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From *the*
Editor

Sit back and enjoy our February issue's armchair tour of fabulous homes. Matt Freeman tells how an internationally known barn became a 21st-century dream home for the owners and their horses—all under one roof. Before-and-after photos in "All Around Farm" show the dramatic transformation architect Richard Buchanan produced while retaining charming barn details.

Get a local history lesson as publisher Ed Malet leads a tour of Ivy Mills mansion house, owned by the same family for nine generations. You'll learn the role the mills played in the finances of our new nation, plus the house's role in a recent TV series.

For more TV news, we take you behind the scenes at *House Hunters*, the top-rated HGTV show, as *County Lines* contributor Kirsten Werner searches for her new home. Can you guess which one she and future husband Jared Leonard chose?

Next we spot a five-story American holly that marks the front of Holly Hill, our Home of the Month. Laurel Anderson tours this stunning 1930s Georgian gem, built for Pierre du Pont's friend and lovingly modernized by the current owners.

Our Brandywine Table columnist Laura Muzzi Brennan shares her kitchen renovation saga, I mean story with a happy ending, in "A Food Writer's Kitchen Redo." Her column this month is all heart—heart-healthy cooking, that is.

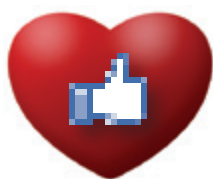
If this inspires you to consider finding your dream home, let local realtor Bob Frame prep you in "What Happens After the Agreement for Sale is Signed." And there's financial advice from Bronwyn Martin in "Baby Boomers: Four Questions to Ask Your Aging Parents."

For fun this month, we suggest you celebrate the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Chester County's 25th anniversary at a performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, or head out to newly opened and very popular Limoncello Chester Springs. Lise Monty recommends reservations! And of course, we've included the Best Local Events to help you enjoy February.

Thank you for reading *County Lines*.

Jo Anne Durako
Editor

In February . . .



COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

On



COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

February 2013

Volume XXXVI, Number 6

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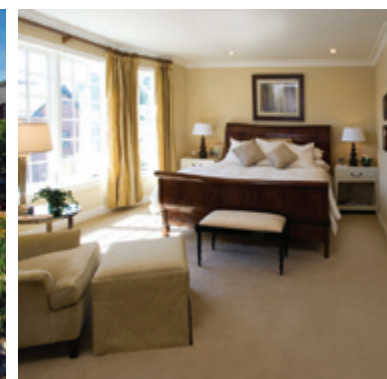
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893 S. Matlack Street, Ste. 150
West Chester, PA 19382.
610-918-9300. Info@ValleyDel.com
Subscriptions: \$39 /year.



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<i>The 50 Top Women in Wealth</i> – <i>Wealth Manager Magazine</i> (May 2010)
<i>Philadelphia Business Journal</i> – #2 Top Wealth Advisor (2010)
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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, and for The Chester County Hospital and Health System.

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Worth Knowing

Baby Boomers: Four Questions to Ask Your Aging Parents

Bronwyn Martin

It turns out that the parents of baby boomers—the silent generation—may still be living up to their name. Recent research reveals that only 28 percent of boomers' parents say they regularly discuss money and finances with their family, and 41 percent feel they haven't discussed their financial situation adequately with their children.* So the responsibility may fall on boomers to approach their aging parents about money-related issues. Whether your parents are only a few years into retirement or more elderly, these four questions are a good starting point for important financial conversations.

1. What do you want? If your parents are hesitant to open up about their finances, this may be a good place

to begin. Ask them what they want and expect for the future—financially or in general. Gently inquire about the legacy they want to leave, including their wishes for their home, other property and valuable possessions, as well as any charitable causes they'd like to support. Your parents may be reluctant to discuss these things, and might not have even thought about some of them. Reassure them of the value in communicating now while both parties are still able.

2. Have you thought about long-term care? Perhaps the most important part of this conversation is understanding your parents' wishes if they can no longer care for themselves physically. Begin by asking if they expect



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to live in an assisted living facility or nursing home, or if they hope to live with family under these circumstances. Be sure your own expectations and abilities are communicated if they choose the latter, or if you may need to pitch in financially to support their medical needs. Ensure you and your parents understand their health insurance and Medicare benefits, and ask if they have any type of long-term care coverage.

3. What do I need to know? Be sure you know where your parents store their important financial and legal documents and if they have a will or written power of attorney in place. Ask for contact information for any financial and legal professionals they've worked with along the way, and confirm you have the updated contact information for extended family members who you may need to reach in the future.

4. Is your retirement income still sufficient? It's possible that your parents may be struggling to make their retirement savings last. They may have lived to be an older age than they expected when they retired, could be facing expensive health care bills, or their investments may have been affected by the recession. Being aware of their financial situation can help you both set expectations for the future.

Having these conversations with your aging parents can be difficult, but often the biggest challenge is approaching them in a way that encourages honest dialogue among multiple family members. Consider working with a financial professional who can help facilitate these and other conversations while keeping your overall financial plan and goals in mind. ♦

* Money Across Generations IISM study. This study was commissioned by Ameriprise Financial, Inc. and

conducted by telephone by GfK in December 2011 among 1,006 affluent baby boomers (those with \$100,000 or more in investable assets); 300 parents of baby boomers; and 300 children of baby boomers at least 18 years old.

Bronwyn L. Martin, ChFC®, MBA, CFS®, CRPC®, CMFC® Financial Advisor and Chartered Financial Consultant®

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Good to Know

Just a few things we thought you'd like to know for February



Got Sea Fever?

If you must go down to the sea again ... on a tall ship, then volunteering on the *Kalmar Nyckel* is just the ticket. You've missed the start of winter sailing classes that teach how to crew on this tall ship based in Wilmington, but the two-and-a-half week summer class may work out

better. Volunteers learn to sail this magnificent recreated 1638 tall ship, including how to tie knots, safely handle lines and set square-rigged sails the way it was done 375 years ago, says Captain Sharon, *Kalmar Nyckel's* Port Captain. Once trained, volunteers crew the ship on day trips or weeks-long adventures along the East Coast. Learn more at KalmarNyckel.org.

Cut a Rug ... Deal.

There comes a time when even a well-loved room needs an update. Or color change. While new paint is an option, changing out your rug is an instant makeover for a room. And rather than tossing out the old and buying a new rug, try the trade-in program at Malvern's **Knots & Weaves**. Rug expert Jim Greim has assembled a remarkable inventory of oriental rugs, while Kerry Greim's design background will help you make the right choice. So don't be stuck with your old rug. Get it back into circulation and enjoy a new look for this new year! Easy, economical and green! 218 E. King St., Malvern, KnotsAndWeaves.com.



Taxpayer Relief.

Words you don't often hear together. We thought it was good to know that **The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012** should spur philanthropy and charitable giving through an IRA charitable rollover provision. Individuals 70-and-a-half or older may transfer up to \$100,000 a year from their IRAs to a qualified charity without the transfer counting as taxable income. At least through the end of 2013. There are other benefits and conditions, but at this point we suggest you consult the professionals.



Sad To Know.

For those who didn't hear, the passing of long-time historic preservation champion **Jane L.S. Davidson** in December was sad news indeed. Davidson's contributions to our area are legion, including her work as county Historic Preservation Coordinator, and co-founder and guiding light of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network. Only Philadelphia has more listings on the National Register than Chester County, thanks to the dedicated volunteers and professionals with whom she worked, known as "Jane's Army." Next time you pass a historic landmark or appreciate the richness of our historic downtowns, take a moment to thank Jane.



Theater in Pottstown?

Something new in Pottstown: the **Steel River Playhouse**, formerly Village Productions and Tri-County Performing Arts Center. A 250-seat, unadorned black box theater "ideal for intimate works focusing on the human elements of performance." In February, they'll perform *Intimate Apparel*, and in March, *Lost in Yonkers*. About 10 shows in the season, ending with *La Cages aux Folles*. The theater is still under construction, but the future is bright. It's an ambitious project, both for Pottstown and for theater. We don't know much yet, but we'll be watching. 610-970-1199; SteelRiver.org.



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of Special Note



Tyler's Pancake Breakfast & Maple Sugaring Celebration

February 23

Tyler Arboretum's annual celebration of the maple tree's yummy offerings. Discover how sap is turned into syrup and try your hand at tapping a tree. Then, satisfy your appetite in the historic Barn with their famous all-you-can-eat pancake and sausage breakfast. 515 Painter Rd., Media. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$6-\$12. 610-566-9134; TylerArboretum.org.

First Annual Kennett Winterfest

February 23

Put on a parka and come out to enjoy winter brews from at least 25 unique craft breweries. Tickets include unlimited tastings and food. S. Broad St. between State & Cypress Sts., Kennett Square. 12:30 to 4 p.m. \$65. 610-444-8188; KennettBrewfest.com.



The Atlantic City Boat Show

February 6-10

Celebrate life on the water. Climb aboard hundreds of boats for every budget and lifestyle, including luxury motor and sailing yachts, sport fishers, performance boats and personal watercraft. You'll find demonstrations, hands-on clinics and free boating advice. Atlantic City Convention Center, One Miss America Way, Atlantic City, NJ. Wed.-Fri., 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sun., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$15. 718-707-0716; ACBoatShow.com.

Trail Creek Outfitters 6th Annual Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival

February 27-28

Nationally acclaimed short independent films and documentaries on outdoor adventures, nature and environmental issues. Benefits The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County and Stroud Water Research Center. Chester County Historical Society, 225 N. High St., West Chester. 7:30 p.m. Tickets, in advance; \$25-\$40, TrailCreekOutfitters.com.



11th Annual Pennsylvania Horse World Expo

February 21-24

Top equestrians compete in the climate-controlled comfort of the 25-acre Farm Show Complex. Equestrian clinicians and entertainers come to the Expo, which is two events in one—the Expo itself, focusing on training riders to train their own horses, and Theatre Equus, a musical equine revue. Cameron & Maclay Sts., Harrisburg. Thurs., noon to 8 p.m.; Fri., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sun., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$6-\$12, Theatre Equus, \$12-\$24. 301-916-0852; PennsylvaniaEquestrian.com.

Best Local Events

Noteworthy in February . . .



February 10
Vox Renaissance Consort "Renaissance Candlemas." Renaissance Masterworks for voices and period instruments. Daylesford Abbey, 228 S. Valley Rd., Paoli. 6 pm. \$25. 610-688-2800; VoxAmaDeus.org.

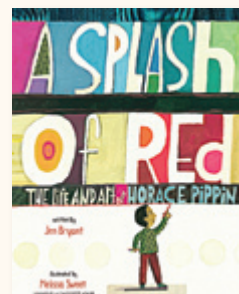
February 14-17
Greater Philadelphia Outdoor Sports Show. Bringing the great outdoors indoors, this show offers top hunting, fishing and camping gear, outdoor sport equipment, boats, RVs and much more. Also, live at the show will be "Wolves of the World," the only traveling wolf pack show in the country and a treat for the whole family. Greater Phila. Expo Center, Oaks. Thurs, 1 to 9; Fri, 12:30 to 9; Sat, 10 to 7; Sun, 10 to 5. \$3-\$12. 610-832-1515; SportsShows.com.



February 23
Media Theatre's Annual Gala. Broadway star and *American Idol* runner-up Justin Guarini is the headliner this year, in a one-night only concert for the benefit of the theater. 104 E. State St., Media. 8 pm. \$50; \$100 for concert and Meet & Greet reception after the show. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.



February 24
Celebrate Horace Pippin. Read-Aloud Family Workshop & Book Signing. Listen to a reading of *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin*, a new picture book about this remarkable artist written by local author Jen Bryant and illustrated by Caldecott Honor winner Melissa Sweet. Brandywine River Museum, Rt. 1, Chadds Ford. 11 am. \$6-\$12. 610-388-2700; www.BrandywineMuseum.org.



Art & Craft Shows

Through February 2
Academy of Notre Dame's 40th Anniversary Art Show & Sale. Nearly 100 artists' works in a variety of media. 560 Sproul Rd., Villanova. Daily, noon to 4. Free. 610-212-2768; NDAPA.org/ArtShow.

Through February 3
Malvern Retreat House Art Show 2013.

Invitational art show and sale featuring original works by more than 100 professional artists. Family Life Center, 315 S. Warren Ave., Malvern. Wed-Sat, 11 to 8; Sun, 11 to 4. 484-321-2534; MalvernRetreat.com.

February 2-22
Paint-Out Chadds Ford. The Chadds Ford Historical Society hosts the 5th annual winter Plein Air event with over 30 juried artists from the Mid-Atlantic region participating. **Feb. 2,**

Preview Party with hors d'oeuvres and wine, 5 pm. Exhibit open to public, from 6 pm. 1736 Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. 610-388-7376; ChaddsFordHistory.org.

Design, Home Shows

February 2-10
Philadelphia Home Show. Share tips and find the latest in home and garden trends. A few new this year: Farm Fresh Cooking demos, Design Upcycle, The Living Fountain and Habitat for Humanity Challenge. PA Convention Center, 12th & Arch Sts., Philadelphia. Sat, 10 to 9; Sun, 10 to 5; Mon-Tues, 4 to 9; Wed-Fri, 11 to 9. \$3-\$13. PhillyHomeShow.com.

February 21-24
Suburban Home & Garden Show. From kitchens and bathrooms to furnishings and contractors, find everything you need for your home from more than 300 local companies. There will also be guest speakers and an Artisans Row. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Thurs-Fri, noon to 8; Sat, 11 to 8; Sun, 11 to 5. \$10; 12 and under are free. PhillyExpos.com.

February 24
38th Bucks County Designer House & Gardens Empty House Party. Meet the 2013 Design Team and view their plans for the designer house & gardens. The Clement Doyle House, 360 Old Dublin Pk., Doylestown. 2 to 5. \$25-\$30. 215-345-2191; BucksCountyDesignerHouse.org.

March 8-10
Greater Philadelphia Historic Home Show & Designer Craftsmen Show. The Designer Craftsmen Show features the highest quality in fine art, traditional crafts, folk art, museum quality replicas, and more. The Historic Home Show is a resource for restoring, renovating and preserving our nation's architectural heritage. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Opening preview, Fri, 6 to 9, enjoy wine and hors d'oeuvres, \$20 (good for 3 days). Sat, 10 to 5; Sun, 11 to 4. \$12. 800-782-1253; HistoricHomeShows.com.

Family Fun

February 7-8
Children's Series at the DuPont Theatre — *The Rainbow Fish.* A touching story of sharing and sacrifice. Gr. P-2. DuPont Theatre, 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. 9:30 and noon. \$6.25. 800-338-0881; DuPontTheatre.com.

February 9
Delaware Center for Horticulture Family Workshop, Blooming Together. Celebrate Valentine's Day with the family at this workshop where you will create a fresh flower arrangement to enjoy at home. Designed for

Local Winter Farm Markets

Bryn Mawr Farmers Market, Lancaster Ave. at Bryn Mawr train station. **Year-round,** Sat, 9 to 1. BrynMawrFarmersMarket.com.

Kennett Square Farmers Market, downtown. **Winter Hours,** 1st & 3rd Fri, 2 to 5. 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com.

Lancaster Central Market, 23 N. Market St. **Year-round,** Tues, Fri, 6 to 4; Sat, 6 to 2. 717-735-6890; CentralMarket-Lancaster.com.

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

West Chester Growers Market, Chestnut and Church Sts. **Dec-Apr,** 1st and 3rd Sat, 10 to noon. 610-436-9010; WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

New Indoor Markets:

Artisan Exchange, 208 Carter Dr., West Chester. **Through Apr. 27,** 10 to 2. Indoor market featuring a variety of organically produced foods and specialty items. 610-719-0282; ArtisanExchangeWCPA.com.

The Market at Liberty Place, 148 W. State St., Kennett Square. Vendors offer fresh seafood, produce, baked goods and other retail foods. 610-925-3411; LGB-Properties.com.

ages 4 to 10. 1810 N. DuPont St., Wilmington. 10 am. \$28. 302-658-6262; TheDCH.org.

February 18
Longwood Gardens OrKID Days Performance. "Two of a Kind"—David and Jenny Heitler-Klevans delight audiences with their music, good humor and audience participation. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Noon and 2 pm. Gardens adm., \$8-\$18. 610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org.



Through February 18
Family Day at Chester County Historical Society Museum. Come for a day of old fashioned family fun including crafts, toys,

dress up and stories. Meet children's author Jen Bryan, author of *A Splash of Red*, *The Life and Art of Horace Pippin* at 11 am. 225 N. High St., West Chester. 10 to 1. \$10 per family. 610-692-4800; ChesterCoHistorical.org.

March 30
Children's Saturday Afternoon Easter Tea. Children ages 3-8 enjoy a themed afternoon tea with a delicious menu, craft activity, storytelling and storybook gift, sing-a-long and character appearance. The Radnor Hotel, 591 E. Lancaster Ave., St. Davids. 1 to 3.

\$59.95, one adult and one child. 610-341-3146; RadnorHotel.com.

Fundraising

March 2-3
The Junior League of Philadelphia Presents The American Girl Fashion Show Benefit. Educational and entertaining look at styles for girls yesterday and today. Benefits the Junior League and its projects and services. The Desmond Hotel, Great Valley Pkwy., Malvern. Sat-Sun, 11 am and 2 pm. \$55-\$65. 610-645-9696; JLPPhiladelphia.org.

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March 16

Bridge of Hope LCC Kicks off 25th Anniversary with Chester County Garden Luncheon. A delicious lunch, exquisite garden-themed auction items and, this year, internationally-renowned gardener and author of “The Layered Garden,” David Culp, as the featured guest speaker. Benefits Bridge of Hope of Lancaster and Chester Counties. Desmond Great Valley Hotel, One Liberty Blvd., Malvern. 11 to 1:30 (silent auction opens at 10:30). \$60. 610-380-1360; BridgeOfHopeLCC.org.

Gardens

Through March 24

Longwood Gardens Orchid Extravaganza. Enter the dazzling world of orchids with thousands to enjoy, including a living orchid curtain, orchid topiaries, columns, waterfalls and other displays. 1001 Longwood Rd. (Rt. 1), Kennett Square. Daily 9 to 5. \$8-\$18. 610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org.

March 2-10

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 2013 Philadelphia International Flower Show.

This year's theme, “Brilliant,” draws inspiration from the contemporary culture, design, gardens and landscapes of Great Britain. PA Convention Center, 12th & Arch Sts., Philadelphia. See website for hours. \$15-\$27. 215-988-8800; TheFlowerShow.com.

Museums

Ongoing

Chester County Historical Society. Ongoing. “On The Edge of Battle: Chester County and The Civil War,” the hopes, struggles and losses of local men and women during the war. “If Walls Could Talk,” the amazing history of Horticultural Hall. **Through Feb. 23,** “Cut It Out! 200 Years of Paper Dolls,” a wide selection from the collection, of over 8,000 paper dolls. 225 N. High St., West Chester. Wed-Sat, 9:30 to 4:30. 610-692-4800; ChesterCoHistorical.org.

Music, Dance & Live Shows

February 1-3

Media Theatre Presents “In the Men’s Room.” Tony-nominated star, Ann Crumb, sings songs usually performed by men from familiar musicals, accompanied by the theatre’s resident music director, Tom Fosnocht. 104 E. State St., Media. Fri-Sat, 7:30; Sun, 3. \$25. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

February 8

The Colonial Theatre – Point Entertainment Presents John Mayall. The “Godfather of British Blues” performs at 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 8 pm. \$29.50-\$39.50. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

February 10

Delaware County Symphony Chamber Series Concert. New works by DCS Composer-in-Residence, David Carpenter. Neumann Univ., Meagher Theater, 1 Neumann Dr., Aston. 3 pm. \$8-\$10. 610-356-5673; DCSMusic.org.

February 15-16

Mersey: British Rock and Roll Invasion Show. Live music and dance at The Media Theatre for the Performing Arts, 104 E. State St., Media. 7:30 pm. \$20-\$30. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

February 16

The Brandywine Singers Presents “An Evening of Love Songs.” Dine and be entertained “bistro style” as the singers present their ever-popular love songs cabaret. Paoli Presbyterian Church, S. Valley Rd., Paoli. 7:30. \$20. TheBrandywineSingers.org.

February 23

Molly Ringwald at Longwood Gardens.

Known for the series of teen films she did with director John Hughes in the 1980s, including *Sixteen Candles* and *The Breakfast Club*, Ringwald is now fulfilling her lifelong love of jazz, performing songs from her upcoming CD. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Reserved seating, \$42. 610-388-1000; LongwoodGardens.org.

February 24

WCU Live! La Pasion Flamenca. A passion-in-motion journey to the cultural crossroads of Andalucia, the birthplace of the flamenco. Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, Phillips Memorial Bldg., University Ave. & S. High St., West Chester. 3 pm. \$15-\$20. 610-436-2266; WCUa.edu.Live.



March 3

Delaware County Symphony Concert. “Images of Eastern Europe” featuring the music of Dvorak, Szymanowski and Kalinikov. Neumann Univ., Meagher Theater, 1 Neumann Dr., Aston. 3 pm. \$8-\$10. 610-356-5673; DCSMusic.org.

March 4

Concerts at the Cathedral. Acclaimed choir from New York, St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys performs at 18th St. at Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia. 7:30 pm. \$25-\$35. CathedralPhila.org.

In Towns & Burroughs . . .

February 1, March 1

First Fridays. Stroll through area towns to find exhibits, galleries, restaurant specials, entertainment and extended hours. **Berwyn,** 610-203-4543; BerwynDevonBusiness.com. **Kennett Square,** 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com. **Lancaster City,** 717-509-ARTS; LancasterArts.com. **A Main Line ARTitude,** with free trolley from Bryn Mawr to Ardmore, 610-642-4040; FirstFridayMainLine.com. **Oxford,** 610-998-9494; DowntownOxfordPA.org. **Phoenixville,** 610-933-3070; PhxFirstFriday.com. **Wayne,** 610-687-7698; FirstFridayWayne.com. **West Chester,** 610-738-3350; DowntownWestChester.com; **Wilmington,** 302-576-2100; ArtLoopWilmingtonDE.com.

February 9, March 9

Media's Second Saturdays. Media's ver-

sion of First Fridays. 610-566-5210; MediaArtsCouncil.org.

Outdoor Activities

Through February

Tyler Arboretum Events. Wed. through Feb., Winter Bird Walks, 8:15 am; **Feb. 2,** Maple Sugaring Exploration, 10:30 am; **Feb. 10,** Winter Trail Rambles, 1:15; **Feb. 16,** Night Hikes, for teens and adults, 6:30 pm; **Feb. 23,** Pancake Breakfast and Maple Sugaring Celebration, see “Of Special Note.” 515 Painter Rd., Media. Phone

for registration. 610-566-9134; TylerArboretum.org.

February 19

Tyler Arboretum's Birding Trip. Cape Henlopen Area Birding Field Trip, 7 am to 7 pm, \$95. 515 Painter Rd., Media. Trip includes transportation, beverages and a snack; bring lunch and binoculars. 610-566-9134; TylerArboretum.org.

February 25

Full Moon Owl Prowl at Bucktoe Creek Preserve. Bundle up for a full moon hike through meadows and woodlands searching

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and calling for owls. Suitable for adults and children. 423 Sharp Rd., Avondale. 6 to 7:30 pm. \$10. 610-347-0347; TLCforSCC.org.



Special Events & Tours

February 3

Tour of The Historic Colonial Theatre. Visit the interior of their newly acquired bank building and learn the story behind the theatre. Step "backstage" and peer into the projection booth where the Blob oozed its way into the theatre and the theatre's history. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. 12:30. 610-917-1228; TheColonialTheatre.com.

February 1-28

Brandywine Valley Wine Trail Presents "Wine & Chocolate Month." Celebrate the 8

wineries of the Brandywine Valley Wine Trail as you enjoy delicious wine and chocolate tastings each weekend in February. Visit their website for details of events planned at each winery. 866-390-4367; BVWineTrail.com.

February 24

"A Night at the Oscars in West Chester." Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln cordially invite you to a Night at the Oscars, in anticipation of the nominations for the Spielberg Lincoln movie. Red Carpet paparazzi, Oscar specialty drinks, food stations and Oscar games. West Chester Oscars will be awarded for Best Lincoln Costume, Best Glamour Glitz and Best Pajamas. Hosted by the Community Foundation & The Lincoln Room. Milestone Events, 600 E. Market St., West Chester. 8:30. \$75-\$250. ChesCoCF.org.

Theater

Through January 6

Aladdin: A Musical Panto. The young ne'er-do-well Aladdin and his animal pals discover a mysterious lamp. People's Light & Theatre, Main Stage, 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Thurs-Sun, 7; Sat, Sun, 2. \$32-\$45. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

Through February 3

Flashdance. This pop-culture phenomenon is now live on stage with its score of smash hits, including the Academy Award-winning title track "Flashdance—What a Feeling," "Maniac," "I Love Rock & Roll" and 10 new, original songs. DuPont Theatre, 1007 N. Market St., Wilmington. \$70-\$85. Tues-Thurs, 7:30; Wed., Sat., Sun., 2; Fri.-Sat., 8. 800-338-0881; DuPontTheatre.com.

Through March 3

The Winter's Tale. Internationally-acclaimed director Guy Hollands from Scotland reinvents this tale of kings and queens, revenge and betrayal. People's Light & Theatre, Main Stage, 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Thurs-Sun, 7; Sat, Sun, 2. \$25-\$45. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.



February 7-10

Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Chester County Present H.M.S. Pinafore. See article in this issue. Madeleine Wing Adler Theatre, Swope Music Hall, West Chester University.



Through December
Centennial Tea Service. Held in the Green Room, a special blend of tea is infused with a burst of pineapple, the international symbol of hospitality. Other themed teas planned through the year, including a Downton Abbey Tea, Patriotic Tea and Halloween Tea. Daily, 3 pm. 302-594-3154.

February 20, September 25
December 11

Hotel du Pont Speaker Series. Series includes cocktail reception, lecture, Q&A portion and meet and greet. Themed dining menu available in the Green Room after each lecture. **Feb. 20,** Photography and Architecture; **Sept. 25,** Howard Pyle Collection; **Dec. 11,** Wyeth Collection.

11th & Market St., Wilmington. 302-594-3100; HotelDuPont.com

Thurs-Sat, 8; Sat-Sun, 2. \$7-\$19. 610-269-5499; GSSChesCo.org.



February 20-March 31

Forever Plaid. The Plaids, a 1950s all-male singing group, return from the Great Beyond to perform the show they never got to when they were alive. Media Theatre, 104 E. State St., Media. \$27-\$49. 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org. ♦

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Gilbert & Sullivan Society Marks Its Silver Anniversary Aboard

H.M.S. PINAFORE

Terri Connelly

When the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Chester County was formed 25 years ago, no one expected it to become a pre-eminent company. But the Society has won many awards, including regular recognition at the Annual International G&S Festivals since 1997, and has become an important part of the local cultural scene.

Celebrating its silver anniversary, the G&S Society will reprise its original 1987 production of *H. M. S. Pinafore*, or *The Lass that Loved a Sailor*, the first blockbuster of Gilbert and Sullivan's collaboration. This well-loved love story combines romance and intrigue and is filled with memorable characters—Little Buttercup and Dick Deadeye—and songs you'll hum as you leave the theater—"For He Is an Englishman!" for one.

For those who haven't seen it: The operetta takes place aboard the *H. M. S. Pinafore*, where the captain's daughter, Josephine, has fallen for a lower-class sailor, Ralph Rackstraw, despite her father's intent that she marry Sir Joseph, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Suspense builds as we watch to see if Josephine and her beloved will defy her father and set sail for



love. As often happens in a Gilbert and Sullivan story, a surprise changes everything.

Sparkling and witty, the original 1879 comic operetta was a stunning international sensation, running for a record-breaking 571 consecutive performances. Today, this work, along with other Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, is credited as the precursor to modern musical theater and continues to delight audiences. It will run from February 7 through 10 in West Chester.

We have reason to be proud of our local group, which retains a unique pedigree among G&S societies worldwide. Until his death in 2008, Bruce Montgomery, famed 50-year director of the



Two scenes from *H.M.S. Pinafore* and one from *The Mikado*, another popular Gilbert & Sullivan operetta.

University of Pennsylvania's Glee Club, served as the Society's stage director. Considered an international G&S expert, Montgomery was also a brilliant performer of the character leads in all 14 G&S operettas, training the Chester County performers in the delightful presentation of these quirky characters.

The Society's high-quality reputation has resulted in performances in Buxton, England; Penn's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts; Merriam Theater in Philadelphia; and in New York.

This year, the Society's stage director is Julie C. May, an accomplished stage

director and performer who was trained by Montgomery and who carries on the traditional presentation of the operettas. The Society's music director for over ten years has been Florrie Marks, a former professional violinist who studied at the Juilliard School and later with famed concert virtuoso Ruggiero Ricci.

The Society's performances are family affairs, both on-stage and off. Performers in *Pinafore* spread across three generations, and if you look out over the audience, you'll see theater-goers of all ages. And its *Trial by Jury* performances have become a family tradi-

tion as part of West Chester's Old-Fashioned Christmas weekend.

Take sparkling music and timeless, witty verbal sparring, add pretty maids and swarthy sailors, saucy period costumes, plus West Chester University's talented voice students and local amateur performers, and you have entertainment that won't disappoint! ♦

H. M. S. Pinafore is performed at the Madeleine Wing Adler Theatre, West Chester University, West Chester. Feb. 7-9, at 8 p.m.; Feb. 9 & 10, at 2 p.m. Ticket, \$7-23. GSSChesCo.org.



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House hunters Kirsten and Jared, backs to camera, taking a break from the hunt with friends.

house hunters

Behind the Scenes of House Hunters

Kirsten Werner

A local family gets its 30 minutes of fame on HGTV's top-rated show.

In 1999, HGTV first aired the television show *House Hunters*. In the dozen years since, the show has skyrocketed in popularity. In fact, it's the network's highest-rated show, with an estimated 1.6 million viewers tuning in to each episode.

House Hunters takes viewers behind the scenes as couples tour three houses for sale. Focusing on the emotional experience of finding and purchasing a new home, each episode shows the process as buyers search for their perfect house.

Just last summer, Kirsten Werner, a contributor to *County Lines Magazine*, and her soon-to-be family (Werner got engaged this past Christmas to Jared Leonard, who has two children) were selected for the show. The filming took place over five days as the couple toured properties in Glen Mills, Chadds Ford and West Chester.

County Lines editor Jo Anne Durako recently sat down with Kirsten Werner to learn more about her experience on the show.

Jo Anne Durako: First, Kirsten, how did you get on the show?

Kirsten Werner: I get that question a lot! Honestly, I just applied online one night after a glass (or two) of wine, not thinking I had a chance in a million of being selected. About a week later, my phone rang and I saw it was someone with a Los Angeles area code. I remember saying to myself, 'I don't know anyone from California,' and I was genuinely shocked when I answered and it was the show's producer.

JD: What prompted you to apply?

KW: Well, I confess I'm not sure I'd really thought it all through before I applied online! I suppose, having watched the show for years, I was bored with seeing so many cookie-cutter, new-construction homes on the show. I'd been house hunting for more than a year, and wanted the opposite ... something unique, his-



House #1, a storybook cottage with a new addition, but a small, outdated kitchen.



House #2, with five fireplaces and in-ground pool, but nine acres to care for.



House #3, a lovingly preserved 200-year-old house, but with no yard for the kids.



toric and full of character. I figured I couldn't be the only person who felt that way, and after seeing dozens of great old houses during my search, I thought others might want to see these unique homes, too.

JD: What made you start house hunting?

KW: My previous house was so great I was reluctant to move. It's an early-1800s mill cottage along the Chester Creek, surrounded by woods, with an old springhouse and small barn, perfect for me when I bought it in 2007. I spent the last five years restoring and renovating it, inside and out. But the house is four stories with original curved staircases to each level. When my parents visit and stay overnight, their trip to the guest room on the top floor meant a lot of stairs for their older knees! And, honestly, I'd finished all the projects there, and I think I was ready for the next challenge.

JD: How did Jared fit into all this?

KW: I'd been looking for a new house for the last couple of years, even before I met Jared. Just ask my realtor ... I've seen a LOT of houses! So when Jared and I fell in love, it really only changed how I viewed the houses, not the search. Jared has a 12-year-old daughter, Mackenzie, and an eight-year-old son, Davis, so now I was considering things like school districts and space for playrooms.

Jared's house is about the same size as my previous house, and the kids were sharing a bedroom because of space constraints. So we knew selling both houses and moving was the best option. And it would let us make the new house 'ours' as a family.

JD: What kind of house were you looking for?

KW: In a word: old. Both Jared and I were living in 200-year-old houses before we found our 'new' home. We wanted a house with character and history. They asked us a lot on *House Hunters* about our 'must haves' and our 'deal breakers.' A

wood-burning fireplace, stone construction, and enough space for the kids to have their own bedrooms were the must-haves. And a house set back from the road—that's actually hard to find in a centuries-old house. Oh, and I really wanted some acreage. I work for Natural Lands Trust, whose mission is to preserve and care for open space, so I wanted to bring that love of land and nature to my home.

JD: Take us inside some of the houses you saw ... what were they like?

KW: Well, I'm not allowed to say anything that would reveal which house we chose ... you have to watch the show on Monday, February 4, at 10 p.m. to find that out! My realtor, Ian Bunch of Brandywine Fine Properties, arranged with the owners for filming the houses you'll see on the show.

The three houses we toured on the show were so different from each other. One was like a little storybook cottage in the woods. It has a peaked roof, dormer windows, and picture-perfect landscaping. An addition had been added about 30 years ago, which really expanded the living space. But the kitchen was small and outdated. I've gutted kitchens in my previous three houses and had hoped to avoid doing it again.

The next house was an old stone 19th-century farmhouse with hardwood floors and five fireplaces. I fell in love with the nine-acre lot, but Jared was concerned we'd be taking on more work than I realized with such a large property. The kids fell in love with the in-ground pool.



House hunters, clockwise from top left, Jared, Kirsten, Davis and Mackenzie. Tune in to watch the outcome of the search for a new family home, February 4.

PHOTOS: BRANDYWINE FINE PROPERTIES, SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL

Walking into the third house was like stepping into a time capsule. More than 200 years old, it had been lovingly cared for to preserve the historical features like the wide-plank floors, wrought-iron hardware, and thick plaster walls. While it needed some work, it was under our budget so we had room for updating. But the lot was only an acre, and none of it was really usable as a yard for the kids.

JD: *Speaking of the kids, how did they react to all of this?*

KW: They both were very excited to be on TV! As far as the house search itself, I was worried they'd be upset about their dad's home being sold and reluctant about the whole process, but they really got into it!

They weren't filmed at the houses we viewed, but they were there behind the scenes—and were so well behaved given the long, 10-hour days. They had fun exploring the houses and giving us their opinions. And they really love the house we chose. I've moved in already; Jared and the kids will move at the end of the school year, but they already refer to it as 'our house.'

JD: *What were the best and worst parts of filming the show?*

KW: The worst part was trying to stay cool in 100-degree weather. The producer warned us there'd be long days of shooting, but I didn't factor in the heat. We filmed in August and lots of shots were outdoors ... driving up to the house, walking to the front door, exploring the yard ... we were drenched with sweat in minutes.

They had us using powder to keep our faces from shining, but it was a lost cause. In between takes, we'd stand by an air conditioning vent. But sometimes the sound engineer wanted the air conditioning turned off because it created background noise. And one of the houses we looked at had no air conditioning ... not even window units. Nothing like having beads of perspiration all over your face in high definition!

The best part had to be how much we all laughed during the process. For example, they had us wear hidden microphones with battery packs. This meant that, no matter where we were, the sound engineer, Frank, could hear everything we said or did. It was weird at first, but after a

few hours we decided to have fun with it. Our goal was to make Frank laugh. We'd crack jokes and get goofy ... and it wasn't hard to be silly after 10 hours of filming!

JD: *Was the show scripted?*

KW: That's another question I'm often asked. I think people are starting to look at so-called 'reality' television with a more skeptical eye. No, *House Hunters* isn't scripted. Everything we said and did was genuine.

However, the producer would often try to tease out areas of conflict ... viewers like to see a couple argue! I think it was frustrating to the producer how similar Jared and I are when it comes to what we like and dislike in a house, so she was forced to make an awful lot out of the few areas where we disagreed. She'd bring them up again and again, prompting us to repeat ourselves, and encouraged us to make very strong statements instead of moderate ones. If we walked into a room and said, 'Gee, this is a bit dated, isn't it?' she'd yell 'Cut!' and coach us to be less timid. I felt pretty conflicted being too negative about someone else's home on national TV!

JD: *Did you say anything you regret?*

KW: Gosh ... probably, though I haven't seen 'our' episode yet so I'm not sure what made it into the final cut. What you see when you watch the show on TV is 30 minutes of footage, minus commercials. But they shoot about 50 hours of footage! Each 'scene' consists of multiple 'takes.' They'll say, 'OK, that was great, now let's film you walking into the house from a different angle,' or 'Not bad, but you were both talking at once. Let's do it over.' After the fifth or sixth take—especially toward the end of the day—we were getting punchy, so who knows what I said! Jared and I both love to laugh and have fun. Hopefully, the editing won't change the context or make it seem we were being dead serious when we were really just joking around.

As fairly regular viewers of the show, we often want to throw a shoe at the TV and yell, 'Seriously? It's only paint!' when a couple bases their decision on the house's wall colors, or we place bets on how often a couple says 'stainless steel appliances,' 'granite countertops,' or 'man cave' in a single episode. So we made a pact we'd steer clear of those kinds of comments. But I'm sure we said a few things that will make viewers roll their eyes! I guess that's part of the fun in watching the show.

JD: *What was the most surprising part of the experience?*

KW: I was surprised at how close we got to the crew in just a few days' time. There are only three people from the show that flew out for filming: the producer, a sound engineer, and a cameraperson. On the last of the five days of filming, our producer, Kathryn, sat down with Jared and me for a final on-camera interview. She asked us how it had been to share the experience of looking for a house together and what was next for us as a couple. We both waxed a little sentimental, I suppose, in our answers. I remarked on the difference between the first part of my house-hunting journey—when I was looking as a single woman—and the latter part with Jared by my side. Jared talked about how the home buying process made him all the more certain he'd found the person to share the rest of his life. Kathryn actually had tears in her eyes at the end of the interview! She's a sweetheart ... everyone on the crew was wonderful.

JD: *Now that the experience is over, would you do it again?*

KW: I think so, although it added stress in an already busy time. The filming schedule dictated our schedules. For example, at the end there's always a short segment where they catch up with the homeowners in their new house. We had to cancel and reschedule the moving company to work around filming dates.

I thought they'd give us a few months to settle in to the new house, paint, and unpack boxes. No, they showed up the day after the move! We got up before dawn that final day of filming to slap a few paintings on the walls, roll out some rugs, and give the house a hurried cleaning. It was a whirlwind! I guess I'd have to ask Jared, but I think we'd both do it again just because it was a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for us and the kids.

The producers e-mailed recently and mentioned something about another episode—more of a 'where are they now?' version where they come back to see what we've done with the house.

We plan on getting married on the property, so they even asked about a *House Hunters* Wedding Special. They were kidding ... I think! ♦

HGTV has scheduled the air date for Kirsten and Jared's House Hunters episode for February 4, 10 p.m. Eastern time. Check your local listings.



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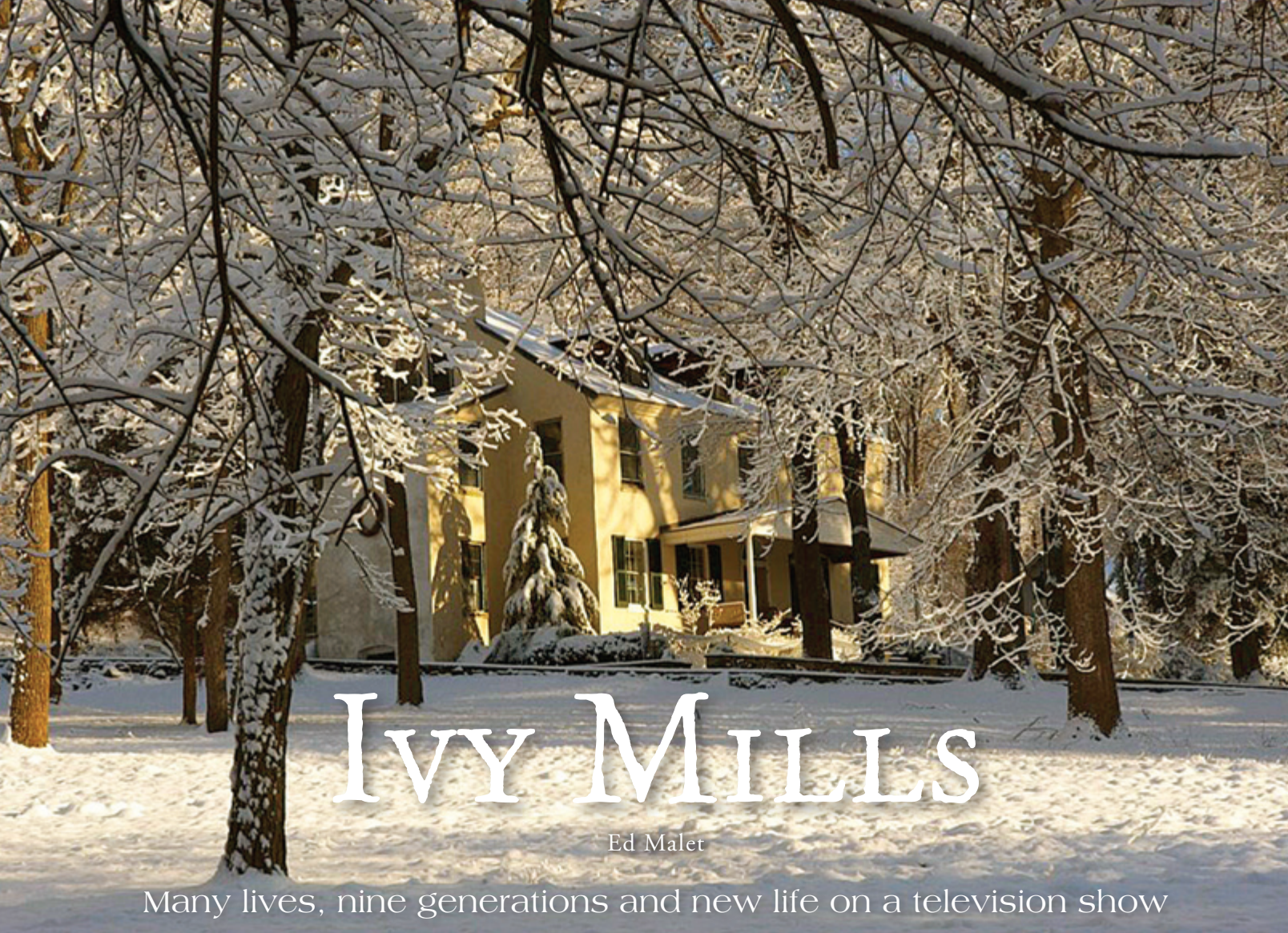
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From far left: the remains of Ivy Mills today; a sample of the paper from Ivy Mills used for the currency in the early days of the United States; and Ivy Mills in better days, c. 1840s (Mark Willcox on rt).

as supplemented by Glen Mills—Ivy Mills' more modern sister operation, also Willcox-owned—for the Civil War. Ivy Mills also made paper for the currency of Germany, Japan, Italy and several other European and South American countries. It was a good business. Rags to riches, so to speak.

Religious Haven

But Ivy Mills wasn't known only for money or even paper. In the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, Ivy Mills was also a center of southeast Pennsylvania's Catholic community. From the days of William Penn, Pennsylvania had been a haven of religious tolerance. The Willcoxes were devout Catholics and Ivy Mills became the site of the first parish in the Commonwealth, St. Thomas the Apostle.

The first Willcox home, an unusually large farmhouse built in the 1720s became a gathering spot for religious activities. During the 18th century, Jesuit missionaries from Bohemia, on Maryland's eastern shore, stopped there regularly on their way

to Philadelphia and ministered to Ivy Mills' small Catholic community. In 1837, the house was mostly torn down and replaced: its exterior unchanged, its interior modernized. Two adjoining parlors served as "St. Mary's Chapel."

In the 1840s, Irish Catholic workers at nearby textile mills trekked to Ivy Mills, where by then the Diocese of Philadelphia regularly sent priests to minister to the greatly enlarged flock. Against a fierce background of anti-Catholic, anti-Irish strife that gripped Philadelphia in the 1840s, Ivy Mills offered a welcome respite for the Bishop, and seminarians for St. Charles Borromeo came for vacations as well.

In 1852, the beautiful St. Thomas the Apostle church was built of fieldstone on nearby land donated by James Willcox. Bishop (later, Cardinal) John Neumann from Philadelphia laid and blessed the cornerstone. The bell on the church, installed in 1860, is rung regularly even now.

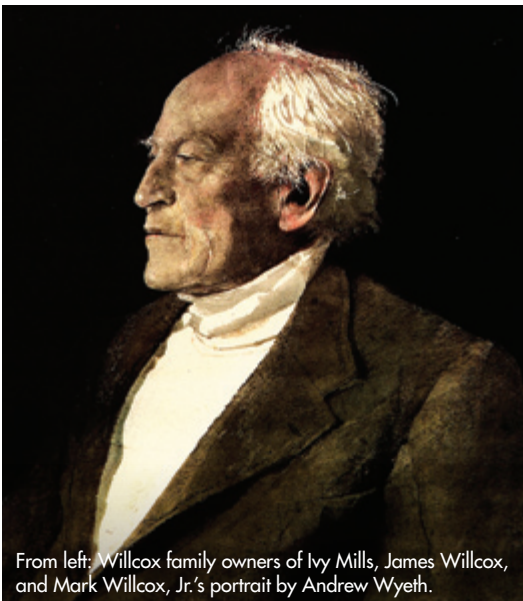


Slide Into the 20th Century

As of 1884, Ashmead's *History of Delaware County* reported Ivy Mills as the "oldest business house now standing in the United States." But the manufacture of paper and currency was changing. In 1866, Ivy Mills ceased operation. In 1879, the Willcox brothers lost their contract with the U.S. Government, sold Glen Mills, and the estate fell into decline.

By the 20th century, Ivy Mills' role in history had stopped. The mill had become a ruin: a ghostly façade. The estate, which had gradually diminished to just 38 acres, then to 16 acres, mostly in the mid-century, fell into disrepair. Portions were sold off as Philadelphia's suburbs expanded.

The family fortune was divided over and over. The Willcox family, for the most part,



From left: Willcox family owners of Ivy Mills, James Willcox, and Mark Willcox, Jr.'s portrait by Andrew Wyeth.

In 1775, the Second Continental Congress ramped up its Revolutionary army, appointed George Washington to lead it, and asked Ben Franklin to provide financing. Eventually, Franklin would raise about \$240 million. Paper, though, for printing the money, was not easy to come by then. Understand, although the Colonies were rich in forests, paper was not made of wood pulp in those days. Instead, it was made of rags, mostly of linen. And few Colonial mills could convert the rags into pulp for paper.

From Rags to Currency

And so Franklin turned about 20 miles southwest to Concord Township and his good friend Tom Willcox for help. Willcox, a Catholic, had immigrated in the early 1720s and had settled in Concord by 1725. In 1727, Willcox and a partner built a dam across the West Branch of Chester Creek. Two years later, they began operating a paper mill, named Ivy Mills because of an ivy sprig Willcox had transplanted from Devonshire, England. It was one of the oldest



papermills—the Rittenhouse mill at Wissahickon was the first—in the Colonies.

Willcox had manufactured paper for Franklin's publications, including the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*. So in 1775, Franklin turned to Willcox to produce paper for the new currency. Unfortunately, for those who bought it, the currency printed on Willcox's paper proved a terrible investment. By the 1780s, it became worthless, giving rise to the phrase, "not worth a Continental." However, this loss in value was not due to the quality of the paper or the quality of the artwork printed on it. In fact, the artists' work became widely available: too widely available. What did in the first American bills was the ease with which they were counterfeited.

Nevertheless, over much of the next century, much of the currency of our young country would be made from paper from Ivy Mills. Ivy Mills was a major source of paper for currency for the Revolutionary War, for the War of 1812, and,



moved south—to North Carolina, Georgia and thereabouts, leaving behind a family cemetery, which remains in evidence today. In the 1990s, the centerpiece of the homestead—the mansion house, the mill clerk's house, the mill ruins—was about to be bulldozed.

New Beginnings

Until Mark Willcox stepped in to save it. Mark Willcox III. That's right. An eighth generation Willcox, who, with wife Anne and ninth generation Willcox children, own the property. In 1995, the mansion was still "in the family" but about to be sold. Mark, a real estate broker with Country Properties of Unionville, was determined to preserve the historic value and save and restore Ivy Mills to its original grandeur.

Ivy Mills has become a cause for Mark, who devotes extensive efforts to saving local family homesteads and farms. For the most part, he's worked on Ivy Mills alone, or with the help of contractor Michael Palita, and friends. For some special projects, community members have also contributed generously of their time. Mark says he's "almost finished" restoring the homestead now.

Mark's goal is for the property to become self-supporting as an event venue, and has worked on its restoration. The interior reflects the elegance of Ivy Mills' glory days, with furnishings that are a combination of original and purchased period pieces, including a piano from 1807 and a clock original to the house.

These days, there are dinners, weddings and other events held in the mansion house. Plans are evolving for a Restoration/

Designer Showhouse benefit for Thorncroft Equestrian Center and Oxford Arts Alliance. A recent highlight from 2012, the final episode of the USA Network television miniseries *Political Animals*, starring Sigourney Weaver, was shot there.

New Status

So far, Ivy Mills has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission Registry of Historic Sites and Landmarks. A Pennsylvania State Historical Marker was installed in 2001. It's also an official project of Save America's Treasures.

To learn more about this local treasure with its rich history, you're invited to join a tour. The Friends of Old Saint Thomas, a nonprofit group, leads tours, where you'll see the mansion house, the mill ruins, the mill clerk's house, the nearby old church, and more (www.fost.us).

You'll also see notes from Ben Franklin and others. And perhaps, just perhaps, a shred of old paper will float by on the wind. ♦

Photos by Alix Coleman and Ed Cunicelli. Historical photos from the Willcox family collection.



Ivy Mills mansion, from top left: dining room, center hall and "The Pub," a favorite gathering spot.

Ivy Mills mansion house was used as the set for the final scene in the USA Network's mini-series "Political Animals," starring Sigourney Weaver. At left, television film crew.



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All Around Farm

A converted barn becomes a 21st-century dream home for the owners and their horses.

Story by Matt Freeman
Photos by Tom Crane Photography

Striking the right balance between profession and pastime can be a challenge, and a few years ago, Johanna Walters realized that she and her husband Brian Sweeney had come down too far on the practical side.

Walters and Sweeney had lived on a farm in Chester County—perfect for avid equestrians like themselves, but not so perfect for Sweeney’s commute back and forth from Jefferson Hospital.

They sold the farm and bought a house nearer the city, but that created another problem. “I became miserable,” Walters says with a laugh, “because I wasn’t on a farm.”

A c. 1870 carriage barn, later an internationally known show barn, was converted to a 21st-century residence with 11 horse stalls by Archer and Buchanan Architecture. The horseshoe-shaped structure, built around a courtyard, has living space at the center and horse stalls on both ends.



All Around Barn, c. 1960s



"Before" photos show the character of the old barn and the extent of the transformation.



Search For a New Home

So they began looking around for their next home, but nothing seemed quite right. At the time, Walters was boarding her horse at a Gwynedd Valley facility called All Around Farm, a large, rambling barn built around 1870 for one of the houses in the area. The building was neglected and in miserable shape cosmetically, but Walters saw something in it and said to herself, "This could make a really cool house."

"My husband thought I was insane," Walters says, but she

started making sketches and invited Richard Buchanan, a foxhunting acquaintance who happened to be an architect, to see the barn.

Walters wanted to create a home that would have stables for their horses as part of the structure, and she says Buchanan, a partner in the West Chester firm Archer & Buchanan Architecture, Ltd., "was able to see the vision and what it could be."

From Barn to Home

That was early in 2009. Walters, Sweeney, and Buchanan worked on

the design for a year, and on the Labor Day weekend of 2011, Walters and Sweeney moved into their new home in the converted and transformed old barn.

Today, a gravel driveway leads up to the double-doors of the entrance gate flanked by walls enclosing a courtyard. The building itself is roughly horseshoe-shaped; on the right and left are stables extending from either end of the taller building where the humans live.

The 9,750-square-foot building has four bedrooms. A central entry gives access to the great room, with a

New roof, siding, wood trim, windows and more updated the rear facade.



The open floor plan of the kitchen and dining room makes the most of the interior space. Original stall posts were used as newel posts for the staircase at the main entrance. And original barn floor joists (visible in the “Before” photo below) were left exposed to great effect.



living room area on one side, kitchen and dining on the other, a recreation room on the right and office on the left. Walters says the vision she had in 2009 is now a reality—she can walk from the kitchen into the mud room and then through the tack room to the east stables.

Buchanan says it’s not that unusual for people and large animals to share a roof—many barns include apartments to house employees. What’s unusual about All Around Farm is that it was converted from largely stables to largely residential space for humans.

Because the people and the horses are living in the same building, some extra building regulations came into play governing fire safety and other issues, but Buchanan says these were uniformly sensible regulations that posed no special problem.

Recycling the Details

The barn had been neglected over

the decades, but there was much in it to value and reuse. It offered both raw material and well-made artifacts to keep and reintroduce—from hardwood planks to window and door latches and ring pulls. The large interior beams, fortunately still sound, became an important design element.

Because they had reduced the number of stalls “we had a handful of interesting old hardware left over,” Buchanan says, including newels from the stalls that were reinstalled atop the stairs in the great room. The builders found a mantel stashed in a hayloft, perhaps a castoff from a long-ago ren-



What was once stable space is now very grand sitting space in the great room. The house is filled with salvaged materials, including antique brick, hardware, windows and cabinetry. For example, the great room fireplace mantle was discovered during construction in the barn’s attic covered with dust and cobwebs.





Traditional wooden doors to the closet were installed on barn sliders to retain the feel of the barn.



The barn's attic hay storage is now the master bathroom and closet.

ovation to the main farmhouse, and they incorporated it into the design of the great room, adjusting the scale of the surrounding elements accordingly.

The architect also worked to recreate an aesthetic sense that made the old barns beautiful. The ironwork in the gate, for example, was inspired by the design of attractive period ironwork found in the stall windows.

Historic barns have a timeless appeal created decades and centuries ago that still charms our eyes today, Buchanan says. In more recent decades, say from 1950 to 1980, horse architecture generally went downhill, Buchanan says—it became slick, cheap, and generally unappealing.

So designers today are reaching back to the past. “The ideas that worked then continue to work now, and they can teach us a lot about how to do things very well,” Buchanan says. “Old buildings like this have a lot to teach us.”

Big Spaces, Warm Spaces

But the old days and the new can have a profitable two-way conversation as well, especially in the realm of technology. The word “barn” is often used disapprovingly for a large interior that’s expensive to heat. This gave people pause about adapting actual barns to live in. “Big spaces historically can be cold and drafty,” Buchanan says.

But today, architects can create a concrete floor with radiant heat built in, as Buchanan did for All Around Farm. The concrete is polished, creating a “lovely, leather-like surface,” Buchanan says, and with the radiant heat, “suddenly all your heating is rising from beneath your feet.”

You can live your life in the warm layer near the floor and admire the cathedral-like ceiling high above, confident that you’re not paying to heat that area. “The things that made traditional design a problem in the past,” Buchanan says, “we have overcome.”

All Around Save

The interior décor is appropriate for a historic Pennsylvania home—there’s

an ironwork chandelier hanging in the great room, for example, and dark wood paneling. But there’s also a clean, modern sense of design free of frillery and composed of strong, simple shapes.

Walters says she and Sweeney are “both minimalists.” And they found a like-minded architect in Buchanan. The most successful projects are “edited down to the greatest simplicity,” he says, “down to their most poetic expression.”

Walters says she was glad to have been in the right place at the right time to save and update a historic structure that might otherwise have been torn down. For Buchanan, it was an opportunity to make a modern, sophisticated residence that still reaches back into history and reuses what he calls “wonderful” resources from historic buildings. “We brought that back to life,” Buchanan says. ♦

RESOURCES

Architect: Archer & Buchanan Architecture, Ltd
West Chester, 610-692-9112
ArcherBuchanan.com

General Contractor: E.C. Trethewey Bldg Contractors, Downingtown
484-593-0334; ECTBuilders.com

Millwork: Saner Architectural Millwork, Quarryville
717-786-2014; SanerMillWork.com

Landscape Design: G. David DeWane Landscape & Design
Collegeville, 610-831-1111





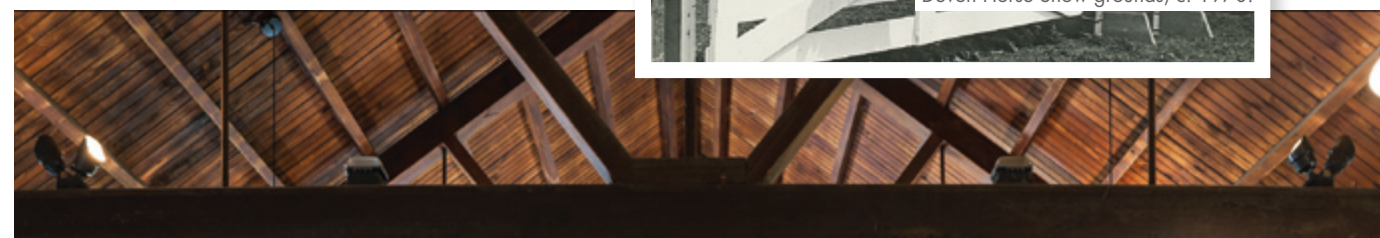
Sebastian, a horse Walters rode when the barn was used for boarding. Little did Walters know she'd be returning to All Around Barn, but to live there.



The original courtyard is now a grand entrance to the home.



Devon Horse Show grounds, c. 1970.



before



During construction, the flat ceiling was removed to reveal beautiful timber frame and wood ceilings. New stall fronts, installed to replace old, heavy wooden doors, provide open, airy space for the horses—a beautiful new space reflecting the owners' abiding passion for horses and the barn.



Open interior in a party barn by Hugh Lofting Timber Framing.

Stone Barn, Bank Barn, Horse Barn... Party Barn?



A cozy area in a party barn by King Construction.

The sight of an iconic Chester County barn on a distant hill may bring to mind this area's agrarian past and its equestrian tradition. Barns have housed horses, cows and farm equipment for centuries. But more recently—the past 25 years or so—they've been a prime spot for parties.

John King, of King Construction, is happy to see barns used in this new way. "It preserves the barns and makes them useful for today." He sees these large interior spaces used for parties, weddings, dances, community functions—sometimes the entire barn or just the top floor.

Water and electricity are already available in many old barns for adding wet

bars, restrooms, lights and heating, making an easier conversion.

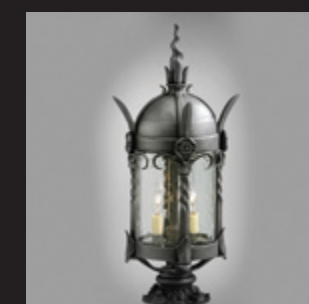
Appreciating these unique gathering spaces, King says he likes to take the old barns back to their original surfaces, conserving the materials. Or, he may build a new barn, specifically designed for party space.

Another way to get a party barn is to buy an old barn, maybe one from Lancaster County, and rebuild it, says Hugh Lofting, of Hugh Lofting Timber Framing. When working with an old barn, Lofting says "it's often better practice to take it down, review the parts, replace parts as needed, and then rebuild." This ensures soundness of all parts, including the supporting posts.

Building a new structure may be less expensive, and with the expert craftsmanship available in our area (King and Lofting have both been in business for over 30 years), may not be distinguishable from one with more history.

So, if your plans don't include a project like All Around Farm's conversion, featured in this article, maybe a party barn is what you need. For artists studios, man-caves or others uses, you can help preserve history and the classic shape of Chester County barns. It's practically your civic duty.

And you may even get included on Chester County Days' Annual Tour! Each year party barns on the tour are a highlight.



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A Food Writer's Kitchen Redo

Laura Muzzi Brennan

I'm going to tell you the end of the story first:
I'm happily-ever-after happy with my new kitchen.

Now for the middle chapters of this tale of a new kitchen: I doubted my decisions, bickered with my husband (when *he* doubted my decisions), and spent countless nights tallying what we spent on takeout.

But let's start at the beginning of the story. Our kitchen was falling apart. Every dollar we spent replacing broken hinges and chipped floor tiles smacked of the "good money after bad" adage. As an avid cook and food writer—I write *County Lines*' Brandywine Table column—I'd developed a clear vision of my ideal kitchen.

First, I wanted a classic kitchen that harmonized with my 1902 Arts and Crafts house. Second, since my family and I cook, entertain, do homework, pay bills and hang out in the kitchen, I wanted a flexible space with areas that were not overly task-specific. Built in spice racks and pull-out

drawers for small appliances look nice, but in my previous kitchen, I found them too limiting.

And finally, I wanted the design, materials and appliances to reflect the way I really cook and to stand up to heavy use without losing their good looks—and without requiring much effort from me. In short, I wanted to spend more time with a whisk than a scrub brush.

Big Decisions

While our galley-style kitchen was plenty big in terms of square footage, we wanted to use the space more efficiently. That meant moving and enlarging the doorway between kitchen and dining room, improving traffic flow and allowing light from one room to enhance light in the other. Just the beginning of our long wish list.

We also needed more usable counter space, not the narrow stretches between two medium-sized sinks we had. To work in a seven-foot-long counter that could serve as both a workspace and a serving area convenient to the table, we broke with conventional design wisdom. Instead of situating the sink under a window, we moved it to face a cabinet wall. We also chunked the two sinks in favor of one large, deep one with no divider, making cleanup of even a roasting pan easy, if not quite pleasurable.

For the cabinets, we went with maple, painted cream in a style I describe as “dressed up” Shaker. Because the inset door panels have few grooves, they met my easy-to-clean criterion. We also ordered a capacious, freestanding pantry with a eucalyptus stain that resembles a piece of furniture. It lends the kitchen a dining-room type of elegance.

But what’s inside the cabinets thrills the cook in me. Two large shallow drawers roomy enough for all my utensils flank the range, while deeper drawers below them accommodate all sizes of pots and pans. Most of the cabinets have adjustable shelves (highly appealing to a compulsive re-arranger like me). Just as important, the cabinets hold bulky, heavy small appliances, e.g., the stand mixer I frequently use but didn’t want crowding the counter.



Breaking with tradition, the sink (one single, deep sink replacing two) is not placed under a window to allow room for a 7-foot counter.

Dream Choices

My favorite part of the cabinetry is the cookbook shelf above the window over the long stretch of counter. A voracious cookbook reader and collector, I dreamed of large shelf to hold my 30 or so favorite books. Truthfully, I requested shelves on one entire wall, but the budget answered with a resounding “NO!”

The choice to put in Carrera marble countertops is one I’ll defend to my dying day. Many kitchen designers advise against marble in heavily-used kitchens because marble is porous, staining easily. Even though marble violated my minimal effort rule (I’d have to wipe tomato sauce splatters immediately and seal it every year or two), I could no more resist its beauty than I could a wedge of my mother-in-law’s coconut cake.

Little Details, Big Improvements

In my previous kitchen, the overhead fluorescent lights made me feel that I was under police scrutiny every time I diced an onion. For the redo, we lit in “layers,” using a combination of recessed ceiling lights, wrought-iron and glass pendants, and a small chandelier. An over-the-sink task light as well as under-cabinet lights make cooking and cleanup easy as store-bought pie.

We installed a porcelain tile floor that resembles the flagstone patio just outside the kitchen. It was inexpensive (the only item under budget), does not show dirt, needs no polishing, and unlike real flagstone, resists splintering. A dream!

On the sink side, the backsplash is a crackle-finish, celery-hued subway tile, again a timeless look with little maintenance. Behind the range, we put in a Pennsylvania fieldstone wall, reminiscent of our home’s exterior.

Appliance Lessons

The challenge to any cook choosing appliances is to differentiate her culinary aspirations from her real-life dinner escapades. I like to *think* of myself as a person who steams fish and vegetables six nights a week and bakes her own bread every Saturday morning. This person needs a steamer basket built into her counter and an oven with a bread-proofing feature. The person I really am needs neither,



Porcelain tile floors are easy maintenance and came in under budget. A new freestanding pantry has eucalyptus stain. Other cabinets are maple, painted cream.

and she’s the one I fought to listen to at the appliance store.

The knowledgeable appliance salesperson also helped me to balance my needs and wants while sticking to my budget. By the way, you’ll save money if you purchase your appliances from one place and if possible, from one manufacturer. Be aware, though, that just because a company makes a cracker-jack dishwasher doesn’t guarantee that its ovens or refrigerators fulfill your needs.

Hours went into researching what I considered the most important appliances: the cooktop and ovens. I knew I wanted dual-fuel (gas cooktop with electric oven), and for years, high-end cooktops, ranges and double wall ovens danced in my kitchen dreams. But how often had I simultaneously used the double ovens I had (2-3 times per year) and would I really use six burners, most with high BTUS? (No.)

I’m happy to report that I found a fabulous compromise: the GE Café 30-inch dual-fuel range. I can’t rank its attributes, so I’ll just sum them up: commercial model good looks, large central burner with a griddle accessory, four burner (two with high BTUs), a huge oven that runs true to temperature, and an extra baking drawer with separate temperature control.

We put the new cooktop and oven to the test when we cooked Thanksgiving dinner



The long counter space, under-counter microwave and cookbook shelf above the window are new features in this renovation.

for 27 (some people brought side dishes but still ...), and they earned my respect.

The GE Café French door refrigerator was another pick because it can accommodate wide trays I use when entertaining. Its shelves and freezer drawers are easy to adjust and remove for cleaning. And the water dispenser on the outside—previous models featured only inside dispensers—means we all drink more water. Another good thing.

For the dishwasher, I chose a Bosch 500 series with an excellent energy efficiency rating, important since I often wash two loads a day. The one appliance I nearly jettisoned—until my husband convinced me otherwise—is a microwave. While I don’t cook in the Sharp microwave drawer, I have to say I often rely on it to reheat and defrost. Because it’s an under-counter model, safely removing hot items is no problem.

Our kitchen redo suffered from all the usual setbacks—underfunding, over-budgeting, takeout burnout. But now that the pilot light’s on, I’m feeling like my hero, *New York Times* food writer Melissa Clark: I’m in the kitchen with a good appetite. ♦



Beautiful Carrera marble for the countertops violated the low-maintenance rule. Note the fieldstone wall that echoes the home’s exterior.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

Kitchen renovations are one of the biggest—and most expensive—home improvement projects many of us will ever undertake, and it’s unlikely that we’ll have the experience more than once or twice. So what we learn rarely benefits us. There are, however, trained experts who have weathered the kitchen design and renovation process many, many times. We’ve asked a few to share their collective wisdom.

Waterbury Kitchen & Bath’s Katy Wolfington recommends stainless steel sinks. She calls them “the lowest maintenance of all sinks and they’re timeless” and advises against “white porcelain sinks that chip easily and are hard to keep clean (as pretty as they are).” She also recommends stained finishes versus a painted finish for cabinetry. “Stained cabinets tend to last longer than paint and painted finishes, especially white or any light color, tend to show dirt more and are harder to keep clean.”

“High-end appliances are well worth the investment,” says **David Cerami, HomeTech Renovations**. “A Wolf range, for example, uses quality cast iron that’s easier to clean and more durable, so it lasts longer. Same thing with dishwashers with stainless steel interiors requiring less maintenance (just a little Lime-A-Way). And some synthetic countertops are very low maintenance, too—no sealing, no staining or knife marks.”

For easy-care kitchen floors, tile is a top pick of **Creative Nook’s Alex Hall**. “Use larger tiles, with thin grout lines, and a darker grout (no white grout to show stains) and care for

your floors will be low on your list of chores. Sealing makes most grout even easier to care for. And if quality porcelain tiles are installed properly, no need to worry about cracks if your spouse drops a pot on them.”

Ron Laudenslager, Muhly KBA, Inc. recommends “customizing kitchen work areas for clients, using special features to provide easy access and storage for work areas to help keep the kitchen clean and organized—anything from pull down shelves in high wall cabinetry to toe-kick vacuums to eliminate the need to bend over with the dust pan to clean up after food spills.”

Top tips from **Andy Madsen, Madsen Kitchen & Bath**: “Install your microwave under the counter for less spilling and lower risk of steam in the face. Extend your counter material up an inch or so to eliminate that nasty joint between counter and backsplash that’s a dirt trap and a mess to clean. Invest in a new touch-operated faucet for all those times your hands are full, and install a good water purifier so there’s no more hauling bottled water home.”



What Happens after the Agreement for Sale is Signed?

Getting what you paid for when you buy a house

Bob Frame

Most of today's home sellers and buyers think the toughest part of selling a home is finding a qualified buyer. But in reality, after a contract has been signed is when the real work begins. This work entails abiding by the 643 lines in the most recent *Standard Agreement for the Sale of Real Estate*. Until all the terms in the Agreement are satisfied, settlement will not occur.

Here are some things to keep in mind.

Deadlines Are of the Essence

An essential rule for the sales process is to consider all deadlines sacrosanct. The phrase "Time is of the Essence"—which is actually printed in the Agreement—means that a deadline is THE deadline and is BINDING! Not a day later.

The settlement date is certainly an important deadline. If changed, the change must be agreed to in writing. The deadlines to apply for a mortgage and to receive a mortgage

commitment are also extremely important. Upon receiving a mortgage commitment, the Buyer must promptly deliver a copy of this document to the Seller. If the Seller doesn't receive a copy by the Mortgage Commitment Date, the Seller may terminate the Agreement.

Another important deadline is the time that the Buyer has to perform various inspections and then present their results to the Seller. The Seller, in turn, has until a specified deadline, usually 5 days, to react to the Buyer's corrective proposal and satisfy the requests—or not.

Naturally, the best way to handle deadlines is to know when they exist and to plan to meet them as early as possible. A change must be agreed to in writing. And any change should be made far enough in advance to avoid harm to either side.

Inspections—Do One Up Front

One of the most troublesome parts of a real estate sale can be conducting inspections. Typically, the Buyer has an opportunity to do inspections for the home, wood infestation, water, sewer and radon within a given number of days after the Agreement is signed. The question then is, "What should the Seller repair and what should the Buyer accept in its current condition?" There's no fixed answer to this.

Buyers may feel that, because we're in a "buyer's market," the Seller should repair everything—from repairing windows to replacing every inch of stucco. On the other hand, Sellers often feel they've already compromised on price and hit their limit on how much they'll give back.

Unless the price is extremely low, Sellers will have to take care of major defects—septic failure, mold, structural flaws—either by repairing them, giving a monetary credit, or dropping the price further. The input of a good contractor is invaluable to know what repairs are major and what are fixable at what price.

A suggestion for Sellers is to do a pre-inspection of your home *before* it goes on the market. Why spend months of time marketing and showing your home, finally getting an offer, only to discover that your property has a deal-killing problem? Do the inspection *up front!* You'll be glad you did.

Mortgage Contingencies

This part of an Agreement makes the sale contingent on getting a mortgage up to a given rate, points, etc. If that mortgage can't be obtained, the Buyer can cancel the deal. This is for the Buyer's protection, and the Seller has little say in the process.

The Seller, however, does have some leverage on the front end. The Seller's real estate agent can look into the financial strength of the Buyer *prior* to signing the Agreement. Reviewing the Buyer's financial information—with the Buyer's permission, of course—with their lender is always a good idea. Beware of any "creative" financing arrangements.

If the Buyer is putting down 20% or more of the purchase price, it's advisable for the Buyer to include an *Appraisal Contingency Addendum* with the offer. This addendum guarantees that the property must appraise for a value that is at least equal to the purchase price.

In this market, the appraisal is part of the transaction that neither the Seller nor Buyer has a say in. The Buyer's mortgage company will hire an appraiser, often one unfamiliar with the area, to set a value for the property. If the appraised value is less than the purchase price, the Buyer can either renegotiate the price or walk away. A suggestion here would be for the agents to make some appraisals of comparable properties available.

Who Gets Personal Property

Problems may arise at or after settlement when it's unclear what personal property stays with the home and what goes. Three sections of the Agreement address this issue, but misunderstandings still occur. For example, it's written in the Agreement that "any remaining heating and cooking fuels" are included in the sale. A Seller should be aware that if they spend \$800 filling up the propane tank two weeks before settlement, they're not going to be reimbursed. Be very specific—in writing.

Make sure that items that are leased—i.e., satellite dishes, propane tanks, security systems—are not included in the sale. Buyers are always surprised when a rental invoice arrives from a propane supplier for the tank they thought they purchased with the house. Leased items

should be separately, and explicitly, excluded in the Agreement.

Final Thoughts

Although we've skimmed the surface of what can go wrong after the Agreement of Sale is signed, these four situations are certainly some of the most prominent problems.

Communicating about deadlines will help avert last minute disasters. Using qualified contractors and working out a fair compromise for inspections will lead to a win-win transaction. Understanding that once the Agreement is signed, the mortgage process is pretty much in the hands of the lender will avoid a lot of frustration. And, specifically outlining in the Agreement what items stay and move can avoid problems later.

The Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS® publishes a *Consumer's Guide To The Agreement of Sale*, downloadable from the Web, covering these four situations and more—a helpful guide for keeping your real estate settlement on track. ♦

L. Robert Frame, Jr. is a REALTOR® and Associate Broker with Coldwell Banker Preferred; an attorney; and licensed auctioneer. He holds the CRS, ABR and SRES designations and is a REBAC instructor for Suburban West Realtors Assn.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

The Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS® publishes a **Consumer's Guide To The Agreement of Sale**, which you can download to find out more about the Standard Agreement for Sale of Real Estate before you buy or sell your home.

Although not a substitute for professional advice from a broker or attorney, its 32 pages of helpful information provide useful background and a good starting point.

The Guide covers such additional topics as Making an Offer, Purchase Price & Deposits, Mortgage Application Checklist for Buyers, Title Surveys & Costs, and Maintenance and Risk of Loss, Default, Termination & Return of Deposits, Settlement & Possession, and Recording a Deed.



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HOME OF THE MONTH

Laurel Anderson
Photos by Ed Cunicelli

A stately Georgian manor house has been lovingly coaxed into the 21st century.

In a hilltop setting as bucolic as its name, Holly Hill is a masterfully restored grand stone manor house in what was once part of Longwood Gardens. The owners' plan: "To have people walk in and think nothing has been changed, while everything has been updated."

Originally built in 1930 for Pierre du Pont's close friend, horticulturalist Malcolm Farquar, the home is surrounded by almost six acres of manicured grounds highlighted by specimen plantings similar to Longwood's heirloom plants. A towering five-story American holly accents the front of this gracious home.

Three Families, Eighty Years

Holly Hill has been home to only three families in its over 80 years: the current owners being stewards of the

17-year renovation project to transform the elegant mansion into a comfortable family home with 21st-century amenities. Conceiving of their role as "caretakers of this special home, until its next owners come," the owners relied on "the home's good bones," as they restored, expanded and upgraded to create six-bedrooms, five full and two half-baths on four levels and ten thousand square feet of comfortable, sun-filled space.

Respecting the "right-size" proportions of the original living, dining and bedrooms, while updating with spacious new kitchen, family room, great room, guest wing and gym, the renovation incorporated key architectural features and details of the original design. Archways that grace the transitions between the living and dining rooms are repeated throughout the home—in the family room, great

room windows and elsewhere, adding charm and character. Crown moldings have been repaired and replicated in new spaces, with meticulous craftsmanship by Jeff Knudsen Designs.

This sparkling gem of a house is a fitting showplace for the owners' extensive collection of contemporary art that fills the space with color and life.

Original Space

As befits the symmetry of a classic Georgian home, the entrance to Holly Hill is through a grand central hall, opening at the back of the home to stunning views of the property, punctuated by original sculpture. To the right, through

the archway, is a sun-filled living room, anchored by one of five fireplaces and boasting windows on three sides. A south-facing solarium expands the brightness.

To the left, Mr. Farquar's original study has been updated with tiger-maple built-ins and magnificent crown moldings. Past the central staircase is an archway to the large formal dining room, with arches repeated in the built-in china cabinet and door to the addition.

Modern Life in the Addition

The arch theme is immediately in evidence with a wall of arched windows in the new family room, bringing light and views of the property into



bay garage, reflected in the three arched windows) provides additional space for relaxing and entertaining. A built-in custom fridge-and-freezer combination are hidden by paneling.

Lower Level

Ease in entertaining continues with the lower level's preservation of

this heart of the home. Window seats, built-in bookcases, gas fireplace and a TV that disappears below floor level are details that create a comfortable gathering space.

Overlooking the family room is the gourmet chef's kitchen, with distinctive granite counter tops, stainless steel appliances and exquisite custom tiger-maple cabinets. The open flow from family room to kitchen is classic modern living. A spacious butler's pantry, with wine cooler and original glass-front cabinets, is bigger than many kitchens, maximizing entertaining and storage, functions that have been thoughtfully integrated throughout the home. A convenient mudroom from the front drive connects the kitchen and great room.

For more family time, the renovated great room (formerly a three

the original kitchen fixtures, creating a prep kitchen convenient for caterers and parties. Just steps away are two—yes, two—walk-in, climate-controlled wine cellars housing a collection better than many local State Stores!

A large, open, carpeted playroom with a wall of built-ins and cozy equestrian themed den with original stone fireplace and wet bar are at the opposite end of the lower level. Both have ample natural light from well-placed windows. A laundry area, pantry, more storage and the modern systems room (for the amenities) complete the space.

Upper Floors

Taking the elevator to the second floor means missing the elegant staircase and spacious landings. The sanctuary of the master suite is at one end of the hall,

above the living room and mirrors the three-sides of windows and fireplace layout. A dressing room, walk-in closets and mahogany and marble custom bath add luxury.

Well-proportioned bedrooms with custom details and baths are perfect for a family. A large second-floor epi wood deck, with custom Chippendale railings, was constructed above the new family room as outdoor space.

Above the great room is another private wing with two more bedrooms, full bath and more storage.

The plush carpeted third floor is currently used as a gym. A walk-in cedar closet and more open storage are found at either end of this luxurious level.

Grounds

The grounds continue the gracious-living theme, with a landscaped stone swimming pool, with hot tub, bocce ball court, with viewing terrace, and out buildings. The four-car garage has enough storage space to add an apartment or separate office. And a former stone springhouse is now a Terrain-style garden shed, as befits the property's Longwood legacy.

Holly Hill is offered by Country Properties, Prudential, Fox & Roach. Contact Georgianna Stapleton (610-322-0833), Cindy Orr Van Putten (610-864-3096), Amy McKenna (610-470-7138); TheCountryProperties.com.



Dining Out

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Lise Monty

Buon Appetito! The crowds that continue to fill the new Limoncello in Chester Springs celebrate our continuing passion for sunny Southern Italian cuisine. Since opening in early December, it's been "packed every night," says Giuseppe Mingrino, the "pappa" of the family that runs the business. And every Monday through Friday, folks line up for the abundant lunch buffet. The queue stretches from one dining room through another ... and another. "It's been crazy," our server told us during an early-dinner visit. We'd been advised to make reservations and were happy we had.

The friendly personality and savory, satisfying cuisine that made the first Limoncello in West Chester so popular are repeated at this new site nine miles up the road. The West Chester restaurant opened in 2006 as a 45-seat operation in a downtown townhouse. Success led to expansion into an adjacent townhouse and seating for "150 inside, 75 outside," Mingrino says. The Chester Springs site accommodates 250 inside, 75 outside.

Its uptown, warm ambiance blends rustic and contemporary themes, including lustrous marble-top tables and bar, exposed brick walls and fireplaces, tall graceful vases, decorative wrought-iron touches and framed paintings of Old Country scenes. We liked the variety of lighting fixtures—some modern, a few Art Nouveau style, one or two traditional, all appealing. The comfortable upholstered chairs encourage lingering—more time to savor every bite from calamari to cannoli.

Large attractive bottles of olive oil—one on each table—send the right message. With style.

Primo!

To start, *Clams Oreganato* (\$12), a mouth-watering beginning to our tasting feast, brought a heap of medium-sized beauties, bathed in a chardonnay-based broth enriched with crumbled sausage and a dash of oregano. The garlic/herb crostini added a tasty crunch to the boffo appetizer.

Other appetizer choices include calamari, one fried, the other Sicilian style, tossed with capers, black olives, fresh tomato, white wine and a bit of red chili. Also, a blend of seafood with lemon, balsamic, olive oil and arugula; arancini (rice croquettes); "drunken" mussels and "Frenchman Cove" mussels; peppers stuffed with sweet sausage; and sweet sausages stuffed with provolone. And, of course, meatballs. There's a lavish antipasto, with the option of adding "boquerones" or marinated Spanish white anchovies.

Minestrone (\$5), the "zuppa del giorno," which sounds so much tastier than "soup of the day," totally satisfied with its traditional and hearty blend of beans, pasta, vegetables and herbs. A classic meal in a bowl. The kitchen keeps a pot of chicken tortellini soup on the stove every day—another treat.

The *Salumi e Formaggi* offerings are broad and appealing with varied cured meats, some familiar, like prosciutto and salami. The cheeses include "brie-like" robiola, plus Dutch and Spanish specialties.

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

Mangia!

For the main event, *Veal Milazzo* (\$22) met every expectation. Tender medallions topped with parma prosciutto, fresh mozzarella and sliced portobello slices were happily paired with cappellini that was cooked perfectly, all of it brought together with a bright white-wine marinara. The veal chop parmigiana also appealed.

A top seller here as well as at the West Chester restaurant is Chicken Limoncello—sautéed chicken breast with asparagus, lump

crab and a white wine sauce, served with cappellini. Seafood creations include shrimp and crab fra diavolo, stuffed salmon stuffed with crab imperial, seafood alla vodka, and crab cakes. For beef lovers, there's a "South Philly Ribeye" with caramelized onion, provolone fondue and truffle fries.

Pasta entrées include ricotta gnocchi, braised short rib-stuffed ravioli, lasagna, rigatoni alla vodka, linguine with meatballs and risotto of the day. Tempting eggplant specialties are eggplant/gorgonzola ravioli, San Marzano-style

with prosciutto and ricotta over rigatoni and the perennial favorite eggplant parmigiana.

Salads get respect here. They're sophisticated and designed to appeal to popular tastes. The *Insalata di Salmone* (\$16) impressed, first for the large fillet, prime quality and grilled just as requested—cooked through but still moist. The toss of good greens, grilled asparagus, sautéed red onions, cherry tomatoes and goat cheese with a tasty honey-dijon-balsamic vinaigrette was delicious.

Other "insalata" choices include roasted beet and goat cheese, fresh mozzarella with tomato and prosciutto and the Insalata alla Dina option with pear, gorgonzola, cranberry and crispy prosciutto. You can add chicken, filet and grilled or fried calamari as toppings.

Gourmet pizzas, stromboli and tasty sandwiches made with Sarcone's sesame bread round out the menu.

No. 1 Buffet

A perennial award winner, the elaborate Monday-Friday luncheon spread, served from 11:30 to 2 and priced at \$10.95, includes salads, varied pizzas, stromboli, chicken and pasta specials, and fresh seafood and veal creations. And it's always jammed.

Dolce Amore

There was little deliberating over dessert choices. We zeroed in on two classics, beginning with *Tiramisu* (\$7) and enjoyed every bite. Limoncello's interpretation combines a sponge-cake base with mascarpone cream, espresso flavoring, a dusting of cocoa powder and squiggles of chocolate syrup. From six gelato offerings, the *Coppa Stacciatella* (\$6) appealed the most. Served parfait style, the chocolate chip gelato was swirled with chocolate syrup and topped with cocoa powder and chopped hazelnuts. Magnifico.

Also on the dolce list: Limoncello cake with the eponymous liqueur added to buttermilk cake; chocolate cake with a New York cheesecake center, plus chocolate mousse and chocolate shavings; apple torte; crème brûlée pie and cannoli. Other gelato flavors: chocolate/pistachio, Limoncello, vanilla, chocolate and toasted almond. ♦

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Chocolate Lovers Unite!

United Way of Southern Chester County is hosting its 1st annual Chocolate Lovers Festival fundraiser February 2, and chocolate lovers are hoping it's not the last. Highlights include plenty of tastings from professional and amateur chefs (Jan. 25 entry deadline means mark your calendar for next year), plus vendors selling sweets and other gifts for Valentine's Day. Indulge your chocolate cravings as you taste chocolate creations—brownies, candies, cakes, cookies, cupcakes. Feb. 2, 1 to 4 p.m. Red Clay Room, 423 Dalmatian St., Kennett Square. 610-444-4357; UnitedWaySCC.org.



Feb Food Fests.

Did you know you can celebrate your favorite foods on days designed to honor them? With 365 days of food festivities, you can mark your calendar for, say, World Nutella Day, February 5th, or Bagels and Lox Day on the 9th. Special edibles get a full week of devotion: National Pancake Week is the last week of February, while Kraut and Frankfurter Week gets the second week. Month-long festivities for February: Great American Pies Month and National Fiber Focus Month, which may be less fun. Find your favorite food's special day at TheNibble.com/fun/more/facts/food-holidays.asp.



February Celebrates ...

The shortest month goes long on parties where food is the star. For Super Bowl snacks, our Food Editor, Laura Muzzi Brennan, put together munchies in November's "Before the Big Meal," on *CountyLinesMagazine.com*. For Valentine's Day, try cheese and chocolate fondues at West Chester's candlelit Lincoln Room; LincolnRoomWestChester.com. And for Mardi Gras, get a taste of New Orleans at



Daddy Mims' in Phoenixville or High Street Caffè in West Chester. From gumbo to jambalaya, there's plenty of authentic Creole cuisine for a culinary trip to the Big Easy.

New Year, More New Restaurants.

In addition to the news in *County Lines*' January Dining Guide (online at *CountyLinesMagazine.com*), we found a few more spots to try. West Chester has two: Roll DogZ, serving gourmet hot dogs and egg rolls, and Core De Roma Trattoria, with authentic Roman cooking by owner Luigi Pinti. In Exton, The Pour House, known for craft beer and juicy burgers, moves in on Pottstown Pike, and another beer haven, The Brew & Bräu, a pub in the corner of the Glen Mills' Whole Foods Market.



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February is All Heart — In Love and Life

Laura Muzzi Brennan

On balloons, on cards, on candy, hearts dominate the February landscape and not just in celebration of Valentine's Day. February is also American Heart Month, a time when The American Heart Association (AHA) and other public health groups raise awareness of cardiovascular health. Most of us know that exercise and eating well go far in promoting heart health, but identifying the right foods and figuring out the correct portion size can be a challenge.

"Most people would be surprised at just how easy it is to make heart-healthy food choices," says registered dietitian Connie Ostap. In her private practice in Downing-

Ostap's advice jibes with experts including those at the Mayo Clinic who recommend eating a Mediterranean diet. With its emphasis on bold flavors and fresh ingredients, it hardly seems fair to saddle it



with the word "diet." Whoever felt deprived dipping bread in flavored olive oil rather than slathering it with butter? And who would call grilled vegetables tossed with olives and just-picked basil anything but delicious?

Brandywiners can experience a taste of authentic Mediterranean cooking at Mythos in West Chester where Chef/owner Gus Tzumakaris prepares the food of his native Greece. "We use no butter!" says Tzumakaris. "Our main flavorings are simple: virgin olive oil, red wine vinegar and oregano." Popular dishes include bronzino marinated in olive oil and lemon, grilled over charcoal and served whole.

Diners also love the classic Greek salad topped with imported sheep's feta and tossed with vinaigrette flavored with oregano, fresh garlic, and more feta. Grilled octopus? It's definitely one of Mythos' most requested dishes.

This February, as you plan your Valentine's menu, think not only of your heart's desire but of its health.



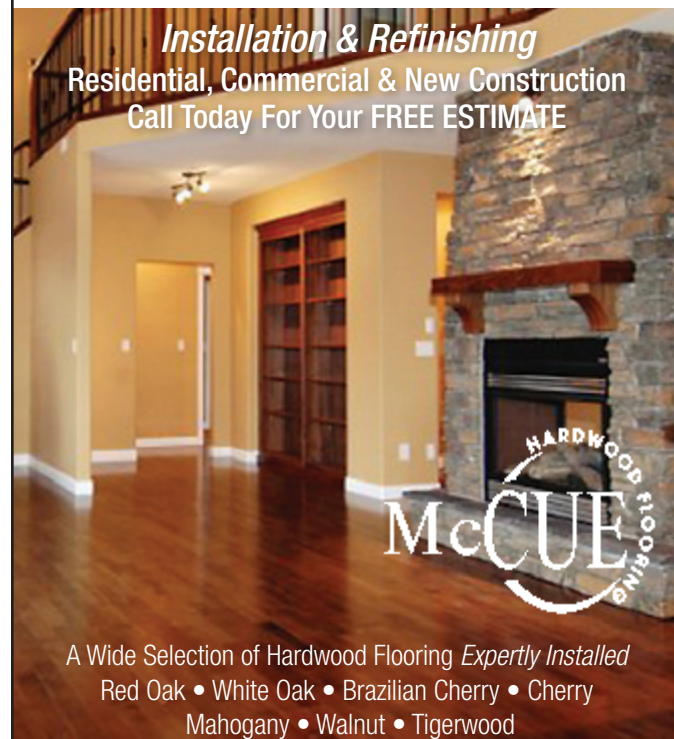
town as well as her work on school wellness committees, Ostap emphasizes the importance of lowering fat intake and understanding the differences among fats. She pointed me toward the "Meet The Fats" section on the AHA website, which offers a lighthearted take on a heavy subject. Never again will I confuse Trans and Sat, a.k.a. the Bad Fats brothers, with Mon and Poly, the Better Fats sisters!

Ostap also helps clients figure out ways to get more whole grains, legumes, fish and vegetables in their meals. "The trick," Ostap believes, "is planning what you are going to eat ahead of time. Once you lose control of your schedule, you lose control of your food choices." To see more of Ostap's eating tips, see the "Love Your Heart" sidebar.



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Middle Eastern Couscous

I adapted this recipe from one I found in The Washington Post over 20 years ago. This couscous makes an ideal side dish for grilled chicken or lamb. Notes: If you can't find currants, substitute with 1/2 C. roughly chopped raisins. You can use leftover couscous for this recipe, but I find that when I use just-cooked, warm couscous, it absorbs the dressing better.

1/3 C. pine nuts
1, 6-oz. jar marinated artichoke hearts, chopped
1 red pepper, roasted, seeded and cut into small dice
1/3 C. currants
4 C. cooked whole wheat couscous
1 tsp. salt
3 Tb. lemon juice
4 Tb. olive oil
2 large garlic cloves, minced
1/3 C. chopped fresh mint
Pinches of allspice and cayenne pepper

Spread the pine nuts on a baking sheet, and bake for 5-10 minutes in a 375° oven. Stir them occasionally and remove from oven when golden brown. Set aside.

In a bowl, combine chopped artichoke hearts, red pepper and currants. Mix in warm couscous. In another bowl, mix salt, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic and mint to make a dressing.

Pour dressing over couscous mixture and mix well. Add allspice and cayenne. Immediately before serving, toss in pine nuts.

Makes 6-8 servings.

Tzatziki (Greek yogurt cucumber dip)

Gus Tzumakaris of Mythos starts with 12 oz. of Greek yogurt, which he strains by placing it inside a piece of cheesecloth suspended over a bowl. After he discards the liquid, he has 1 C. of very creamy yogurt for the tzatziki. Feel free to substitute plain lowfat yogurt. Serve this classic Greek dip with grilled whole wheat pita. It's also great over grilled chicken or lamb.

1 medium cucumber, peeled
1 C. plain yogurt
4 Tb. virgin olive oil
1 Tb. chopped fresh dill
1 Tb. chopped fresh garlic
1 Tb. red wine vinegar

Using a knife, remove the seeds from the cucumber and cut into small dice. Do not chop in a food processor or the cucumber

will become mushy. Mix cucumber with the rest of the ingredients.

Makes 1 1/2-2 C.

Roasted Green Beans with Mushrooms, Balsamic, and Parmesan

Recipe courtesy of Nancy Smith, A Taste of Olive.

8 oz. mushrooms, any kind
1 lb. fresh green beans or frozen thin green beans
1 1/2 Tb. extra virgin olive oil
1 Tb. balsamic vinegar
Salt and fresh ground black pepper
2 Tb. finely grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 450°.

Wash mushrooms, drain and dry. While mushrooms are drying, trim and cut beans in half. Cut mushrooms into slices 1/2-inch thick.

Put cut beans and mushrooms into a Ziploc bag or plastic bowl. Whisk together olive oil and balsamic vinegar and pour over vegetable mixture, then squeeze bag or stir so all the beans and mushrooms are lightly coated with the mixture. Arrange on large cookie sheet, spreading them out well so beans and mushrooms are not crowded.

Roast 20-30 minutes, starting to check for doneness after 20 minutes. Cook until beans are tender-crisp, mushrooms are cooked, and all liquid on the pan from mushrooms has evaporated.

Season beans to taste with salt and fresh ground pepper. Then sprinkle with finely grated Parmesan. Serve hot.

Makes 4-6 servings.

Minestrone

If you're looking for a way to incorporate more vegetables into your menu, this soup fits the bill. Many minestrone recipes advise putting all of the vegetables into the broth at the same time, but I've found that cooking the celery, carrots and onions (a classic combination also known as mirepoix) before combining them with other ingredients speeds up the cooking time.

3 Tb. olive oil
3 stalks celery, cut into large dice (approximately 1 C.)
3 carrots, cut into large dice (approximately 1 C.)
1 medium onion, cut into large dice (approximately 1 C.)

A Taste of Olive Oil

Olive oil is the fairy godmother of the Mediterranean diet, casting its fruity spell on ordinary foods and transforming them into something special—and healthy. At A Taste of Olive, owner Nancy Smith offers more than a dozen extra virgin oils and 20+ flavored oils along with over 30 types of vinegar. All are “on tap” and available for sampling at stores in West Chester, Ardmore, Chestnut Hill and Haddonfield, NJ.

When I caught up with Smith, she was readying her recently opened store in Chestnut Hill for the winter holidays. An avid cook, Smith became interested in olive oil when she visited an olive oil purveyor in her home state of Illinois.

The more she explored the benefits of olive oil as well as vinegar varieties, the more enthusiastic she became about their place in a healthy diet. “You can change the flavor of foods and your enjoyment in them by making small changes. Adding olive oil or a splash of balsamic vinegar is easy to do, and it keeps healthy foods from getting boring,” says Smith.

Clearly, “boring” is banned at A Taste of Olive where hot chile peppers, Parmesan, garlic and rosemary flavor the House Blend, one of the store's bestselling olive oils. Other popular products include Tuscan Herb olive oil and fig and pomegranate balsamic vinegars.

Like wine, olive oil can be herby, grassy or have hints of avocado or banana, so tasting can be fun and informative. A Taste of Olive offers private tastings and classes through local school nights.

But whether you want to up your OOIQ (Olive Oil IQ) or simply give your food a flavorful, healthy boost, olive oil is what the doctor ordered.

1, 28-oz. can diced tomatoes with juice
8 C. vegetable or chicken broth
1 medium zucchini, cut into large dice
Salt to taste
1 Parmesan cheese rind
1, 6-oz. package baby spinach leaves
1, 15-oz. can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
Juice from 1/2 lemon
1/2 C. basil pesto, optional

In a stockpot or Dutch oven, heat olive

Love Your Heart: Hints for Healthy Eating

Dietician Connie Ostop believes that small changes can yield big benefits when it comes to boosting heart health. Do try these at home:

Stop using the word “diet.” Think “healthy food choices” or “healthy lifestyle” instead.

Stock your pantry with ingredients for two go-to meals. That way, you won't be tempted to travel the fast food or takeout route for dinner.

Look for snack foods that contain four or fewer fat grams and no saturated or trans fats.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. They replace higher fat food and their fiber keeps food moving through your system.

Strive to eat fish two times per week as fish provides essential fatty acids your body cannot make on its own.

Select lean cuts of meat and limit portion size to 2-3 oz. Remember that the more marbled a piece of meat, the higher its fat content. Trim excess fat before cooking.

Substitute lower fat foods for their high fat counterparts.

- Trade butter or margarine for “I Can't Believe It's Not Butter” in baking recipes. Why? It provides 50% less saturated fat than butter.

- Use olive or canola oil cooking spray instead of butter when frying or sautéing.

- Replace half of the oil in baking recipes with applesauce. For example, if a recipe calls for ½ C. oil, then use ¼ C. canola oil and ¼ C. applesauce.

- Choose part skim or skim dairy products instead of whole milk versions. An easy switch: Use nonfat or low fat Greek yogurt in place of sour cream in your favorite dip.

- Let Canadian bacon stand in for regular bacon whenever possible.

oil over medium heat. Add celery, carrots and onion. Cook for 3-5 minutes, stirring frequently so that vegetables do not brown. Add tomatoes, broth, zucchini, salt and Parmesan rind.

Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and

simmer for 30 minutes. (I don't like my vegetables too soft, but if you do, simmer for another 10-15 minutes.) Add spinach leaves, beans and lemon. Simmer for 5-10 minutes more. Remove cheese rind and discard.

To serve, ladle into bowls and swirl in a spoonful of pesto.

Makes 10-12 servings.

Mediterranean Chicken Salad

Extra virgin olive oil keeps this chicken salad moist, rather than mayonnaise. Recipe courtesy of Nancy Smith, A Taste of Olive.

3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and cut into small chunks

3 Tb. parsley, minced

1 small red bell pepper, diced

½ large onion, diced

¼ C. extra virgin olive oil

½ Tb. mustard

½ tsp. dried oregano

¼ C. capers

¼ C. plus 1 Tb. raisins

Salt and freshly ground pepper

In a bowl, combine the chicken, parsley, red pepper and onion. In a separate bowl, whisk together olive oil, mustard, oregano, capers and raisins. Pour oil mixture over chicken mixture. Adjust seasonings and mix well.

Makes 10-12 servings.

Kale Salad

My cousin Polly, a happy vegetarian, brought this side dish to Thanksgiving last year. It provided much needed balance to the creamy sweet potato casserole and all those rich desserts. Since then, I've made it twice and turned it into a main course by topping it with thinly sliced smoked salmon.

¼ C. extra virgin olive oil

3 Tb. lemon juice

Pinch of salt

Pinch of sugar

1, 10-oz. bag kale*

½ C. pecan or walnut pieces

Parmesan cheese, (optional)

8 oz. smoked salmon (optional)

**You can find kale prewashed, stemmed and torn into bite-sized pieces in many grocery stores. If you can find only bunches of kale, make sure you wash the leaves well and remove those tough stems.*

Whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, salt and sugar. Massage into kale. (You

might feel silly doing this, but it helps to distribute the dressing evenly and to wilt the kale.) Add nuts and toss.

Right before serving, top each salad with a small wedge of Parmesan or, using a vegetable peeler, slice a few “ribbons” of Parmesan on top of each salad.

Makes 6-8 side dish servings or, with smoked salmon, 4-6 main course servings.

Shaved Fennel and Chevre Salad with Red Apple Balsamic Vinegar and Truffle Oil dressing

You can find red apple balsamic vinegar as well as truffle oil at A Taste of Olive, the home of this recipe. Nancy Smith suggests that meat eaters top this dish with thinly sliced prosciutto, adding, “If pears are not your thing, using figs in the same salad is equally delicious, especially with the prosciutto.”

1 head Boston lettuce

1 bulb fennel/anise

1 small sweet onion

½ C. dried cranberries

5 oz. soft chevre (goat cheese)

1 Bosch pear, cubed

1 C. red apple balsamic vinegar

1 Tb. white or black truffle oil

Rinse the lettuce and break apart the leaves from the center stem. Cut off the upper shoots of the fennel (save for other uses), leaving only the bulb. Halve the bulb and slice thin with a knife or shave thin with a mandoline.

Peel the onion, cut it in half and slice thin with a knife or shave thin with a mandoline. Keeping the ratio of onion to fennel at 1:1, combine the lettuce, fennel and onion in your favorite salad bowl. Add the dried cranberries for tartness. Crumble the chevre in a separate bowl and then sprinkle liberally on salad.

Cut the pear in half, remove the center seeded area and cut into ½-inch cubes. Spread around the top of the salad. (You can cut the pear in half, slice lengthwise and place around the top of the salad for a more dramatic presentation.) Leave this step for last or the pear will get brown and ugly looking.

Combine the red apple balsamic vinegar and the truffle oil in a vessel for serving and bring to the table for people to dress as desired.

Makes 4-6 servings.

Peppered Shrimp

A Taste of Olive has the specialty olive oil and vinegars used in this tasty appetizer. Recipe courtesy of Nancy Smith.

1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. crushed red pepper

3 Tb. basil extra virgin olive oil

1 small onion, finely chopped

1, 14-oz. can diced tomatoes

3 garlic cloves chopped

2 Tb. dried oregano leaves

1 C. white balsamic vinegar

(or oregano white balsamic vinegar)

3 Tb. fresh parsley, chopped

3 Tb. fresh basil, chopped

Salt to taste

Toss the shrimp with salt and crushed red pepper in a medium bowl.

Heat the basil extra virgin olive oil in a large skillet on medium-high. Add the shrimp and sauté about 2 minutes. Place the shrimp on a large plate.

Add the onion to the same skillet and sauté about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes with juices, garlic, oregano and the balsamic vinegar, and simmer about 10 minutes, until the sauce thickens. Return the shrimp to the skillet, blend and coat.

Remove from heat and stir in parsley and basil. Add salt to taste.

Makes 4-6 appetizer servings.

Healthier Baked Penne

I use a mix of whole grain and regular penne, add mushrooms and spinach for extra fiber and vitamins, and replace full fat cheeses with their lower fat counterparts. Serve with extra marinara sauce and Parmesan cheese.

½ Tb. butter

1 Tb. olive oil

1 lb. sliced white mushrooms

4 C. part-skim ricotta cheese

6 C. marinara or your favorite tomato sauce, divided, plus extra for serving

4 C. finely shredded part-skim mozzarella and Parmesan cheese, divided

1, 6-oz. package baby spinach

1 small bunch of basil, stems removed and leave cut into ribbons

4 C. cooked whole grain penne

4 C. cooked regular penne

Salt and pepper to taste

½ Tb. Italian herbs mix (oregano, basil, marjoram, thyme and rosemary) (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a casserole dish (9x13x2) with olive oil or cooking spray.

In a skillet, melt butter with olive oil over medium heat. Add a pinch of salt and sliced mushrooms. Stirring frequently, cook mushrooms for 3-5 minutes. Drain off liquid and set mushrooms aside.

In a large bowl, mix together ricotta cheese, 4 C. marinara, 2 C. mozzarella and Parmesan, mushrooms, spinach and basil. Fold in penne. Add salt, black pepper and Italian herbs to taste.

Spoon mixture into casserole dish. Spread 2 C. remaining marinara sauce on top. Sprinkle with remaining 2 C. shredded cheese. Cover loosely with aluminum foil. Bake for 25 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 15 minutes until cheese is melted.

Makes 12-14 servings. ♦

To contact Laura, please e-mail her at LauraBrennan@ValleyDel.com.

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