

SHORE

September/October 2022

MAGAZINE

FAMILY *farms*

Featuring generational farms, agritourism, mobile produce and more from across the region!

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EDITORS' NOTE

Welcome to the Shore, where your stories are told. This edition, we prepare for the harvest with features and profiles on the very farmers, gardeners, business-owners and more who take care of the land and the people and animals who occupy it.

What better way to celebrate our beautiful rural escape than with those who help make the Mid-Shore home? What you will find inside is exactly that — our neighbors who help make our region better than the rest.

For those who help enrich the earth with a green thumb or a heart for animals, we hope to enrich you through their stories. Just like a garden, Shore magazine started out as nothing more than a seed, an idea. Through proper care, it began to grow and now blossoms.

Inside these pages, you will get to connect with some of the Shore's finest and it may spark an idea or two for you. We want this publication to be a part of the community, just like the good people in our stories do with their bounty.

Legacy farms and fantastic personal tales alike are just a few page-turns away! But wait, there is more! Yes, we may be feeling the blistering heat and oppressive humidity now, yet our minds are already in autumn. Included in this issue are many area farms across the five counties that offer fall festival fun — we hope to see you there!

Thank you for picking up another edition of Shore magazine! We appreciate you and also appreciate your feedback. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your comments or story ideas. We love to hear from you!

So without further ado, let's grow together with this farm-fresh edition.



Eli Wohlenhaus



Jonathan Carter

— Jonathan and Eli

WHERE TO FIND SHORE?

For a detailed list on where you can find the latest issue of shore, head over to shoremnthly.com

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A Kent County Fall

PERFECT FOR MEMORIES



Photo contributed by:
Kent County Office of Tourism

Fall in Love with Kent County, MD!

Have you ever visited a place where you immediately felt welcome and just knew that you would come back again? Kent County, Maryland is just that place. As this scenic peninsula kisses the shorelines of the Chesapeake Bay and the historic Chester and Sassafras Rivers, it is a top destination for nature enthusiasts, artists, and music lovers. Many describe the shore of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries as breathtaking and relaxing, for there is something that touches the senses when water abounds.

Less than one hour from most points along the mid or lower Eastern Shore, Kent County is a perfect example of how a getaway destination can enable stress release from the body and mind. Rich with beautiful scenery and diverse activities, this waterfront haven offers visitors year-round experiences that showcase the depth and beauty of each season.

With fall upon us, Kent County invites visitors to explore the crisp, cool and refreshing season. A fall escape filled with



Photo by Chris Cerino

leaf peeping hikes, or a tranquil paddling adventure are the perfect components for your next getaway. Whether driving or cycling its two-lane roadways, you will discover calming landscapes of low, rolling farmland, dramatic sunsets, and rich heritage. Home to some of the most quaint and delightful towns (Chestertown, Rock Hall, Galena, Betterton, and Millington), you will be enthralled by exploring the historic architecture, enjoying visual and performing arts, savoring wines from local vineyards, sampling concoctions at the resident distillery or shopping along red-brick sidewalks.

Chestertown, one of the oldest mid-Atlantic ports of entry, rests on the banks of the Chester River. Chestertown has been designated an Arts & Entertainment District and is home to

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SUNDAY: FLATLAND DRIVE - SOMBARKIN' - THE SIMMONS FAMILY

the annual Chestertown Jazz Festival (September 9 – 10, 2022). This year's festival will be a celebration of the "Many Moods of New Orleans". Relish an eclectic mix of local musicians like Philip Dutton and the Alligators or Sylvia Frazier and the Anointed Vessels against the backdrop of the serene Chester River at Chestertown's premier waterfront park. You'll also have an opportunity to take some of Chestertown's finest art home with you from the Chestertown RiverArts Street Festival (September 11, 2022). Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Chestertown RiverArts Festival will feature regional and local artists' works at galleries and venues around town as well as engage the community in the creation of art with activities for all ages.

Rock Hall, also known as the "Pearl of the Chesapeake", is rich with maritime history and celebrations of its nautical bounty. In colonial times, Rock Hall, was the terminus

for a ferry that ran between the Eastern Shore and Annapolis, and today is notable for its many marinas and fine seafood restaurants. Each year, Rock Hall embraces its maritime heritage with FallFest (October 8, 2022), a celebration paying homage to the almighty oyster. Visitors will have an opportunity to savor oyster stew and fried oysters while browsing through dozens of artisan and craft booths, serenaded by a variety of live music performances.



Fall is full of adventure and family friendly events in Kent County. Chestertown welcomes the return of the HP Festival Weekend (October 14 – 15, 2022) celebrating the wonderful wizarding world of Harry Potter ©. Grab your wand, hop on your broom and frolic in the streets as the town transforms into well-known locations from the famed movies.



Photo by Mariya Filippova

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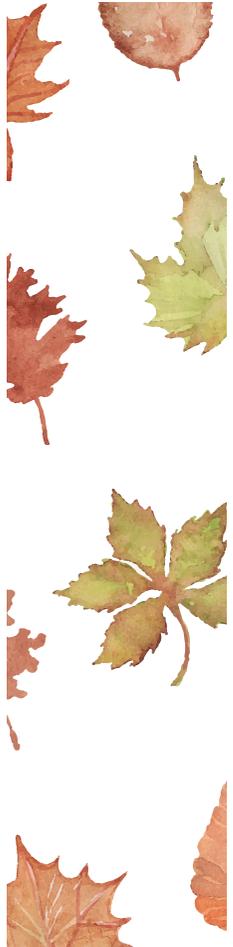
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Another popular Chestertown event not to be missed is Sultana Downrigging Festival (October 28 – 30, 2022), one of the largest tall ship gatherings in North America. The festival features a weekend full of Tall Ship sails, tours, lectures, exhibits, family activities, regional food and incredible live bluegrass music performances.

Whatever your adventure, there is much to do and see around this charming destination. Visit www.kentcounty.com/visitors to plan your getaway today.





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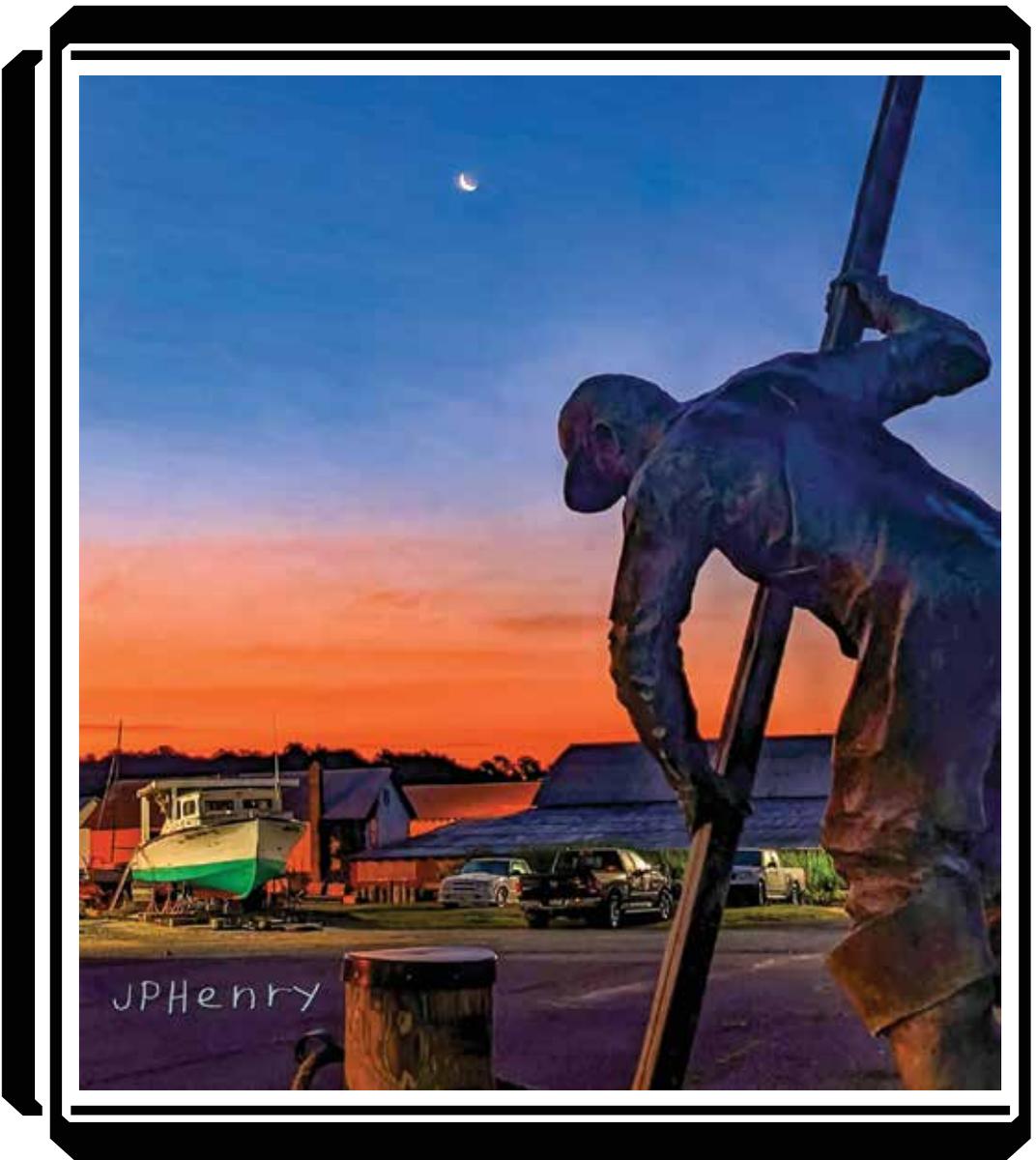
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Shore-met

Shore Gourmet Mobile Market connects farmers to food deserts on Mid-Shore

Story by Amelia Blades Steward | Photos courtesy of Shore Gourmet

When the Shore Gourmet “Sho Go” Mobile Market pulls into your neighborhood, you might think it is the ice cream truck. Although it has no recognizable jingle playing over the loudspeaker, its brightly colored vinyl wrap displaying fresh fruits and vegetables has an equal appeal to the young and the old who clamor to step inside to purchase a fragrant cantaloupe, peach, or some freshly cut lettuce.

Holly Foster, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Caroline County Public Schools (CCPS), oversees the Sho Go

bus. Her abundant energy is contagious as she shares the benefits of healthy eating with residents in Caroline and Talbot counties. Four days a week, between Monday and Thursday, the bus provides milk, eggs, soups, frozen meals for one, ready-to-eat meals and fresh produce in neighborhoods where seniors, families and young children may have limited access to farmers’ markets due to rural transportation barriers.

The bus stops currently include the Caroline County Health Department/Senior Center/Adult Daycare



Several organizations are partnering with the program to introduce children to healthy eating. The University of Maryland Extension Service donated 50,000 Sylvia's Spinach books to area elementary schools and a bookmark with the Shogo Mobile Bus schedule for this past summer.

and Martinak State Park in Denton, Heritage Court in the Wesleyan Retirement Community in Denton, the Judy Center and Federalburg Elementary School Camp in Federalburg, the Greensboro Elementary School Camp, Marydel Park, St. Mark's Village and Parkview in Easton, as well as several housing developments in food insecure neighborhoods. In the future, the bus hopes to service residents of Dorchester County.

"For some of these people, we are the highlight of their week and that is precious. You develop great friendships and feel connected to your community by offering something so good and fun. Whether it is offering a friendly smile or just a listening ear — people just want to be seen and heard," states Foster, who joined Shore Gourmet's team five years ago

after being a dairy farmer and operating a creamery.

The mobile market, however, is the brainchild of Beth Brewster, Supervisor of Food Services at Caroline County Public Schools, who is working with Shore Gourmet, Inc. and the Caroline County Technology Center (CCTC) Culinary Program to lead a proactive approach at the grassroots level to make healthy food more accessible. Since 2014, Caroline County Technology Center (CCTC) Culinary Program has been operating in the renovated historic Caroline Schoolhouse offering academics and practicums to 10th and 11th-grade students from North Caroline High School and Colonel Richardson High School. During their two semesters, students learn the basics of the culinary industry through catering and working in

Shore Gourmet Market, including prepping meals for the Sho Go bus.

The Maryland Department of Transportation donated the bus to Caroline County Public Schools and it was retrofitted inside to look like a produce stand. It also has a refrigerator and freezer with a generator to store frozen meals for one and soups made by the CCTC students. Produce offered on the bus includes lettuces, tomatoes, avocados, zucchini, squash, eggplant, cabbage, kale, asparagus, carrots, celery, onions, red and white potatoes, apples, oranges, mandarins, bananas, grapes, and other seasonal vegetables and fruits. Residents can use senior vouchers, debit/credit cards, or cash to purchase items on the bus. The bus is currently working on getting the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) vouchers and Supplemental Nutrition

Assistance Program (SNAP) program vouchers approved as well.

"We believe that everyone deserves access to fresh foods, regardless of your budget or where you live," said Foster.

Several organizations are partnering with the program to introduce children to healthy eating. The University of Maryland Extension Service donated 50,000 Sylvia's Spinach books to area elementary schools and a bookmark with the Shogo Mobile Bus schedule for this past summer. The bus also offers recipes categorized by the seasons which encourages people to try new items as well.

The Sho Go Bus is also partnering with Choptank Community Health System (CCHS) and the Avalon Foundation to provide \$5 produce vouchers to students enrolled in Choptank Health's School-Based Health Centers in Caroline and Talbot counties to shop on the bus for fresh fruits and vegetables. The project, which is funded through a grant

through the School-Based Health Center Food Access Learning Network and Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign, also provides wellness incentives for CCHS employees to purchase from the bus.

"I have really enjoyed working with the kids later in the new produce prescription voucher program because you can see how excited they are and how they want to try new things," Foster added. "We get to talk with all of them about the foods and they are learning how to shop. They can pick anything they want but they are encouraged to try something new."

The bus also offers recipes categorized by the seasons which encourages people to try new items as well.

"Beth started our efforts to promote healthy eating by buying fresh produce from local farmers to be processed and frozen for use in the school cafeterias throughout the year. It has now grown into working with seniors and children at the same time on the same day through the mobile market."



Among the local farmers participating in Shore Gourmet's programs include Harris Farms, Red Acres Farm, Clayton Farms, and T.J. Farms, as well as Walmart for out-of-season products.

Bryan Williams with Red Acres Farm and Red Acres Hydroponics has been in business for eight years providing lettuces with no pesticides or preservatives to family-owned stores, markets, produce stands, restaurants, and farmers' markets in the region. He has provided Caroline County Public Schools and Shore Gourmet with hydroponic lettuces, microgreens and herbs for five years. Red Acres Farm's lettuces are used in the school salad bars throughout the county weekly during the school year and Shore Gourmet uses the produce in their catering and on the Sho Go bus.

"I am impressed by the number of people involved in getting these projects going. It has been top-notch from day one and we have a great working relationship. It makes us feel good that the young people have fresh produce accessible to them now," Williams commented.

William also participates in a unique project providing lettuce seedlings from the farm for hydroponic lettuce towers in each of the schools in the county, introducing students to growing the produce that they later get to eat.

Julie and Steve Harris of Harris Farms, a seventh-generation farm in Preston, have also supported Brewster's efforts. Along with its farm stands in Hurlock and Easton, the farm provides produce to farmers' markets in Easton, Cambridge and Centreville. Julie is also on the board of Chesapeake Culinary Center and for 12 years has provided fresh produce for the CCPS food program. She has been taking senior vouchers for produce over the past five years at the Denton and Federalsburg Senior Centers and is now involved with the Sho Go bus efforts at these locations.

"It is an awesome idea to reach community members who do not have transportation to buy produce," Julie said. "Our rural community is rich in food. It is hard to believe we cannot access it better."

"Beth Brewster is always wanting to help the farming community and to

connect people to healthy food. These programs help the local farmer while helping others as well — it gets food to where it needs to go. It is also good to see the food get used and not wasted."

According to Roxanne Wolf, Program Director of Shore Gourmet, local foods are more nutritious and safer.

"The pandemic showed us that rural Maryland is not sustainable for providing local food because we have an aggregation and storage issue," Wolf said. "Our Sho Go bus is a hot ticket in Maryland right now. We showcased our bus on Maryland Day in

“ I feel like I am right where I am supposed to be, and I love what I do”

the spring of 2022 so we could be a model for other counties in Maryland. The need is so great on the Mid-Shore to get fresh food to people of all ages that we are trying to get a second bus."

"I feel like I am right where I am supposed to be, and I love what I do," Foster added. "When it comes to staying healthy, I love helping the younger and the older generation make healthier choices."

Support for the Sho Go bus comes from Share Our Strengths No Kid Hungry Campaign, Rural Maryland Council, Food for Learning, Caroline Foundation, CCPS Food Services, Mid-Shore Community Foundation, Caroline Human Services Council, and Mid-Shore Regional Council.

For further information on the Sho Go bus schedule, visit Shogomobile.com or call 410-924-0463 or contact Holly Foster at holly.sbogo@gmail.com. For information on Shore Gourmet, visit shoregourmetmarket.com or call 410-479-2452. 📞

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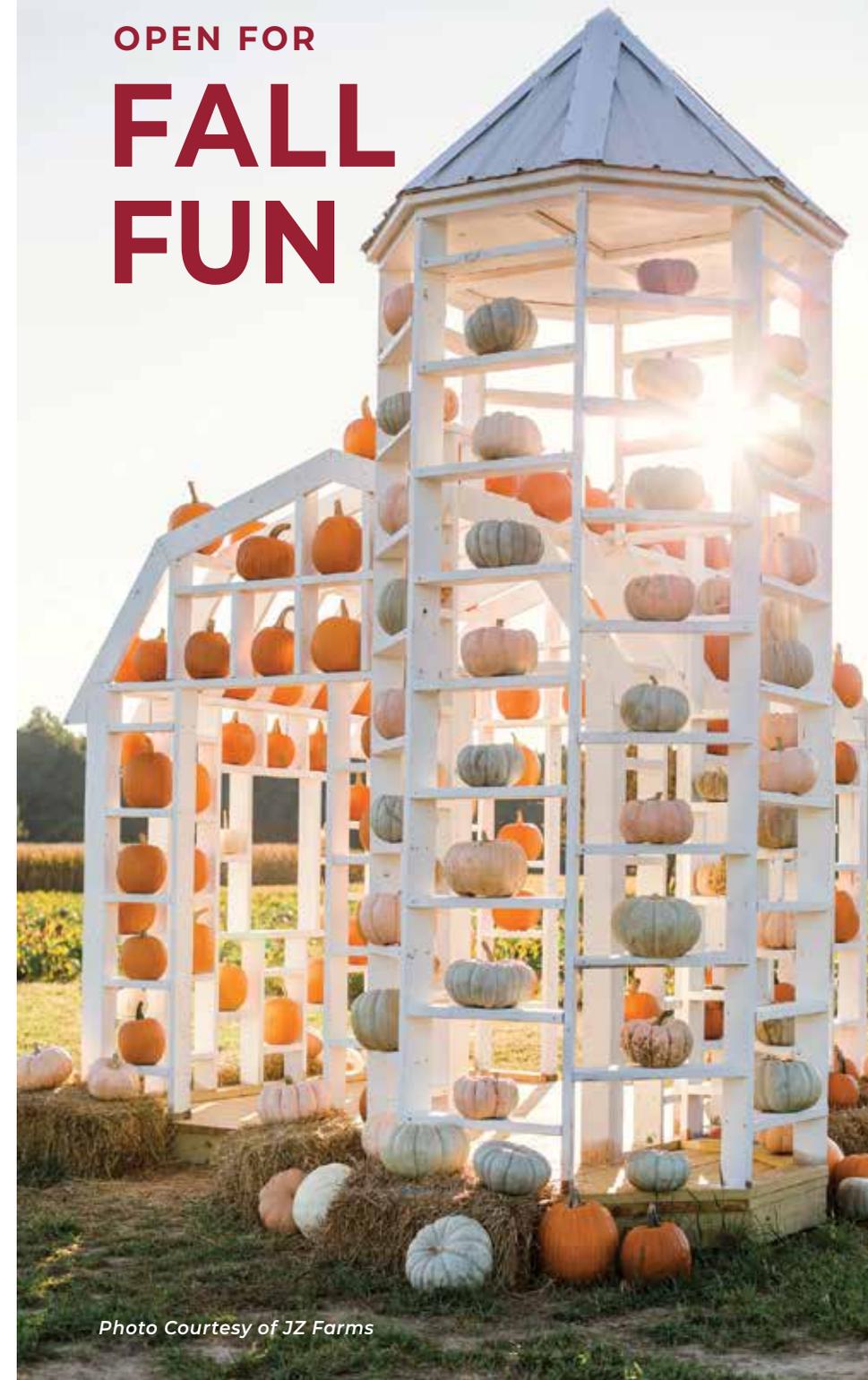


Photo Courtesy of JZ Farms

Celebrate Fall in Caroline County, MD! From autumn festivals and pumpkin picking to concerts in the park and guided hikes, there's something for everyone! Experience the 10-acre corn maze at JZ Farms' Fall Fest starting September 15, meet the alpacas at Outstanding Dreams Farm's Alpaca Festival September 17 & 18, or enjoy the Beer Garden at Adkins Arboretum on October 22. See all of these events – and more – at VisitCaroline.org. We're open for you, if you're

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ATMOSPHERE



PASSION & PRODUCE

A hot afternoon with Cleo Braver, Cottingham Farm

Story and Photos by Tracey F. Johns

“Come on in, it’s too hot for the market to be outside today,” said Cleo Braver upon my arrival to the small, air-conditioned market room inside Cottingham Farm’s barn. A gaggle of chickens, turkey, geese and more had already greeted me on this hot August day, with an abundance of garlic hanging overhead as I walked inside to the cooler air.

Cottingham Farm provides certified organic heirloom vegetables and herbs, and organic-fed meats — all purposefully grown and raised on the Farm’s 156

acres, situated on the banks of Goldsborough Creek in Talbot County.

The ‘too hot’ sentiment speaks volumes to the driving force that keeps Braver passionate and hopeful about having more people ‘vote with their forks’ by eating cleaner, not just with produce, but all foods — part of why the farm is now offering pastured, heritage, strictly organic-fed chicken, turkey, pork and more.

I arrived just as the Tuesday market at the farm opened. The interview, it turns out, was more of an observation



“In this region surrounded by farms and farmland, the produce we eat travels an average of 1,500 miles away. Cottingham Farm’s goal is to make an impact in changing that.”



of Braver and her interactions with the loyal customers that filtered in over the next few hours.

She speaks with exuberance as each person entering the market is offered a hybrid cherry tomato that came from one of the passive solar high tunnels. These little lovelies were still warmed by the soil and huge, each bursting with flavor as we tipped our heads back to take in all the deliciousness. Eggs from organic-fed chickens were a big draw, along with half and whole organic chickens, and certified organic cabbage, garlic and more.

Her passion is palpable regarding no chemicals and organically fed meat and grown produce as she speaks to her loyal customers about how eating clean needs to go beyond organic produce to include how the meat we eat lived, as well as what it ate while being raised.

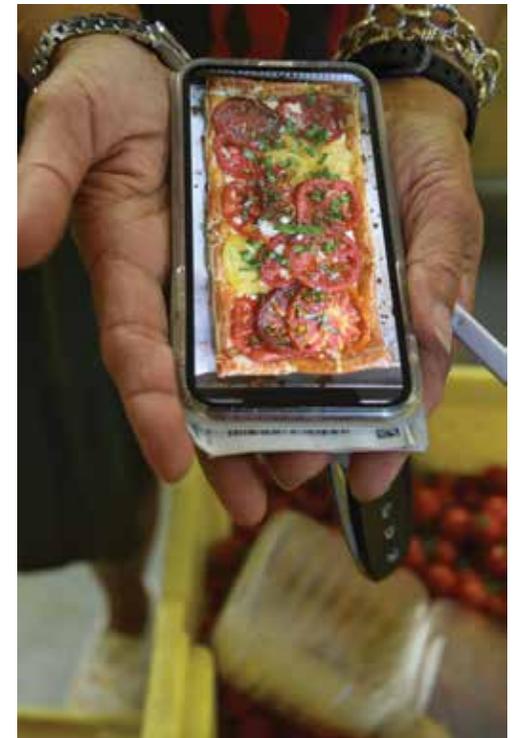
Braver’s case-making skills are on point and convincing, and likely by-products of her first career serving as an environmentalist attorney.

“The current food supply system in Maryland, as in much of the country, is broken,” says Braver. “Low-value, synthetic fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide-heavy corn and soy are the predominant crops on the Eastern Shore and are designed to be fed to confined animal feed operations (CAFOs), or utilized as biofuel.

“So, in this region surrounded by farms and farmland, the produce we eat travels an average of 1,500 miles away. Cottingham Farm’s goal is to make an impact in changing that.”

Braver says there’s a rich agrarian history and reputation in our community, and that we don’t need to import our produce when we can grow nutritiously dense, healthy produce here. That’s why she grows produce and raises animals using organic methods and feed that leverages heirloom varieties, with no synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides.

“We wanted cleaner agriculture on our own farm, and realized we would have to do it ourselves,” Braver says.



“That’s how I became a farmer. Not willingly, and with a very steep learning curve. But I wanted to marry my environmental advocacy with my farming practices. As landowners, we didn’t want to continue to be part of the problem.”

I filled up my bag with heirloom tomatoes, eggplant, garlic and more before asking one departing question of Braver to a brief lull in customers still shopping the market. I wanted to know where she found her joy.

“I’m grateful to have proven myself as an environmental lawyer, to be blessed with a man I adore for more than 30 years and to be able to sneak in this different life,” says Braver. “My joy comes from knowing I’m using every breath to move

the needle in reversing climate change through my advocacy and dedication.

“If we can all vote with our forks by eating clean and with intention,” she says, “then we’ll have a chance to make big changes even without changes in policy and practices beyond our organic farm. Each of us has that power as individuals.”

Cottingham Farm is open year-round during select hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and offers Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Other locations to purchase from Cottingham Farm include the Easton and St. Michaels Farmers Markets, with numerous local restaurants also sourcing ingredients from Cottingham Farm.

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PROFILES

FROM COWS TO KANGAROOS

Not your average veterinarian practice

Story by Debra R. Messick | Photos courtesy of Steve Harris

When thinking about animal doctors, we commonly conjure images of heroes helping keep dogs, cats, and other home pets healthy and happy.

But what about the countless other critters — cows, horses, and sheep, picturesquely dotting nearby country pastures? Who answers the call when they need care?

How about a wayfaring water buffalo gifted to a local farm?

Just as our scenic Eastern Shore’s rural charms could rival England’s Yorkshire Dales,

it also boasts several James Herriot-like practitioners carrying on the tradition of treating all creatures, great as well as small.

While the numbers of those serving larger animals have steadily dwindled, Dr. Steve Harris, owner of Easton’s MidShore Veterinary Service, thrives on doing his part to help keep the time-honored tradition going.

While admitting to not being sure of the exact definition of a calling, without hesitation, Harris describes his chosen vocation as “helping make me whole.”

Growing up in Montgomery County where



many neighbors kept horses, from an early age Harris was drawn to anything having to do with hay and stalls, he recalled. His FBI agent dad would regularly bring the family to spend happy weekends crabbing and fishing in Queen Anne’s County.

By the end of high school and during college, Harris got a feel for his future profession working with renowned Olney veterinarian Harold “Doc” Holbrook. Impressed with his abilities, several years later Holbrook hired Harris for a position over a 3rd-year veterinary student.

With a B.S. degree in animal science from the University of Maryland, where he met his wife Lynne, Harris advanced to Tufts University, earning his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine.

In 1994, he opened his Dutchman’s Lane practice to patients running the gamut from pocket pets to exotics, also offering large animal ‘house’ calls.

Two years ago, the thriving operation moved to a larger facility across the street, enabling some convenient drive-in treatment for trailered horses, goats, and even a chicken.

“Sometimes it’s quicker for them to get here than it is for us to get out to where they are,” stated longtime practice manager Amber Tatman. There are also more tools at hand to treat the animals there, and it’s often less costly for clients, Harris added.

But he and Dr. Olivia Holden still devote up to “two good days” traveling to farms from north of Centerville to Hebron, with stops on Kent and



Tilghman Islands, seeing regular clients including “cows, sheep, and the occasional pig,” Harris noted.

As a local youngster, Holden had helped transport her own family’s miniature horse to Harris for treatment, anxiously waiting by the animal’s side. In 2016, she joined MidShore as a veterinary assistant to gain experience while earning her B.S. degree from Virginia’s Randolph College, later graduating from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2021.

Representing the growing ranks of female vets, Harris is especially glad she’s chosen to join those opting to focus on larger animal care.

According to Harris, only 6 percent of veterinary school graduates currently choose to do so initially, with just 3 percent continuing to work in the field.

“While much of the work involves

routine vaccinations and checkups, plus treatment of relatively minor ailments like colic, it comes with its own set of challenges such as learning to read each animal and “how to not get hurt” that takes years of experience to master,” Harris added. “In that way, it’s really kind of an older person’s game,” he mentioned.

It also means making tough calls, as Harris did with a goat named Tillie, afflicted with a football-sized fibrous tumor engulfing her entire uterus, and very long odds to survive its surgical removal.

Unwilling to seal Tillie’s fate by doing nothing, Harris succeeded in removing her uterus on Good Friday. But when Easter Sunday arrived, and she still hadn’t managed to urinate, Lynne Harris mentioned the goat’s dire plight to her St. Mark’s Sunday School class. It may have been a pure coincidence when her husband was

paged during the church service with the eagerly awaiting news that Tillie had finally tinkled!

Several years back Harris attended to a bovine about to deliver at the Messix farm in Queen Anne’s County. He recalls reaching in and readily bringing forth a first calf, then reaching in once more to find the second. Knowing that two was usually the limit with this type of cow, Harris nevertheless acceded to the anxious pleas of Messix’s young daughter Megan, who felt there still might be one more baby. Sure enough, after one more tug, the final triplet arrived!

Diane Mielke of Workhorse Farm, a haven for domestic and exotic animals in Denton referred to Harris as a “godsend,” saying, “I truly don’t know what we would have done without him” during the 15 years he’s helped take care of the unique

menagerie she and her late husband Nick delighted in acquiring.

Harris had originally been the couple’s regular horse and cow practitioner. After a friend unexpectedly presented them with a water buffalo, the collection expanded to include zebras, a South American capybara, the world’s largest rodent, emus, wallabies, and more.

Harris recently helped set one of the eight resident kangaroos’ arm in a cast, while her joey nestled within her pouch. Mielke also mentioned that he had gelded several camels, stitched up an ostrich, and worked with a baby emu whose legs were splayed, none of which he had ever previously encountered, but which he didn’t hesitate to tackle. Asked if she’d characterize him as someone who liked a challenge, Mielke laughed heartily and responded, “I’d say that’s an understatement!”

The U.S. Secret Service might agree. When the agents and their canine assistants were assigned to attend to security at an Aspen Institute conference at Wye Mills, one of the dogs became injured after getting a paw stuck in a field culvert. Harris answered the middle of the night call, driving to the site and successfully rescuing the frightened snarling animal, who required surgery. After attempting to treat the dog in a makeshift barn operating station near Aspen, Harris convinced agents to transport the patient back to his clinic. His truck turned into an ambulance which received a Secret Service escort en route — with two black sedans in front and two behind.

Among his most massive animal encounters are those closest to home with his own herd at Wright’s Mill Red Angus Farm in Trappe, where they partake of rotational grazing on pasture from April through November.

Begun as a college project, the ongoing care of what’s grown to 50



to 60 head of cattle isn’t something he considers work, but a satisfying outlet he finds relaxing.

After putting out fires and treating the changing always-changing cast of animal patients all day long, Harris actually welcomes the more steady flow of recurring “groundhog day” chores on his home farm. He also admits to enjoying calving season the most because, “I love the babies!”

Harris is also up for the challenges involved in staying on top of the latest high-tech breeding procedures, such as computerized genetics testing and digitized matchmaking aimed at producing the most desirable offspring.

In addition to staying more than busy with his practice and farm, Harris has made time to tackle even more projects relating to animal welfare. Twenty years ago, he developed and patented a custom flavor-infused animal medication formula, Flavor x. “For pocket pets, especially, it’s ‘the bomb,’” Harris added.

After 30-plus years of dedicated animal doctoring, some might find it time to wind down and begin taking it easy. Harris acknowledged that the encroaching years now encourage a 9 or 10 p.m. bedtime. At the same time, he finds what he does rejuvenating and isn’t looking to stop anytime soon.

Helping him hang in and stay in his chosen course is a staff whose dedication, expertise and caring he admires, and he considers them family.

This August, with Olivia Holden willing and able to relieve his large animal duties briefly, the Harris were finally able to schedule some downtime away from the constant call of duty, yet animals were sure to be involved in their own travel adventure — a two-week trip to Alaska where a trove of wildlife wonders awaits them.

For more information, call 410-820-9229 or visit midshoreveterinaryservice.vetstreet.com.



FIVE Generations

Since 1900, five generations of the Mason family have owned the land that makes up Mason’s Heritage and Mason Farms Produce. Located on Ruthsburg Road in Queen Anne the home farm is approximately 550 tillable acres. Approximately 350 are owned by Bill Mason; in 2022 it was recognized as a century farm by Governor Larry Hogan.

Story by Niambi Davis | Photos by Kate Mason Kraszewski

A century farm is land continually owned by one family for 100 years or more. “Generational heritage means a great deal,” Bill Mason said. His daughter Kate is the fifth generation to actively farm this land, along with her husband Steve Kraszewski. Their son Will says he’d like to be the sixth.

Bill leases the other approximately 200 acres from his siblings, along with three other farms, making 900 acres the total of land he works. Mason’s Heritage is primarily a certified organic grain operation

with crops of corn, soybean and barley.

For Mason Farms Produce the family grows five acres of fresh produce including corn, tomatoes, squash, broccoli, cauliflower and kale. Mason Farms Produce also carries beef from Steve’s family farm in upstate New York as well as pork, lamb, chicken eggs, milk, yogurt, ice cream jellies, teas, and spices among other locally sourced items. Their farm market is the only place where Mason Farms Produce can be purchased.

In 2005, the family decided that “a new direction was in order,” Bill said. “One that

would take into consideration becoming more environmentally friendly and keeping up with the trend towards organic produce. We wanted to use less conventional chemicals and maintain our sustainability.”

“It’s a three-year process to certification,” he explained. “One in which crops are planted as usual, but no fertilizer or conventional chemicals are used.”

All products must be approved by the Food and Drug Administration after which a yearly inspection takes place. Bill’s father describes it as “farming like we did when I was a boy.”

Kate grew up working at Mason Produce, the market began by her parents in 1988. For a while, she considered a career in photojournalism. After two years at Ithaca College in New York, she decided she wanted to return to the farm. Kate transferred to Cornell (where she met Steve) to study agriculture and earned both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

Back in Maryland, she went to work for the state’s Department of Agriculture, and for four years managed Maryland’s Best, the state’s branding program. Kate put in four 10-hour days at MDA and worked the produce market from Friday to Sunday. “After four years my parents were ready to turn the produce market over to me and it was then I moved back to the farm full-time.

“They were happy and proud,” she recalled. “That’s how I’d feel if one of my children decided to be a part of this as well.”

For lovers of fresh farm produce, the season begins in late spring and ends at harvest time. For farmers, however, there is no end; when one season is over another begins — not only outside in the field, but inside at a desk, poring over seed catalogs and spreadsheets, or wherever good old-fashioned brainstorming takes place.

“Each season is an opportunity



to learn something new and then be able to apply that lesson in the following season,” Steve said.

“To get ready for the season takes a lot of preparation,” Kate explained. “We’re planting seeds, getting the gardens and high tunnels ready, and pruning plants as they grow.”

Away from the field, she spends a lot of time analyzing the previous years’ records.

“Fieldwork on the grain farm begins in early April,” Steve said. “It ramps up once May arrives and then it’s ‘game on’ until harvest.”

Bill’s daily version of “game on” begins with planning the night before, executing the plan at sunrise,

and dealing with labor and equipment breakdowns, “all of which”, he said, “contribute to a day of wondering why you do this and loving it at the same time.”

For Kate, when the produce market is open, her day starts just after dawn. Kate’s July 16 Facebook post is the best visual and verbal description of how each one begins.

“Here comes Steve,” she wrote under the misty, early morning photo of her husband in the field. “For 25 years my father picked every ear of corn we sold, every morning by himself by hand. And for the past decade, Steve has done the same.”

Kate herself is out in the field

shortly after, often with the help of a couple of high-school kids, to pick additional produce and get the market ready for the day. For items they don’t grow on their own land Kate travels to other farms to obtain items for sale at Mason Farms Produce.

Cheryl Chiccone of Centreville is one of Mason’s many loyal, frequent customers.

“Mason’s offers quality produce grown by a local farming family,” said Cheryl. “The kindness of owners and staff makes for a weekly excursion I look forward to, and miss terribly when they close for the season.”

Or, as another simply states: “You guys are the best!”

“We’re incredibly grateful to have such amazing customers,” Kate said. “So many of them know me from when I was a kid. These same people watched me go off to college, get married, and have children of my own. It makes you happy to know how appreciative they are of our family, the care we give our crops, the quality of our products and what we stand for.”

Days when the market is closed, there’s time to catch up on home chores, but often, the garden calls. Soon after they’re immersed in everything from mowing to pruning

tomatoes to tilling the garden. Some days after the produce stand closes at 6, they still find the time to glean produce for the Maryland Food Bank. And because Steve works full-time with Bill, there are still summer days when he’s on the tractor.

In the fall attention turns to harvest, which keeps them busy until late November. Additionally, although the market is closed, they continue to grow produce for donation to the Maryland Food Bank. By then it’s time to develop a plan for the following season.

The most challenging aspect of farm life for Kate is balancing time.

“There is always work to do, and



some days we just can't catch up," she said. "But at the end of the day, we're doing what we love and providing for our family."

For Bill, it's caring for a multi-generational business and doing something you truly love while competing with Mother Nature, a force over whom you have no control.

Aways, however, on the other side of the challenge is joy. When Bill watched his grandson drive a tractor for the first time, on his own, he realized that he just might be watching the next generation to farm the land. Kate recalls her wedding on the farm.

"Steve and I got married here, in the grass acre between my parents' house and my grandparents' house," Kate said. "It was good to celebrate our marriage and share this place we love with all of our family and friends. And my parents got married on the farm, too! We're fortunate to do what we love with the people we love. It's as simple as that." 





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WAYFARING



Farm-fresh *fall fun!*

Featuring family-friendly farms to find for fall fun across the Shore

By Tracey F. Johns

EMILY'S PRODUCE | CAMBRIDGE

Emily's Produce on Church Creek Rd. is one of the Mid-Shore's most perfect destinations for families looking to connect with agriculture and local farms in ways that make memories that last a lifetime.

Emily's is not-to-miss for experiencing a great corn maze plus hayrides, pumpkin-picking, children's activities, fall flowers and produce, as well as lots of photo-op-worthy backgrounds to memorialize your day.

Emily's Produce's five-acre corn maze includes a wild west theme, with a barn and horse design part of the maze. Plenty of seating is available near the food truck and silo bar, where you can enjoy freshly made eats and a selection of locally crafted beer, wine, and mead available to take home or enjoy onsite.

A covered pavilion is great for groups, or guests simply wanting to sit down under cover, enjoy the ambiance, and relax. Next to the market is a small area with farm animals, and a sunflower patch that's in bloom late summer and fall, plus comfort stations and plenty of parking.

Children enjoy a Halloween parade each October, which includes contests for costumes and pumpkin carvings. Adults enjoy shopping the market for fresh flowers and produce grown on the family-run farm, plus locally sourced meats, cheeses, crab meat and more.

Ticketed special events include Sipping in the Stalks, Hops in the Crops, Fresh-Cut Flower Happy Hours and more — perfect for small and private groups celebrating family reunions, bridal and bachelor parties, girls' night outs or weekends and much more.

"People come from all over the Eastern Shore and seaboard to enjoy our farm-fresh connection with nature, and to especially enjoy the bounties of our farm," said Kelly Jackson, who runs the farm with daughter Emily, son Kyle, and husband Paul, who is a sixth-generation Dorchester County native and grain farmer. The Jackson family currently farms 500 acres growing corn, wheat, soybeans and more.

Don't forget to grab some fresh apple cider while you're there and be sure to look online ahead of time for any special events, menus or activities for the day of your trip.



Photos courtesy of Emily's Produce



EMILY'S PRODUCE
 2214 Church Creek Rd.
 Cambridge, Md. 21613
 443-521-0789
 emilysproduce@gmail.com
 www.emilysproduce.com

JZ FARMS | FEDERALSBURG

JZ Farms brings fun to the entire family with a spectacular 10-acre corn maze, a U-pick pumpkin patch, and more than 20 other family activities perfect for fall. They also host a two-week Winterfest in December, discounted tickets, and more on their website.

JZ FARMS

6526 Dion Rd. Federalsburg, Md. 21632
443-786-7183
jz farms21@gmail.com
www.jz-farms.com

Fall Fest hours, Thurs.- Sun., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sept. 15 - Oct. 30
Winterfest hours, Fri. - Sat., 11 a.m. — 8 p.m., Dec. 2 - Dec. 17

Photos courtesy of Caroline County Tourism



Photos courtesy of Caroline County Tourism



OUTSTANDING DREAMS FARM | PRESTON

Outstanding Dreams Farm's 14th Alpaca Festival takes place Sept. 17-18 and features alpacas — of course — along with family-friendly craft vendors, live music, pony rides by The Little Farm, Belly Bustin Grill food truck, face painting, an Alpaca Barrel Train Ride, fiber arts demonstrations, and more.

www.outstandingdreamsfarm.com

OUTSTANDING DREAMS FARM

24480 Pinetown Rd.
Preston, Md. 21655
410-829-4492, or 410-829-2012
pvliske@OutstandingDreamsFarm.com
www.outstandingdreamsfarm.com
Farm & Retail Shop hours, Wed. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tours by appointment



CROW VINEYARD & WINERY | KENNEDYVILLE

Crow Vineyards offers adults a great way to connect with the land, with seating for up to 45 people overlooking the vineyards, tours offered on demand, and a year-round list of special events and occasions, including a Sept. 4 & Sept. 18 Grape Stomp. You can even spend the day volunteering to pick grapes, eat a delicious lunch, and enjoy the outdoors.



Photos courtesy of Crow Vineyard



CROW VINEYARD & WINERY, LLC

12441 Vansants Corner Rd.
Kennedyville, Md. 21645
302-304-0551
www.crowvineyardandwinery.com

Open daily year-round 12-5 p.m. (except holidays)



Photos courtesy of Kent County Tourism



LOCKBRIAR FARMS | CHESTERTOWN

Lockbriar Farms provided plenty of U-Pick fun, plus farm-made ice cream, outdoor adventure, and more.

LOCKBRIAR FARMS

10051 Worton Rd.
Chestertown, Md. 21620
410-778-9112
info@lockbriarfarms.com
www.lockbriarfarms.com

Open weekdays 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.,
weekends 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., holidays, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

PATRIOT ACRES FARM BREWERY | SUDLERSVILLE

Patriot Acres Farm Brewery is planning a corn maze and plenty of other fall activities, with updates on their webpage.

PATRIOT ACRES FARM BREWING COMPANY

1621 Millington Rd.
Sudlersville, Md. 21668
410-708-5424
patriotacresfarmbrew@gmail.com
www.patriotacresfarmbrewery.com

Taproom hours Thurs. 4-8 p.m., Fri. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 12-6 p.m.
Hours are subject to change based on inclement weather



Photo by Shawna Truitt



Photo by Jack Rodgers



APG Chesapeake File Photo



FAMILY AFFAIR FARM | EASTON

Family Affair Farm offers u-pick pumpkins, a field of fun ideal for children ages 7 and under, and a 4-acre interactive corn maze. They host a flashlight maze Fri. and Sat. nights from 6:30-9:30 p.m., a fall festival on Sat., Oct. 8, and a Halloween party on the last weekend in October.

FAMILY AFFAIR FARM

30091 Rabbit Hill Rd.
Easton, Md. 21601
410-310-1331, or 717-682-4857
familyaffairfarm@gmail.com
www.familyaffairfarm.wixsite.com/familyaffairfarm

Open weekends, mid-Sept. through Oct. 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., select Fri. & Sat. nights, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.



Photos courtesy of Family Affair Farm





COUNCELL FARMS | CORDOVA

Councill's family farm offers a variety of pick-your-own pumpkins, and a Field of Fun with more than 25 activities for families—including a corn maze, jumping pillow, combine slide, and more. Pick up some of fall's seasonal bounty in produce and decorations while sipping some fresh apple cider or enjoying a dip of Vanderwende's ice cream.



COUNCELL FARMS

11773 Old Skipton Rd.
Cordova, Md.
410-822-8213
councellfarms@gmail.com
www.councellfarms.com

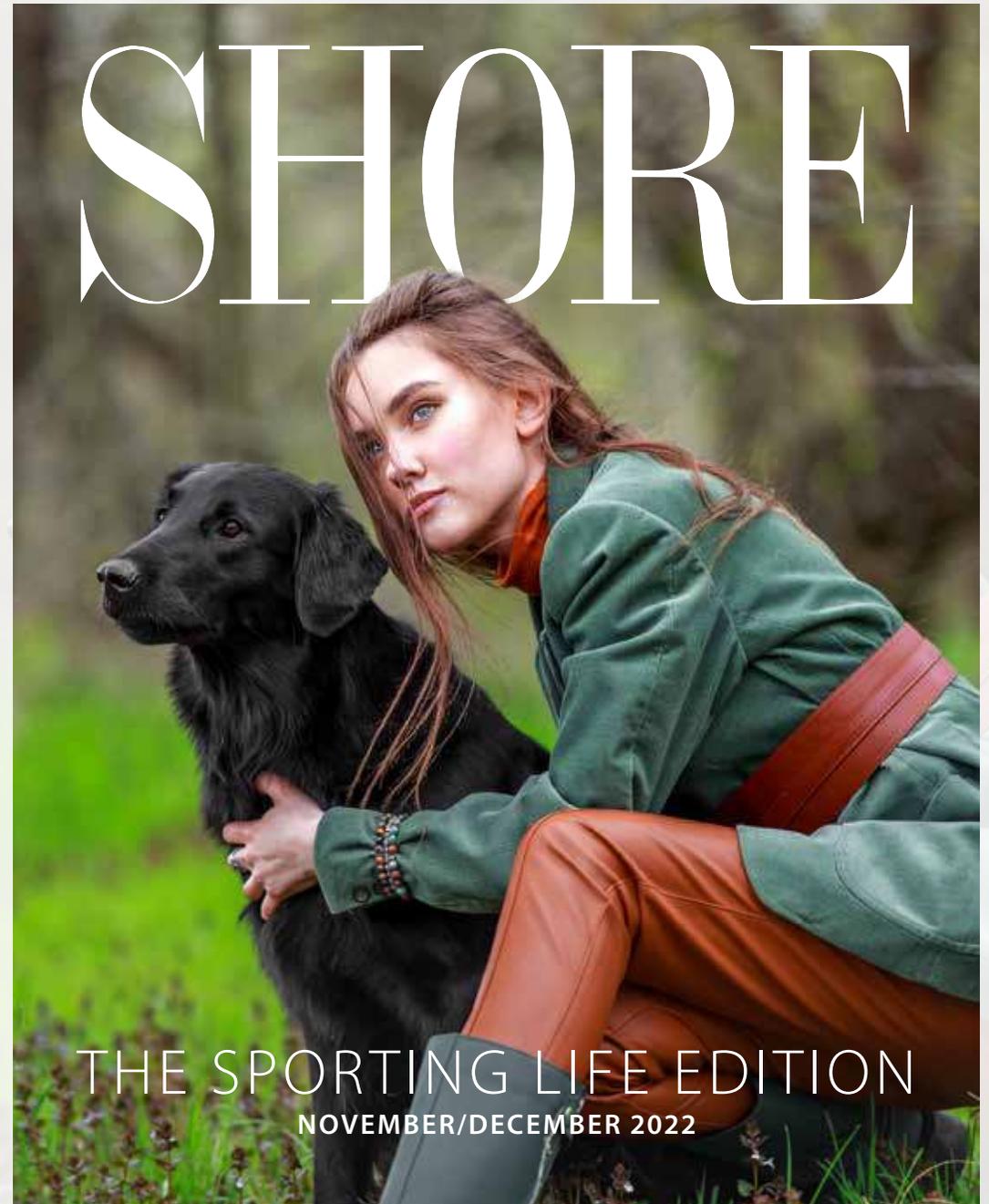
Open daily, 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Sept. 7 - Oct. 30



Photos courtesy of Councill Farms

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The Mill of Kingstown

Story by Niambi Davis | Photos by Cal Jackson



On January 1, 2019, Chris and Liz Starkey of Kingstown Farm, Home and Garden formed a partnership with the Mill at Belair and its five other stores to become The Mill of Kingstown.

“It was a mutually beneficial collaboration,” said April Cooper, Director of Operations and Communications of the Mill. “It helped The Mill to expand their lawn and garden offerings and for Kingstown to expand in the farm and feed delivery sectors.”

The foundation for the success of The Mill of Kingstown (and other Mill locations) is a commitment to one-on-one interaction with customers backed by a strong customer service philosophy.

“Our first consideration is the customer’s goal,” Cooper said. “We try to accommodate all of our customers, from the people there just to grab a bag of soil, to providing them with the right information.”

If a customer has a need but is on a tight budget, the Mill will find a solution, from the homeowner looking to care for his or her lawn to golf course superintendents working to achieve the kind of turf their clients require. In a garden

department that is beautiful, colorful, lush, and irresistible to plant and garden lovers of all levels of knowledge, customers will also find a certified horticulturist who knows plants inside and out.

Liz Starkey attributes its success to “twenty years of teamwork and hard work, with the knowledgeable and courteous staff that everyone grew to love at Kingstown Farm, Home, and Garden.”

Kingstown’s other departments include crops, horses and livestock, home and lawn, pets, wildlife and wild birds, fencing, gates, and bulk materials. Each department has the benefit of a dedicated staff specialist.

For example, Mill specialists work with farmers on crop management and offer certified nutrient soil testing and nutrient management, both important considerations in the Chesapeake region.

“We have nutritionists on staff for horses and livestock of all species,” Cooper said, “and so in all our departments we strive to have people with higher levels of certifications and expertise who can really help make solid recommendations.”



“ We have nutritionists on staff for horses and livestock of all species, and so **in all our departments we strive to have people with higher levels of certifications and expertise** who can really help make solid recommendations.”



At the Mill, the title of specialist is not handed out lightly; it comes with the requirement of experience, some level of certification or a degree program. For employees who express a strong interest in an area of knowledge, The Mill’s signature community support extends in-house. One good example is the sponsorship of master gardener training for an employee with a keen interest in plants.

When COVID-19 brought the world to a halt, the Mills’ community outreach and in-person events came to a sudden stop.

“But there came a time when we decided to get back out there with our customers,” Cooper recalled.

During this past fair season, Mill specialists worked with 4-H kids and adults in the business of raising livestock. For bird watchers, The Mill hosts a Wild Bird Dinner that brings in a representative from Washington College’s Foreman Branch Bird Observatory.

For horse people, they host an equine dinner and bring in a “big name horse person” as the guest speaker. They hold fundraisers for animal rescue and host dog adoption days. This past spring the Mill sponsored a turf expo, allowing homeowners and lawn experts to ask questions and share knowledge.

Although The Mill has an extensive array of products to serve the home, garden, and farm community, the mission of helping and not just selling is clear.

“We’re about more than selling products. Whatever is asked of us, we try to find a way to make it happen.”

Visit the **MILL OF KINGSTOWN** (and get a look at their lovely mural) at 7121 Church Hill Rd, Chestertown, MD 21620 410-778-1551

Or visit <https://www.themillstores.com/> to learn more about the services, workshops, information and celebration days devoted to gardening, pets, farm animals, and even vegetables! The Mill does offer something for everyone!



Beyond the Sky by Miyah Lam



Another Day is Done by Tanis & Levin Schwaninger



Cambridge Fireworks by Sewell Matthews



Monarch Butterfly -- Open Wings by Jude Erhardt



Young Red Fox by Marc Butt

SUBMISSIONS

Submit your own Through the Lens photographs at <http://stardem.secondstreetapp.com/Shores-Through-the-Lens/>



ABOUT THE COVER

Photos by Angel Powell of Angel Marie Photography

Thomas & Angel Powell enjoy fresh, local produce and describe going to Emily's Produce as "a fun family adventure." Being a photographer, Angel was inspired by the colorful fruits and vegetables to take a "milestone picture" of her son Jasper "to represent his growth." The inspiration struck and the perfect magazine cover was captured!

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