and environment-friendly gifts, and unique, jewelry created by artisans. 37 W. Gay St.; *KalyClothing.com*.
- Specializing in vintage ladies’ wearables, from 1850 to 1980, **Malena’s Boutique** is filled with treasures like costume jewelry, coats and dresses—most pieces under \$50. 101 W. Gay St.; *MalenasBoutique.com*.

- **nich boutique** brings a fun, urban edge to their clients by carrying hip, original accessories—like hair tattoos—plus closet staples like jackets, sweaters and active wear. 29 S. High St.; *ShopNich.com*.
- Featuring the latest fashion trends, combined with classic pieces, **tish boutique** helps women feel and look their best at any age, size or budget. 138 E. Gay St.; *TishStyle.com*.

BRING ON THE BLING

- You’ll find personalized service at **Big Diamonds’** wholesale shop where they assist customers in selecting the perfect diamond for engagement rings, wedding bands, or fashion jewelry at any budget. 15 W. Gay St.; *BigsDiamonds.com*.
- **Sunset Hill Jewelers** features unique jewelry including antique, vintage, contemporary and classic designs, as well as fine quality jewelry made in the US. Plus a fine arts gallery upstairs. 23 N. High St.; *Sun-SetHillJewelers.com*.



SHOPPING GUIDE

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. G-Spot Thrift Boutique | 22. The Antique Shop |
| 2. tish boutique | 23. Woman’s Exchange |
| 3. Hybrid Cycles | 24. Church Street Gallery |
| 4. Sunset Hill Jewelers & Fine Arts Gallery | 25. Halladay Florist |
| 5. Coins of Chester County | 26. Kent Studios at Z Gallery |
| 6. Ruby Slippers Boutique | 27. Mad Platter |
| 7. nich boutique | 28. May 23 Clothing & Accessories |
| 8. Kati Mac Floral Designs | 29. Stay Chic |
| 9. A Taste of Olive | 30. Great Craft Works |
| 10. Chester County Running Store | 31. Malena’s Vintage Boutique |
| 11. Éclat Chocolate | 32. Greene Street Consignment Shop |
| 12. Jane Chalfant / Kiki Boutique | 33. Taylor Music Store |
| 13. Artistic Eyewear | 34. Moonflower |
| 14. G&G Cigars | 35. Green Eyed Lady |
| 15. Visual Expansion Gallery | 36. Blink |
| 16. WCU Ram Shop | 37. Beau Être |
| 17. Chester Co. Hist. Soc. | 38. The 5 Senses |
| 18. Fairman’s Skate Shop | 39. Mainline Custom Clothiers |
| 19. KALY | 40. Old Soul Décor |
| 20. BIG Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry | 41. Kaplan’s Fine Jewelry |
| 21. Acorn Cottage Style | 42. Second Reading Books |
| | 43. Art Trust Gallery at Meridian Bank |

Holiday Fun in WEST CHESTER

THROUGH DECEMBER 19

Chester County Art Association Exhibit & Event. Enjoy an art exhibit where all works are priced \$300 and under to promote giving original artwork for the holidays. *Dec. 8-Jan. 8*, Holiday Market featuring beautiful handmade gifts. Join them on *Dec. 11* for festive piano music, mulled drinks and cookies while shopping, 2 to 7. 100 N. Bradford Ave. Tues-Sat, 9:30 to 4. 610-696-5600; ChesterCountyArts.org.

THROUGH DECEMBER 24

17th Annual Miniature Show. See 30 favorite Chester County artists display miniature artworks at Sunset Hill Gallery, 23 N. High St. Mon, 9:30 to 5:30; Tues-Thurs, 9:30 to 7; Fri, 9:30 to 6; Sat, 10 to 6. 610-692-0374; SunsetHillGallery.com.

DECEMBER 3-6

MARSdrinks Old-Fashioned Christmas Celebration in West Chester. *Dec. 3, 5, 6*, Gilbert & Sullivan Society performs *Trial By Jury* at the Courthouse; *Dec. 4*, Jingle Elf 5K Run, 6:30 pm; tree lighting at 7; parade at 7:15. Soup & Sandwich Parlour at the Knights of Columbus, 5:45 to 9. *Dec. 5*, Breakfast with Santa at The Chester County Historical Society, 8:30 am, \$14. For a schedule of weekend events, GreaterWestChester.com.



DECEMBER 4

Old-Fashioned Christmas Concert. Holiday favorites performed by members of West Chester Studio of the Performing Arts at the Chester County Hist. Society, 225 N. High St. 12:30. WestChesterStudio.com.

DECEMBER 5

West Chester Library Holiday Home Tour. See *House Tours* page in this issue.

DECEMBER 5

West Chester Charity Ball. Dinner, dancing and auction. Benefits The Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children, Emergency Family Shelter for homeless and the Homeless Prevention Program. West Chester Golf and Country Club, 111 W. Ashbridge St. Cocktail chic or black tie. 6:30. \$175. 610-431-3598; FriendsAssoc.org.

DECEMBER 5

WCU Live! Presents ... Story Pirates. The cast creates a show before your very eyes based on audience suggestions, and the result is hilarious and unexpected. Madeleine Wing Adler Theatre. 2 pm. \$5-\$8. 610-436-2266; WCUPA.TicketLeap.com.



DECEMBER 5-6, 12-13, 19-20

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 (additional 5 pm departure last two weekends). \$6-\$22; under 2, free. 610-430-2233; WestChesterRR.com.

DECEMBER 5-18

Uptown! Entertainment Alliance Presents *Dec. 5-6, It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, Chester County Hist. Society, 25 N. High St. 6 pm. \$18. *Dec. 17*, Family Jazz Night, The Cartoon Christmas Trio Performing with members of Pocopson Elementary Chorus at the Ballroom at the Westside, 430 Hannum Ave. Doors open at 6, concert begins 6:30. \$15 in advance online, \$20 at the door. *Dec. 18*, award-winning Venezuelan playwright



Indira Paez's play, *Mujeres de Par en Par* at Sprout Music Collective, 130 E. Prescott Alley. 7 pm, followed by an evening of Salsa dancing. 610-738-3350; UptownWestChester.org.

DECEMBER 6

Westtown Parks & Recreation's Holiday Festival. You'll enjoy music, crafts, games, refreshments and, of course, Santa in the mansion, decorated for the holiday season. Oakbourne Mansion, 1014 S. Concord Rd. Noon to 3. Free. 610-692-1930; WesttownPA.org.



DECEMBER 6

38th Annual Brian's Run. A 5-mile race through West Chester and North Hills benefits Homes for Our Troops. Henderson High School, 400 Montgomery Ave., 1 pm. \$25-\$30. BriansRun.org.

DECEMBER 11-20

Brandywine Ballet Presents *The Nutcracker*. See *Of Special Note* in this issue.

DECEMBER 12

SantaFest at the American Helicopter Museum. Bring your camera to see Santa arrive by helicopter at 11 am. 1220 American Blvd. 10 to 2 pm. Helicopter rides from 11 to 3. \$40 includes holiday activities and snacks. 610-436-9600; HelicopterMuseum.org. ♦

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Christmas in County Lines Country

Colleen Cummings & Jenny Miedwig

WEST CHESTER'S OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

Even if December is not yet white, West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas has everything to make the season bright. The 36th Annual MARS Drinks Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade kicks off this holiday season on Friday, December 4th.

Once again, the Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce hosts the celebration. See spectacular floats, high school marching bands, dance troupes and antique cars that make up the holiday merriment, orchestrated by Under the Sun Productions. And listen for Santa's silver bells as he flies through the streets in his sleigh.

Join the 7th Annual Jingle Elf Run before the parade for children's races, one-mile walk and two-mile run. Register early and get a jingle elf hat to wear!

The entire weekend is filled with events for everyone—from holiday open houses hosted by local businesses before the parade to Saturday breakfast with Santa, when he'll be taking pictures and making his Christmas list for all the good boys and girls.

Pick your spot to watch the fun as Friday's parade starts at New and Market Street, travels east on Market—past the beautifully decorated Christmas tree at the Old Courthouse—then north on Matlack, west on Gay Street, before circling back to New Street.

Thousands come from near and far—even from across the country—to celebrate this tradition and welcome Santa Claus. The parade is broadcast live and rebroadcast Christmas Day on QVC so you can recapture the holiday spirit.

Downtown West Chester will have everybody dancing merrily in a new old-fashioned way this holiday season.

IF YOU GO: Dec. 4: Jingle Elf Run, 6:30 p.m., High and Market Sts. Lighting of the Tree, 7 p.m. Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade, 7:15 p.m. For more events, DowntownWestChester.com.

HAVE YOURSELF A MALVERN VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Grab your top hat and beribboned bonnet to get in costume and in the holiday spirit at Malvern's Victorian Christmas.

This two-day event kicks off with the tree lighting on Friday, December 4th, followed by performances throughout the town sponsored by local businesses. Join in the caroling covering every Christmas song in the book. Stroll down King Street and stop in the many open houses to sip some cider, hot chocolate or wine.

Don't want to keep the kids out late on Friday night? No problem! Past Saturdays have typically included scores of activities—puppet shows and magicians, along with a variety of holiday crafts

including making gingerbread houses, holiday wreaths and ornaments, plus face painting.

Take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage and marvel at the transformation of modern-day Malvern to the Victorian era. Admire the decorations and greens—hung by volunteers in November—bedecking the town. Hayrides and pony rides are free, too.

And what would Christmas be without Santa Claus? Jolly Saint Nick and Mrs. Claus will be taking pictures with all good children on Friday night and on Saturday. What better photo for your Christmas cards!

In the spirit of the holidays, donate to the food drive benefiting Chester County Food Bank, at locations in town, including Malvern Public Library and Malvern Federal Savings Bank.

Embrace the Victorian era that Malvern recreates for a special weekend every year, charming everyone—kids from one to ninety-two!

IF YOU GO: Tree Lighting: Dec. 4, 6 p.m.; The Pavilion, Burke Park Warren Ave. & Roberts Ln. 610-296-9096; MalvernVictorianChristmas.org.

WAYNE HOTEL'S OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

Step into Wayne's winter wonderland the first weekend of December to join in their Old Fashioned Christmas celebration! December 4th and 5th are jam-packed with Christmas cheer for the entire family, beginning with carriage rides and ending with a visit from Santa Claus.

Friday, get an early start at 4 p.m. for the First Friday Special Holiday Shopping Hours for great deals on Christmas gifts along Lancaster Avenue.

At 5:30, head for Radnor Fire House to make memories decorating ornaments to hang on your family tree. Kids can get their faces painted before taking an old-fashioned ride on a horse-drawn carriage rolling down South Wayne Avenue.

On North Wayne Avenue, carolers stroll along singing Christmas tunes. The evening's highlight is at 7:30—the town's Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Wayne train station. The Valley Forge Military Academy and College Choir will sing carols before 6ABC Action News Reporter, Vernon Odom, lights the Christmas tree.

On Saturday, begin your morning along Lancaster Avenue for Santa's Parade at 10 a.m. Give a wave to Santa, who'll be sitting atop a shiny red fire truck, as you watch Radnor High School Marching Band, cheerleaders and Valley Forge Military Academy Field Music Group.



West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas



Malvern's Victorian Christmas



West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas



Wayne Hotel's Old Fashioned Christmas



Wayne Hotel's Old Fashioned Christmas

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Have the kids grab their wish lists before meeting Santa at the Veranda of The Wayne Hotel, until 11:30. Sip hot chocolate and sample freshly baked cookies provided by Paramour.

The next weekend—December 12th and 13th—head to the Wayne Art Center to wrap up your Christmas shopping. Over 25 craft and cuisine vendors will participate in the holiday shopping weekend. While you're there, check out the Craft Forms and Craft Technology exhibitions, featuring over 100 artists working in contemporary and traditional handmade crafts.

For more, visit WayneChristmas.com and WayneArt.org.

PHOENIXVILLE FESTIVITIES

Pop on over to Phoenixville this December to join their distinctive holiday festivities—where the town celebrates holiday cheer *and* their independent, artistic spirit.

Begin the celebration December 4th with the annual Christmas Parade, starting at the 300 block of Bridge Street at 7 p.m. Follow the winter wonderland floats, some of your favorite characters (Cat in the Hat, Philly Phanatic) and *of course* St. Nicholas himself to Bridge and Main Street to watch the Christmas Tree lighting at 8 p.m.

On December 5th get an early start at 9 a.m. at the Holiday Craft Fair at the Kimberton Fire Company. Browse crafts and collectables to wrap up as gifts for family and friends.

At 3 p.m., head over to the Parkside Church at Third and Main Street for the annual Candlelight Holiday Tour. Visit some of Phoenixville's historical and modern homes and buildings decorated in their holiday best. Enjoy crafts, music and refreshments, too!

End the day by heading to Friendship Field at Franklin Avenue and Fillmore Street for the famous Firebird Festival. Join the Phoenixville natives as they celebrate their rise into a vibrant, artistic town.

Beginning at 3, local artists, street performers, musicians and vendors will entertain crowds. At 8:15, the Firebird—a 20-foot wooden Phoenix built by local volunteers—will be set ablaze.

Grab your family and celebrate the holiday season the Phoenixville way! ♦

SHOP LOCAL THIS SEASON!

Skip the Mall &

Shop Small.

Mary Irene Dolan

DID YOU KNOW THAT FOR EVERY \$100 SPENT AT locally owned small businesses, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll and other benefits? When you shop small and local you don't just go home with a unique purchase, you help put food on a local family's table and put their kids through college.

Plus the atmosphere at independent brick-and-mortar stores far surpasses a maddening mall experience. Sales associates are attentive and knowledgeable, and shops are decked out for the holidays—many offering holiday sales, custom gift-wrapping and special in-store refreshments.

So, we propose that you give back to our community this holiday season by shopping in it! Don't know where to begin? Read about shopping in West Chester in another article in this issue. And, we have a few more suggestions...

STOP & STROLL THROUGH MALVERN

This quaint town is home to a collection of locally owned gems, many along King Street. Boutiques abound and are stocked with the latest trends. Visit **Nota Bene Boutique** for a wide selection of stylish clothing for all ages—with many brands made in America. Then stop in **Gingy's Boutique** for more clothing and accessories, including original designs by Jean, the owner.

You'll find elegant women's apparel at **Posh Collections**, with personal shoppers available to assist you in your quest for the per-

fect gift or holiday outfit. At **Louella**, with another shop in Wayne, take your pick of classic and contemporary styles.

Looking for personalized home décor items? **The Picket Fence** is packed with hostess gifts, candles, quotable signs, specialty baby items and more. Or stop in **Knots & Weaves** for more than just stunning rugs, including throws, pillows and signed art.

Support local artists and fair trade supporters at **Terra Culture** by buying artisan-made jewelry, pottery and home accents. And if you have a giftee in need of pampering, stop by **Grazia Skin Care Studio and Spa** for a gift certificate. And consider treating yourself!

SHOPPING SPECIALS: *Malvern Holiday Madness on Third Thursday, Dec. 17, plus shops are open for Victorian Christmas, Dec. 4–6.*

A BIT OF THE MAIN LINE IN WAYNE

Don't overlook the bustling Main Line this season. First up, **The Eagle Village Shops** on Lancaster Ave. let you visit several shops at one stop. For the eco-conscious fashion lover, **Element Six** has chic yet environmentally and socially responsible clothing with impeccable style. Family-owned **Ellie** offers contemporary fashion, plus their sales associates double as stylists to give professional advice.

The Little House Shop is a long-time favorite for many, with gifts fit for any occasion—ornaments, candles, stationery and more. **Valley Forge Flowers** is another gift gold mine with much more than just flowers—art, baby items, pet toys and themed gift baskets to name a few.



Venture over to another eco-friendly shop, **Waltzing Matilda**, with locally sourced hand-made leather and silver accessories. Or visit newly opened **Company C** for tasteful home décor and entertaining pieces. Finish up at **Wayne Art Center** for their year-round gallery shop and, starting December 4th, **Craft Forms** exhibit for stunning pieces from established and emerging artists.

SHOPPING SPECIALS: Free parking on Small Business Saturdays through December 27. Join them for Wayne Hotel's Old Fashioned Christmas, Dec. 4-6.

MORE THAN FOOD IN PHOENIXVILLE

It might seem like restaurants dominate the scene here, but there are plenty of shops to discover on your holiday gift hunt! First, take a walk down Bridge Street. You'll find gifts for music lovers and fans of all things vinyl at **Deep Grove Records & Audio** and some of the tastiest, decadent treats in town at **Bridge Street Chocolates**.

For an eclectic shopping experience, head to **Diving Cat Studio & Gallery** and sift through over 200 artists' imaginative work to find the perfect gift. **Ellie's Choice Gift & Specialty Items** gives off an artsy vibe too, with fragrances, bath and body products, clothing and more for the hippie-at-heart. And **Romantic Jewelers** has that one-of-a-kind piece among their selection of heirloom jewelry and handcrafted reproductions—in a welcoming Victorian environment.

Main Street is also a must-visit, especially for local fashion. Founded by two friends with a vision, **LuLu Boutique & Gifterie** is jam-packed with wearable vintage clothing and accessories. With roots online on Etsy, **Minx Vintage's** storefront is another treasure trove of vintage goodies, with clothing, housewares, art and assorted curiosities. And don't forget to stop in **Generations Toys** for fun and creative gifts for the young and young at heart.

SHOPPING SPECIALS: Unwrap Phoenixville, "passports" available. Make 5 purchases at participating locations through December 4 to be eligible for prizes! More details at UnwrapPXV.com.

STOP & SHOP IN NEWTOWN SQUARE

Take a trip to Delaware County to shop 'till you drop! For the runners on your list, **The Running Place** has all the gear you need—shoes, apparel and gift certificates if you don't know what to get. And speaking of everything you need, **Earth Wood & Fiber** truly does have it, from kitchen tools and bar gadgets for foodies to beautiful but useful office items for working professionals.

For those hard-to-buy-for people, you can't go wrong with **Christopher Chocolates & Fine Foods**, boasting an assortment of special holiday treats including their popular office baskets for company parties. And do visit **Mostardi Nursery** to get your friends and family in the holiday spirit, with seasonal flowers, wreaths, trees, stocking stuffers and more.

FAIR TRADE & MORE IN MEDIA

Don't just shop local in Media, shop fair trade, too. The first Fair Trade town in the Americas since 2006, Media is home to small businesses that give back to the community, both locally and globally.

Kuta offers exclusive handmade jewelry, accessories and clothing from eco-friendly brands, while **Earth & State** carries an array of local and international designs from pottery, glass and metal work to wood carvings, musical instruments and even fairy wings!

Similarly, **Seven Stones** is dedicated to promoting fair trade practices, selling authentic Native American jewelry, leather, crafts and more. And **local home + gifts** supports independent artisans in their backyard, carrying everything from adorable baby gifts and bath and body products to home fragrances and holiday items.

For the little ones, skip the chain stores and visit newly opened **Simon Says** for all kinds of baby and kid-approved gifts from toys, clothing, books and more.

And there's still no reason to head to the mall when you can visit local women's apparel shops like **Sorella Boutique**, **Per Lei Boutique** and **Tan-**



creed's Specialty Shop for your pick of classic or trendy clothing and accessories at a variety of price points.

SHOPPING SPECIALS: Second Saturdays

KENNETT IS FAR FROM SQUARE

Go see why downtown Kennett Square's small business scene is hopping! If you know any tea drinkers, take your pick of **Mrs. Robinson's Tea Shop's** selection of 150 specialty teas—including a limited edition Christmas in Kennett tea—plus accessories.

Clothing boutiques continue to blossom, like **Green Eyed Lady**, also in West Chester, with vintage jewelry and trendy new styles. And mid-century modern goods are plentiful at **Scout & Annie** along with gift-ready fine candles and luxurious bath products.

You'll find fair trade boutiques as well like **State & Union**, which stocks quality brands that meet the highest standards of social and environmental responsibility. **Marcella Cruz Boutique** is dedicated to supporting artists internationally, featuring colorful fashion and gift items handmade from the indigenous people of Northern Columbia.

And kids on your list get eco-friendly treatment, too, at **Bedbugzz**, full of cool clothes, fun toys and more from ethical brands—plus they offer monogramming and embroidery on site.

SHOPPING SPECIALS: Christmas Carols by the Brandywine Singers: Saturdays, December 5 & 12. Carriage Rides on State & Union Streets: Sundays in December, noon to 3, \$5 per person; 5 and under, free. ♦

Want to learn about why you should shop small? Visit ShopSmall.com, The350Project.net and ShiftYourShopping.org.

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Holiday WINDOW SHOPPING

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We make lists, check reviews, ask friends, stroll the shops, looking for inspiration in the windows. Occasionally, a treasure in

the window catches our eye, invites us in. Inside, the shelves are plump and the shopkeepers helpful. There is more to see.

This guide, a sampling of what the windows and shops hold, also will help.

At County Lines, we wish you happy shopping! And the happiest and most wonderful of holidays! To our readers and advertisers, we say thank you. Your season, we hope, will bring you joy.

Marci Tomassone

★ Pennsylvania ★

AVONDALE

Loch Nairn Golf Club, located in the heart of Chester County, is a "Jewel In The Country." Offering fine dining in **The Farmhouse**, a charming 17th-century farmhouse featuring excellent food and service. Serving lunch on Saturdays and dinner Thursday–Sunday. You'll find casual fare in the **Greathouse**, with the Round Room, including hearty comfort foods and draft beers. They have a sports bar and a crackling fireplace. Open daily for lunch and dinner. 514 McCue Rd. 610-268-2235; LochNairn.com.

BIRD-IN-HAND

In the heart of Lancaster's Amish Country, find the **Amish Experience at Plain & Fancy Farm**, 3121 Old Philadelphia Pk., an inter-



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Walter J. Cook Jeweler
610.644.5347 • WalterJCookJeweler.com

pretive center for guided tours of the Amish farmlands, also tours of Lancaster County's only officially designated Heritage Site, Amish House & One-Room School and the spectacular Amish Experience Theater F/X production of *Jacob's Choice*. For a great holiday family activity, don't miss the limited run of the new **Christmas Magic Lantern Show**, November 27–December 31. 717-768-8400; AmishExperience.com.

CHADDS FORD

The perfect gift awaits at the gift shop at the **Brandywine River Museum of Art**. Shop the unique selection of gifts inspired by art and nature, including notecards and art reproductions featuring the iconic



Wayne Art Center
610.688.3553 • WayneArt.org

works of the Wyeth family, handcrafted jewelry, exclusive silk scarves and accessories, toys for children, art activity books and more. Don't miss the annual Critter Sale, December 5–6. Located on Rt. 1. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org.

COLLEGEVILLE

Relax for an afternoon or a full day at **Eden Day Spa and Salon**. Named 2015 Best Day Spa by *Philadelphia Magazine* and 2014 Best Day Spa by *Philly Hot List*, this suburban oasis is dedicated to pampering and beautifying experiences in an inviting environment. With warm stone massage, Keratin hair smoothing, expert Brazilian waxing, and world-class skin care, Eden assures that your time here will make you or that special someone feel balanced and beautiful. 378 W. Main St. 610-489-0800; EdenDaySpaAndSalon.com.

EAST EARL

There's no place like **Country Home Furniture**, especially around the holidays. They have up to 61 vendors from the USA, Canada and Amish Country, displaying in 30,000 square feet on two gigantic floors. You'll find sofas, recliners, living, dining, bedroom, office, occasional, entertainment and outdoor furniture. Located at 1352 Main St. next to Goods Store at Shady Maple. Quality furniture, great value for your dollars and low delivery charges to your area. 717-354-2329 or Sales@chfs1.com. Closed Sundays.

ELVERSON

If the hearth is the heart of the home, **Chester County Hearth and Home** will warm your home's heart with their quality products and services. With products from Regency, Marquis and Enviro, the shop fea-

tures a variety of stoves, inserts and fireplace accessories as well as custom fireplace designs. They also provide CSIA and NFI certified chimney and gas fireplace services to make your home safer and more energy efficient. Consider them if you want to make your chimney safe for Santa! 19 Park Ave. 610-913-0730; ChesterChimney.com.

EXTON

Deck the halls this holiday season with 18th-century through Victorian era original and reproduction furniture, lighting fixtures and furniture hardware. Visit **Ball & Ball**, 463 W. Lincoln Highway (Rt. 30), to find unique gift ideas including candlesticks, bookends, lanterns and fireplace accessories made on premises in brass, tin, copper, pewter and hand-forged iron and bronze. All perfect gifts this holiday season. Open Mon.–Fri., 8 to 4:30; Sat. hours, October–March, 9 to 1. 610-363-7300; BallAndBall.com.

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.

GLEN MILLS

Scout & Molly's Boutique, 523 Wilmington-West Chester Pk. 610-558-3838; ScoutAndMollys.com. See entry under Paoli.

GLENMOORE

Specializing in extraordinary finds for you and the ones you love, **Eleanor Russell Ltd.** offers exquisite gifts and home décor, fabulous items for entertaining, delectable gourmet treats, plus adorable items for pets. From British biscuits and decoupage trays, to an array of



Mostardi Nursery
610.356.8035 • Mostardi.com



Eleanor Russell Ltd.
610.321.2777 • On Facebook

exceptional items with a fox and hound flair, along with their signature wall of whimsical pillows, you'll find the unusual, the practical and the beautiful here. Complimentary gift wrap. Ludwig's Village (Rtes. 401 & 100). 610-321-2777; On Facebook.

KENNETT SQUARE

Drawing fans in Kennett since 2011 is **Lily's Asian Cuisine, Sushi & Grill**, 104 W. State St. This stylish, modern Asian restaurant serves Japanese, Chinese and Thai dishes insisting on high quality food, all freshly prepared with finest ingredients. Meet friends for lunch, have dinner with family or come for a celebration. Every Tuesday they offer all-you-can-eat sushi including hot starters. BYOB, enjoy the comfortable ambience, delicious food and excellent service in Lily's. 610-925-3700; LilySushiAndGrill.com.

LANCASTER

The **Museum Store of LancasterHistory.org** offers an unequaled selection of gifts by local artisans including art, crafts, books and holiday decorative items. You'll find fraktur, scherenschnitte, pottery and distinctive decorations for the holidays as well as gifts for children and everyone else on your list. Two locations in Lancaster: 4 W. King and 230 N. President Ave. on the Campus of History. Unusual. Distinctive. Different. They're ready for the holidays! Are you? Visit them today. 717-392-4633; LancasterHistory.org.

MALVERN

From classic to contemporary, **Louella** expresses your signature style. With two locations, in Wayne and Malvern, you'll find the perfect blend of clothing, jewelry and accessories for everyday style or that special holiday party. Bring your friends and make a day of it! 335 E. King St. Open Tues.–Sat., 10 to 5:30, Thurs, until 7. 610-722-4900; LouellaStyle.com. Also in Wayne.

There's something special at **Nota Bene Boutique** for you and other style-lovers on your Christmas list! They offer clothing, gifts and acces-

sories for women of all ages. 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.

Posh Collections is a fine women's apparel and accessories boutique located on King Street. They offer contemporary apparel from all your favorite posh designers; everything from sportswear to cocktail from Vince, Trina Turk, DVF, Theory, Joie, DL1961, and more. Their personal stylists are there to cater to all your wardrobing needs. Visit them at 103 E. King St. soon. 610-644-7220; PoshCollections.com.

Give yourself a treat this holiday season and stop in to **Tonino's Pizza & Pasta Co.** to savor the freshest ingredients in their authentic, homemade Neapolitan pizza, pasta and signature Italian dishes. This family-run business invites you to come in and dine, BYOB, or call them and they will deliver to you. Having a party? Their party trays make the planning easy—perfect for holidays and celebrations at home or at work. 235 Lancaster Ave. 610-240-9566; ToninosPizzaAndPasta.com.

MARSHALTON

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. 215-704-7419; TheMerchantOfMenace.net.

NEWTOWN SQUARE

Exceptional gourmet 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, sugar-free items and fine chocolates for a customized gift basket to delight all on your list. Pick up a brochure for your gift-giving needs. They ship and deliver. Open daily from Thanks-



Delaware Art Museum Store
302.571.9590 • DelArt.org

giving to Christmas. 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 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 find garden accents, ornaments and accessories to delight anyone on your list. Mostardi is dedicated to providing avid gardeners and homeowners with plants for every season and every reason. 4033 West Chester Pk. (Rt. 3); 610-356-8035; Mostardi.com.

NOTTINGHAM

For a tasty and educational adventure for you and the kids, visit **Herr's 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.

PAOLI

Michael Cook of **Walter J. Cook Jeweler** continues the tradition started by his father in 1946—bringing smiles to people's faces with gifts designed to celebrate life's special occasions. This season he features the newest collection of Lika Behar who specializes in unique designs of alternative metals with diamonds and gemstones. Visit them for fine jewelry, artisan gifts and collectibles. Their staff will help you select the perfect gift. Located in the Chestnut Village Shoppes, 36 Chestnut Rd. 610-644-5347; WalterJCookJeweler.com.

Scout & Molly's Boutique, 82 E. Lancaster Ave., is where today's transcending woman goes to find that special little something that'll fit just right. Their boutiques are merchandised with a simple rule in mind: "No style fits all," which is why maintaining individuality while dressed in the latest trends, is a necessity for all of their customers. Their locations are home to your favorite designers and unique finds



Herr's Snack Factory Tour
800.637.6225 • Herrs.com



Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewelry
610.692.7707 • BigsDiamonds.com

that are sure to produce both confidence and compliments. 484-318-8588; ScoutAndMollys.com. Also in Glen Mills.

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; Alegacy-Furniture.com.

WAYNE

Louella Women's Clothing 227 E. Lancaster Ave. 610-293-9800; LouellaStyle.com. See entry under Malvern.

Wayne Art Center presents the annual Holiday Shopping Weekend with over 25 craft and cuisine vendors on December 12th and 13th, 10 to 4, offering one-of-a-kind holiday gifts. Visit the Gallery Shop for hand-made clothing, jewelry, home décor, wood, ceramics, glass, ornaments and leather accessories. View the 21st Craft Forms and Emergence: Craft + Technology exhibitions featuring award-winning international craft artists. 413 Maplewood Ave. Mon.–Fri., 9 to 5, Sat., 9–4. 610-688-3553; WayneArt.org.

WEST CHESTER

Specializing in a wide array of boutique eyewear like Oliver Peoples, Paul Smith, Alain Mikli, and many more exciting European designers. This family owned business carries distinctive frames and focuses on the customer experience. **Artistic Eyewear** is located in historic Doylestown and downtown West Chester at 127 N. High St., bringing a stylish and cosmopolitan flair of custom eyewear directly from Europe to the heart of these cultural communities. 610-738-7150; ArtisticEyewear.com.

Created in West Chester, **BACO Juice & Taco Bar** at 8 W. Gay St., serves authentic ingredients fast and fresh. Their large selection of smoothies will recharge you on the run and the juice bar holds fresh kale, cucumber, celery, ginger, lime and more. All smoothies and tacos

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scoutandmollys.com

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The Merchant of Menace Art Gallery
215.704.7419 • TheMerchantOfMenace.net

are made to order. They serve an array of baco-centric breakfast items including burritos, coffee, granola and of course their world famous juices. 610-436-4177; BacoJuiceAndTaco.com.

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 2016. 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.

Since the fall of 1933, the Jane Chalfant shop has been providing personalized service in a friendly atmosphere. Today, **Jane Chalfant / Kiki Boutique** takes pride in their unique collections of sweaters, ponchos and novelty jackets. They also have a wide selection of accessories including scarves, hats and fun fashion jewelry. Free parking behind the shop at 123 N. High St. 610-696-0290; JaneChalfant.com

Chester County Art Association boasts a fresh display of hundreds of original works of art nine months of the year. They take pride in offering opportunities for new and veteran artists to show and sell their artwork. Visit their website for details about “\$300 and Under Show” and their Holiday Artisan Market, November–January. 100 N. Bradford Ave. Tues.–Sat., 9:30 to 4. 610-696-5600; ChesterCountyArts.org/Bradford-Avenue-Galleries.

Founded in 1973 as the Exton Chorale, **Chester County Choral Society** is a non-profit community chorus of over 80 volunteer singers from the region, dedicated to excellence in performing diverse choral music. They present three major concerts each year in multiple venues, plus a “Dinner & Song” gala fundraiser with solo and small group performances. The Society’s Chamber Ensemble focuses on an advanced a cappella repertoire. Visit ChesterCountyChoralSociety.org.

Touch ... Sight ... Taste ... Smell ... Sound ... **The 5 Senses**. You can find something for everyone on your shopping list for any occasion (and a little something for you as well) at this shop. They offer North American and Fair Trade, handmade, functional works of art, from pot-

tery to candles to jewelry and gift art—all appealing to your senses. 133 W. Market St. 610-719-0170; The5Senses.com.

KALY, located at 37 W. Gay St., is an eclectic women’s boutique in beautiful, historic downtown West Chester. They focus on clothing that is unique, beautiful and made in the USA and gifts that are sustainable and produced by fair trade and environmentally conscious manufacturers. Their jewelry is created by artisans and is both high-quality and unique. Baby items are the newest addition to their wonderful mix! 610-436-8272; KalyClothing.com.

Located in one of West Chester’s most famous historic structures, **The Lincoln Room**, 28 W. Market St., provides a charming place to enjoy a luncheon and tea menu. They also offer a wide range of seasonal favorites and special events, including the very popular Fondue Fridays. Join them for Christmas Tea on Mon., December 14 and Mon., December 21. Closed Sunday, but available for private rentals. 610-696-2102; LincolnRoomWestChester.com.

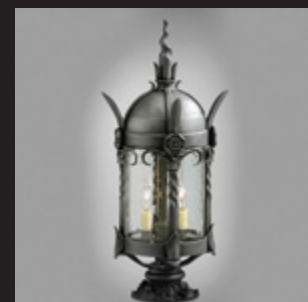
Experience a fiesta you won’t forget as you order from the award-winning menu at **Más Mexicali Cantina**. Fresh, organic ingredients in their sizzling fajitas, tantalizing tacos and brag-worthy burritos—more than your typical meal. Looking for a fun and unique place to host your next event? The second floor Tequila Bar/Velvet Lounge and West Chester’s only rooftop dining destination can host as few as 10 and as many as 500! Three floors—one great place! 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 Jewelers & Fine Arts Gallery’s** 17th Annual Miniature Show. This show features small pieces of art from 30 Chester County artists and beyond. 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



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BALLANDBALL.COM

EXTON, PA

1.800.257.3711



The 5 Senses

610.719.0170 • The5Senses.com

of fine jewelry. The show runs through December 24th, 23. N. High St. 610-692-0374; SunsetHillGallery.com.

At **tish boutique**, 138 E. Gay St., you'll find an ideal mix of contemporary, high-end casual, and evening wear from brands like Hunter Bell, Vince, BCBG Max Azria and many more. tish boutique is a haven for women looking for stylish and flattering pieces to complete their wardrobe. tish also offers sleek accessories and unique jewelry. This holiday season, tish will also have a gift-giving selection. Choose from local artist designs, hostess gifts and gifts for her. 610-692-7500; tishStyle.com.

The holidays mark winter registration at **West Chester Studio for the Performing Arts**. Their focus is on the individual to move forward through their emotional and developmental journey while building strong acting skills. Growth at WCS is process-oriented and integrated with fun, plus, their educators are talented professionals with exceptional teaching skills. Classes begin January 9th. There's no better time than the holidays to encourage your performer to "Find Your Voice." 225 N. High St. 484-995-2915; WestChesterStudio.com.



Ball & Ball

610.363.7300 • BallAndBall.com

★ Delaware ★

WILMINGTON

For the artsy friends and family members on your shopping list, the **Delaware Art Museum** is sure to offer something unique to satisfy their standards this holiday season. Browse a selection of treasures, including handcrafted jewelry, vases, ceramics, textiles and books by local artisans in the Museum Store or during the Winter Arts Festival December 11 and 12. Visit their website to find out more about the Museum's festive holiday offerings, events and special exhibitions for all ages. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

For readers interested in live theatre, **Delaware Theatre Company** is the place to be. Located on Wilmington's beautiful Riverfront, Delaware Theatre Company is the only theatre in the State of Delaware that develops new works for Broadway. In the last three years, celebrities such as Michael Learned, Peter Strauss, Duncan Sheik, Donna Pescow and Sheryl Crow have worked on their stage. This December, see Sheryl Crow's new Broadway-bound musical *Diner*. 200 Water St. 302-594-1100; DelawareTheatre.org.



Eagleview Town Center

InEagleview.com

A Delaware shopping destination for over 63 years, the **Wilmington Country Store**, 4013 Kennett Pk. in Greenville, offers a well-curated selection of updated classics for men and women. You'll find everyday staples, on-trend styles and luxurious fabrics from top-named designers like Eileen Fisher, Peter Millar, Vineyard Vines and Barbour. Known for their incredible holiday gift selection and complimentary wrapping, the Wilmington Country Store simplifies holiday shopping. 302-656-4409; WilmingtonCountryStore.com. ♦

Visit **CountyLinesMagazine.com** for the complete Holiday Window Shopping Guide with links to advertisers' websites.

See also, "Holiday Shopping is Moving Up in Downtown West Chester" and "Shop Local" in this issue.



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Holiday Style

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Pencil Skirt, *Blaque Label*
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White & Yellow Gold with Diamonds, *Pe Jay Creations*
Sunset Hill Jewelers, West Chester



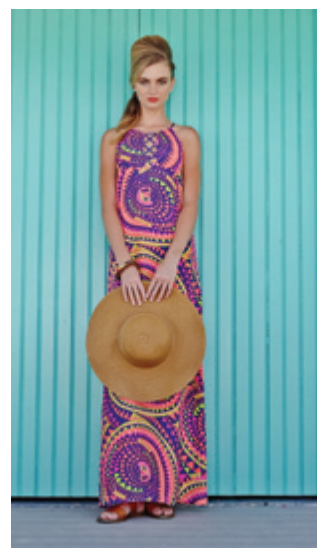
Cotton & Wool Handknit Poncho, *525 America*
Jane Chalfant/Kiki Boutique, West Chester



The Vogue Dress, *Black Halo*
Posh Collections, Malvern



Rose Gold & Diamond Ring, *Costar*
Big Diamond Importers & Fine Jewellery, West Chester



Tanya Maxi Dress, *Alice @ Trixie*
Louella, Malvern & Wayne



Retro-Style Frames, *Oliver Peoples*
Artistic Eyewear, West Chester



Silver Sequin Top, *Elana Wang*
Nota Bene Boutique, Malvern



Shaker Earrings, *Catherine Weitzman*
tish boutique, West Chester



Gold & Diamond Ear Cuffs, *Lika Behar*
Walter J. Cook Jeweler, Paoli



Cowl Poncho, *Wooden Ships*
KALY, West Chester



Men's & Women's Classic American Sportswear, *Peter Millar*
Wilmington Country Store, Wilmington



Heart Bracelet, *Hattie Weselyk*
The Merchant of Menace, West Chester



Winter is Coming

AND SO IS THE TIME FOR
BUYING WINE AS GIFTS

Dustin Best

"Everything's better with some wine in the belly." ~ Tyrion Lannister

RESPONSIBLY, I MAY ADD TO TYRION'S QUOTE about his favorite pastime. With the brisk breezes and the long, stark (pun definitely intended) days comes an opportunity to hunker down and catch-up on or rewatch episodes of *Game of Thrones*.

When I first watched *GOT*, I regularly mixed up character names, household affiliation and allegiances ... which was exactly what I experienced when I began being a wine fan. Monastrell? Tannins? Pinot is red and white? I felt as lost as a wildling in King's Landing. A little time and focus cured that.

On Sunday nights, *Game of Thrones* and wine became a household tradition as I realized how much wine and *GOT* had in common. Both are entrenched in history, place and, most important, character. I soon found myself pairing wines with certain personalities in the show.

I'm certain fellow wine fanatics who overheard me at the Philadelphia Wine Festival grumbling about how a particular cabernet sauvignon was *so* Ser Meryn most likely thought I was two sheets to the winds of winter. But to me, it made sense.

And so, let's make our voyage across Westeros and through my winter wine recommendations, suitable both for giving as gifts and enjoying at home during the holidays.

Like the 2012 *Macho Man Monastrell* (\$16.99), Sandor Clegane (aka The Hound) is as macho as they come. This wine wraps its full-bodied tannins across the palate like The Hound's thick steel armor. Through the tannins and grit, however, comes the heart of the wine that's much more refined, with dark fruit and dried herb flavors. This brooding wine, that pairs well with hearty and meaty stews, is one The Hound would have approved as his last wish ...

or might he have more wishes? All I know is that producer Casa Rojo has a Hound-sized hit with this brute.

Bold, sassy and upfront, the 2013 *Chronic Cellars Suite Petite* (\$14.99) is my petite sirah wine interpretation of Daenerys Targaryen. Suite Petite breaks the chains off the scintillating dark fruit and trounces your palate with it. Featuring a pepper-laden finish, it screams for some dragon-charred lamb. If you can't summons a dragon to char your fare, cook up some burgers or venison.

The 2012 *Frank Family Cabernet Sauvignon* (\$44.99) sourced from Napa Valley is as calculated and silky smooth as Lord Varys. This opulent, friendly cabernet is beautiful to drink now, with some slight decanting. Its rich cassis and plum-like elegance is

showcased on the palate. Don't let this wine escape you like Varys did King's Landing. Serve it with filet mignon on your holiday spread and feast like a king!

Perhaps no character in *Game of Thrones* was (hopefully is!) as bold as Jon Snow. The fan favorite was brave, steadfast and believed in what he was doing. This perfectly sums up the 2012 *Chateau Maris's Les Anciens Carignan* (\$24.99). Chateau Maris is one of my favorite wineries because

of its Jon-Snow-like authenticity and hand-tended, beautiful, 90-plus-year-old Languedoc Carignan vines. This is an unpretentious wine with serious, Valyrian-steel-like piercing dark fruit flavors with a nod to mocha. Pierce open a bottle and enjoy with grilled sausage or brisket.

Underappreciated or just plain unknown, Uruguay is quickly becoming the next player on the wine scene in South America. *Artesana's* 2013 *Tannat-Merlot* (\$15.99) blend is a steady, fearless wine whose character is close to that of Daario Naharis, Dany's enforcer and lover. With its medium to heavy body and supple tannins that work in perfect accord with its acidity, this wine smooth talks like Daario. Cook up a little Beef Bourguignon and indulge in the delightful *Artesana*, a true winter classic.

Deceiving! The word that best describes Petyr Baelish, as you never quite know what to expect of Littlefinger. Like Lord Baelish, you may have a notion of what sauvignon blanc brings to the table—young juice, freshness and zippy acidity. Well, the sauvignon blanc-based *Ashbourne Sandstone White* (\$19.99) is anything but traditional. This 2008 vintage is meshed with small percentages of chardonnay and sémillon, resulting in a full-bodied effort that showcases honey notes, dried stone fruits and bracing minerality. Some may be put off by an older white wine, but, much like Littlefinger, there's truly more than meets the eye with Sandstone. Capture this wine exclusively in the Fine Wine & Good Spirits Wine Club and pair with crab cakes or any other shellfish.

Finally, while not a wine, the *Roger Groult Calvados Reserve* (\$42.99) is just the right elixir to take the edge off the winter chill. A limited-release and Premium Spirits exclusive, this is relatively young, aged just three years in oak, but has the complexity of an older style Calvados. Young, complex and snappy could describe this aperitif, or Arya Stark. Both show many faces and styles, but the core attributes are rooted in their history. Like Arya, Calvados develops certain intricacies with age and experience. Made from 100% Northern France apples, from sweet to bitter, this libation is a quality way to introduce your palate to Calvados.

Winter may be coming, but you needn't be unprepared. Grab the perfect bottle for someone on your gift list or enjoy it yourself as you tune in for more *Game of Thrones*. Brace for winter and enjoy responsibly! ♦

Hailing from upstate New York, Dustin Best has spent 10 years working in the wine industry, enjoying a great deal of time exploring New York's Finger Lakes region and appreciating the beauty of wine. Dustin currently works as the Wine Club Manager for Fine Wine & Good Spirits. More at FineWinesAndGoodSpirits.com.



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Food News

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



Beers To You. Give the gift of good beer with Malvern native Bryan Kolesar's new book, *Beer Lover's Mid-Atlantic: Best Breweries, Brewpubs & Beer Bars*. Bryan got the scoop on local breweries and beers in the tri-state area, plus Maryland. Traveling over 9,000 miles and visiting over 350 locations, he created the ultimate beer lover's handbook filled to the brim with events, city trip itineraries, brewery profiles and more. Plus, readers will become expert on knowing the characteristic of every beer from IPAs to stouts. *Amazon.com*.



12 Lucky Grapes. You know about lucky four-leaf clovers, ladybug landings and face-up pennies. But, did you know about the *Spanish New Year's Eve tradition* that predicts luck for the whole year? At each stroke of midnight, you eat a grape—12 total. If a grape is bitter, then the month

corresponding to that grape's number may bring bad luck. So, if your twelfth grape is bad, next December may be a bit rocky! *FoodRepublic.com*.



Chestnuts Roasting on Your Open Fire. Nat King Cole croons that roasting chestnuts are a sure sign Christmas is here. But, have you ever actually *roasted chestnuts*? The short course: cut into the peel around the equator of the chestnuts and place them in a skillet in the glowing embers of your fireplace. Cook for about half an hour while you decorate your tree. Peel and enjoy. They're delicious—for kids from one to ninety-two! For details, *Esquire.com*.

Eat Your Eggnog. Tired of waiting for holiday parties to enjoy the creamy elixir that is *eggnog*? If you want more, try eggnog in your breakfasts and desserts. Make doughnuts, pudding, ice cream and more to spice up the holiday tradition with that tasty drink. Love it or hate it, eggnog adds a punch to recipes and may make you wish eggnog were a year-round treat. Recipes at *TheKitchn.com*.



Celebrate with Sauerkraut. Sauerkraut has never been the most kid-friendly food, but eat it with pork and this combo is said to grant good luck for the upcoming year. Why? The green of sauerkraut's cabbage and the rich fat of the pig symbolize wealth and prosperity. The lengthy shreds of sauerkraut also ensure a long life. *Sauerkraut* doesn't have to be eaten plain, though. Add it to a hot dog or transform it into pancakes or even dumplings. One bite and good luck is coming your way! *Wholesome-Cook.com*.



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Bring on the Apps

Laura Muzzi Brennan

GREAT ANY TIME OF YEAR AND EASY FOR A HOLIDAY GATHERING

WHILE SOME PEOPLE SWEAR OFF DESSERT and others could care less about a signature drink, I've yet to meet a person immune to the charms of appetizers. After all, what's not to love about dips and small bites teeming with flavor?

When planning the appetizers for a holiday gathering, keep in mind some guidelines I've picked up from chefs and caterers. "We eat with our eyes first," I've heard many chefs say, so choose appetizers that vary in color and texture. As far as quantities are concerned, most professionals stick to this general rule of thumb: if appetizers are a prelude to dinner, plan to serve no more than three and allow for 2-3 of each per guest. If appetizers are the main course, offer 3-6 choices and plan for 3-5 portions per grazing guest.

While it's always smart to consider your guests' food preferences—including allergies and sensitivities—you can't go wrong by including at least one vegetarian and one non-dairy appetizer. And in menu planning as in life, balance is key. Go for a mix of hot, cold and room temperature, and so you're not a hot mess

when guests arrive, choose a few dishes that can be made ahead of time. Most importantly, don't feel you have to make everything from scratch. Store-bought smoked fish spreads and rewarm paninis sliced into strips have saved many a party.

And let's not forget the one easy appetizer most people adore: the cheese plate. Make it local cheese, and you've got a conversation piece as well. Since I first wrote about local cheese in September 2008

(reposted on *CountyLinesMagazine.com*), another wonderful dairy has come on the scene.

In 2014, Stefanie Angstadt started *Valley Milkhouse* in Oley after apprenticing at a Colorado goat dairy and studying with cheese makers in Belgium's Flemish region. Already her hand-

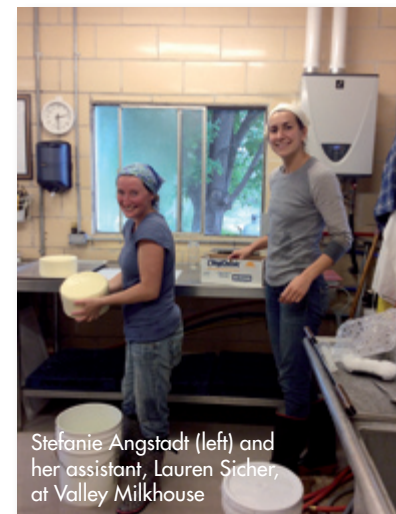


Covered Bridge Farmstand

crafted French and Belgian style cow's milk cheeses—all named for wildflowers—are sought after by chefs at some of the region's most acclaimed restaurants including Talula's Garden, Fork and a.kitchen. They're also a favorite with customers at the Easton Farmers Market and at the Covered Bridge Farmstand, a few yards away from Valley Milkhouse.

When assembling a cheese plate, Stefanie recommends starting with at least three cheeses: one fresh (e.g. fromage blanc), one mold-ripened (brie) and one hard aged (blue or gouda). She recommends one ounce per cheese per person and likes simple accompaniments such as honey and jam. For more about Valley Milkhouse cheeses and Stefanie's cheese pairing ideas, see the sidebar.

Here's hoping December finds you enjoying local cheese and savory bites in the company of people you love.



Stefanie Angstadt (left) and her assistant, Lauren Sicher, at Valley Milkhouse



Thistle cheese in the making

Shrimp Dip

The word addictive gets overused, but in the case of this dip, it applies. Serve with pretzels or potato chips.



- 1, 8-oz. package cream cheese
- 1, 6-oz. can medium shrimp
- Garlic salt, to taste
- Onion salt, to taste
- A few shakes of Worcestershire sauce, more to taste
- 1 Tb. milk or more for a creamy consistency

Reserve a few shrimp. Put remaining shrimp, cream cheese, salts and Worcestershire in a food processor. Process until smooth. Add milk one Tb. at a time until desired consistency. Adjust seasonings.

Chill for a half hour. Garnish with shrimp.

Makes 1½ C.

Vegetarian Potstickers

This recipe started with celebrity chef Ming Tsai and has been adapted by many cooks. Here's my take. Serve with the simple dipping sauce below or with sweet chili sauce. Note: These dumplings are labor-intensive. If you can, assemble them a few days before your party and freeze.



For the potstickers:

- 2 Tb. oil, divided

Q and A with Cheese Maker Stefanie Angstadt Valley Milkhouse

How did you get interested in making cheese? I started experimenting at home while I was working in banking in NYC. I've always loved strong, stinky cheese. When deciding which cheeses to make, I definitely was thinking about cheeses that could stand alone on a cheese plate, not just cheese as an ingredient.

Tell me about your cheese. I make between 300-350 pounds every week, all by hand with the help of my part-time employee, Lauren Sicher. There's Clover, a fromage blanc I'd describe as soft, creamy, crumbly and tart. I've got two mold-ripened, Brie-style cheeses: Thistle and Witchgrass. Thistle's buttery, grassy and earthy while Witchgrass is more assertive and tangy. And my blue cheese—Blue Bell—is a sweeter, softer blue, not as sharp and acidic as the blues a lot of people know. I'm really excited to unveil a gouda in December, and in the summer, I'll start making Foxtail (a Bulgarian-style sharp, creamy feta) again.

What are your favorite foods to pair with cheese? I like to roll fresh cheese in fresh herbs or drizzle it with honey. Pepper jams,

in particular, go well with fresh cheese. The creaminess of fresh cheese cuts the jam's heat. I love the traditional pairing of walnuts with blue cheese and fig or berry jams with mold-ripened cheeses.

What are some of the most creative pairings you've seen? I went to a cheese tasting where, in the center of the cheese plate, there was a small pile of microgreens. The microgreens cleanse your palate in between bites. I loved that idea! I also get ideas from Madame Fromage's blog. She's based in Philly, collaborated on the 2013 DiBruno Bros. *House of Cheese* book, and comes up with innovative pairings like fermented black garlic with salty cheese.

Any thoughts about the future of cheese in Pennsylvania? In America? I'm working with a few people now to start a guild for PA cheese makers. And I'd love to see the cheese course find its way back to the American table just like it does in the Old World.

Find out more about Valley Milkhouse at ValleyMilkhouse.com.

- ½ large red onion (about 1 C.), chopped fine
- 2 tsp. grated ginger
- 1 C. chopped shiitake mushrooms
- 1 C. shredded white cabbage (shortcut: use coleslaw mix)
- 2 medium carrots, shredded (about 1 C.)
- ½ C. snipped chives
- 2 tsp. sesame oil
- ¼ C. chopped cilantro
- 30-35 wonton wrappers

For the dipping sauce:

- ½ C. soy sauce
- ½ C. rice vinegar
- 2 tsp. sesame oil, optional
- 1-2 tsp. Sriracha or other hot chili sauce, optional

To make the potstickers: Heat 1Tb. oil in a large pan over medium-high heat and cook onion and ginger for 2 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent burning. Add mushrooms and cook for another minute. Add cabbage, carrot and chives. Cook for 2 more minutes or until vegetables are soft. (If veggies are starting to brown, reduce heat to medium.)

Transfer vegetable mixture to a colander and allow to drain and cool. Place mixture in a bowl and stir in sesame oil and cilantro.

Drop a generous teaspoonful of mix-

ture in center of each wonton wrapper. Moisten 2 adjoining edges with water and fold in half to form triangle. With your fingers or a fork, press on edges to seal.

If freezing, place dumplings in a single layer on a sheet pan. (Do not let dumplings touch or they'll stick together.) When frozen, you can store in a plastic freezer bag. Do not defrost before cooking.

Working in batches, add 1Tb. oil to a large skillet and heat over medium-high heat. When oil shimmers, add dumplings. When bottom browns and releases easily, add ¼ C. water and cover immediately. (Be careful as steam rises quickly and can burn you.) Steam for a minute or so. Remove lid and let any remaining water evaporate. Remove from skillet when bottom releases easily.

Makes 30-35 dumplings.

To make the dipping sauce: Whisk all ingredients together. And serve. Easy!

Mushroom-Almond Pate

This vegetarian pate recipe comes from my friend Sara who adapted it from The New York Times' food section. She uses a mix of meaty mushrooms—shiitake, portabella and button. This appetizer is so rich and

satisfying it tastes as if it's made with heavy cream. It's not! To make it vegan, use olive oil in place of the butter.

- 3 Tb. unsalted butter (or olive oil)
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 lb. mushrooms, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1-2 Tb. dry sherry
- 1 C. roasted and salted whole almonds
- 1-2 Tb. olive oil
- ½ tsp. freshly ground pepper
- Salt, to taste
- ¼ C. chopped Italian parsley

Heat the butter in a large pan. Add garlic, mushrooms and thyme and sauté over medium-high heat for 2-3 minutes. Let mushrooms brown a bit. Add sherry. Lower heat slightly and cook until sherry evaporates.

Place the almonds in a food processor with 1 Tb. olive oil. Process and slowly add another Tb. as the mixture starts to get creamy. Process until smooth. Add the mushroom mixture and pepper. Process until the mixture reaches the texture you prefer. Taste for seasoning and add salt and more pepper if desired. (Often the salted almonds provide enough salty flavor.)

Place in a crock or large ramekin. Cover and refrigerate for at least a half hour or overnight. Right before serving, garnish with parsley. Serve with baguette slices or crackers.

Makes 3 C.

Polenta Squares

This recipe is one of those that has been passed from cook to cook, eventually landing in the kitchen of my friend Liz. If you want to cut fat, skip the goat cheese and drizzle balsamic vinegar directly on the polenta squares.

- 2 Tb. olive oil, plus more for greasing dish
- ¼ C. finely chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2¼ C. low sodium chicken broth
- ¾ C. polenta
- 1 Tb. minced fresh parsley
- ½ tsp. minced fresh thyme
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 2 oz. fresh goat cheese, cut into ½" square pieces
- 1 Tb. balsamic vinegar

Lightly oil an 8" square baking dish. In a large saucepan over medium heat, heat the oil. Add the onion and sauté for 4-5 minutes or until golden brown. Add the garlic and sauté until softened but not browned.

Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Gradually add the polenta to the stock, whisking constantly. Lower the heat and continue to cook, stirring constantly, for about 15-20 minutes, or until the polenta comes away from the side of the pot easily.

Stir in the parsley, thyme, salt and pepper. Pour into the prepared dish, smoothing the top with a spatula. Set aside and let cool.

When ready to serve, cut polenta into 1-inch squares. Top each square with a piece of goat cheese. Make a small indentation in the goat cheese. Transfer to a serving platter and place a drop of balsamic vinegar in each indentation. Serve at room temperature.

Makes 20 servings.

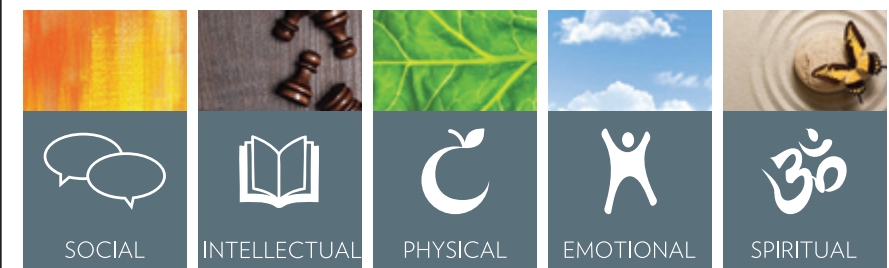


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Buffalo Chicken Bites

These bites are not as messy as their wing-y counterparts. They're also oven "fried" rather than deep fried, making them just a smidge healthier. Serve with blue cheese dressing.



For the chicken:

- 1½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast tenders
- ½ C. buttermilk
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ C. flour
- 2½ C. panko bread crumbs

For the Buffalo sauce:

- 1⅓ C. Frank's hot sauce
- 1 C. cold butter
- 4 Tb. cider vinegar

- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- A few sprinkles of garlic powder

Cut chicken tenders into 3-4 pieces (about 1 or 1½" each). Put chicken, buttermilk and salt together in a plastic bag. Shake well and refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

While chicken chills, heat all sauce ingredients together in a small saucepan over medium heat. Whisking constantly, bring to a simmer. When mixture starts to bubble, remove from heat and set aside.

Preheat oven to 400°. Set up your breading station: place flour in one bowl, half of sauce in another bowl, and panko bread crumbs in a third bowl.

Remove chicken from bag and shake off excess buttermilk. Dip chicken pieces in flour, plunge into sauce and roll in panko. Place on a wire baking rack with a cookie sheet or sheet pan underneath.

Start checking chicken for doneness after about 20 minutes, less time if your pieces are small and thin.

To serve, put on a platter and drizzle generously with remaining sauce. Other ideas:

Put extra sauce in a bowl and serve alongside blue cheese or mix a few tablespoons of sauce into blue cheese dressing.

Makes 6-10 servings.

Tapenade

This recipe comes courtesy of my friend Barry who makes this appetizer for gatherings large and small.

- 1 C. pitted olives (Kalamatas work well)
- 1 C. loose fresh basil leaves
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2 Tb. good olive oil, plus more if desired
- ¼ C. shaved or grated Pecorino Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 1 Tb. fresh parsley leaves
- 1 Tb. capers, optional
- 2-3 Tb. lemon juice

Place all ingredients, except lemon juice, in a food processor and process to the desired texture. (For a smoother tapenade, add additional olive oil). Stir in lemon juice a tablespoon at a time, to taste.

Serve on baguette slices.
Makes 1-1½ C.

Curried Pecans

Art Roman of The Kitchen Workshop shared this recipe with me a few years ago. Double or triple this recipe. That way, you can send guests home with goody bags.



PHOTO: MARK BERGVIST

- 1 lb. pecan halves
- 2½ Tb. corn oil
- ½ C. sugar
- 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. Drain well. While pecans are still hot, put them in a bowl and toss with oil and sugar. Let stand for 10 minutes.

Arrange pecans 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. Combine seasonings and toss with still-warm nuts. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Makes 1 lb.

Hot Artichoke Dip

There are many variations on this basic recipe: some cooks add chopped spinach; others toss in pimientos and scallions. Let your taste—and your pantry's contents—be your guide.

- 1, 15½-oz. can artichoke hearts, drained
- 1 C. mayonnaise
- 1 C. grated Parmesan cheese
- 8-oz. shredded mozzarella cheese
- Garlic salt, to taste

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a pie pan. Mix together all ingredients. Bake for 25-30 minutes until bubbly.

Serve with crackers or baguette slices.

Serves 8-10. ♦

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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