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DOWNTOWN EASTON

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40' BOAT SLIP INCLUDED! Fabulous bright and airy 4 bedroom home minutes to all of Oxford's amenities. Breezy wrap around porch, beautifully updated kitchen, living room with fireplace, first floor bedroom, second floor master suite with balcony, and workshop over one car garage. **\$475,500**



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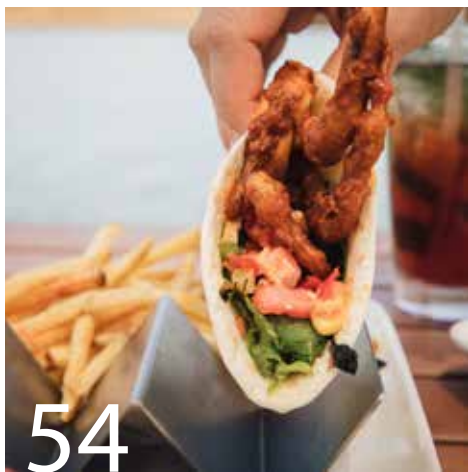
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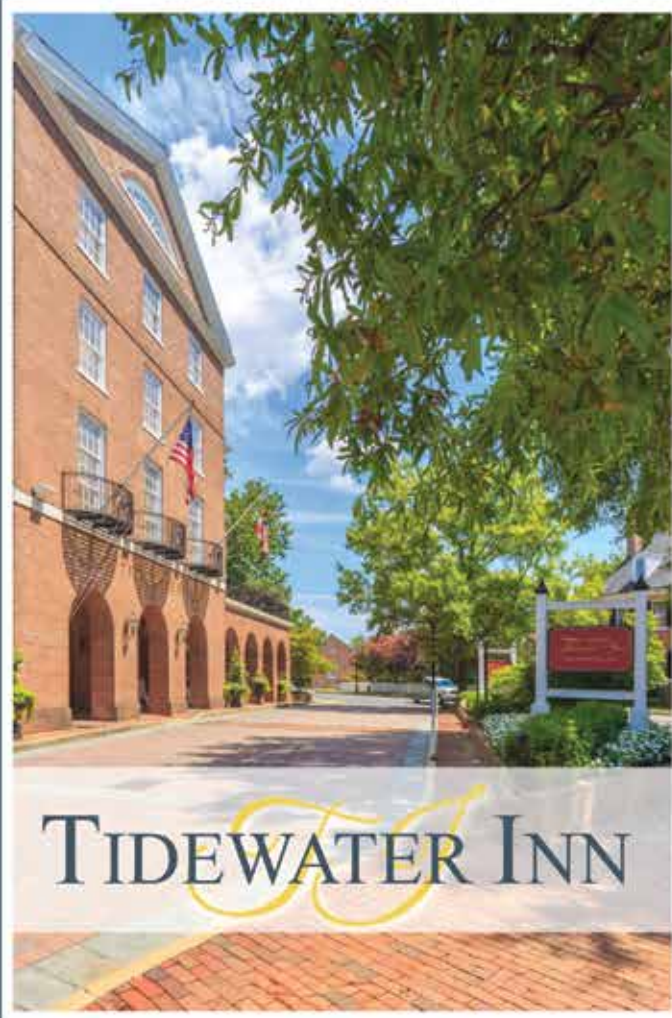
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THE MAGIC OF GARDENS

A garden is a magical place, and its creation and maintenance seem miraculous to those of us without the skill, patience and eye for them.

My godfather grew roses; one grandfather grew vegetables; my other grandfather grew all sorts of things, including one garden filled with pansies for his daughter. My godmother grew beautiful perennial gardens, as does my mother. My aloe plant kill count is sitting at four.

Even into her 90s, my godmother would direct me to view her container garden. Although much smaller and more contained than the gardens of her younger years, it was always more lush and more bountiful than anything I have grown.

My mother can point to flowers in her gardens and say which friend or family member had gifted them from their own gardens, and it's lovely to feel surrounded by the life our loved ones cultivated.

Our dear family friend Donna died in 2008 after a long illness. She had requested some of her ashes be buried in the perennial garden my mother planted at the far end of the swimming pool, where our families spent countless summer evenings swimming, singing and playing.

In this issue of Shore Monthly, explore the garden and consider how gardens have brought you closer to those you love.

Sarah Ensor
Editor



EASY-LIVING, CASUAL ELEGANCE

SHORE MONTHLY

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Cute as a Button!
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\$398,500 MDKE115216



Chester River Retreat!
 Located on the upper Chester River, pride of ownership shows throughout this Dutch Colonial, with gourmet kitchen with granite counters, a crafts room, open living/dining areas with a fireplace and great outdoor living spaces! Large shop for the do it yourselfer!
\$579,900 MDQA112650



Tolchester Estates
 Come and see this beautiful split floor plan with loads of space. Detached garage workshop/patio, one acre semi-private. Join the HOA for water privileges. Clean and open floor plan!
\$220,000 MDKE107836



Betterton Beauty!
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\$405,000 MDKE101208



Moonlight Bay
 Inn and Marina offers 10 guest rooms with full baths, 50+ boat slips, sandy beach for launching kayaks, and a large parking lot. Incredible Chesapeake Bay views!! This is a rare opportunity to own a working inn located in Rock Hall!!!!
\$1,350,000 MDKE107842



21117 Striper Run, Rock Hall MD
 Lovingly cared for townhome with 3 levels. The entrance level offers a bedroom with full bath and a laundry area and garage. The 2nd level has a kitchen plus dining area and living room with wood floors. There is also a small balcony and a deck off the kitchen too. Come see me!
\$192,000 MDKE114968



Historic Home on Queen St
 Updated inside beautiful while maintain the graceful carpentry original to the home. Beautiful, perfect location, courtyard is enclosed, off st. parking. Steps to the Chester River, restaurants and so much more!
\$435,000 MDKE114014



414 Bell Ave
 Nice home with loads of space! Four bedroom, 2.5 bath, updated kitchen. Has a family room with brick fireplace on the lower level and a beautiful screened porch on the main level. Oversized two car garage and shed on the property. Beautifully landscaped
\$285,000 MDKE114082



Just Listed in Rock Hall
 Located on N. Main St, this three bedroom 1 bath home has a deck, an enclosed porch, hardwood floors, and is a solidly built home with a detached garage.
\$194,900 MDKE115198



Energy Saver!
 This home was built with energy savings in mind!! North side of house is protected by earth berms to protect from winter weather conditions. The southern exposure has a multitude of windows! There is even an attached green house so you can grow all year long!!
\$750,000 MDKE114882



Historic District but New
 So much to love about this home! Wood floors, gas fire-place open floor plan, first floor master suite and all within walking distance to downtown Chestertown! Screened in porch!
\$460,000 MDKE107934



Hotel Tallulah's!
 Offers 6 daily, weekly, seasonal rentals. List price is for real estate only. Business can be purchased separately and would include furnishings. Individually metered, can be apartments. Each unit has own kitchen. Two decks and off street parking for 10+/- cars.
\$375,000 1003159519

AGENTS

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BE WELL

FIVE USEFUL HERBAL ALLIES TO TUCK INTO YOUR SPRING GARDEN

Story by Joan Tylecki
Photos by Deny Howeth



COMFEY

Comfrey, *Symphytum officinalis*, is a gorgeous, stately plant with a number of beneficial uses for your body and your garden alike, and it adds beautiful greenery and prolific purple flowers to your garden palette. This perennial happily grows in most soils and will improve them. Its leaves make a spectacular natural nutritive mulch. Interplant it in your garden beds or use it to make compost tea to provide nourishment to plant roots. It will re-propagate readily from even small root cuttings. It grows to at least 3-feet tall, so place where it won't shade out shorter plants.

It acts as a soothing, moistening, vulnerary agent when applied topically to the skin or taken internally as a tea. Comfrey promotes tissue repair for cuts, scrapes, abrasions, burns, sprains, and breaks. It's so effective in this arena that you don't want to apply it directly over deep or puncture wounds because it can close the top skin so quickly that it would seal in an infection.

Comfrey leaf's high nutritional content includes vitamins and minerals helpful to both humans and other plants. And, while it's nutritive, excessive internal use or use by folks with compromised liver function is not advised.

VIOLET

Viola odorata, or sweet violet, is a vibrant low-growing ground cover which will happily add its heart-shaped glossy leaves and cheerful purple flowers to nearly any spot, from full sun to full shade. I love to use it to ring the base of trees and as an edging plant along the borders of garden beds. It stays between 6 and 12 inches tall and brings some of spring's earliest blooms to your yard.

Violet can be used topically as a demulcent (moistening) astringent (tightening and tonifying) agent, or taken internally as a tea. With internal use, it helps maintain the strength of capillary walls within your blood and lymphatic vessels and so may assist in reducing spider veins and other varicosities. By helping to tone and tighten the vasculature, thereby improving lymph and blood flow and consequently moving wastes out of local tissues it earned an historical reputation as an alternative or "blood cleanser". This may also be why it's an old popular remedy for bruises. Violet flowers are edible and can be enjoyed as a tea, made into a syrup, or used to decorate sweets, added to salads or cocktails, or frozen into ice cube trays or popsicles.



PLANTAIN

Plantain might already be a part of your landscape. Encompassing a number of native species, commonly *Plantago lanceolata* and *P. major*, this groundcover is very likely already underfoot. It grows in full sun, yet it is also tolerant to shade and foot traffic. Mostly staying under 6 to 12 inches, plantain makes a good choice for borders and edges of existing garden beds. This native requires essentially no maintenance or watering.

It's a wonderful summertime ally to have around because it can help take the zing out of bites and stings. Plantain possesses soothing, anti-inflammatory, and drawing actions in addition to being anti-itch and anti-bacterial. Add in the fact that it's also a vulnerary, and you see how it can help you get safely on the other side of an insect assault. Kids can be taught to reach for this one. Once they can safely identify it, they just chew a leaf and apply their newly minted mouth poultice to the affected area. Always make sure to harvest from an area that hasn't been sprayed with herbicides or pesticides and which doesn't receive vehicle traffic.

PASSIONFLOWER

Passionflower, *Passiflora incarnata*, is perhaps one of the most striking flowers on the planet. It's a climber, so trellising is a must. It likes sun and is great for arbors, pergolas and porch columns. This one will spread like crazy so be sure you're tucking it in somewhere its roots can be contained (like a pot or a deeply bordered zone).

I enjoy just being around passionflower. Its uniquely shaped leaves, exotically beautiful flowers, and vining tendrils spark joy, deep breaths, and peace. Its flowers may be added to water for a lovely presentation but the best use is probably a warm leaf tea infusion. In this preparation, you can most fully receive its many benefits. Passionflower leaf is a hypnotic sedative nerve skilled at reducing spasm, nervous tension, and pain due to spasm, as well as promoting restful sleep. This means it can help calm circuitous thoughts, quiet your mind, calm your nerves and gut, and ease you into slumber. The maypop fruits it produces each summer and fall can be made into a tasty jelly or just eaten right off the vine.



SPEARMINT

Spearmint is versatile and will tolerate full sun to part shade, and its strength is in its roots. Watch out because it will spread rapidly by underground runners. Make sure to tuck it into a deeply bordered section or pot to avoid it overtaking your other plantings. This plant typically grows to 2 feet, though I've seen it reach 3.5 feet in my beds. The pulegone and other essential oils it contains mean that planting this one near your home can help deter mosquitoes, flies, ants, and other unwanted insects. You can even rub a fistful of leaves onto exposed skin for added repellent benefit.

Spearmint, *Mentha spicata*, is the original mint from whence come many varieties (peppermint, chocolate mint, etc.). It makes a lovely soothing leaf tea to aid digestion, especially for the stomach, a little less so for the lower bowels. Spearmint is calming, carminative (reductive to gas and bloating), anti-spasmodic, and a mild anti-nauseant. Because it doesn't contain menthol, its flavor is gentler and less cooling/ less intense to most palates than peppermint. This makes it less likely to cause exacerbation of GERD-like symptoms in the gut, while still maintaining beneficial effects on the digestive apparatus. Where peppermint is stimulating, spearmint is calming; its strength is in its gentleness. Because of this, it's a favorite tea with kids.



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Helping Families Heal
~ by Ryan Helfenbein ~

Remember growing up how simple the world was? If you wanted to go play ball with a friend you'd knock on their door and ask, not hope that the wife is working so you can send them a video of yourself with a caption of "Want to join in?" I overheard the other day that more change has occurred in our society in the last 18 years than the last 2000. For an industry such as mine, that still keeps typewriters in business, we have even begun seeing change in the style of service offered. The funeral service is now being replaced by Celebration of Life, the newspaper obituary is falling by the wayside as online personalized tribute pages are created, and as amazing as this might seem – even the methods of disposition are expanding into alternatives beyond our wildest imagination.

For generations now the choices of what to do with our recently departed has been narrowed down to two options – burial or cremation. But with change in all industries around death care, it was only a matter of time until it caught up with us. Today, options in methods of disposition now include placing our loved ones directly into the earth through the option of Green Burial and dissolving our loved ones with an alkaline solution through what is called Alkaline Hydrolysis. And, as of May 21st, the state of Washington, families can transform the ones they love into human compost.

Recomposing, or "natural organic reduction" as it is being called, is the newest jaw dropping method of disposition yet. As if the dissolving idea was not radical enough, we now can generate a nutrient rich topsoil similar to that which can be purchased at the local store, in which trees and flowers can be planted. The process transforms everything, even bones and teeth, into soil, by introducing heat loving microbes and helpful bacterial to rapidly breakdown the human remains contained in a reusable vessel. Through the introduction of woodchips and a controlled process to balance out the ratio of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and moisture, recomposing creates the ideal 120-160 degree environment for thorough decomposition. At different intervals, the human remains are mixed to ensure equal breakdown. The entire process takes about a month and the cubic yard of topsoil left behind is then given to the family.

Hold on Ryan, so what about surgical implants and pacemakers? Do they breakdown through this process as well? Much like that of cremation, all foreign material is removed prior to or after the process is completed and then recycled or placed into bio-waste. This concept of recomposing is to attempt to reduce our human remains into the most environmentally friendly form available in the death care industry today.

Yes, the world was simple 30-50 years ago. Phone calls were just that, picking up the phone and speaking to someone not keystroking a handheld device through texting, and the nutrient rich earth that we used for our landscaping was something we purchased at the Garden Center, not what the undertaker handed back to us after mom passed away. Things are changing all around us, even in an industry to what most would imagine is resistant to change. The question is...are we ready for it?

For more information, including pre-planning and other options, please call your nearest FH&N Funeral Home.

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HEARTHBEAT

POOL HOUSES

Thoughtful designs across the Eastern Shore

Story by Jennifer Martella | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

During my first trip to California, I visited Hearst Castle, designed by the architect Julia Morgan. Morgan was one of my heroines because she was the first woman to be admitted to l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris to study architecture. The site is spectacular. The castle is perched on a high hill, and the Neptune pool, which has 20,000 Grecian-style marble floor tiles, has panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean. Not many Talbot County residents need a 165-foot

long pool like Hearst, nor do we have the Pacific Ocean as a backdrop; however, the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, creeks and inlets provide a tranquil backdrop for summer fun.

Pool design has evolved over the years to include more than a rectangular pool and a shed for pool equipment. Pool sizes and shapes are limited only by one's imagination and budget. The pool surround can expand to include hot tubs and spacious landscaped areas for sunbathing, seating and dining. Pergolas

and pavilions provide an escape from the heat of summer.

Lauren Dianich and her Atelier 11 project team's design for a client's pool area in Easton first added a pergola as a portal between the house and the garage to define the entry to the pool area from the driveway and to unify the existing structures. Just beyond the pergola, steps with lighting incorporated into the stair risers and deep grass treads edged in stone lead down to the pool area. The pool surround expands into a spacious hardscaped terrace to offer a variety of areas for relaxing after a dip in the pool or a sojourn in the sauna. One area has Adirondack chairs grouped around a firepit; another has a circular table and umbrella for poolside snacks or meals. Chaise lounges with umbrellas are strategically arranged around the pool for sunbathing. Between the pool area and the waterside deck (with a pizza oven and grill built into a stone wall) is a free-standing screened pavilion with a cupola infilled with glazing. The pavilion is furnished as an outdoor dining and living room and the focal point of the dining area is the tabletop inlaid with Italian tiles. A mix of rattan and iron chairs with cushions around a coffee table create a very comfortable space for catching the summer breezes. An outdoor Bocce ball court and extensive landscaping completes the design.

Another Atelier 11 collaboration, with the owners of a property in Royal Oak, began with the transformation of the main



house into an exquisite Craftsman-styled gem. The new pool house was designed to complement the main house by setting it at an angle to break down the massing. The brick sidewalk between the two buildings passes by the herb garden and meets the stained and scored concrete pool terrace. The center wing of the pool house has a high pitched ceiling with three pairs of French doors for access to the pool area beyond. On the opposite wall, long windows with transoms are aligned with the French doors and transoms between walls

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“The pool surround can expand to include hot tubs and spacious hardscaped areas for sunbathing, seating and dining.”



bath and storage. Perpendicular to the pool house is a long pergola with two tables that can accommodate up to twenty guests for al fresco pizza parties. I have been fortunate to attend two of these pizza parties that began in the late afternoon and extended into the early evening, delightful celebrations of food and fellowship.

Designer and builder Clint Wadsworth and landscape designer Jan Kirsh collaborated on a pool house for a client whose waterfront site has broad vistas to the Choptank River. On a breezy day,

the wind chimes add their music to the sound of the birds as you drive up to the house unaware that the pool house and pool are hidden behind mature landscaping and plantings. Jan has a special talent for hardscapes, and a staggered path of stone pavers leads from the entry drive to the pool area. The pool house has all the amenities one needs for spending the day by the pool, a seating area with a sink and undercounter refrigerator for drinks and snacks, a changing area, restroom and a door to the outdoor shower. The fencing



around the shower and the pool equipment has weathered a beautiful gray that is enhanced by cascades of clematis. Half of the pool house's front entry gable has exposed rafters that cast playful shadows on the deck and pool house wall and filter sunlight through the accent window below the ridge of the roof. The other half of the gable has roofing to provide shade from the sun. The property boundary is infilled with mature landscaping for complete privacy.

Whether your architectural style preference is cottage, Craftsman, Georgian, rancher or any other style, thoughtful design of your pool and landscape by a design professional can create wonderful outdoor spaces for family fun all summer long. [S](#)





Thoughtful design
of your pool and
landscape by a design
professional can create
wonderful outdoor
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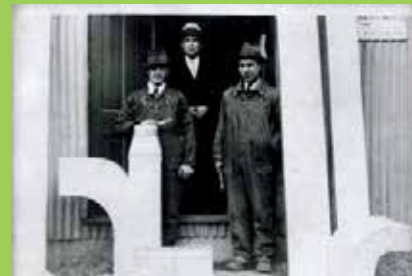
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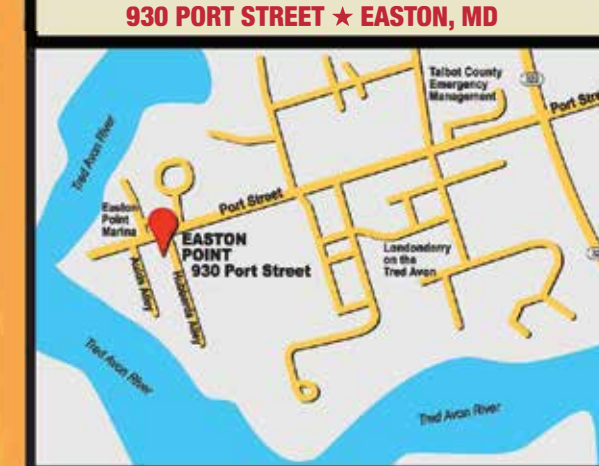
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PROFILES

URBAN OASIS

The Talbot Historical Society

Story by Michael Valliant

Gardens in downtown Easton

Photos by Arden Haley

There is a slice of paradise in downtown Easton if you know where to look.

The Talbot Historical Society gardens, off Washington Street and Glenwood Avenue, are award-winning and spectacularly gorgeous. They make for a tranquil place for an outdoor lunch, a haven for plein-air painters, and a scenic backdrop for weddings and special events. The one-acre gardens were created and are maintained through a partnership between the historical society and the Talbot County Garden Club.

“We have photographers and artists in the gardens every week; we have hundreds and hundreds of visitors and tourists who come through,” said Larry Denton, executive director of the historical society. “It is a true gem in downtown Easton and we couldn’t do it, it wouldn’t be possible, without the Talbot County Garden Club.”

Artist Claude Monet said that his garden was his most beautiful masterpiece. The master work in the society’s gardens features mature boxwood, a terraced shade garden, an herb garden, fully established perennial beds, and fruit and flowering trees. But they didn’t

get that way overnight and it takes creativity, hard work, and time to keep them looking like they do now.

Trish Reynolds joined the garden club in 1996 and has been a co-chairman of the Talbot County Historical Society Garden Committee ever since. The other three committee co-chairmen are Joey Frankos, Janet Mackey, and Caroline Rugg. There are 26 women on the committee and between April and the first week in November, they are working in the gardens at least twice a month, every other Tuesday — weeding, trimming, mulching, and planting, as well as determining the design and direction of the gardens.

The society was founded in 1954, and its partnership with the garden club goes back nearly as far. The two groups have worked together for decades to bring a place of quiet beauty to downtown Easton. It takes considerable time, effort and resources to create and tend a one-acre garden. As Rudyard Kipling said, “Gardens are not made by singing ‘Oh, how beautiful!’ and sitting in the shade.” But it’s a labor of love for the garden club and a design that has been worked out and improved over the years.

The Talbot County Historical Society Gardens are open during daylight hours every day. They are available for rent for weddings and other events.





WE HOPE PEOPLE ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF IT, IT IS A HIDDEN GEM IN THIS COMMUNITY AND SHOULD BE ENJOYED BY MANY.

“There have been a few key thrusts of the current garden,” said Reynolds. “The north terrace was redesigned in 1998. The Huxley Herb Garden was redesigned in 2017. And the perennial garden beds are being constantly redesigned and worked over time. There will also be the installation of a totally new garden of the Glenwood Avenue wall, which is a replica of (a) cemetery wall of the historic Wye House.”

The gardens are there to be enjoyed — they are open and free to the public seven days a week during daylight hours. They are located between Tharpe Antiques and the Neall House Galleries on Washington Street,

and they can be rented for weddings and other private events.

Accessibility is part of the beauty. Anyone coming to downtown Easton to eat, to shop or to take a break during lunch hour can transform or brighten their day with a brush with nature. And that’s why the gardens are there and why the historical society and the garden club put such care and effort into maintaining them.

“We want to encourage people to come and spend some quiet time there — there are places to sit, have lunch, or bring a friend,” Reynolds said. “We hope people enjoy the beauty of it, it is a hidden gem in this community and should be enjoyed by many.”



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Element shrubs add some organic complexity to your cocktails

Story by Jennie Burke | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

While scientists estimate that Mother Earth is approximately 4.6 billion years old, homo sapiens, my species, has only been here for a brief 200,000 years. And isn't it remarkable to think, that of all the miraculous phenomena to witness or consider — molten meteors that blaze the summer sky, a unique snowflake among the billions

that fall in a dusting, the ancient movement of tectonic plates, fire — so much of modern life depends on a humble invention that most of us take for granted? I'm not talking about the World Wide Web here; I'm paying homage to the cold closet we appreciate only when the power goes out. How did mankind survive even one week without refrigerators?

There are plenty of methodologies our ancestors used to save what we eat, and wouldn't you know it, hipsters are making food preservation cool again. Once reserved for aproned grannies and country folks, now city dwellers grow produce on rooftops and porches, and put up jams and jellies crafted from the fruits (or vegetables) of their labor.

Charlie Berkinshaw, 38, remembers his introduction to food preservation. While living in Cambridge, Mass., with his wife Angie, Berkinshaw participated in a group called The League of Urban Canners. Charlie recalls with a laugh the group's mission: to acquire fruits and vegetables from local trees

and gardens and then preserve them as pickles, preserves and ciders. Some members of the group preserved fruit using a colonial method that used apple cider vinegar and herbs. This elixir, called a shrub, produces a sweet-tart vinegar that can be mixed with beverages or used in cooking. Angie, then pregnant, found that the shrub satisfied her craving for a cocktail when mixed with club soda.

Charlie looked for commercial shrubs to bring home to Angie, but he found that most had only one flavor note — like lemon, ginger or cherry — and lacked the complexity Angie desired. He started experimenting with flavors at home.

In late 2013, after the birth of

their daughter, Charlie took a year to develop his new passion into a family business that would bring “unique, different” shrubs to the market. He scaled back his career as a consultant to part-time, so that he could develop recipes, acquire bar codes, and source glass containers. By November

2014, Element Shrub was available in two stores in Washington, D.C. Today, the mixtures are widely available at national grocery stores, and specialty shops, such as Lyon Distilling in St. Michaels.

Berkinshaw believes that shrubs are the perfect addition to any modern bar or kitchen. They add “low-sugar complexity

with real ingredients” to cocktails, non-alcoholic drinks, salad dressings and marinades. Element produces an array of flavors: from the popular ginger lime and chai pear, to the more obscure honeydew jalapeno and pineapple tumeric. The curious and the thirsty are welcome to stop by the tasting room at Lyon Distilling to sample a sip. Element also produces ready-to-drink sparkling “shrub and club” sodas.

For those ready to make their own shrubs, there are plenty of





recipes available online. All it takes is a little vinegar and sugar, some fruit and herbs, and a willingness to try something out of the ordinary. The mixture can process with a steep in the fridge for a few days or a gentle simmer on a stove. Either way, shrubs offer a miraculous taste of the past, just like a summer peach pulled from a Mason jar in February. After all, up until about 100 years ago, traditional preservation shaped the way we ate, drank and survived. Wouldn't it be a shame if our modern conveniences robbed us of a delicious and healthy heritage we were meant to enjoy? 🍷

**“EITHER WAY, SHRUBS
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Worms *The purpose of*

A tale of life and death in the garden

By Nicole Johnson

Every year when it gets hot, the worms come and sun themselves on the black tar of our driveway. One day, my daughter stops me. We are late for school, but she has to move the worms from their spot under my van wheels. I don't want to run them over, do I? Of course,

not I say and let her transport half a dozen of them to the moisture-rich grass. I've taught my children to value all life, even the squirmy, slippery, slimy kind, even the sort that seems short and pointless.

Last year, we had an insect cemetery in the garden. My

“Watching one of the
worms still in soil,
*I am reminded of
high school biology.*”

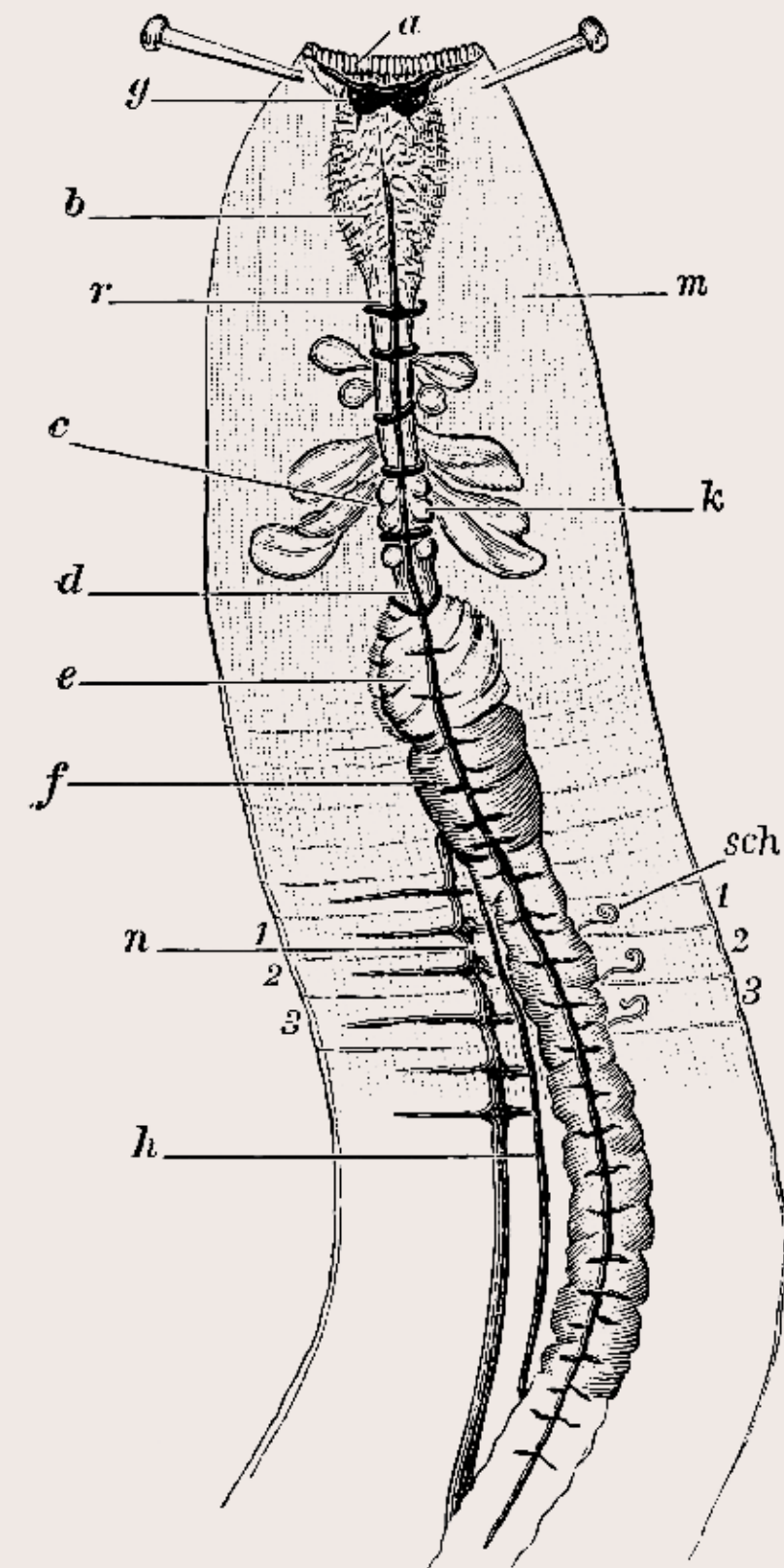
daughter wrote names in permanent black marker on some rocks she found around the yard. Then she dug a tiny hole with the tip of her pointer finger, said a few words and buried the unfortunate thing — ant, bee, spider, beetle or worm — in the fertile soil where weeds would soon root and grow.

For a moment, watching one of the worms still in soil, I am reminded of high school biology. As a junior, I dissected a common Earthworm, splitting its body by gliding the scalpel down its shiny center and nailing it to the blue polyethylene mat with pins. “Scientific name: *Lumbricus terrestris*, Order: Opisthopora, Class:

Clitellata, Phylum: Annelida, Kingdom: Animalia,” my teacher said without once referring to the textbook. Inside — heart, intestines, brain, organs—all both familiar and divine — I know this now because I look it up. But all I remember then was dirt, dark, gritty and wet. Maybe this made it easier for me to remove the worm’s insides and compare them to the chart in our books. Maybe it made it easier to see it as something dead. Scraping the dirt onto the white paper next to my dissection mat, I still feel a sad sort of pity for it.

I wonder later, back in the present, as my daughter stands next to me and we stare at the

Fig 1: *Lumbricus terrestris*



MMXVII

Fig 2: Excavation patterns of the earthworm



MMXVII

segmented round bodies fossilized in the tar, burnt up in the sun, what purpose they serve, what value they bring. Once a color between brown and purple, they are now the pale beige of dirt.

“Some of them were so close,” she says. They sit just beyond the border to the grass. As if, by some miracle — if time or God had been kinder granting them the extra time to move to safety, they would be allowed to live. Instead, they die under crystalline skies while the kids ride bikes up and down the driveway occasionally running a worm over on its way to freedom. Odds are, based on the number of dead worms against tar, they would have died soon anyway. My mind wanders. “The harmful rays of the sun kill them,” my teacher says. Would it be better to die under the dirt-encrusted wheel of a bike or basking in the blistering sun? This is the question I ponder while I make dinner and set the table.

Ever the empath, one of my definitive flaws, I imagine what it must feel like to burn to death as I brush my teeth, spit and turn out the bathroom light. What their bodies must go through, the sheer trauma and magnificent pain of drying out, shriveling to nothing but parched commas punctuating the black driveway. It is worse, I imagine, for those who were closest to the grass. Did they sense the plush, green

“Even the shriveled worms, filled with tiny hearts and their own versions of brains, *have purpose.*”

shelter as they lay dying mere inches away?

This has become a part of my spring — dead worms on tar. I can’t seem to push the image from my mind, as I throw a hand up and excuse the universe for the offing of worms whose biggest flaw is venturing too far and being too slow. Worms are paralyzed by too much light. Another fact recalled from high school biology. They were, and remain, faulty by design yet, I imagine I see minute movement from a pale brown worm curled into itself. When I get closer, nothing. Death surrounds me, especially here on a tar driveway where the sun executes as it warms.

Poor worms. Poor murderous sun. The universe dictates things we cannot change. Worms serve no purpose at all but to burn up and suffocate in the life-giving sun. The one that feeds us and the plants in our garden.

“Earthworms spend most of their lives underground, creating complex burrow networks,” I remember my teacher saying

from twenty years earlier as my teenage age body shifted on a wooden lab stool. “They are essential in gardens and farmland by contributing to soil fertility. Charles Darwin studied them for 38 years. He suggested they were the most important creatures on Earth.”

As I move the bodies toward the pet cemetery in the garden where everything else grows, I understand the value of all things. Even the shriveled worms, filled with tiny hearts and their own versions of brains, have purpose. S

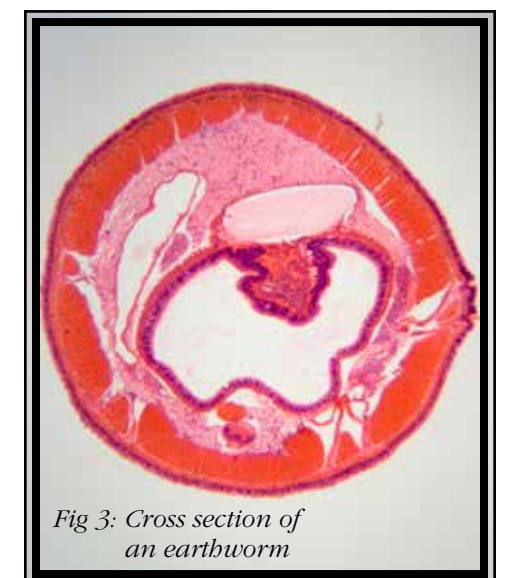


Fig 3: Cross section of an earthworm

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Crab Companions

Two creative crab dishes from
Capsize for the true Marylander

Story by Sarah Ensor | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

TASTE BUDS



JUMBO LUMP CRAB CAKES

(for the true Marylander or southerner)

Few Maryland items are as common on menus in other states as a Maryland crab cake, perhaps only rivaled by Chesapeake chicken.

Attempts to reinvent the crab cake, to spice it up, or to change its size never seem to live up to expectations. A true Marylander seeks a crab cake:

1. made of jumbo lump blue crab meat from Maryland;
2. broiled or lightly fried; and
3. held together with little but magic.

Messing with a recipe beyond those three qualities risks the structure of the dish. Crab is easily overpowered by cheese and other common flavors. Very rarely a chef successfully creates something new with a crab cake, and that is what Doug Kirby has done at Cap-size OXMD in Oxford. Kirby was born and raised on the Shore and worked in this building when he was 15 and the restaurant was Town Creek Seafood.

The secret is in perfect execution of the crab cake itself — uncompromised lumps of blue crab, held together with

a whisper of seasoning and a prayer. Kirby gives two of these crab cakes a southern home atop a bed of cheddar bay grits. With them, he serves three thick slices of fried green tomatoes and a peach chutney.

Fried green tomatoes are usually a welcome addition to a meal, however these fried green tomatoes could go up against the like several states to the south. They are warm through, tender but with structure. The breading offers a satisfying crunch and stays put when the tomato is cut. It is precisely the mild tang of the fried green tomato that sets off the crab cake.

These are generous portions; there are likely to be leftovers for lunch (or second dinner because these are irresistible). Take your well-behaved dog with you and sit on the deck (order a treat from the canine menu, which includes a bucket of water). A glass of sauvignon blanc or raspberry-Meyer-lemon iced (or sweet) tea complements this meal.





DESSERTS

Because the restaurant is located on the opposite side of The Scottish Highland Creamery, Kirby keeps dessert options to a minimum. If, for some reason, ice cream is not your idea of a luxurious summer dessert, Capsize OXMD offers Smith Island Cake and key lime pie.

SEASONAL

Capsize OXMD is open for the summer season and closes at the end of September.

SOFT CRABS

(for the truest Marylander or taco aficionado)

If you get to Capsize OXMD on the right day, you might find an excellent special, such as the soft crab tacos with watermelon salsa. (Korean shrimp tacos are on the regular menu, but Kirby buys fresh soft crabs from local suppliers, and soft crabs are not always available.)

Eat the battered, deep-fried soft crab as it goes — whatever is sticking out of the taco should be consumed first. When you have nibbled the taco ingredients down to a manageable taco, you can eat the rest inside the soft, flour tortilla. Spring mix and the corn and watermelon in the salsa provide

a satisfying crunch, and siracha aioli kicks up the spice.

You have not had a seafood taco like this before. The soft crab is flavorful and juicy, and the combination of textures and flavors from the vegetables makes it a summer feast.

“I really strive to put things on the menu you’re not going to find anywhere else,” Kirby said.

Dive into those summer flavors with an orange crush or a painkiller (Pusser’s rum, coconut, pineapple juice, orange juice and nutmeg).

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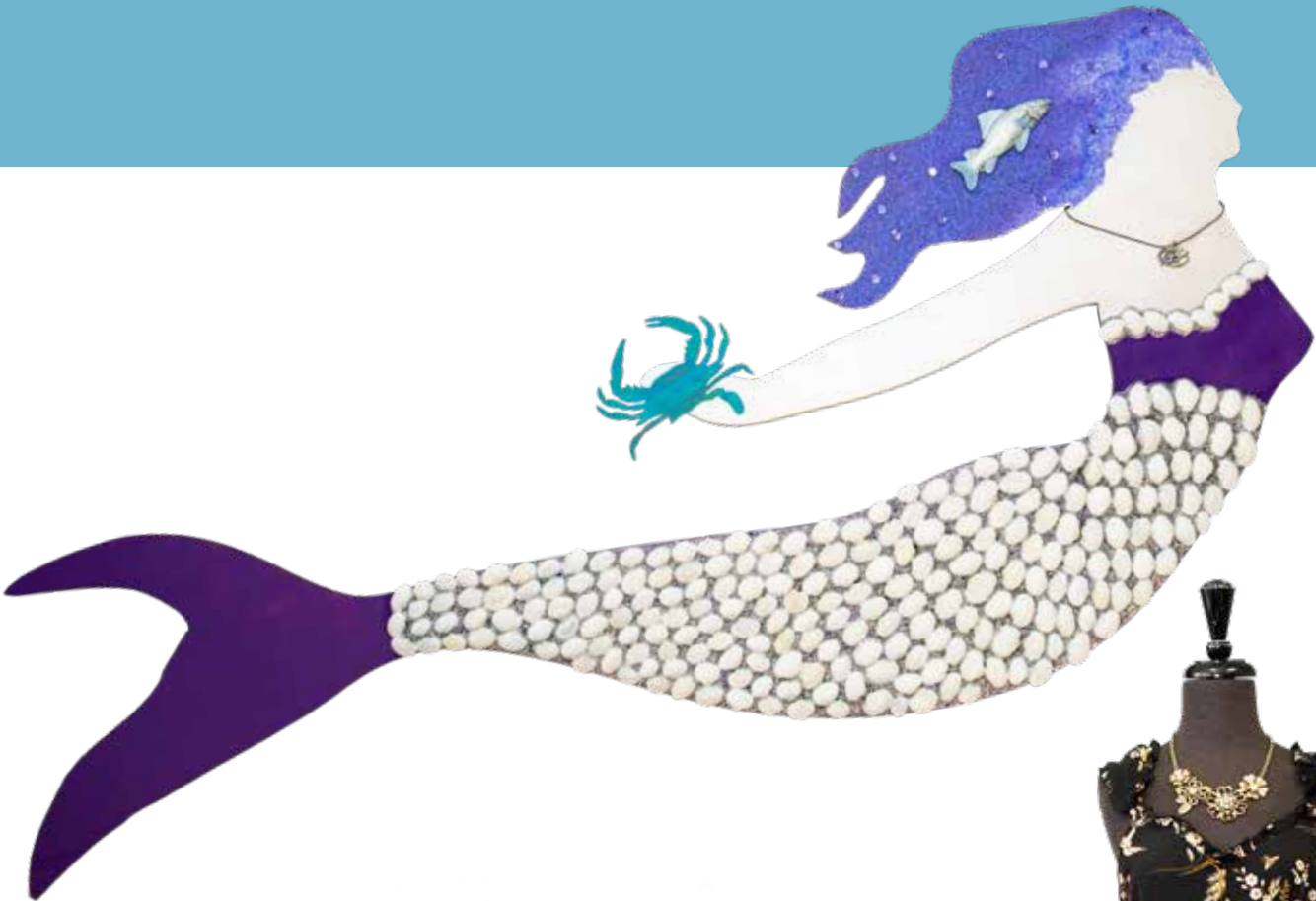
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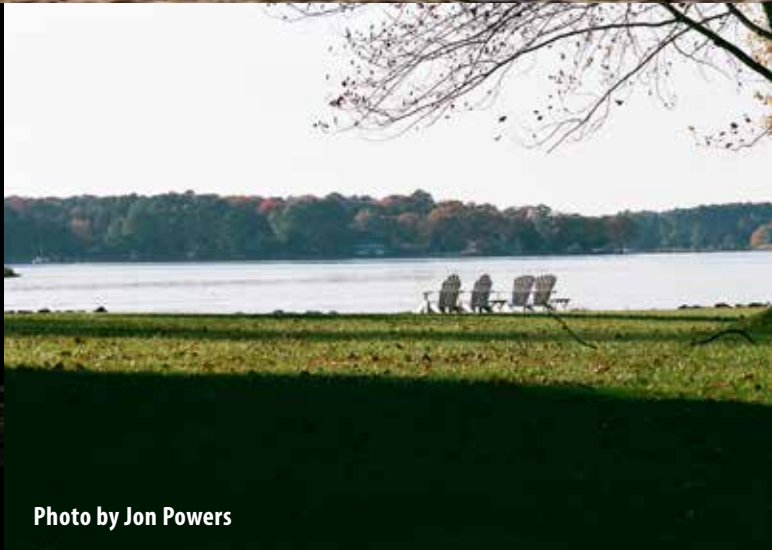


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ABOUT THE COVER

The Talbot Historical Society gardens have been created and maintained through a long, generous partnership with the Talbot County Garden Club.

The award-winning gardens feature mature boxwood, a terraced shade garden, an herb garden, fully established perennial beds, and fruit and flowering trees. The gardens may be rented for weddings and other private events.

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