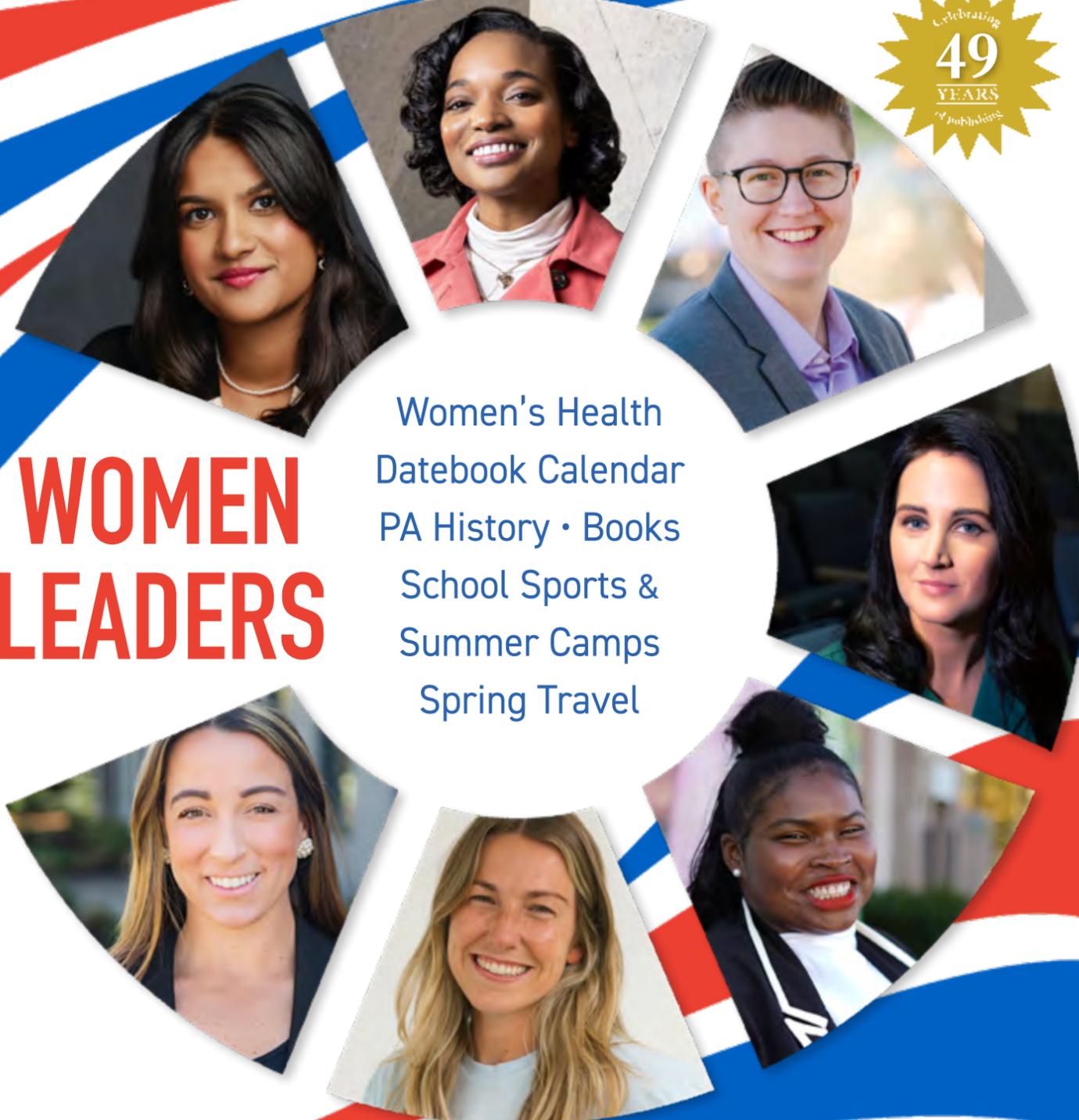


COUNTY LINES

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Historic Fairville Inn in Chadds Ford

This historic property features 10 tasteful guest rooms, eight of which have gas fireplaces. The Main House features the guest reception area, living room, after-hours sitting room, dining room, kitchen and the possibility for 5+ additional rooms. Contact us for full details about what else is possible with this gorgeous property.
Price Upon Request

NEW PRICE



Superior Family Compound with Four Living Units

This fabulous c.1886 home features 3 BR, 2.1 BA, great Kitchen & a wonderful floor plan. Additionally, the property has three, one or two bedroom living units, making this an exciting opportunity for someone seeking a wonderful family compound! This 3+ acre property boasts superior amenities. Mechanical systems have been updated. Unionville Schools. Low taxes!
\$1,550,000



Overlooks French Creek Golf Club's 14th Hole

Set in Olde Bulltown Village is this charming 3BR, 2.2 BA home which combines the old with the new featuring cathedral ceilings, stunning main level primary suite, antique hardware, finished lower level and beautiful quarter sawn oak floors! The kitchen has high-end appliances and handsome cabinetry. This wonderful property must be seen to be full appreciated.
\$1,585,000

NEW PRICE



Great Property in Kennett Square

This updated 3BR, 2BA home is a "Must See"! The open floor plan features a generous living area that flows into an eat-in kitchen, complete with granite counters, white cabinets, and stainless steel appliances. The main level includes 2 BRs with hardwood flooring, updated hall BA, and a laundry/mudroom. Upstairs, the primary BR has an ensuite BA and walk-in closet. The finished attic offers flexibility for an office or storage. Unionville Schools!
\$585,000



SOLD

Crebilly Farm

Last Asking Price: \$3,780,000



SOLD

West Bradford

Last Asking Price: \$601,000



SOLD

Chadds Ford

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SOLD

Faggs Manor

Last Asking Price: \$735,000



SOLD

Newlin Township

Sold for Price: \$3,150,000



SOLD

West Chester Boro

Sold for Price: \$2,200,000



SOLD

West Nantmeal Township

Sold for Price: \$885,000



SOLD

West Bradford Township

Sold for Price: \$1,275,000



from the
EDITOR

Welcome March, with the first signs of spring — despite the groundhog’s prediction — and our focus on women.

Our cover feature, “Young Women Leaders,” highlights seven inspiring women from many sectors of our community. Read the stories behind food entrepreneur Madi Coble of Madi’s on a Roll, Uptown Performing Arts Center’s Heather Grayberg, Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry’s Laura Manion, civic engagement advocate Jahnvi Rao, LGBTQ+ leader Carrie Stare, Media Borough Mayor Joi Washington and Chester County OIC’s Javonna Wylie.

In Brandywine Stories’ “Pennsylvania Women Who Shaped a Nation,” Kim Andrews tells of four unsung patriots of the Revolutionary War. For longer stories, Main Point Books’ Shelley Laurence recommends eight books covering women from the Revolutionary War to Wall Street in “The Power of Her Story.” And to set the record straight, Liz Tarditi writes “Girly Drinks? Busting the Female Palate Myth,” taking issue with the trope that women prefer “sweeter” drinks.

Our Women’s Health feature offers expert advice on how Alzheimer’s disease hits women twice as hard, what to know about breast density and mammograms, and a holistic path to well-being.

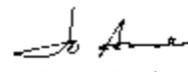
Ed Malet found it was “An Exceptional Season” for private high school sports. The girls’ teams in particular excelled in field hockey, soccer and volleyball. Get an update and learn about the top colleges local sports standouts will attend.

Shannon Montgomery suggests “Great Escapes Close to Home” for spring break trips or summer vacations, while our “Summer Camps” guide offers options for keeping the kids energized and engaged.

This month, cheese is the focus for Brandywine Table as Liz Tarditi explores Birchrun Hills Farm’s products and recipes in “Cheeseboard, But Make It Dinner.”

And we suggest you plan ahead using Marci Tomassone’s “Datebook Calendar,” filled with fundraisers — celebrations, galas, festivals, runs, flowers shows and more. Plus our Family Fun and Best Local Events sections have even more to do in March.

Thank you for reading.



Jo Anne Durako
Editor

COMING IN *April*



OUTDOOR LIVING ISSUE

Improve, Invest, Enjoy Your Outdoor Spaces

Lancaster Focus • Homesteading

West Chester Film Festival • Sports Stars

PA Garden Party • Spritzes • Dentists



COUNTY LINES MAGAZINE

March 2026

Volume XLIX Number 7

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Issue: \$5.00
Subscriptions: \$36/print; \$12/digital
Advertising: 610-918-9300

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Let Your Phoenixville Neighbors Give You Year-Round Peace Of Mind On Your Taxes

Julie Brufke Wenger, EA, CFP, ChFC

Phoenix Tax Consultants LLC, is an award-winning, woman-owned, Phoenixville-based tax firm. They blend strategic tax planning, top-tier expertise, and modern technology to make taxes simpler and more effective for clients. Founder Julia Brufke Wenger firmly believes tax filing shouldn’t be a do-it-yourself activity. Tax returns have become more complex, rules change often, and even small mistakes can cause big problems, like delayed refunds or missed savings opportunities.

Instead of treating taxes as a dreaded once-a-year task, let Phoenix Tax Consultants help you build a personalized tax solution throughout the year. The highly trained team can help you uncover “next-level” opportunities — such as adjusting retirement contributions, choosing the right business structure, or making moves to significantly change a tax outcome.

Since Wenger founded the firm in 1990, it’s grown to serve over 2,000 clients nationwide, with most concentrated in the Brandywine Valley. The dedicated staff includes CPAs, enrolled agents, and tax attorneys, many with advanced degrees and strong professional credentials.

Phoenix Tax Consultants also offers a flexible, tech-enabled approach that combines secure portals and online meetings with the personal

feel of face-to-face conversations, allowing clients to have the in-person experience all across the country. Their mission is simple: to help clients protect what they earn, avoid costly surprises, and make smarter long-term decisions.

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There are very few family- and women-run heating and cooling companies left. While many of them are being purchased and folded into larger regional and national companies, there is one company located in Chester County that is holding true to their family-first business. For over 125 years, D.E. Duffey & Sons has been known for years for “The Duffey Difference,” a mantra focused solely in keeping their friends and neighbors comfortable year-round.

Kate Duffey, daughter of Dan Duffey, and great-grand daughter of the Duffey founder in 1898, currently stands confidently at the helm of the company. She is actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the business, answering phones, scheduling fuel oil deliveries, HVAC services and installations.

What is her inspiration? “I am inspired by my family and customers. I am so proud of what my great grandfather started and where we have been and where we are going as company. And, our customers are the best! Every day we get to talk to so many and get to know them. They inspire me to run a better local business, provide better customer service and, really, just be a better person overall.”

Kate started working at D.E. Duffey & Sons 17 years ago, under the tutelage of her father, Dan Duffey. He told her that if she was going to work there, she had to start from the ground up, which included getting her hands dirty and learning. She delivered oil, serviced heating and cooling systems, helped schedule installs, resolved customer issues and more. Kate claims “It was the best thing he ever did. I got to know every part of this business.”

Part of successfully running a full-service heating and cooling company requires fierce attention to equipment efficiency guidelines, state and federal requirements and customer perceptions around home heating oil as a source of heat. To stay ahead of the curve, Kate currently serves as a Board Member on the Pennsylvania Petroleum Association as a Chairman of the New Generation Committee. She also sits on the board of NEFI (New England Fuels Institute) and is a past Chairman of NORA (National Oil Heat Research Alliance).

When asked what best advice she could give to young women, she states, “Surround yourself with good people and listen. I am so lucky to have great people in my life from my family, fellow coworkers, and other friends in the industry who are always there to help me when I need.”

Kate hopes to continue the legacy of the Duffey family who came before her by forging a new and innovative future for the heating and cooling industry and holding true to the “Duffey Difference”:

For over 125 years, we have been focused on one thing: keeping our friends and neighbors comfortable. That is our mission each and every day and has been since 1898. We are extremely proud of our past, but we aren't stuck in it. Rather, we view our 100 plus years of experience as a foundation on which to build a bright future. As a direct result of this experience, we have crafted an industry-leading customer service-first culture. This culture is firmly built on doing the right thing, the right way, every time. Our sincere hope is that you will join our family, experience this first-hand and that we can establish a relationship with you as our valued customer that will last for years to come.

D.E. Duffey & Sons is located in Malvern PA and proudly embraces Sheller Oil, Ennis Fuels, Wister Fuels, Angello Fuel Oil and Merone Heating Oil into their family of companies that serves Montgomery and Chester counties as well as parts of Delaware and Philadelphia counties. For more information, call 610.940.1400.



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Power to the (Young) People. Teens may soon vote in school board elections, thanks to local students. The Fund for Women and Girls created **Vote16PA**, a nonpartisan, student-led initiative focused on expanding youth voice in school government. As a result of their advocacy, House representatives circulated a memo announcing forthcoming legislation to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in Pennsylvania school board elections, joining nine municipalities in other states. TheFundCC.org/Vote16PA



Gone to the Dogs. The Philadelphia Flower Show returns February 28 to March 8, and the whole family can join in on the fun — even pets! On March 6 from 5 to 8 p.m., **Fido Friday** invites guests to experience the Flower Show alongside their four-legged friends. Leashed dogs are welcome to explore the show floor, visit dog-friendly vendors and enjoy playful activities designed for both pets and people. PHSOnline.org/The-Flower-Show



PHOTO CREDIT: ELLIASHANICHAZ

Treasure Trove. A quirky new player has joined Chester County's vintage scene. Phoenixville native Molly Ferguson opened **Great Scott Vintage** in her hometown last month. With the motto, "Vintage for oddballs, by oddballs," Great Scott offers an eclectic, hand-picked mix of vintage clothing, home decor, glassware and gifts. Open Wednesdays through Sundays. 26 S. Main St. GreatScottVintage.com

Sweep the Nation. As America250 approaches, you can help make the nation shine. Keep Chester County Beautiful is joining the **Greatest American Cleanup**, a nationwide push to remove 25 billion pieces of litter by July 4. Local efforts include French Creek State Park's 345 Cleanup (March 14), Lititz Run Watershed Alliance's Stream Cleanup (March 21) and Upper Merion Township's Scrub and Pub (March 26), with a free beer for volunteers. KAB.org/Greatest-American-Cleanup



Moms Supporting Moms. For a raw, honest look at the unseen realities of motherhood, read local author and mom Crystal Lynette Rance's new book, **"Mom Truths: The S#!t No One Talks About."** Rance shares real stories of infertility, postpartum depression, divorce, coparenting and rebuilding after loss. Meet her at the Mom's Night Out book launch and fundraiser to support maternal mental health, April 11 at Building 24 in Wyomissing. [@MomTruthsBook](https://twitter.com/MomTruthsBook)



Crystal Lynette Rance

N.C. Wyeth Mural Experience
Through November



Take a guided tour of N.C. Wyeth's monumental mural, "Apotheosis of the Family, 1932," housed in a specially designed round

barn on Point Lookout Farm, the home of N.C.'s grandson, artist Jamie Wyeth. Measuring 19 feet high and 60 feet long, this mural is the largest work ever created by the artist. Transportation to the N.C. Wyeth Studio and Point Lookout Farm is by passenger van, which departs directly from the *Brandywine Museum of Art, Rte. 1, Chadds Ford*. Registration required. \$70. Brandywine.org

"Twelfth Night" at People's Light
Through March 29

A shipwreck, mistaken identities and tangled desires set the stage for a new spin on Shakespeare's sharp and subversive comedy taking place in a luxurious resort, a modern playground for the upper crust, where the servants and the served collide in a riotous, romantic story of revelry and rebellion. 39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. Times and tickets, PeoplesLight.org.



Chester County Community Foundation's Sweet Charity Event

March 3



Bring your sweet tooth for a taste of history with a theme of "Red, White, Blue: America's 250th Birthday." 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 to 7:30. Tickets \$125 and up. ChesCoCF.org

World Water Day 2026

March 21

Experience the thrill of real scientific exploration — observe live demonstrations, participate in hands-on experiments and discover how we protect our precious water resources. Bring your curiosity and your family to World Water



Day, held rain or shine with indoor and outdoor activities. *Stroud Water Research Center, 970 Spencer Rd., Avondale*. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free, but registration required. StroudCenter.org/Events

Jurassic Quest

March 27-29

This huge and very popular dino event features unique and exciting experiences for the whole family. Observe the herd of life-size dinosaurs, join the fun in the interactive Raptor Training Experience, Dino Bounce Houses, Bungee Pull, games and inflatables. *The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks*. Fri., 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat., 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sun., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. \$30. JurassicQuest.com



FAMILY FUN

MARCH 5 & 12

Children's Read Aloud Tours at Brandywine Museum of Art. Young children and their grown-ups hear a story, interact with art in the Museum and make their own creative works in this popular program. *Mar. 5*, "Festival of Colors" by Kabir Sehgal and Surishtha Sehga. *Mar. 12*, "Cat Nap" by Brian Lies 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. 10:30 am. \$6. Brandywine.org



MARCH 6-8

Greater Philadelphia Pet Expo. Fun for the whole family with special attractions including The Dynamo Disc Dogs, Rainforest Reptile Shows, Rabbit Hopping 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. \$4-\$20. FamilyPetShows.com*



MARCH 8

Charter Day at Brandywine Battle-



field Park. A living history event that celebrates Pennsylvania's birthday and the Battle of Brandywine. Guests can meet historical interpreters, explore the museum, watch a short film about the Battle of Brandywine and join guided tours of the historic houses. 1491 Baltimore Pk., Chadds Ford. Noon to 4. Free. BrandywineBattlefield.org

MARCH 14

Science Saturday at Hagley—Bubble Bubble POP! Experiment with suds to determine the best bubble solution. Visitors of all ages are invited to discover solutions to science and engineering challenges. This is a drop-in activity; join the fun at any time. 200 Hagley Creek Rd., Wilmington. 11 to 3. \$16-\$20. Hagley.org



MARCH 20 & 27

Playin Time Music Circle at Stoneleigh. Join this interactive musical program geared toward children up to age 5 and their parents or caregivers. Participants will warm up their bodies with movement, practice listening skills and jam to classic and new tunes. *Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden, 1829 County Line Rd., Villanova. 10:15 am. \$25. NatLands.org*

MARCH 21 & MAY 16

Brandywine School of Wizardry Presents Wizardry One-Nighters. Fun wizard activities and magical lessons, spells and Quaddball (weather permitting) and potions all take place while the night's magic unfolds. Students go home with a selection of sweets and treats. *Brandywine Learning Center, 849 Newcomen Rd., Chester Springs. 5:30 to 8 pm. \$56. BrandywineSchoolOfWizardry.com/Wizardry-One-Night-Events*

MARCH 25

Sesame Street Live! Elmo's Got the Moves. The all-new "Sesame Street Live" show brings Elmo and his Sesame Street friends to the stage with singing, dancing and favorite songs. *Keswick Theatre, 291 N.*

Keswick Ave., Glenside. 6 pm. \$48-\$152. KeswickTheatre.com



MARCH 27

Family Movie Nights at The Creamery in Kennett Square. Enjoy a cozy evening on the heated outdoor patio. These events encourage guests to bring blankets or sleeping bags, with movie snacks available for purchase. 401 Birch St., Kennett Square. 6 pm. Free. KennettCreamery.com

MARCH 28

West Goshen Community Park Egg Hunt and Decorated Hat Parade. Kids search for eggs filled with candy, toys, quarters and even a few with dollar coins. The section for the 7, 8 and 9 year-olds will have a "golden egg" worth \$10. Rain date, Apr. 4. 1023 Fern Hill Rd., West Chester. Parade and egg hunt begin at 10:30 am. Free. Registration req. WestGoshen.org



APRIL 8

WCU Live! Presents Tamagawa University Taiko Drumming & Dance. Drummers and dancers from Tamagawa University make a return to campus for an athletic and graceful appearance that includes thundering taiko drumming and Japanese folkloric dance. *Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St., West Chester. 7:30 pm. \$15-\$25. WCUPA.edu/Live*

ART, CRAFTS & ANTIQUES
THROUGH MARCH 9

Montgomery County Guild of Professional Artists' "30x30" Exhibit. Celebrating 30 years, the show commemorates this milestone with a showcase of diverse styles, mediums and artistic voices. Penn State Great Valley Conference Center, Henry Gallery, 30 E. Swedesford Rd., Malvern. Mon-Fri, 9 to 5. GreatValley.PSU.edu/Gallery

MARCH 13 & 14

Antique & Collector Fair in Oaks. Featuring over 65 quality dealers specializing in primitives, architectural salvage, home and garden finds,



and more. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks. Sat, 10 to 6; Sun, 10 to 4. \$8-\$10. AC-Fair.com

MARCH 21 & 22

Elverson Antique Show and Sale. Over 40 dealers showcase folk art, Americana, furniture, stoneware, textiles, advertising and more. Honey Brook Elementary Center, 1530 Walnut Rd., Honey Brook. Sat, 10 to 4; Sun, 10 to 3. \$10. ElversonAntiqueShow.com



MARCH 23-APRIL 25

Art Quilt Elements 2026 at Wayne Art Center. An international juried exhibition of contemporary fine art quilts, featuring the work of 55 artists on display. Wayne Art Center, 413 Maplewood Ave., Wayne. ArtQuiltElements.org

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Vanishing Sky.” **Big Reads: Mar. 4**, “Vigil” by George Saunders. **Kiss and Tell Romance: Mar. 18**, “Game Changer” by Rachel Reid. **Then & Now: Mar. 24**, “The Emperor of Gladness” by Ocean Vuong, 234 Bridge St., Phoenixville. ReadsAndCompany.com

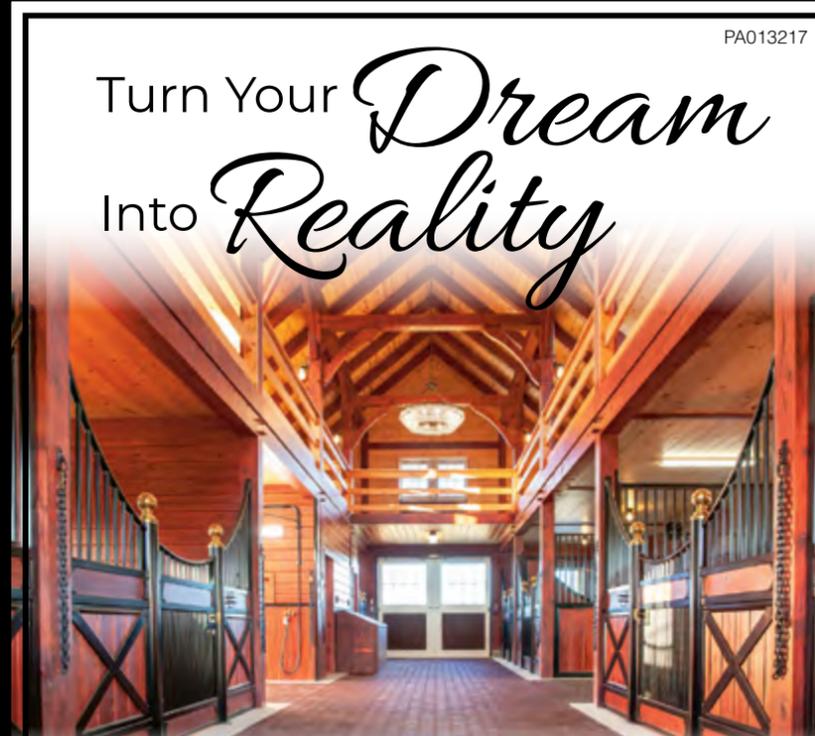
MARCH 13-15
Friends of Newtown Public Library Spring Book Sale. The sale features a wide selection of donated hardback and paperback books across many genres, as well as DVDs, CDs and vinyl records. Benefits library programs and services. Fri, early admission, 8 to 10 am, \$10 fee; Sat,

10 to 5; Sun, to 4, \$6 a bag. 201 Bishop Hollow Rd., Newtown Square. NewtownLibrary.org

EQUESTRIAN EVENTS.....
MARCH 29
79th Running of the Cheshire Races. Experience the rush of timber racing at this annual community tradition—known as Mr. Stewart’s Cheshire Foxhounds Point-to-Point—celebrating open space and benefiting community events, education and the care of horses and hounds. Plantation Field, 387 N. Green Valley Rd., Coatesville. CheshireHuntConservancy.org

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Local Farm Markets



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, 9 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. LMFarmersMarkets.org/BrynMawr

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, 2nd, 4th Thurs, Feb-Apr, 1st, 3rd Thurs, 3 to 5pm. GrowingRootsPartners.com

Farmer Jawn Farm Store, 1225 E. Street Rd., West Chester. Tues & Wed, 10 to 6; Thurs-Fri, 10 to 7; Sat-Sun, 9 to 5. FarmerJawn.co

Kennett Square Farmers Mkt., 600 S. Broad St. 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. GrowingRootsPartners.com

Media Farmers Market, Edgemont St. between Front & State Sts. Dec-Apr, 1st and 3rd Sun of the month, 10 to noon. MediaFarmersMarket.com

Oxford Village Market, 193 Limestone Rd. Thurs, 8 to 6; Fri, 8 to 7; Sat, 8 to 5. OxfordFarmMarketPA.com

Phoenixville Farmers Market, 200 Mill St. Jan-Apr, 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

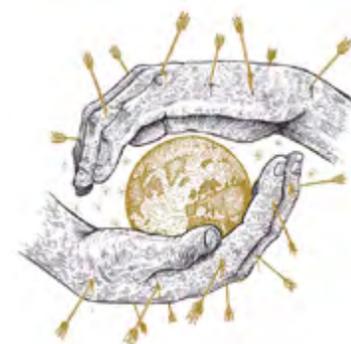
Westtown Amish Market, 1165 Wilmington Pl., West Chester. Thur, 9 to 6; Fri, 9 to 7; Sat, 8 to 4. WestChesterAmishMarket.com

For more visit the Chester County Farm Guide online, ChesCoPlanning.org/Agriculture/FarmGuide.cfm

APRIL 5
83rd Running of the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point. Celebrate one of the first races of the season with kids activities, lead line, stick pony races, Radnor Hunt foxhound parade and raffle prizes. Food available on site for purchase. Benefits Brandywine Red Clay Alliance. Myrick Conservation Center, 1760 Unionville-Wawaset Rd., West Chester. 11 to 3. \$40/carload. BrandywineRedClay.org



FILM.....
MARCH 19
19th Annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival. Enjoy a night of environmental short films that will inspire as you learn of serious challenges facing our environment today. The film festival equally benefits Stroud Water Research Center and Brandywine Red Clay Alliance. Upland Country Day School, 420 W. Street Rd., Kennett Square. 6 to 9 pm. \$45. TrailCreekOutfitters.com



FOOD & BREWS.....
THROUGH MARCH 1
Wine & Chocolate Pairings at Penns Woods Winery. Pairings include a tasting of four wines perfectly paired with four gourmet,



handcrafted chocolates. Reservations required. 124 Beaver Valley Rd., Chadds Ford. Check website for hours. \$38. PennsWoodsWinery.com

THROUGH MARCH 1
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. DowntownAnnapolisPartnership.org

MARCH 3-14
King of Prussia Restaurant Week. Dine out for a good cause. Find your next favorite restaurant and enjoy prix fixe lunch menus for \$15, \$20 or \$25 and dinner menus for \$30, \$40 or \$50. Benefits CHOP’s King of Prussia campus. KOPRestaurantWeek.com

MARCH 5
Field to Feast Demonstration Dinner. Demonstration dinner with Chef Donna Laveran featuring three courses of locally sourced menu items, inspiring late winter dinner ideas to cook for family and friends. Rushton Conservation Center, 915 Delchester Rd., Newtown Square. WCTrust.org



MARCH 5
ACTnow Annual Chef’s Best Food Truck Event. Vote for your favorite offerings from competing food trucks. Benefits ACTnow, formerly ACT in Faith of Greater West Chester. Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester. Details at AssistingNow.org

MARCH 7
Live! Music Brunch at Delaware Art Museum. Good vibes meet great music. Enjoy a delicious brunch and the chance to connect with musical artists. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. 11 to 1. \$6-\$18. DelArt.org

FUNDRAISERS.....
See Datebook Calendar in this issue.

GARDENS.....
MARCH 13
Beauty of Buds Walk. Join Stoneleigh staff and explore the vast and fascinating world of buds during a guided walk in the garden. Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden, 1829 County Line Rd., Villanova. 10:30 am. \$15. NatLands.org

America250 Events



March 1-30, Forged in Freedom: The Land, the People and the Promise that Shaped a Nation. A traveling exhibit that overviews the people and events that shaped Chester County. Chesco.org/5383/Events

March 10, The Story of Phoenixville’s Role in the Revolution. Schuylkill River Heritage Center (Phoenixville Foundry) 2 N. Main St., Phoenixville. PhoenixvilleFoundry.org

March 12, Stars and Spectra: The Life and Legacy of Charlotte Moor Sitterly. A virtual presentation about the accomplished astrophysicist from East Fallowfield Township, who helped transform our understanding of the universe. TicketTailor.com/Events/ChesterCountyHistoryCenter/2056622

March 12, Book Discussion: Women in the American Revolution. Onsite at Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester and on Zoom. TicketTailor.com/Events/ChesterCountyHistoryCenter/2040684

March 21, Ordinary People, Extraordinary Times: Montgomery County in the American Revolution. A symposium at John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove, 1201 Pawlings Rd., Audubon. Events.Humanitix.com/Montco250Symposium

March 22, Bruce Mowday Lecture. This presentation will focus on Marquis de Lafayette’s role in the American Revolution. Uwchlan Township Building, 715 N. Ship Rd., Exton. Mowday.com/Events

March 26, America 250 at Goshen. A presentation with Ned Donogue at West Goshen Twp. Administration Building. WestGoshen.org/382/America-250-At-Goshen

March 29, Women’s Patriotism in Chester County. A program about women’s patriotism and contributions in Chester County. Thorndale Fire Company, 3611 Lincoln Hwy., Thorndale. On Facebook.

Keep Chester County Beautiful Volunteer groups participate in beautification activities throughout the county. ChesCoPlanning.org/Environmental/KCCCB/A250.cfm

Regional Meetings Monthly Zooms provide an open forum for the community to share ideas and plans for America250 celebrations and commemorations. Visit CCCF250.org/Planning for details.

- **Greater Phoenixville:** 4th Tues. monthly at 3.
- **Greater West Chester:** 4th Mon. monthly at 2.
- **Southern Ches Co:** 4th Wed. monthly at 2.
- **Main Line:** 2nd Mon. monthly at noon.
- **Coatesville:** TBD.

MUSEUMS.....

THROUGH MAY 31

Brandywine Museum of Art. *Through May 17,* "John Sloan's Street Theater," a key figure of the Ashcan School, a group of artists focused on portraying the unvarnished realities of modern life in New York City. *Through May 31,* "Cropsey, Wyeth, and the American Landscape Tradition," debut of a rediscovered masterpiece by Jasper Francis Cropsey. 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Wed-Mon, 9:30 to 4:30. \$8-\$20. Brandywine.org

THROUGH DECEMBER

Delaware Art Museum. *Through Aug. 23,* "Living Indigenous" showcases and celebrates the creative contributions of Indigenous artists living in and connected to the Delaware community. *Through Dec.,* "Jamey Grimes: Aster" installation transforms DelArt's Fusco Hall with swirling, synthetic forms inspired by nature, inviting viewers to explore space and movement. 2301 Kentmere Pkwy., Wilmington. Wed-Sun, 10 to 4. \$14-\$25. DelArt.org

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

MARCH 1

Delaware County Symphony. Symphony Series Concert: "Fanfare for the New World" featuring the music of William Grant Still,

Edward MacDowell, William Schuman and Duke Ellington. Neumann University, Meagher Theatre, 2 Neumann Dr., Aston. Times and tickets, DCSMusic.org.

MARCH 1-29

The Keswick Theatre. *Mar. 1,* The Platters, The Drifters, Cornell Gunter's Coasters; *Mar. 2,* Steven Curtis Chapman's Speechless '26 Tour; *Mar. 7,* Three American Troubadours, tribute to James Taylor, Carly Simon & Carole King; *Mar. 8,* Masters of Illusion; *Mar. 12,* The High Kings; *Mar. 15,* Rhythm of the Dance; *Mar. 17,* Celtic Woman; *Mar. 20,* Engelbert Humperdinck; *Mar. 29,* Chazz Palminteri: A Bronx Tale. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Check website for more. Times and tickets, KeswickTheatre.com.



MARCH 4-APRIL 2

American Music Theatre. *Mar. 4,* 7th Annual CPMA's & Hall of Fame Induction

Ceremony; *Mar. 5,* The Phil Collins Story; *Mar. 6,* Vienna Boys Choir; *Mar. 8,* The Drifters, The Platters & Cornell Gunter's Coasters; *Mar. 12,* Air Supply; *Mar. 13,* Celtic Woman: A New Era; *Mar. 15,* Mark Lowry with special guest Endless Highway; *Mar. 19,* "Menopause The Musical 2: Cruising Through The Change"; *Mar. 20,* Riverdance; *Mar. 27,* Mitchell Tenpenny; *Mar. 28,* The Oak Ridge Boys; *Apr. 2,* The Simon & Garfunkel Story. 2425 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster. Times and tickets, AMTShows.com.



MARCH 5-28

The Grand in Wilmington. *Mar. 5,* Dark Star Orchestra; *Mar. 6,* The Simon & Garfunkel Story; *Mar. 7,* An Evening with Jimmy Webb; *Mar. 8,* Blackberry Smoke; *Mar. 13,* Tony Trischka's Earl Jam; *Mar. 14,* The Irish Tenors; *Mar. 22,* An Evening with Tom Rush; *Mar. 27,* Colin Quinn; *Mar. 28,* An Evening with Gar-

ison Keillor with Special Guest Rich Dworsky. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

MARCH 7-APRIL 4

At The Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville. *Mar. 7,* The Theatre Organ Society of the Delaware Valley: Open Console; *Mar. 8,* Irish music with Solas; *Mar. 13,* Rick Wakeman & Son; *Mar. 21,* Seven Wonders: A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac; *Mar. 24,* James Garner's Tribute to Johnny Cash; *Mar. 26,* Sam Grisman Project; *Mar. 28,* Brave Strangers: A Tribute to Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band; *Apr. 4,* Europa: Tribute to Carlos Santana. 227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. Times and tickets, TheColonialTheatre.com.



MARCH 11-28

Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center. *Mar. 11,* Dueling Pianos—Philly Keys; *Mar. 12,* Better than Back; *Mar. 15,* Seamus Kennedy in concert; *Mar. 17,* Whiskey Rovers; *Mar. 19,* V. Shayne Frederick's Treasures—Jazz Cocktail Hour; *Mar. 20,* Andy Gross—Are You Kidding Me?; *Mar. 21,* Classic Stones Live; *Mar. 22,* Brandywine Valley Symphony presents Masterworks 2 - Songs Without Borders; *Mar. 26,* Laugh Lounge; *Mar. 27 & 28,* Mamma Mania. 226 N. High St., West Chester. Times and tickets, 610-356-2787; UptownWestChester.org.



MARCH 18-21

WCU—36th Annual Jazz Festival. Join all of the school's ensembles, faculty and guest

artists in a celebration of improvisatory music. Madeleine Wing Adler Theater, 817 S. High St., West Chester. Free. For times, WCUPA.edu/Music/JazzFest.aspx

MARCH 28

WCU Live! Presents The Doo Wop Project. Their brand new 90 minute show, "Echoes of the Street," keeps the classic sounds of Doo Wop alive for audiences of all ages. Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall, 700 S. High St., West Chester. 7 pm. \$20-\$35. WCUPA.edu



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.....

MARCH 7

Wolf Sanctuary of PA Full Moon Fundraiser. Bring a blanket, flashlight, chair and a sense of adventure. The event features a bonfire, entertainment and wolf tours that are self-guided

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with volunteers. 465 Speedwell Forge Rd., Lititz. 6:30 to 9 pm. \$35, must be 16 years old. WolfSanctuaryPA.org

THEATER.....

THROUGH MARCH 8

“And Then There Were None” at Fulton Theatre. One of Agatha Christie’s most foreboding tales, this classic play’s growing sense of unflinching tension will keep you guessing to the very end. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

THROUGH MARCH 8

“Glory Ride” a New Musical at Delaware Theatre Company. Based on the true story of legendary Tour de France champion Gino Bartali. 200 Water St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, DelawareTheatre.org.

THROUGH MARCH 22

“The Shark is Broken” at Fulton Theatre. This comedy dives deep into the tumultuous, murky waters of the making of a major motion picture with testy, feuding costars, unpredictable weather and a shark prop with constant breakdowns. 12 N. Prince St., Lancaster. Times and tickets, 717-397-7425; TheFulton.org.

THROUGH APRIL 26

Murder Mystery Dinner Theater at Mount Hope Estate. You’re invited to this interactive culinary “who-done-it,” where you will enjoy a four-course meal and the opportunity to become the detective, interrogate the suspects, put the clues together and uncover the truth. 2775 Lebanon Rd., Manheim. Times and tickets, 717-665-7021; PARenFaire.com.

MARCH 7

“Dirty Dancing in Concert” at The Grand. A live-to-film concert featuring the original film in full, accompanied by a live band and singers performing songs from the soundtrack. 818 N. Market St., Wilmington. Times and tickets, TheGrandWilmington.org.

MARCH 25–APRIL 5

“Fun Home” at Media Theatre. When her father dies unexpectedly, a young woman dives into her past to tell the story of the one-of-a-kind man whose temperament and secrets defined her family and her life. 104 E. State St., Media. Times and tickets, 610-891-0100; MediaTheatre.org.

APRIL 3–5

“Jesus Christ Superstar” at The Keswick

Theatre. The rock opera that retells the last week of Jesus’s life from the perspective of Judas Iscariot. Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice. 291 N. Keswick Ave., Glenside. Times and tickets, KeswickTheatre.com.

TOWNS, TALKS & TOURS.....

MARCH 3

True Crime on Trial. Join historians from the Chester County History Center for this interactive presentation of one of Chester County’s most controversial murder trials. Interact using your smartphone throughout the evening, ultimately delivering the verdict at the end. Victory Brewing, 420 Acorn Ln., Downingtown. 6 to 9 pm. \$20. MYCCHC.org ♦

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The Other Revolutionaries: Pennsylvania Women Who Shaped a Nation

FOUR UNSUNG PATRIOTS WHO FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM IN THEIR OWN WAY

Kim Andrews

IN 2026, WE'LL HEAR PLENTY about Washington, Lafayette and the battles that swept across southeastern Pennsylvania. But the Revolution wasn't won by generals or soldiers alone. It depended on women — organizers, writers, workers and caregivers — many of whom lived in or moved through what is now Chester County.

To commemorate America 250, here are four Pennsylvania women whose stories have long been missing from view.

ESTHER DE BERDT REED: A BROADSIDE THAT BECAME A MOVEMENT

In June 1780, with morale crumbling and the Continental Army short on supplies, Philadelphia's Esther de Berdt Reed issued a bold broadside in "Sentiments of an American Woman." Her message was groundbreaking — women could, and should, take public action to support the cause.

She urged women to raise money for Washington's troops, something wildly unconventional for the time. Within weeks, the Ladies Association of Philadelphia collected more than 300,000 Continental dollars. When Washington suggested the funds purchase shirts, the women bought linen and sewed more than 2,000 garments, stitching their names inside.

Reed's activism both clothed soldiers and helped establish the idea that women's civic engagement could shape national life.

HANNAH GRIFFITTS: A QUAKER POET'S PEN AGAINST POWER

While Reed organized, Philadelphia Quaker Hannah Griffitts wielded her pen. Raised in a community that embraced

spiritual equality, Griffitts wrote political poems urging "Daughters of Liberty" to resist British taxes and imported luxuries.

In her widely shared poem "The Female Patriots," she mocked men who were too timid or too easily bribed by British officials, writing: "If the Sons ... the Blessing despise, / Let the Daughters of Liberty nobly arise." Her work championed boycotts, thrift and speaking one's mind.

A pacifist, Griffitts was troubled by the war's violence. She mourned divided families and criticized extremism on both sides, calling Thomas Paine a "snake beneath the grass," while finding British officers' revelry in occupied Philadelphia equally distasteful.

Griffitts never sought publication, rather her poems survived because other women copied them. Today they reveal the conflicted loyalties and quiet courage of Pennsylvania women during the Revolution.

HANNAH ARCHER TILL: CLAIMING A FREEDOM NOT GIVEN

Hannah Archer Till's life spans slavery, survival and self-emancipation. Born enslaved in Delaware around 1721 to a mother of African descent and a father from the Oneida Nation, she was bought and sold several times, even taken to England before returning to North America.

Trained as a cook, she earned small amounts of money, enough to purchase her freedom, taking the name Archer. She married Isaac Till, and when the Revolution began, both joined the Continental Army workforce. By 1776, she was working as a skilled cook for the Continental Army's senior command, a role requiring exceptional trust. She followed the army through major campaigns, including the brutal



**Then & Now:
Women Leading in
Chester County**

The women of the Revolution — Esther Reed organizing fund drives, Hannah Griffitts wielding her pen, Abigail Hartman Rice nursing the sick and Hannah Till carving out her own freedom — pushed the boundaries of their time. Today, that legacy continues, as 54% of Chester County nonprofits are led by women (Chester Cty. Comm. Foundation, 2024) and nearly 40% of county businesses are women-owned (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). This is despite women still earning only \$0.84 for every dollar men earn locally (PA Dept. of Labor & Industry, 2024). It's a reminder that women's influence here is longstanding, growing but not yet fully formed.

winter at Valley Forge, where she gave birth to a son inside Washington's headquarters.

After the war, the Tills settled in Philadelphia and joined the First African Presbyterian Church. She lived to be more than 100 years old and is recognized today as a patriot. A DAR chapter carries her name.

ABIGAIL HARTMAN RICE: QUIET HEROISM AT YELLOW SPRINGS

Abigail Hartman Rice's story brings the Revolution home to Chester County. Born in Germany and raised near present-day Pikeland Township, she married a millwright and raised a very large family from 21 pregnancies, with 17 children living to adulthood.

In 1777, the war reached her doorstep. After the Battle of Brandywine, the Continental Army passed through the region. When the army established a hospital at Yellow Springs in early 1778, Rice became a nurse. Supplies were scarce, medicine rudimentary and disease rampant. During the Valley Forge encampment, more Americans died from illness than in battle, and Rice was among the civilians caring for them. She contracted typhoid fever while nursing the sick and never fully recovered.

Rice's service was quiet but essential — the kind of everyday patriotism the war depended on.

EXAMINING AMERICA 250

These stories are a reminder that the Revolution was not only a political struggle but a human one, carried on by people whose names history often overlooks. As celebrations unfold across Chester County in 2026, perhaps the most meaningful tribute is the widened understanding of who shaped the Revolution.

Esther Reed, Hannah Griffitts, Hannah Till and Abigail Rice each moved history forward in their own way. They show that the Revolution wasn't fought only by men with muskets and maps but also carried by women whose contributions are finally visible. ♦

Kim Andrews is part of the Chester County Community Foundation's America 250 initiative and a nonprofit governance consultant. She wrote this article to raise awareness of Chester County's role in our nation's fight for freedom and build engagement for 2026, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. For more information and to get involved, A250Friends.org.



The Work of Healing at Yellow Springs

From January through March 2026, Historic Yellow Springs will present a special exhibition on Revolutionary War medicine at Washington Hall, the former Yellow Springs Hospital. Drawing on research materials and historic medical reports, the exhibition explores how this site functioned within the Continental Army's coordinated hospital system. Among those who provided care here was Abigail Hartman Rice, a

Pikeland Township resident who served as a nurse during and after the 1777 Battle of Brandywine, tending soldiers suffering from disease as well as wounds. The exhibition brings the hospital's ruins to life through the routines, sanitation practices and daily labor that shaped survival.

Historic Yellow Springs, 1685 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. YellowSprings.org



Ruins of Washington Hall (Yellow Springs Hospital)



1. Hannah Archer Till portrayed by Ajena C. Rogers at Valley Forge National Historic Park
PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE
2. Cemetery at St. Peter's United Congregationalist Church in Pikeland, where Abigail Hartman Rice is buried
3. Portrait of Esther de Berdt Reed by Charles Willson Peale



THE POWER OF HER STORY

STRONG WOMEN, GREAT BOOKS

Shelley Laurence, Main Point Books

LEANOR ROOSEVELT SAID it best: “A woman is like a tea bag — you can’t tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.” And when you really think about it, it’s so true. Women have been taking the reins quietly — or not so quietly — throughout history.

And they make for great reading, in fiction *and* fact!

For example, how about a wonderfully detailed saga of two of the most influential and glamorous women in 19th-century Europe? Nancy Goldstone offers up “[The Rebel Empresses](#),” a dual biography about Empress Eugenie of France and Elizabeth of Austria, writing of their influences on history, social movements and war. Balancing historical context with private details, the book — featuring some of the most scandalous and pivotal moments in

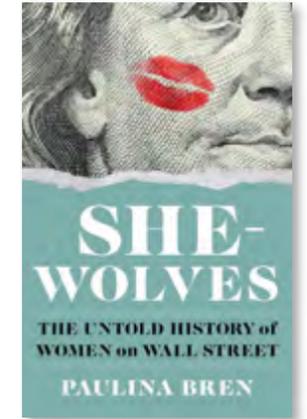
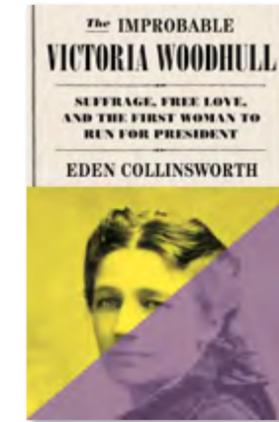
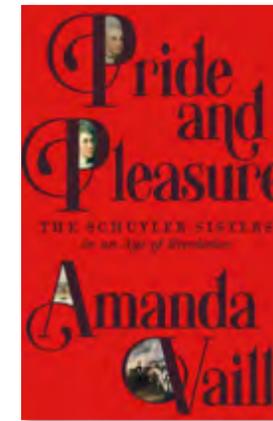
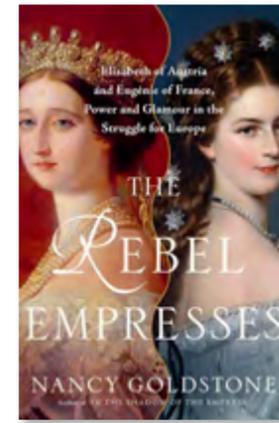
European history — shows these rulers as modern women who rejected tradition and championed progressive causes.

Next up, America’s founding era is reconsidered through the lives of two women, familiar to those who saw the musical “Hamilton.” In “[Pride and Pleasure: The Schuyler Sisters in an Age of Revolution](#),” Amanda Vaill introduces us to Angelica and Elizabeth Schuyler, born to wealth and privilege during the latter half of the 18th century. They were raised to marry well and run huge households. Instead, they got involved in the fight for America’s freedom and rebelled, each in different ways, against the destiny mapped out for them.

Staying with politics, did you know a woman ran for president of the United States in 1872? Learn that and much more in “[The Improbable Victoria Woodhull: Suffrage,](#)

[Free Love, and the First Woman to Run for President](#)” by Eden Collinworth. Woodhull, the daughter of a con artist, achieved remarkable success in finance, journalism and politics. A spiritualist, suffragist and proponent of free love, Woodhull was an iconoclast who fought for her beliefs no matter how controversial. *Kirkus Reviews* calls this “a zesty biography of a colorful woman in the raucous Gilded Age.”

Woodhull was just the tip of the iceberg. In “[She-Wolves: The Untold History of Women on Wall Street](#),” Paulina Bren tells the story of how women infiltrated Wall Street from the swinging ’60s to 9/11, starting at a time when “No Ladies” signs hung across the doors of its lunch clubs and inside its brokerage houses and investment banks. If the wolves of Wall Street made a show of their ferocity, the she-wolves did it

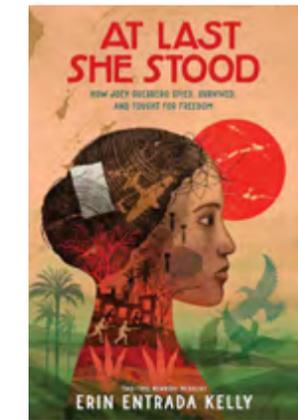


with subtlety and finesse. The lives of these women should never be forgotten.

You probably don’t think about librarians as powerful, but you’ve likely never heard of Amanda Jones. Jones lays out her case in “[That Librarian: The Fight Against Book Banning in America](#).” She’s faced death threats and attacks from all sides after standing against book banning at a public library board meeting. This book is part memoir and part manifesto from a Louisiana librarian who continues to advocate for free speech on the front lines of the culture wars.

It’s never too early to introduce the younger set to women who seize the moment for themselves. Local author Erin Entrada Kelly introduces us to Joey Guerrero, a brave, little-known Filipina who helped the Allied Forces win World War II while living with Hansen’s disease, also known as leprosy. Because of her condition, she was rarely searched by Japanese soldiers, which allowed her to carry secret messages, including an invaluable minefield map that she taped to her back. “[At Last She Stood: How Joey Guerrero Spied, Survived, and Fought for Freedom](#)” is an intriguing, well-told account of an extraordinary life.

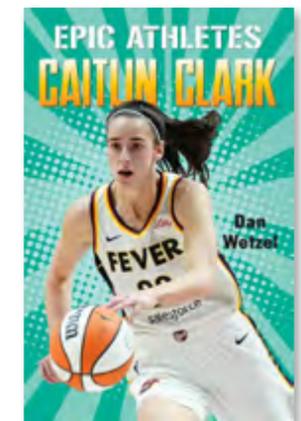
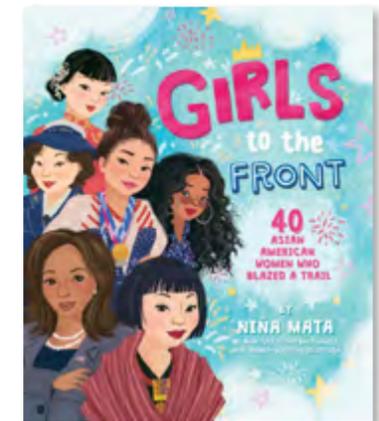
Another local author says stand back, women are coming through! In “[Girls to the Front](#),” Niña Mata highlights the lives and achievements of 40 women of Asian American descent. From politics to the U.S. Navy, from laboratories to boardrooms, these girls and women lead every line. *Booklist* calls this “an engaging celebration of Asian American ingenuity and triumph.”



How about an inspiring biography of one of the greatest women’s college basketball players of all time? In “[Epic Athletes: Caitlin Clark](#),” Dan Wetzel details Clark’s journey from multiple sports star in Iowa to making college basketball history and being named the WNBA Rookie of the Year. It’s a story of dedication, hard work, competitiveness and belief that has made her a barrier-breaking hero to people across America and beyond. Little girls will love it!

These books are just a small sampling of what’s waiting for you at your local bookstore. So get out there and start reading — and learning! ♦

Shelley Laurence is a bookseller at Main Point Books, an independent bookstore with a hand-picked selection for every member of the family. Check out their events, book groups and children’s activities at [MainPointBooks.com](#) or on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. Order online for delivery or pickup. 484-580-6978; 116 N. Wayne Ave., Wayne.





GREAT ESCAPES

Close to Home

START MAPPING OUT SPRING AND SUMMER WITH THESE FOUR DRIVABLE DESTINATIONS

Shannon Montgomery

AS WE SLOWLY LEAVE THIS RECORD-COLD winter behind, it's easy to start dreaming of warm-weather escapes. Whether you're planning a spring break trip or looking ahead to summer vacation, now's the time to start thinking about your next getaway.

Here are four destinations within a day's drive to spark your imagination — and start booking before everyone else does!

JERSEY SHORE

We've covered some of the big names — Ocean City, Wildwood, Cape May, LBI — but there's plenty more to explore at the shore. Here are a few towns to add to your summer vacation bucket list.

In **Atlantic City**, the iconic boardwalk hums with headline entertainment, high-profile restaurants and oceanfront resorts that turn a laidback beach day into a sparkling night out. Downtown, the Tanger Outlets promise designer finds without the hefty price tags, and the climb up Absecon Lighthouse — New Jersey's tallest — rewards with breathtaking coastal views.

Prefer things quieter? Nearby **Margate** beckons with wide beaches and a stop at Lucy the Elephant, the delightfully eccentric six-story landmark that's greeted vacationers for generations.

Farther south, **Sea Isle City** delivers a classic, family-friendly shore experience. The heart of Sea Isle is the Promenade — a 1.5-mile concrete walkway along the coastline, perfect for morning strolls with coffee, evening ice cream runs and breezy bike rides. Five miles of sandy beaches keep families happily parked until sunset, while free concerts, family fun nights and movies under the stars bring everyone to the Excursion Park Band Shell at night.

For many beachgoers, Avalon and Stone Harbor define quiet luxury at the shore. In **Avalon**, Dune Drive's boutiques, cafes and polished dining rooms set a stylish tone between hours on pristine beaches that are "Cooler by a Mile" — sitting about a mile further out to sea than surrounding towns.

Just minutes away, days in **Stone Harbor** unfold on the sand or along the marsh paths of the Stone Harbor Bird Sanctuary, while evenings are spent browsing 96th Street's chic storefronts. Both offer a sophisticated, effortlessly refined escape. [VisitAtlanticCity.com](#); [VisitSICNJ.com](#); [VisitAvalonNJ.com](#)

DELAWARE BEACHES

From boardwalk bustle to protected shoreline, Delaware's small-but-mighty coast makes it easy to match the mood to your vacation style.

In **Rehoboth Beach**, sandy afternoons give way to strolls along the iconic mile-long boardwalk. Families gravitate to Funland for old-school rides, refuel with Thrasher's fries and saltwater taffy, then browse tax-free treasures on Rehoboth Avenue and the open-air Penny Lane Mall. On weekend nights, an eclectic mix of performers take the stage at the Rehoboth Beach Bandstand.

Just south, **Dewey Beach** packs ocean and bay into one lively strip, where sun-soaked days slide into waterfront cocktails and late-night energy.

For travelers seeking serenity, Delaware's southern beaches offer a gentler pace. **Bethany Beach's** tidy boardwalk invites quiet mornings on the sand, quick walks to dinner and seaside concerts at the bandstand.

At the very tip of Delaware, **Fenwick Island** opens onto broad, uncrowded sand, popular for swimming, surfing and paddling the quiet back bays. A stop at the historic Fenwick Island Lighthouse — the state's oldest — adds a dash of heritage to the day.

Set between the northern and southern resorts, a different kind of escape awaits at **Delaware Seashore State Park**. Cross the Indian River Inlet Bridge for miles of preserved ocean and bay shoreline, beloved by anglers, beachgoers, paddlers and cyclists, then tour the Indian River Life-Saving Station for the tales of dramatic maritime rescues. With two waterfront campgrounds, bayfront cottages and a four-bedroom house, the park works as either a scenic stop or a getaway all its own. [Beach-Fun.com](#); [TheQuietResorts.com](#); [DEStateParks.com](#)

MARITIME MARYLAND

Whether you're craving canal-town charm, classic boardwalk nostalgia or waterfront nightlife near the nation's capital, Maryland has a getaway for you.

Just far enough to feel like a getaway, Cecil County makes slipping into vacation mode effortless. In **Chesapeake City**, wander

brick sidewalks, settle into waterside restaurants and watch ships glide through the C&D Canal — one of the busiest canals in the world.

Nearby **North East** blends busy marinas with antiques and dockside meals, plus the charmingly nautical Upper Bay Museum. Outside town, a hike to Turkey Point Lighthouse in **Elk Neck State Park** rewards with sweeping views where the Chesapeake meets the Elk River.

In the heart of the Eastern Shore, you can't get a more classic beach vacation experience than **Ocean City** — 10 miles of sand, a beloved boardwalk and off-shore adventures in the White Marlin Capital of the World (really!). Just south, **Assateague Island National Seashore** swaps arcade lights for wild ponies, quiet beaches and prime paddling.

For a fun inland stop, **Berlin's** boutiques, galleries and historic Main Street make it one of the Smithsonian's "20 Best Small Towns to Visit."

Trade in your flip-flops for a little polish in **Prince George's County**. Just minutes from Washington, D.C., National Harbor is abuzz with dining and shopping galore — and a spin on the Capital Wheel offers front-row views of the monuments across the Potomac. Farther north, the College Park Aviation Museum preserves flight history at the world's oldest continuously operating airport, where Wilbur Wright trained the first military aviators. Add the murals and indie flair of the Hyattsville Arts District, and you've traded beaches for a completely different kind of getaway. [DiscoverCecil.com](#); [OCOcean.com](#); [ExperiencePrinceGeorges.com](#)

SUMMER IN THE POCONOS

When warm weather settles over the Pocono Mountains, ski slopes give way to green ridgelines, sparkling lakes and vacation options that range from hammock naps to high-speed thrills.

For many, the anchor is **Lake Wallenpaupack**, where pontoon rentals, paddleboards and fishing charters fill long, sun-drenched days. Dock-and-dine restaurants ease the transition from afternoon cruising

to dinnertime, and swimming and lakeside lounging at Palmyra Township Public Beach might make you forget the Atlantic altogether. For a change of pace, take the kids to Claws 'N' Paws Wild Animal Park or Costa's Family Fun Park for go-karts, laser tag, mini-golf and more.

Looking for an all-in-one base camp? **Camelback Mountain Adventure Park** packs in thousand-foot ziplines, backroad UTV trails and Pennsylvania's only mountain coaster. Resort-minded travelers are drawn to **Mount Airy Casino Resort**, where an indoor/outdoor pool complex, championship golf, spa services and sleek dining set the tone. Days might unfold in a shaded cabana or on the fairways before shifting to cocktails, live music and late-night entertainment.

If reconnecting with nature is the goal, the **Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area** offers over 70,000 preserved acres along the Delaware River, the longest free-flowing river east of the Mississippi. Hike to tumbling waterfalls, bike wooded trails or spend a lazy afternoon canoeing or tubing down the Delaware River. Scenic overlooks reward even short walks, delivering wide-open views that feel miles from everyday life. [PoconoMountains.com](#); [CamelbackResort.com](#); [MountAiryCasino.com](#); [NPS.gov/DEWA](#) ♦



1. Avalon, NJ
2. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE
3. Ocean City Boardwalk
4. Atlantic City's Steel Pier
5. Rehoboth Beach

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Women's HEALTH



For this issue, we turn the spotlight on women's health at every stage of life. From the greater impact of Alzheimer's disease to the complexities of dense breast screening and the growing interest in complementary therapies for perimenopause, knowledge is power. These articles bring expert insights, practical guidance and a proactive path forward — helping women advocate for their bodies, their wellbeing and their futures.

Alzheimer's Hits Women Twice as Hard

**WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT RISK,
 CAREGIVING AND PROTECTING
 BRAIN HEALTH**

Amba Kasongo, Programs Director, *Alzheimer's Association*

AS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER'S disease continues to rise across the country, its impact is felt unevenly among different groups. Women, in particular, face a double burden: they're more likely both to develop Alzheimer's disease and to care for someone living with the disease.

Consider a few facts: More than 12 million women in the United States live with or care for someone experiencing Alzheimer's disease. Almost two-thirds of Americans living with the disease are women. And a woman's estimated lifetime risk of developing the disease at age 65 is 1 in 5, compared to 1 in 10 for their male counterparts. What's more, a 65-year-old woman is more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease over the rest of her life as she is to develop breast cancer.

WHY ARE WOMEN MORE AT RISK?

Researchers are exploring several potential reasons why more women than men develop Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia. One of the most common explanations is that women tend to live longer and Alzheimer's is more likely to develop as you age. However, age is likely not the only factor. New research



is exploring whether risk is higher at any age and the role of other aspects such as biology, genetics or life experiences.

Another area of investigation is how women's reproductive lives affect brain health across their lifespan. There have been studies, for example, that examine the risk of dementia and the age at first menstrual period, age at menopause, and time between first menstruation and menopause. While more research is needed, this study supports a promising theory — that events that happen across one's lifespan, such as those associated with reproduction, may have an impact on dementia risk.

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With more than a decade of nonprofit and public health experience, Amba Kasongo is Programs Director for the Alzheimer's Association. She leads a team that conducts education and training, empowers volunteers, and develops and nurtures corporate and community partnerships for the Association, which is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. ALZ.org



Breast Density

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HER MAMMOGRAM

Angela Jain, MD, *Fox Chase Cancer Center*

FOR MANY WOMEN, A MAMMOGRAM IS A FAMILIAR part of routine health care — something checked off the calendar every year or two with little fanfare. But for millions of women, the results of that mammogram may include a term that raises new questions and concerns: dense breasts.

What does breast density mean? Why does it matter? And how should it affect decisions about breast cancer screening?

Understanding breast density can empower women to have more informed conversations with their health care providers and to take an active role in their breast health.

WHAT IS BREAST DENSITY?

Breast density refers to the composition of breast tissue, not how the breasts feel to the touch. On a mammogram, breast tissue appears in shades of black and white. Fatty tissue looks dark, while glandular and connective tissue — known as fibroglandular tissue — appears white.

Breasts are considered “dense” when there’s more fibroglandular tissue than fatty tissue. Radiologists classify breast density into four categories: 1. almost entirely fatty, 2. scattered areas of fibroglandular density, 3. heterogeneously dense and 4. extremely dense.

Women in the last two categories are considered to have dense breasts. This is very common — about half of women who undergo mammography fall into one of these dense categories.

WHY DOES BREAST DENSITY MATTER?

Breast density is important for two key reasons. First, dense tissue can hide cancer. Because both dense tissue and tumors appear white on a mammogram, cancers can be harder to see in dense breasts. This is sometimes described as trying to find a snowball in a snowstorm. As a result, mammograms may be less sensitive in women with dense breasts.

Continued on page 30



Angela Jain, MD, Chief of the Division of Gynecologic Medical Oncology at Fox Chase Cancer Center and Associate Professor in the Department of Hematology/Oncology, specializes in the treatment of gynecologic cancers and breast cancer. In addition to her clinical work, her research focuses on clinical trials to improve outcomes and treatment options in women’s cancers and retrospective outcomes-based research, focusing on improving the quality, effectiveness and value of cancer care. FoxChase.org



Nurturing Yourself Through Perimenopause: A Holistic Path to Well-Being

WITH TIPS FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES

Beverly Fornoff, *Penn Medicine*

PERIMENOPAUSE CAN BE A CHALLENGING TIME for many women, especially if they’ve spent a lifetime caring for others. This caretaking often occurs at the expense of nurturing their own health.

By the time many women notice shifts associated with approaching menopause, they may feel the need to step away from putting out fires for others and begin tending to their own blazing infernos. Taking some time to quietly look within and prioritize their own health needs might feel impossible or even selfish, but it’s the most important step they can take to be able to continue caring for their families, careers and other responsibilities.

At this phase of their lives, some women are turning to complementary medicine for support in managing the stress of mid-life demands and their changing health needs. Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine are just two options that are becoming mainstream modalities and increasingly accepted and used alongside conventional Western medicine, often within existing health organizations.

ACUPUNCTURE AND HOW IT HELPS

Acupuncture involves inserting sterile, fine needles in specific points on the body. The needles evoke a response from the nervous system, sending messages to the brain that stimulate neurochemicals affecting pain, hormonal balance, blood quality and circulation, and mood, among other things. Studies have shown that acupuncture is effective at reducing hot flashes, sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety and perceived stress — all symptoms commonly associated with perimenopause.

Treatment strategies may include acupuncture point combinations that would cool the heat and improve fluid metabolism to

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Beverly Fornoff, MAc, is a licensed acupuncturist at the Women’s Specialty Center at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health Holistic Therapy. She received her graduate degree from Maryland University of Integrative Health and has been in practice for more than 23 years. For more information on holistic therapy and perimenopausal care, visit PennMedicine.org.

Alzheimer's Hits Women Twice as Hard: *Continued from page 27*

Researchers are also investigating sex-specific differences in the architecture of the brain. In a study released at the 2024 Alzheimer's Association International Conference, scientists found that differences in the structural and functional connections of a woman's brain may speed the spread of tau, a protein that's a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease. These findings could lead to new risk reduction strategies targeted for women.

Beyond biology, scientists believe that societal or cultural factors may also play a role in women's risk. A recent study looked at work and family patterns, which have changed drastically over the last 100 years, and how these changes may play a role in a woman's memory decline. The study indicated that women who participated in the paid labor force between early adulthood and middle age experienced slower memory decline in late life — building on previous research that links work and education with higher levels of cognitive engagement.

HOW DOES CAREGIVING IMPACT WOMEN'S HEALTH?

When it comes to caregiving, there are inequities as well. More than 60% of Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers are women — and more specifically, more than one-third are daughters. Women in the workforce are impacted as well, as nearly 19% of women dementia caregivers had to quit working either to become a caregiver or because their caregiving duties became too burdensome.

Studies have indicated that the overwhelming majority of dementia caregivers who request individual counseling and respite care are women. What's more, women caregivers may experience higher levels of depression and impaired health than their male counterparts. Evidence suggests these differences arise because women caregivers tend to spend more time caregiving — to take on more tasks, and to care for someone with greater cognitive, functional or behavioral challenges.

HOW TO REDUCE DEMENTIA RISK?

Research shows that people can reduce the risk of developing dementia by leading a healthy lifestyle. In 2025, a major breakthrough in brain health was announced at the Alzheimer's International Association Conference. The U.S. POINTER Study, a two-year clinical trial involving more than 2,000 older adults, found that simultaneously targeting risk factors for cognitive decline — including regular physical activity, a brain-healthy diet, cognitive and social engagement, and health monitoring — can improve brain function in older adults.

The trial is the first of its kind to show that these interventions work across diverse communities, regardless of age, gender or genetic risk. The results provide powerful, actionable guidance for promoting brain health. Specifically, the U.S. POINTER brain health recipe includes:

- **Physical exercise** — 30–35 minutes of moderate-to-intense aerobic activity four times a week, plus strength and flexibility exercises twice a week.
- **Cognitive exercise** — Computer-based brain training three times a week for 30 minutes, plus regular engagement in intellectually challenging and social activities.
- **Nutrition** — Adherence to the MIND diet, which emphasizes dark leafy greens, berries, nuts, whole grains, olive oil and fish, and which limits sugar and unhealthy fats.
- **Health monitoring** — Regular check-ins on blood pressure, weight and lab results.

Women can take charge of their brain health by incorporating these and other healthy habits such as not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight and managing diabetes. The Alzheimer's Association also provides tools, like the Brain Health Habit Builder tool, available online and which can be used to check current habits — such as physical activity, diet and sleep — and make a plan to protect the brain.

More research is needed, and with more understanding will come new tools and best practices for addressing risk, prevention, detection and additional dementia treatments. Until then, women can take heart in adopting the positive actions that have been proven to make a real difference in brain health.

And all women are encouraged to access the resources provided by the Alzheimer's Association, which include disease education and help for caregivers — such as support groups and navigation tools — all of which are accessible through the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800-272-3900).

Breast Density: *Continued from page 28*

Second, dense breasts are a risk factor. Having dense breasts slightly increases a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. While density alone does not mean cancer will develop, it is considered one of many risk factors, along with age, family history, genetic mutations, personal health history and lifestyle factors.

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE DENSE BREASTS?

Breast density can't be determined by a physical exam or breast size. The only way to know is through a mammogram. After your screening, the radiologist evaluates the images and assigns a density category.

In many states — and now under federal regulations — women are notified if they have dense breasts as part of their mammogram results. This notification is meant to encourage discussion between patients and their health care providers, not to cause alarm.

DOES BREAST DENSITY CHANGE OVER TIME?

Yes. Breast density can change throughout a woman's life. Density often decreases with age, particularly after menopause, but this is not always the case. Hormone



replacement therapy may increase or maintain breast density, while other factors such as weight changes or medications may influence it as well.

Because breast density can change, it's evaluated each time a mammogram is performed.

IS MAMMOGRAPHY STILL IMPORTANT WITH DENSE BREASTS?

Absolutely. Mammography remains the most effective screening tool for reducing breast cancer deaths and is recommended for women of average risk starting at age 40, or earlier for some women at higher risk.

Even though dense tissue can make interpretation more challenging, mammograms still detect many cancers in dense breasts. Newer technologies, such as digital breast tomosynthesis (3D mammography), have improved cancer detection and reduced false positives, especially in women with dense tissue.

ARE ADDITIONAL SCREENING TESTS NEEDED?

For some women with dense breasts, supplemental screening may be recom-

mended. This decision is individualized and based on overall breast cancer risk, not density alone.

Possible additional screening options include: breast ultrasound, which can detect cancers that may not be visible on mammography, and breast MRI, typically recommended for women at high risk due to genetics or strong family history.

While these tests may find additional cancers, they can also increase the likelihood of false positives, leading to extra imaging or biopsies that turn out to be benign. For this reason, the benefits and risks should be carefully weighed in consultation with a health care provider.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT BREAST CANCER RISK?

Breast density is just one piece of the cancer risk puzzle. Many women with dense breasts never develop breast cancer, and many women with breast cancer do not have dense breasts.

Your provider may use a risk assessment tool that considers multiple factors, such as age, family history of breast or ovarian cancer, personal history of breast conditions, genetic test results and reproductive history.

This broader view helps guide screening recommendations that are tailored to you.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PATIENT?

Knowledge is power when it comes to breast health. If you've been told you have dense breasts, consider taking the following steps:

- Ask questions about your mammogram report and what your density means for you.
- Discuss your personal risk for breast cancer with your health care provider.
- Review screening options, including the potential benefits and drawbacks of supplemental tests.
- Stay up to date with recommended screenings.
- Report any breast changes — such as lumps, pain, nipple discharge or skin changes — promptly, regardless of recent imaging.

Breast awareness and regular screening work together to support early detection.

A REASSURING PERSPECTIVE

Hearing that you have dense breasts can feel unsettling, but it's important to remember that density is common and manageable. It's not a diagnosis, and it doesn't mean something is wrong.

Advances in imaging, increased awareness and personalized screening strategies have made it possible to detect breast cancer earlier and more accurately than ever before. Open communication between patients and health care providers is the cornerstone of this progress.

Breast density is a normal and important part of breast health. Understanding what it means — and what it doesn't mean — can help women make informed decisions without unnecessary fear.

If you have dense breasts, you're not alone. With the right information, appropriate screening and ongoing dialogue with your care team, you can take confident steps to protect your health.

Nurturing Yourself Through Perimenopause: *Continued from page 29*

reduce hot flashes and night sweats, supplement energy production to reduce fatigue and improve brain function, and regulate the nervous system to improve sleep and reduce anxiety and depression.

As few as four needles or as many as 20 or more may be used in a session. Needles are generally retained in place for 20 to 30 minutes while the patient relaxes before being removed. Each acupuncture session also includes time to discuss symptoms and treatment strategy, lasting about an hour in total.

Treatment frequency is based on each woman's needs, and most commonly begins with weekly sessions, gradually decreasing as symptoms improve. Some women choose to continue maintenance treatment, while others stop once their symptoms are under control.

CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

Chinese medicine includes more than acupuncture. Herbal medicine can also be used to balance menopausal symptoms. Herbal formulas may be prescribed by a licensed acupuncturist who also holds a certificate in Chinese herbs, meaning they've completed two years of herbal study and passed a national board exam.

Chinese herbs are rarely prescribed as a single ingredient. Most often formulas are combinations of herbs that complement one another. Herbal formulas can be taken as raw herbs, granular tea or in capsule form. They may also be prepared as a tincture or poultice.

In perimenopause, herbs can be used to reduce hot flashes, regulate the menstrual cycle, improve sleep and support the nervous system. This approach helps reduce the effects of stress with similar strategies and diagnostic process as with acupuncture.

There's no "one size fits all" herbal prescription. Each formula is custom designed to fit the patient's specific symptoms. Practitioners of Chinese medicine also view

food as medicine and often provide dietary recommendations based on the energetic properties of foods and a person's diagnostic symptoms.

MORE HOLISTIC CARE THERAPIES

During times of high stress, it's important to maintain physical movement to keep the joints healthy and the muscles flexible. **Yoga, tai chi** and **qi gong** are all gentle movement exercises that improve flexibility, strength and balance without causing strain or increasing inflammation.

Yoga focuses on flexibility and body awareness and can be easily modified by a trained instructor to accommodate physical limitations. Tai chi, while initially designed for self-defense, has evolved into a slow-moving exercise that can strengthen muscles and joints as it improves focus and balance. Qi gong combines slow movement and awareness of breathing to cultivate qi (vital energy).

Mental well-being is also important to address. **Meditation** fosters mindfulness by teaching individuals to observe their thoughts without becoming caught up in the story and drama. This practice can increase positive feelings toward themselves and others, allowing better coping with worry and stress that are so common at this stage of life. Studies show that many types of meditation — such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation, and Focused Attention (such as on the breath) — can affect the length of telomeres on a gene strand, an indicator of slower aging.

Massage is another self-care tool that can reduce muscle aches and pain through physical manipulation of the fascia, muscles, tendons and ligaments. Benefits can be achieved in as little as 15-to-20-minute sessions for those who may have trouble fitting a longer 60-minute session into a busy schedule. Massage can also promote relax-



ation, as appropriate professional touch can increase endorphins and reduce cortisol.

More options include **sound and vibration**, which have been used for many years for their health benefits and have recently gained popularity for their ability to calm the nervous system. The use of gongs, singing bowls and tuning forks among other instruments have all been used for their ability to produce sound waves that resonate through the body to stimulate relaxation and support a balanced nervous system through vagal nerve activation. This type of therapy can be experienced in private or group sound immersion sessions and can be experienced sitting in a chair or lying on the floor or a table.

HOW TO CHOOSE

Many primary care physicians understand the benefits and strengths of complementary modalities and may be able to refer you to a practitioner. A well-trained, licensed acupuncturist has expertise in most of the modalities mentioned here or has a network of practitioners to refer you to.

It's important to know about the training, licenses and certifications of your practitioner, as levels of education can vary. And it's important to feel comfortable and have rapport with your practitioner, so feel free to ask questions during your consultation.

An increasing number of women are seeking complementary therapies in addition to Western care as they navigate their journey through perimenopausal challenges. With proper support, this can also be a magical time of self-empowerment as women begin to make room for themselves and their own health. ♦

INSPIRING Young Women Leaders

This March, the theme for Women's History Month of "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future" encompasses sustainability beyond environmental concerns. It also includes issues such as financial sustainability, community resilience, leadership succession and intergenerational equity.

As part of that focus, *County Lines* shines a spotlight on seven dynamic young women shaping the future here in the Brandywine Valley — each leading the change with vision, grit and a deep commitment to community. From kitchens and stages to borough halls and boardrooms, these changemakers are redefining what a new generation of leaders looks like.

Meet food entrepreneur Madi Coble, performing arts center director Heather Grayberg, chamber president Laura Manion, civic engagement advocate Jahnvi Rao, LGBTQ+ leader Carrie Stare, local mayor Joi Washington and nonprofit president Javonna Wylie. Their paths are distinct, but their impact is shared: building stronger communities, expanding opportunity and inspiring their generation and the next. In businesses, nonprofits and public service, they're proving that leadership isn't just about titles — it's about action.

We thank them for sharing their inspiring stories.

Madeline Coble | Founder & Owner, Madi's on a Roll

Madeline Coble is on a roll — though you may know her as Madi's on a Roll, the 31-year-old entrepreneur with brick-and-mortar stores in Exton and Phoenixville selling gourmet egg-rolls, bite-size apps and dips.

Citing inspiration from her mother's Allentown bakery, Madeline's on Liberty, Madi helped out since age 8 and indulged in specialty treats — “Cheesesteak eggrolls were my favorites,” she said. Later she built her business from a folding table and fryer (with hot oil!) at events, then regular gigs at farmers markets, to her dream of a storefront or two.

This dream career was a leap of faith from the corporate marketing job her degree from West Chester University prepared her for. “After helping at my mom's bakery over Christmas, I knew I needed a new challenge. Something more high energy where I'd talk to 200 people a day,” Madi said. “And at 23, the risk was low. Plus I felt better working 16-hour days.” She decided to start her business in Chester County.

Stuffed specialty eggrolls always sold out at her mother's bakery, so that was a strong, tested concept. “You can put so many different things into eggrolls, with new flavors all the time. Like Italian roast pork, or my current favorite, spinach-artichoke. They can be made gluten-free, too, a big new market for us.” And so the business grows.

How did she make the jump to a storefront after working from a kitchen in the back of Café Baladi in Malvern? “I drove by the Exton location over and over. My dream spot, a place where we could expand our frozen eggrolls, which are more sustainable and less labor intensive.” Covid prompted a lucky pivot to frozen eggrolls that continued to be popular.

After a profitable holiday season, she and her husband (who became her business partner) visited the store. “It was ten times bigger than we needed, but I knew we could grow into it. Luckily we did, because I discovered I was pregnant the day we signed the lease!” Expanding to Phoenixville followed a question posted on Instagram about where fans would like to see another shop. “It was overwhelmingly Phoenixville, where I'd first wanted to open.” A smaller storefront opened there in 2024.

But it's not all dreams and lucky pivots. “I don't think everyone understands the pressure on business owners. We have over 15 employees, and I'm responsible for their livelihoods! On slow days, the weight is intense,” she said. What about being a woman owner? “My favorite part of being a woman business owner is modeling independence, ambition and creativity in real time and knowing my daughter gets to grow up watching it.”

With role models ranging from her mother to Sara Blakely (Spanx founder and youngest self-made female billionaire), Madi had this advice for her 25-year-old self: “I feel like I did it right. At least for me. I started my business at 23 and have grown it and a family. I'd say, keep going. And one day your pipe dream can come true.”



Where Does This Foodie Like to Eat?

“I love to eat at mom-and-pop places. Local spots where you can meet the owners and talk with them. Of course, Café Baladi Restaurant is a special favorite, given their generosity and key role in my startup business. It's also where I met my husband, and they have great Lebanese food.”



Heather Grayberg

Executive Director, Uptown Knauer Performing Arts Center



When you hear that Heather Grayberg, Executive Director of Uptown Knauer Performing Arts Center, has over 25 years of experience as a producer, director, choreographer and artistic leader with credits ranging from “The Wedding Singer” to “The Sponge-Bob Musical” to Disney's “Beauty and the Beast,” you might wonder if she fits the young leaders category. After a web search that failed to confirm her age, we asked.

“I started performing at 5 and got my first paid job as a choreographer at 14,” said 34-year-old Grayberg. So, the math does work. “And I don't highlight my age. In addition to being a woman, I'm also very small, at 5'1". I've had my share of people telling me to ‘smile and make the world a better place’ or asking to speak with my husband.”

Grayberg grew up around the arts. “My mother worked as a scenic designer, with help from my father, whose other role was as a pastor and a community leader,” said Grayberg. That might partially explain the arts-plus-admin role Grayberg enjoys now, as well as her choice to work with her husband founding Revival Productions, a community arts organization started in Coatesville.

Running Revival Productions was both a high and low point in Grayberg's career. Inspired by her love of performing arts and connecting with the community, she moved into a space in Coatesville while still working out the brand and mission, just before the pandemic hit. She realized she'd hit rock bottom in 2022 when she had to leave the arts space and hold dance classes in the stairwell of the local YMCA and voice classes in the daycare room. But through force of will, she moved the organization to Parkesburg, grew it to perform on the main stage at Uptown, and later reopened in Coatesville.

Along the way Grayberg realized that it takes more than artistic talent to run a successful arts organization, spurring her to earn a master's in arts management. Armed with new credentials, hard lessons learned and a successful 2023 run of “Nonsense,” Grayberg reached out to the Uptown board about a position there. About a month later she became Director of Programming and in 2024 was named Executive Director.

With a leadership style mixing tough love to preserve limited arts resources with a desire to say yes to help others try things, even if they fail yet learn through the failure, Grayberg now focuses on arts advocacy to broaden access and enhance the beneficial impact on the community. “The arts are a key financial driver in the community, bringing over \$30 back in meals, parking and other services for every \$1 invested,” shared Grayberg. Plus there's the intangible pleasure of engagement with the arts.

What advice would she give her 25-year-old self? “At 25 I had two kids and was breastfeeding and performing full time. Somehow, the word ‘revival’ came to me and inspired me to start an arts group. I needed to find a way to enjoy my life more and believe that things would resolve themselves.” It looks like they did.

What Inspires You Now?



“During a recent trip to New York City, I bought a bag at the Museum of Modern Art with a quote by Faith Ringgold, an artist, activist and creator of narrative story quilts. It says ‘I just decided when someone says you can't do something, do more of it.’ Ringgold used rejection as motivation and creative solutions, also saying ‘I'll come

in another door’ when met with barriers.” Words to live by for leaders of all kinds of organizations.

Laura Manion

President & CEO, Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry



“I became an accidental child care advocate,” said Laura Manion, about one of her signature accomplishments as the very young head of the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry. The county’s largest chamber, it represents 550 businesses, has a budget of \$800,000+ and sponsors 50+ high-profile events annually with a staff of just six.

Being only 32 and six months pregnant with her first child when appointed head of the Chamber in 2022 prompted Manion’s advocacy. “I wrote an op-ed in the *Daily Local* about child care that went viral, then got involved with a statewide coalition of 55 chambers focused on the issue. And I worked on getting legislation passed expanding child care tax credits in Pennsylvania.”

Child care, which can run about \$27,000 a year for a two-child household in Pennsylvania, is a vital business issue, key to recruitment and retention, even more so post-pandemic, Manion added. Now pregnant with child number three, Manion and her chamber coalition colleagues got another win with a 2025 state budget line item of \$25 million for child care teacher recruitment and retention.

Her deep roots in Chester County — where Manion was born, raised, educated (West Chester University for her master’s) and built her career — made her a natural fit for the chamber job. “I spent my life in Chester County, even while manager in the Great Lakes Regional Office for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, when I flew back and forth to the six states I oversaw.” At the urging of longtime mentor Caitlin Ganley, Manion decided to apply for the chamber job, believing it was the right next step given her background and passions.

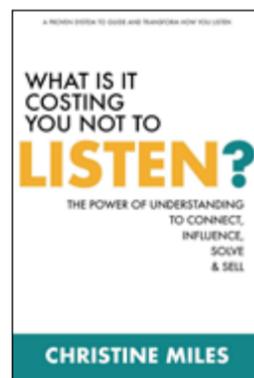
Mentors have helped shape Manion’s career — from her mother to the prior Chamber Board Chair Caitlin Ganley to the circle of peers she meets with regularly. “Millennial women seek out mentors, and I’ve been lucky to have many,” said Manion, noting the importance of getting support from above, sharing support with peers and providing support to rising younger leaders. “When I speak to younger women I tell them to lean in. Don’t be afraid to go for the job. Remember that you’re qualified and embrace that uncertainty. It’s a sign this will help you grow.”

How is Manion leaning in? Among her key goals are growing the chamber by increasing membership, rebranding, fundraising and effective legislative advocacy. In addition to child care, she’s focused on issues of housing, infrastructure and public transportation, becoming a trusted voice for the business community. This position led to a spot as a monthly panelist on ABC6’s “Inside Story,” where she speaks on public policy, business and community impact.

It may be surprising that this accomplished young leader admits to occasional flashes of imposter syndrome. “Sometimes when I’m in high profile situations, on a stage or testifying before lawmakers, I’ll look around and question whether I’m qualified to be there,” said Manion. “But then I take a breath and remind myself I’m well-trained, experienced, and I’m there for a reason.”

What’s Influenced You Lately?

“I’ve moved on from my guilty pleasure of reading thrillers to reading about self-improvement and leadership. My current favorite is *What Is It Costing You Not to Listen: The Power of Understanding to Connect, Influence, Solve & Sell* by local author Christine Miles. We’re often taught to be storytellers, but being a listener is far more important to successful leadership.”



Jahnavi Rao | Founder & President, New Voters



How does a Conestoga High School junior go from feeling voiceless after the 2016 elections to founding and running a nationwide Gen-Z-led, nonpartisan nonprofit to mobilize high school students to register to vote? “I was not going to wait. The impact of the elections affected my generation more than any other. We could do this hard thing not despite our age but because of our age,” said Jahnavi Rao about starting a movement at her high school that’s grown to over 500 chapters in 42 states.

“I was a music kid who got my track team and Science Olympiad friends and others to reach out with the message to register to vote — first to 25 kids, then 50, and ultimately registering 85% of the eligible students in three days. We went into homerooms, had sign-up clip boards at homecoming, created spreadsheet, sent texts. I even used the school directory to cold call parents to spread the word,” she continued.

The effort got press coverage and earned a Pennsylvania Governor’s Civic Engagement Award. High schools across the state reached out, wanting advice on replicating the program. “We created a copy-and-paste model of what to do,” Rao said. At 17, she expanded the high school club and founded a 501(c)(3) organization that now provides mentorship, toolkits and support to help students become voters and lifelong civic participants.

Then in 2018 the Parkland high school shooting in Florida left 17 dead and ignited nationwide activism among students. The push for voter registration efforts grew — spawning over 100 new Pennsylvania chapters of New Voters and causing Rao to take a leave from her studies at Harvard University during the pandemic to devote to nurturing the organization.

While most voter registration efforts focus on college students and other groups, Rao could see the possibilities of working with high school students. “High school is the last time when all young people are together for their last shared experiences,” said Rao. “Then 60% go off to college.”

“There are over 27,000 high schools in the country, over 1,200 public and private high schools in Pennsylvania, and over 40 in Chester County,” Rao rattled off the statistics. “That’s around 4 million new high school graduates in 2025 in the U.S. And since this country spends about \$50 per student on STEM programs but only about \$0.05 on civics education, there’s plenty to do.”

What were the challenges in growing New Voters, one of fewer than five groups focused on registering high school students? “We were lucky to have support from Conestoga High School teachers when we started. And one, Kathleen Walker, is still involved today. But I needed help with things like payroll, business tasks and fundraising,” said Rao. She drew on advisers like Blake Emmanuel at the Chester County Fund for Women and Girls, and others from her *Forbes* “30 Under 30” network.

Rao has come a long way in her 25 years from the little girl who studied music at age 4 and dreamed of a career as a professional singer, then on to a college student with a music minor who studied opera in Italy. Luckily she was well prepared to take on a national stage.

What Advice for Your 18-Year-Old Self?

“Just send the email. 18-year-old me would take weeks to write an email. I’d send a draft to my dad for rounds of feedback, while the other person would get irritated waiting. The bigger lesson is not letting perfection get in the way of progress. I’m proud that now I send first drafts (after a read-through) and maintain a healthy level of revisions before I present something. I share this with the 18-year-olds at New Voters, urging them to save the anxiety and ‘just send the email!’ New-Voters.org”



Carrie Stare | President, LGBT Equality Alliance of Chester County

“I’ve always been passionate about LGBTQ+ rights,” said 36-year-old Carrie Stare. “It’s a core part of who I am, and I want to make an impact for those in my community who aren’t as privileged as I am.”

Growing up in York, Stare was interested in history and politics from a young age, encouraged by her father. And after coming out at 13, she realized the work that needed to be done for LGBTQ+ equality — and the importance of a supportive community. “Coming out that young was a challenge,” she said. “I lost friends, people looked at me differently, but I had a few friends who stuck by me, and we’ve been inseparable since 6th grade.”

Stare credits her AP U.S. History teacher for guiding her and her classmates “to form our own thoughts, opinions and beliefs about what’s going on in the world.” She went on to study political science at Millersville University, where her leadership journey began as president of the school’s Amnesty International chapter. “That led me on a trajectory to change how my community is seen in the world, in the country and locally,” she said.

In 2014, Stare moved to Chester County. She instantly fell in love with the area — and wanted to get involved in the community. This led her to the LGBT Equality Alliance of Chester County, a local nonprofit fostering inclusivity, wellbeing and social justice for the LGBTQ+ community.

Stare started volunteering and joined the board of directors in 2018. In 2022, she was asked to become president. It was no easy feat — the organization was deeply impacted by the pandemic. Unable to hold flagship events like PrideFest and the annual fundraising gala, the organization was struggling financially, and the board had just five members.

But Stare and her dedicated team orchestrated a comeback, growing the board to 15 members and quadrupling the organization’s income. Last year, the organization received its first-ever state grant for their new Mental Health Shortfall Fund, helping members of the local LGBTQ+ community access mental health care from affirming practitioners.

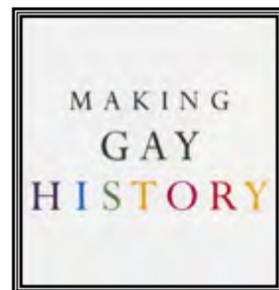
“President is a loaded title,” Stare said. “When we put out statements, the board helps me craft it, but it’s my name put out there first. It’s a lot of responsibility being out in the public eye.” It’s also a juggling act — keeping tabs on every committee and event, overseeing finances, strategic planning. She credits her board of directors for her success. “I could not do an ounce of what I do without them and their support, hard work and genuine desire to see the LGBTQ+ community in Chester County thrive.”

To young queer women, Stare advised, “If somebody tells you it’s not your time, don’t listen to them. We were making some fantastic strides but have seen some serious challenges to our rights. We need everyone we possibly can to step up. If you are ready, you can get involved.”



What Are You Listening To?

“I love ‘Throughline’ by NPR. It goes back in history to understand what’s going on today. And the ‘Making Gay History’ podcast covers parts of LGBTQ+ history that are being forgotten. We can’t afford to forget where we came from and what we’ve gone through, because without that we wouldn’t be here.”



Joi Washington | Mayor, Media Borough



PHOTO CREDIT: KYLE KIELINSKI

When Media’s Mayor Bob McMahon announced his retirement after 33 years, there was one question on everyone’s mind: what — and who — comes next? Media residents answered that question emphatically last fall, when Joi Washington won 77% of the vote. In January, Washington was sworn in as Media’s first woman mayor and first mayor of color, ushering in a new era for Everybody’s Hometown.

Washington describes her upbringing in Philadelphia’s Germantown neighborhood as very “Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood” — friends and family stopping by the house, nearby parks and shops, a close-knit community in a historic area. “It really shaped the type of environments that I appreciated growing up and enjoyed when I was living elsewhere,” she said.

It was here that her interest in politics began, too. A Moore College of Art & Design grad and graphic designer by trade, Washington discovered early that art was her favorite subject in school — but social studies came in a close second. Other formative influences include watching “Nick News” with Linda Ellerbee and running for treasurer in elementary school.

A job initially brought Washington to Media. In 2013, tired of the long commute from the city, she decided to move there. She was drawn to Media for many of the same reasons she loved Germantown: a tight-knit community and a walkable main street, for example.

Following the 2016 election, Washington got involved with the local Democratic committee. Her time canvassing inspired her to run for Borough Council in 2022. Pedestrian safety was a key issue in her campaign, and she delivered on that promise with the installation of a traffic circle and other calming measures on Jefferson Street.

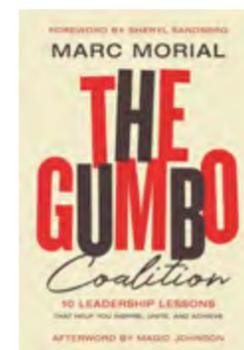
As mayor, Washington describes her leadership style as compassionate, yet decisive. She’s committed to keeping the good of the town at the forefront of her decisions, while balancing the needs of both Borough residents and the business district. All in all, it’s a group effort. “People think that as the mayor, I’m the only decision-maker,” she said. “That’s not true, and I’m grateful for that. There’s staff, other council members. It’s a big team you end up working with.”

Of course, being mayor comes with challenges. “Some people would rather go to social media than straight to the source,” Washington said. “I try to remind them that if they do have issues, contact us directly.”

Washington measures her successes by the feedback she receives from constituents and visitors. “I met someone from Toronto a couple years back,” she recalled. “He said to me, ‘This place is amazing — keep it like this!’ Those meetings aren’t long encounters, but I keep them with me,” she said.

As for her vision for the future of Media? “More walkability, maybe with another pedestrian area like Plum Street Mall. Hopefully, the Trader Joe’s will still be here for residents and visitors. I hope we’ll have more frequent mass transit, more trees planted throughout the neighborhood, small businesses thriving and we’ll have affordable housing for seniors and more apartments and starter homes for new residents to still be known as Everybody’s Hometown.”

What Are You Reading Now?



“Former New Orleans mayor Marc Morial recently sent his book, ‘The Gumbo Coalition: 10 Leadership Lessons That Help You Inspire, Unite, and Achieve,’ to my office. I’ve been reading it almost every day. It has great advice for anybody who’s an elected official, business leader or employee. I wish I’d read it earlier!”

Javonna Wylie | President & CEO, Chester County OIC

When Javonna Wylie was a student at Peirce Middle School, a teacher signed up her group of friends to volunteer at a healthy snack convention at the Head Start center in Coatesville. None of Wylie's friends wanted to go — and neither did she. When her mom got wind of it, she assured the teacher that Wylie would be there.

Reluctantly, Wylie volunteered at the event, the only one of her friends to do so. She made a poster and taught young kids about healthy snacks. "That was a turning point for me," Wylie recalled. "It made me realize that I had purpose — that I could be a leader."

And what a leader she became. A graduate of Shippensburg University's social work program, 32-year-old Wylie is the president of the Chester County OIC, where she leads workforce and adult education initiatives for over 1,000 residents each year. She's also president of the Chester County Human Resource Association, a member of the Coatesville NAACP, and serves on the Chester County Workforce Development Board and on the boards of the Transport Management Association of Chester County, 2nd Century Alliance and the Coatesville Area Public Library.

Having both wide and deep roots in the community is a key part of Wylie's leadership style. "I do it because I love it, but it also creates space for me to be a connector, an influencer, a voice for a broader community that might not enter that room — and to bring it back to the OIC," she explained. "I tell my team, 'I'm not going to get all the answers by sitting in this building.'"

Sometimes these answers come from places you wouldn't expect. One of Wylie's proudest accomplishments is establishing the Work Enclave Program, an intensive five-week professional development program for adults. The initial funding came from a woman whom Wylie initially disagreed with politically, but soon found they shared many of the same values. With her backing, the program became a pipeline to livable-wage jobs for 50 people each year.

Wylie measures her success through her ability to remain innovative. "Even though we have the same mission, every few years we have to change — the job market changes, the economy changes, and the jobs here now might not be here tomorrow," she explained.

But change doesn't always come easy. Wylie admits she struggled with imposter syndrome when she first took on the role of president. At just 29, much of the OIC's workforce was older, and she had to find a way to revitalize the organization while maintaining respect and trust. "We've grown so much and attracted new team members," said Wylie. "A lot of the voices in the organization today reflect what we want to see tomorrow."

Wylie encourages young women to be curious. "Be great at what you're good at, but lean into what you don't like, too," she said. "Some of my favorite coalitions and boards I've been on have been the most uncomfortable — where I was the only woman, Black person or millennial. Lean into that discomfort and try everything." ♦



PHOTO CREDIT: MONIKIN MEDIA

What Inspires You Lately?

"Case Kenny, a Chicago-based writer and podcaster, has a podcast called 'New Mindset, Who Dis?' It's only ever 15 minutes long, so I always make time to listen to it. He has a really refreshing way of putting things into perspective in your own life and career. I hope to bring him to Chester County someday!"



Your best choice for serious illness care at home

Looking for the best provider of serious illness care? Make sure they offer a full range of services for different stages of illness. Plus, check how long they've served your region. If they're driven by a caring mission instead of profit, that's another plus.

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DATEBOOK Calendar

There are so many great local events in our area—from galas to steeplechases to fabulous food festivals and golf outings—and all for worthy causes. Read through this selection and mark your calendars to attend as many fundraisers as you can. Some dates have not yet been set (marked “TBD”), so check websites often for updates. Have fun!

JANUARY

25th Annual A Taste of Phoenixville—2027

TBD
Enjoy creative cuisines, silent auction, live music, local wine and beer. Benefits Good Samaritan Services, helping with homelessness in the area. *Franklin Commons, 400 Franklin Ave., Phoenixville. TasteOfPhoenixville.com*

FEBRUARY

Cheers for CHOP—2027

TBD
An evening of live music, cock-

tails, dancing and a silent auction. Benefits Behavioral Health at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. *The Fillmore Philadelphia, 29 E. Allen St., Philadelphia. CheersFor.CHOP.edu*

Kennett Winterfest—2027

TBD
Sip winter brews from 60 unique craft breweries, plus live music and food trucks. Benefits Kennett Square. *KennettBrewfest.com*

The Philadelphia Flower Show—Rooted: Origins of American Gardening

FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 8, 2026
Explore the future through the

eyes of designers, gardeners and passionate green enthusiasts. Benefits the Philadelphia Horticultural Society. *PA Convention Center, 1101 Arch St., Phila. TheFlowerShow.com*

MARCH

Chester County Community Foundation Food for Thought: Sweet Charity Edition

MARCH 3
Sample delicious desserts made by local chefs while supporting the Foundation’s mission to grow legacy philanthropy in the re-

gion. *Downingtown Country Club, 85 Country Club Dr., Downingtown. ChesCoCF.org*

ACTnow’s Annual Chef’s Best

MARCH 5
Guests taste the offerings from competing food trucks and vote for their favorite. Proceeds support ACTnow of Greater West Chester. *Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St., West Chester. AssistingNow.org*

Brandywine Ballet Co. Spotlight Performance

MARCH 6
A special evening of dance and community. Benefits Brandywine Ballet. VIP Cocktail Hour with cocktails and appetizers. *Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center, 226 N. High St., West Chester. UptownWestChester.org*

5th Annual Snowball Shuffle 5K Run & 1 Mile Walk

MARCH 7
Communities That Care of Greater Downingtown’s annual fundraiser to help create a healthy, supportive and engaged community where all young people are empowered to achieve their full potential. *Eagleview Town Center, 565 Wellington Sq., Exton. DTownCTC.org*

DE Breast Cancer Coali-

tion Lights of Life Gala: Diamonds & Denim

MARCH 7
Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition’s gala evening with a southern-inspired dinner, dancing and auctions. *Bally’s Dover Casino Resort, 1131 N. Dupont Hwy., Dover, DE. DEBreastCancer.org*

Safe Harbor of Chester County—Cheers for Change—30th Birthday Celebration

MARCH 11
Celebration and annual campaign kickoff. Buffet dinner included with open beer and wine bar. Benefits Safe Harbor of Chester County’s Cheers for Change. *Teca Restaurant and Bar, 38 E. Gay St., West Chester. SafeHarborOfCC.org*

77th Annual Chadds Ford Art Sale & Show

MARCH 14
Local and regional artists auction work in an array of mediums. Benefits educational enrichment programs at Chadds Ford Elementary School. *3 Baltimore Pk., Chadds Ford. CFES.UCFS.org*

Uptown! Studio Annual Future Stars Benefit

MARCH 14
Showcasing the talent and creativity of local future stars with a buffet lunch, complimentary wine, beer, mimosas, raffle and a silent auction. *226 N. High St., West Chester. UptownWestChester.org*

Chester County Futures Strikes for Futures

MARCH 15
Bowling event for CC Futures, whose mission is to connect students with opportunities, resources and mentorship. *Palace Bowling & Entertainment Center, 977 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. CCFutures.org*

19th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival

MARCH 19
Celebrating many years of inspiring activism through film



Chester County Balloon Fest, June

and art. Benefits Stroud Water Research Center and Brandywine Red Clay Alliance. *Upland Country Day School, 420 W. Street Rd., Kennett Square. StroudCenter.org*

Saturday Club Spring Consignment Sale

MARCH 19-22
Shop gently used women’s and children’s clothing. Benefits local charities. *The Saturday Club, 117 W. Wayne Ave., Wayne. SaturdayClub.org*

Philadelphia Red Ball

MARCH 27
Cocktails, dinner, dancing and auction at this gala event. Benefits the Red Cross of Southeastern PA. *Please Touch Museum, 4231 Avenue of the Republic, Philadelphia. RedCross.org*

Chester Co. Hospital Gala at Longwood Gardens—Disco Ball

MARCH 28
Celebrate the hospital’s mission

and support community outreach programs. *Longwood Gardens, 1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square. ChesterCountyHospital.org/Giving*

Railroad Museum of PA Rails & Ales

MARCH 28
The event is held among the world-class collection of historic trains and features craft breweries and food vendors. Benefits the museum. *300 Gap Rd., Strasburg. RailsAndAles.org*



Chester County Day, October



People’s Light Lights Up - Uncorked, April



Delco Gives, May



Habitat for Humanity Hops for Homes, June



Alex's Lemonade Stand Great Chefs Event, June

APRIL

KOP Cares Month

APRIL 1-30
Dine or visit your favorite KOP spots to support Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's I Heart CHOP campaign. KOPCares.com

83rd Running of Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point

APRIL 5
The oldest point-to-point in the Delaware Valley. Benefits Brandywine Red Clay Alliance. *Myrick Conservation Center, 1760 Unionville-Wawaset Rd., West Chester. BrandywineRedClay.org*

People's Light Lights Up Event—Uncorked

APRIL 10
Where theater-making meets culinary craft. Uncorked will wine and dine you through the rarely-seen spaces of People's Light. Benefits the theater. *39 Conestoga Rd., Malvern. PeoplesLight.org*

Canine Partners for Life Unleashed: Written in the Stars

APRIL 17
Enjoy food, music, live and silent auctions. CPL dogs and puppies will be there. Benefits CPL's mission to increase the independence and quality of life of individuals with disabilities. *Deerfield Golf Course, 507 Thompson Station Rd., Newark, DE. K94Life.org*

To Love A Canine Rescue Raffles for Ruffs

APRIL 17
A virtual fundraiser with a variety of themed baskets filled with goodies and experiences. Benefits TLCs mission — rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming dogs in need. TLCRescuePA.org

Greater West Chester Chamber Annual 10 Grand Club Event

APRIL 17
This event merges cocktail party with fundraiser with a game of

chance. Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce annual fundraiser. *Providence Church, 430 Hannum Ave., West Chester. Tickets_GWCC.org*

Ryerss Run for the Horses

APRIL 18
Run a 10K, 5K or 1-mile walk on a cross country course. Benefits the farm's retired and rescued horses. *1710 Ridge Rd., Pottstown. [Donation options on websitesite.com](http://DonationOptions.onwebsitesite.com). RyerssFarm.org*

20th Annual Valley Forge Revolutionary 5-Mile Run

APRIL 19
Runners trek a 5-mile course that traverses the scenic Valley Forge National Historical Park. Benefits VF National Historical Park. *To register, ValleyForge.org/Revolutionary-Run*

43rd Annual Emmanuel Dining Room Auction

APRIL 19
Hosted by The Ministry of Caring Guild, raising operating costs for dining room sites, where the hungry of all ages are fed nutritious daily meals. *Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St., Wilmington. MinistryOfCaring.org*

Rescued on the Runway

APRIL 19
Francisvale Home for Smaller Animals and Providence Animal Center host an afternoon of fun with raffles, lunch, music and adoptable pets looking for a home. *Kings Mills, 6000 Pennell Rd., Media. ProvidenceAC.org*

Delaware Marathon Running Festival

APRIL 19
Race benefits Delaware College Scholars. *Tubman Garrett Riverfront Park, 815 Justison St., Wilmington. DelawareMarathon.org*

Delaware Hospice Jazz Brunch

APRIL 26
Enjoy an afternoon of food, beverages, auctions and musical

entertainment. *Harry's Savoy Grill, 2020 Naamans Rd., Wilmington. DelawareHospice.org*

Pennsylvania Antiques Show at Valley Forge

APRIL 23-26
A new antiques show for America's 250th, featuring a selection of Americana, folk art, decorative arts from the 17th–20th centuries. Benefits Historic Trappe's educational programs. *Valley Forge Casino Resort, 1160 1st Ave., King of Prussia. HistoricTrappe.org*

Thorncroft's 41st Annual Victory Gallop Fundraiser & Gala

APRIL 24
A black-tie evening for the benefit of Thorncroft with dinner and dancing. *The Pumphouse at Pencoyd Iron Works, 615 Righters Ferry Rd., Bala Cynwyd. Thorncroft.org*

53rd Annual Yellow Springs Art Show

APRIL 25-MAY 10
Featuring over 4,000 works from more than 220 regional artists. Benefits the arts, education, preservation and environmental protection of Historic Yellow Springs. *1685 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. YellowSprings.org*

Unite For HER—Bloom Spring Fashion Show & Luncheon

APRIL 26
View the latest spring fashions and celebrate members of Unite for HER Wellness Program. Proceeds support local breast and ovarian cancer patients. *Drexelbrook, 4700 Drexelbrook Dr., Drexel Hill. UniteForHER.org*

Celebrity Chefs' Brunch

APRIL 26
Guests indulge in tastings prepared by world-renowned chefs as well as brunch cocktails, live entertainment and a silent auction. Benefits Meals on Wheels in Delaware. *Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St., Wilmington. MealsOnWheelsDE.org*

Notable Kitchen Tour & Chefs' Tastings

APRIL 30
Tour kitchens, enjoy chefs' small plates and view floral and table displays. Hosted by the Main Line Committee for the Philadelphia Orchestra for the benefit of the orchestra. NotableKitchens.org

MAY

Humane Pennsylvania's 48th Annual Walk for the Animals

MAY 2
Supports Humane PA's mission and the dogs, cats and critters they serve. *Reading Fairgrounds, 1216 Hilltop Rd., Leesport. HumanePA.org*

Blue Cross Broad Street Run

MAY 3
A 10-mile, point-to-point course through the varied neighborhoods of Philadelphia along Broad Street. Benefits the American Cancer Society. BroadStreetRun.com

Kennett Run—Small Town, Big Race

MAY 6
Choose your run from a 5K, 10K, 5K PowerRun, 10K PowerRun, 1 Mile Walk/Run or Kids Pond Run. Benefits area nonprofits. *405 N. Walnut Rd., Kennett Square. KennettRun.net*

3rd Annual Delco Gives

MAY 6 & 7
Hosted by The Foundation for Delaware County, this community-wide celebration supports local nonprofits with events across Delaware County, from performances and open houses to walks, art shows and community gatherings. DelcoGives.org

26th Annual Bringing Hope Home Great Guys Dinner

MAY 7
Join the great guys (and gals) for dinner, cocktails, auctions and more. Benefits families dealing



The Philadelphia Flower Show, February–March



Devon Horse Show & Country Fair
CREDIT: BRENDA CARPENTER



Thorncroft Victory Gallop, April



Surrey Services Garden Party, June



Notable Kitchen Tour & Chefs' Tastings, April



Broad Street Run, May

with the financial hardships of a cancer diagnosis. *Springfield Country Club, 400 W. Sproul Rd., Springfield. BringingHopeHome.org*

Showcase of Homes at Hershey's Mill
MAY 7

Enjoy a tour of renovated and decorated homes, a luncheon at Hershey's Mill Golf Club, vendor boutique and raffle. Proceeds help maintain state-of-the-art equipment at Paoli Hospital, including the da Vinci 5 Robot for minimally invasive surgery. *1500 Greenhill Rd., West Chester. PaoliAuxiliary.org*

Wilmington Flower Market
MAY 7-9

Carnival rides, art, gifts, beer, entertainment, flowers and plants are available. Benefits dozens of nonprofit Delaware children's agencies. *Rockford Park, Lookout Dr., Wilmington. WilmingtonFlowerMarket.org*

Bridge of Hope Spring Gala
MAY 8

Celebrate the mission to end family homelessness. This year's theme is "Hope Can't Wait: Stories of Strength and Resilience." *Doubletree, 2400 Willow Street Pk., Lancaster. BridgeOfHopeInc.org/Gala*

15th Annual Main Line Animal Rescue Tails & Trails 5K Run/2K Walk
MAY 9

Supports the mission to save animal lives. Ready. Set. Rescue! *1149 Pike Springs Rd., Chester Springs. PSPCA.org*

33rd Running of Willowdale Steeplechase
MAY 9

World-class steeplechase racing, pony races, Jack Russell terrier races, shopping, tailgate, food vendors and fun for kids. Benefits Stroud Water Research Center and Penn Veterinary Medicine's New Bolton Center. *101 E. Street Rd., Kennett Square. WillowdaleSteeplechase.org*

Phoenixville Dogwood Festival & Parade
MAY 13-16

Phoenixville Jaycees Foundation hosts this annual event with rides, entertainment and a parade. Benefits local nonprofits. *Reeves Park, 148 3rd Ave., Phoenixville. PhoenixvilleDogwoodFestival.org*

All That's Purple Affair
MAY 14

The Domestic Violence Center of Chester County's annual fundraising gala. *Penn Oaks Golf Club, 150 Penn Oaks Dr., West Chester. DVCCCPA.org*

95th Radnor Hunt Races
MAY 16

Racing for Open Space. Race day is about steeplechase racing, fashion and tradition at this signature event. Benefits the Brandywine Conservancy. *Radnor Hunt Grounds, 826 Providence Rd., Malvern. RadnorHuntRaces.org*

The Arc of Chester County Bubble Walk & Fun Day
MAY 17

The Arc advocates for individuals with disabilities and their families. *West Goshen Community Park, 900 Lawrence Dr., West Chester. ArcOfChesterCounty.org*

The Devon Horse Show & Country Fair
MAY 20-31

Olympic-caliber riders, junior classes, and munchkins on the lead line and fun outside the ring at the country's oldest and largest outdoor multi-breed horse show. Visit the Country Fair's midway attractions and boutiques. Benefits Bryn Mawr Hospital. *23 Dorset Rd., Devon. DevonHorseShow.net*

Historic Sugartown Pop-Up Biergarten
MAY 21

Featuring local food, craft beer, wine and music. Benefits the Village of Historic Sugartown. *690 Sugartown Rd., Malvern. HistoricSugartown.org*

Thorncroft Therapeutic Riders
MAY 23 & 24

Over 175 riders of all abilities compete in equitation, dressage and trail classes. Benefits Thorncroft. *Sat., 190 Line Rd., Malvern; Sun., Devon Horse Show Grounds, Rt. 30, Devon. Thorncroft.org*

Willistown Conservation Trust Barns & BBQ
MAY 30

Enjoy the Morning Barn Tour or

the Barns & BBQ, both featuring the tour and access to barns and farms. Barns & BBQ attendees ending the evening with a cocktail hour, three-course meal and live music. Benefits the Trust's conservation works. *925 Providence Rd., Newtown Square. WCTrust.org*

Kennett Education Foundation Spring Soiree
TBD

An evening of food, drinks and fun. Benefits Kennett Consolidated School District. *Hartefeld National, 1 Hartefeld Dr., Avondale. KennettEducationFoundation.org*

Uwchlan Garden Club Plant Sale
TBD

Find a selection of vegetable and herb plants, crafts, perennials, shrubs, trees, a kids corner and gifts. Benefits the 1756 Uwchlan Meeting House. *5 N. Village Ave., Lionville. UwchlanGardenClub.org*

Wildflower, Native Plant & Seed Sale
TBD

Shop from a wide variety of native wildflowers, grasses, ferns, vines, shrubs and trees. Benefits the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art's Garden Program. *Brandywine Museum of Art, 1 Hoffman's Mill Rd., Chadds Ford. Brandywine.org*

JUNE

Pints with a Purpose & Cornhole for Charity
JUNE 3

Enjoy food and beverages, cornhole tournament and raffle. Benefits Safe Harbor of Chester County. *Locust Lane Craft Brewery, 50 Three Tun Rd., Ste. #4, Malvern. SafeHarborOfCC.org*

Brews at the Battlefield
JUNE 13

Enjoy music, drinks and food at this celebration where every toast feels bigger around the corner. Benefits Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates.



French Creek Iron Tour, June



Kennett Run, May



Canine Partners for Life Fall Festival, September



Unite for Her Harvest Chef/Wine Tasting Event, November



Willowdale Steeplechase, May



Willistown Conservation Trust Barns & BBQ, June

1491 Baltimore Pk., Chadds Ford.
BrandywineBattlefield.org

PrideFest Chester County

JUNE 13
Enjoy live music, art displays, entertainment, a variety of vendors, fun games and engaging activities. Benefits LGBTQIA+ programming and support groups, youth outreach and community events. *Bridge St., Phoenixville. LGBTEAChesCo.org*

Alex's Lemonade Stand Great Chefs Event

JUNE 13
Culinary superstars along with local stars from the best bars, wineries and craft breweries share their creations at this annual fundraiser at the Navy Yard. *Urban Outfitters Headquarters, Bldg. 543, 5000 S. Broad St., Phila. AlexsLemonade.org*

Schuylkill River Sojourn

JUNE 13-19
Annual guided paddling trip on the Schuylkill River. Benefits Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area. Location varies. *SchuylkillRiver.org/Sojourn*

24th Annual French Creek Iron Tour—Cycling for Open Space

JUNE 14
Rides for all levels—from beginners to accomplished cyclists—with courses from 11 to 100 miles. Benefits French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust. *Kimberton Fairgrounds, 762 Pike Springs Rd., Phoenixville. IronTour.org*

Surrey Triple E Garden Party—Elegant Equestrian Evening

JUNE 18
Enjoy cocktails and a light supper while supporting Surrey's vital work for older adults in the community. Highlights include the "Best of the Blooms" competition, an auction and other surprises. *Bryn Clovis, 749 Sugartown Rd., Malvern. SurreyServices.org*

Chester County Balloon Festival

JUNE 19-21
Hot air balloons from all over the country are featured along with a balloon glow, balloon rides and a walk-through balloon. Benefits Scouting America Troop 52, Chester County Hero Fund, local police, fire and fire police plus EMS. *Ludwig's Fair Grounds, 5 Natmeal Rd., Glenmoore. CCBalloonFest.com*

Habitat For Humanity Hops for Homes Beer Festival

JUNE 20
Sample craft brews, cider, spirits and wine and help build affordable homes. Benefits Habitat for Humanity. *Chester County Art Association, 100 N. Bradford Ave., West Chester. HFHCC.org*

Historic Sugartown Pop-Up Biergarten

JUNE 25
Featuring local food, craft beer, wine and music. Benefits the Village of Historic Sugartown. *690 Sugartown Rd., Malvern. HistoricSugartown.org*

Friday Night Lights

JUNE 26
Live music and refreshments under the evening sky. Benefits Natural Lands. *ChesLen Preserve, 1199 Canery Rd., Coatesville. NatLands.org*

JULY

The Colonial Theatre Presents Blobfest

JULY 10-12
A weekend of events surrounding the classic film, "The Blob." Benefits the theater. *227 Bridge St., Phoenixville. TheColonialTheatre.com/Blobfest*

AUGUST

Historic Sugartown Pop-Up Biergarten

AUGUST 20. *See June 25 event*

Delaware Burger Battle

TBD
Delaware's top chefs put their best burgers forward as guests sample the burger-licious options. Benefits

Ministry of Caring's Emmanuel Dining Room. *Cauffiel House, 1016 Philadelphia Pk., Wilmington. DEBurgerBattle.com*

SEPTEMBER

Annual Run for Thorncroft Equestrian Center

SEPTEMBER 3
Featuring a 5K and Move As You Please, 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk/Wheel or Ride. Post-race features live music, craft beer and food trucks. Benefits the farm and the care of horses. *190 Line Rd., Malvern. Thorncroft.org/5K-Run*

Radnor Hunt Concours d'Elegance

SEPTEMBER 11-13
This nationally recognized event includes a Friday Night Barbecue, Chester County Road Rally and Black Tie Gala. Benefits Thorncroft Equestrian Center. *Radnor Hunt, 826 Providence Rd., Malvern. RadnorConcours.org*

Up On The Roof

SEPTEMBER 12
Cocktail party and dinner held on the roof of the Chestnut Street Garage benefits the beautification of West Chester. *14 E. Chestnut St., West Chester. DowntownWestChester.com*

Whitford Classic

SEPTEMBER 17-19
Players gather to play in golf, tennis and pickleball tournaments. Benefits the Whitford Charitable Fund of Chester County Community Foundation. *Whitford Country Club, 600 Whitford Hills Rd., Exton. ChescoCF.org/Fund/Whitford-Charitable-Fund*

Coatesville Invitational Vintage Grand Prix

SEPTEMBER 18-20
Experience authentic early American sports car racing, with rare and unique historic cars and motorcycles. Benefits the Coatesville community. *Start and finish at 3rd Ave. & Lincoln Hwy., Coatesville. CoatesvilleGrandPrix.com*

Canine Partners for Life Fall Festival Featuring Cow Bingo

SEPTEMBER 26
Learn more about CPL's mission while enjoying a day full of family fun. *334 Faggs Manor Rd., Cochranville. K94life.org*

Bike the Brandywine

TBD
The ride features three scenic loops along the Brandywine Creek Greenway. Benefits the Brandywine Conservancy's Open Space and Clean Water Programs. *Chadds Ford Historical Society, 1736 N. Creek Rd., Chadds Ford. Brandywine.org/Conservancy*

OCTOBER

Chester County Day House Tour

OCTOBER 3
Celebrate the history and architecture of Chester County on this self-driving tour taking you inside homes and historic buildings. Benefits the Women's Auxiliary's Cancer Care Campaign pledge to Chester County Hospital. *ChesterCountyDay.com*

Ryerss Farm Blessing of the Animals

OCTOBER 3
Bring your dogs, cats or other small animals on a leash or in a carrier for a nondenominational service and blessing. Benefits Ryerss Farm for Aged Equines. *1710 Ridge Rd., Pottstown. Donation options on website, RyerssFarm.org.*

West Chester Chili Cook-Off

OCTOBER 11
Cooking teams line the streets for this cook-off and compete for prizes. Organized by Fiorenza's Food For Friends, a nonprofit organization helping to eradicate hunger in America. *Downtown West Chester. WestChesterChiliCookOff.com*

Miles for Mutts To Love a Canine Rescue Event



Yellow Springs Art Show, April



Historic Sugartown Pop-Up Biergarten, May, June, August



Chadds Ford Art Show, March

TBD
Raising funds for rescue dogs in need of veterinary care. *Wilson Farm Park, 500 Lee Rd., Wayne. TLCRescuePA.com*

Annual Radnor Run
TBD

Lace up your shoes and join the 5-mile timed running race, 1-mile walk/fun run and a health fair. Benefits the American Lung Association. *Radnor Twp. Bldg., 301 Iven Ave., Wayne. Lung.org/RadnorRun*

Main Line Animal Rescue Annual Bark & Whine Gala
TBD IN OCT./NOV.

Yearly fundraiser to celebrate the PSPCA rescue's mission with cocktails, dinner, music and dancing, auctions and adoptable pets. *PSPCA.org*

NOVEMBER

91st Running of the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup

NOVEMBER 1
Steeplechase event benefits the Chester County Food Bank, Work to Ride program and Upland Country Day School. *North of Rt. 926 & Newark Rd., Unionville. PAHuntCup.org*

Harvest—Unite for HER Chef/Wine Tasting
NOVEMBER 5

The region's best chefs, wines, brews and spirits, plus an auction and live music at this event. Benefits local women affected by breast and ovarian cancer. *Phoenixville Foundry, 2 N. Main St., Phoenixville. UniteForHER.org*

Delaware Antiques Show

TBD
Featuring 60 distinguished dealers in art, antiques and design. Benefits Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library. *Chase Center on the Riverfront, 815 Justison St., Wilmington. Winterthur.org*

French & Pickering Creek Trust's Annual Auction Party
TBD

Enjoy live and silent auctions plus food and beverages. Benefits the Conservation Trust. *Stonewall Links, 375 Bulltown Rd., Elverson. FrenchAndPickering.org*

Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce Charity Gala
TBD

Benefits the Phoenixville Senior Center and Barnstone Art for Kids. *RiverCrest Golf Club & Preserve, 100 RiverCrest Dr., Phoenixville. PhoenixvilleChamber.org*

Wine, Wit & Wisdom
TBD

Silent auction, fine wine and cuisine and special guest speaker.

Benefits Phoenixville Library. *RiverCrest Golf Club & Preserve, 100 Rivercrest Dr., Phoenixville. PhoenixvilleLibrary.org*

DECEMBER

Surrey Services Holiday House Tour
TBD

Get your tickets early for this very popular tour of homes decorated for the holidays on the Main Line. Benefits Surrey Services' many services. *SurreyServices.org*

West Chester Charity Ball
TBD

Major gala benefits The Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children's outreach, family shelter and homeless prevention. *West Chester Golf and Country Club, 111 W. Ashbridge St., West Chester. FriendsAssoc.org* ♦

For more events news, subscribe to our twice-monthly Newsletter on our website, CountyLinesMagazine.com.



Chester County Hospital Gala, March



Wilmington Flower Market, May



Rescued on the Runway, April



1



2

AN Exceptional SEASON

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS DOMINATE GIRLS' SPORTS

Edwin Malet

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF *COUNTY LINES* country had an amazing sports season. Especially the girls!

Max Field Hockey ranked four of the schools in the top 10 in Pennsylvania. One won the PAISAA (Pennsylvania Independent Schools Athletic Association) championship, while another won the DIAA (Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association) Division II. Plus, area girls' teams also finished first in soccer and first in volleyball. And the boys' teams had a banner year in football.

We wish these star athletes well as they head to top colleges.

FIELD HOCKEY

Max Field Hockey (MFH) ranked the Academy of Notre Dame de Namur 1st in Pennsylvania, winning 22 of its 23 games. The Irish were ranked 25th nationally by MaxPreps. The team won the Inter-Ac championship and PAISAA and outscored their opponents 133–19.

Head Coach Brandi Ritz said that two seniors, both named to the All Inter-Ac team, had a major impact for the team this season. Reese Milone, who's committed to Princeton, scored 11 goals, along with Kiera Sack, who also scored 11 goals and is committed to Northwestern. According to Coach Ritz, one other player deserves mention: Maeve McGinley, a junior, who scored 32 goals last season and has committed to the University of North Carolina.

Finishing second in the MFH ranking was Episcopal Academy, which won 19 of their 22 games. Senior Rebecca Block scored 31 goals, had 12 assists and will attend Cornell University next year. She received multiple honors for her play, including MFH National Player of the Year. Senior Eliana DeGennaro anchored the team's midfield and defense. Named to MFH Second Team, she's headed to the University of Richmond.

Villa Maria Academy finished fourth in the MFH rankings with a record of 22–3, winning its fourth consecutive District 1 title. The Hurricanes' star, scoring 223 goals during her four years with Villa — the 6th most in history among all high school girls — was senior forward Caitlin Connell. She's headed for the University of Virginia. Defensive standout Lilly Ippolitto, headed for Towson



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University, was selected as an All-Star by the Athletic Association of Catholic Academies in 2024–25.

The Agnes Irwin School had a record-breaking season with a 15–5 record — its most wins since 2015 — and was ranked 9th in the state. Owls’ Coach Nicole Gerdes declared it a “magical season.” Defender Gwen Schnyder will play at Gettysburg College next season, while Margo Chisholm, who scored 12 goals this season, has committed to play lacrosse at Boston College. Junior Gabby Lee already committed to Ohio State, scoring 25 goals with 15 assists.

In Delaware, Wilmington Friends School’s success from 2024 — the Quakers had a record of 15–2–1 and reached the championship round for the first time in 38 years — carried over to this season. The school finished 2025 at 17–1 and, this time, won the 2025 DIAA Division II Championship, capturing its first state title in field hockey since 1986. It was ranked 4th by MaxPreps in Delaware.

Coach Scott Clothier states that among its standout seniors were goalkeeper Anna Weiner, who allowed only 9 goals all season and 0 in the state tournament; Molly Dolan, who scored 25 goals, 11 assists and became WFS’s all-time leading goal scorer; and Sara Clothier, who also had 11 assists and will play at Bowdoin College next fall.

GIRLS’ SOCCER

Episcopal Academy had a brilliant girls’ soccer season, shutting down its Inter-Ac league competitors with 12 wins and winning the PAISAA tournament. MaxPreps ranked the school 3rd in Pennsylvania.

Coach Andy Fraggos looked back at the season. “The care they had for each other at practice had a direct impact in how they showed up for each other in games... They weren’t concerned who got the goal or assist. Their priority was the team succeeding. This group showed the program for years to come the power of a team that put the collective above the individual.”

The top players were the team’s senior captains. They were “incredible leaders ... a major factor in our success.” Sofia Gagliardi at forward, the MVP of the Inter-Ac, is going to the University of Maryland for lacrosse. Caroline Johnston at center midfielder, headed for Cornell for lacrosse, was deemed “a major part of our success.” And Caitlyn McCarthy at centerback, committed to Duke, was “strong, fast and insanely competitive ... the heart of this team,” said the coach. All three were All-Inter-Ac and All-Delco.

GIRLS’ VOLLEYBALL

It was another strong season in girls’ volleyball for Tower Hill, winning its third state championship in four years. Coach Michael

1. Notre Dame’s Reese Milone
2. Villa Maria’s Caitlin Connell
PHOTO CREDIT: JAMES QUINN SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHER
3. Episcopal Academy’s Caroline Johnston
4. Tower Hill’s Lily Leung
PHOTO CREDIT: JIM GRAHAM

Sachs reported, “Our players ... started a tradition not just of winning but more importantly of servant leadership, support and fun. Each season, younger players step up into larger roles, both playing on the court and becoming great leaders. While state championships are never guaranteed, our players have created such a strong culture that we often seem to be competing for them. At the same time, win or lose they are creating special moments and relationships that they will value forever.”

Leading the team for the Hillers were senior Lily Leung and junior Sydney Fischer, both All-State selections. Leung was a “spectacular defender and solid passer,” the Delaware Coaches’ Association Player of the Year and the Delaware Online top-ranked player. She’ll play for NYU next year. Fischer was “a strong attacker and blocker” and the “most dominant outside hitter,” though she missed eight matches this season with a bad ankle sprain. Nevertheless, Delaware Online ranked her the #2 player in the state.

FOOTBALL

For Malvern Prep football coach Dave Gueriera, this past season was “special.” The Friars “showed tremendous growth, resilience and leadership, and it was rewarding to see that effort reflected in an Inter-Ac championship (shared with Episcopal Academy) and a top-5 state ranking.” He continued, “The group set a strong standard for how we want to compete and represent the school.”

Two seniors who stood out for the team were QB Jackson Melconian and tight end Dylan Novak. Melconian was the Inter-Ac MVP and the “unquestioned leader of the team.” Finishing 2nd in most passing records at Malvern, Melconian plans to go to Vanderbilt for baseball. Novak was Mini Maxwell Club Award winner and “pound for pound one of the best football players in the state on both sides of the ball.” His college plans are to go to Notre Dame for lacrosse.

Sharing the Inter-Ac championship was Episcopal Academy with its first league title since 2019. Coach Todd Fairlie said that “defense was the backbone of the team all year.” Led by senior lineman Dorian Dabney, the team “played tough, disciplined and physical football every week. ... They made things hard for opposing offenses from start to finish — forcing turnovers, creating pressure and playing with a high level of effort and execution.”

Offensively, Jackson Orcutt, headed to the University of North Carolina in lacrosse, led the way and leaves EA as the “most accomplished receiver in program history.” Orcutt set two Inter-Ac records — most receiving yards in a season and most career touchdown receptions — and “consistently delivered in big moments.”

BOYS’ SOCCER

The Phelps School was ranked 5th in the state in soccer by MaxPreps, and for the fourth consecutive year, it was the champion of the Penn-Jersey Athletic Association. The Lions finished the season with a record of 22–9–2.

Michaiah Clarke has been a “stalwart for the team,” said Trey Morin, the school’s Director of Athletics. Clarke has a strong awareness defending the back post, was dependable in recovery situations during defensive transition, and was named to the All-American Game and as All-State by Prep Soccer. He also excels in the classroom and is currently weighing his college options. Goalkeeper Gabin Meneyrol was a “dependable, competitive presence.” He was consistent in goal, showed good command of the box, and demonstrated the ability to make big saves routinely while stepping up in key moments. Over the course of the season, he averaged 4.1 saves per match.

It was another exceptional season. We congratulate them all! ♦



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5. Episcopal Adademy’s Jackson Orcutt
6. Wilmington Friends School’s Molly Dolan
7. Agnes Irwin’s Margo Chisholm, left

SUMMER CAMPS

Our Guide To Help You Keep Your Kids Energized, Engaged And Happy All Summer Long



Brandywine School of Wizardry (BSW)
Various Locations in Chester, Montgomery, Delaware & Philadelphia Counties
 610-827-5678; BrandywineSchoolOfWizardry.com
 Weekly Monday–Friday, June 15–August 14

Welcome to BSW! They offer unique, exciting summer camps for 6–15-year-old wizard fans. Camp is indoor and outdoor at multiple locations, with full- and half-day options. Professional and trained professors immerse your child in a magical world with wizardry classes and activities including potions, wands, spells, magical animals, quadball, games, shopping at their Sweets & Zippies shop and more.



Delaware Museum of Nature & Science Camps
 4840 Kennett Pk., Wilmington
 302-658-9111; DelMNS.org

Ages 6 months to 4 years: Summer Camp for Tiny Explorers (with caregiver) Wednesdays, June 10–August 19 or Thursdays, June 11–August 20 (9–10 a.m.)
 4–6 years: June 8–12, July 6–10, Aug. 3–7 (half day a.m.)
 5–6 years: June 15–19, June 22–26, July 6–10, July 13–17, July 20–24, July 27–31, Aug. 10–14, Aug. 17–21 (full day)
 5–11 years: June 29–July 3 (full day)
 7–8 years: June 15–19, June 22–26, July 6–10, July 13–17, July 20–24, July 27–31, Aug. 3–7, Aug. 10–14, Aug. 17–21 (full day)
 9–14 years: STEAM Workshops, June 22–26, July 13–17, July 27–31, Aug. 17–21 (full day)

Campers will have an incredible summer getting their bodies and brains moving. Each day they'll play and learn as counselors ask questions, explore answers, create, experiment, build and expand their knowledge and enthusiasm for science. The nature and science camp offers several themes for different age levels and developmental stages.



Chesterbrook Academy
 1190 McDermott Dr., West Chester
 610-719-0240; ChesterbrookAcademy.com

June 15–August 21

This year, Be Bold, Be You at Chesterbrook Academy's summer camp. Every week, campers immerse themselves in hands-on activities from science and nature exploration to creative and performing arts, sports and games. The camp offers a perfect blend of indoor and outdoor adventures, all packed with excitement. Registration is open — save your spot today.



Centreville Layton School
 6201 Kennett Pk., Centreville
 302-571-0230; CentrevilleLayton.org/S
 June 22–July 24

This Early K–8th grade program is designed to reinforce academics, with an optional afternoon program focused on recreational activities and nature exploration. The program offers students instruction and academic support for reading, written language and mathematics to prepare students for the upcoming school year.



American Helicopter Museum
 1220 American Blvd., West Chester
 610-436-9600; HelicopterMuseum.org

July 6–10: The Science of Flight, 10–3 (includes a helicopter ride)
 July 13–17: Spy Science Week, 10–3
 July 20–24: Engineering Week, 10–3
 July 27–31: Drone Week, 10–3 (includes a drone)

These interactive programs are filled with science shows, hands-on activities, presentations by experts and science projects. Aftercare is available. All programs are for ages 6–12.





CENTREVILLE LAYTON Summer

Morning Academics

- Math • Written Language
- Reading • Academic Learning

Recreational Afternoon

Cooperative Activities & Games
Nature Exploration
Swimming and More!

Full Day & Half Day Options

Learn More



EARLY K through EIGHTH GRADE

Benefits

- Small Class Size
- Team Approach
- Reading Specialist
- Occupational Therapy
- Language Therapy

Five Weeks
{ June 22-July 24 }

centrevillelayton.org/s

6201 Kennett Pike - Centreville, DE 19807 - 302-571-0230



Delaware Museum of Nature & Science

2026 SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camps & STEAM Workshops
Spring Break Camps | School Day Off Camps

delmns.org/camps

4840 Kennett Pike | Wilmington, DE 19807 | 302-658-9111

BE BOLD, BE YOU



SUMMER@
Chesterbrook Academy

- Sports & games
- Exciting STEAM activities
- Arts & crafts, music, dance, and drama
- Field trips & special events
- Kindergarten Enrichment

LEARN MORE



1190 McDermott Dr • West Chester, PA
WestChester.ChesterbrookAcademy.com



A Summer of Science Fun at the American Helicopter Museum!

Four unique week-long programs to engage your young learners!

The American Helicopter Museum
1220 American Blvd.
West Chester PA

The Science of Flight - July 6
Spy Science - July 13
Engineering Week - July 20
Drone Week - July 27

helicoptermuseum.org



Ask About Aftercare Options!

mystery - quadball - charms - divination - potions

Wizard Camp

2026

ages 6-15

Full Day & Half Day*

One-Night Events

Winter One-nighter
Mar 21st

Spring One-nighter
May 16th

Camp Schedule

- June 15-19 - Chester Springs*
- June 22-26 - Chester Springs*
- June 22-26 - Upper Dublin
- June 29-Jul 3 - Chadds Ford
- July 6-10 - Chester Springs*
- July 6-10 - Chestnut Hill
- July 13-17 - Chestnut Hill
- July 20-24 - Chester Springs*
- July 20-24 - Rednor/Bryn Mawr*
- July 27-31 - Rednor/Bryn Mawr*
- July 27-31 - Bryn Athyn*
- August 3-7 - West Chester
- August 3-7 - Glenside (Arcadia)
- August 10-14 - Limerick
- August 10-14 - Westtown*

BSW

BRANDYWINE SCHOOL OF WIZARDRY
610-827-5678

WWW.BRANDYWINESCHOOLOFWIZARDRY.COM



CHESTER COUNTY
in Bloom
PHOTO CONTEST

Send us your best photo of beautiful blooms in Chester County!

The winner receives a **Family Membership to Longwood Gardens for up to 5 people!**

1. Like and follow us on Facebook @CountyLinesMagazine.
2. Upload & hashtag your **one** best photo **#chestercountyinbloom** OR send it to **info@valleydel.com**.
3. Tell us when and where it was taken.

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY **MAY 3, 2026.**

COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

 Check website for rules



Girly Drinks?

Busting the Female Palate Myth

REEXAMINING WOMEN'S ROLES THROUGH HISTORY IN WINE AND SPIRITS

Liz Tarditi

WOMEN TEND TO HAVE stronger, more discerning senses of taste and smell than men, yet we're fed the myth that women prefer "sweeter," less serious drinks. We think of aromatic white wines and rosés as "easy" or "feminine" until we examine what's in the glass.

A non-easy white wine that's designed instead for sophisticated sipping, [Les Fleurs du Lac Bordeaux Blanc 2023](#) (\$25.99) has a profile of grapefruit, citrus, yuzu, botanicals and intense florals with lively energy and a long, fresh finish. Another similar seemingly "feminine" wine is [Domaine Dominique et Janine Crochet Sancerre Rosé 2024](#) (\$28.99). But you'll find it's decidedly not a "girly wine," since it's loaded with the gun-flint complexity of silex soils, with the nose of lavender, spiced cranberry, rhubarb and crisp minerality we expect in a top Sancerre.

In contrast to white wines, reds have been associated with power and structure and have long been labeled as "unfem-

inine." But [Susana Balbo Signature Malbec Uco Valley 2021](#) (\$24.99) proves otherwise. Argentina's first female enology graduate crafted a malbec that's dry, structured and intensely ruby-hued, with aromas of blueberry and notes of blackberry, flowers and licorice. Intense but elegant, it has a polished finish and round tannins, appealing to many fans.

It's not as easy as red and white.

WHEN WOMEN OWNED FERMENTATION

Did you know that fermented drinks like mead and beer grew out of women's roles as gatherers and food processors? While men hunted, our foremothers gathered honey, grains and fruits, developing the foundational knowledge needed to harness fermentation.

Brewing required the same domestic skills as baking and cooking — grinding grains, tending a hearth — making it a core household task managed by women. This

work was so culturally significant that many early brewing deities, including Sumerian goddess Ninkasi and the Egyptian goddess Hathor, were female. In short, women were the original master brewers and custodians of these sacred, nutrient-rich beverages.

That legacy lives on in discrete niches. For example, in [Apimeda Trnava Mead Dolna Krupa](#) (\$29.99), produced by Slovakia's largest family-owned meadery. Full-bodied, herbaceous and spicy, it pairs with cheese, chocolate, foie gras or fruit desserts. Closer to home is another example. [Franklin Hill Vineyards Vidal Blanc](#) (\$12.99) reflects Pennsylvania's agricultural roots. Produced by a woman-owned winery, its bright, crisp profile with subtle honeyed notes echoes the earliest fruit-based fermenting traditions.

POWER, PROFIT AND THE WITCH NARRATIVE

And there's more history. Women's authority over fermentation persisted until the rise of medieval trade guilds. As brew-

ing became profitable, access shifted to licensed, male-dominated professions. Female brewers, known as alewives, were pushed out through regulation and social smear campaigns.

The tools of their trade were weaponized into symbols of suspicion. Tall hats worn for visibility in the markets became witch's hats. Cauldrons became vessels of black magic. The broomstick, held aloft to signal fresh ale was for sale in a time when few could read, was reimagined as an instrument of flight. And the cat that protected grain from vermin became a demonic familiar. This narrative justified restrictive laws that erased women's role in brewing and defined the modern image of a "witch."

Today, that legacy is being reclaimed. [Uncle Nearest Premium 1856 Tennessee Whiskey](#) (\$59.99), developed by CEO Fawn Weaver and Master Blender Victoria Eady Butler, the first Black female master blender, honors overlooked expertise with a whiskey of depth, balance and refinement.

And 21 Seeds, a company founded by sisters Kat Hantas and Nicole Hantas-Emanuel, produces [21 Seeds Cucumber Jalapeño Tequila Blanco](#) (\$32.99), which continues the ancient tradition of women flavoring ferments with gathered botanicals, delivering a fresh, modern profile.

EXILE FROM AUTHORITY — AND FROM THE GLASS

The exclusion of women from fermentation extended beyond guilds. By the 18th and 19th centuries, marginalization was codified through "access laws" that, under the guise of protecting moral purity, barred women from working in or even patronizing bars. Strong spirits were branded as "masculine," and women were relegated to low-alcohol, syrupy drinks ("girly drinks"), a double standard that persisted well into the modern era.

Crafted under the leadership of Master Distiller Elizabeth McCall, [Woodford Reserve Straight Bourbon Double Oaked](#) (\$67.99) quietly dismantles that double standard. With deep chocolate and toasted oak notes, this premium bourbon proves that complexity and strength were never gendered.

Local distilling tells the same story. [Hewn Spirits Dark Hollow Bourbon](#) (\$46.79), hand-





crafted by Dana Weddell in Bucks County, showcases heirloom corn and careful craftsmanship, resulting in a smooth but layered expression of a classic American spirit.

THE PALATE WAS NEVER THE PROBLEM

For centuries, fermented beverages were safer to consume than local water, making alcohol a shared household necessity rather than a luxury. Only later did consumption become moralized and gendered. By the Victorian era, women were cast as guardians of purity, while men claimed public drinking as a right. It wasn't until the 1960s and 1970s that anti-discrimination laws dismantled many of those barriers. Biology never changed — permission did.

Learning happens by tasting broadly, so here's another reason to sample widely. Why not begin with **McBride Sisters Sparkling Brut Rosé Hawk's Bay Non-vintage** (\$7.99)? It's a sophisticated New Zealand sparkler featuring gentle notes of rose petals and crushed red berries with a

crisp, dry finish, reflecting the McBride Sisters' mission to dismantle elitist "gatekeeping" and invite confidence through experience. Lesson learned!

EMPOWERED CHOICE

Reclaiming fermentation history is about more than what's in the glass. It's about trusting your own palate and honoring the women who shaped this craft from the beginning. Choose what you love, explore broadly and — always — please drink responsibly! ♦

Liz Tarditi, WSET II, is an entrepreneur and classically trained chef with 35 years of culinary experience. She graduated from Villanova University and the Culinary Arts program at the Art Institute of Seattle. Liz has worked for Fine Wine & Good Spirits for several years, becoming a Wine Specialist in 2020. She enjoys pairing wine and food for special events and celebrations. See her at the Villanova Fine Wine & Good Spirits location.

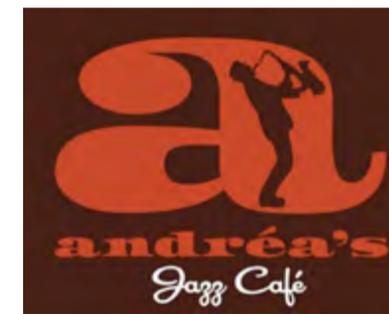


Food News

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



A250 Brew. Plan now for your themed America's 250th sipping. Victory Brewing teamed up with Visit Philadelphia to create **Philly First** — a crisp, drinkable, special edition ale brewed to celebrate the birthplace of America. Released in February, it's now available in retail locations and bars. The eye-catching label on the 16-oz. cans sports some Philly firsts — zoo, public library, mint, slinky, wit wiz and more. VictoryBeer.com



Smooth Jazz+. A February 17th ribbon cutting launched **Andréa's Jazz Café**, a new live music, entertainment and dining spot in Coatesville. Aiming to bring "smooth jazz, bebop, Latin, contemporary country, blues, down-home jazz, blues, fusion music" plus delicious dining to the community. And maybe dancing? They're booking performers, so check social media for developments. *236 E. Lincoln Hwy. AndreasJazzCafe.com*

New Starter. With flavors like cherry rye, raisin cinnamon and lemon-blueberry, the sourdough offerings at **Wild Yeast Bakehouse's** planned storefront at Eagle Village Shops can't happen soon enough for fans. Baker John Goncher built a loyal following who seek crispy crusts and tangy interiors at farmers markets and specialty shops. It's a giant step from his original living room-based bakery. Follow progress on the spring opening on social media. *503 W. Lancaster Ave., Ste. 1105, Wayne. WildYeastBakehouse.com*



Rise Up. A new inclusive coffee shop plans to open soon in Glen Mills. Look for **Ryan's Rise Up Café**, a business with a mission to hire and train workers with disabilities, including people with Down syndrome and autism. Founded by local dad Jim Vail in honor of his son, Ryan, the café blends community-focused breakfast and lunch offerings with meaningful employment and support. Come for the coffee, leave inspired. *5 Evergreen Dr., Ste. 100. RyansRiseUpCafe.com*

Winning Wine. Twelve for 12, with three double gold medals, for the slate of **Turks Head Wines** entered in the 2026 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Top honors went to two cab savs plus a Sonoma merlot, along with nine other notable potables (two golds, six silvers, one bronze). Stop by the West Chester tasting room to sample all the winners, a strong selection of Napa-style wines sourced and produced on the West Coast. *120 N. Church St. TurksHeadWines.com*





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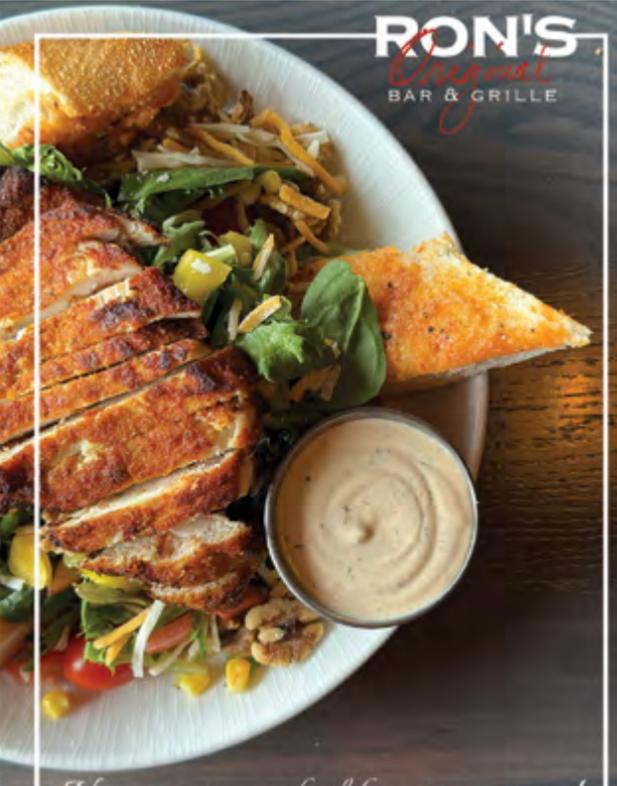


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Cheeseboard, But Make It Dinner

MORE WAYS TO ENJOY THE WONDERS OF SOME OF CHESTER COUNTY'S FINEST

Liz Tarditi



IN “THE WISE MAN’S FEAR,” PATRICK ROTHFUSS HAS his main character quip that it’s not the dark arts that scandalize people: it’s eating the cheese the wrong way. Yes, that’s a lighthearted lesson in manners, but it underscores a deeper truth: cheese is more than sustenance — it’s a cultural anchor.

If you don’t know your cheese history, it’s one of the foundational foods of human civilization. Cheese emerged as a “happy accident” some 8,000 to 10,000 years ago, closely following the domestication of herd animals like sheep and goats in the Fertile Crescent. As ancient nomadic cultures traveled, they discovered that milk stored in animal stomach pouches would separate into curds and whey, transforming a perishable liquid into a durable, transportable, digestible food source.

That ancient history laid the groundwork, but modern cheese-making has refined the craft into an art form that mirrors the complexity of fine wine. For this month’s Brandywine Table, we checked

in with Sue Miller, owner and expert cheesemaker at **Birchrun Hills Farm**, a family-run dairy and creamery in Chester Springs, known for its award-winning, milk-first philosophy. Sue and her husband Ken manage every detail of production, starting with their herd of Holstein cows raised on high-forage diets and farm-grown feed.

“You take a simple ingredient like milk and translate that into flavor and texture and stories,” said Sue Miller. She noted that cheese shares the same concept of terroir with wine, but with a more immediate pulse. While a vineyard reflects a season, milk reflects a single day. Weather, hydration, even herd stress register instantly in fat and protein levels, shaping flavor, texture and melt.

At Birchrun Hills, gravity-fed milk flows to the creamery to preserve its natural character before cheeses are aged in an underground, cave-like facility. This dedication to daily terroir has earned the Millers honors as Chester County Farmers of the Year and a permanent place on the region’s finest cheese boards.

To bring that craftsmanship into the home kitchen, Sue shared four signature recipes that showcase the versatility of the Birchrun lineup, from fresh, crisp dishes like celery and fennel salad with Birchrun Blue and the tart acidity of skillet Chardy with roasted grapes and walnuts to richer, comforting favorites. A bright, herb-flecked Birchrun Hills Farms Ola with lemon and za’atar and the decadent Fat Cat fondue with wild mushrooms highlight the farm’s distinct profiles. We’ve also included an alpine-inspired tartiflette for a hearty, entrée-sized celebration of melted gold. And for a sweet finish, the Birchrun cheesecake proves once again that world-class cheese elevates every course.

These recipes are designed to spark conversation and delight, turning every seasonal gathering into a showcase of Chester County’s finest flavors.

Birchrun Farms Ola with Lemon & Za’atar

Sue Miller notes that Ola is a cow’s-milk interpretation of a classic French *bûcheron*. While the traditional version is made with goat’s milk, Ola’s silky, luscious cow’s milk base gives it a softer, creamier texture with bright freshness, gentle earthiness and clean dairy sweetness. Za’atar is a Middle Eastern spice blend — typically thyme, sesame seeds and sumac — that brings herbal warmth, nutty crunch and a gentle lemony tang to both savory and fresh dishes.

Serves 4 to 6

- 1 piece Ola cheese, room temperature
- 1–2 T. za’atar, to taste
- ½–1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 2–3 T. high-quality olive oil
- Freshly cracked black pepper (optional)
- Flaky salt, if needed

To serve:

- Warm crusty bread or grilled sourdough
- Flatbread or seeded crackers
- Raw vegetables, such as radishes or cucumbers

Remove the Ola from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before serving. Slice into thick coins or gently break into large pieces and arrange on a shallow serving plate.

Sprinkle evenly with the za’atar and lemon zest. Drizzle generously with olive oil, allowing a little to pool around the cheese.

Let rest for 10 to 15 minutes, so the flavors bloom and the cheese softens fully. Taste and finish with black pepper or flaky salt if needed. Serve at room temperature.



Ola with Lemon and Za’atar and Celery & Fennel Salad with Birchrun Blue

Celery & Fennel Salad with Birchrun Blue

This crisp, refreshing salad balances thinly sliced celery and fennel with toasted nuts and bright lemon. Farmhouse Birchrun Blue anchors the dish, its savory depth and gentle sweetness cutting cleanly through the crunch of the vegetables and tying everything together without overwhelming the freshness. It’s a sharp, bracing counterpoint to richer dishes on the table.

Serves 6

- 1 large celery bunch, including tender inner stalks and leaves, thinly sliced
- 1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed and very thinly sliced
- 1 small shallot, very thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- 2–3 T. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ C. extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ C. toasted walnuts or almonds
- 3–5 oz. Birchrun Blue, broken into large crumbles
- Freshly cracked black pepper

In a large bowl, combine the celery, fennel and shallot. Season lightly with salt and toss, allowing the vegetables to soften just slightly to create the salad base.

Add the lemon juice and olive oil and toss until evenly coated and glossy. Fold in the toasted nuts.

Scatter the blue cheese over the salad, keeping the crumbles chunky so there are pockets of cheese throughout. Finish with freshly cracked black pepper, taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Serve immediately.

Skillet Chardy with Roasted Grapes & Walnuts

This warm, skillet-baked, camembert-style Little Chardy cheese from Birchrun Farms is designed for easy sharing and minimal prep. Roasted grapes bring sweetness and acidity to balance the cheese’s richness, while toasted walnuts add texture and depth. Serve it straight from the oven with crusty bread and alongside a simple salad of bitter spring greens.

Serves 4 to 6



- ½ lb. seedless grapes
- 1 T. honey
- ¼ C. red wine
- Pinch of black pepper
- 1 Little Chardy cheese
- ¼ C. walnuts



Outlawed: Why You Can't Buy Reblochon in the U.S.

Blame the government. No, really! Reblochon, the raw-milk cheese traditionally used for tartiflette, is aged fewer than 60 days and as a result can't legally be imported into the United States under FDA regulations.

Fortunately, several washed-rind cheeses offer similar richness, aroma and melt, making them good stand-ins for home cooks and professional chefs alike. Taleggio, from Lombardy on the Italian side of the Alps, is one of the most reliable substitutes, with a supple texture and savory depth that performs beautifully when baked. Or capture that French flavor with raclette or brie. For those ready for a French-level noseful of truly stinky cheese, there is Époisses, which tastes far more subtle and sweet than its barnyard scent suggests. And it melts wonderfully.

The goal is not to replicate reblochon exactly, but to capture its spirit — creamy, aromatic and indulgent enough to stand up to potatoes and bacon without overwhelming the dish.

Preheat the oven to 400°. In a small cast-iron skillet or oven-safe ramekin, combine the grapes, honey, red wine and black pepper.

Bake for about 30 minutes, until the grapes blister and the wine reduces slightly. Lower the oven temperature to 350°. Nestle the cheese on top of the grapes and return the skillet to the oven.

Bake for about another 15 minutes, until the cheese is soft and begins to ooze.

Meanwhile, toast the walnuts until fragrant and chop coarsely.

Remove from the oven, scatter the walnuts over the top, and serve immediately.

Tartiflette (Potato, Bacon & Cheese Gratin)

This potato gratin from the French Alps layers tender waxy potatoes with sauteed onions, smoky bacon and melted cheese for a dish that's deeply comforting and unapologetically rich. Traditionally made with reblochon, this version uses cheeses that are readily available in the U.S. while preserving the spirit of the original.

Serves 6 (as entree)

8 medium Yukon Gold or red potatoes (waxy potatoes hold their shape better for baking)

Kosher salt

1 lb. thick-cut bacon, cut into lardons

1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced

1 clove garlic, minced

½ C. dry white wine, such as Jacquère

Freshly cracked black pepper

12 oz. taleggio or raclette cheese, rind removed and sliced (if using a more assertive washed-rind cheese such as Époisses, reduce the amount to 6–8 oz. to keep the dish balanced.)



Place the potatoes, unpeeled, in a large pot and cover with very well-salted cold water. (Taste the water. Salty like the sea is correct for this recipe.) Bring to a gentle boil and cook until just tender when pierced with a knife, about 20 to 25 minutes depending on size.

Drain thoroughly and let the potatoes steam-dry for several minutes. When cool enough to handle, peel and slice into ¼-inch rounds.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until rendered and lightly crisp. Transfer to a plate, leaving the fat in the pan.

Add the onion to the skillet and cook slowly until soft and lightly golden, seasoning lightly with salt. Add the garlic and cook just until fragrant. Deglaze with the wine and simmer briefly until reduced by about half.

Preheat the oven to 375°. Butter a shallow baking dish. Arrange half the potatoes in the dish and season lightly with pepper. Top with half the onion mixture, bacon and cheese. Repeat the layers, finishing with cheese on top.

Bake until bubbling and deeply golden, about 35 minutes. Let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Birchrun Farms Fat Cat Fondue with Wild Mushrooms

This baked fondue pairs sauteed mushrooms with a washed-rind cheese that melts into a rich, savory pool without losing structure. Earthy mushrooms and thyme deepen the flavor, making this an ideal dish for cool evenings when you want something warm, communal and unfussy. Serve straight from the oven with crusty bread for dipping.

Serves 4 to 6

Olive oil or butter, for sauteing

1 small onion, thinly sliced

1 shallot, thinly sliced

Pinch of salt

1–1½ C. mixed mushrooms, such as shiitake, oyster or wild varieties, sliced

¼ C. dry white wine



1–2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves

6–8 oz. Fat Cat cheese, sliced

Crusty baguette, for serving

Preheat the oven to 375°.

In a skillet over medium heat, warm a little olive oil or butter. Add the onion and shallot with a pinch of salt and cook until softened and lightly golden. Add the mushrooms and cook until they release their moisture and begin to brown.

Deglaze with the wine and let it reduce slightly. Stir in the thyme and remove from the heat.

Transfer the mushroom mixture to a small ovenproof dish and layer the sliced cheese evenly over the top.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until the cheese is fully melted and bubbling. Serve immediately.

Birchrun Cheesecake

This cheesecake leans on cultured dairy for structure and balance rather than heaviness. Fromage blanc keeps the texture light and clean, while crème fraîche adds gentle richness and tang. The result is a smooth, softly-set cheesecake that finishes fresh rather than cloying. Credit where it's due to Sue Miller — using farm-fresh ingredients instead of supermarket stand-ins is what pushes this dessert into next-level territory.

Serves 6



For the crust:

1½ C. graham cracker crumbs

3 T. sugar

6 T. cultured butter, melted

Pairing Without Rules

When building a cheese-board-style dinner, stop thinking in pairings and start thinking in balance. Nearly every successful plate hits the same four notes: fat, acid, salt and crunch.

Cheese brings fat and richness, whether it's molten, baked or served at room temperature. Acid keeps that richness in check — lemon juice, vinegar, wine used in cooking, pickled vegetables or a spoonful of fruit compote. Salt might come from the cheese itself, cured meats, olives or anchovies, while crunch adds contrast through toasted bread, nuts, raw vegetables or crisp salad greens.

If those four elements are present and in balance, the meal works! No rigid rules, formal pairings or special knowledge required.

For the cheesecake filling:

2½ lb. fromage blanc

2½ C. sugar

12 oz. crème fraîche

5 large eggs

2 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 325°.

First prepare the crust. Stir together the graham cracker crumbs and sugar. Add the melted butter and mix until evenly moistened. Press firmly into the bottom of a 9- or 10-inch springform pan. Bake for about 15 minutes, then set aside to cool slightly.

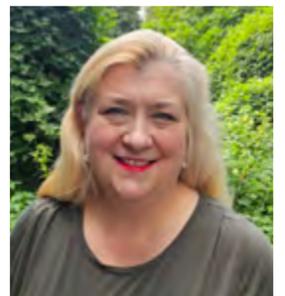
In a large mixing bowl, combine the fromage blanc, sugar and crème fraîche. Mix on medium speed until smooth and fully combined, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.

In a separate bowl, lightly whisk together the eggs and vanilla. Slowly add the egg mixture to the cheese mixture, mixing gently just until smooth.

Pour the filling into the prepared crust. Bake for 25 minutes, then rotate the pan and continue baking for another 25 minutes. The cheesecake should be lightly set around the edges and still slightly jiggly in the center.

Remove from the oven and refrigerate overnight before cutting. ♦

Liz Tarditi is a chef and wine specialist with more than 30 years of experience in food, wine and event planning. She holds degrees from Villanova University and from a Seattle culinary arts program founded by a Certified French Master Chef, where she trained in a classic brigade-style kitchen. Liz later ran her own catering company and has worked as a wine specialist in Pennsylvania. She brings her training and lifelong passion for seasonal, approachable cooking to Brandywine Table.



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