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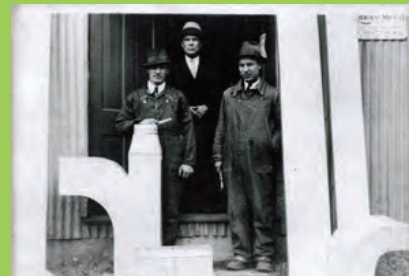
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43



14



37



20



54

DEPARTMENTS

14

HIGH SPIRITS

Faulkner Brnach Cidery

20

BE WELL

Families who run together

28

TASTE BUDS

Brisket and sides at Hot Off The Coals

37

STAGE LEFT

Bluegrass group The High and Wides

43

HEARTHBEAT

Bethel AME's history in Cambridge

50

LOCAL FLAVORS

How to make a tasty pretzel salad

54

WAYFARING

Bird banding on the Shore

60

PROFILES

A clerical friendship

65

SHOP TALK

Things that are better together

66

ABOUT THE COVER

Bethel AME

LIVING THE GOOD LIFE

Whether we gather with family or friends, at church or around the table, our passions unite and inspire us.

We set out this issue to explore the theme of gatherings and unwittingly uncovered a secondary theme of work — the work of the soul that unites friends of different faiths, the work of social justice and community building, the work of making music, the work of fermenting cider, the work of smoking brisket, the work of monitoring migratory birds.

Annie Dillard, in her beautiful book, “The Writing Life,” writes, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing. A schedule defends from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time. A schedule is a mock-up of reason and order – willed, faked, and so brought into being; is a peace and a haven set into the wreck of time; it is a lifeboat on which you find yourself, decades later, still living. Each day is the same, so you remember the series afterward as a blurred and powerful pattern.”

What better time to consider our work than Labor Day, when our nation celebrates its workers? As neighbors return from their final summer vacations and students return to school, let us consider how we spend our time together and how by exploring our passions, we build friendships, families and community.

As Dillard writes, “There is no shortage of good days. It is good lives that are hard to come by. A life of good days lived in the senses is not enough. The life of sensation is the life of greed; it requires more and more. The life of the spirit requires less and less; time is ample and its passage sweet. Who would call a day spent reading a good day? But a life spent reading – that is a good life.”

How do you spend your days?

Sarah Ensor
Editor



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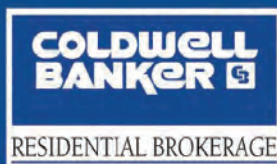
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AT BLADES ORCHARD

Story by Amelia Blades Steward | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips





Traditionally —
as it is done at
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Cidery — cider
is served in a
wine glass

To gain entry to the speak-easy-like tasting room at Faulkner Branch Cidery and Distilling Company, one must first solve a riddle. The cidery, located between Preston and Federalsburg, is one of only six cideries in Maryland.

First-generation farmers Stephen and Lynda Blades bought what is now Blades Orchard, a 65-acre fruit farm near Federalsburg, in 2008. Initially the farm had 20 acres of peach trees and 6 acres of apples. After several years of nurturing, the orchard now boasts 28 acres of peach trees and 15 acres of apples, producing 200,000 pounds of peaches and 800 bushels of apples a year.

When the farm began to have excess fruit, the couple started trucking the fruit

to cideries. Because this was not a lucrative solution for the excess fruit, friends in the wine industry encouraged them to get a winery license. Steve had recently retired from the liquor industry, so he was somewhat familiar with the business side of it.

“The fruit industry is a small community and has offered a tremendous amount of resources and support to us in our new endeavor,” he said. “The excess apples made a cidery the perfect venture.”

Faulkner Branch grows and crushes the fruit at Blades Orchard.

“Cider has its own set of rules,” he said. “It has to have a certain amount of apple in it, as well as a certain amount of alcohol and carbonation. It is made just like wine, but when you drink it, it finishes with a tartness from the apples.”

“Ciders are still relatively new and just starting to take off in the craft alcohol industry, representing about 11 percent of the craft alcohol industry today

The cidery's three ciders range in price from \$15 to \$17 a bottle. Head Waters cider is a dry European-style cider, much like a dry champagne. Tax Ditch Green is a sweet American-style hard cider with the flavors of brown sugar and molasses. The Jungle is made with Maryland honey and has a smooth finish and a sweeter edge, leaving a tart finish. It is Faulkner Branch's most popular seller.

“Like Australian wines, our ciders should be drunk within 12 months to keep their young and fruity flavors,” Steve said.

Lynda, once in medical sales, is on the road selling the cider at farmers' markets and helps to run the tasting room on weekends.

“People are enjoying what we are making,” she said. “We are selling out of what we are making with each batch. It is especially popular with the 20- and 30-something age groups.”

“Ciders are still relatively new and just starting to take off in the craft alcohol industry, representing about 11 percent of the craft alcohol industry today,” Steve said.

The couple is excited to share with visitors the Faulkner Branch Tasting Room, which opened in 2015 with a speakeasy theme.


A chalkboard riddle on the Tasting Room door challenges the visitor to solve the riddle before entering the low-lit lounge with a bar area and soft, comfortable sofas. The building also has a pavilion and patio for outside tastings.

Ciders are sold from the tasting room and are available at Town and Country Liquors in Easton, Hair o' the Dog in Easton (where



it is also on tap), The Wine Racks in Ocean City and Salisbury, Cheers in Salisbury, Pips Liquors in Chestertown, Beverage Barn in Denton, and Bakers on Kent Island, as well as area farmers' markets.

Blades Orchard also makes fresh pressed apple cider, known as “soft cider” which is non-alcoholic. It is sold in gallon and half-gallon containers seasonally from Blades Orchard farm stand, located at the edge of the farm.

Blades Orchard also sells blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, cherries, preserves and honey at the farm stand, as well as U-Pick apples on weekends in the fall months of September and October. Families come to pick apples, take family pictures, experience hayrides and tours of the farm, sample fresh pressed cider, as well as Faulkner Branch hard cider. 

To gain entry to the speakeasy-like cider tasting room at Faulkner Branch, guests first must solve a riddle.





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BE WELL





RUNS IN THE FAMILY

FAMILIES THAT RUN TOGETHER TALK ABOUT ITS BENEFITS — ON AND OFF THE TRAIL

Story by Michael Valliant | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

Tracey Smith's daughters might be faster than she is, but she'll catch them over longer runs, at least for now. But for the Smith girls, running isn't about winning races; it's about spending time together, being strong, being healthy and making memories.

Tracey, an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher at Easton Elementary School, started running in 2008 with a program

called Easton Rocks, which teamed runners together to train for races and to raise money for afterschool programs at Easton Elementary School. Smith was pushing her younger daughter Mattie (now 12) everywhere in a jogging stroller when a friend and fellow teacher recommended she start running.

"Lea Ann Robinson said, 'You are already walking all the miles, you should start running,'"

Tracey said. “So Mattie in her stroller was really my first training partner.”

Tracey’s older daughter Michaela (now 15) and Mattie are both lacrosse players and run to keep in shape for the sport. Each girl had run her first 5K (3.1 mile) race by the time she was 8. They have done a number of 5Ks, a couple triathlons, and Michaela has run an 8K race. All three have been a part of Easton Elementary’s color run 5K race over the past two years.

Her personal reasons for running lead into the reasons Tracey loves to see and be a part of her daughters’ running as well.

“I run to set goals for myself, to increase distance and challenge myself, to accomplish things I didn’t think I could – and hopefully the girls see that,” she said. “If they decide they are going to do a race with me, they’ll both really train for it. And I love spending that time together, being outdoors, getting them outside.”

Favorite running memories include a destination race in Virginia Beach. Michaela and Tracey ran the Shamrock 8K together, and the following day Tracey ran the Shamrock half-marathon. Her brother and sister-in-law are both runners and were part of it, a family trip to the beach and running all mixed in together.

Tracey is a coach for Talbot Unleashed, the training team that Easton Rocks turned into, which helps people train for full or half-marathons and raise money for Talbot Humane Society. Michaela and Mattie have volunteered at water stops for the team and done some informal training runs. Unleashed is starting its 12th season, training for the Richmond Half-Marathon in November. Also this fall, the three Smith girls hope to run a 10K race at Mt. Vernon, which will be the girls’ longest race so far.

Easton Rocks is also what got Amy and Scott Walstrum running. Amy, a 17-year teacher for Talbot County Public Schools, now an early childhood literacy coach for the county, trained for and ran the Marine

Corps Marathon. Scott, a project manager for a base operating support contractor at the Naval Academy, ran a half-marathon in Virginia Beach.

The Walstrums’ daughters, Faith, 12, and Lili, 8, are competitive gymnasts, and running adds crossing training and cardio to their practice. But running is also something they share as a family.

In 2015, the Walstrums went to Virginia Beach, with all of them running races. Amy’s mom went with them. Scott and Amy ran 5-mile races that Friday evening, Amy did the half-marathon on Sunday, and Scott ran the marathon. In between, Faith, then 9, ran the “final mile,” a one-mile run to add to 25 miles she had run over the course of months of training, and Lili, then 4, ran a 26.2 yard run.

“Faith’s final mile was run on the marathon course, with a big finish just like everyone who finished the marathon,” Amy said. “It was so cool to go to a running festival where we could all run races on the same weekend.”

“Being together as a family, to be able to go out and support each other, was a really great experience—our family did five races in one weekend,” Scott said. “And there was still time to be together as a family, go to restaurants and have fun together.”

Finding time to run with the girls putting in a lot of time for gymnastics and both Scott and Amy working in different towns, can be challenging. So the Walstrums often run while the girls are training at the gym. When they can run together, it’s a great time for the two to catch up.

“Running is a huge stress reliever where I can let my mind go,” Scott said. “When I run with Amy while the girls are at the gym, it’s like, ‘oh, hi, wife, nice to see you!’”

“And the thing about it, when we run, it’s not just talking about what is going on with work, what we are doing for dinner, or where we have to be next, we go deeper into thoughts and feelings, which is really cool,” Amy said.

Regular exercise reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and type-2 diabetes, strengthens bones and muscles, improves mood, and increases the chance of living longer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services





It was also running while the girls trained where Amy found a group and organization that would change their lives and perspectives. In Fruitland, talking to another gymnastics mother, Jill Fears, Amy talked about wanting to work with athletes with disabilities. She asked Fears if she knew who to get in touch with. Fears said she did know; she was the person who coordinated Athletes Serving Athletes (ASA) for the region.

For ASA, runners help raise money for disabled runners and their families to be able to compete in races. And then as a “wingman,” you work together in the race to cross the finish line. Amy and Scott had been serving as wingmen and captains in ASA for three years, when Amy asked about the girls getting involved in it and learned about the “junior wingman” program, where younger athletes can fundraise and support the athletes on race day.


“It’s been incredible to see what this organization does

for families, how it brings families together,” Amy said. “I would never know about any of this without running, and for our kids to be a part of this — to experience what it’s like to serve a population of people who are underserved; to have the opportunity to view others’ difference as unique and beautiful. It’s pretty powerful.”

“We got into running for personal goals and reasons, and ASA changes your perspective, you also want to be there for athletes,” Scott said. “When we got involved with ASA, our training took a different direction, “Together we finish” is our motto.

This past spring was the first race all four Walstrums did together for ASA. For the Third Wave 5K, they ran together with an athlete named Kayleen.

“We ran together as a team — the first time our family was a team together for a race — we had the best time, laughing, supporting Kayleen, and she was laughing the entire time,” Amy said.

They finished the race together. 

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SMOKY SWEET

Slaughterhouse brisket and baked beans

Story and photos by Caroline J. Phillips

Since learning the art of barbecue from a young age, pitmaster Richard (Ric) Tilghman Brice V has been practicing and refining his barbecue skills and serving barbecue to the public since 1998. His love for barbecue led him to start a catering business and then opening Hot Off the Coals in 2014.

The smoky, sweet scents of Brice's barbecue are apparent

even before the sign comes into view on U.S. Route 50. Lucky diners will arrive when Brice or his head chef, Matthew Provencher, are pulling meat off the smoker (which is located in front of the business) in time for the meal.

In the tradition of barbecue, a staple of large, outdoor get-togethers, Hot Off the Coals provides dishes that are perfect to share with a group.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE BRISKET

Served on a fresh bun, the brisket is a mouth-watering pile of meat slathered in a special barbecue sauce.

The Slaughterhouse Brisket is close to Brice's heart. The rub was a gift from the late Richard Slaughterhouse, a friend of Brice's and resident of Oxford. When Brice was beginning his business, he asked Slaughterhouse for his rub recipe, and after much thought, Slaughterhouse gave it to him on the condition that Brice name it after him. The Slaughterhouse Brisket is still served in honor of Slaughterhouse and his friendship.

The beef brisket is covered in Slaughterhouse's rub and then set for 24 hours. After eight hours in the smoker, it rests for a while before it is ready to be cut. Brice emphasizes the importance of the cut – he cuts the brisket across the grain, in one-eighth-inch thickness.

This is his art, and his methods are ever-changing.

"The art of food is all about doing better – finding something that makes it better than it already is," Brice said.



CLASSIC SIDES

The masterpiece brisket is best served with the unique smoked baked beans and sweet, cake-like hushpuppies. The smoked baked beans are a “a little bit of this, and a little bit of that,” said Brice, and they complement the smokiness of the brisket. For a sweet balance, pop a hushpuppy into your mouth. Instead of the usual onion flavor, Hot Off the Coals’ hushpuppies are sweeter and served with honey butter.

To bring the whole meal together, serve it with a pint of Devil’s Backbone Vienna Lager — a classic craft beer.

Other pairings are available, of course. Guests will be blown away by Brice’s grandfather’s coleslaw recipe or the seven-cheese macaroni-and-cheese. Or choose from stewed tomatoes, red potato salad, green beans, or collard greens.

You're going to **LOVE** Kent County_{MD}



Photo courtesy of Massey Air Museum

Many will get away this Fall to see the spectacular fall settings in the historic towns of Chestertown, Rock Hall, Galena, Millington and Betterton, where the autumn foliage bursts of fiery reds, burnt oranges and vivid golds. You too will want to put this on your list of special getaways. Hear the migratory waterfowl chatter, as the birds make their way to open fields and waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, which flow through and around this bucolic Peninsula. Taste the flavor of fresh seafood, local produce, wine, spirits, and grass-fed beef, which many Kent County chefs feature in their specialty dishes. Breathe fresh country air, as you bicycle the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway. Witness nature closer than you can imagine when paddling the water trails of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, the Chester River, and the Sassafras River. Feel the water's mist, as you venture out on a 65 foot classic yacht for a cruise on the Chester River or charter a sail on the breathtaking Chesapeake Bay.

The towns are packed with history, some with more than 300 years of perseverance, turmoil, triumph, hard work and prosperity. Pride of sharing their heritage, art, waterfront, landscape, music, wine, spirits, and creative fun through festivals, events, tours and more is

the cornerstone of the distinct character of the County of Kent. The peaceful vistas and beautiful landscape of rolling hills, farms, vineyards and open space reminds us of a time past, when life was simpler. Enjoy the peace and beauty, but be ready to have fun, for this quaint countryside is host to hundreds of events. Combine an event with attractions, recreational activities, local fresh foods, wine and spirits tasting, shopping, history, musical and theatrical performances, and you have the making of a perfect escape.

In fact, Kent County has become notably recognized for its many popular events. Some old-time favorites keep getting better, like the Chestertown Farmers and Artisans market. Early Saturday mornings, you will find Downtown's Fountain Park teeming with "Made in Kent County" vendors. It is the only outside farmers market in Maryland to be open year-round.

With a myriad of events coming up in the next several months, you'll want to get your calendar out to save some dates, but be sure to check the calendar of events at www.kentcounty.com for the most current information. Let's begin with First Fridays in Downtown Chestertown. Situated in the Arts & Entertainment District, Chestertown shops keep their doors open late, and it is not uncommon to see musicians performing on the red-brick, tree-lined sidewalks, while their audience meanders in and out of boutiques, art

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galleries, and shops or dines at an outside table of their favorite restaurant. Just days later, the music lover won't want to miss the Jazz Festival, a six-day jazz and blues extravaganza, from September 5th to the 10th. For a complete schedule, visit chestertownjazzfestival.org.

Kids Fly Free on September 9th! Young Eagles Day at Massey Aerodrome & Air Museum introduces young people to the world of flight with free airplane rides. Find out more at masseyaero.org.

The weekend of September 14th begins Friday evening with a show at the Garfield Centre Theatre in Chestertown or a Sultana Public Music Sail on the Chester River. Saturday morning get your running shoes on for the Rock Hall Firemen's 5K Run/Walk. Afterwards, enjoy the Rock Hall Firemen's Festival Parade. Next, head for delicious eats, local vendors, and dancing in the street at Chestertown's Block Party. Sunday take a brunch cruise on the Chester River. Extend your weekend for Rock Hall's Mainstay Mondays featuring pianist Joe Holt and Nevin Dawson on Viola.

Closing the street for the Classics on Thursday evening, Cars on High line the 300 block of High St. You'll find classic, exotic, antique and

customized beauties in Downtown Chestertown on September 20th. The rest of the weekend options go something like this... See a play at the Garfield Center Theatre. Paddle or sail with Sultana. Enjoy the wacky fun of the 12th annual Cardboard Boat Race and Waterfront Festival in Chestertown's Wilmer Park on Saturday September 22nd. Savor the Fall Wine Tasting at Chestertown's Wine and Cheese Shop on Saturday evening. Tap your toes at the Mainstay concert. Top off your weekend at a Farm to Table Sunday Brunch at Kent County's winery.



Don't put that calendar away yet. If you thought September was packed with fun events, you'll be amazed with October. Here is just a sampling, but don't forget to check kentcounty.com/events for a complete list.

Now grab your wand for Chestertown's annual HP Festival. Historic Downtown transforms October 5th and 6th into everything HP. Hop on your broom and find the schedule for this magical event at www.chestertownhpfest.org.

Mix it up this same weekend with the 48th annual Chestertown Historic *continued*



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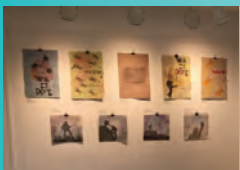
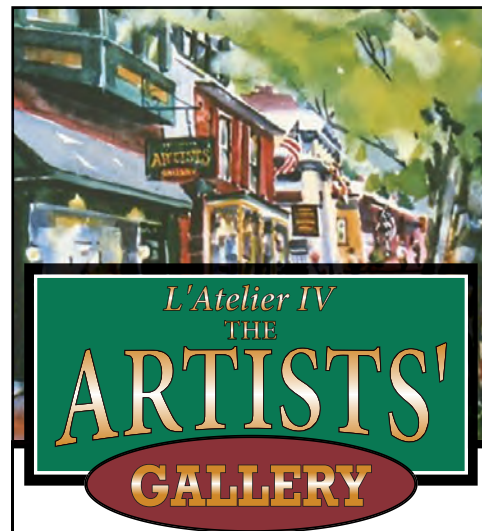


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House Walking Tour on October 6th from 1:00 to 5:00pm. Blending spooky with historic, the Chestertown Historic Ghost Walk will share some of the odder tales of local lore, including those of murder and mayhem for four weekends in a row: Oct. 6, 13, 20 and 27th. For more information on both of these special tours, visit www.kentcountyhistory.org.

One of Maryland's scariest haunted attractions, the Devil's Playground, is open October 13, 19, 20, 26, & 27th, visit 301devilsplayground.com,

Foodies...Are you ready for some oysters! Don't miss the 21st annual Rock Hall FallFest on Saturday, October 13th from 10am-4pm. Come hungry to "Celebrate the Oyster," prepared every which way for every taste bud. Main street closes for delicious oysters, lots of music all day long, food and craft vendors, kids court and more. www.mainstayrockhall.org.

Artists open their doors at one of the largest studio tours in Maryland. Over two weekends, The RiverArts Studio Tour will feature more than 60 artists, and will take you on an adventure to creative spaces on Oct. 20th & 21st and Oct. 27th & 28th. Begin your self-guided tour at the RiverArts Gallery at 315 High St., Chestertown, where there will be an exhibit of works by the artists on the tour. www.chestertownriverarts.net

Combine your Studio Tour with the 18th Annual Sultana Downrigging Weekend Tall Ship and

Wooden Boat Festival, from Oct. 26th - 28th. One of the largest Tall Ship gatherings on the East Coast, this celebration of maritime culture is packed with ships, schooners, wooden boats, performances by world-class musicians, family-friendly activities, lectures by nationally recognized authors and filmmakers, and opportunities to go sailing as part of a fleet of "Tall Ships." Visit www.sultanaeducation.org.

A couple of sneak peeks...Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge begins Winter Birding Walks on "First Saturdays" from November through March. These five guided walks will take you to areas on the Island that are usually not open to the public. And you won't want to miss Kent County's Holiday happenings, which begin on Thanksgiving Friday and run through New Year's Eve. Of the many events, they include Dickens of a Christmas and Santa arriving by boat.

Plan your trip today to this very special Upper Chesapeake Bay region called Kent County. For more information, please visit www.kentcounty.com, and be sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @visitkentcounty. You're Going To Love Kent County, MD!



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STAGE LEFT



Photo by Walter Bowie

'G F R E S H C U T R A S S

National bluegrass outfit The High and Wides talk about the influence of rural roots on their music, and the harmony found when playing on the Shore

Story by Robyn Barberry

It's 7:30 on a ridiculously gorgeous Thursday night in June. At a wrought iron table on the patio of MaGerk's, a bustling Baltimore sports bar, sit Mike Buccino and Marc Dykeman of The High and Wides, an up-and-coming bluegrass group with its roots in Kent County.

Buccino is wearing a navy baseball cap and an unassuming gray camp shirt. Dykeman is wearing a subtle Western shirt in faint blue and high-waisted pants with a fist-sized belt buckle. Buccino orders the spicy tuna wrap. Dykeman, the grilled cheese.

"How would you like your fries?" the waitress asks Dykeman, rolling off a list of fixins ranging from cheese to jalapenos to Old Bay.

"Yes. I'll have all of that," he says. After all, he is a master in the art of remixing something interesting into something captivating.

We talk shop (both of the guys work in college fundraising, Buccino for University of Maryland Baltimore County, and Dykeman for Washington College), condiments, and hip hop music while we wait for The High and Wides to take stage at the 8X10, a black box of a venue in historic Federal Hill, for Third Thursday Bluegrass.

The band has been gaining national attention since their album "Lifted," emerged at #10 on the Billboard bluegrass charts when it was released in April.

As with most bluegrass bands, vocals and strings are the sole ingredients to The High and Wides' sound, courtesy of Buccino (stand-up bass), Dykeman (guitar/

vocals), Nate Grower (fiddle), and Sam Guthridge (banjo/mandolin/vocals).

The album was recorded in an old Kent County farmhouse in 2016, where a woodstove provided heat. The album's name comes from the fact that Dykeman's laptop containing the final mixes was stolen ("lifted") from his car when he went to Nashville to see the solar eclipse in August 2017 and the fact that The High and Wides returned to the studio and produced an album that is one of those rare collections you can listen straight through without skipping a track.

Bluegrass' rustic vibe blends right in with the Eastern Shore.

"Everywhere you go on the Shore is a small town. People on the Shore are so supportive. There's a great sense of community. You have to work a little harder in the city," Dykeman says.

Before forming The High and Wides, Dykeman, Guthridge, and Grower were in another bluegrass band called Chester River Runoff, although that band's style differed from that of The High and Wides, which adds to bluegrass early rockabilly and other rhythmic influences. Buccino, who was not a member of Chester River Runoff, is a versatile bassist and phenomenal songwriter.

When it comes to performing, The High and Wides are bluegrass defectors. There's no pickin' and grinnin'. No jam sessions. No cheesy banter. No goofy suits. No "hee-haw showmanship." And absolutely no toe-tapping. When you sound this good, there's no need for gimmicks.

"We embrace the music by allowing it to stand on its own without the usual

“**THERE’S NO PICKIN’
AND GRINNIN’. NO JAM
SESSIONS. NO CHEESY
BANTER. NO GOOFY
SUITS. NO “HEE-HAW
SHOWMANSHIP.” AND
ABSOLUTELY NO TOE-TAP-
PING. WHEN YOU SOUND
THIS GOOD, THERE’S NO
NEED FOR GIMMICKS.**



Photo by Walter Bowie

cultural trappings,” Guthridge says.

Still, there is that undeniable locomotive drive, the “brother harmony” shared by Dykeman and Guthridge, and a dash of lyrical heartache, for good measure. Dykeman’s voice is animated and punctuated, which makes Guthridge the smooth and mellow crooner. Together or apart their voices provide a versatile range of

Together or apart their voices provide a versatile range of vessels for selling convincing stories. They are so synchronized that they can even yodel together.

vessels for selling convincing stories. They are so synchronized that they can even yodel together.

I expect to hear mainly tracks from the album at their show at the 8X10 but am surprised to hear some unfamiliar tunes and even a couple of covers.

“I love covers when the way you play them changes the meaning of the lyrics,” Dykeman says.

The High and Wides’ rendition of “Brown-Eyed

Girl” is a flawless execution of this principle. They twist the saccharine tone of the upbeat summer anthem into something heavy and hypnotic. The fiddle screeches. The guitar taunts. The banjo creeps. The bass throbs. It’s an original and delicious take on a tired tune.

At the end of The High and Wides’ set, John Way, the emcee of Third Thursday Bluegrass and an affiliate of the Charm City Bluegrass Festival, tells

the crowd, “Every time I see these guys they get better and better. I keep snapshots of them in my mind as they grow.”

As for going on tour, Dykeman says, “The problem is you have to follow it up with something new in six months.”

As much as your growing fan base would love to see that, no rush guys. In the words of “Caroline,” the opening track of “Lifted,” “You’ve almost made it, ain’t got far to go.” **S**



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*How the power of faith and community has
helped Bethel A.M.E. overcome adversity*

Story by Kristina Gaddy | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

On a quiet Sunday morning on Pine Street in Cambridge, parishioners trickle into a Gothic-revival brick church. Inside, the bright summer sun shines through the colorful stained glass onto the hardwood floors, illuminating the large sanctuary. The windows and floors, the pipe organ behind the choir, the pressed tin ceiling overhead, and the radiator system are all original to the 1903 building. For 171 years, the members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church have gathered at this corner to worship, to build community and to spark change.

This Sunday, the Rev. Randolph Fitchett Jr. preaches about managing what you have.

"The task may be huge and your ability small," his voice booms out to the congregation, but turn it over to God and you will manage it, he says. Shouts of "Yes!" and "That's right" echo back from the sixty or so people sitting in the pews.

In the 1960s, the task for the African American community centered on Pine Street was huge: desegregate the town of Cambridge. Businesses refused to integrate, but more importantly, black citizens of Cambridge didn't have equal access to healthcare, education, or work. And just like Fitchett preaches, the community brought the task back to Bethel. The civil rights era is what Bethel A.M.E. is most known for, but for more than 100 years before and more than 50 years after, this church, and this building, has been a community anchor for Cambridge.

In 1847, nine men bought the land to establish the Bethel A.M.E. church and congregation. At the corner of Pine and Cedar streets, Bethel was one pillar of the growing African American neighborhood, and the other was the Waugh Methodist Episcopal Church at the intersection of High and Pine, founded in 1826.

Like in many African American neighborhoods, churches were safe spaces



that grounded the community and even helped residents buy land and establish businesses. Major events necessitated the building of larger churches. The first was emancipation in 1865, and in 1870, the Bethel congregation expanded to a wooden church. But even that didn't suffice because more and more people moved to Cambridge to work in the new packing plants and expanding industrial economy at the end of 1800s.

In 1903, Bethel replaced the wooden church with a brick Gothic Revival church

According to Dion Banks, lifelong member of Bethel A.M.E., the church is home to one of the country's oldest working pipe organs.



with corner towers in contrasting heights. The congregation raised money to build an impressive church with a sanctuary that could seat as many as 350 people, large colorful stained-glass windows and a pipe organ.

The church would fill up on Sunday mornings, and as lifelong member Dion Banks said, “Bethel was known as the church for everybody.”

In the era of Jim Crow, Bethel

continued to be a safe space to congregate.

Written above the pulpit on the wall of Bethel is the African Methodist Episcopal motto: “God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother.” Just a year before the cornerstone was laid for the current building, in 1902, when a pastor was leaving the church, the *Afro-American* reported that City Councilman John Cooper addressed the crowd and said,

“The mission of the church was to make men and the community better and not simply to gather therein for social purpose.”

As African Americans across the United States and in Cambridge became more and more vocal about injustices in this country and lack of civil rights for people of color in the 20th century, Bethel became the place where people could come to instigate change.



“We must keep marching downtown until downtown gives us what we want,” Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee leader Reginald Robinson told a crowd of over 200 people seated together in the sanctuary of Bethel on a night in June 1963.

They had returned to the church after marching two-by-two from the church to the Dorchester County Jail on High Street, to sing, pray, and protest the arrests of twenty demonstrators. The night before, they had been confronted by angry white counter-demonstrators and harassed with firecrackers.

“We must control our emotions. Retaliation is no good,” Gloria Richardson told the crowd.

For more than a year, Dorchester and Talbot counties had been home to freedom rides to desegregate public transportation and sit-ins at drugstores, snack bars, and restaurants. And although Cambridge’s

African American 2nd Ward had been able to elect a black city councilman since 1882, in 1963, only one out of 19 white-owned restaurants would serve black customers, and playgrounds and schools were segregated, as was the hospital.

The closing of packing plants and an economic downturn affected African Americans more disproportionately than whites, and job discrimination only added to the inequity. Throughout the 1960s, Bethel became the place where community leaders like Richardson could bring people together, have freedom riders give speeches to children, and plan sit-ins and rallies. The church was the center of the civil rights movement.

Bethel was taking on a huge risk by supporting the meetings. In September 1963, members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in



Nine men bought the land for Bethel A.M.E. in 1847. In 1865, emancipation required a larger church, which was built in 1870. The congregation soon outgrew the wooden church as people moved to Cambridge for work in the new packing plants. In 1903, the wooden church was replaced by the existing brick Gothic Revival church.

Birmingham, Ala., killing four girls — Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley and Carole Robertson, all who were 14, and Carol Denise McNair, who was 11.

In Cambridge, threats of bombs, fire and violence were real. Banks, co-founder of the Eastern Shore Network for Change, says that other churches, like Waugh, had more to lose.

“They were business owners and teachers,” (while Bethel was more working class) he says, and could have their livelihoods destroyed by supporting the movement so publicly. In addition to firecrackers and bullets shot into crowds of demonstrators, *The Baltimore Sun* reported a gasoline-soaked mop was thrown into the window of a

bakery, and of course, there was the fire in 1967.

The narrative that is most often remembered, and what the national media put out was that activist H. Rap Brown spoke and incited a riot that burned down a school, businesses and homes on Pine Street.

What really happened was much deeper and more nuanced than this narrative, and in 2012, forty-five years after the fire, Banks and his friend Kisha Petticolas realized that the real story hadn’t been told, and the fire was a wound that hadn’t yet healed.

“There were issues going on in the community that were not being addressed,” says Petticolas, issues that stemmed from the tensions of the 1960s.

Banks and Petticolas wanted to hold an event that would allow the community to come together and speak about this history publicly, and they knew Bethel was the place for this conversation. The church was still the safe space it had been 45 years earlier.

“Whenever we have a community conversation, we do it in Bethel,” says Petticolas.

After the first meeting, they knew they had more work to do. The sanctuary had filled with tension, anger and tears. They realized this was the first time the community had come together to speak about the past. They also wanted to illuminate the true history of what happened in 1967.

“These [false] perceptions are what hold us back,” says Banks.

Banks and Petticolas co-founded the Eastern Shore Network for Change to raise awareness about issues facing the community and foster change.

“We need to be able to tell a story of healing, faith, and community,” says Petticolas.

Last summer, they hosted “Reflections on Pine,” a series of events to commemorate fifty years after the Long Hot Summer of 1967 and what happened on Pine Street. While the fire and the aftermath are still painful for many community members, Bethel has continued to be a home for these conversations.

This fall, ESNC will kick off their “Year of Reading,” a community book club, through a discussion at Bethel about *Civil War on Race Street* by Peter Levy, and in the next five to seven years, they want to ensure that the physical Bethel A.M.E. church remains in good shape. While minor adjustments have been made to the building, including air conditioning, the main building and sanctuary have never been renovated.

“It would be a hole in the community if something happened to the building,” says Petticolas.



They want to make sure this building remains a community gathering space for generations to come. Even though the congregation is smaller than it once was, it remains a place where people know and care about one other and want to make the community stronger. Music and messages of faith and hope will continue to fill this old brick building. During the sunny summer service at Cambridge, the congregation sang “We Shall Overcome” backed up by a drum set and organ, reminiscent of the history of this church, and the role that it plays in the community’s future. ●

“We Shall Overcome” is a gospel song with origins in the early 20th century. Later that century, it became an anthem of the civil rights movement.



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First, assemble your crust

5 cups of coarsely crushed pretzels
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2 sticks of salted butter (melted)

Spread pretzels onto a 12x18 pan evenly, then sprinkle sugar over the pretzels and mix altogether. Bake at 400 degrees in a convection oven for 5-6 mins until pretzels are golden and sugar is caramelized.

Second, assemble your middle

16oz Philadelphia cream cheese
1 tablespoon heavy cream

Whip these ingredients together until they become "fluffy."
Add 16 oz whipped cream and continue whipping until fully mixed

Third, assemble your topping

Boil 4 cups of water, add
16oz of strawberry Jell-O.
Remove from heat.

Slice 16 frozen strawberries (Or 2 cups of fresh strawberries).
Add all ingredients together, and let sit for 15-20 mins for Jell-O to set.

Combine all components

Evenly spread your middle over top the pretzel base, making sure that there are no visual pretzels left. This helps to separate the topping from getting to the pretzels, making them soggy.

Then, add strawberry topping once Jell-O is set. You want it to be partially congealed. Spread even and refrigerate until Jell-o is a solid consistency.



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Feast & Flight

Birds of a feather travel together

A local look into the world of bird banding — the process of tagging birds in order to study migratory patterns and behavior.

Story and Photos by Daniel Divilio

When it comes to travel, many of us seek to lose weight before leaving. We are inundated with ads from gyms that will get us beach-body ready.

Meanwhile, those birds you hear in the trees behind your house may instead be packing on the grams, doing the exact opposite as they get ready for a long trip of their own.

And it is in the process of their migration that they might find themselves delayed in a mist net — think a nearly invisible volleyball net — at Washington College's Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory just outside Crumpton. They will be carefully pulled from the delicate netting by the hands of trained researchers, placed in a mesh bag and taken to a rustic cabin, where they will be measured, banded and set free.





Jim Gruber is the banding director. Having grown up in Chestertown, he started banding birds in the mid-1970s in Tolchester. In the mid-1990s his banding efforts moved to a farm called Narnia near Chestertown. Then, 20 years ago, the station moved to its current home at Chino Farms. Both properties were owned by Dr. Harry Sears.

Field Ecologist Maren Gimpel joined the team in 2006 after assisting with seasonal bird research in a number of different locations in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. She and her husband came to Chestertown for a summer research gig and were invited to remain on. They were due in Tobago though, but came back after that job ended.

Sears donated Chino Farms as a legacy gift to Washington College, which in 2011 took over the nonprofit organization previously established for the bird observatory. The site has become the college's River and Field Campus.



"One of the last recoveries we had, though, of a bird that we had banded was actually banded at Narnia. It was recovered in June," Gruber said in an interview over the summer. The bird was a grackle, at least 20 years old.

Last year, the Foreman's Branch team banded nearly 15,000 birds, along with capturing in its nets another 7,000 birds that were already banded. In the fall tally, the white-throated sparrow came out on top with 1,463 of them caught.

"White-throated sparrows we band more than anything pretty much every year. Every once in a while, song sparrow wins. But it's almost always one of the two. And you think, 'Oh it's another white-throated sparrow,' but it's still amazing to think how many there are and where they're going," Gimpel said.

The observatory notched 1,036 song sparrows in fall 2017 for second place. Maybe this will be their year.

The observatory's focus is on the spring and fall migration seasons.

Gimpel likened the migration seasons to the difference in population in Ocean City between winter and summer.

"So during the spring, you have this huge movement through — like beach traffic on Friday in the summer — of all these birds leaving South America and Central America and Mexico and moving up to their breeding grounds," Gimpel said. "Some of these birds are migrating past us, like the Baltimore oriole. They breed up into Canada. And in the fall it's even more birds, because hopefully each pair has created offspring."

So why are these birds making these trips? Why is the blackpoll warbler eating so much it's body weight goes from 10 grams to 24 grams, to the point that Gruber said the bird is squishy to the touch? Why does the godwit — a crow-sized shorebird — fly nonstop for 8,000 to 11,000 miles over the course of week to the point that, as Gimpel said, they begin metabolizing their organs and arrive nearly skeletal at their destination?



Gimpel said the current thinking among scientists is that these birds evolved in the tropics of Central and South America, land without changing seasons. She said some began moving north to see what was available. She spoke about the ample space, arboreal forest and associated insects for food that would have been present in Alaska after the glaciers receded.

"The idea is that it was to take advantage of more space and more food," Gimpel said.

During a tour this summer of Foreman's Branch, Gruber extricated a female Baltimore oriole from a net, her feathers darkly stained from the mulberries she was gorging on. She was so covered in juice that she looked more like she had been in a fight, than at an all-you-can-eat berry buffet.

Foreman's Branch is busy during the migration seasons. The team is logging birds. They note the age, either less than a year old or more than a year for birds not having been previously caught. They check gender, if they can tell it, which is not

always easy for species with males and females having the same color patterns. They measure wing size and body mass. All of it is inputted into a federal research system that scientists can access as part of other studies.

Gimpel said the process takes about a minute.

The nets are checked frequently when they are up, which is only about five hours a day. The team also watches the weather very closely. Birds are fine if they are upright in the rain, but that is not the position they usually end up when caught in a net.

"Working with wildlife, the first rule is that we are excruciatingly concerned with the welfare of the animals that we are studying," Gimpel said. "So we pay really close attention to make sure we are checking the nets on a regular basis and any kind of situation changes, we will close nets."

Gruber spoke about some of the changes he has seen at Foreman's Branch in its 20 years. Chino Farms was in row crop production when he first arrived. Sweet corn is no



longer grown there and the trees in the wooded areas have gotten bigger, leading some species to change their migration itinerary.

"Habitat has a lot to do with the presence or non-presence of certain species," Gruber said.

Also, in regards to habitat, Gruber said they are starting to see Kentucky warblers again at Foreman's Branch following an absence. Their numbers began dropping when trees were cut down near utility lines in the area about nine years ago.

"The Kentuckies must have really liked that spot because they disappeared from breeding in that area almost in a couple years. And now they're coming back, so we hope," Gruber said.

And it is not just habitat changes here, Gruber said. Cutting down of rain forests in the tropics plays a role in the birds migrating through the Eastern Shore, as does clear-cutting of trees for mining operations in Canada. S

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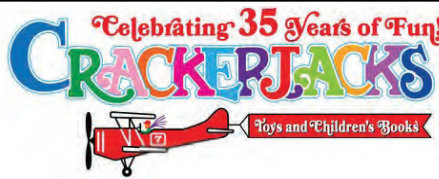
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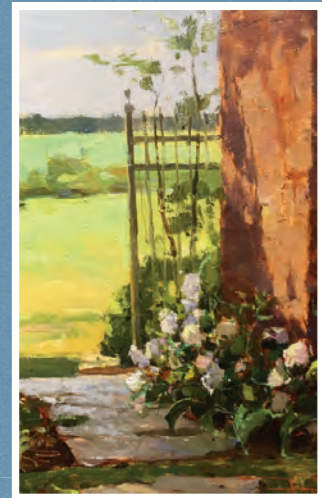
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By Jennifer Robin Musiol, C-RNP, Certified in Advanced Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

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*A bishop and a rabbi walk into a restaurant.
This may sound like the opening of a joke you have
heard, but it is the reality of friendship for two local men.*

Story by Amelia Blades Steward | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

One plays the marimba, drums, and the piano; the other is a former symphony orchestra executive and producer/host of an NPR syndicated classical music show. In the end, however, it was their intellectual curiosity and search for knowledge that 10 years ago formed the friendship between Anglican Bishop Joel Marcus Johnson, 72, and Rabbi Peter E. Hyman, 66, of Temple B'nai Israel. The two have remained the best of friends ever since.

"The timing was perfect," Johnson said of meeting Hyman. "I had lost my famous theologian in residence, and I didn't have anyone to talk to. I

discovered a true compatriot in study with Peter. He is one of the best-read and most comprehensive readers I have ever encountered. He goes deep into text."

After realizing they had a great deal in common, the two theologians began leading local seminars in ancient Near East history and literature, teaching through the lens of times when the texts were written. They have between 45 and 50 followers of their seminars, which have covered such topics as Genesis, Exodus, and the Psalms, and even one called "Current Topics, Ancient Voices." These have been offered at Scossa Restaurant, Chesapeake College,



Inn at 202 Dover, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and Temple B'nai Israel.

"Not everyone is comfortable with our point of view. We have many educated and well-read participants who energize our presentations. They are not threatened by ideas that are not cookie-cutter ideas," Hyman said.

"Bishop Joel is an intellectual, and I find his depth of knowledge about so many things to be remarkable – music, religion, literature, and he is also a great teacher," Hyman said.

Johnson is a first generation American; his mom was a Swede and his dad a Russian Jew. He was quarantined as a child because of childhood diseases. New books, new reading, and new ideas enveloped him and gave him a world perspective. He continues to read voraciously today. He completed undergraduate work in Chicago and seminary in England.

He arrived in Easton in 1991, and with the laity formed St. Andrew-the-Seafarer Chapel. The church soon found itself ministering to mission chapels of Hispanic residents in Talbot County and other communities on the Eastern Shore. This expansive work prompted the College of Bishops to create the Diocese of The Chesapeake, covering the Delmarva Peninsula. He was consecrated bishop in January 1997 in Christ Church, St. Michaels. It is telling that his consecration was attended by over 30 interfaith clergy, including Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. Johnson is co-founder and president emeritus of the Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center, former chairman of Talbot Association of Clergy and Laity, and former board member of the Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra.

Both men have had a role in reshaping our community through the Talbot Association of Clergy and Laity (TACL). Johnson, who was the first chairman of the Talbot County Conversation on Race, reflected on how Hyman brings diverse viewpoints together in Talbot County.

"Peter, by sheer force of perseverance,

has helped to reshape TACL into becoming a socially proactive organization," Hyman said. "This has tugged at the conscience and heart-strings of its members."

Hyman has been at Temple B'nai Israel since 2008. He completed his master's and doctorate degrees in divinity at Hebrew Union College of the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. He is an active member of the community, serving on the boards of the Easton YMCA, a presenter/instructor for the Institute of Adult Learning at Chesapeake College and Downtown Lunch and Learn, and a member of the Frederick Douglass Celebration Committee.

An Eagle Scout, he has been involved nationally as National Chairman of the Messengers of Peace Program and the National Jewish Chaplain, both for the Boy Scouts of America, as well as the National Chairman of the Jewish Committee on Scouting. He was honored for his work with the Boy Scouts of America when he was awarded the Silver Buffalo Award for distinguished service to youth. Locally, he was the recipient of 2011 TACL Award of Appreciation for Outstanding and Inspiring Interfaith Work in Talbot County and recipient of William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award in 2013.

Both men teach from what they call the "Johnson and Hyman" rules for engaging biblical text, one of which is, "Ancient ain't stupid . . . old does not mean unsophisticated." The rules are meant to illuminate the creativity, ingenuity, nuance, efficacy and majestic power of the biblical text and not intended to erode or destroy faith.

"We are fighting the wave in religion today. It can be in collision with what people are taught and what they believe," Hyman said. "People tell us they have never heard this approach until they have studied with us. It opens up dialogue and discussion."

"We both have a sense of humor in a world of the utterly ridiculous," said Johnson. "Each of us comes from different

Bishop Joel Marcus Johnson and Rabbi Peter E. Hyman are members of the Talbot Association of Clergy and Laity. Although the men's friendship is based in faith, they also share a love of food, books and music.



academic constraints. Peter is text driven and I come from a viewpoint of anthropology, psychology, and history. People often come in with the question: What is the purpose of my life? Humankind has been dealing with this issue since the beginning of time, but ancient thinkers delivered answers to difficult questions like that.”

Although their faiths form a basis for their friendship, the two friends enjoy sharing a love of food, books and music. They go to concerts together, cook, and share recipes.

“My wife Suzie says we are like an old married couple,” Johnson said. “We share intellectual togetherness and we are both alert to the issues in the world around us. Peter is the kind of friend I never imagined encountering in this stage

of my life. There is an intimacy in our friendship. We call each other in the middle of the night, talking books and ideas.”

“My gift from Joel is his friendship,” Hyman said. “I learn so much from him.”

The two have a few projects in their future. They are working together on a think tank in Easton. Since retiring as Bishop of The Chesapeake, Johnson has re-purposed his vocation, founding The Oaks of Mamre Library and Graduate Center in Easton. He serves as Chief Visionary Officer, and Hyman is on the Board of Advisors. The Oaks is a component project of the Mid-Shore Community Foundation with plans to soon go under the tent of a major university.

Another project the two are

working on aligns with Hyman’s fascination with the Greek gods since he was a child.

“Our project is looking at theology and religion as a phenomenon of human reality – the connected nature of all this,” Hyman said. “We are planning trips to Israel and Greece. It comes from the searching and questioning of being a Rabbi.”

As the two wrapped up their time together with me, Johnson pulled out a book and music CD to add to Hyman’s growing library in his new office in Temple B’nai Israel. The two bantered with one another.

“He knows more famous people than I do!” Hyman said.

Johnson retorted, “Peter is way cool.” **S**



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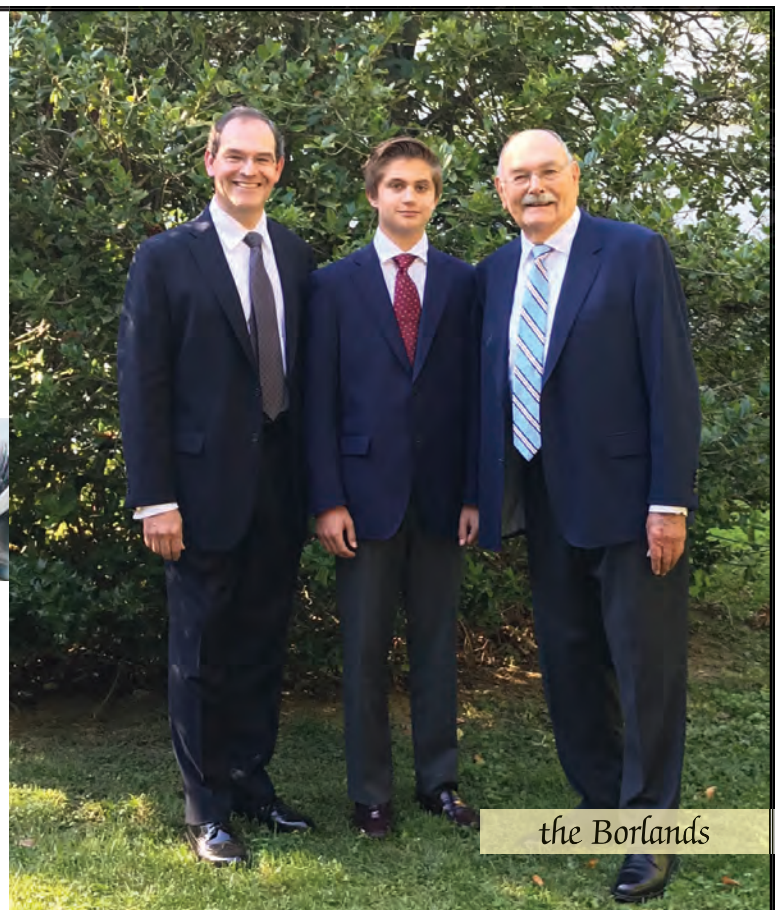
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*For complete details on how you could win 2 tickets to see the Capitals & Golden Knights play on Oct. 10th, please call or visit our office. *Expires 9/30/2018.*

