

COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

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FEBRUARY 2025

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COUNTY LINES

Your guide to unique places, interesting events, fine dining, great shopping
and the special lifestyle of Southeastern Pennsylvania and Northern Delaware



Fine Home Issue

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NEW
PRICE



Chadds Ford

Set in Sought-After Area

Located on one of the most sought after roads in Chadds Ford, sits this gorgeous, 5 bed, 4.5 bath brick colonial set on 2.5 exceedingly private acres. Entering through the gates, the driveway winds gracefully past the pool to the house, which is well situated to overlook the grounds. The totally custom home is incredibly well built and the layout is perfect for both elegant entertaining and cozy family living. Entering into the stately foyer, there is a large formal living room and dining room, as well as a gourmet kitchen off of which sits a soaring family room with fire place and glass doors to the brick patio at the rear of the home. The first floor is completed by a mudroom and laundry area. The second level is accessed via either of two staircases. The primary bedroom suite includes a well appointed bathroom and huge walk-in closet. There are two further bedrooms on this level and a full bath. On the third floor is a large bedroom with its own full bath. A fifth bedroom and full bath are located in the finished basement, where there is also direct access to the large 3-car garage. Located in a highly desirable area in Kennett Township just a stone's throw from the Delaware state line, and with easy access to all amenities, this is an exceptional property and a unique opportunity to buy in to one of the most coveted neighborhoods in Chadds Ford.

\$1,250,000



East Bradford

Great home in Bradford Square!

Here is a great opportunity to own a wonderful updated 4 bedroom, 3.1 bath townhouse in the sought-after Bradford Square community. On the main level, the home features a large Living Room with a fireplace, Dining Room, and updated Kitchen. On the upper level, the Primary Bedroom has an updated bathroom and large closet. The two additional bedrooms share a hall bath. The third floor is accessed from the hallway and has new carpet. It is a great space for an office, hobby room, use your imagination. The full basement is finished with a family room, and the fourth bedroom and full bath. The home has new flooring throughout and is freshly painted. Ready for you to move in and start enjoying the good life at Bradford Square! You will love the community pool and tennis courts. This wonderful home is set in the popular West Chester School District, near the West Chester Borough, and enjoys low taxes!

\$569,000



Royersford

Wonderful twin with many upgrades!

This Victorian Style three story twin in beautiful Royersford features numerous upgrades like central air conditioning and forced air heat, and stainless Kitchen appliances. The open Living Room is huge (16' x 34') and connects to the Dining Room (16' x 16') making a huge space for entertaining friends and family. The Kitchen features granite counters and an attached Breakfast Area with a lofted ceiling. In the ceiling is a wonderful skylight which allows in volumes of natural light. A convenient Powder Room is off the Breakfast Area as in the access to the covered Back Porch which overlooks the rear yard with its play set for the children. On the Second Level are three large bedrooms, one of which has built-in shelving with storage cabinets below plus a renovated bathroom. On the Third Level are two additional bedrooms, one of which is carpeted. The third level also features the wonderful 1880's front windows which are wonderful architectural features. The large basement has been remediated against water penetration and allows lots for room to finish. Many of the windows have been replaced. This is a great location for those needing access to the 422 corridor for work and is also close to the Schuylkill Valley Trail for walking and biking which just over the bridge in Spring City.

\$389,000



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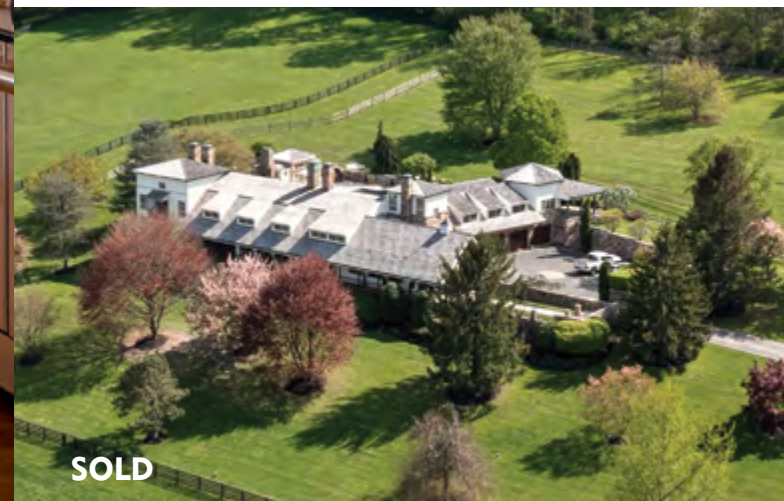
Happy New Year!



SPRINGDELL ROAD | 40 ACRES | WEST MARLBOROUGH
Stone farmhouse with log cabin addition overlooking the
countryside in the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District.



LENAPE ROAD | 26+ ACRES | POCOPSON
Magnificent estate in a picturesque setting with stream, vineyard,
guest house, pool with pool house, guest suite and art studio.



SOLD

PRIZER ROAD | 36.6 ACRES | CHESTER COUNTY
Congratulations to my sellers on the sale of this
spectacular property. Enjoy your next chapter!



SOLD

MARSHALL BRIDGE ROAD | 2.1 ACRES | KENNETT TOWNSHIP
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purchase of this historic farmhouse on the Red Clay Creek!.



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from the EDITOR

February is our Fine Home issue, and we feature two fabulous examples, along with more home inspiration.

Carol Metzker tours Fallow Field Cottage, a very special “forever home,” designed to fit its owners’ treasured collections and combined lives. And a different dream home took years of saving, planning and building. In “BYOB: Build Your Own Barn,” Shannon Montgomery tells the story of high school sweethearts who wanted a home in a red barn.

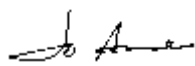
We look at three historic homes — along with one repurposed iconic bank building and two significant patrons of local preservation — in our review of “West Chester’s 13th Preservation Awards.” Jane E. Dorchester tells us why they help make life in the Borough better.

The stunning photos in our “Dream Kitchens” layout let us daydream about what we’d cook up, if only we had such an inspiring space. And our “Fine Homes & Design Resource Guide” provides more ideas for both inside and outside our homes. For those dreaming of a new home for 2025, local realtors share favorite past success stories in “The Best Is Yet to Come.”

February is also when we focus on education. Trends like technology, collaboration, globalization. In “The 4Cs ... Plus One More,” Ed Malet looks inside the 21st-century classroom. Meanwhile Marci Tomassone offers a “Guide to Private, Independent & Cyber Schools” for more background, plus Jennifer Green and Sarah Wagner share select scenes from West Chester University’s history in “Purple and Gold.”

We round out this issue with “Step Up Your Fitness,” Shannon Montgomery’s review of dancing for health, mood and connections; Natural Land’s Kit Werner’s story “Down But Not Out,” highlighting the plight of ground-nesting birds — bobolinks, meadowlarks and sparrows; and Brandywine Table’s Courtney Diener-Stokes’ “Baking Bread,” on the ultimate comfort food.

As always, we have the Best Local Events, complete with Family Fun ideas, to keep you busy this month. Thank you for reading.


Jo Anne Durako
Editor



COMING IN March

WOMEN LEADERS ISSUE

Profiles of Local Women Leaders

Women’s Health • Summer Camps

Charity Datebook Calendar • Volunteering

Books • Wine • St. Patty’s Day Food



COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

February 2025

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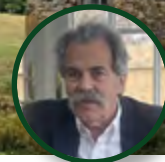
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Warwick Township

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Presented by Mark Willcox

\$329,000

UNDER CONTRACT



Highland Township

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Presented by Amy McKenna & Rob Van Alen

\$5,700,000

SOLD



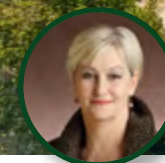
Colerain Township

The original Augustine Stable, on 181.9 acres w/cottage, 4-unit apartment, barns, equipment building, fenced paddocks & pasture and crop/hay production.

Presented by Camille Gracie

\$4,500,000.00

SOLD



Newlin Township

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Presented by Amy McKenna

\$1,275,000

SOLD

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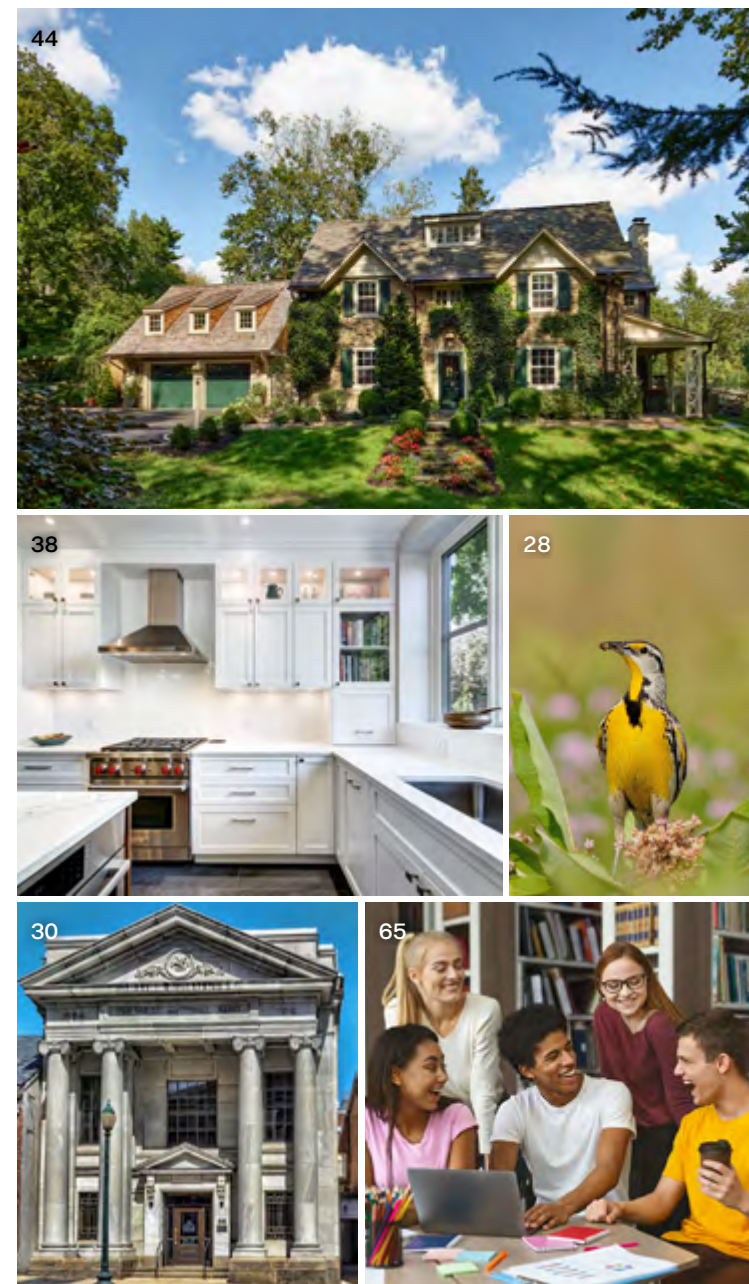
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[Good to Know]

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

Seoul Sister. It's official: Media has a **sister city** in South Korea. The recently signed agreement promotes the collaboration between the Delaware County seat and Boseong-gun, a county nearly 200 miles south of Seoul with a population around 40,000. The communities are linked by Dr. Philip Jaisohn, a Korean independence activist who came to the U.S. as a refugee in 1884. Learn more at the Philip Jaisohn Memorial House, *100 E. Lincoln St., Media. Jaisohn.org.*



Checking In. At long last, **Hotel Indigo** is open for business in downtown West Chester. The 108-room boutique hotel features a fitness center, meeting/event spaces and three dining options: the Corner Cafe, West Chester Seafood Kitchen and Room 109 speakeasy. With nods to local history around every corner — ram details in guest rooms, portrait of courthouse architect Thomas U. Walter in the lobby — no wonder it's already fully booked for WCU commencement weekend. *39 E. Gay St., West Chester. IHG.com/HotelIndigo.*



Forbidden Phrases. Since 1976, Lake Superior State University has *dropped* its annual **Banished Words List** of *cringe-worthy* words we should stop *utilizing* in the new year. This year's list is a real *game changer*, featuring 10 words and phrases that are *100%* in their flop *era*. We're *sorry not sorry* to see them go, even if we still don't understand what *skibidi* means. What made the list for 2025? Well, *IYKYK. Period. LSSU.edu/Traditions/BanishedWords.*



Turning the Page. Used bookstore Second Reading II is starting a new chapter. Now called **More Than Books**, the volunteer-run shop is moving from the Parkway Shopping Center to Gay Street Plaza early this month. The new, larger space will still offer secondhand books, music and movies, with proceeds now benefiting the West Chester Food Cupboard instead of the West Chester Senior Center. Donations are paused until the store reopens. *525 E. Gay St., West Chester. Facebook.com/WCSecondBook2.*

State Street Reads.

Bookworms, rejoice: downtown Media is home to a new independent bookstore. Following a holiday pop-up in December, **Bookish Notions** is now open on East State Street. Browse loads of books, plus gifts and goodies for bibliophiles — stickers, tote bags, stationery, puzzles, even literary-inspired temporary tattoos! *11 E. State St., Media. On Instagram @Bookish_Notions.*



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[best Local Events]

Firebird Festival in Phoenixville

February 1



After the December postponement, the Phoenix will rise again. The mission of this annual event that draws huge crowds to town is to foster a collaboration of local artistic and creative talent and to enhance the cultural life of Phoenixville. The festival is thrilling and fun for all with drummers, dancers, fire breathers and live music. Burning of the Firebird at Veteran's Field, 192 Mowere Rd. 5 to 10 p.m. Free. FirebirdFestival.com.

"A Raisin in the Sun" at People's Light

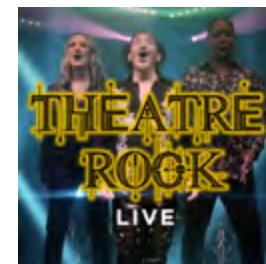
February 19–March 30



You don't want to miss this award-winning classic that's both intimate and mythic in scope. Lorraine Hansberry's pivotal drama portrays three generations sharing a cramped apartment on the segregated South Side of 1950s Chicago as they argue over how to spend the proceeds of a life insurance policy, revealing deep generational divides. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, 610-644-3500; PeoplesLight.org.

Theater Rock Live at Uptown

February 22



Prepare for an unforgettable night when rock meets musical theater magic, complete with memorable melodies and an electric atmosphere. This dynamic tribute to rock musicals from the 1970s to the present features vocalists and musicians who blend Broadway's vocal prowess with the power of a rock concert. *Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center*, 226 N. High St., West Chester. VIP with reception, \$60; tickets, \$40. 7:30 p.m. UptownWestChester.org.

February Picks

by Marci Tomassone

West Chester Restaurant Week

February 23–March 2

West Chester's culinary stars will create special multi-course prix fixe menus for \$30, \$40 or \$50, featured for one week only. Dine-in and takeout options available. Visit the website for a list of participating restaurants. DowntownWestChester.com/RestaurantWeek.



American Music Theatre Presents "Riverdance"

February 25–March 2

To celebrate their 30th-year milestone, "Riverdance" is on a special anniversary tour and making a stop in Lancaster. This spectacular production rejuvenates the much-loved original show with innovative new choreography and costumes plus state-of-the-art lighting, projection and motion graphics. 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. Times and tickets, AMTShows.com.



Yesterday and Today: The Interactive Beatles Experience

February 28

This is a unique experience when, before the show, audience members fill out a card with their name, favorite Beatles song and reason for their choice. The band then weaves the audience's personal stories into their performance. *Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall*, 700 S. High St., West Chester. Times and tickets, WCUPATix.com/WCULive.



FAMILY FUN

THROUGH FEBRUARY 16

Winter Park at The Creamery. Take the family to this outdoor ice rink at The Creamery, a community gathering space in Kennett Square. The rink features Glice — synthetic ice known for its authentic skating performance. Sat, 12:30 to 6 pm; Sun, noon to 4 pm. \$10–\$15. 401 Birch St., Kennett Square. Reservations and details, KennettCreamery.com/Glice-Rink-2024.



THROUGH FEBRUARY 17

Flight on Ice. This pop-up outdoor ice skating rink brings a season of family fun, this year offering a kids zone with moon bounces, heated tents, a large LED TV, fire pits, open-air gazebos and more. You'll enjoy local entertainers and DJs plus food and beverages. A portion of proceeds are donated to the Delaware County Veterans Memorial Association. 4901 West Chester Pk., Newtown Square. Times and tickets, FlightOnIce.com.

FEBRUARY 9

Little Tykes go on Hikes. Hiking Hound Adventures presents these courses of treasure hunt hikes with fun games and hands-on activities. They cover safety, choosing the right trail, packing, leave no trace and more. Skunk Hollow Park & Trails, 490 Darby Paoli Rd., Villanova. \$20. 3 pm. Register online, RadnorRecreation.com.

FEBRUARY 14-23

Fire & Ice Festival in Lititz. This 10-day celebration features wow-worthy ice sculptures, food from downtown restaurants and food trucks. Special events include kids activities in Winter FUNderland, Art in the Park, a chili cook-off, the Makers Market and entertainment. Check website for times and details, LititzPA.com/Event/Fire-Ice-Festival.

FEBRUARY 23

Immaculata Symphony Children's Concert: "Heroes & Villains." Immaculata

Symphony partners with the Chester County Youth Orchestra to perform exciting music written to accompany our favorite heroes and villains. Children are invited to meet the musicians and to see and hear the instruments up close. Immaculata Univ., Alumnae Hall, 1145 W. King Rd., Immaculata. 3 pm. \$10. Face-book.com/ImmaculataSymphony.



MARCH 7-9

Greater Philadelphia Pet Expo. Fun for the whole family with special attractions including The Dynamo Disc Dogs, Rainforest Reptile Shows, Piggyvilla and more. The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Fri, Family Night, 3 to 8; Sat, 10 to 7; Sun, 10 to 5. \$5–\$13. FamilyPetShows.com.



MARCH 8-30

Media Theatre Youth Ensemble Presents "Honk! Jr." Travel along with Honk as he discovers his true beauty, love and acceptance. "Honk!" is witty and heart-warming and will delight audiences of all ages. 104 E. State St., Media. Times and tickets, 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

BOAT SHOWS

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 2

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. Wed–Fri, noon to 8; Sat, 10 to 8; Sun, 10 to 6. \$20; under 12, free. ACBoatShow.com.

DANCE

FEBRUARY 21-23

First State Ballet Theatre Presents "Triple Bill." Three ballets sure to move you. These are world premieres by choreographers Viktor Plotnikov, Blake Krapels and Carlos Martinez. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

DESIGN / HOME SHOWS

FEBRUARY 21-23

Philly Home + Garden Show. Visitors will find fresh inspiration, helpful tips, innovative products and fantastic deals on remodeling, home improvement, decor and outdoor spaces from hundreds of experts. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Fri, 11 to 8; Sat, 10 to 8; Sun, 10 to 6. \$10–\$12. Philly-HomeAndGarden.com.



FOOD & BREWS

THROUGH FEBRUARY

Berks County Wine Trail Chocolate & Wine Pairing Weekends. Enjoy four weekend days of pairing fabulous wines of the region with chocolates and other sweet confections. For details, visit BerksCounty-WineTrail.com.

FEBRUARY 22

Kennett Winterfest. Enjoy winter brews from over 60 unique craft breweries, live music and food trucks. Ticket price includes unlimited tastings of delicious craft beer and a mug. Visit the event website for a complete brewery list. Benefits Kennett Collaborative. 600 S. Broad St., Kennett Square. Regular admission, 12:30 to 4 pm, \$50. Designated driver, \$15. KennettBrewfest.com.

FEBRUARY 22-MARCH 2

Restaurant Week in Annapolis, MD. Take a daytrip to Annapolis, where participating restaurants will offer prix fixe menus for you to enjoy for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Visit DowntownAnnapolisPartnership.org.

MARCH 4

Chester County Community Foundation's Sweet Charity Event. A charitable evening filled with delicious food and great company. This dessert competition between the finest caterers, restaurants and bakeries supports CCCF's mission to connect people who care with causes that matter. Downingtown Country Club, 85 Country Club Dr., Downingtown. 4:30. Tickets \$125 and up. ChesCoCF.org.

FUNDRAISERS

FEBRUARY 21-23

Unite for HER—Annual Pink Invitational. Over 4,000 athletes compete to raise funds to support local breast cancer and ovarian cancer patients. Enjoy a vendor fair and gymnastics at all levels. Pennsylvania Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Phila. Daily 8 am to 10 pm. \$15–\$20. UniteForHER.org.

FEBRUARY 22

Cheers for CHOP. Party with a purpose and enjoy an evening of music, cocktails, dancing and an incredible silent auction. Benefits rare disease research at Children's Hospital of Phila. The Fillmore Philadelphia, 29 E. Allen St., Philadelphia. 7:30 pm; post-party, 11:30 pm. Tickets \$225 and up. CheersFor.CHOP.edu.

MARCH 1

DE Breast Cancer Coalition Presents the Lights of Life Gala: A Night in Paris. Enjoy an elegant evening of fine food, dancing, live and silent auctions, open bar, an art gallery and more. Bally's Dover Casino Resort, 1131 N. Dupont Hwy., Dover, DE. 5 to 9:30. \$165. DEBreastCancer.org.

GARDENS

MARCH 1-9

Philadelphia Flower Show. This year's theme, "Gardens of Tomorrow," explores



the future of gardening through the eyes of visionary designers, expert gardeners and passionate green enthusiasts, providing inspiration on how to cultivate the possibilities of tomorrow through gardening. PA Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Phila. Open daily from 10 am to 8 pm; closes at 6 pm on March 9. \$20–\$49. TheFlowerShow.com.

MUSEUMS

THROUGH FEBRUARY 16

Brandywine Museum of Art. "Up East: Andrew Wyeth in Maine." 1 Hoffman's Mill

Rd., Chadds Ford. Wed–Mon, 9:30 to 4:30. \$8–\$20. Brandywine.org.

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

THROUGH APRIL

Longwood Gardens Indoor Performance Series. In celebration of the opening of the new Mediterranean-inspired West Conservatory, Longwood welcomes artists with ties to, and showcasing the cultures of, Mediterranean climates from around the world. 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. Times and tickets, LongwoodGardens.org.



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FEBRUARY 1-15
Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center. *Feb. 1*, Dance Fantasy; *Feb. 7 & 9*, Rachel Harris; *Feb. 8*, Jingo—Heart and Soul of Santana; *Feb. 15*, “Mamma Mia!” 226 N. High St., West Chester. Times and tickets, 610-356-2787; UptownWestChester.org.


FEBRUARY 1-23
American Music Theatre. *Feb. 1*, Lee Brice: You, Me and My Guitar with special guest Nick Norman; *Feb. 8*, Three Dog Night; *Feb. 12*, Boyz II Men; *Feb. 14*, Vitamin String Quartet: The Music of Taylor Swift, Bridgerton, and Be-

yond; *Feb. 16*, Puppy Pals Live! *Feb. 21*, Little River Band with special guest Orleans; *Feb. 22*, Grand Shanghai Circus; *Feb. 23*, George Thorogood & The Destroyers: The Baddest Show on Earth. 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. Times and tickets, AMTShows.com.





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Local Farm Markets

Since many farmers markets switch to winter hours or close in inclement weather, we suggest checking websites before heading out.

Artisan Exchange, 208 Carter Dr. West Chester. Sat, 10 to 1. ArtisanExchange.net.

Berwyn Farmers Market, 511 Old Lancaster Rd. Jan–Apr, 2nd and 4th Sun, 10 to noon. BerwynFarmersMarket.com.

Bryn Mawr Farmers Market, Lancaster Ave. Bryn Mawr train station lot. Jan–Mar, 1st, 3rd and 5th Sat, 10 to noon. FarmToCityMarkets.com.

Downingtown Farmers Market, Kerr Park, Log House Field, 28 E. Pennsylvania Ave. Jan–Apr, 2nd, 4th Sat, 10 to noon. GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Eagleview Farmers Mkt., Eagleview Town Ctr., 570 Wellington Sq., Exton. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd Thurs, 3 to 5. GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Kennett Square Farmers Mkt., 600 S. Broad St. Jan 3–Apr, bi-weekly Fri, 3 to 5:30. KSQFarmersMarket.com.

Lancaster County Farmers Mkt., 389 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. Wed, Fri & Sat, 6 to 4. LancasterCountyFarmersMarket.com.

Malvern Farmers Market, Burke Park, 26 S. Warren Ave. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd Sat, 10 to noon. 484-753-6363; GrowingRootsPartners.com.

Media Farmers Market, Edgemont St. between Front & State Sts. Dec–Mar, 1st and 3rd Sun, 10 to noon. FarmToCityMarkets.com.

Newtown Square Farmers Mkt., 3625 Chapel Rd. Fri, 3 to 6. Facebook.com/NewtownSquareFoodAndMakersMarket.

Phoenixville Farmers Market, 200 Mill St. Jan 6–Mar 30, Sat, 10 to noon. PhoenixvilleFarmersMarket.org.

Thornbury Farmers Mkt. & CSA, 1256 Thornbury Rd., West Chester. Thurs–Fri, noon to 6; Sat, 9 to 6; Sun, 11 to 5. ThornburyFarmCSA.com.

West Chester Growers Mkt., Chestnut & Church Sts. Jan–Apr, 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat, 10 to noon. WestChesterGrowersMarket.com.

Westtown Amish Market, 1165 Wilmington Pk., West Chester. Thur, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 7; Sat, 8 to 4. WestChesterAmishMarket.com.

For more visit the Chester County Farm Guide online at ChesCoFarming.org.



FEBRUARY 1-MARCH 1
The Keswick Theatre. *Feb. 1*, Who's Bad (Michael Jackson Tribute); *Feb. 2*, The Price is Right Live; *Feb. 7*, Three American Troubadours: Celebrating James Taylor, Carly Simon and Carole King; *Feb. 8*, Let's Sing Sabrina; *Feb. 11*, Hindley Street Country Club; *Feb. 14*, The Million Dollar Experience: A Celebration of Sun Records; *Feb. 15*, Vic DiBitto; *Feb. 16*, Trapped Between the Kingdom and the Culture; *Feb. 18*, WXPN Welcomes Travis: Raze The Bar Tour; *Feb. 21*, George Thorogood & The Destroyers; *Feb. 22*, Dirty Deeds: The AC/DC Experience; *Feb. 25*, The Moody Blues' John Lodge; *Feb. 27*, Matt Nathanson; *Feb. 28*, Howard Jones & ABC; *Mar. 1*, A Live Conversation with John Cusack. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Times and tickets, KeswickTheatre.com.

FEBRUARY 1-MARCH 7
At The Grand in Wilmington. *Feb. 1*, In Conversation with The Sopranos featuring cast members Steve Schirripa, Vincent Pastore, Michael Imperioli, hosted by comedian Joey Kola; *Feb. 8*, Dan + Claudia Zanes with Tyree Austin; *Feb. 8*, Jay and Silent Bob: The Aural Sects Tour in Copeland Hall; *Feb. 15*, The Rock Orchestra performs Phil Collins; *Feb. 22*, Elvis Costello and Steve Nieve; *Feb. 23*, Air Supply; *Feb. 28*, An Evening with Sutton Foster; *Mar. 7*, Seldom Seen. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

FEBRUARY 2-22
Kennett Flash. *Feb. 2*, The Legendary Kennett Flash Open Mic Night; *Feb. 6*, New Songs, Old Friends: Lauren Calve Residency; *Feb. 8*, Highway Run: tribute to the music of Journey and women in rock; *Feb. 15*, The Hoppin' John Orchestra: Mardi Gras Show; *Feb. 21*, Angry Young Band: A Tribute to Billy Joel; *Feb. 22*, Seattle Tribute Night featuring Riot Act (Pearl Jam), Loud Love (Chris Cornell) and Into The Flood Again (Alice in Chains). 102 Sycamore Alley, Kennett Square. Times and tickets, 484-732-8295; KennettFlash.org.



FEBRUARY 15
Get Happy! Celebration 100+ Years of Judy Garland at Media Theatre. Join

Jenna Pastuszek and Broadway music director Joshua Zecher-Ross in this 100th birthday celebration of Judy Garland. 104 E. State St., Media. Times and tickets, 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

FEBRUARY 15-MARCH 7
At The Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville. *Feb. 15*, Floydian Trip: Brick by Brick to Benefit the 1903 Theatre; *Feb. 19*, Folsom Prison Experience; *Feb. 21*, Kashmir: The Spirit of Led Zeppelin Live! *Mar. 2*, Marc Broussard: Time is a Thief Tour; *Mar. 7*, Seven Wonders: A Tribute

to Fleetwood Mac. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. Times and tickets, TheColonialTheatre.com.



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OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....

FEBRUARY 15

Wolf Sanctuary of PA Full Moon Fund-raiser. Bring a blanket, flashlight, chair and a sense of adventure. The event features a bonfire (weather permitting), entertainment and wolf tours that are self-guided with volunteers. 465 Speedwell Forge Rd., Lititz. 7:30 to 10 pm. \$35, must be 16 years old. WolfSanctuaryPA.org.

THEATER.....

THROUGH FEBRUARY 22

Dutch Apple Theatre Presents "Murder for Two: A Musical." A blend of a classical musical comedy and madcap mystery. 510 Centerville Rd., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-898-1900; DutchApple.com.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 23

"Something Rotten!" at The Candlelight Theatre. Welcome to the Renaissance and the outrageous, crowd-pleasing musical farce. 2208 Millers Rd., Wilmington. Times and tickets, 302-475-2313; CandlelightTheatre-Delaware.org.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 23

SALT Performing Arts presents "Legally Blonde The Musical." A treat for the whole family. 1645 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. Times and tickets, 610-513-5839; SALTPA.com.

FEBRUARY 7-MARCH 16

"The Irish ... And How They Got That Way" at The Fulton. Enjoy an irreverent history of the Irish through the 20th and 21st centuries through the eyes of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Frank McCourt ("Angela's Ashes"). 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.



FEBRUARY 14-MARCH 9

"Jesus Christ Superstar" at The Fulton. A timeless work, the edgy rock opera is set against the backdrop of an extraordinary and universally known series of events but seen through the eyes of Judas Iscariot. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 9

"Tuesdays With Morrie" at Delaware Theatre Company. Based on the best-

selling memoir, the play is a tender yet profound recounting of teacher and student reuniting for one final lesson. 200 Water St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, 302-594-1100; DelawareTheatre.org.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS

FEBRUARY 7

1st Fridays

Coatesville, 484-786-8896; DowntownCoatesvillePA.com. **Lancaster City,** 717-509-ARTS; VisitLancasterCity.com. **Oxford,** 610-998-9494; OxfordMainStreet.com; **Phoenixville,** 610-933-3253; PhoenixvilleFirst.org. **West**

Chester, 610-738-3350; DowntownWestChester.com. **Wilmington Art Loop,** 302-576-2135; ArtLoopWilmington.org. ♦

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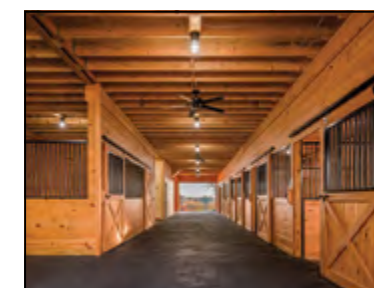
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Purple and Gold

SCENES FROM WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY'S STORY

Jennifer Green & Sarah Wagner

WHEN THE WORDS “CHES-ter County history” are mentioned, many images come to mind — “Quakers,” “Women’s Rights,” “Underground Railroad.” But one of the keystones of this county’s history is its strong and consistent emphasis on education, and an important building block is West Chester University.

EARLY YEARS: TRAINING EDUCATORS

One-room schoolhouses proliferated in our region in the 18th and early 19th centuries. But things changed dramatically in 1834 when Governor George Wolf signed into law Pennsylvania’s Free School Bill, paving the way for the commonwealth’s first public schools. With the rise of publicly funded education came a resulting demand for qualified teachers.

Later in 1857, the state legislature passed a law dividing Pennsylvania into 12 districts and urged each district to construct a school specifically for training teachers.

Where would the vast number of new teachers required for the public schools be trained? It turns out West Chester University — originally founded in 1812 as a private school called West Chester Academy — had a pivotal role in educating the new educators.

In 1870, a cornerstone was laid for the first of many green serpentine buildings at what would next become West Chester Normal School. (The term “normal school” comes from the French *école normale*, a school where future educators were trained in model teaching practices.)

The Normal School welcomed its first class of 160 students in 1871. More than 20 years passed before the faculty, among

many other things, chose the school’s official colors — purple and gold. Though the school colors remain the same today, the faculty’s dubious school yell of “Hoo! Rah! Rah!, Hoo! Ray! Ray!, Rah! Rah! Rah!, Rah! He!, S.N.S.!, W.C.!” has fallen by the wayside. More trivia: early mascots included a dog named Puck and a goat named Elmer before the school settled on the Golden Ram in the 1960s.

The evolution continued. In 1960, the Normal School became West Chester State College, and then in 1983, it adopted its current name: West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

FAMOUS GUESTS AND ALUMNI

The Normal School welcomed many influential figures over the years. These included future President Theodore Roos-

1

1. WCU Old Library, built 1902
2. Recitation Hall, built 1892
3. Old Main Archway Remains

2

3



evelt, who gave a lecture titled “Our Native Land” in January 1896, and suffragist Henrietta G. Moore, who spoke to a large crowd of men and women in the school’s chapel in February 1898.

One of the most notable and frequent visitors was Frederick Douglass, the famed abolitionist, activist and political leader. In 1895, Douglass delivered his last public speech at West Chester’s campus. In his “Against Lynch Law” address, Douglass advocated for a federal law to make lynching a federal crime, warning of the dangers it posed to law and order in the country. Douglass died less than three weeks later, and more than 125 years before this country enacted an anti-lynching law in 2022.

West Chester University has also produced notable alumni. A recent high-profile alum is Dr. Jill Biden, the former first lady who earned her master’s degree in education in 1981. Another is Michael Brune, former Sierra Club executive director, who earned dual degrees in economics and finance in 1993.

- Other notable alumni include:
- Philip M. Sharpless (1857–1944), who founded the largest industrial enterprise in West Chester’s history, the Sharpless Separator Company, which produced machines used to separate heavy cream from milk.
 - Cathy Rush (b. 1947), who earned degrees in 1968 and 1972, and coached

basketball at nearby Immaculata University, where she led the Mighty Macs to three consecutive national championships and was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2008.

- Marian Elizabeth Washington (b. 1946), who coached women’s basketball at the University of Kansas for over 30 years and was inducted into the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame in 2004.
 - Lee Woodall (b. 1969), who played eight seasons in the National Football League, including as a rookie for the San Francisco 49ers during the 1994 season when they won Super Bowl XXIX.
- Finally, let’s not forget the contributions of Donald Yetter Gardner, who earned a bachelor’s degree in music and in 1944 penned the classic holiday song “All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth.”

A LEGACY OF LEARNING

While West Chester University’s popular major — early childhood education — harkens back to its origins as a Normal School, today WCU is the largest state-owned university in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with more than 17,000 students, and is the sixth largest university in the state. Through its history and contributions, West Chester University continues to build the legacy of learning in our region. ♦

This article was a collaboration between Jennifer Green, Director of Education at Chester County

Serpentine

Ever wondered why there are greenish buildings on West Chester University’s campus? It’s from the serpentine stone.

A prime example is the first building of West Chester Normal School, called “Old Main,” designed by architect Addison Hutton, who had a penchant for using serpentine. The serpentine used in Old Main, the largest serpentine building in the world, came from nearby Brinton’s quarry, which also supplied stone for many fine homes in West Chester, including the famous “Four Sisters” on Virginia Avenue.

As the university grew and new buildings were added, they too boasted the unique green hue that made the campus distinctive. But because of serpentine stone’s tendency to absorb water, leading to accelerated deterioration, it’s rarely used now as a building material.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CHESTER COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

History Center, and Sarah Wagner, Outreach Officer for the Chester County

Community Foundation, who are working to gather community support for Chesco 250. The Brandywine Stories series brings awareness to the expansive history and culture of Chester County, building excitement for 2026, the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.





Step Up Your Fitness

DANCE CAN BOOST YOUR HEALTH ...
AND YOU'LL HAVE FUN!

Shannon Montgomery

engages more muscles than traditional exercises, including small support muscles and tendons. Dancing can also lead to better balance, flexibility and coordination — it's no easy feat moving your arms, legs, head and body all at once!

Plus, dance can improve your mind as well as your body. In a recent study, Australian researchers reported that structured dance of any style can be better for mental and cognitive health than other exercise. "Learning dance sequences may challenge cognition, partnered or group dance may benefit social interactions, and the artistic aspect may improve psychological well-being," the study's lead author wrote.

Suzy Keenan of West Chester's Carousel Ballroom certainly finds this to be true. "When you hear the beautiful music and start moving in rhythm with a partner, it removes your mind from the stresses of the day," she said. "Dancing is a great form of exercise that's social at the same time — unlike walking on a treadmill. ... People who come to our dance parties for the first time are surprised at how friendly, encouraging and inviting our students are."

Finally, dancing is just plain fun. When you're genuinely enjoying yourself, it's easier to commit to exercising — and stick to it!

WHY DANCE?

As it turns out, dancing comes with a host of benefits and plenty of reasons to get started.

First and foremost, dance is a great way to get moving. Like all physical activity, dancing regularly can strengthen muscles, reduce fat, increase heart and lung capacity, lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels. A study from the University of Brighton found that dancing can burn over 300 calories every 30 minutes — as much or more than swimming, cycling or jogging. And, as a weight-bearing exercise, dance promotes bone tissue growth, leading to denser and stronger bones.

In fact, you may even be getting a *better* workout than you would at the gym. Dance requires moving your whole body in a variety of ways and directions, which

CHOOSING A STYLE

Dance dates back to our earliest human civilizations, so a wide variety of styles have evolved over the millennia to choose from. Feeling overwhelmed? Here are a few popular forms of dance to consider.

Ballroom and Latin dance are often considered beginner-friendly and easy to learn. While these popular partner dances often go hand-in-hand (pun intended), there are some key differences. Ballroom dancing tends to be a bit slower, incorporating smooth, flowing dances like the waltz, foxtrot and tango. Latin dance, on the other hand, includes a number of lively, rhythmic dances like the cha-cha, rhumba, salsa and samba.

For those looking to improve balance and posture, ballet is an excellent option.

Fans of exercises like yoga and Pilates will find ballet emphasizes many of the same key elements, including controlled movements, core engagement and body awareness. Meanwhile, hip-hop is great for improving cardiovascular health, featuring sharp, rhythmic movements set to upbeat, often fast music.

One style that's gaining traction, especially in our area, is country line dance. Folks are drawn to line dancing for the music, social scene and easy-to-follow choreography. Popular line-dancing spots in our area include West Chester's Brickette Lounge and the Thorndale Inn, which hosts lessons on Sunday evenings.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR SENIORS

While dancing boasts positive effects for all ages, studies have shown that it can be especially beneficial for older adults. The *New York Times* once proposed that dance is the "kale of exercise," boosting physical and cognitive health for seniors.

Research suggests that dancing can increase the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for learning, memory and equilibrium. This is especially critical for seniors, who are at increased risk of injury from falls. As for other benefits, one study found that out of 11 different exercises, dance was the only one associated with a lower risk of dementia.

"Dance provides a variety of health benefits for adults of all ages, including seniors," said Claire Jones, Director of Dance Education at the Upper Main Line YMCA. "Most forms of dance can be adapted to the experience level of the participant and offer a gentle form of movement that aids in strength and flexibility while improving balance and stability. Beyond the physical benefits, adults who participate in dance regularly benefit from social connections, mindfulness and improved mental focus."

Jones teaches Silver Swans, a ballet program developed by the Royal Academy of Dance in London. Designed for those 55 and older, Silver Swans is open to adults of all ages, both members and guests of the Y.

Carousel Ballroom's Keenan knows firsthand the cognitive benefits of dance for older adults. "With dancing, the more you learn, the more you want to learn," she said. "One of our students didn't start dancing until he was close to retirement, and he wanted to learn to dance with his daughter at her wedding. He's fascinated with recalling the movements and delights in leading unexpected moves — to the equal delight of his dance partner."

Whether it's for fitness, mood, social connections or simply for fun, there's plenty of reasons to get dancing. This winter and beyond, lace up your dancing shoes and boogie on! ♦

Get Moving

Ready to get started? Here are a few beginner-friendly dance classes to try. Check websites for dates and times.

Chester County Lifelong Learning

Adult Beginner Ballet
Adult Beginning Hip-Hop
Line Dancing Level 1
More at CCLifeLearn.org.

Carousel Ballroom

Ballroom and Latin Dance for Beginners

*Free Open House: April 29, 7 to 8 p.m.
319 Westtown Rd., Ste. P, West Chester. Register at CCLifeLearn.org.

Thorndale Inn

Country Line Dance & Lessons
430 Bondsville Rd., Downingtown.
More at DJExpressJim.com.

Upper Main Line YMCA School of Dance Education

Adult Tap
Silver Swans
*Free Silver Swans Trial Class: February 6, 9 to 10 a.m.
Adult Ballet
1416 Berwyn-Paoli Rd., Berwyn.
More at YMCAGBW.org.

PHOTO CREDIT: SEBASTIAAN TERBURG



Dancers at Carousel Ballroom



1

DOWN But Not OUT

2



SOMETIMES BIRDERS NEED TO LOOK DOWN AND TREAD CAREFULLY.

Kit Werner, Natural Lands

CLAUDIA WINTERS, NATURAL LANDS' assistant preserve manager for Sadsbury, Willisbrook and Green Hills Preserves, is a self-professed birder. Okay, actually she's a wildlifer — she has a passion for myriad critters and the natural areas that protect and sustain them.

Claudia's appreciation for the outdoors began at an early age. "Starting when I was very young, I'd climb the pine trees out in the yard. I was so small that I could get almost all the way to the top. From 50 feet up, I'd look out over the surrounding farms and fields as the tree top swayed in the wind."

As a bird lover, Claudia had kept looking out and up, usually with binoculars at the ready.

WHEN TO LOOK DOWN

That's except when it comes to looking for bobolinks, eastern meadowlarks or grasshopper sparrows during spring breeding season. These native songbird species all build their nests on the ground, tucked between clumps of meadow grasses. To spot these tiny nests, Claudia has to look down and be careful where she steps.

"They pick a spot, usually a little depression in the ground, and then weave dried grasses into a tiny, cup-shaped nest," said Claudia. "They're so well camouflaged."

Nationwide, grassland birds are struggling. Researchers estimate many species have lost more than half their population since 1970. One quarter of these are "Tipping Point" species: birds that are predicted to lose another 50% of their population in the next 50 years.

These bird species spend their winters in the southern U.S., Central or South America. They migrate north in the spring to breed in the grasslands of the northern U.S. and southern Canada. With the decline of native prairies and meadows, these species have adapted well to hayfields and pastures. But, as more farms are lost to development, grassland species are struggling to survive.

KNOW WHEN TO MOW—AFTER JULY 15

Fortunately, the meadows and farm fields of Natural Lands' preserves are ideal nesting habitat for ground-nesting birds. That is, of course, unless the land is mowed before the baby birds have fledged (become able to leave the nest).

"We can control when we mow our fields or when our farmers harvest their crops. All of Natural Lands' properties



3



4

PHOTO CREDIT: KATI FLEMING

1. Eastern meadowlark

2. Grasshopper sparrow

3. Bobolink

4. Chestnut-collared longspur nest, another ground-nesting bird species

with native grassland or farmland are managed through delayed mowing practices with a 'no mow before' date of July 15th," said Claudia. "But we need to spread the word to other landowners and farmers if we're going to give these birds a fighting chance."

That's why Natural Lands has joined with Willistown Conservation Trust to partner on the Grassland Bird Collaboration, which they launched in 2022. With a grant from the Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, the Collaboration reaches out to Chester County property owners and the farmers who work these lands. "We work with these partners to provide guidance on best management practices to benefit the three focal species: bobolink, eastern meadowlark and grasshopper sparrow," said Claudia.

One of the most vital land management practices is to delay mowing during the breeding period. Mowing before birds complete their nesting cycle removes available habitat. Implementing a "no-mow" period when there are babies and fledglings in a field allows young birds to develop in a safe environment before the nesting grounds are disturbed.

So far, the Collaboration has enrolled more than 1,000 acres of privately held land to participate in "bird-sensitive" field management practices. The goal is to expand that number to 1,500 acres.

THANKS TO MUSHROOM FARMERS

Chester County is well positioned to support this conservation effort thanks to local mushroom farms — and their demand for mulch hay. Mushroom houses prefer later-season hay that's been left to mature and dry in the fields. Providing for the mushroom market means there's less disruption to farming practices and to the grassland birds during their crucial breeding period.

"The unique local agricultural market provides a great opportunity to work with farmers to meet our conservation goals," said Zoë Warner, project manager for the Grassland Bird Collaboration. "This enables us to increase the wildlife benefit of conserved land within a large contiguous preservation belt. The land won't simply be 'open space.' It will provide valuable and essential breeding grounds to help reverse the precipitous decline of grassland birds."

"These birds don't just rely on our fields and meadows for nesting. They also use them as stopover sites or staging grounds, before or during migration," said Claudia, who coordinates Natural Lands' involvement in the Grassland Bird Collaboration. Her work includes monitoring breeding pairs of grassland species at Bryn Coed, ChesLen and Stroud Preserves.

"We found that bobolinks in particular feast on insects and seeds in preparation for their 6,000-mile journey back to South America. Especially when surrounding fields have been mowed, the grasslands enrolled in the program are a lifeline to these amazing animals."

Next time you're strolling in a meadow or field this spring or summer, remember to look down! ♦

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BILL MOSES AND NATURAL LANDS

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 Greater Philadelphia region's oldest and largest land conservation organization, Natural Lands — which is member supported — has preserved more than 125,000 acres, including 42 nature preserves and one public garden totaling more than 23,000 acres. Nearly five million people live within five miles of land under the organization's protection. Land for life, nature for all. NatLands.org.



West Chester's 13th Preservation Awards

MORE PROJECTS AND PEOPLE TO CELEBRATE

Jane E. Dorchester, Founding Preservation Awards Committee Chair

AMONG THE MANY WAYS WEST CHESTER CELEBRATES what makes it a special place to live, work and visit is through the annual Preservation Awards. Presented for the past 13 years, these awards recognize the ongoing efforts of civic-minded property owners to restore and rehabilitate the Borough's historic fabric as well as to thoughtfully accommodate necessary change. Additional awards recognize special contributions by individuals and organizations.

Presented by the West Chester Downtown Foundation, this year's awards highlighted four Bricks and Mortar Award winners and, for the first time, two, rather than a single, Special Recognition Award winners. The Preservation Awards Program started in 2008, and the popular program has grown ever since.

Here are the most recent winners that demonstrate the value and power of preservation and its impact on the architecture, streetscapes and life in West Chester.

BRICK AND MORTAR AWARDS

The Bricks and Mortar Awards recognize a wide variety of construction projects that demonstrate the creative ways best preservation practices can be used to preserve, restore or rehabilitate historic buildings and their settings. There were four award recipients for 2024.

9 Prime (1912), Adaptive Reuse, 9 North High Street. 9 Prime won in recognition of the owners' exemplary rehabilitation of

the Neo-Classical-style First Bank of West Chester into an elegant restaurant and speakeasy. The adaptive reuse preserved the exterior's historic fabric, with its marble Ionic columns and its part in West Chester's classically inspired architectural core on North High Street. The interior design preserved the bank's historic character yet inserted modern elements to accommodate the new use. This project clearly demonstrates how a significant building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, can retain its original grandeur while being sensitively rehabilitated for a new commercial use.

Curtis Hoopes Hannum House (1887), Restoration, 322 North Matlack Street. The Hannum House was recognized for the owners' careful restoration of this 1887 Stick-style Victorian house. When the owners purchased the property in 2023, it was in need of significant maintenance both inside and out. On the exterior, windows were refurbished, gutters and downspouts were added, roof shingles and flashings were replaced, and the elaborate woodwork was repainted in a pleasing modern version of its traditional color scheme. Repairs and renovations made to the interior included revising the apartment floor plans for single-family occupancy and removing the baseboard heating system, which revealed original tall baseboards. This project is a fine example of the restoration of a distinctive Victorian-era mansion.

House (c. 1900) Renovation, 631 North Matlack Street. This project won its award in recognition of its owners' thoughtful

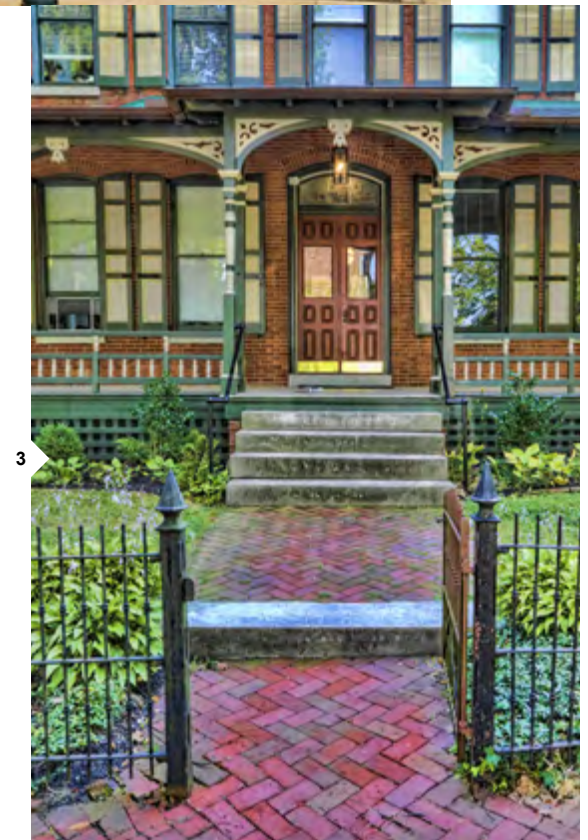
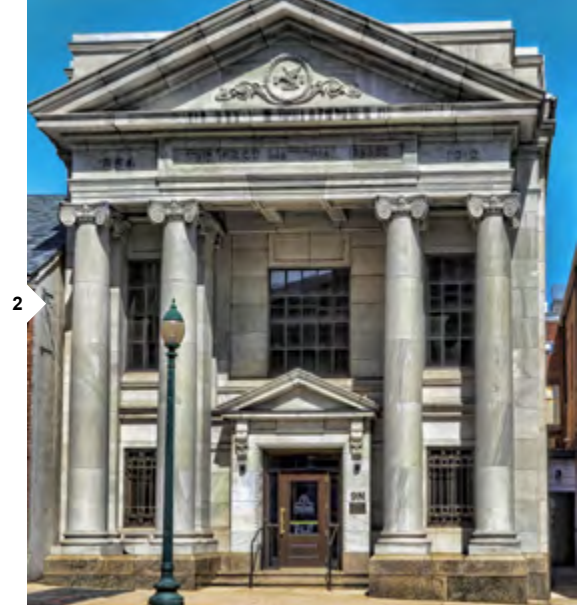
renovation and additions, which restored the exterior of the house, replaced the roofing, and cleaned and restored the "Valley Forge White" stone foundation. At the same time, a new addition was constructed to increase the footprint of the house, while minimizing the visual impact — a new garage, pool and patio were added at the rear of the property. A new addition was built of matching local stone and included compatible new windows and locally sourced wood flooring. This project is an excellent example of how a historic building can be expanded for modern living without sacrificing its historic integrity and respecting and improving the character of a residential neighborhood.

Dower House (c. 1755) Renovation, 100 Goshen Road. The Dower House was recognized for the owners' creative renovation of and addition to one of the most well-known and the oldest continuously occupied house in West Chester, which R. Bognard Okie modernized in the 1920s. The 21st-century renovation included constructing a new entry foyer with mudroom, powder room and staircase, restoring the butler's pantry, and upgrading existing heating and electrical systems. A two-story rear ell, made from stone taken from the house's core, was added, creating a new kitchen, dining area and bedroom suite. Much of the existing stone, doors, hardware, cabinets and millwork were reused in the new addition. This project is a prime example of how collaboration among architects, craftspeople and owners can produce a project combining a modern lifestyle with the charm and character of an iconic historic home.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

These awards recognize contributions that increase understanding of the history of West Chester and of the importance of preserving the physical evidence of that history. For the first time, two awards were given.

John Suplee, Artist, was presented with a Special Recognition Award for his long career and large body of work providing a visual record of the Borough's history through his paintings of streetscapes, characteristic buildings and everyday details of West Chester and the surrounding area. Over his 50-year career, John's relatable and timeless paintings chronicle everything from well-known landmarks



1. Dower House Renovation
PHOTO COURTESY JEFFREY TOTARO
2. 9 Prime Adaptive Reuse
3. Curtis Hoopes Hannum House Restoration
4. House (c. 1900) Renovation



5



6

- 5. John Suplee
- 6. Painting by John Suplee
- 7. Timlyn Vaughan
- 8. Photograph of East Market Street by Timlyn Vaughan



7



8

to little-known resources. Many of his paintings provide the only record of resources that have been lost over time. By continuously providing fresh perspectives of the Borough's architecture and streetscapes, John reminds us of the importance of appreciating its historic character and preserving this special town.

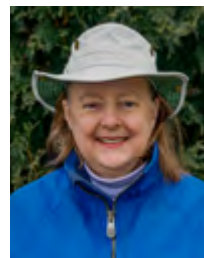
Timlyn (Tim) Vaughan, Photographer, was also presented with a Special Recognition Award, this one for his unique, creative and evocative photographs of West Chester. The distinctive character of his images chronicle everything from well-known features of West Chester's built environment to lesser-known and hidden details. In addition to being part of private collections, his work is in the permanent collections of the Hotel Warner, Chester County Hospital and the Chester County Courthouse. Tim has also played an important public service role promoting art throughout the Borough, including as a founding member of the West Chester Borough Public Arts Commission, a mentor to emerging artists and the official photographer for these Preservation Awards. Throughout his career, Tim has demonstrated that preserving West Chester's historic fabric is closely aligned to the preserving and promoting the arts.

FOR 2025

The upcoming 14th Preservation Awards will kick off April 10 this year, when nominations open for 2025, and close June 10. Nomination forms and rules are available at the Downtown West Chester office or online at *DowntownWestChester.com*. Winners will be announced in July, and the Awards Ceremony will take place on Thursday, October 16, 2025.

Please help recognize projects that have enhanced West Chester's historic character by submitting a nomination! ♦

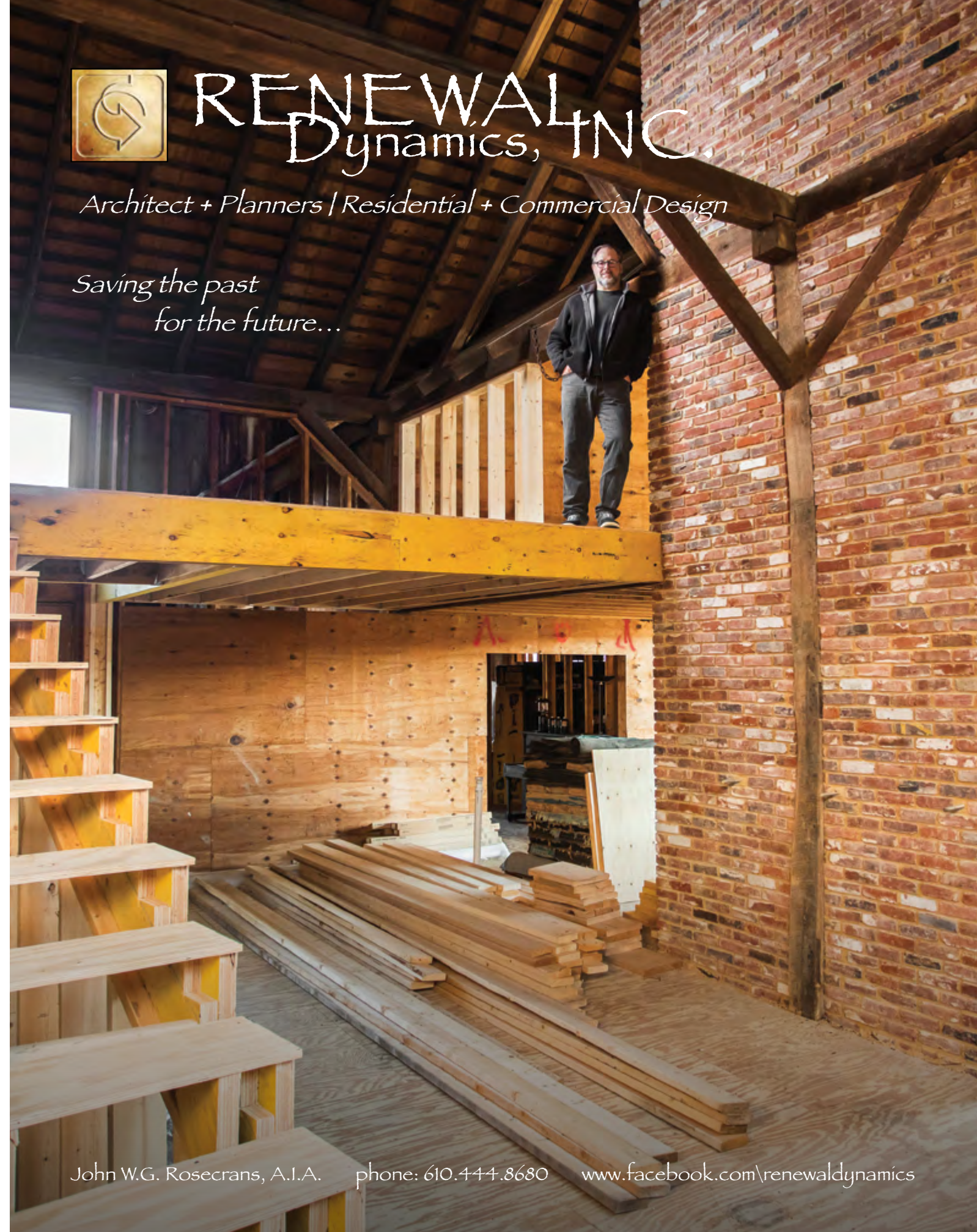
Jane E. Dorchester has worked in the preservation field since 1983, specializing in historic property research, historic resource inventories and surveys, and National Register nominations. In 2001, she received a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania and currently runs a historic preservation consulting firm located in East Goshen Township.



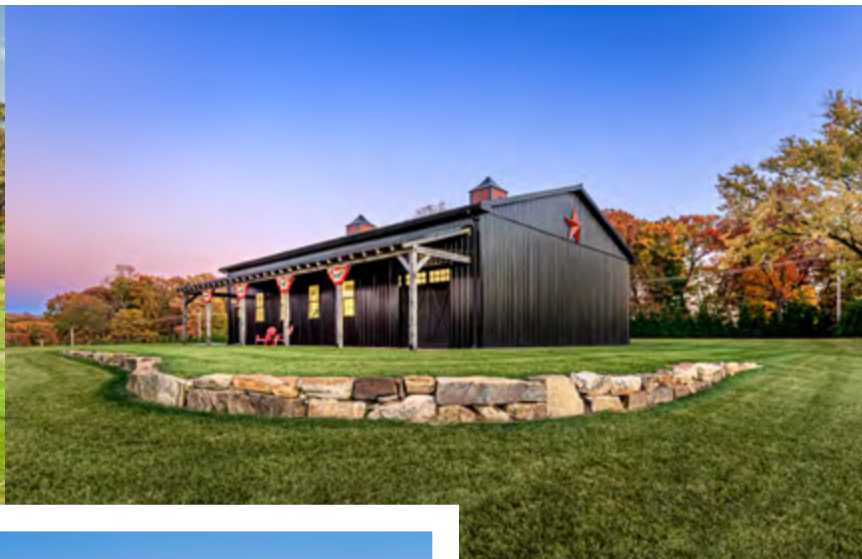
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Sarah and Ron Bronson breaking ground on their new home



BYOB: Build Your Own Barn

A COUPLE CREATES THEIR DREAM HOME IN EAST FALLOWFIELD TOWNSHIP

Shannon Montgomery

FOR SARAH AND RON BRONSON, IT ALL STARTED WITH A red barn.

This goes back 22 years, when the pair married at West Chester's Snug Hollow Farm Bed & Breakfast and held their reception in a red barn. From that day forward, Sarah and Ron dreamed of living in a barn someday.

For about a decade, the couple looked for the perfect property. Both Henderson High School grads — “We started dating before I could drive,” Sarah said — they wanted to stay in Chester County. Just as they were about to give up that part of their dream, they discovered 30 acres of undeveloped land in East Fallowfield Township.

At first, it seemed impossible. “Sarah said, ‘What do we need 30 acres for?’” Ron recalled. “She didn’t talk to me for two days.”

Then, the plan came together. They’d sell their rental property in Downingtown along with a 10-acre parcel of the East Fallowfield property, and they’d do much of the work themselves. After four years of hoping, planning, hard work and perseverance, the Bronsons built their dream home: a red barn.

BUILDING A BARN

After purchasing the property for their dream home in 2016, Sarah and Ron got to work. They began cleaning up the land, camping there in a tent on weekends, while saving up money — the Bronsons funded the build primarily through a home equity loan, with no additional construction loan.

The couple had a general idea of what they wanted — a red barn, four dormers in the front and back, covered porches. Ron drew up the floor plan, and they handed the reins to Mark C. Meyers Architects, based in Downingtown. After two years of preparation, they were ready to build.

Aided by Sarah’s experience in real estate and Ron’s as a contractor, the couple decided to be their own general contractors, collecting bids and coordinating local subcontractors, such as Lancaster County Cupolas for custom cupolas atop the house and garage.

Sarah estimated they did about 40% of the home building themselves — or, as Ron put it, “most everything after the drywall.” This included laying hardwood floors, installing tile and backsplashes, hanging doors and installing trim. Sarah painted all the interior trim herself, including high dormer trim that required scaf-



folding. Outside, Sarah and Ron built their mahogany deck and planted privacy trees, plus decorative trees and shrubs — they’ve planted over 180 trees and counting. “We put money where we felt it was necessary and got creative where we could to save money,” the couple explained.

Sarah and Ron spent about 14 months building their home, while both still worked full time. They came to the property to work on the house before and after heading off to their day jobs and every weekend, when they’d sleep on an air mattress on the floor of the ongoing construction.

Their new home was almost finished when the pandemic hit in 2020. “The kitchen was being built, and the cabinets were being installed when the shutdown occurred,” Sarah remembered. Fortunately, their cabinetmaker, Bird-in-Hand’s Stoltzfoos Home Improvement, was able to finish the job after a few weeks’ delay.

Though most stores were closed, they were able to get furniture custom-built by Amish artisans. All in all, Ron estimated the pandemic set the project back only about a month. “We were so lucky that our timing was right at the tail end.”

The most challenging part, Sarah and Ron agreed, was selling their previous home at the onset of the pandemic during that unsettled real estate market. The first contract for their Downingtown rancher fell through, so the couple made some improvements and put it back on the market. Then, after hosting a virtual open house on Zoom, a bidding war ensued.

“It turned out our biggest challenge was also our biggest piece of luck,” Ron reflected.

PERSONAL TOUCHES

Come up the winding driveway, past the black pole barn garage built by Heritage Post Frame and arrive at the Bronson’s front porch. In front of the main entrance, a compass stamped into the concrete points true north. Then, step

inside a home tailor-made by and for Sarah and Ron, where personal touches and thoughtful details abound.

Enter into a large, open-concept living space, framed by asymmetrical wooden beams resembling a converted barn. A thermostat-controlled gas fireplace, corner bistro seating and reclaimed barn wood accents lend a sense of coziness.

Behind the living area is a rustic-inspired kitchen complete with a farmhouse sink, tile rooster above the stove and custom range hood that Sarah designed. Anchoring the otherwise white kitchen is a royal blue island, in memory of Ron’s grandmother who, as she was aging, mistakenly remembered the couple having a blue kitchen.

To the left of the living space is Sarah’s favorite part of the house: her corner office. Framed by sliding barn doors, the focal point of the room is an upcycled desk that makes good use of leftover barn wood.

Continue on to a guest suite with another sliding door, allowing family and guests extra privacy. Then find the primary suite, full of details for easy living — washer and dryer in the closet, heated floors, under-cabinet lights in the bathroom, and outlets in vanity drawers for a hairdryer and appliances.

Glass doors in the primary bedroom and living space lead to the covered back deck, looking out over 20 acres of grounds and down into what Sarah and Ron call “the valley” — a tree-lined area harkening back to their days of camping on their new property.

Now the space boasts a firepit, picnic tables, a hammock and Adirondack chairs, plus walking trails laid by Ron. “This place is our sanctuary,” said Sarah. “We feel like it’s our home and vacation home in one place.”

After two decades of dreaming, saving, planning and building, Sarah and Ron created the home they’ve wanted since their wedding day. At long last, they have their own red barn. ♦

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DREAM Kitchens

IT'S LIKELY AT LEAST ONE OF YOUR RESOLUTIONS for 2025 involved food, and equally likely it included cooking. So if you haven't abandoned that plan yet, think about the place you'll spend time in as you perfect, expand or maybe begin your cooking journey. A gorgeous kitchen will make you and your sous chef and assistants (if you want them to join) even more likely to follow through on preparing delicious unprocessed meals. Say "yes, chef" to these dream kitchens.



This traditional farmhouse kitchen features beaded-inset custom cabinet doors along with soapstone countertops, backsplash and soapstone sink. A convenient pot filler is set above the Wolf stove-top oven. And the brick paver floor complements the gray cabinet color and soapstone countertops. Add in the view — the brightly lit kitchen looks out on the gardens and greenhouse.

Courtesy E.C. Trethewey Building Contractors



Wood tones combined with creamy white cabinetry result in a kitchen that is both warm and inviting. The perimeter cabinetry contrasts beautifully with wood tones of the island and white oak hardwood floors, creating a balance between brightness and warmth. As with all islands, this one provides versatility and convenience and is as functional as it is beautiful. The marble top and prep sink provide additional workspace for the cook and serve as the perfect spot for casual meals and social gatherings. The light fixture above the island is the cherry on top, providing both task lighting and style.

Courtesy Dewson Construction



Crisp and classic. They say the kitchen is the heart of the home, but this beauty is the centerpiece of the open floor plan as well. Style and function blend seamlessly, with the oversized island offering plenty of counterspace for entertaining and meal prep. Storage pantries on both ends of the kitchen create a functional workspace, with everything right where you need it. The sundrenched space lets the grain of the walnut island shine, complementing the coffered ceiling and butcher block top. Add a generous prep sink, glass-front display and custom metal hood, and this kitchen has it all.

Courtesy Main Street Cabinet Co.



Natural light pours through the windows of this custom kitchen to illuminate its wide plank, French red oak floors. The cabinetry, crafted from white oak, features hand-carved scrolls adorning the drawer fronts and a distressed finish to emulate reclaimed lumber. Above the range, bold corbels lift the hood to the exposed rafters, repurposed from a dismantled barn. A deep apron-front farmhouse double sink, black marble countertops and slate-gray herringbone subway tiles contribute striking accents to the room.

Courtesy B&D Builders



Using natural light as a design element adds warmth and a sense of well-being to this beautifully detailed kitchen. The softer white cabinetry finish and natural stone enhance the pleasure of working with the state-of-the-art appliances in a classic Chester County kitchen. This kitchen was recently designed and installed in Chester Springs.

Courtesy Sugarbridge Kitchen & Bath Design



This kitchen was part of a modern take on a classic beach home. The mix of materials added depth and texture to the overall clean lines of the design. The softness of the plaster hood and the honed quartz countertops provide relief from the textures of the white oak cabinets, the handmade tile and all of the iron and brass accents. A perfect kitchen for relaxing and socializing over a meal.

Courtesy Waterbury Kitchen & Bath



This modern-inspired kitchen combines transitional elegance with functionality. Custom cabinetry by Superior Wood Cabinets, professional-grade appliances, and luxurious soapstone countertops and backsplash set the tone for a sleek, sophisticated space. Gold accents, walnut contrasts and Shaker-style millwork add depth, creating a warm, relaxed and timeless design to enjoy for years to come.

Courtesy Hazley Builders

PHOTO CREDIT: WEST CHESTER VIEWS

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THE BEST IS YET TO COME

SUCCESS STORIES FROM AREA REALTORS

Edited by Lauren Anderson

ANYONE WHO FOLLOWS THE REAL ESTATE market knows it's been an exciting few years in our area. Housing prices have soared, interest rates have been on a thrill ride, and local realtors have been there in the trenches, helping clients continue to find and sell homes. But without a crystal ball to look into the 2025 market, we thought a look back at success stories from 2024 might give some insight into what to expect from talented professionals.

GOOD FORTUNE

Just a stone's throw from the historic village of Unionville, a small farm with beautiful house, gardens and pond sits snugly in a landscape with wide vistas, feeling more like western Lancaster County than the eastern end of Cheshire Hunt country. What a fantastic listing, and we were honored to represent the sellers.

And, as luck would have it, buyer clients of ours purchased the charming farm and could not be happier with their slice of Chester County paradise. They're now living the dream in what we all think of as God's own country.

The next step was to find the sellers their new home. It was a small lot in a cul-de-sac development in the countryside — all the benefits of their former farm but an easier-to-manage size — the perfect downsize.

Reflecting one evening with our happy clients, I leaned against the porch railing, watching the sunset as twilight shimmered on the pond below. We shared our satisfaction about how well things often seem to work out in real estate if we let them and have the right perspective. Savoring the evening and the win-win-win deal, I'd be hard pressed to find a better profession.

*Stephen Gross, Holly Gross Group
BHHS, Fox & Roach Realtors*



ABOVE AND BEYOND

For a recent home sale, I worked with the seller, an elderly individual with physical and cognitive challenges, who was living alone in a neglected four-story estate. Despite its disrepair, the home's past grandeur was still visible. Meanwhile, the seller's distant family struggled to the face the reality of the seller's situation. Previous agents had failed to sell the property, adding additional market challenges.

Shortly after listing the property, I learned foreclosure proceedings were imminent. Although I managed to secure a delay, soon after, the client had a health crisis, leaving the home unoccupied and further damaged. Winter showings often required me to arrange heating oil deliveries and clearing the property of leaves, tree limbs and debris.

Eventually, a young family with the vision and energy to restore the estate came along. From contract to settlement, I personally coordinated clearing out the home — sorting family belongings, arranging donations and handling disposals.

The story's happy ending? The buyers, represented by another agent, invited me back to see the incredible transformation. It's rewarding to know the house has regained its former beauty, and the new owners are living their happily ever after. This experience reaffirmed my commitment to going the extra mile for my sellers and buyers.

*Camille Gracie, Country Properties
Berkshire Hathaway Home Services*



LOCATION, LOCATION

At the beginning of 2024, I sold the same home in a desirable location for the second time in three years. And to make the sale, I shared ideas to improve the home itself with potential buyers during showings. The new owner is using many of those ideas to change the home to get the dream home that she wants — and in the right location. She knew you can always change the house, but the location remains!

Recently I sold a home I lived in almost 40 years ago to clients who wanted an old farmhouse with a workshop and in-law suite — a rare find at their price and in their preferred location. They were growing frustrated from making many offers. But I counseled patience. When the right place finally came on the market, we got it in multiple bids. And even when the septic system failed, I was able to use my contacts and experience living on a farm to help the owners arrange a new septic system at that right location.

It warms my heart to get phone calls from former clients after they move in telling me how much they love their home and are so glad I helped them wait — for the right one!

Missy Schwartz, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services



BIGGEST SALE?

In early 2024, I sold a gracious estate property in Bryn Mawr, set on over two acres, with a nanny suite, gorgeous pool and even a putting green. The property sold for over \$3.5 million, so some would count that as my “biggest sale” of the year. But I’m not so sure.

Later that year, I sold a carriage house in Malvern to first-time homebuyers. They were ecstatic to find a new home where they could begin their lives together. Perhaps that was actually my “biggest sale” of the year?

During my career, I’ve enjoyed celebrating many of life’s milestone moments with my clients, including birthdays and school anniversaries of children who were “just a twinkle” in their parents’ eyes when we first met. Buying or selling a home is an important time our lives, and I am honored and privileged to be a part of those special times. ♦

Sue Fitzgerald, Compass RE





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FALLOW FIELD COTTAGE

A *Forever* Home

Carol Metzker



UP A LANE LINED WITH EVERGREENS AND DECIDUOUS trees sits a lovely stone home. Ivy climbing past original shutters and a garden in bloom, seemingly long past the normal season, lend an air of enchantment.

From a path between gardens, step into a charming atrium bathed in sunlight, the result of garden-to-roof windows. The residence's point of entry immediately sets its ambiance: a sublime combination of past and present, indoors and outdoors, and simplicity and elegance. Welcome to the "forever home" of owners Jan and Ignace.

Past and Present

Built in 1911, the original structure was the gardener's house on the estate of the Ludingtons, a prominent local family that loved learning and libraries — represented now by the one in Bryn Mawr that bears their name. The stone dwelling is perched above a pretty chauffer's cottage at the bottom of the hill. Extensions in 1955 and 1995 gave it a slightly larger footprint while retaining wonderful proportions and presence.

Jan, owner of the property from the 1990s into the 2000s, and Ignace met through their personal trainers. With no plans or interest in marrying, they went out for coffee to appease the would-be matchmakers. Their friends got it right, though. And when the couple “took the plunge” of being together, they needed a bigger house to accommodate all their treasures.

Jan brought beautiful furniture and a keen eye for decorating. Ignace brought collections of some 3,000 books, old house keys and antique maps. Both brought art and heirloom furnishings.

Archer and Buchanan Architecture, Rittenhouse Builders, plus designers and artisans brought talent and expertise to expand the space to reflect Jan's and Ignace's personalities, highlight their belongings and serve them beautifully into the future.

The couple moved into Ignace's house while Jan's home underwent a two-year transformation — renovated kitchen and bathrooms, and new additions including the atrium connecting the garage and house, a library above the garage, a gym on the lower level of the house, and a cylindrical glass elevator to connect the lowest level to the highest.

The resulting home was truly made for them. Peter Archer, partner at Archer and Buchanan, described it as “a place to be cherished.” Jan and Ignace dubbed it Fallow Field Cottage.



Indoors and Out

The two-story-plus atrium — airy, intimate and inviting — exemplifies the harmonious design and artisanship throughout the home, as well as the contributions of the couple. There's a beautiful view from every angle.

At the first-floor level, a sprawling leafy tree owned by Jan since she was 25 years old greets guests as they enter. Peer into the kitchen through a window in the stone wall, formerly the home's exterior. Look to the back. A curved white window seat beckons visitors to relax at the base of an exquisite bowed wall of windows that allows sun to splash

the space and offers views of the backyard's hillside garden. Glance two stories upward to the ceiling with old beams from Lancaster County.

For a bird's-eye view, climb a helical staircase to the mezzanine that stretches across the atrium. Ascend with the sense you could be walking magically upside down because the steps look the same from underneath as they look when descending from above. Superb iron work by Compass Iron Works includes a special touch: a tassel at the end of the handrail to resemble the end of a graceful winding rope.

Each Element Tells a Story

Different vantage points also offer closer glimpses of antiques and items from Ignace's collections. Next to the door, witness European history in the 1560-dated fireplate — a cast iron piece that reflects fireplace heat — from the northeast region of Belgium intersecting with Germany and the Netherlands. Its artwork includes a double-headed eagle, a symbol of power, as well as icons representing the surrounding kingdoms at that time. From the staircase, marvel at the wall of fascinating old keys from Flanders, Belgium, highlighted after sundown by a simple, expansive, century-old Danish chandelier.

From the stairs or mezzanine, family and visitors can admire the details of Ignace's collection of 104 Delft Blue miniature houses that line the window ledges. Each one, modeled after a real building in the Netherlands, originally held gin and was distributed by KLM airline to international passengers. Ignace has imbibed some of that gin and some he hasn't, he says with a smile.



A Capstone Library

The newly built addition over the garage, accessible from the atrium's mezzanine, is a library as perfect as there could be. Gleaming wood — from the floor to the beamed ceiling with cabinetry and library shelves between — is warm and welcoming. Library ladders lend a sense of adventure for reaching prized books that sit near the cathedral ceiling.

At one end of the room, a fireplace adds to the cozy feel. Delft tiles, many from the 1600s and 1700s as well as one custom-made for Jan and Ignace, form a charming border above the hearth.

Noteworthy lighting provides ambiance and the requisite ability to read every volume in the room. In a Philadelphia restaurant, Jan spied a fabulous suspended chandelier of aged brass that could be lowered closer to a table or raised farther up on a bicycle chain. A matching ELK Lighting Torque Pendant now shines near the center of the library. Lamps from 1876 found at a London antique market by Jan's mother hang on the wall.





Into the Garden

When the house was finished, they created a garden. It became another dimension of the house — fitting for a 1911 home for a gardener and with Ignace’s inspiration as the son of a horticulturalist. A new stone retaining wall and steps up the slope end at a beckoning patio, the hillside became Jan and Ignace’s entertaining spot and private park of flowers, greens and shrubs.

Fallow Field Cottage is a comfortable, approachable and beautiful home that “supports and displays the owners’ interests and passions,” said Metzler. “It was a delight to build, and it’s a delight to visit.” ♦

PHOTOS COURTESY: JEFFREY TOTARO AND SIMONE ASSOCIATES

- **Architect:** Archer & Buchanan Architecture
- **Builder:** Rittenhouse Builders, Inc.
- **Cedar and Copper Roofing:** Gillespie Contracting, Inc.
- **Library Casework:** Seven Trees Woodworking
- **Metalwork for Stairs:** Compass Iron Works
- **Structural Engineer:** Innovative Structural Engineers

Shhhh ...

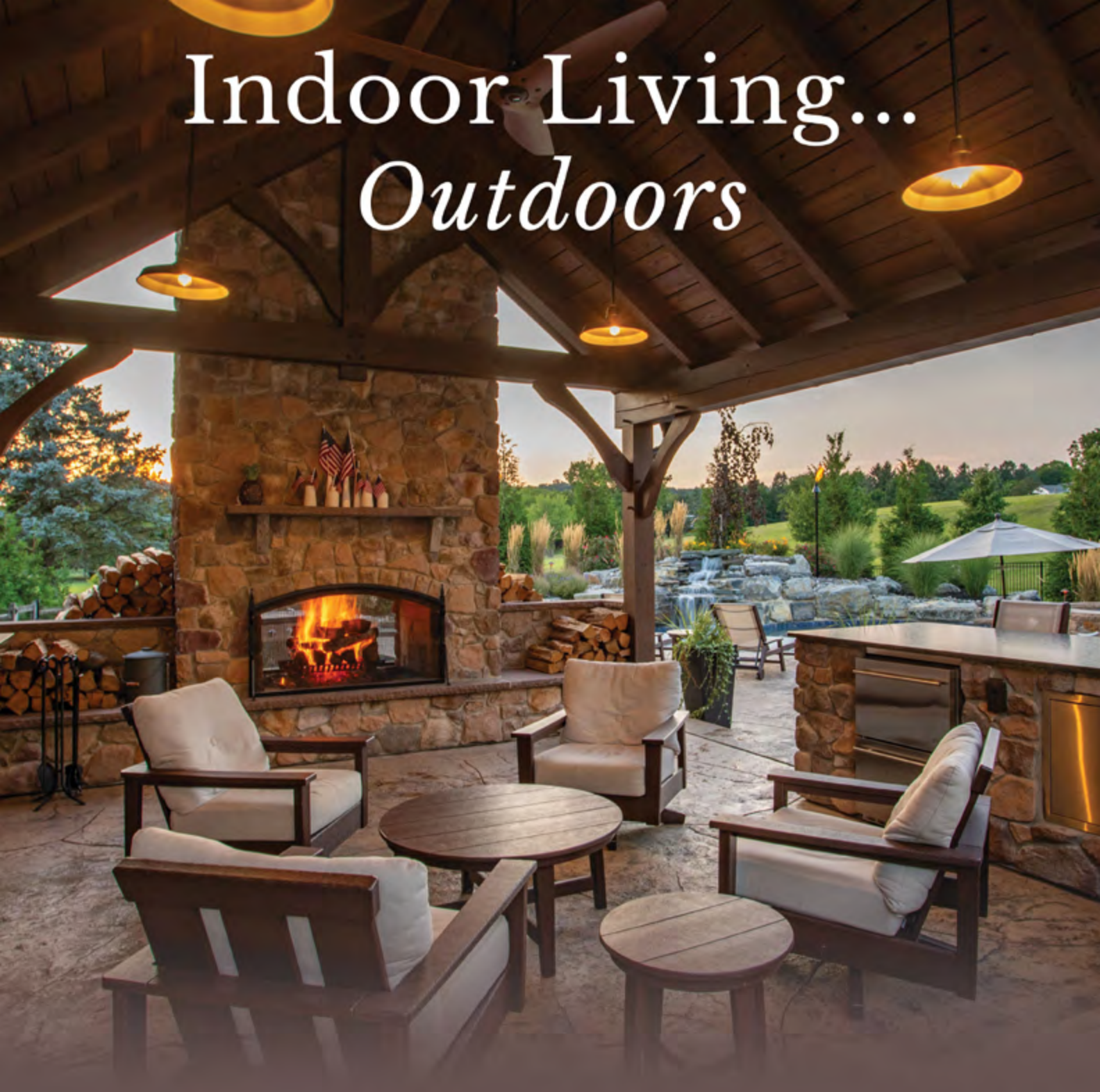
“Around every corner, the house features welcome surprises, just waiting to be discovered,” says George Metzler, founding partner of Rittenhouse Builders.

Every great home needs a secret compartment. This one is no exception. Like an enchantment in a Harry Potter book, touch a bookcase in just the right way and it moves to reveal a small room that becomes the grandchildren’s delightful guest quarters.

Even the expanded kitchen with wood floors, orchids in the windows and gold- and gray-veined white Calacatta marble island holds a little surprise. A hidden television rises by a small lift so the couple can watch the news while breakfasting, but otherwise disappears to provide a full view of the garden outside the window.



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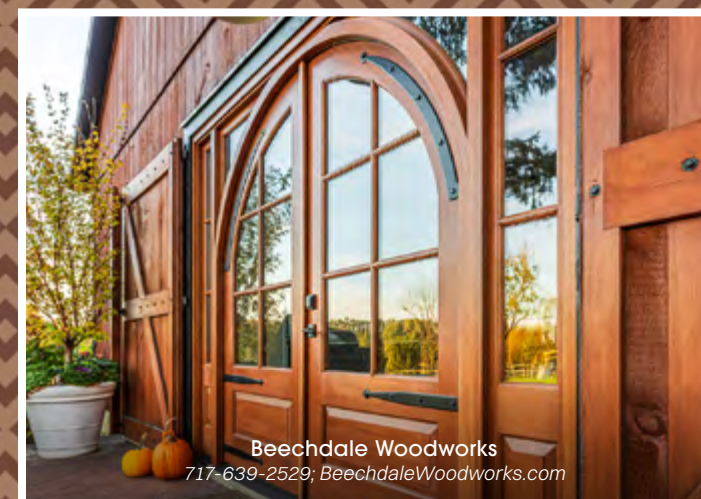
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DewsonConstruction.com

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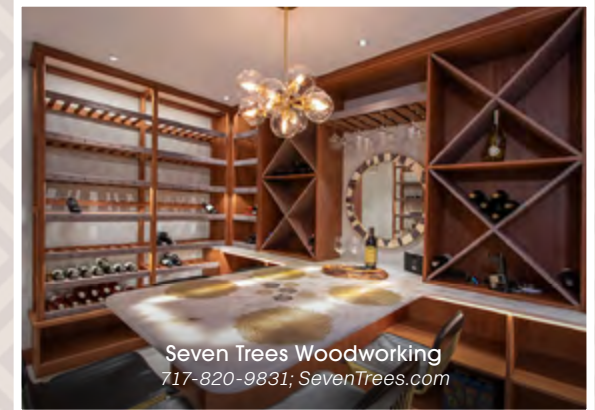
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The 4Cs ... Plus One More

THE CHALLENGE OF TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Edwin Malet

IT'S BEEN 25 YEARS SINCE THE END OF THE 20TH century. Since then, we've had five presidents, fought in several wars, watched our computers shrink but become more powerful, survived a pandemic or two, and worried as polar ice grew thinner and summers grew hotter.

But what has happened in our schools? What lessons are our kids learning? Twenty-five years ago, a number of articles appeared, mostly aimed at educators and policymakers, asking what the 21st-century classroom should look like. We checked in at local schools to learn more.

THE DEATH OF ROTE LEARNING

We discovered that much of what our kids experience in school hasn't changed too much. In the lower grades, the emphasis remains on the "3Rs" — reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic. These skills had been reinforced though memorization and rote learning.

In the 21st century, however, our schools have shifted their emphasis to what are called the "4Cs": critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity.

For example, Jonathan Huxtable and Eddie Gallagher, co-interim Heads of School at Wilmington Friends School, observed that much of 21st-century education is "simply the distilling of excellent teaching and learning practices that have been signatures of a Friends education for nearly 300 years." This includes "independent thinking, a collaborative and creative approach to problem solving that involves both active listening and leadership, a strong knowledge basis, individual growth and development in the context of community, and an awareness of one's role and responsibility in service to the greater good."

Similarly, the Westtown School believes 21st-century education is not uniquely different and has roots in its core mission. Chris Wills, Head of School for Program and Community, said, "We teach our students about relationships — the relationships and connections between ideas and academic concepts, the relationships a student has with themselves, with others and the larger world, both human and natural. Education is grounded in teaching lifelong, transferable skills that provide students with the tools needed to thrive in a changing world."



Many 21st-century classes take a hands-on approach to learning



Schools foster collaboration through group projects

Wills continued, “Our program is rooted in our Quaker mission and values, partnering academic excellence with essential skills such as collaboration, empathy, negotiation and resilience, [creating] learning experiences that center exploration and action, fostering curiosity and problem-solving, to help our students develop innovative solutions to the challenges they will encounter in school and the rest of their lives.”

ADOPTING THE 4CS

Other schools have adopted the 4Cs more explicitly and wholeheartedly. Reach Cyber Charter School, according to Brandie Karpew, Director of Outreach, incorporates strategies to promote the 4Cs. “Collaboration is fostered through group projects, project-based learning, STEM camps, clubs and career experiences. Communication skills are enhanced through presentations, discussions and digital communication tools ... Critical thinking is developed by engaging students in problem-solving tasks ... Creative thinking is nurtured by allowing students to explore innovative solutions and express their ideas through various mediums.”

Likewise, with a focus on language-based learning differences, Center School finds the 4Cs are “central to its educational mission,” said Heidi Mozzillo, Director of Marketing and Communications. Among the tools used are interactive smartboards, talk-to-text, tablets, digital classrooms and collaborative projects.

As for students, they are encouraged to ask questions, think critically and apply their knowledge to real-world challenges. Students also participate in group projects, present to assemblies and cross-graded activities, and are challenged to analyze and solve real-world problems. Using multi-modal approaches, integrating visual, auditory and hands-on methods, creativity is highly encouraged as part of the 4C focus.

ELEVATING THE 4CS

At the Agnes Irwin School, Julie Diana, Director of Learning Innovation and Libraries, saw the 4Cs as a continuation of the

school’s learn-by-doing philosophy. According to Diana, “students should learn how to participate in the world, so group work and collaboration are key.”

“When many of us ... reflect on the group projects we did in school, we might think of a dysfunctional group of students where one person does all the work. That’s because no one taught us how to work together!” To teach this, she might have students spend a class period solving a complex, novel task where they have to work together with little guidance. “Students can reflect on how they navigated the task, showed up for the group, and how they might work together more effectively when they start their group project the following day,” she said.

Kelly Edwards, Academic Dean of Episcopal Academy, said that the 4Cs have always “been at the heart of what we value and how we educate.” It is “our intentionality and approach in cultivating these skills” that resonates. “Getting our students to recognize that these skills can be applied to situations they are not yet cognizant of is the ultimate goal.” She cited Episcopal Academy’s experiential learning opportunities that allow for service learning, community engagement and project-based learning as means to advance these skills.

CFS, the Church Farm School, sees 21st-century education as “student-centered, organic and nimble,” according to Stefanie Claypoole, Director of Marketing and Communications. She called the 4Cs an “inherent part” of its curriculum.

Among other methods, CFS uses “Harkness discussions,” with the teacher acting as more of a moderator than leader, for its students to delve deeply into a text or historical event, generate new ideas, add evidence and generate a collective theory or answer. The school also uses escape rooms, technology quizzes and design challenges to develop collaboration — for example, building a bridge using toothpicks or solving a water crisis in a desert community.

BEYOND THE 4CS

If the 4Cs are education’s beating heart, they still don’t capture the scope of education’s burgeoning 21st-century mission. Dig-

ital awareness, globalization, community, a focus on personal and social-emotional skills, and character also have emerged as central to a modern education.

Digital citizenry skills “allow students to navigate online settings and ‘remote’ and ‘virtual’ relationships in ways that maximize the efficiencies and opportunities those spaces provide, but also minimize the potential for depersonalization and anonymous acting that such environments can breed,” said Huxtable and Gallagher at Wilmington Friends.

Globalization is another broad theme, pursued notably at Academy of Notre Dame de Namur’s Center for Global Leadership. “The school recognizes that education is not limited to just four walls or on campus, but that the world is truly our 21st-century classroom,” said Tyler Gaspich, Director of Information Resources and Technologies.

Outside the classroom, students learn life skills such as cultural competency and self-awareness. The school has used “design thinking” to help solve a problem for a character in a story they are reading, providing a deeper understanding of the character’s motives, the story’s context, and extrapolating information often found with higher-level thinking.

CHARACTER FORMATION

Sister Regina, Head of School at Villa Maria Academy High School, also placed great importance on “digital awareness and cultural competence or global awareness.” But, to these, she added character to the 4Cs. “Because information is ever evolving and exponentially increasing ... the skills and ability to seek truth and differentiate it from all of the competing distortions.” She placed “a good bit of importance into character formation and integrity.”

Others schools have also taken up the challenge of framing 21st-century learning within a student’s character and personality. Lifelong skills such as self-awareness, building healthy relationships and responsible decision making are emphasized at Reach Cyber Charter School. Academy of Notre Dame has embarked on a program to teach empathy, character, emotional resilience, executive functioning and navigating social media. And CFS has committed to building its students into lifelong learners and global citizens committed to ethical, positive change.

“Independent, ethical and adaptable leaders who think critically, collaborate meaningfully and embrace innovation” are what Episcopal Academy seeks. “Grounded in holistic thinking, our students master content by actively producing, evaluating and synthesizing information. They are prepared to navigate a rapidly changing world, thoughtfully integrating new technologies and creating solutions for challenges and opportunities that don’t yet exist.”

We learned our schools have taken on a great and ever-changing task: preparing our children to be the citizens and leaders of this new century. Innovation, computerization, globalization and exploding information only begin to outline the challenges of the 21st century. The 4Cs — critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity — form the basis of many schools’ approach. However, the fifth C — character — will be the measure of their educational success. ♦



1. Integrating new technologies is a key component of 21st-century learning
2. Students work together to complete tasks and solve problems
3. Students develop communication skills through presentations

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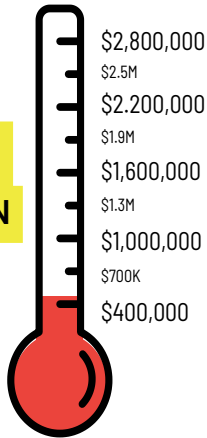
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610-525-1670; StAloysiusAcademy.org

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851 Buck Ln.; 610-642-2334; FriendsHaverford.org

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[Open House Dates: Mar. 7, Apr. 24, 9 am](#)

[Register: FriendsHaverford.org/Visit](#)



MALVERN

Malvern Preparatory School

418 S. Warren Ave.

484-595-1100; MalvernPrep.org

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Open House (Preschool–Gr. 8): Jan. 30, Mar. 12
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1501 Barley Mill Rd.
302-998-2292; Tatnall.org

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Middle & Upper School Tour & Learn (Grades 6–12):
Feb. 20, 8:30 to 10 am

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

More Redheads. Try newly opened **Testa Rossa** (Italian for redhead) in Glen Mill's Shoppes at Brinton Lake for Italian American faves, including housemade pasta, hand-tossed pizzas,



large and share plates. The former Ruby's Diner space is a vibrant addition to the Fearless Restaurant group (White Dog, Rosalie, Autograph). Yet another Testa Rossa is planned for later in 2025 in Wayne. 919 Baltimore Pk., Glen Mills; 523 W. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. FearlessRestaurants.com.

15 and Counting. That's the number of **Nudy's Cafes** in our area since the first opened in Devon in 1979. The newest location in Glen Mills will serve up the same beloved breakfast and lunch classics. Owner Ray Nudy, who visits each café daily, plans further expansion of this family-owned business that's been part of communities spanning three counties. Where "friends can eat and spend time, not a fortune." 31 W. Baltimore Pk., Glen Mills. NudysCafes.com.



Sip & Shop. If wine bar + boutique is your happy place, head to **Nature's Vin** when it opens in downtown Wayne. Owner Ragini Parmar plans to serve natural, organic and biodynamic wines — low carb, sugar free, low sulfites, no toxic additives — made by women. The aim is to create a relaxed environment for learning and enjoying wine through tastings, private events and a membership club. Check social media for opening. 193-195 E. Lancaster Ave., Wayne. NaturesVin.com.

Downingtown Dining. After Downingtown dining declined with the closing of De La



Terre and Amani's, **Myrtos'** opening provided a new spark. This Greek BYOB (in De La Terre's location) offers 45 traditional dishes to satisfy diners craving fresh Med meals. Named after an iconic Greek beach, Myrtos has a menu with classic appetizers (dolmades, saganaki, spanakopita), mains (moussaka, gyro platter), avgolemono soup, a Greek salad and baklava and beyond. 47 W. Lancaster Ave., MyrtosRestaurant.com.

Win for Win. That's for **Win Hospitality**. Despite the 2024 closing of Azie Villanova, Win Hospitality (Azie Media, Blue Elephant, Teikoku) plans two new ventures. Mama-San, a lunch and dinner spot, is in store for Radnor. And in the iconic former home to Margaret Kuo's in Wayne for 22 years, a seventh Win Signature Restaurant will open in 2025. Maison Lotus is slated for upscale French-Vietnamese fare, plus a bakery. 226 Radnor-Chester Rd., Radnor; 175 Lancaster Ave., Wayne. WinSignatureRestaurants.com.



Baking Bread: The Ultimate Comfort Food

HOMEMADE BREAD — AMAZING AROMAS & MEMORABLE TASTES

Courtney H. Diener-Stokes

BREAD OF ALL KINDS, SHAPES AND SIZES IS A FOOD we love any time of day ... or night. And it's bread's very versatility that guarantees an extra measure of mealtime pleasure. During the chilly winter months, a nourishing bowl of soup or hearty plate of stew feels almost naked without a thick slice of crusty goodness by its side.

Other winter comfort foods give bread an opportunity to shine. Envision a thick slice of sourdough bread for French toast, drenched in maple syrup, at a late weekend breakfast. Or a super cheesy and buttery grilled cheese sandwich that satisfies adults and children alike, whether for a quick dinner after school or an indulgent fireside meal, sans kids.



Sarah Holland, owner of Good Girls Bakery

Consider homemade dinner rolls as part of a Sunday family meal tradition in the deep of winter. The prep gives kids a chance to help out in the kitchen, mixing ingredients and shaping balls of dough on a day when you don't have anywhere else to go.

As bread lovers and home bakers know, making bread yourself takes the pleasure of eating and serving it to others to a whole new level. And there's the added bonus of the aroma that wafts through your home while you bake.

So, when Sarah Holland, owner of **Good Girls Bakery** in Eagleview Town Center, made sourdough bread for the first time in early 2020, she felt both giddy and a huge sense of accomplishment. "I'm a science nerd, so the chemistry and scientific part is what I love. The sourdough starter is a microorganism you keep alive. And it blew my mind that I could make something like that," she said.

In time, Sarah felt no boundaries and ventured into making all types of sourdough-based breads with different types of grains, shapes and purposes. One early success was her hyper-popular fluffy sourdough English muffins that customers use for breakfast or lunchbox sandwiches and even as hamburger rolls. "They're our claim to fame, and we make about 300 a day. People get upset with us when we run out," said Sarah. As they often do.

Initially Sarah sold her bread at farmers markets and made front porch deliveries before opening her Exton store in early 2024. Regardless of where she's sold her bread over the years, seasonal ingredients from local farms have always been part of her sourdough creations. "We shop at the farmers markets and change the menu based on what the farms have available," she said.

Read on for some of Sarah's favorite bread recipes to infuse your kitchen with baking aromas and treat your appetite to tasty goodness this winter.

Signature Sourdough

This recipe solidified Sarah's love of making sourdough bread. It's the foundation for all her tasty bread creations. And it includes steps needed for other recipes.



Makes one loaf

- 1 ¼ C. water
- 2 ¾ C. bread flour
- ¼ C. whole wheat flour
- ½ C. sourdough starter (available at Good Girls Bakery)
- 2 T. salt
- Olive oil

In a mixer with a dough hook attachment, add water, bread flour and whole wheat flour. Mix for 4 minutes. Let dough rest in the mixing bowl, uncovered, for 40 minutes.

Add ripe starter (starter that's already been fed and doubled in size). Mix for 10 minutes, then let rest for 10 minutes, uncovered. Add salt and mix for 10 minutes more.

Grease a large bowl with olive oil to place finished dough, and cover it loosely with a damp cloth. Let it rest in a warm place for 1 hour.

On a lightly floured surface, do 3 sets of 'stretches and folds' (Google for demo), with 1 hour in between sets. (Dough should be rising during this process.)

Shape dough into a round ball and place in a round shallow basket lined with a thin cloth that's been dusted with flour.

Place in the refrigerator for 8 hours or overnight to bake the next morning.

***Final Bread Baking Steps: You'll repeat the next instructions for all Sarah's recipes using sourdough starter.**

Place a Dutch oven in a oven to preheat at 450°.

Gently turn dough out onto a piece of parchment paper, which will be the lining for the Dutch oven.

Score a slash down the center of the loaf with a kitchen knife. Place in the Dutch oven with the lid on.

Bake for 20 minutes, then remove the lid to allow steam to escape so crust can develop. Bake for another 15 to 20 minutes, depending on oven settings and personal preference.

When bread is done (it will have a golden brown crust), immediately remove it from Dutch oven to prevent the bottom from getting too dark.

Allow bread to cool completely before cutting. The cooling process is still part of the baking process.

Chocolate Pumpernickel

The molasses, cocoa powder and chocolate chips add a flavorful depth to this rye-based bread. Pairs perfectly with egg, chicken and tuna fish salad.



Makes one loaf

- 1 C. water
- 1 T. molasses
- 2 ¼ C. bread flour
- ¼ C. rye flour
- ⅓ C. cocoa powder
- ⅓ C. sourdough starter (available at Good Girls Bakery)
- 2 tsp. salt
- ⅓ C. semisweet chocolate chips
- Olive oil

In a mixer with a dough hook attachment, mix the water and molasses with bread flour, rye flour and cocoa powder. Mix for 4 minutes. Let the dough rest for 40 minutes, uncovered.

Add ripe starter. Mix for 10 minutes. Rest for 10 minutes, uncovered.

Add salt and mix for 10 minutes more. Add chocolate chips during the last 3 minutes of mixing.

Grease a large bowl with olive oil and place finished dough inside. Cover loosely with a damp cloth and let rest in a warm place for 1 hour.

On a floured surface, do 3 sets of 'stretches and folds' (Google for demo), with 1 hour in between sets. (Dough should be rising during this process.)

Shape the dough into a round ball and place in a shallow round basket lined with a lightly floured thin cloth. Place in the refrigerator for 8 hours or overnight to bake the next morning.

Refer to **Final Bread Baking Steps in the Signature Sourdough recipe.*

Ancient Grains

Einkorn, considered the oldest wheat known to agriculture, shines along with spelt in this hearty bread with earthy undertones and a perfect touch of sweetness.



Makes one loaf

- 1 C. water
- 1 T. barley syrup
- 1¼ C. bread flour
- ½ C. spelt flour
- ⅓ C. einkorn flour
- ¼ C. whole wheat flour
- ⅓ C. sourdough starter (available at Good Girls Bakery)
- 2 tsp. salt
- Olive oil

In a mixer with a dough hook attachment, mix water, barley syrup and four flours: bread, spelt, einkorn and whole wheat. Mix for 4 minutes. Let the dough rest in the mixing bowl for 40 minutes.

Add ripe starter. Mix for 10 minutes. Rest for 10 minutes, uncovered. Add salt and mix for 10 minutes more.

Grease a large bowl with olive oil and place finished dough inside. Cover it loosely with a damp cloth, and let it rest in a warm place for 1 hour.

On a lightly floured surface, do 3 sets of ‘stretches and folds’ (Google for demo), with 1 hour in between sets. (Dough should be rising during this process.)

Shape the dough into a round ball and place in a round shallow basket, lined with a thin cloth dusted with flour.

Place in the refrigerator for 8 hours or overnight to bake the next morning.

Refer to **Final Bread Baking Steps in the Signature Sourdough recipe.*

Morning Buns

You don't have to call anyone to the kitchen when you whip up these decadent morning buns. The aroma does all the talking!



Makes one dozen buns

For the dough:

- ¼ C. whole milk
- ⅓ C. water
- 2 C. bread flour
- ⅓ C. sugar
- 1 tsp. instant yeast
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 T. cold butter, diced
- ⅔ C. (approx 11 T.) quality grass-fed butter, such as Kerrygold

For the butter folds:

- 1½ sticks butter

For the cinnamon filling:

- 2 T. butter, soft
- ¼ C. packed brown sugar
- 1½ tsp. cinnamon
- Pinch of salt

To make the dough:

In the bowl of an electric mixer, add milk, water, flour, sugar and yeast. Mix for 4 minutes. Rest for 10 minutes. Mix for 4 minutes more, and while mixing, gradually add salt and diced, cold butter.

Remove dough from the mixer, spread evenly on a floured sheet tray or flat pan, and cover with plastic. Put in the refrigerator overnight or for at least 8 hours. (This is to rapidly cool your dough.)

To do the butter folds (Google ‘butter block hand lamination’ video demo):

Shape the 1.5 sticks of butter into a rectangle by hitting it with a rolling pin, then rolling it out thinly (¼" high x 8" long) on parchment paper to soften it. (Don't let butter get too warm.)

Roll out dough with a rolling pin to a rectangle twice the size of the butter.

Place the butter rectangle in the center of the dough. Wrap dough around the butter, pinching the seams to seal the butter inside.

Roll laminated dough into a long rectangle, about ¼" thick. Do a book fold (meaning fold both ends so they meet in the middle of the rectangle, then fold dough in half).

Place back in the fridge for 40 minutes to 1 hour.

Roll dough out again to the same size. Do a trifold, like a wallet.

Place dough back in the fridge to rest for another hour.

Laminated dough is now ready to shape.

To make the buns:

Roll dough out into a ¼"-thick rectangle. Spread cinnamon filling out evenly on the dough. Beginning at one end, roll up the dough to form a log. Slice log in ¾" pieces and place in a casserole dish (not touching).

Bake 25 minutes until golden brown and visibly bubbly.

No-Knead Rosemary Focaccia

Inspired by food blog “Alexandra’s Kitchen,” this overnight refrigerator focaccia requires no sugar because of its long, slow rise.



Makes one pan of focaccia (number of squares depends on you!)

- 4 C. all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 tsp. instant yeast
- 2 C. lukewarm water (½ C. boiling water + 1½ C. cold water)
- Butter for greasing
- 4 T. olive oil, divided
- Flaky sea salt (such as Maldon)
- 1 to 2 tsp. whole rosemary leaves

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, salt and instant yeast. Add water. Using a rubber spatula, mix until the liquid is absorbed and ingredients form a sticky dough ball.

Super Spreads for Breads

Try unique spreads to explore sweet and savory tastes beyond your usual nut butters, avocado and jams:

•Whipped ricotta (recipe online at CountyLinesMagazine.com)

•Berry lavender compote

•Spiced cardamom custard

•Red pepper pesto

•Herb cream cheese

•Cinnamon and honey butter

•Spinach and artichoke hummus

•Creamy garlic yogurt sauce

•Sriracha mayo

•Pepper jam

Rub the entire surface of the dough lightly with olive oil. Cover the bowl and immediately place in the fridge — at least 12 hours, up to 3 days.

Line a 9"×13" pan with parchment paper. Pour 2 T. of oil in the pan.

Using two forks, deflate the dough by releasing it from the sides of the bowl and pulling it toward the center. Rotate the bowl in quarter turns as you deflate, turning the mass into a rough ball.

Place dough into the prepared pan. Roll dough ball to coat it in the oil, forming a rough ball. Let it rest for 3 to 4 hours, uncovered.

Set oven rack in the middle and preheat to 425°. Sprinkle dough with rosemary, brushing oil on top to avoid burning.

Pour two tablespoons of oil over the dough. Use your hands to coat it with oil. Then, using your fingers, press straight down to create deep dimples. (If necessary, gently stretch the dough so it fills the pan.) Sprinkle the top evenly with flaky sea salt.

Place pan in oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until underside is crisp and golden. Remove from oven and transfer to a cooling rack. Cool for at least 10 minutes before serving. ♦

Courtney Diener-Stokes is an award-winning journalist, author, food writer, photographer and food stylist. Most recently she co-authored the Kimberton Whole Foods Cookbook and Farmhouse Manna: Nourishing Recipes and Rituals for Head, Heart, Hands & Soul. She lives in the Oley Valley countryside with her husband, three children, two Babydoll Southdown sheep, a flock of bantam chickens and a Bernedoodle named Daisy.



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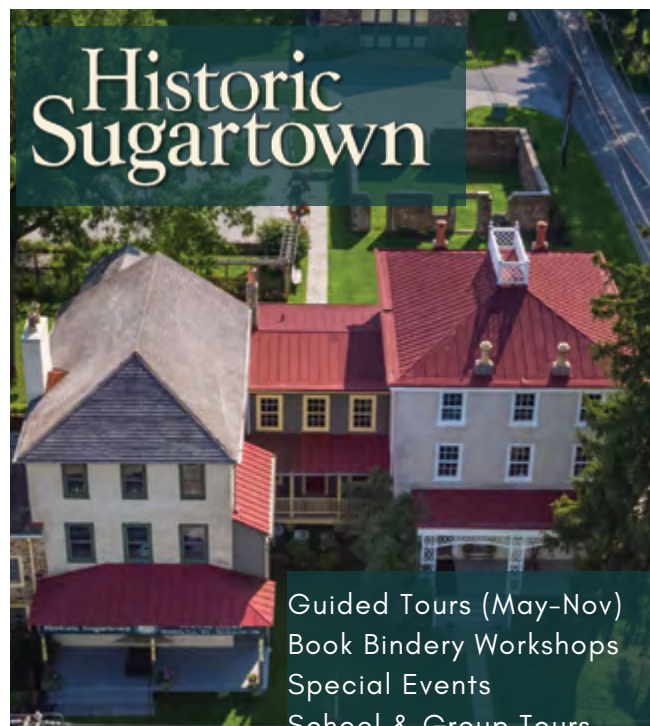
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