

WASHINGTON

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SWAMP VIEWS

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Publisher

Ashley Vansant

Editorial

Steve Barnes

Holly Morgan

Contributors

Richard Andrews

Ellen Brabo

Clark Curtis

Vail Stewart Rumley

Marketing & Sales

David Singleton

Kristen Smith

Distribution

Kim Riggs

Art Direction

Ryan Webb

Contact information

Washington the Magazine

P.O. Box 1788

Washington, NC 27889

Advertising inquiries

252-946-2144 Ext. 221

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EAGLES WINGS' DINNER AND DANCE FUNDRAISER RETURNS

PHOTOS BY HOLLY JACKSON

Eagle's Wings Food Pantry held a dinner and dance fundraiser at the Washington Yacht Club on Friday, Sept. 29. It was the first dinner and dance fundraiser the nonprofit has hosted since 2019. The evening raised thousands of dollars that will be used to help pay for food for families and individuals in need across Beaufort County.



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BEST OF THE PAMLICO 2023 WINNERS

PHOTOS BY

Washington News Media hosted an awards celebration for this year's Best of the Pamlico winners and those who receive runner-up. The celebration was held at the Daily News office on Thursday, Sept. 7.



Jeremy Danielle and Ella Wells



Charley Bishop and Casey Schulte



Heather Hamilton and Megan Overman



Chris Whitehead
Melissa Jarvis
Helen Tait
William Taylor



Grace Lassiter Arnold, Jaime Cherry, Sidney Marslender, and Carmen Folk



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Changing the angle on swamps

How one photographer hopes to change public perception of wetlands

STORY BY **HOLLY JACKSON**
PHOTOS BY **CHARLES THRASHER**

Dangerous, infested, muggy and uninhabitable are words often used to describe swamps; however, Chocowinity photographer, Charles Thrasher, believes the opposite is true. To him, swamps are serene, beautiful and worthy of praise and recognition. Swamps are his muse as well as his escape from a busy world.

Thrasher, a retired Microsoft employee and professional sailor, moved from California to Chocowinity, because of his wife's job with medical information systems at ECU Health.

Thrasher dabbled in photography, but it wasn't until he and his wife moved to Beaufort County that it became a passion. Here, he developed an affinity for swamps and wetlands with every trip he took in his kayak. He was compelled to capture a reality few people have seen, because popular perception is that creatures and infectious diseases lurk in the

Bald cypress and Spanish moss obscured by fog on the shoreline of Chocowinity Bay.





Bald cypress in
summer shadows,
Cherry Run near
Washington.





Sawgrass islands at the head of Chocowinity Bay, the Bay of Islands in native Tuscarora.

shadows.

He is drawn to the swamps, because he has felt like an “outsider” since childhood. This is why “I suppose I have always felt myself an outsider even as a child,” Thrasher said, explaining why places on the outermost edge have always appealed to him. “I found myself very attached to this peripheral environment, the swamp, the black water creek.”

From a photographer’s point of view, swamps possess a “powerful and unique beauty” that provide opportunities to capture light reflecting off of water and shadows behind trees. Also, because swamps are seen as odious by the public, the public is not there which is attractive to photographers and people who prefer solitude.

A wetland near Cherry Run Road, several miles in length, seems a “world away” from the City of Washington. The hum of traffic is the only sign of nearby civilization.

“You have places that are unvisited, that are secluded that are wonderfully



A Great Blue Heron greets the dawn from the shore of Chocowinity Bay.



The roots of a downed cypress tree on Castle Island exposed by hurricane erosion.



Cherry Run is only a few miles long before it loses its identity in the Tar River, but in its short course it contains multitudes.



Spider webs strung between cypress knees net the morning fog.



Baulks of discarded timber,
Norfolk Southern Railroad
bridge across Sidney Creek.





Remnants of the cypress woods on sunken Grandpap Island.

beautiful, but they're right in juxtaposition to population," Thrasher said.

Thrasher begins some mornings in that solitude. He wakes up early so that when he reaches his destination, the light is pouring through the trees and brush and reflecting off the water at the right time. He then packs his Canon EOS 80D before heading out.

All of his photos are taken from his 20-lbs, fiberglass kayak which in some local wetlands is the only way they can be accessed. When he returns home three hours later, the post-production process begins to "tease out characteristics or qualities in a photograph that were obvious to begin with," Thrasher said.

He hopes his photographs can change

people's perceptions of swamps and help them see the allure of lush greenery, hear the chorus of wildlife and experience the peacefulness of untouched, preserved land.

"If those photographs can change people's attitudes toward a swamp or a black water creek then they can see something that surprises them in a way they can have an



affinity toward or appreciate the beauty of....” Thrasher said.

Thrasher’s advice for people interested in photography as a hobby is to be patient because time and effort make the photographer, not the camera. He also says it’s important to focus on one muse at a time. The more attention a muse receives, the better the photos will become.

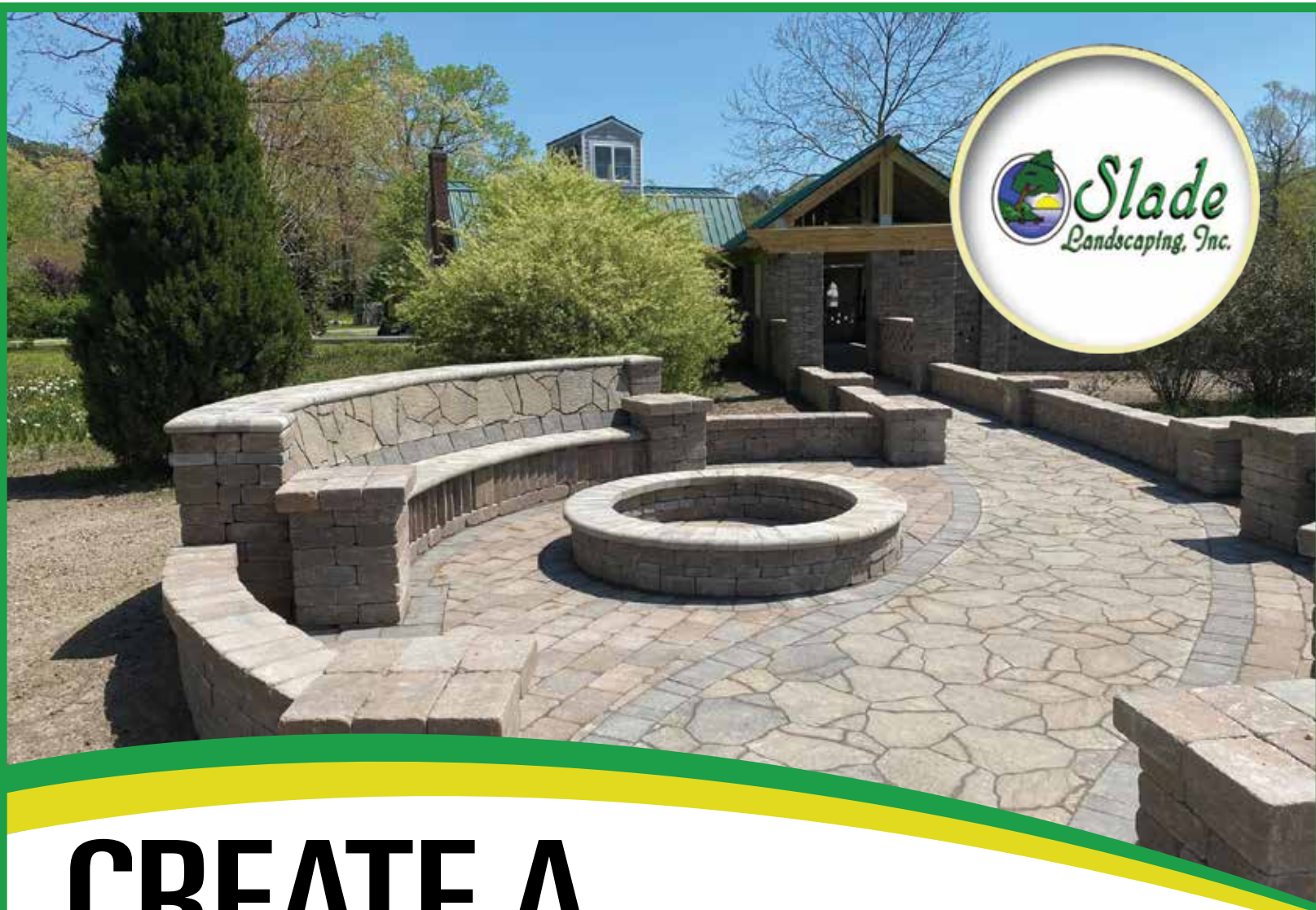
Time, experience and education will also contribute to stronger photos.

Being present in his environment and patient are two things Thrasher has learned in his own journey to becoming a professional photographer.

Thrasher’s journey as a local photographer is well documented in a Facebook group he

created last year called Beaufort County NC Photography. This is where professional and amateur photographers can view each other’s work. So far, more than 1,100 people have joined.

Thrasher enjoys seeing group members’ posts, some of whom he says have improved since their first contributions and who could become professionals if they wanted.



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Who says timeless has to be boring? A new trend is to purchase classic glass ornaments in fun and funky styles to add more personality to your Christmas decor.

CELEBRATE



Leah Allen, Stacey Fuldner and Emma Crisp opened Pinetown Proper on Market Street this fall.

The heart of holiday decor for 2023

STORY AND PHOTOS BY **HOLLY JACKSON**

Memories of Christmas past are at the heart of holiday decorating trends. Vintage, antique and heirloom holiday pieces you've collected over the years will add a special and personal touch to your home.

Interior designers Leah Allen and Stacey Fuldner at Pinetown Proper on Market Street in Washington love to decorate with timeless and classic decorations that bring back memories of Christmas past.

"Part of Christmas for me is unpacking all of the ornaments and having the memories and nostalgia of that," Allen shared.

Throughout her life, Allen has collected and decorated with

glass ornaments. Though timeless for her, glass ornaments are a trend this holiday season.

Because glass ornaments come in a myriad of shapes, sizes and colors they can elevate your decorations or incorporate little nods to the Pamlico River.

Whether you've called Washington home all your life, or it has recently become your home, glass ornaments can bring symbols of the Pamlico lifestyle into your decor with little golf carts, boats, life jackets, crabs, shells, fish and even hotdogs as a nod to Bill's Hotdogs and a smoker as a nod to Smoke on the Water.

Another way to add pieces of the Pamlico to the decor you already have - and follow current trends - is to take natural



Glass ornaments made to look like crabs, boats, golf carts and grills can add a little Washington or Beaufort County flair to your Christmas decorations.

elements like pinecones, oyster shells, pampas grass, Smilax, Spanish moss, magnolia leaves, Holly tree leaves and add them to your garlands or wreaths.

It's easier to weave natural pieces into artificial garlands, because they can be tied to wires within the garlands, Allen and Fuldner said.

Pale greens and blues are popular in everyday design, and on trend for holiday decor this year. These colors work well with greenery found in your backyard or with finds from the shoreline.

Allen and Fulder have seen pale greens and blues in everyday decor, but are starting to see the colors flow into Christmas decorations. They are often paired with champagne and silver accents.

Allen's holiday decor fits in well with her home's interior color palette and style. She doesn't move her regular furnishings out of their places; rather, her Christmas decorations are nestled in between for a





seamless look.

"I believe in working Christmas into my home. I don't move stuff out of my house to decorate for Christmas. I work Christmas into what I have," Allen said. "Christmas gets woven in."

To achieve a warm and cozy atmosphere, Allen and Fuldner said it's best to decorate with pieces you and your family love. The

pieces don't have to match, because if they fit style and what you love, then they should create a cohesive look.

"Don't feel like everything has to be perfectly matched. Things work together if you layer and blend," Allen said.

Allen and Fulder agreed that decorating for Christmas doesn't have to be overwhelming or stressful, but if it does,

their advice would be to step back and remember the true meaning of Christmas - celebrating Jesus' birth and spending time with family and friends.

"If one tree is all you can do or if you can't do a tree - don't forget the true meaning of Christmas - being together with family and celebrating the birth of Jesus," Allen said.

INSTATE GETAWAY

ENCHANTING HOLIDAY





Weekends at Biltmore dazzle

STORY AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF **THE BILTMORE COMPANY**

Guests are invited to enjoy the enchantment of the holidays at Biltmore, with its dazzling array of twinkling lights, glittering ornaments, and dozens of hand-decorated Christmas trees. Christmas at Biltmore begins Nov. 3, 2023 and runs through Jan. 7, 2024.

This time-honored tradition dates back more than 125 years when George Vanderbilt celebrated his first Christmas with family and friends in 1895 in his then-new North Carolina home – the 250-room Biltmore House. It offers a

one-of-a-kind experience for modern-day guests to connect with family and friends at one of the South's most beloved holiday destinations.

European designs and Vanderbilt traditions influence holiday décor

Given the home's resemblance to French Renaissance-style chateaux, its classic European motif offers the perfect canvas for Biltmore's in-house floral team to create breathtaking holiday décor. Working year-round and behind the scenes, the team pulled inspiration this year from the

estate's rich history, the home's architecture and interiors, and the surrounding North Carolina mountain beauty.

As tradition dictates, the home's massive Banquet Hall is the setting for an elegant 35-foot tall fresh Fraser fir Christmas tree. Every year this tree is adorned with 500 ornaments and 500 lights, a Vanderbilt family tradition dating back to 1895, as noted in Biltmore's archives. Inspired by the yuletide tale, "The Night Before Christmas," the tree and the room will glitter in shades of red, emerald, and gold.

Hallmark's "A Biltmore Christmas"

For something more modern – in terms of the 1940s, that is – the Library in Biltmore House will be dressed in the style of a new Hallmark Channel film premiering this holiday season, "A Biltmore Christmas," which was filmed on the estate in January 2023. Portions of the film are set in the 1940s, so the Library will feature multi-color décor with lots of classic red and green elements, with dramatic cascades of silver-sequined tinsel adorning the room's Christmas tree.

Two Christmas experiences at Biltmore

Two experiences are available to enjoy at Biltmore during the holiday season.

- Christmas at Biltmore Daytime Celebration, Nov. 3, 2023 – Jan. 7, 2024

Biltmore's daytime Christmas experience includes a tour of Biltmore House, the gardens, Conservatory, the Winery, and Antler Hill Village.

- Candlelight Christmas Evenings, Nov. 3, 2023 – Jan. 6, 2024

Evenings when Biltmore House is decorated for the holidays offer an Old World charm. With thousands of twinkling lights combined with the scent of fresh greenery, the experience is reminiscent of a bygone era. Setting the scene is a sparkling 55-foot Norway spruce tree in the center of the front lawn, and hundreds of luminaries lining the walkways to the home.

Tickets are on sale now for both of these experiences. For more information, visit: <https://www.biltmore.com/things-to-do/events/christmas/>

Holiday highlights across the estate

- The Conservatory

Seasonal blooms and an array of tropical plants offer a warm and bright holiday stop inside the Conservatory in the Walled Garden. Displays of poinsettias in multiple colors, amaryllis, Christmas cactus, bromeliads, orchids, and peace lilies fill the historic building.

- Wine tasting and dining

A visit to Biltmore Winery is an essential part of the holiday experience, with complimentary tastings of Biltmore Wines. Biltmore Sparkling and holiday commemorative wines will be available for sale. Estate restaurants offer favorite seasonal dishes and craft cocktails.

- Antler Hill Village illumination

As evening falls over Antler Hill Village, the estate's European-inspired village, a constellation of holiday lights illuminates trees, quaint buildings, the Winery and walking paths. Visits with Santa are offered on the weekends, and select week days.

- Italian Renaissance Alive



exhibition – Final Months!

Italian Renaissance Alive wraps you in wonder as you move amid large-scale projections of great beauty and detail of masterpieces created by some of the world's most revered Italian artists and sculptors. Staged at Amherst at Deerpark, a dramatic operatic score elevates the experience. The exhibition closes on Jan. 7, 2024.

Holiday stays at Biltmore's overnight accommodations

Staying overnight is the ultimate way to experience Christmas at Biltmore. Several special stay packages are available at Biltmore's collection of guest

accommodations. Holiday packages are offered at the luxurious four-star Inn on Biltmore Estate and at the cozy farmhouse-feel of Village Hotel, both decked out for the holidays. Historic cottages from Biltmore's agricultural past now accommodate overnight guests. Find out more about staying overnight at <https://www.biltmore.com/stay/>

Visit information

For more information about visiting the estate during the holidays and to purchase admission tickets, please visit <https://www.biltmore.com/things-to-do/events/christmas/>



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Preserving history, one ornament at a time

In the heart of our town, where historic streets weave stories of the past and a tight-knit community thrives, the Washington Area Historic Foundation (WAHF) has quietly nurtured a tradition for over two decades. This cherished annual ornament fundraiser, orchestrated by the dedicated non-profit organization, is more than a decorative tradition—it's a celebration of our town's rich heritage.

This year, the spotlight falls on a true classic, "The Bug House," a timeless ornament with roots dating back to 2002. The decision to reissue this beloved keepsake carries a poignant touch, honoring the building's 100-year anniversary. Kasey Stone, a member of the WAHF Executive Committee, shares the sentiment behind this choice, connecting our present to the past.

The purpose behind this tradition extends far beyond mere decoration. The funds raised through the ornament sales serve a dual purpose. They are channeled into the maintenance of Harding Square, in collaboration with the City of Washington, and enable the WAHF to offer financial assistance to homeowners seeking to install historic plaques on their residences, a symbol of the town's rich history.

But what makes this tradition truly special is the personal touch brought by the stories of our local residents. Enter Alma Friedman, a Washington native and a passionate collector of the annual WAHF ornaments. Alma's journey is as intertwined with the town's history as the streets beneath her feet.

"I grew up here and then moved to Delaware in 1964," shared Friedman, reflecting on decades of memories. "I came back 40 years later."

For nearly 20 years, Alma has eagerly awaited the unveiling of each year's ornament, forming a collection that echoes her personal journey and the town's evolution. With the help of Stone, she's managed to add missing pieces to her collection since returning to Washington.

"I really look forward to what the new ornament is going to be," said Friedman. "They keep it a secret, which I think is fun."

The meticulous process of creating these



ornaments involves the careful selection of a different building from the Washington Historic District each year. The chosen building is thoroughly photographed, capturing every architectural detail. In some cases, paint chips are sent to the artisans based in New England, guiding them in replicating the building's authentic colors.

"Last year, I was able to get paint chips of the Hyatt, Myers, and Marsh Houses so that the ornaments were the right colors," recalled Stone.

The artisans craft a detailed sketch, which, upon approval, leads to the creation of a prototype. Only after the committee gives its nod of approval does the production of these exquisite ornaments commence.

This year's Bug House ornament holds a special place in Friedman's heart, sparking memories of her childhood spent practically living at the Bug House. Her home's proximity made it a walkable haven, and Alma recalls countless fond moments from her girlhood days.

"I grew up going to all of these places," shared Friedman, her connection evident. "For so many of them, I was there. I remember them."

Although numerous past ornaments evoke cherished memories for Friedman, such as the Turnage Theater from her Saturdays growing up and the Methodist Church where she is now a member, she had no hesitation when identifying

her favorite among them.

"The one that stands out to me the most was my elementary school, John Small, because I went there," shared Friedman. "It brings back so many memories."

In looking to the future, Friedman proposed a unique approach. She envisions a series that compares historic buildings with their new uses, a dynamic way to witness the town's evolution, citing the example of McLellan's Five & Dime store, now the Harbor District Market. However, there is one ornament she is most hopeful to add to her collection in the coming years.

"Hotel Louise would be a fun one to have done," said Friedman. "Maybe do two ornaments to compare the current look to what it used to be. I think I would cherish that one the most."

Receiving her annual ornament is not just a Christmas gift for Alma; it's a moment of connection with the town's history. Alma's tale is one among many, a testament to the deep-rooted connections between our town, its people, and the cherished WAHF ornaments that bridge past and present.

The Bug House ornaments, priced at \$30 each, are available for purchase at local establishments including the Estuarium and the Harbor District Market. Each ornament comes complete with a stand and ribbon.

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HOLIDAY HELPINGS

Celebrate a savory season with these sensational sides

FOOD PREP, PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY BY VAIL STEWART RUMLEY



It's the most wonderful time of the year, when tables are laden with delicious dishes and culinary traditions make an annual, much-anticipated appearance. While it may be a roast turkey or ham taking center stage, it's no secret it's the supporting cast of scrumptious sides that really make a meal to remember.

Side dishes have a simple, yet oh-so-important role: to complement the main dish. Any one of these recipes featured here will do exactly that — and have guests going back for more.

Franke Kugler Rumley's Pineapple Casserole balances a savory glazed ham with its rich sweetness; the Mashed Chipotle Chili Sweet Potatoes do the same, with their perfect blend of sweet and spicy. Glenna Browning's Buncombe Hall Corn Pudding and Alice McClure's Golden Parmesan Potatoes pair well with any main course, while Margaret Jewell's Collards — Blounts Creek Style and Nana's Oyster Dressing from Alison Potter add a touch of eastern North Carolina tradition to any holiday table.

Shared by some of the best cooks Beaufort County has to offer, may these seasonal sides be a merry match for your holiday meal. Have a happy, heaping helping or two!



MASHED CHIPOTLE CHILI SWEET POTATOES

Recipe by Vail Stewart Rumley

2 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed; 1 tablespoon salt; 1 stick of butter; 2 teaspoons chipotle chilis, chopped; 1/4 cup brown sugar; 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon; 1 teaspoon vanilla extract; 1/4 cup heavy cream; 1 tablespoon orange juice; 1 teaspoon salt.

Add cubed sweet potatoes to a medium saucepan; fill with cold water until sweet potatoes are covered. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer, and simmer until sweet potatoes are fork-tender. Remove from heat and drain. Place the stick of butter at the bottom of the saucepan, then return sweet potatoes to the pan (the butter melts easily). Mix in the chipotle chilis, sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla and mash. Gently stir in the heavy cream, orange juice and salt. Serves 6 to 8. (You can add more chipotle chilis to give this recipe a little bit more zing!)

GOLDEN PARMESAN POTATOES

Recipe by Alice McClure

"Our Celebration Cookbook," First Presbyterian Church, Washington

6 large potatoes; 1/4 cup flour; 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese; 3/4 teaspoon salt; 1/3 cup butter; 1/8 teaspoon pepper; chopped parsley.

Peel potatoes and cut into medium-sized chunks. Combine the flour, cheese, salt and pepper in a bag. Moisten potatoes with water and shake to cover with flour in the prepared bag. Melt butter in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, layering the potatoes in the pan. Bake at 375 degrees for one hour, turning once during baking. When golden brown, sprinkle with parsley. Serves 6 to 8.

NANA'S OYSTER DRESSING

Recipe by Alison Potter

"Second Heavenly Helpings,"

Swan Quarter Baptist Church, Swan Quarter

1 large package Pepperidge Farms cornbread stuffing mix; 2 eggs; 1 small onion, diced; 1 cup celery, diced; 1 cup chicken broth; 1 quart oysters; salt and pepper to taste.

Sauté onion and celery until onions are translucent. Mix all ingredients together. Place in a greased baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.



PINEAPPLE CASSEROLE (AKA “PORCUPINE”)

Recipe by Franke Kugler Rumley

1 (20-ounce) can crushed pineapple; 1/2 cup milk; 3 eggs; 1 cup of sugar; 1 stick of butter, softened; 5 thick slices of bread, cubed.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream together sugar and butter. Beat in 3 eggs, one at a time. Stir in pineapple, with the juice. Fold in bread cubes. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes to an hour, until nicely browned on top.



COLLARDS — BLOUNTS CREEK STYLE

Recipe by Margaret Jewell

“Scent from Heaven,” Smyrna OFWB Ladies Auxiliary, Blounts Creek

5 pounds collards; 1 package salted pig tails.

Take about three pig tails, rinse salt off and put in a good-size dinner pot. Add about three inches of water. Start heat on high until pot is boiling, then turn heat to moderate and continue to boil. Pick collards carefully, making sure no worms, bugs, worm eggs or trash are left on them. Cut out large stems. Wash in cold water until water is completely clean (some folks put a little table salt int the first water to help in cleaning them). After pig tails have boiled 30–45 minutes, put collards in pot. Summer collards take 1 1/2 to 2 hours to cook; winter collards take about 30 minutes or so. They must be very tender, but not mushy. If you have “buds,” put them in the pot a little later than you do the leaves. When done, drain in a colander and chop well with a chopper or knives.



WARM SPINACH SALAD FOR TWO

Recipe by Denyce Osmundson
"Without A Doubt, St. Thomas' Best,"
St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath

2 tablespoons olive oil; 1/2 pound hard salami, cubed; 1 red onion, thinly sliced; 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard; 1 tablespoon honey; 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar; 3 eggs, boiled; 1 (5-ounce) bag baby spinach.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the salami and red onion and cook until onion is wilted and salami is browned. Add the mustard, honey, vinegar and stir together. Turn off heat. Divide the spinach between two bowls. Pour the hot salami mixture over the spinach. Slice eggs and divide evenly over each salad and serve.

(Cook's note: This recipe can be a meal for two, or doubled and shared with eight — just make some extra honey-Dijon-red vinegar dressing to drizzle on top!)

BUNCOMBE HALL CORN PUDDING

Recipe by Glenna Browning
"Keyes to the Kitchen, Gracefully Rekeyed," St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Washington

1 stick unsalted butter; 5 cups fresh corn kernels cut off the cob (6 to 8 ears) or frozen corn, thawed; 1 cup yellow onion, chopped; 4 extra-large eggs; 1 cup milk; 1 cup half and half; 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal; 1 cup ricotta cheese; 3 tablespoons fresh basil leaves; 1 tablespoon granulated sugar; 1 tablespoon kosher salt; 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper; 3/4 cup grated, extra-sharp cheddar, plus extra to sprinkle on top.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease the inside of an eight-to-10-cup baking dish.

Melt the butter in a very large sauté pan and sauté the corn and onion over medium-high heat for four minutes. Cool slightly.

Whisk together the eggs, milk and half and half in a large bowl. Slowly whisk in the cornmeal and then the ricotta. Add the basil, sugar, salt and pepper. Add the cooked corn mixture and grated cheddar, then pour into the baking dish. Sprinkle the top with more grated cheddar.

Place the dish in a large pan and fill the pan halfway up the sides of the dish with hot tap water. Bake the pudding for 40 to 45 minutes at 375 degrees, or until the top begins to brown and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve warm. Yield: 8 servings.



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Fishing opportunities from the sea to the mountains: part two

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY **CAPT. RICHARD ANDREWS**

In the last edition of the magazine, I introduced you to a unique fish in Western North Carolina, the mountain river smallmouth. I provided a nice background and general description of where they live and what they are; however, in this issue, I'd like to provide more detail on how we fish for them.

Fishing in moving water is much different than fishing in our estuarine waters here on the Pamlico. While we sometimes have wind-driven tide and current, most of our water is relatively still. Fishing in fast-moving water is totally different, and fishing in a mountain river with fast current, exposed rocks and whitewater is even very different from fishing the Tar or Roanoke rivers out of a boat with a trolling motor that can hold you in a fixed position while targeting fish.

In a mountain river, you might have only one good chance at casting to a prime area or fish. The rafts and drift boats we use can be anchored, allowing anglers to repeatedly cast to a fixed area; however, there are many areas that can only be covered with one cast due to the fast current, so accurate casting and "reading the river" is essential to success.

In mountain smallmouth fishing, anglers use both fly tackle and conventional spinning or bait casting tackle. The conventional tackle is usually a better tool, allowing anglers to cover more area with longer and faster casts; however, there are certain situations where the fly rod allows anglers to throw flies which better imitate what the smallmouth are eating. Smallmouth eat a variety of freshwater forage species such as crawfish, hellgrammites, small baitfish such as darters, daces, shiners, suckers, damselflies, dragonflies, cicadas, worms, and many other species of food. All of the conventional lures and flies are designed to imitate all of the different classes of food, so on any given day while fly fishing, we may be throwing flies ranging from streamers to imitate



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baitfish or crawfish to popping bugs imitating frogs. On the conventional side, we might be using lures ranging from soft plastic crawfish or worms to crank baits imitating baitfish. The techniques and tackle are just as diverse as the various rivers in the region.

Smallmouth bass, like many other river fish such as wild rainbow trout, are often opportunistic feeders. They will attack many different baits and flies if presented correctly in feeding zones within the river. The true thrill of river smallmouth fishing lies in reading the river. In order to catch a fish, you might need to make a long cast across many different currents in the river and hit a spot that is no bigger than a table top or even as small as a paper plate. If the cast and presentation are executed properly, the reward will likely be a fish. This takes practice in knowing where the fish are likely to

be positioned in the river. Such places might be in eddies behind rocks, around log jams on the bank, in foam lines running through shallow riffles, or dozens of other scenarios.

Combining reading the river while fishing and at the same time navigating the river in a manner that allows safe passage around boulders and through class II and III rapids while also putting the anglers within casting reach of productive areas is the essence of river smallmouth fishing.

It's truly an adventure and another unique fishing experience that our state and the surrounding region of the Southern Appalachians has to offer. We will be offering mountain river float trips for smallmouth bass from mid-May through mid-August next summer. If interested, shoot me an email at richard@tarpamguide for more information.

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Best bourbon hacks for the holidays

STORY BY WARREN AND KATHERINE ALLEN PHOTOS BY ELLEN BRABO

As the festive season approaches, we at 1906 Bistro and Bourbons are getting into the spirit with our favorite seasonal sips. Warm, cozy drinks like eggnog, hot chocolate, and spiced cider are making regular appearances at our gatherings. And when it comes to parties, we've got a trick up our sleeve: pre-made pitchers of delightful concoctions, served with a bag of ice on the side to keep things refreshingly cool.

Now, when it comes to finding the ideal gift for the bourbon aficionado in your life, we've got you covered. Consider a custom ice cube stamp from Etsy, personalized with their initials. Most bourbon lovers probably already have ice molds, so this unique touch will elevate their bourbon experience. If they're missing a good set of ice molds, the Ghost Ice system is a game-changer, producing 12 crystal clear ice cubes that silicone trays simply can't match. An etched bourbon glass is also a classy choice. And if you're ever in doubt, a gift card to their favorite bourbon haunt is always a safe bet.

Picking out a bourbon for someone else, though, can be a bit tricky. The thrill of the hunt is part of the joy for bourbon lovers, who often seek rare or allocated bottles at just the right price point. But fear not; there are excellent options that won't break the bank. A classic like Wild Turkey 101 is always appreciated, especially by those who enjoy mixing up a mean Old Fashioned.

When it comes to serving bourbon at your holiday soirée, there are a few things to keep in mind. For cocktails, aim for something closer to 100 proof. The proof matters more than you might think, especially in stronger cocktails. A bourbon around 100 proof helps balance out the sweetness. For a more approachable cocktail, something like Bulleit Bourbon, at around 80 proof, works beautifully.

If you're offering bourbon straight up, look for unique descriptors like "toasted barrel" or "double oaked." These indicate bourbons with distinct flavors, perfect for intriguing your guests. Woodford Reserve Double Oaked, priced at around \$40, is an excellent choice. It undergoes the aging process in a new oak barrel not once, but twice, resulting in a smooth and approachable bourbon that's sure to be a crowd-pleaser.



And remember, there's no wrong way to enjoy bourbon. Whether you prefer it on a big rock of ice or a small one, it's all about savoring the flavors at your own pace. So, pour yourself a glass, let it chill for a moment, and savor the rich, complex notes that make bourbon so special.

Before we sign off, let us leave you with this: even the most seasoned bourbon hunters find it challenging to snag a good deal on readily available bottles. So, if you stumble upon that perfect bourbon at a reasonable price, consider it a holiday miracle and savor every drop.

From our bourbon-loving family to yours, have a warm, spirited, and joyous holiday season!

Warren and Katherine Allen are the owners of 1906 Bistro and Bourbons in Washington.

APPLE PIE MOONSHINE PUNCH

Perfect for group gatherings and parties, this easy-to-prepare Apple Pie Moonshine Punch is a festive crowd-pleaser. Ideal for whipping up in advance, simply bring a bag of ice to serve separately for that refreshing chill.

1 gallon apple cider
1/4 cup apple butter
1 fifth apple pie moonshine
Equal amount of water for dilution

1. In a large mixing bowl or pitcher, combine the apple cider and apple butter.
 2. Pour in the apple pie moonshine.
 3. Add an equal amount of water for dilution. Adjust to taste. In a bar setting: shake or mix with ice to achieve the desired dilution. At home tip: Pre-mix with water and stir using a big wooden spoon.
 4. Garnish with cinnamon sticks or wedges of apple.
- Bonus tip: Dip apple wedges in lemon juice and then edible glitter for an especially festive touch. Enjoy the Apple Pie Moonshine Punch responsibly at your holiday gatherings!*

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SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR

Family holidays grounded in tradition

BY KATHLEEN BOGART KENNEDY

I grew up in Washington on the Pamlico - literally. I could see the river from my bedroom window when I woke up every morning. My whole world was within walking distance of four or five blocks in any direction. This area contained my grandmother's big brick house on South Bonner Street which she shared with my mother, my sister and me. That perimeter of blocks also contained the First Presbyterian Church, Brown Library, John Small School and the Old Post Office where my mother's office was located. There were two huge windows in that office and my sister Melody and I would sometimes stop by after school and enjoy watching passersby going about their business on Market and Second Streets.

The best time of the year in downtown Washington was Christmas. It officially began when a 25 foot live Christmas tree went up on Stewart Circle at the south end of Market Street. That was before there was a Stewart Parkway. Moss Planing Mill was still in full operation and cargo ships and some fishing boats still docked on the wharf on Water Street.

On Saturdays in December everybody in Beaufort County came to Washington to Christmas shop. The phrase "cheek to jowl" was a fitting description for the way the shoppers crowded the stores and sidewalks. The Salvation Army assembled a little red plywood house on the sidewalk near the Turnage Theater and there were not one but two red kettles out front to remind people to be especially charitable. The store windows and lampposts were decorated to dazzle and brought to life the song lyrics of "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas".

As the Big Day and Christmas vacation



Our pastor at the First Presbyterian Church told us children that we could bring our favorite Christmas present to the Christmas service. This is my sister Melody on the left who brought her new doll. I brought my puppy - Tiny Tim. The pastor allowed it. My mother and grandmother allowed it. No one in the church thought it was odd or remarkable. Such is Washington. (The puppy slept through the whole service.)

approached out at John Small School, teachers pretty much gave up on us memorizing states and capitals and multiplication tables. Instead they busied us with arts and crafts. We cut out gold foil stars and snowflakes and used smelly white paste to stick them onto construction paper Little Towns of Bethlehem. We colored purple ink mimeographed images of angels and magi and gingerbread men. We made gifts for our parents using macaroni and gold paint.

Christmas Parade Day found my sister and me leaning out of our mother's office window for a grandstand view of the floats and marchers and Santa and the Washington Pam Pack Band. We would wave at people below like we were on the balcony at Buckingham

Palace.

Churches in Washington were always lovingly decorated and heavily attended during Christmas time. My sister and I were in the children's choir and loved singing the old carols from up in the church balcony. We children felt like we were on a real concert stage in our little white robes with the big red bows.

I love Washington because so much of the town is still like I remember it - the homes in which I visited as a child, the churches, the store fronts, the train trestle and of course...the river. I grew up in a good place among good people and Washington is still blessed with people that are taking real good care of it.



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