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The "Barron's Winner's Circle Top 1200" is a select group of individuals who are screened on a number of different criteria. Among the factors that advisors are assessed include their assets under management, revenues, the quality of service provided to clients, and their adherence to high standards of industry regulatory compliance. Portfolio performance is not a factor. Please see Barrons.com for more information.
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Unionville
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Equestrian Area | Unionville Schools
\$1,595,000



West Bradford Township
5 BR, 4.2 BA | Downingtown Schools
Original model home | Great Value
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Newlin Township
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Unionville
Last List Price: \$2,490,000



Newlin Township
Last List Price: \$1,250,000



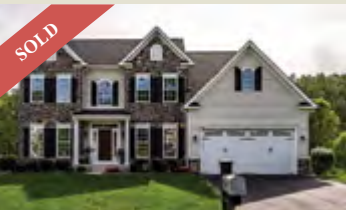
East Brandywine Township
Last List Price: \$1,139,000



Warwick Township
Last List Price: \$1,075,000



Chester Springs
Last List Price: \$848,000



London Grove Township
Last List Price: \$518,000



West Chester Borough
Last List Price: \$349,500

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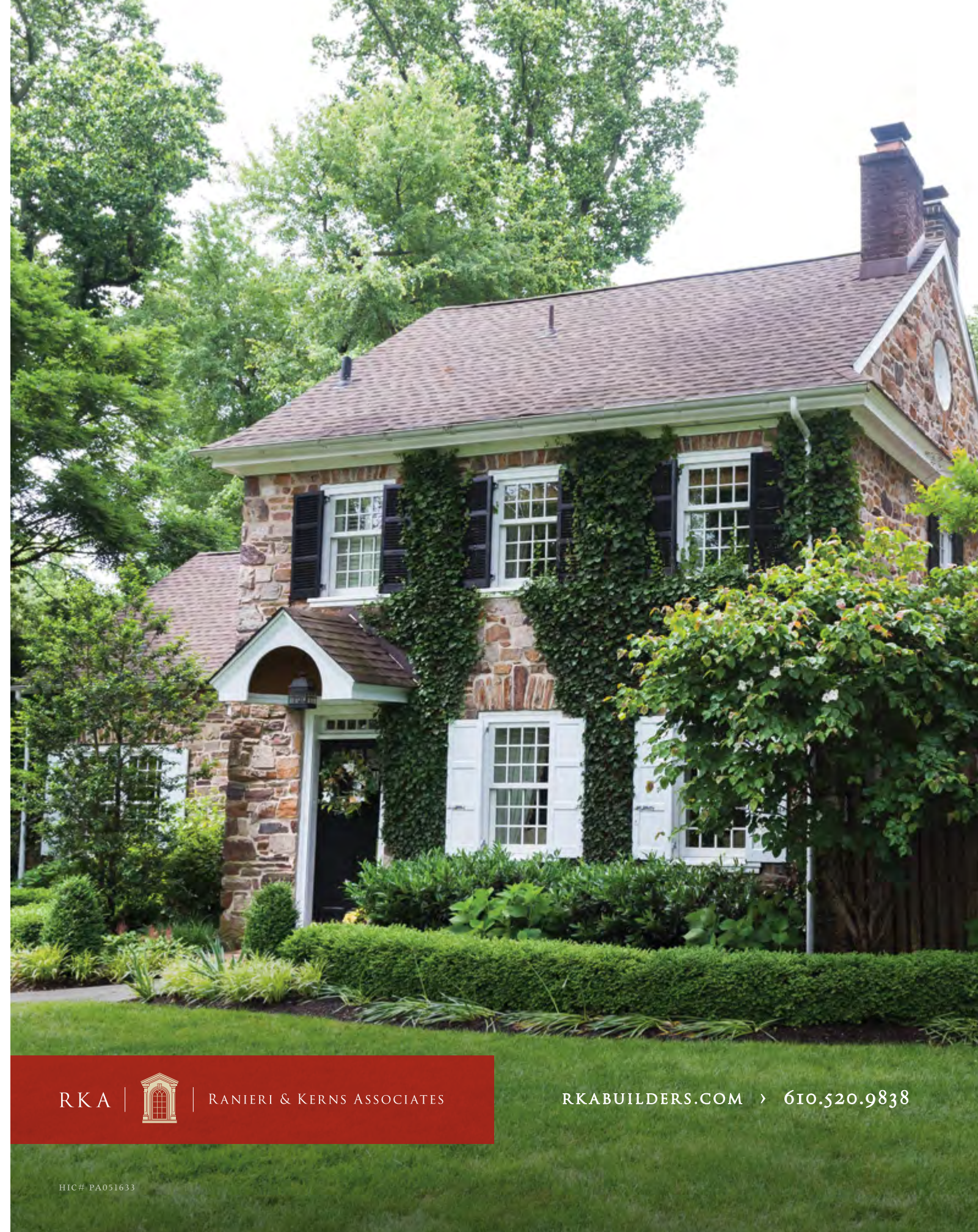
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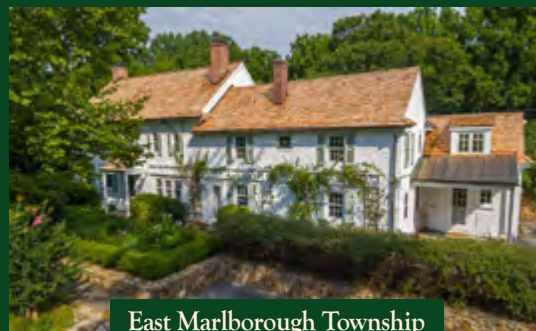
West Marlborough Township

Magnificent views of lush fields and countryside, 78+/- acres under conservation easement (2 primary, 1 secondary houses allowed). Cheshire Hunt country, Unionville Chadds Ford Schools. \$2,652,000



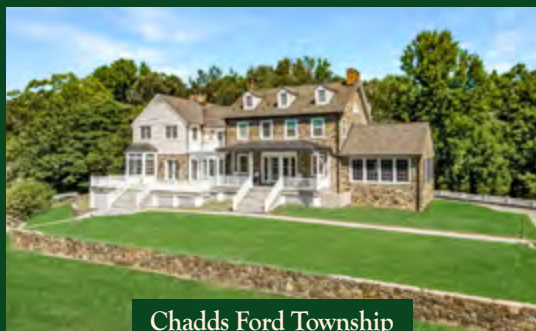
Newtown Township

Stunning grand carriage home, circa 1887, lovingly reimagined to exceed the most discriminating buyers' expectations w/5BR, 4.5B on 1+ acres. 3202saintdavidssrd.com
Price Upon Request



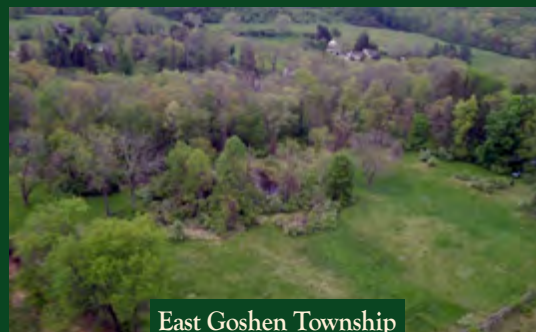
East Marlborough Township

Elegant, gracious Manor house with all the hallmarks of a historic home on 6.9 acres with 5BR/4.5B and period carriage house. Located in the Unionville Chadds Ford School District. \$1,429,000



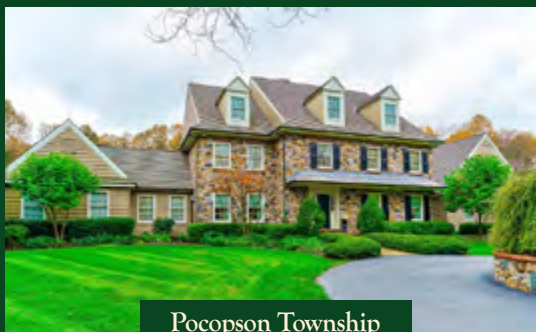
Chadds Ford Township

Private waterfront setting on 7 acres in the heart of historic Chadds Ford with 7BR/8B & many amenities, including 2 home offices. The epitome of fine living in the Brandywine Valley.
Price Upon Request



East Goshen Township

Fantastic 5.6 acre parcel near Radnor Hunt. Sloping open field allows for the designated building area to overlook the property down to the woods & potential pond. \$495,000



Pocopson Township

Quintessential PA stone colonial on 6.8 acres with 6 BR in desirable community with an idyllic country setting. Unionville Chadds Ford Schools.
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from the EDITOR

For February we're focusing on homes and independent schools. Yes, it's cold outside, but inside ... First Matt Freeman tours a stunning home in Elversham, inspired by the owners' trip to Provence and designed by John Milner. Read "A Stone Farmhouse in Elversham" and feel free to drool over the photos.

Next our Home of the Month writer Laurel Anderson visits the Dunminning Estate Carriage House, a conversion of an outbuilding to a home fit for a movie star. Diamond-mullioned windows, 25-foot ceilings, seven-foot crystal chandelier and an elevator add to the wow factor.

Our third home is a turn-of-the-19th-century home in Bryn Coed Preserve. In "New Life for the Ralston House," Kirsten Werner describes its history and its renovation by Natural Lands.

And finally we have a tiny house! Twin sisters needed a room of their own and built an A-frame called "Shelby Shack." Learn more about their project in our interview and on their website.

Want more on homes? Then check our "Dream Kitchens" photo spread and our "Fine Homes & Design Resource Guide" for ideas.

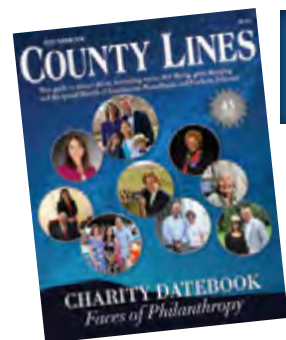
In our school coverage, Ed Malet checks in to see how schools, teachers, parents and students are pivoting in "Independent Schools: Learning to Live in the New Normal." Learn more in "A Guide to Area Independent & Private Schools."

For more in our area, Madison Meinel directs you to the best in "Exploring Downingtown and Exton," we learn about the West Chester Public Arts Commission's work (there's a town flag and suffrage mural), and get the sweet story behind Whiskey Hollow Maple in Alyssa Thayer's Brandywine Table column.

To keep you busy this month there are suggestions from Rachel Thompson if you're "Stalled in a February Fitness Funk" and, as always, we have the Best Things To Do feature filled with ideas to keep your family busy.

Enjoy this short month. Thank you for reading.

Jo Anne Durako
Editor



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March

3rd Charity Datebook

Profiles of Local Philanthropy
Medical Features • Datebook Calendar
Fundraising Fun • Gala Fashions
Books • Wine • Brandywine Table



COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

February 2021

Volumes XLV Number 6

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Subscriptions: \$39/print; \$12/digital

Advertising: 610-918-9300

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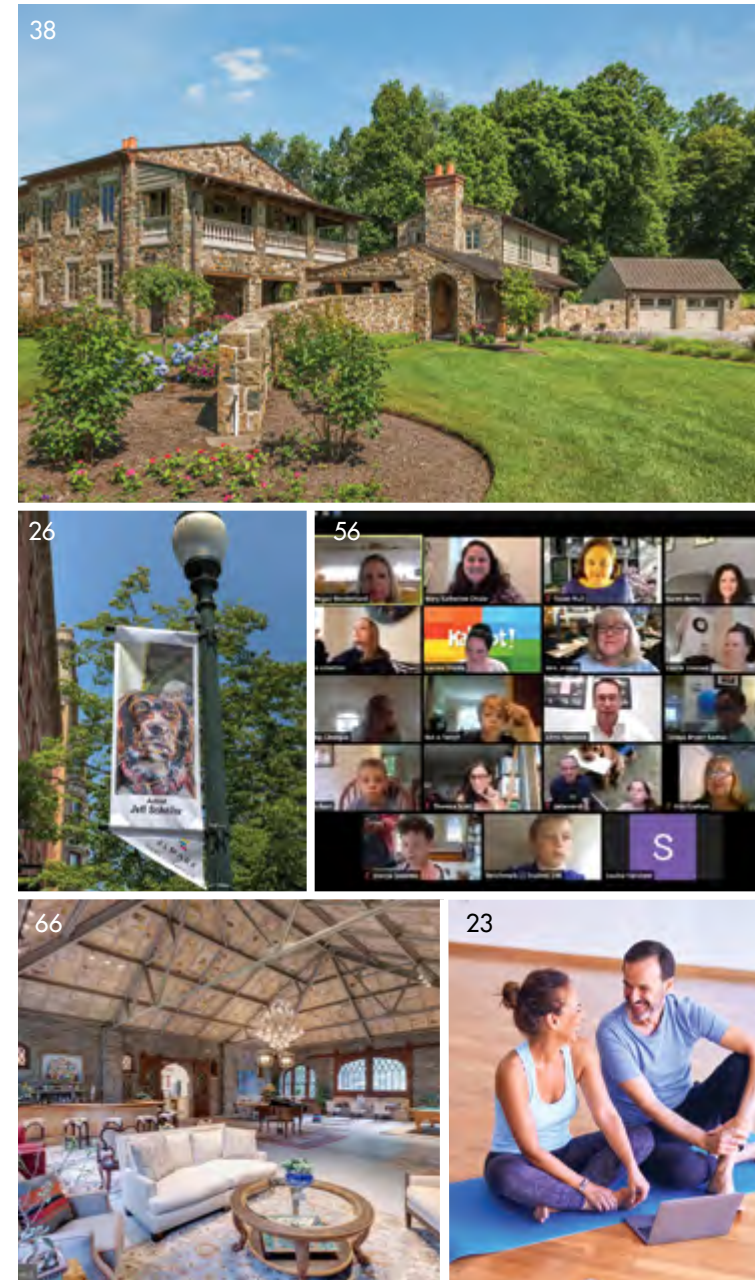
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Cover photo and top photo of a John Milner-designed home in Elverson, by Tom Crane Photography

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[Good to Know] Just a few things we'd thought you'd like to know this month

History Rewritten. Turns out the history books might have overlooked some interesting stories about President George Washington. Did you know he survived smallpox,



malaria, diphtheria, dysentery and tuberculosis (at the same time) and pneumonia. You can read all about Washington's resilience, myths and legends and even some hard truths about the president in Alexis Coe's biography, **You Never Forget Your First**. Pick up a copy at your local independent bookstore and impress your friends and family with your history knowledge.

Treasure Hunt. Binged every show on Netflix and still feeling bored? Get outside and try **geocaching**, a non-contact game of hide-and-seek between hundreds of strangers. Players hide their caches or "treasure" (in small plastic containers) in hidden spots for others to find using GPS technology. Download apps like Gecaching HQ or Cachy to get started. Get your family involved in the thrill of the hunt and enjoy exploring your neighborhood in a new way. Geocaching.com.



Family Tree. Ever wondered about your family's history but not sure where to begin? Then the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's 8-week Zoom course on the **Foundations of Genealogy** is what you need. The course will help you create a plan of attack, tackle extensive research, build a family tree and so much more. With beginner to expert levels, the course lets you follow along no matter your expertise. Learn about your family's heritage while strengthening research skills. Start date February 17th. Tickets \$250. Portal.HSP.org.

Middle-Earth Magic. Ever dreamed of visiting The Shire? Well, a local couple made their dreams a reality with architect Peter Archer of West Chester's Archer & Buchanan. Taking a page right out of *Lord of the Rings*, Archer created a **life-sized tribute to The Shire** for the couple. Hidden away in the beautiful Chester County countryside, the "hobbit house" is complete with an authentic-looking



round hobbit door, mahogany butterfly windows and, of course, the owner's extensive collection of Tolkien books and memorabilia. ArcherBuchanan.com.

Stocking Change. Make your spare change cha-ching with **Acorns**, an app that rounds up your debit and credit purchases to the nearest dollar and invests the extra. When your stash reaches \$5, the money is withdrawn and put into your personal stock portfolio—designed by you, based on your investment goals and risk preferences. With this commission-free app, there's no more guessing where you want your funds to grow. Start the new year with a smarter way to stock at Acorns.com.





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[February Picks] Our Picks for top events this month

Kennett Winterfest Backyard Edition

February 27

Enjoy exceptional beers from 48 renowned breweries in the safety and comfort of your own backyard. Choose either the Kennett Case or the Winterfest case. Tickets correspond to a specially curated case of 24 distinctive beers in 16-oz. cans (see website for what's included in each option), perfect for enjoying from home.



Pickup is Feb. 27 at 600 S. Broad St., Kennett Square between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tickets \$110, advance purchase only at KennettBrewfest.com.

Tastes of Brandywine

February 11

Join the Brandywine Conservancy for "Sweet & Spicy Palate" with beers from Bill Covaleski of Victory Brewing Company, chocolates from Christopher Curtin of Éclat Chocolate, and jerky from Brendan Cawley of Righteous Felon Craft Jerky. Enjoy this selection while connecting with local foodies and learning about the clean water and open space resources that make Chester County such a delicious place to live. 7 p.m. Tasting Bundles, \$85–\$150. Brandywine.org/Tastes.



Wayne Art Center's Have A Heart Date Night

February 3

Get an introduction to watercolor techniques as you create a perfect painting to make into a Valentine's Day card or present. Only three tubes of paint, brush and watercolor paper needed. 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. 6 to 8:30 p.m. \$40. Register at WayneArt.org.

Family Fun on Sundays at Winterthur

Sundays Through February

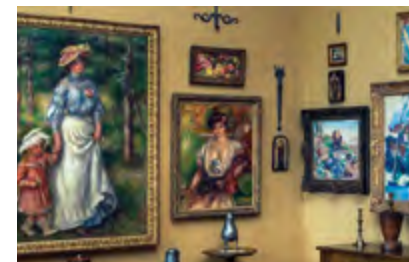
Sledding Sundays—hope for snow and bring your sled to a designated safe place on the Winterthur grounds, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (check snow conditions on website by 10 a.m.). Then round out your family's day of fun with a story time fit for all ages during **History Heroes Story Time**, 2 to 3 p.m. **Take a Hike** through over 10 miles of roads and 1,000 acres of scenery as you discover the perfect trail, 2 to 3 p.m. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur. \$6–\$20. Members free. Winterthur.org.



The Barnes From Home

Through February

This winter, plan a safe winter escape and spend time with Cézanne, Matisse and Seurat from the comfort of home. Online classes explore the materials and techniques behind the art, and private online tours feature the highlights of the collection. Engage in a new online series where artists, scholars and community activists explore issues related to race in America. 2025 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia. 215-278-7000; BarnesFoundation.org.



best Things To Do

Many events are on hold for now, but there are still fun things to do in our area. Please be sure to check websites often for the latest updates. *TBD—to be determined.

FAMILY FUN

THROUGH MARCH 4

Tales for Tots at Hockessin Bookshelf. Throw on your cozy pj's, grab your teddy and snuggle up for a bedtime story. Your host will be sharing a picture book for the perfect ending to your day, live on the book shop's Facebook page. *First Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm. Facebook.com/HockessinBookshelf.*



THROUGH MARCH 9

Delaware Art Museum Art Club Classes. In Home School and After School art clubs, students learn the principles and elements of art using a variety of mediums to create works inspired by the Museum's collections. This is an 8-week program, \$170–\$195. Visit the website to register. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.

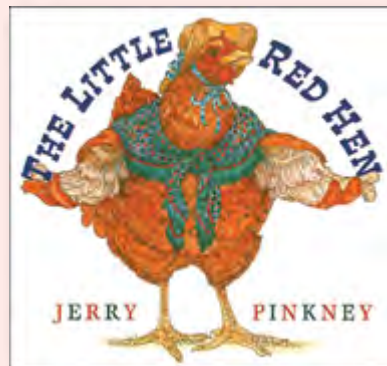
THROUGH JUNE 30

Storytelling with Jeff Hopkins: Pirate and Mermaid Adventures at Delaware Art Museum. Characters from the Museum's paintings come to life as storyteller Jeff Hopkins illustrates and narrates engaging tales for young children. Free. Days and times vary each month, so check the website regularly. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org.



FEBRUARY 3, 10

West Chester Public Library Winter 2021 Story Times on Zoom. “Little Ones,” ages 2–3, enjoy stories, songs and rhymes at 10 am. “Pre-K Fun” for 4–6 year olds offers stories, songs and rhymes—plus academic content geared for older children preparing for preschool and kindergarten, 11 am and noon. *Register at WCPublicLibrary.org/Kids.*



FEBRUARY 4–25

Brandywine River Museum of Art Virtual Children's Read Aloud. Families with young children join Museum staff on Zoom for a morning of fun, interactive storytelling and artwork. You'll receive suggestions for connecting to the book at home with craft and sensory exploration ideas. 10:30. *Donations appreciated. 610-388-8382; Brandywine.org.*

FEBRUARY 13–JULY 18

Crayola IDEAworks: The Creativity Exhibition at The Franklin Institute. A World Premiere Exhibition featuring a fusion of cutting-edge technology with state-of-the-art exhibits. Crayola IDEAworks inspires visitors of all ages to develop and expand their creative skills through a variety of activities. 222 N. 20th St., Philadelphia. \$31–\$35. *Adv. tickets req. FI.edu.*



ART, CRAFT & ANTIQUES

JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 7

Academy of Notre Dame de Namur 48th Annual Fine Art Show & Sale. This year the show will be entirely virtual, with an online exhibition and sale featuring nearly 100 artists and their works in a variety of mediums, including oils, watercolors, acrylics, ceramics, metals and glass. Benefits Notre Dame's mission of educating young women for responsible living in a global society. More information at NDAPA.org/ArtShow.



FEBRUARY 3

Brandywine River Museum of Art Virtual Creative Escape: Wild & Wonderful Alcohol Inks. Unwind, mingle and make art from home. A virtual program featuring a hands-on opportunity to paint with alcohol inks. A kit will be assembled for you that contains everything for the workshop. Program fee includes supply kit, shipping and the live Zoom program. 6:30. \$35. Brandywine.org.



BOAT SHOWS

FEBRUARY 24–28

The Atlantic City Boat Show. Celebrate life on the water. Climb aboard hundreds of boats for

every budget and lifestyle. Atlantic City Convention Center, One Convention Blvd., Atlantic City, NJ. Check website for hours and admission prices. 718-707-0716; ACBoatShow.com.



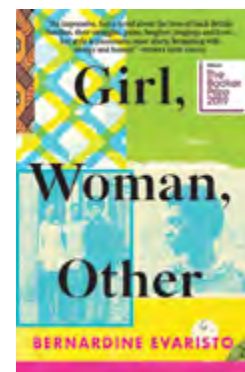
BOOKS

FEBRUARY 4, 17–18

Wellington Square Bookshop. *Feb. 4,* Non-Fiction Book Club: “Sea Stories: My Life in Special Operations,” by Admiral William H. McRaven. *Feb. 17–18,* Fiction Book Club: “There There” by Tommy Orange, Wed–Thurs, 2 to 4; Thurs, 7 to 9. Books groups available on Zoom. 549 Wellington Sq., Exton. 610-458-1144; WellingtonSquareBooks.com.

FEBRUARY 16, 17, 20

Main Point Books. *Feb. 16,* “Girl, Woman, Other” by Bernadine Evaristo, 1 pm; *Feb. 17,* A Conversation with the authors of “In Case You Get Hit by a Bus: How to Organize Your Life Now for When You're Not Around Later,” 7 pm; *Feb. 20,* Girls in Capes Book Group: “All Systems Red,” by Martha Wells, 5 pm. 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne. Main Point Books by Zoom. 484-580-6978; MainPointBooks.com.



FEBRUARY 25

Virtual DelArt Readers: Book Club. Join this community-led book club that meets monthly to discuss, debate, celebrate and share works of fiction and nonfiction. “Becoming Dr. Seuss: Theodor Geisel and the Making of an American Imagination,” by Brian Jay Johns. Join this Zoom virtual meeting, 6 to 7:30 pm. Free. DelArt.org.

FUNDRAISERS

ONGOING

Tredyffrin Historic Preservation Trust Presents “As History Goes On.” A non-event fundraiser, to meet final construction costs of the Jones Log Barn and programming needs of the Living History Center. To donate, call 610-644-6759 or visit their website, TredyffrinHistory.org.

FEBRUARY 19–21

Unite For Her Pink Invitational. Join Olympic gymnast Laurie Hernandez and UCLA Champion Peng-Peng Lee for a weekend of gymnastics

and a special virtual wellness retreat to benefit Unite for HER. Create your own offline Pink Event or compete in their virtual USAG sanc-



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GARDENS.....

THROUGH FEBRUARY

Garden Walk: Trees, The Treasure of Win-

terthur. Learn about the champion trees while exploring winter interest in the garden. Begins at the Brown Horticulture Center. Masks required for guide and participants. Cancellations due to weather or low attendance may occur. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. 2 to 3 pm. \$6–\$20; members, free. Winterthur.org.

THROUGH MARCH 21

Longwood Gardens—Orchid Extravaganza.

The Conservatory is a vision of color and texture with breathtaking collections of orchids displayed in vivid baskets, columns, orbs and

Local Farm Markets



Artisan Exchange, 208 Carter Dr. Unit 13 B, West Chester. Sat, 10 to 1. Order online for delivery or pickup. ArtisanExchange.net.

Bryn Mawr Farmers Market, Lancaster Ave. Bryn Mawr train station lot. 1st, 3rd and 5th Sat, Face masks req. 10 to noon. FarmToCity.org.

Downingtown Farmers Market, Kerr Park, Pennsylvania Ave. Jan–Apr, 2nd, 4th Sat, 10 to noon. 610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Eagleview Farmers Market, Eagleview Town Crt., Wellington Sq., Exton. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd Thurs, 11 to 1. 610-836-1391; GrowingRoots-Partners.com.

Kennett Square Farmers Market, The Creamery, 401 Birch St. Fri, 3 to 6. Jan 8–Apr, every other Fri, 3 to 5. Seniors/high-risk, 3 to 3:30. 610-444-8188; HistoricKennettSquare.com.

Lancaster County Farmers Market. 389 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Wed, Fri & Sat, 6 to 4. Check Facebook to phone for pickup. 610-688 -9856; LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com.

Malvern Farmers Market, Warren Ave. & Roberts Rd. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd Sat, 10 to noon. 610-836-1391;610-836-1391; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Phoenixville Farmers Market, 200 Mill St. Sat, 10 to noon; seniors, 9–9:30. Curbside pick-up, if req. by Fri, noon. PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org.

West Chester Growers Market, Chestnut & Church Sts. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd, 5th Sat, 10 to noon. Can pre-order. Contactless payment encouraged. Some vendors pre-package. 610-436-9010; WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

Westtown Amish Market, 1165 Wilmington Pk., West Chester. Thur, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 7:30; Sat, 8 to 4. 610-492-5700; WestChesterAmishMarket.com.



more fanciful forms during the Orchid Extravaganza. Visiting guidelines follow state and local regulations. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Timed admission tickets are required. \$13–\$25. LongwoodGardens.org.



MUSEUMS

THROUGH MARCH 14, 2021

Delaware Art Museum. “Seeing Essential Workers through a New Lens.” 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Wed, 10 to 4; Thurs, 10 to 8; Fri–Sun, 10 to 4. \$6–\$12, Sun, free. 302-571-9590; DelArt.org. Coatesville. SteelMuseum.org.

THROUGH APRIL

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library Curator’s Gallery Walks. *Through Feb. 28*, Fri–Sun, 11 to 2. *Through Apr*, join a curator for an informal discussion of the “Lady of the House, Ruth Wales du Pont” exhibit, featuring a look at a reproduction of her wedding dress, along with objects and images from the Winterthur archives. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. Tues–Sun, 10 to 5. \$15–\$30. 302-888-4600; Winterthur.org.

ONGOING

Nat’l Iron & Steel Museum Digital Exhibits. The museum announces the launch of a new digital archive, an online collection of newsletters of the Lukens Steel Company produced between 1935 and 1989 and volumes of a separate publication called “The Specialist,” produced for employees between 1969 and 1975. 50 S. 1st Ave., Coatesville. SteelMuseum.org.



FEBRUARY 22–23

Brandywine River Museum of Art Virtual Gallery Talk. Join Victoria Wyeth as she shares her uniquely personal perspectives on the art of her uncle, Jamie Wyeth, exploring some of Wyeth’s most compelling subjects. 1 Hoffman’s Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. 7 to 8 pm on Zoom. \$25. 610-388-2700; Brandywine.org.

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT.....

THROUGH APRIL 14

The Keswick Theatre Presents. *Feb. 11*, Meat-ater: Off the Air; *Mar. 4*, Daughtry; *Apr. 7*, Colin Hay Solo; *Apr. 8*, An Intimate Evening of Songs & Stories with Graham Nash; *Apr. 14*, One Night of Queen. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Visit website for updates, times and tickets. 215-572-7650; KeswickTheatre.com.


FEBRUARY 13

Murder Mystery: “Til Death Do Us Art.” It’s the 1920s, and the Delaware Museum of Nat-

ural History has invited you to a wedding in the Winterthur galleries. However, the festivities have been interrupted by murder! Clues will be found, motives revealed and a culprit discovered. Dress in your best 1920s attire. Adm. includes small bites, champagne toast, cash bar. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. 6:30 pm. \$45. 302-658-9111; DelMNH.org.


FEBRUARY 14

Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center. An Evening of Love Songs with jazz vocalist Sharon Sable with guitarist E. Shawn Quassaunce and



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band, 7 pm. 226 N. High St., West Chester. For tickets, 610-356-2787; UptownWestChester.org.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

FEBRUARY 24

For the Birds: Winter Birding Walk at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library. Visit natural areas including wetlands, meadows and the woodlands along Clenny Run. These areas provide great habitat for a wide variety of birds year-round. 5105 Kennett Pk., Winterthur, DE. 8 to 10 am. \$20. 302-888-4600; Winterthur.org.

THEATER.....

FEBRUARY 22-MARCH 28

America 2 AM at People's Light. In three episodes, follow the confessions and confrontations that unfold over late-night Zooms. Your \$15 purchase includes access to all episodes. 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS

ONGOING

LancasterHistory Launches Access to Online Collections Database. Search all of LancasterHistory's historic collections using one search tool through the website as well as the James Buchanan Presidential Library, which provides online access to the papers of James Buchanan. LancasterHistory.org.

THROUGH FEBRUARY

Mt. Cuba Center Virtual Classes. Join Mt. Cuba Center this winter for virtual, in-person or on-demand classes. Topics range from gardening to conservation, art or wellness. All classes are available for registration online. Prices vary. 302-239-4244; MtCubaCenter.org/Programs.

FEBRUARY 10

Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition's 23rd Annual Breast Cancer Update. Offered virtually via Zoom, the update is an educational conference free to the public, featuring leading medical breast cancer panel experts and informational resources offering the latest developments in treatment and care. 7:30 am to 2 pm. Register at DBCC.ejoinme.org/BCU2021. ♦

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Stalled In a February Fitness FUNK?

RE-ENERGIZE YOUR FITNESS RESOLUTIONS

Rachel Thompson

A IREADY NOTICING YOUR 2021 FITNESS resolutions shifting into low gear? Or worse, coming to a grinding halt? It's time to jump start your motivation!

Exercising is a key component of a healthy lifestyle and this past year has re-emphasized that point. Exercise boosts your immune system to fight off disease, plus helps with anxiety, depression and stress.

That's why fitness resolutions are some of the best resolutions. Yet, they're also the hardest to keep. New Year's burst of motivation quickly sputters, so four out of five who make health resolutions break them and about a third won't make it to the end of January.

To help you avoid being a statistic, we've gathered tips to help.

PRE-WORKOUT PREP

Start Small. A common resolution problem is creating overly ambitious goals that often feel overwhelming. Instead start small by creating a workout ritual and commit to it for just a month—and then another month. This shorter time frame will help build better habits while also feeling more manageable.

Create a Schedule. Start by creating a schedule that's right for you. If you're an early riser, schedule your workout as a powerful wake-up call. But if waking up early sounds like punishment, plan a post-work sweat.

Record Your Progress. Measure the amount of time you work out in a week, number of sets and reps in each workout or miles you run a day (depending on your workout routine). Not only will a visual record hold you accountable for your fitness, but it also helps you adjust your workouts based on progress made.

Make Resolutions Manageable. Remember it's important to listen to your body and understand its limits, especially when beginning an exercise plan. Don't set yourself up for failure by adding too much too soon.

Create Small Benchmarks. Small goals help you maintain motivation throughout the year and give you a chance to celebrate each of many successes. Once you build up stamina, you'll be able to adjust your workout routine and schedule to match your progress.

Set Reminders. For a visual motivator, set out your workout clothes the night before and put them in a spot you can't ignore. For morning workouts, put your clothes on your dresser or next to your bed. For after-work exercise, put clothes on your couch or kitchen table so they're the first thing you see once you finish your work day.





EXERCISE TIPS

Add Variety. Add a healthy mix of cardio (jogging, running), strength training (weights) and flexibility activities (yoga, stretching) to avoid losing interest in your routine.

Experiment with Exercise. Experiment with something new, like bike riding, barre classes or boxing. Try creating outdoor workout circuits, HIIT workouts or going for a mindful walk (mixing in med-



itation and exercise). The more options you have in your schedule, the more you'll look forward to each session.

Online Classes. To try out a new type of exercise, check YouTube for free online classes with everything from Zumba and Yoga to HIIT and weightlifting. Apps like Nike Run Pro offer free guided runs accompanied by music and a motivational coach to keep you moving. Or support local by checking in with your local trainers and gyms (ACAC in West Chester) for online classes.

Get Creative. Have fun with fitness! Create an obstacle course in your backyard and race against family members or hold a 1-on-1 basketball tournament using your driveway hoop.

Lifestyle Fitness. If you're struggling to find a block of time to work out, try integrating exercise into your daily life. Exercise doesn't have to be a specific regimen that's labeled "exercise," especially when life keeps getting in the way. Try walking during phone calls, squeezing in some active chores (vacuuming) or riding a stationary bike while watching your favorite TV show.

Reward Yourself. Treat yourself to a spa day filled with relaxation—pamper yourself, binge-watch favorite movies, or join a Zoom



happy hour with friends. Or reward yourself with new workout gear to keep you motivated and looking great. Whatever you do, make sure you take time to celebrate your accomplishments. You earned it!

No matter what workout you pick, remember the best type is the one you'll actually do. Whether that's taking a scenic walk around your neighborhood or dancing some stress away after work, as long as you're enjoying yourself and spending time moving, not sitting, you're doing it right.

These tips for your February fitness plan will help you stay on track and build better habits in the long run. Even after you achieve your 2021 goals, reevaluate them and push yourself even further.

The most important thing is keeping your body moving and staying healthy long after those early January resolutions. ♦

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PUBLIC ART

for All to Enjoy

West Chester's Public Art Commission has been busy!

ALTHOUGH IT GOT ITS START JUST A few years ago in 2017, West Chester Borough's Public Arts Commission (aka PAC) has made an impact. Sponsoring, spearheading and promoting the arts, culture and creative identity of the Borough, the Commission was established to provide "guidance, advocacy and leadership to support the reach and impact of public art." From murals, sculptures, banners and more, public art has become part of the fabric of the Borough.

Here are a few of its accomplishments that you may have noticed.

Lamp Post Banners

West Chester winning the Great American Main Street Award got a tribute in the form of banners proclaiming the designation and the work done of preserving the historic and cultural heritage of the town. Sponsored by Elmark Graphics, the banner competition resulted initially in 18 local artists' work being selected to be displayed on banners hanging from lamp posts along the busiest part of High Street. The banners mark this milestone award for West Chester as well as display original art in this well-traveled public space. More banners were later created and displayed along Gay Street.



Best Flag Forward

Did you know West Chester had a flag? Maybe you noticed the blue flags with gold design hanging on buildings around town, including Borough Hall?

Spurred by an idea from The Fence Authority, the Commission held a competition to create an official flag of the Borough, to capture the sense of pride and unity of residents and join many other cities and towns boasting their own distinctive flag.

In 2019, Borough Council selected Julie Allen's design with its tilted gold grid pattern symbolizing the six original streets in West Chester (Chestnut, Gay, Market, Church, High, Walnut). *[Editor's note: For some fun with flags, spend 18 minutes watching a delightful and informative TED talk on YouTube about designing city flags. See how the West Chester flag is a winner.]*



Open-Air Marketplace and Art Space

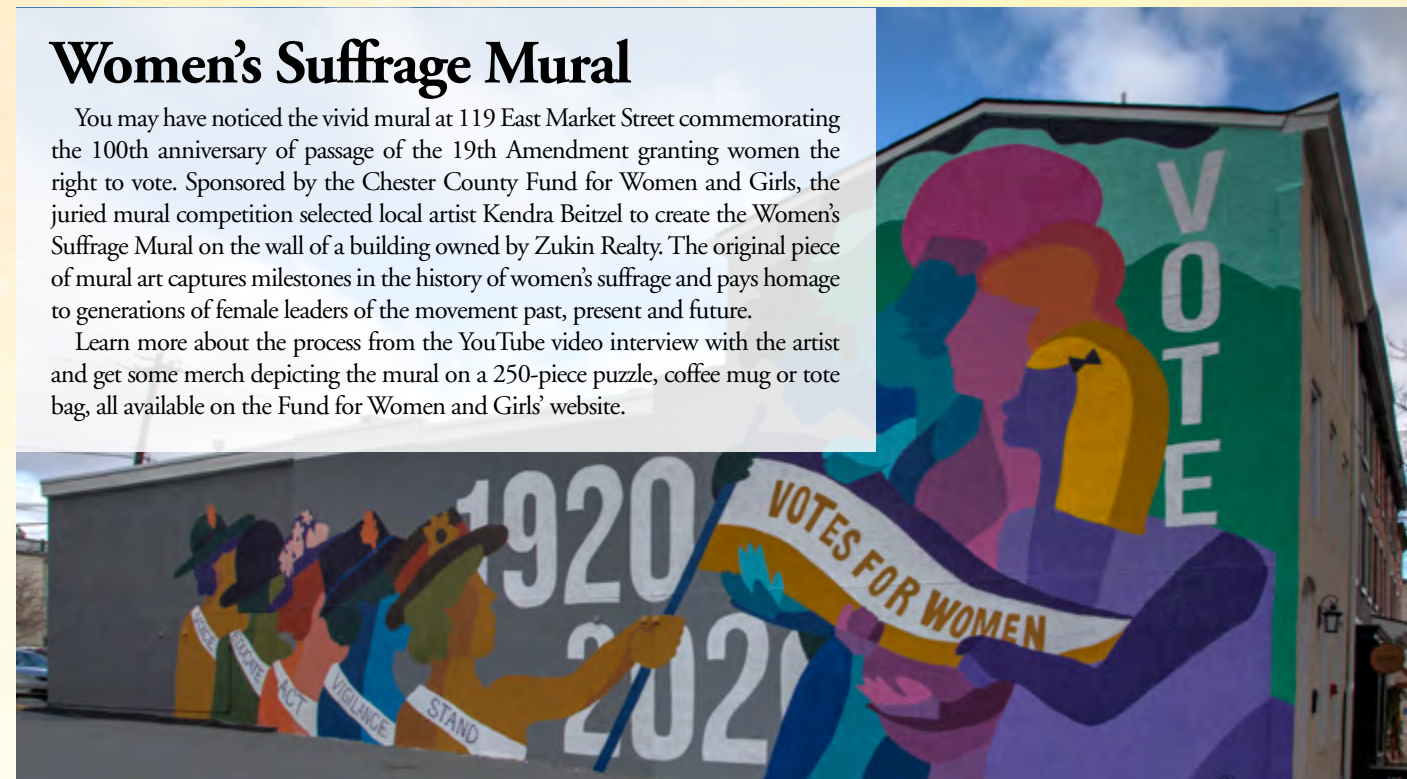
Closing four blocks of Gay Street to traffic opened possibilities for public art. Focused initially on beautifying the concrete barriers blocking cars, a handful of local artists—including Rhoda Kahler, Al Moretti, Dane Tilghman, Jeff Schaller—were joined by West Chester University students to use concrete as their canvases, painting on-site on the Marketplace's opening day. Later more artists along with local kids continued to add art to the well-used open-air Marketplace. When cold weather forced changes, new uses were explored for the decorated barriers.

Now temporarily stored in Hoopes Park, the barriers await their next use. Perhaps a return to Gay Street this spring?

Women's Suffrage Mural

You may have noticed the vivid mural at 119 East Market Street commemorating the 100th anniversary of passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. Sponsored by the Chester County Fund for Women and Girls, the juried mural competition selected local artist Kendra Beitzel to create the Women's Suffrage Mural on the wall of a building owned by Zukin Realty. The original piece of mural art captures milestones in the history of women's suffrage and pays homage to generations of female leaders of the movement past, present and future.

Learn more about the process from the YouTube video interview with the artist and get some merch depicting the mural on a 250-piece puzzle, coffee mug or tote bag, all available on the Fund for Women and Girls' website.

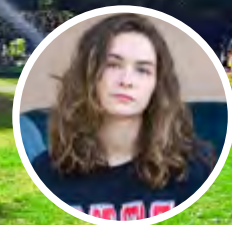


PHOTOS BY TIMLYN VAUGHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Learn more about the work of the West Chester Public Arts Commission on their website and social media.
West-Chester.com/544/Public-Arts-Commission.

Shelby Shack is a Room of Their Own

Catherine
The Make-It-Happen-in-ator



Matt
The Muscle



Theresa
The Visionary



EVERYONE DESERVES THEIR OWN SPACE, especially when the pandemic pushed us together for a tad too much togetherness.

Local teen twins, Theresa and Catherine, decided to build their own space and created a Tiny House in their backyard. Shelby Shack, as they call it, withstood December's snow storm and was a bright spot with its holiday lights and decorations.

We asked the twins to tell us more about the experience of building their own special space.

Why did you decide to build your own space?

We love tiny houses and have thought for awhile about building one of our own. We couldn't do much over the summer because of COVID, so we decided this was the perfect time. With the uncertainty of the upcoming school year, we thought this place would be great if we still had to attend school virtually.

Plus coming from a family of seven, we needed the extra space! We'd struggled with distractions on Zoom meetings in the spring, so we thought more space would help everyone. And it did!

What experience did you have building things?

We were very inexperienced before this project. We like DIY projects, but neither of us had attempted anything this big. We had a lot of help and definitely learned a lot. We totally did not anticipate it taking as long as it did! Taking four months instead of 90 days.

Our dad helped us, but he's also not experienced in everything. So we had to look online, watch Youtube videos, and get advice from other people. Our dad's friend Dan works in construction and helped us one day on the base of the A-frame. We borrowed tools from our Uncle Justin, and our Uncle Brendan put in the electrical for us—not a good idea for novices to tackle electrical!

Why did you decide on a tiny house?

We wanted extra space and a tiny house just made the most sense. We thought an A-frame would be cheaper than other designs, and we found one by tiny cabin designer Deek Diedricksen and just loved it. The swing wall really opens up the place when it's warm. And the shelf wall was something we knew we wanted as soon as we saw it.

It took a lot to convince our parents to let us do it. Once they understood the benefits, they were pretty much on board. Our dad got really excited about it the more pictures and videos he saw of other tiny houses. Our mom was the hardest to convince. But it worked out in the end!



Where did you get the money for this project?

The original budget was \$1,000 for the basic components, using some repurposed materials. Because of COVID, building supplies were harder to get, which drove up prices. In the end, our total budget was around \$2,000.

We used mostly our own money we'd earned from babysitting and internships from the summer. Our grandmother pitched in, too.

How can our readers learn more about your project?

We really wanted to share what we did. We took photos and video on our phones during the building process. And we also built a website, ShelbyShack.com, with all the information—stories, perfection, mistakes, problems and solutions—laid out in 10 steps. It's all on our website!

What was your biggest fail during the process?

While people were working on the garage roof at our home, we asked them to put on the roofing for Shelby Shack, which they did at no charge. But the roofers used normal-length roofing nails, which were too long for our design and poked through the plywood walls. The inside of the cabin looked like a torture chamber with all the sharp pointy nails!

We thought the help would save us money and time, but ended up causing a huge headache. We had to borrow an oscillating tool to cut the nails flush to the wall, but it took so long we didn't cut them all. Some at the very top are still there. What a long and annoying process ...

Best lesson learned?

We can do anything! Just kidding. Obviously not, but we can do much more than we think we can. You don't know what you're capable of until you give it a shot.

What's your next project?

Theresa: I'd love to try a van conversion build, where you turn a passenger van into a mini-mobile house. That would be really fun.

Catherine: As a high school senior, I'm applying to colleges, so that's my focus now. Along the way I definitely want to do other fun small projects, though! ♦

Learn more at ShelbyShack.com.





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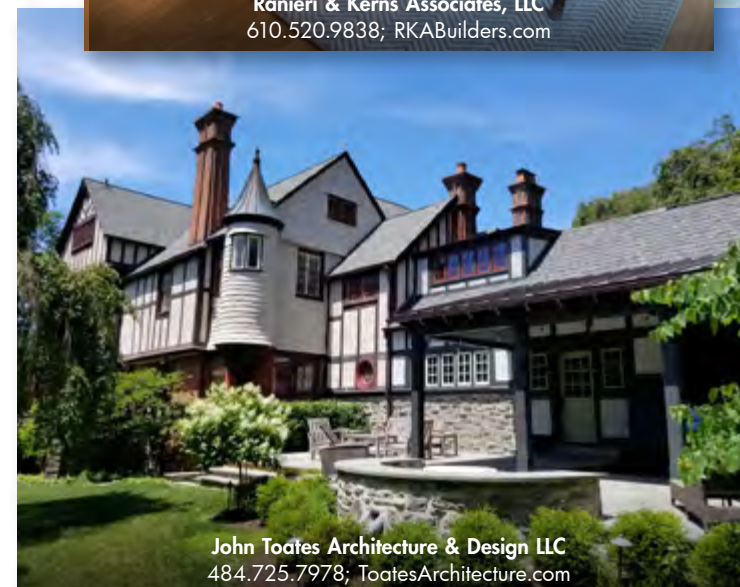


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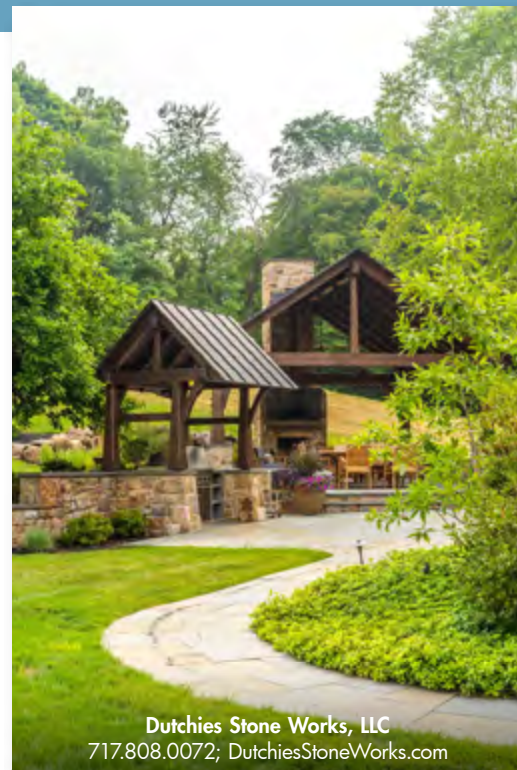
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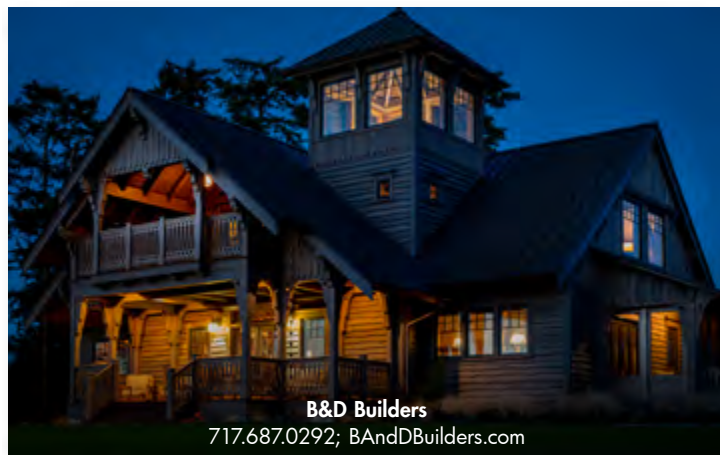
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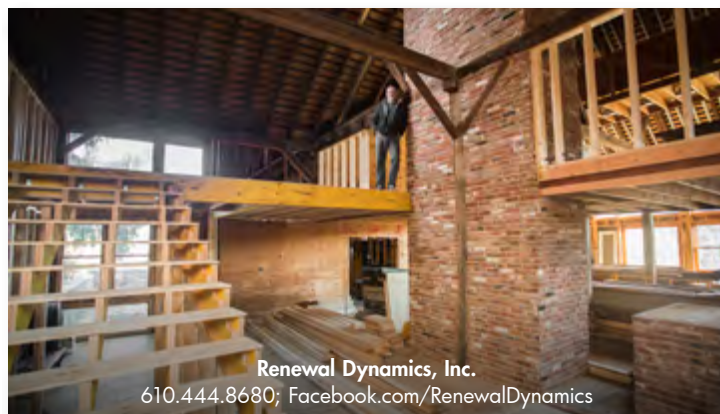
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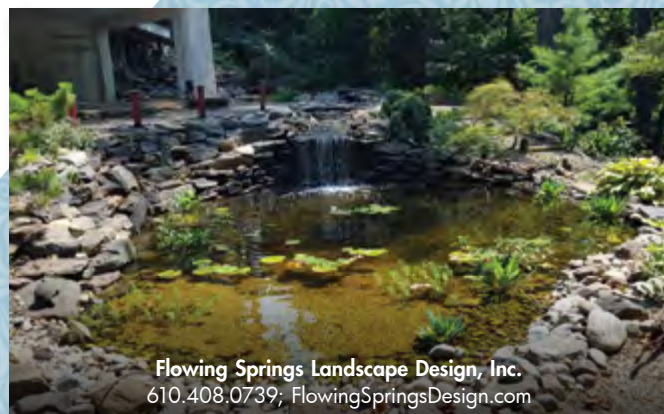
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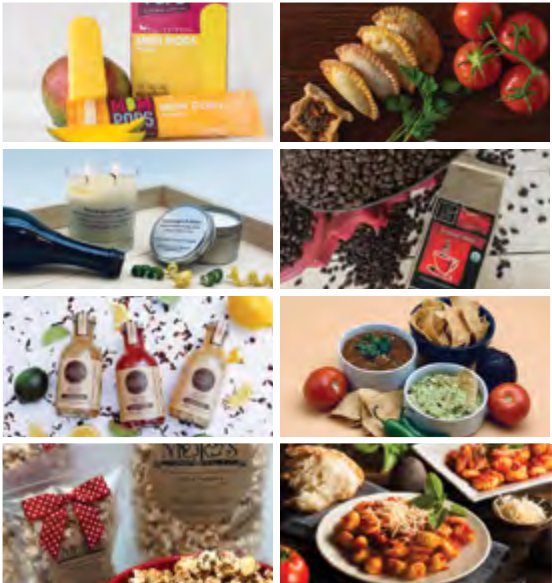
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A Stone Farmhouse in Elverson

Inspired by Provence, but every bit a Chester County Classic

Story by Matt Freeman | Photos by Tom Crane Photography

FIELDSTONE FARMHOUSES ARE such an iconic sight in Chester County that it can be a shock of recognition to go rambling out in the world and find that, in fact, there are other places where this style is a tradition as well.

So when people go to, say, Provence, they see that farmers there, too, from centuries past found rocks were inconvenient when plowing. But if enough were collected, these fieldstones made a good, solid house.

As time went on you could erect outbuildings, too, and maybe a bigger, nicer house as the farm prospered. Eventually one generation would hand down to the next a complex of buildings as efficient for agriculture as they were charming to the eye.



About ten years ago, a local couple who had fallen under the spell of southern France started looking for a good piece of land to recreate that magic, to build a “timeless and generational” property they could pass on to their own children.

After a two-year search for the right property, they spent six months thinking about exactly what they wanted and then another six interviewing architects.

The couple chose architect John Milner, known throughout our area for his expertise in historical preservation. It’s not as widely known that Milner traveled in Provence a great deal himself and knew the traditional styles there well enough that he and the couple decided to work together.

House Goals

Milner had several goals for the home’s design. One was to place the house so there were beautiful views from every vantage point, and so the house wouldn’t be visible from public roads.

Another was to preserve the existing slopes, to “drape the house over the topography,” he says.

A third goal was to have the initial visit to the property be what he likes to call “a process of discovery.” As you come up the drive, not everything is visible. You see a garage, a guest house, and a transitional structure he calls a terrace room—a roofed open-air space connected to a porch on the main building. These outer structures are connected by a curving wall, and the idea is for the entire property to unfold itself before you as you go in.

With walking paths along one side of the exterior and the interior of the main building organized along one straight axis, the property is deliberately designed to inspire you to continue to discover. One thing that emerges is that even if you explored the home without knowing the influences that shaped it, the seemingly familiar fieldstone building is like a person whose faint accent takes a minute or two to pick up on.

The many arched doorways are a hint of the Mediterranean. They’re made of wood, and some are double doors with one side wider than the other, a typical Provençal detail, Milner says.

A Provençal provenance can also be sensed in the columns in a balustrade along the second-floor balcony and the terra-cotta chimney pots. There’s also distinctive brickwork at the tops of the chimneys and portions of the highest rooflines—there not so much as regional style but because, Milner says, he just likes brickwork.

The way the stones are laid is actually more typical of our own region, Milner says, and it gives the property that first impression of familiarity, with the Provençal touches emerging soon as a kind of intriguing counterpoint. Milner says the wooden columns are their stylized interpretation of traditional timbering.

One set of windows features a pair of stone columns Milner got from a dealer in France, and one door includes a bas-relief column obtained from the same dealer. The house is well supplied with casement windows with prominent limestone lintels—another southern French detail.





As the owner explains it, the interior leans to the more sophisticated side. The molding, woodwork and ironwork are what you would see in a manor house. The dining room, with its distinctive herringbone fireplace, has the exposed-stone walls you'd see in a home where a new generation added to the original structure as their circumstances became easier.

A staircase that winds upward embodies this idea. With elegant ironwork and carved wood, lit by a deeply set window, this staircase might be found in a manor home in the country—but you'd hardly call it "rustic." That's not to say it's overtly formal. It's meant to be inviting. "We wanted something that was really open to flow," the owner says. They wanted guests to feel free to walk about and explore.

"We built the home to handle the kids," she adds. So the idea was to make it both beautiful and cozy, a place people could be comfortable, a place, she says, where her daughter's soccer team could come for a sleepover and the next morning be "sitting on all your countertops eating breakfast."



Interior Spaces

The interiors, even more than the outer details, embody a subtle distinction in Provençal architecture, which is the line between the utilitarian rustic and the more sophisticated rural manor house.

We see the same thing in Chester County, often in the same house, where the original house meant to provide shelter is part of a complex that includes a larger, more elegant structure built as the owners prospered over the years. In Provence, the more rough-hewn style is called a *mas*, and the more elegant and sophisticated, a *bastide*.



Stylistically the house is very much influenced by the traditions of Provence, where history is measured more in millennia than the shorter centuries we think about here. But there's an emotional component to it as well. Visitors look at the farms there, sense the succeeding generations of families that lived their lives there, and muse on all that life, extending back in time.

It's the same in our area. A possible difference being that its creators imagine all that life extending into the future, not the past—their children, and maybe their children's children, living in this beautiful and peaceful spot.

"We feel so fortunate," the owner says. "It was a labor of love." ♦



RESOURCES:

Architect: John Milner Architects
 General Contractor: Bancroft Homes
 Stone Masons: Leroy Lapp
 Millwork & Doors: G.R. Mitchell
 Roofing: Perry Hoberg Roofing
 Mechanicals and HVAC: Smucker Mechanical
 Painting: Basciani Decorators



Dream Kitchens

HAVE YOU BEEN SPENDING MORE TIME IN YOUR kitchen lately? Cooking more family meals, working on your bread-making game, lingering over coffee before facing another day?

And maybe your “heart of the home” has become busy 24/7 with working-from-home coffee breaks, remote school sessions and just hanging out.

Why not elevate everything you do in the kitchen by making 2021 the year you get the kitchen of your dreams? Here are a few gorgeous inspirational designs to help you create your new favorite room. From classic white to comfy colors to warm wood details—so many ideas to dream about!



Working in a calm, clean and comfortable space to prepare and serve food has always been important. But in such an unprecedented time, for some, this has become more desirable and even therapeutic.

This custom kitchen in Berwyn showcases integrated appliances, custom cabinetry and quartz countertops. Large windows pull in natural light throughout the day. The backsplash tile introduces a soft color to the overall aesthetic and works well with both the warm white cabinetry finish and the stainless custom hood.

A natural gathering space for the family.

PHOTO COURTESY: SUGARBRIDGE CUSTOM KITCHENS & BATHS

This kitchen features a 6' x 10' soapstone island, white subway tile wall, and black stove and vent combination to present an almost commercial look. The reclaimed wood cabinets under the island, white modified Shaker cabinets, white quartzite counters, and black cabinet pulls all combine to project the simple look of Barn Modern.

Authentic vintage-looking custom cabinetry was fabricated from 100-year old reclaimed pine and fitted under the soapstone slab to feel like an antique cabinet piece. Other cabinets were made in a simple white design with black hardware sourced from London.

A transitional look is created by the feel of the hand-hewn beams in the adjacent room.

PHOTO COURTESY: E.C. TRETHERWEY BUILDING CONTRACTORS



Here's a space in a historic home that's both approachable and elegant.

To balance the formality of an applied molding door style and traditional decorative cup pulls, distressed black paint and rustic alder wood cabinetry were used. For a more historic furniture feel, appliances were paneled and turned legs and deco ends were added. To keep the space modern and fun, checkerboard wood tops and a pop of color on the walls add a hint of whimsy, yet the space remains historically appropriate.

The result is casual enough to relax with a cup of coffee and elegant enough to have on display while entertaining.

PHOTO COURTESY: MAIN STREET CABINET



Feeling a little blue isn't always a bad thing.

Beautiful blue cabinets from Wood-Mode Cabinetry paired with an 11-foot white island and Cambria Skara Brae counters make a warm, bright and inviting kitchen in this Downtown home. By blowing out a wall to the adjacent dining room, the enlarged and open kitchen creates a welcoming gathering space for cooking, dining and entertaining. New slider doors and large casement windows provide ample light and connection to the patio and pond beyond.

Highlights of the wet bar include gridded glass doors, decorative corbels, locked storage, drawer refrigerator and freezer, and a warm Saxon wood top by Grothouse.

PHOTO COURTESY: PINE STREET CARPENTERS / JON FRIEDRICH PHOTOGRAPHY



This circa 18th-century Chester County home underwent a major renovation and addition with special attention to maintaining its original character while incorporating modern day amenities.

The flat grain walnut island top and brick floors maintain charm, while skylights add light and warmth that welcomes the homeowners each morning.

Other details include a built-in breakfast banquette, two large barn doors to a pantry and powder room, and a special at-home kitchen classroom feature that's especially useful now. The timeless backsplash design blends original brick paired with tile, while the custom range hood built with reclaimed timbers adds more character to this living space.

PHOTO COURTESY: HAZLEY BUILDERS

This homeowner wanted a cleaner design, more storage, and the ability to display some collections. Display space was provided in the glass-door upper-transom cabinets and large shelf above the built-in Sub-Zero refrigerator and tall pantry cabinets.

Adding more drawers provided efficient storage with easier access. The end-wall cabinet is an appliance garage with lift-up door for out-of-sight-storage for a toaster and other appliances, providing a clean look.

More clean design features: electrical outlets were installed along the bottom of the upper cabinets and the refrigerator and dishwasher received custom deco door panels for a more uniform appearance.

PHOTO COURTESY: MADSEN KITCHEN & BATH



This kitchen renovation wasn't just new cabinetry. It started with removing a knee wall and resurfacing outdated support columns separating the kitchen from the family room and ended with finishing touches, like a mirrored backsplash at the dry bar.

Custom Cabinetry from Mouser/Centra, combo Corian quartz and granite counter tops, and a Sub-Zero/Wolf appliance package contribute to the update. Details—stainless inlay on the wood hood, pantry cabinet with pocket doors and accessories fit for a coffee bar—customize this space.

A custom banquette and dining table, support columns with wainscot millwork, and other finishing touches make this kitchen a show stopper.

PHOTO COURTESY: MACLAREN KITCHEN & BATH

New Life for the Ralston House

Kirsten Werner, Natural Lands

A HISTORIC RESTORATION WITH A PRAGMATIC PURPOSE

A VISIT TO BRYN COED PRESERVE IS A PICTURE postcard of the best of Chester County: rolling woodlands, meadows and farm fields stretch for miles. Bald Eagles ride the thermals in slow, graceful circles, and songbirds chatter in the trees.

This land has been inhabited for more than ten thousand years, originally by the Lenape and, more recently, by European settlers who found the county's rich soil ideal for farming. As a result, the landscape's natural beauty is complemented by picturesque farmhouses and barns.

When Natural Lands purchased Bryn Coed Farms in 2016 to save its 1,505 acres from significant development, the property contained 15 farmhouses, 13 barns, and 40 other outbuildings. All but one of these buildings have been sold as part of the conservation easement parcels that make up the Bryn Coed Conservation Community.

The remaining structure, the early 19th-century Ralston House, is within the boundaries of the 520-acre Bryn Coed Preserve and has sat unoccupied for several years.

Now, thanks to an extraordinary gift from long-time Natural Lands friend and supporter Penny Wilson, this historical farmhouse will undergo a complete restoration.

The house was constructed between 1800 and 1820 by Major Robert Ralston, a prosperous farmer and lawyer. It was one of the largest homes in the township and was built on the site of an earlier log house that appeared on tax rolls in 1798.

By today's standards, the Ralston House is modest, just 1,950 square feet. But this home was part of a significant local trend towards building larger, costlier structures that began after the Cal-lowhill Manor legal case in 1790.

Robert Ralston and his son John played instrumental roles as attorneys in this case against the descendants of William Penn, who still laid claim to the land. The decision allowed residents to obtain legal title to the farms they had worked as tenants for decades.

The homestead remained in the Ralston family for more than a century until 1928. In 1944, it was subdivided and sold, representing the first change in the property's boundaries since the farm's establishment. In 1956, the Buckwalter Turkey Farm reunited the parcels. A little more than a decade later, the farmer sold the land to Ludens, Inc. and it became part of Bryn Coed Farms.

The Ralston House was built on a center-hall plan with symmetrical rooms on each side and an additional rear "ell," which was the



kitchen wing. Though in need of updating and modern systems, it is structurally stable and includes many original details, such as mantels, random-width flooring and doors.

“Remarkably, the interior of the house has retained its structural and historical integrity,” said Peter Zimmerman, a member of Natural Lands’ President’s Council and professional architect who is overseeing the Ralston House renovations.

While the building is in surprisingly good condition, it has been vacant for some time. “There was quite a bit of deferred maintenance over the years,” said Steve Longenecker, director of building stewardship. “Given the history of this property, we don’t just want to renovate the house. We want to restore it.”

Major work will focus on removing the stucco and repointing the original stone façade; installing a new septic system; upgrading heating, plumbing and electrical systems; renovating the kitchen and bathrooms; and replacing the roof and windows.



All work will be conducted with sensitivity to the historical nature of the building. Additionally, Natural Lands is working with the West Vincent Township Historical Commission, which has already documented and photographed the farmhouse and outbuildings.

The restoration of the Ralston House, like other historical structures Natural Lands owns and cares for, will serve a pragmatic purpose: the farmhouse will be both home and “home base” for stewardship staff, allowing better oversight of Bryn Coed Preserve.

“Since opening to the public in 2018, Bryn Coed has quickly become one of our most visited nature preserves,” said Scott Wendle, Vice President of Preserve Stewardship. “It requires a lot of staff

hours to keep up with the day-to-day preserve maintenance, not to mention all the improvements our team has done: installing parking lots, creating rain gardens, planting thousands of trees, building bridges, and expanding the trail system. Having a staff person on site at the Ralston homestead—which will be their office and home—will be a tremendous benefit and improve operational efficiency at Bryn Coed.”

“We’re not in the business of acquiring land to save the buildings, but we can save buildings to service the land,” said Longenecker. “I’m thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to work on this exciting project—which restores and adapts a significant historical structure, preserves a piece of Chester County’s past, and serves the Natural Lands’ mission. Thank you to Penny Wilson for making it all possible!”

The Ralston House restoration is projected to be completed in fall of 2021. ♦

Natural Lands is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature’s wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors for everyone. As the region’s oldest and largest land conservation organization, Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres, totaling more than 23,000 acres. Nearly five million people live within five miles of land under its protection. Land for life, nature for all. NatLands.org.

To learn more about preserve infrastructure gift opportunities contact Ann Hausmann, hausmann@natlands.org.

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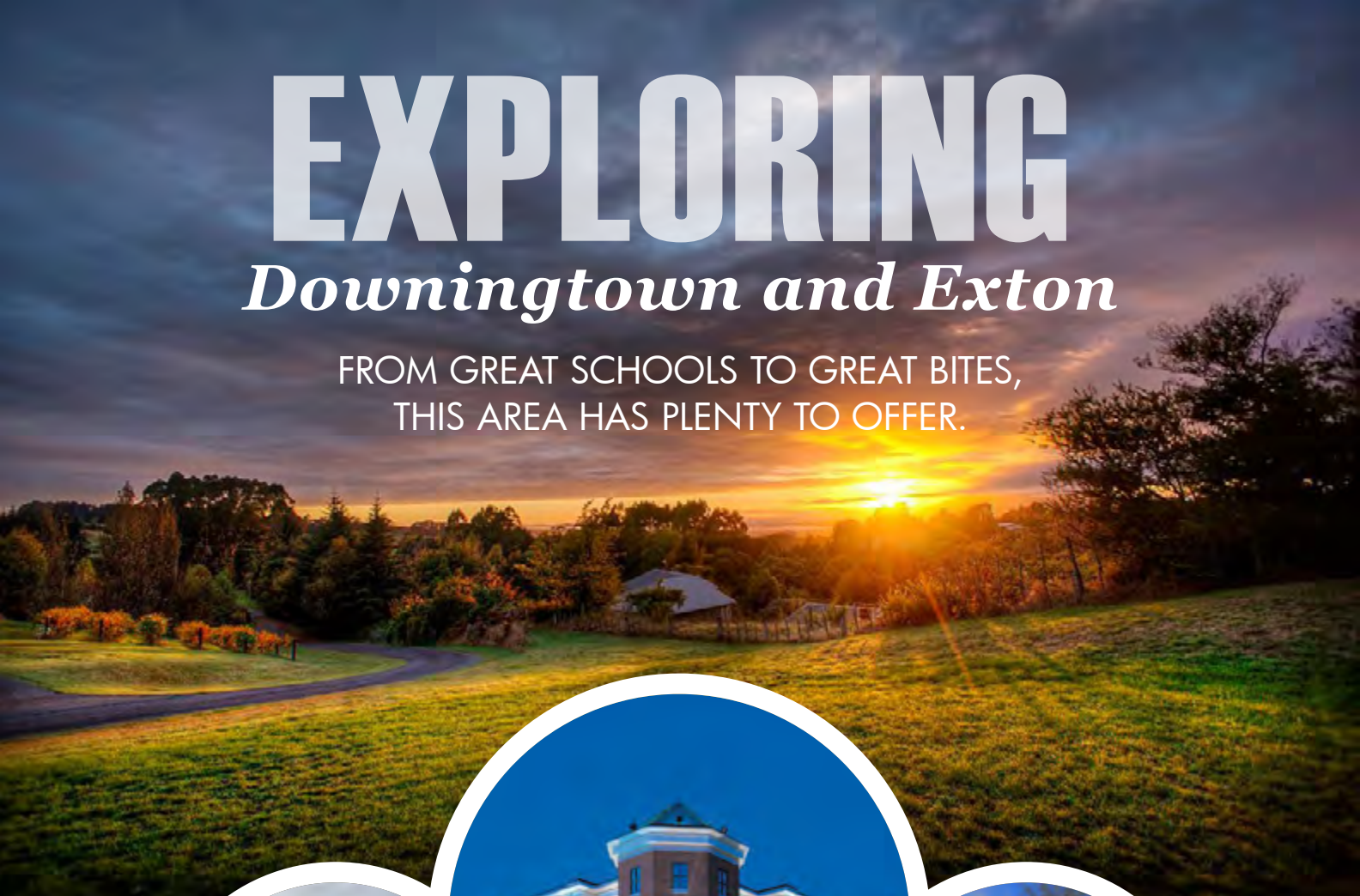
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Madison Meinel



FILLED WITH UNDERSTATED CHARM, INTERESTING history and famous natives (like Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan), the Downingtown and Exton area has been an important part of Chester County since the early 1800s.

Today Downingtown is a growing and thriving area with an acclaimed school district (ranked #20 nationally and #2 in Pennsylvania), restaurants for every taste, parks and trails to explore, and family fun options.

Just a stone's throw away is Exton, a major shopping district with malls (indoor and outdoor), local shops and even more places to grab a bite or pick up take out.

We've gathered some noteworthy spots to help you plan your next visit.

TIME TO TAKE-OUT

Looking for new options to expand your take-out game? Both Downingtown's and Exton's dining scenes have grown significantly with plenty of restaurants to choose from.

Check out some of our favorites in Downingtown, like [Estrella Tacos y Mas](#) for, you guessed it, great tacos and more, including brisket chili or vegetarian tacos (available in family meals). Order a DIY margarita kit for the perfect take-out taco Tuesday.

Switching from fine dining to takeout in response to current conditions, [Amani's BYOB](#) is creating weekly menus for customers to enjoy delicious seasonal creations at home. Try entrees like their New York strip served with goat cheese and forest mushroom mac and cheese or savor seafood risotto with saffron cream and shrimps, scallops and clams.

If you're looking to dine in or out safely, head to Exton and [Ron's Original Bar & Grill](#). Grab a table at their tented outdoor patio complete with a heating system, full bar and additional propane tanks for extra warmth. Dine outside and enjoy Italian specialties like crab and sausage Amatriciana and drunken shrimp capellini, all while staying toasty. Plenty of take out, too.

Another Exton favorite is family-owned [Appetites on Main](#), located in Main Street in Exton. Outdoor seating is still open with limited availability based on weather conditions. Chow down on entrees like the ultimate burger piled with shoestring fries, BBQ sauce, bacon and American and cheddar cheese. If the weather is too cold, order to go.

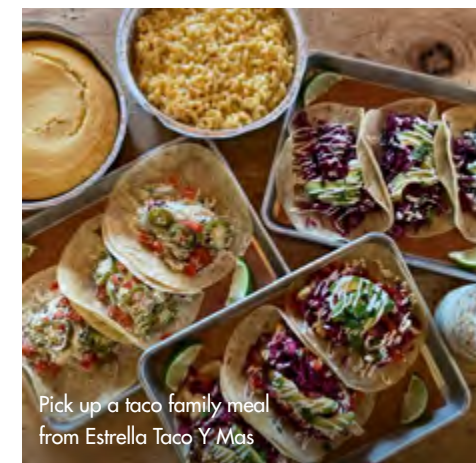
And a bright light on the Exton and Downingtown dining scene is the opening of a new restaurant—[La Tavola Famiglia](#)

And a bright light on the Exton and Downingtown dining scene is the opening of a new restaurant—[La Tavola Famiglia](#) (meaning “the family table” in Italian). Traci and Michael Carneglia, owners of A Cut Above Deli, are expanding into Downingtown with their Italian restaurant set to open early this month. Enjoy comforting Italian meals as you gather around “the family table”.

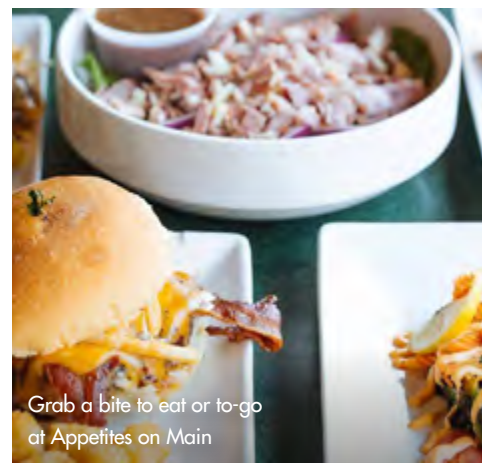
Carb lovers can shop local and pick up bakery items at [Brandywine Valley Bread](#) in Downingtown. Take in the delicious aroma of fresh baked bread and pastries as you select treats like almond croissants, morning buns and seeded ancient grain loaves. There's more carb-loading at [San Marco Pasta](#) for fresh-cut pasta, sauces and cannolis to help bring the taste of Italy to your kitchen.

HAPPY HOUR

Looking for an adult beverage to complement your takeout? Ever-popular [Victory Brewing](#)



Pick up a taco family meal from Estrella Taco Y Mas



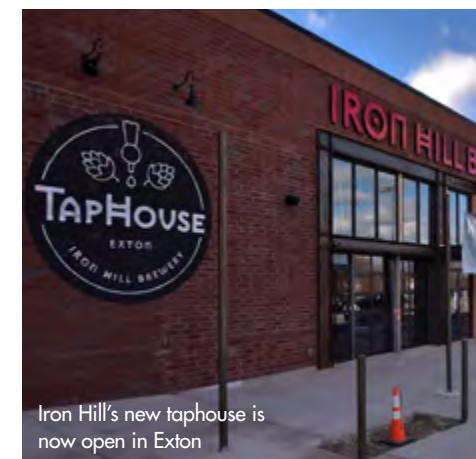
Grab a bite to eat or to-go at Appetites on Main



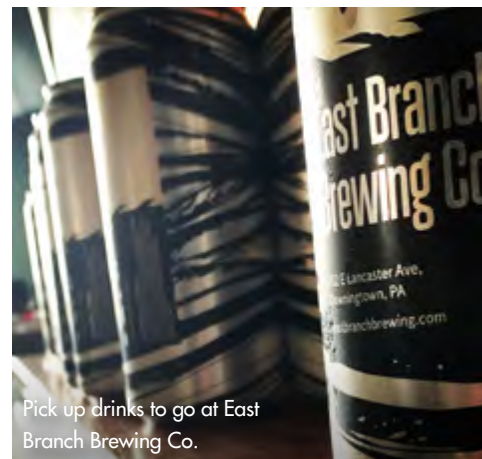
Enjoy your brews in Stolen Sun's spacious expansion



Visit Ron's Original tented and heated outdoor patio



Iron Hill's new taphouse is now open in Exton



Pick up drinks to go at East Branch Brewing Co.



Find renovation inspiration at SchoolHouse Woodworking

Get the bar experience at home with Station Taproom's Craft Cocktails



Get your baked goods from Brandywine Valley Bread

[Company](#) has its home base in Downingtown. Stop by their taproom and pick up drinks to go from their extensive selection of full flavored beers.

For more options, visit another Downingtown spot, [East Branch Brewing Company](#). Enjoy brews like Estemere, an English pub stout, or Aigre D'or, a sour Belgian ale. Pair your beers with entrees including brie and pomegranate grilled cheese and brisket noodles.

Also close by, [Station Taproom](#) offers craft cocktails to go, including a Moscow Mule, Dirty Martini and Old Fashioned—all perfect for getting the craft cocktail experience right from home.

Exton's beer scene continues to grow with [Iron Hill's](#) newest Taphouse now open. Pair their signature burgers with award winning beers and be grateful for great local food. The Taphouse is open for takeout and delivery and the dining room is now open with social distancing and safety precautions.

More notable options in Exton include [World of Beers](#), with over 350 craft and domestic cans and bottles, and [Stolen Sun Brewery and Roastery](#), serving craft beer and specialty coffee in their newly expanded space. The new space includes a dedicated coffee roasting area, a new smoker for BBQ menu items (like Korean BBQ pork belly tacos) and plenty of space to safely enjoy some brews. Try options like Cosomogryl, with flavors of pineapple and grapefruit, for happy hour and pick up a bag of their coffee beans to perk up your mornings.

SHOP LOCAL

Downingtown and Exton are home to an extensive shopping scene and now more than ever it's important to shop local and support the businesses that make our area unique. From large malls and strip malls to local specialty shops, there's a place for every shopping need.

Looking to make a day of it? Start at [Eagleview Town Center](#) for a stop at local favorite [Wellington Square Bookshop](#). You can browse



Stop in Wellington Square Bookshop for your next book

their selection online or stop in to pick up the next title on your reading list. Next, head to Restaurant Row at Eagleview for modern Mexican food at [Al Pastor](#) or superb sushi at [Bluefin Eagleview](#).

And for more shopping, head out on Route 30 to [Exton Mall](#) with new additions, like Jeff Devlin's [SchoolHouse Woodworking](#) on the second floor. The HGTV and DIY network host is instructing woodworking classes, consulting on home renovation projects and selling home décor. Find inspiration for your next home project and call to schedule an appointment.

Take advantage of a sunny day and stroll through the outdoor mall, [Main Street at Exton](#). Pick up clothing and jewelry at [Exton Place boutique](#) or haircare products at [Avanté Salon](#).

Help keep these local businesses busy even after the holiday season.

GREEN SPACES

Looking for a new spot to get some outdoor exercise (think about those New Year's fitness resolutions)? There are several trails and parks worth exploring in the Downingtown/Exton area.

Originally the Waynesburg Rail Line, [Struble Trail](#) is a mostly flat, 2.6-mile trail perfect for riding bikes, running, hiking and walking. Try taking a mindful walk while taking in the beautiful scenery of running waters (courtesy of the Brandywine Creek) and vegetation native to Chester County.

Another spot to check out is [Boot Road Park](#) in Exton, a community park filled with both active and passive recreation opportunities. From baseball diamonds, playground equipment and walking areas to benches, picnic areas and even a butterfly garden (best enjoyed in warmer months), there's plenty to do.

Or spend a peaceful afternoon at [Marsh Creek State Park](#) right in Downingtown. This scenic 1,784-acre park contains the 535-acre Marsh Creek lake perfect for fishing and sailing when the weather improves. For now, enjoy the view of the lake and hiking the trails located on the west side of the park.

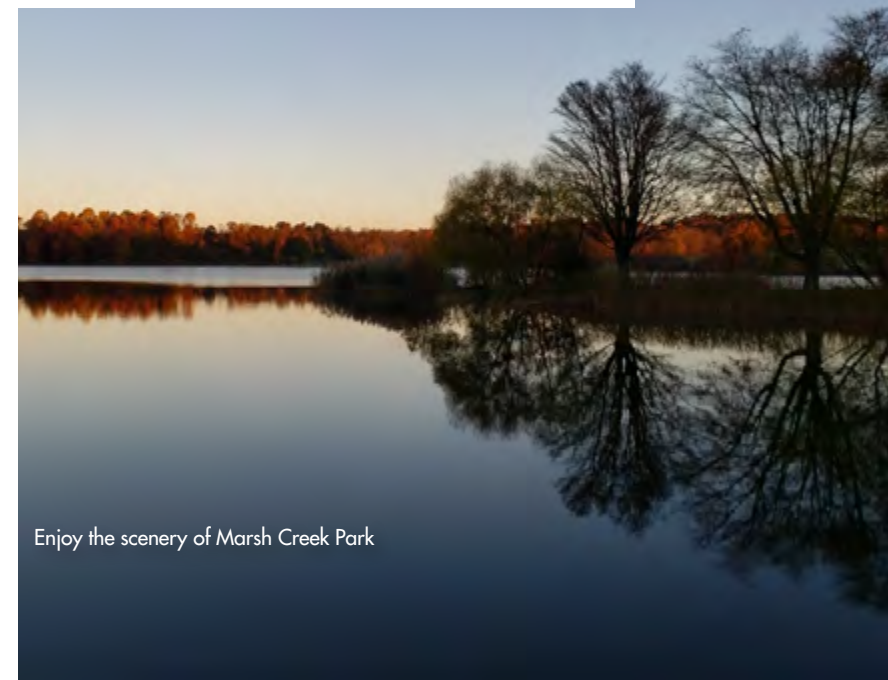
From a full day of shopping or hiking to dinner and drinks, Downingtown and Exton are happy to help fill your weekend. We hope you explore these towns and enjoy all they have to offer. ♦



Extensive collection of accessories at Exton Place Boutique



Spend an afternoon at Boot Road Park



Enjoy the scenery of Marsh Creek Park

Independent Schools:

Learning to Live in the New Normal

Edwin Malet



The School in Rose Valley

OUR AREA'S INDEPENDENT schools have shown the same high level of resilience in the face of recent events that they teach their students. A welcome sign in these times.

Even though it's been almost a year since coronavirus shut down our schools to in-person teaching and learning back in March 2020, school staffs spent the better part of the summer planning for a safe reopening. By September, most independent schools were ready for the new school year, but with changes.

And now, more than half way through the current school year, schools have learned important lessons.

STUDENTS ADJUSTING TO THE NEW NORMAL

Schools have learned their students can and will adjust. They've had to. School facilities now are redesigned for socially distancing. In classrooms, students sit apart and wear masks. In hallways, movement is channeled along one-way paths. Between grades, students are often separated as well. Schools are doing their best to limit unnecessary contact and promote safety.

Students' schedules are also split—between in-person and virtual learning—as a precaution. And some students don't come to campus at all. Learning at home, using computers or by videoconferencing

has become, for some, their primary way of interacting with other students and teachers.

In spite of this, independent schools have tried to maintain a level of community and togetherness. Rod Stanton, Head of School at the **School in Rose Valley**, for example, noted there is “limited opportunity for social connection” but continues, “our students ... still exhibit a joy for learning. They act like children ... Children are quite resilient, and we've tried to maintain a sense of normalcy, as best we can.”

At **West Chester Friends School**, Head of School Brian Fahey notes, “The biggest missing piece is the social/emotional component of learning that's crucial in elementary education. Much of that happens in informal settings, such as class discussions, recess and quiet times during the day when children are interacting in a natural way.”

“Socialization challenges” have also arisen at **Archmere Academy**, according to Gina Dzielak, its Marketing and Communications Director. She says many schools noticed “an uptick” of emotional and mental issues due to the isolation. Nevertheless, over time she's seen fewer issues.

CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG STUDENTS

In response to COVID, all our schools have adopted remote learning, using platforms like Zoom, Google Meets, videoconferencing and the like. And, as remote

learning has become customary, it's also become more useful overall.

Special challenges do exist, however, especially for younger students. “We don't want children to be online all day,” says Fahey at West Chester Friends. “Without question, the youngest students are most severely affected by having to learn online ... but we rely on play and social interaction a great deal. That's harder to deliver in an online format.”

Lori Yingling, Director of Marketing and Admissions at **Upland Country Day School**, says the “give-and-take between students and teachers online is not always as fluid as the classroom setting.” She observes, “Remote learning presents more of a challenge with younger students, not only in the support they may need at home, but also for a classroom teacher simultaneously juggling an in-person class and online students.”

At **Delaware Valley Friends School**, David Calamaro, Associate Head of School, has had concerns about the added demands on staff. Faculty have had to “teach two approaches at once,” requiring additional emphasis on socialization and emotional learning. The result has been longer days and more exhaustion.

Page McConnell, **The Tatnall School's** Director of Marketing and Communications, agrees. “The teachers who have to prepare to teach in person and to our remote learners with every lesson—keeping

all students engaged while masked and separated has added an extra level of stress for everyone.” On the other hand, the faculty became more tech-savvy.

THERE'S AN UPSIDE

In general, all have been thankful for online technology in teaching. Most echo Natasha Solomon, Dean of Students at **Linden Hall School for Girls** in Lititz, who says that while students “miss their friends,” online learning is a good compromise. She's “impressed by everyone's dedication to keeping our community safe.”

Plus there are advantages to the broader use of online education. For instance, Alyce Callison, Director of Marketing and Communications at **Benchmark School**, reports that the “quieter students are opening up more.” The school has explored creative online techniques, including using Zoom's polling features, launching an e-sports club, and having a “wildly successful Virtual Talent Show, cross-school games of Kahoot! [and] virtual contests and activities.”

At **Centerville Layton School**, Elana Marks, who teaches reading and writing in middle school, says the “best part of teaching completely online is that students don't lose their papers anymore—everything is posted online!” She finds she can “build skills of maintaining a schedule, being punctual and becoming more comfortable using online tools.” Especially gratifying, Marks adds feedback to student assignments while they work. “It makes the feedback so much more meaningful to the student.”

Marks lauds the “interactive online activities and tools that help monitor the progress of each child. Since our classes are both online and in person simultaneously, class discussions can still happen. Students can be paired up with partners, talk together and ask each other questions regardless of their locations. It's pretty cool!”

Julie McNulty, an art teacher at **Notre Dame Academy**, has found an added benefit is the ease with which her students can make adjustments and improve their work. Her students may “receive feedback from me multiple times until they're happy with

their creation and I'm confident they've learned the objectives of the project.” The software she uses has been “a huge asset in this process, and made it much easier for me to have a ‘conversation’ with each student about their work.”

SPORTS AND CLUBS

In general, during the pandemic, extracurricular activities—and particularly sports—have been significantly curtailed, if not cancelled. There are exceptions, particularly in Delaware, where the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association has allowed sports to continue.

Wilmington Friends, Tatnall, Archmere and **St. Edmonds Schools** have had relatively normal interscholastic sports seasons. Archmere has added “movie nights” in its efforts to promote a sense of community, while Tatnall is continuously looking for “safe methods

puts greater emphasis on its strength and performance training than competitive sports. Similarly, athletes at **Episcopal Academy, Haverford School, Malvern Prep, Baldwin School** and **Agnes Irwin School** are largely training and planning for next year.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS IN CURRENT EVENTS

The last year's teaching hasn't been only about the global pandemic. Church Farm School, for one, has found teachable moments in the legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the 2020 election, social justice and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Westtown School students have learned about mitigation, virology, epidemiology and development of therapeutics and vaccines, along with developing a greater appreciation for sound scientific reasoning. Art students captured the experi-

“The best part of teaching completely online is that students don't lose their papers anymore—everything is posted online! Students can build skills of maintaining a schedule, being punctual and becoming more comfortable using online tools.”

to have the students come together, such as can drives and theme dress days.”

In Pennsylvania, on the other hand, interscholastic sports have been cancelled. Instead, independent schools have provided in-person options to promote student health.

Coaches at **Church Farm School** provide training and exercise for students. “It was important for us to encourage outdoor activities as much as possible,” says Stefanie Claypoole, Director of Marketing and Communications. “We continued to hold weekend activities ... including bonfires, athletics, painting, a variety of board games, etc., while adhering to our rigorous health protocols.”

The **Westtown School** has always maintained superb athletic facilities. For now, it

ence of quarantine orders in sketchbooks. Others discussed violence in the context of COVID-19.

BOTTOM LINE

Although schools have struggled, they met the challenges. Independent schools retooled their buildings, reconfigured their classes, and reframed their curricular offerings and teaching methods. Parents, the partners in learning, have been understanding and supportive, taking comfort in their students' safety and health.

Students, for their part, have remained tolerant, flexible, resilient. In the words of Upland's Lori Yingling, they are as “happy as they have ever been.” ♦

Guide to

Private Schools

Pennsylvania

Chester Springs

Montgomery School

1141 Kimberton Rd. 610-827-7222; MontgomerySchool.org

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888-722-9237; PACyber.org



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610-444-3035; UplandCDS.org

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Malvern

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418 S. Warren Ave.

484-595-1100; MalvernPrep.org

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www.royer-greaves.org

118 South Valley Road, Paoli, PA 19301

Malvern



Media-Providence Friends School

125 W. Third St.

610-565-1960; MPFS.org

A Quaker school in downtown Media for students age 3 through grade 8. Small classes allow for a whole child approach to learning and differentiated instruction in a rich academic environment, where students find their passion with purpose. MPFS offers full-day pre-school and kindergarten as well as a virtual learning program. MPFS @home launched in March of 2020 so students can continue learning from home if needed.

Open House: Feb. 26th, Apr. 22, 10 am. RSVP to MPFS.org/rsvp



Newtown Square

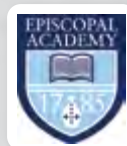
Episcopal Academy

1785 Bishop White Dr.

484-424-1400; EpiscopalAcademy.org

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Visit EpiscopalAcademy.org/Events



Delaware

Claymont

Archmere Academy

3600 Philadelphia Pk.

302-798-6632; ArchmereAcademy.com

Known for its college preparatory program, Archmere Academy is a private, independent and Catholic school for grades 9 through 12 that welcomes students of all faith backgrounds. The Archmere education focuses on the whole person, developing students into empathetic leaders. The 1:1 Mac laptop program, small class size and close-knit community make Archmere Academy one of the top private schools in Delaware.

Visit the website for additional information.



Wilmington

Tatnall School

1501 Barley Mill Rd.

302-998-2292; Tatnall.org

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TATNALL.ORG/VISIT



Wilmington Friends School

101 School Rd. (Rts. 202 & 95)
302-576-2900; WilmingtonFriends.org

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Open House: Check their website.



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Downingtown

Devereux Autism Assessment Center

600 Boot Rd. 610-431-8830; Devereux.org/Autism
Provides comprehensive services to address questions and concerns about Autism Spectrum Disorder, offering the gold-standard in autism assessment including the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS). The program strives to deliver the highest quality of services from intake, to thorough assessment, to intensive follow up—all in line with Devereux's mission of providing individualized and comprehensive services for children and adults with special needs.



Paoli

Delaware Valley Friends School

19 E. Central Ave.
610-640-4150; DVFS.org

DVFriends serves bright students in grades 1–12 with learning differences in reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia), math (dyscalculia), memory (long-term and working), processing speed, ADHD and executive functioning challenges. Their Quaker community recognizes and honors the inherent worth of all people. Teachers guide students to embrace the courage to try, establish the confidence to reach farther, and build resilience to succeed in school and beyond.

Virtual Open Houses: All grades: Feb. 21, 1 pm; Mar. 10, 7 pm.
Talk & Tours: Lower School: Feb. 9, Mar. 16, 7 pm; Middle School: Feb. 3, Mar. 3, 7 pm; Upper School: Feb. 17, Mar. 24, 7 pm



DVFriends
GRADES 1–12

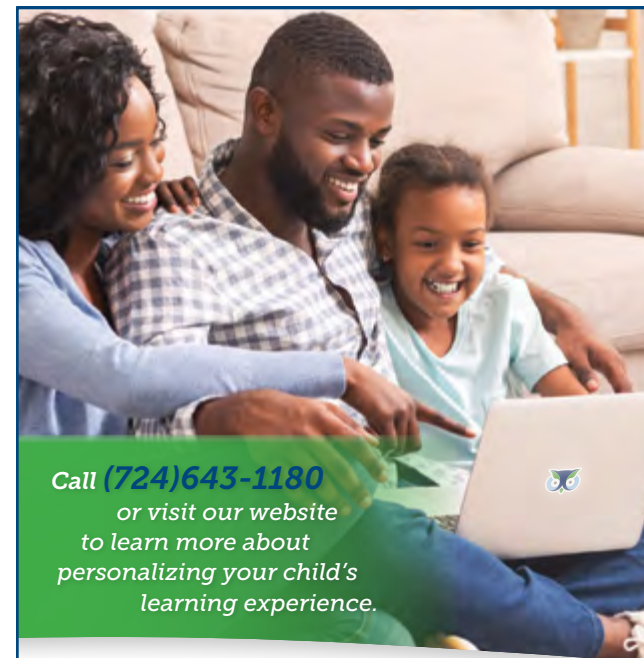
Pennsylvania

Berwyn

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973 Old Lancaster Rd.
610-725-0755; TimothySchool.com

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610-873-4955; Devereux.org
 Sites: Downingtown, Glenmoore, Malvern
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Paoli

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Delaware

Centreville

Centreville Layton School

6201 Kennett Pk.

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Centreville Layton School offers a robust educational and cultural experience for students who learn differently. The program identifies academic and social needs and provides a curriculum that focuses on problem-solving and critical thinking. Through intervention and strengthening learning strategies, the school empowers each student to reach his or her potential. Pre-K-12 and postgraduate program. In-Person & Continuous Learning (on-line) options for the 2020-2021 school year.

Virtual Open Houses Monthly



Wilmington

Augustine Hills School

6 Stone Hill Rd.

302-594-0685; AugustineHills.com

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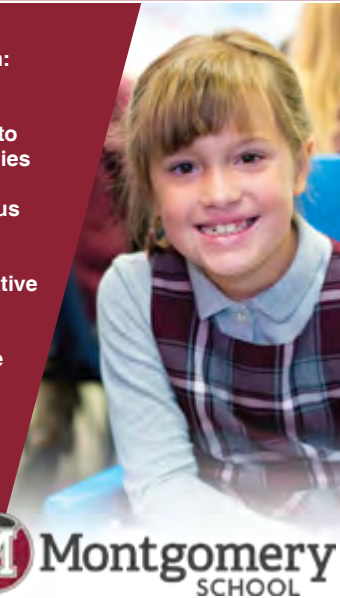


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DVFriends
 GRADES 1-12

Delaware Valley Friends School
 19 E. Central Avenue | Paoli, PA | 610.640.4150



Dunminning Estate Carriage House

A PIECE OF HISTORY, REIMAGINED AND MODERNIZED

Laurel Anderson

WOW! THAT'S THE USUAL REACTION UPON entering the grand stone carriage house that was once part of the sprawling 150-acre Dunminning Estate, designed c. 1887 by architect Theophilus P. Chandler and once owned by the Brown family of Girard Trust.

Actually, a *double wow!!* is in order for this unique property, called Hidden Rock, with so much star power it was considered as a suitable temporary home for a movie star filming in our area. Massively updated in 1995 and reimagined and modernized further in 2020, this home is move-in ready and filled with amenities—including a sleek glass vacuum elevator that looks like modern sculpture.

This is one of the largest and most distinctive carriage house conversions of the era, with timeless craftsmanship preserved and complemented by modern conveniences for comfortable family living (WiFi, surround sound, security system, etc.). And at seven

thousand four hundred square feet of space in the carriage house, the grandeur of the former main house can only be imagined.

The wow factor is first evident as you approach the stately home and catch a glimpse through the central diamond-mullioned windows of the seven-foot glittering crystal chandelier in the main room, once called The Court. The impressive stone façade resembles a Gilded Age mansion more so than a mere outbuilding on an estate.

On first sight from the driveway, the owners say they “fell in love.” And no wonder. The 40 photos and 3D virtual tour online as well as videos on Vimeo may make you have the same reaction.

An open floor plan gives the stunning interior space a modern feel with ample room for entertaining. Details like interior stone walls, huge windows, graceful archways, beamed ceilings and 12-foot sliding mahogany doors add character throughout.



Beneath a 25-foot ceiling lined with hand-made tiles is the central great room. Large enough to be a ballroom, it affords several distinct spaces to enjoy—a dining area, sitting area, eight-seat wet bar, pool table and a piano positioned under the center crystal chandelier.

Through an archway is the more formal living room, anchored by an exquisite fireplace. To the left is a cozy library/guest suite with custom wood shelving and marble bath. To the right, past the elevator, is a raised seating area, situated beneath original gears and pulleys used in the old carriage house, another sculptural element adding character to the home.

The dramatic-looking elevator whisks you to a luxurious second-floor guest or in-law suite, complete with a small kitchen,

laundry, sitting area, bedroom and bath. Two additional bedrooms and full hall bath complete this floor. Below this section of the home are the garage and utility/storage areas.

On the opposite side of the house, where the stables once were and evidenced by a line of black hitching posts, is an expansive gourmet kitchen, equipped to satisfy any chef and sure to be a family gathering place. Here, under a 12-foot beamed ceiling are the adjacent raised breakfast area with room for 12 and fireside sitting area. A butler's pantry and powder room complete this inviting and comfortable area.

And the master suite? Climb the stair above this space to a private sanctuary with its own study, laundry, large walk-in closet (with skylights), all leading to the sunlit master bed-



room with the home's third fireplace and more skylights. The spacious marble master bath is highlighted by a free-standing soaking tub.

Manicured gardens, inviting blue stone terraces and whimsical outbuildings for gardeners, artists or collectors add to the bucolic acre-and-a-half setting surrounding the home.

This distinctive carriage house has everything needed to be both an inviting family home and a legacy property. Along with that ineffable wow factor. ♦

For more information about this unique five-bedroom, five-bath historic home with attached garage and outbuildings on 1.56 acres in Newtown Square—offered by Country Properties, Berkshire Hathaway, Fox & Roach at \$2,599,000—contact Rob Van Alen, 610.212.5470, or Jody Vandegrift 484.354.2474; 320StDavidsRd.com; TheCountryProperties.com.



[Food News] *A few of our favorite things to share this month about local food and drink*

Hot Coco Craze. Spice up your hot chocolate game this season with a new twist—**Hot Chocolate Bombs**. Place the chocolate sphere in a cup of warm milk and watch the shell “explode” as coco powder and mini marshmallows spill out. Try this winter treat by making them at home

or picking some up at your local candy shop. Visit Kelly's Kandy in West Chester or Christopher Chocolates in Newtown Square for specialty chocolate bombs. *Christopher-Chocolates.com.*



Shop and Go. Creating access to local, organic and wholesome foods, the West Chester Co-op launched their curbside grocery pick-up **GoBox**. You can browse their online shop filled with staple items (like meat, milk, eggs and veggies) and specialty items (pies, cookies and kombucha) to create your own unique box ready for pickup. Not only will you be eating fresh and healthy foods, but you'll also be supporting so many local businesses. It's a win-win! 142. E. Market St., West Chester. *WestChester.Coop.*



Baring it All. Taking inspiration from the 1999 Vitamix blender ad, Revivalist Spirits and participating chefs are stripping down for a fun and light-hearted social media campaign—**Naked Chefs Revival**. Local chefs, like Patrick Feury from Berwyn's Nectar, posed in their birthday suits with drinks made from Revivalist spirits to highlight the brand's products. Photos from the campaign are posted on social media and for each share, \$1 will be donated to the Hospitality Assistance Response of Pennsylvania. *RevivalistSpirits.com.*

Waste-less. Looking to be more sustainable in the kitchen? Give **No-Waste cooking** a try. A new social media spotlight on No-Waste cooking is urging people to become more aware of their food waste. Don't throw away scraps, instead practice using every single part of vegetables, fruits, meats or whatever else is required for the dish. Check

out Instagram account @MaxLaManna for recipes like no-waste baked mac and cheese, butter bean and kale stem soup or no-waste butternut squash hummus. *Instagram.com/maxlamanna.*



New in Town. There's plenty to look forward to in 2021 including **Iron Hill's first full-scale production brewery and taphouse** in Exton. Stop by the Taphouse to enjoy casual fare like nachos, chicken wings and of course their pub style burgers paired with an extensive selection of craft beer. You can now dine in (with social distancing and safety precautions). Or take the Iron Hill experience home with canned brews thanks to their production facility. 260 Eagleview Blvd., Exton. *IronHillBrewery.com.*



Making it Maple

TAPPING INTO THE NATIVE AND NATURAL SWEETNESS OF PA-MADE MAPLE SYRUP.

Alyssa Thayer

IT'S FEBRUARY, WHICH MEANS MOST OF US ARE HOLED up in hibernation, but not the Dewees family. For these first-generation sugarmakers, it's showtime. Kyle and Sara Dewees are the dynamic pair behind **Whiskey Hollow Maple**, specializing in PA-produced maple syrup and other maple products.

Often, maple sugaring practices are passed down from one generation to the next, but this wasn't the case for Kyle and Sara Dewees. They found their way into the business through curiosity and an appreciation for the outdoors. "We fell into it. It wasn't our ultimate plan," says Kyle, remembering the first time they tried tapping maples on his parents' property as an experiment.

Those first taps were all it took—they were hooked. "That first year we made syrup and then went on a tour of sugar houses all across Pennsylvania," says Sara. They leased Kyle's parents' property to start and two years later (in 2018) bought their own sugar bush—140 acres of maple woods in Bradford County, PA.

Although Whiskey Hollow got off to a modest start, the Dewees now have over 3,400 taps. Sara puts this in perspective saying "This may sound like a lot, but you go into Vermont and it's in the tens of thousands."

Once they had the collection and boiling process down, the Dewees continued their experimentation. "We always have something brewing in the kitchen," Sara laughs. They played with infusing flavors and heating to different temperatures. "It is amazing what you can do with it,"



Whiskey Hollow Maple is truly a family business and the Dewees parents involve their kids whenever possible!

says Kyle. "You start with syrup, boil it down further, and you can make maple cream and even granulated sugar."

One of the most creative and delicious innovations is their partnership with Manatawny Still Works Distillery. They age their syrups in old whiskey and rum barrels for a year, during which time the complex flavors of the barrel are drawn into the syrup. Manatawny then closes the loop, taking the barrels back to create maple whiskey.

Four years into their maple enterprise and the Dewees are as committed as ever. They spend their summer and fall looking at equipment and planning. "We hope to go up to eight thousand taps in the next two years," Sara says proudly.

Their extensive line of maple products are sold online, at farmers markets and various shops around the region. They are excited to see folks starting to think about maple as more than just a pancake or waffle topping. Check out the recipes in this article that showcase a few of its seemingly endless uses. Then try them yourself!



Kyle and daughter, Adley, plumbing some sap tanks and prepping for the winter season.

Recipes

Think of the maple-biliites: the rich and earthy sweetness of maple syrup lends itself to almost any sweet or savory application. Use the dishes below as a jumping off point and then continue to play and experiment to find your own favorite maple recipes.

Granola

Yes, you are being challenged to think outside the pancake, but there are still many ways to incorporate maple into your favorite breakfast. Try this wholesome and delicious granola sprinkled over yogurt, drenched in milk, or by the handful.



- 3 C. rolled oats
- 1 C. chopped nuts (can be a combination of cashews, almonds, pumpkin seeds) *unsalted, or less on salt quantity below to compensate
- ½ C. shredded or flaked coconut
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- ⅔ C. coconut oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ C. maple syrup
- *optional ½ C. nutritional seeds (chia or hemp) added to dry ingredients in beginning
- *optional ½ C. dried fruit or chocolate chips, added at the end, after baking

Preheat oven to 325°F. In a large bowl, add together all dry ingredients (oats, nuts, coconut, cinnamon, salt) and set aside.

In a saucepan, melt coconut oil over low heat, add in vanilla and maple syrup and stir—it will stay separated and that's OK.

Pour melted oil mixture over oats and stir until everything is well coated. Transfer wet oat mix onto baking sheet (parchment paper recommended) in a thin layer.

**Note:* often this recipe is too much for just one tray—better to do 2 trays or multiple batches if possible.

Bake for 18–20 minutes, keeping an eye on the edges to make sure they do not burn. Pull tray(s) out and mix/rearrange into thin layer about halfway through.

Much About Maple

Fun facts and tips about this amber-colored nectar of the trees:

Tap on: The process of tapping (if done correctly) does not hurt the tree. It siphons off only a small percentage of the sap and the tree heals easily from the hole.

It's Native: Although maples are native to PA, the cooler northern climates are more conducive for tapping. The highest producing county in PA can be found in the west of the state—Somerset County, which benefits from a high elevation.

Spring Sap: Maple sap naturally begins to flow in the spring. Above freezing days and below freezing nights create pressure that prompts the sap flow.

Better Sweets: As far as sweeteners go, maple syrup is a cut above the rest. It's naturally high in minerals and antioxidants and is lower on the glycemic index than honey or cane sugar.

Go Pure: Grocery aisles are full of maple mimics that have nothing to do with trees. The Dewees do an activity in schools comparing ingredients of real maple syrup and generic syrup. No surprise, the kids can't read or pronounce the ingredients in the fake stuff.

Good Grades: Due to changes in the way maple is graded, most of the maple syrups we see on grocery shelves are now lumped into grade A. When it comes to taste, the most important property is color: A light amber color (formerly fancy grade) is more delicate in color and comes from the first taps of the season, while medium amber and darker colored syrup have a more robust flavor and are produced later in the season.

Keep It Cool: Sealed maple syrup has a very long shelf life (read decades). Once the seal is broken, keep it in the fridge or freezer. Sap is a natural antifreeze for maple trees, so even in a freezer, it will not freeze solid.

Universal Use: The uses for maple are endless, and include slow-roasting veggies, marinating meats, mixing into hot sauce and even stirring into your Happy Hour Old Fashioned. Granulated maple sugar can be substituted evenly for cane sugar in baking recipes!

See recipes for more culinary inspiration.

**Note:* Depending on your oven, you may need to turn down the temperature to 300°F if edges start to burn too quickly, or if using multiple trays or thicker layered granola. On the other hand, baking time could take up to 25–30 minutes before granola is nicely browned.

Cool completely before storing in an air-tight container. Makes 4–6 servings.

Maple-Glazed Salmon

This recipe makes my toddlers eat salmon like it's candy—the sweet of the maple and the salt of the soy combine for the perfect bite!

6 salmon fillet portions—could be used for one large salmon fillet as well.

1 Tb. olive oil

For the Sauce:
3 Tb. maple syrup
2 Tb. soy sauce (for gluten free, use tamari)
1 garlic clove, finely minced
1 tsp. Dijon mustard



Pull salmon out of the fridge and blot dry and place onto a plate. (Bringing it close to room temperature allows for a more even cooking process, even 10–15 minutes helps.) Preheat oven to 425°F. Whisk together all sauce ingredients and set aside. Pour olive oil into the bottom of the roasting pan and swirl around to coat. Arrange salmon portions skin-side-down in the pan, making sure there is space between the fillets. Spoon sauce over each salmon. (*Note: this is a little runny, so do your best to get it to stay on the top of the salmon. Feel free to spoon any mixture that runs off back over top of the salmon.) Roast until it's cooked through, approximately 12–18 minutes. General rule for salmon is 5 minutes per ½ inch of thickness. Take out of the oven and transfer to a plate to rest for 10 minutes before serving. Enjoy warm! Makes 4–6 servings.

Maple Butternut Squash Soup

There is perhaps nothing as cozy as a steaming bowl of squash soup on a frigid winter's evening. Best enjoyed with a hunk of crusty bread and roasted nuts sprinkled over top.

- 1 butternut squash (yields approximately 2 cups of roasted squash)
- 3 Tb. olive oil
- 1 C. water
- ¾ C. onion, diced (about ½ a medium onion)
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- Salt to taste
- 1 Tb. butter
- ½ C. pear, chopped
- 2 C. vegetable broth, or chicken broth
- 2 Tb. maple syrup

Preheat oven to 400°F. Using a sharp and sturdy knife, carefully slice your squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds and pulp. Pour 1 tablespoon of olive oil and ½ cup of water into the bottom of a large roasting pan, then place your squash pieces cut-side down in the pan. Roast for 50–60 minutes, until the flesh is extremely soft (should squish down easily when you press on the outside of the peel.) *Note: don't worry if skin browns, you'll be peeling that off. Take squash out of the oven and carefully place flesh side up to cool. Using a thick-bottom large pot (a Dutch oven works great), heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Over medium-high heat, saute onions until softened and brown (approximately 5 minutes). Turn heat down to medium and add minced garlic and a generous pinch of salt. Stir in until fragrant (about 30 seconds). Add butter and let stand until melted. Turn the heat down to medium-low and add chopped pear and saute until the pear is soft and browned (approximately 10 minutes). When butternut squash is cool enough to handle, scoop out the flesh of both halves into your pot. Add broth and bring back up to a simmer for 10–15 minutes (long enough to meld the flavors and take the rawness off of the broth). Turn off heat and stir in maple syrup. Once the soup has cooled slightly, transfer to a blender. Blend on high until smooth silky texture is achieved. *Note: you can also use an immersion blender for this. Serve right away, or put back into the pot and keep it on very low to make sure it's warm for serving. *Note: the amount of broth will depend on how thick you like your soups—if you like them to be a thicker puree, you might start with just 1 cup of broth. You can blend and return to pot and add more broth if it's too thick for you. Remember to simmer it a bit before serving. Makes 6 servings.

Maple & Rosemary Toasted Walnuts

Sweet, salty and herbal flavors intertwine in this addictive crowd-pleaser. Best enjoyed atop soups and salads.



It's important to Kyle and Sara Dewees that their products are as transparent as possible, so they bottle in clear glass and only infuse with ingredients you can see—like vanilla bean and cinnamon sticks.

- 2 C. walnut halves and pieces
- 1 fresh rosemary sprig, finely minced
- 1 Tb. butter (unsalted or salted works fine, just account for saltiness at the end)

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2 Tb. maple syrup
¼ tsp. sea salt

Prepare a large cookie sheet with parchment paper and set aside. In a small bowl, combine walnuts and rosemary and set aside. Melt butter in a saucepan over low heat. Once melted, mix in maple syrup and pour over nuts. Mix well to evenly coat walnuts. Arrange onto the prepared cookie sheet, spreading the nuts out into one single layer. Sprinkle evenly with sea salt. Bake for 5 minutes, give them a quick stir and then place them back in the oven for an additional 5–7 minutes (until rosemary is fragrant and nuts are golden brown). Allow to cool completely and place into an airtight container to store. Makes about 2 cups. *Note: Depending on the type of butter used, an extra pinch of salt after baking may be needed. ♦

Alyssa Thayer found her love of food at an early age, frolicking around her mother's organic farm and eating her weight in berries and snap peas each summer. She is a self-proclaimed urban farm girl, whose mission is to bring inspired ideas to life, passionate people together, and good food to every table.



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