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VOL 57 ISSUE 67_2022
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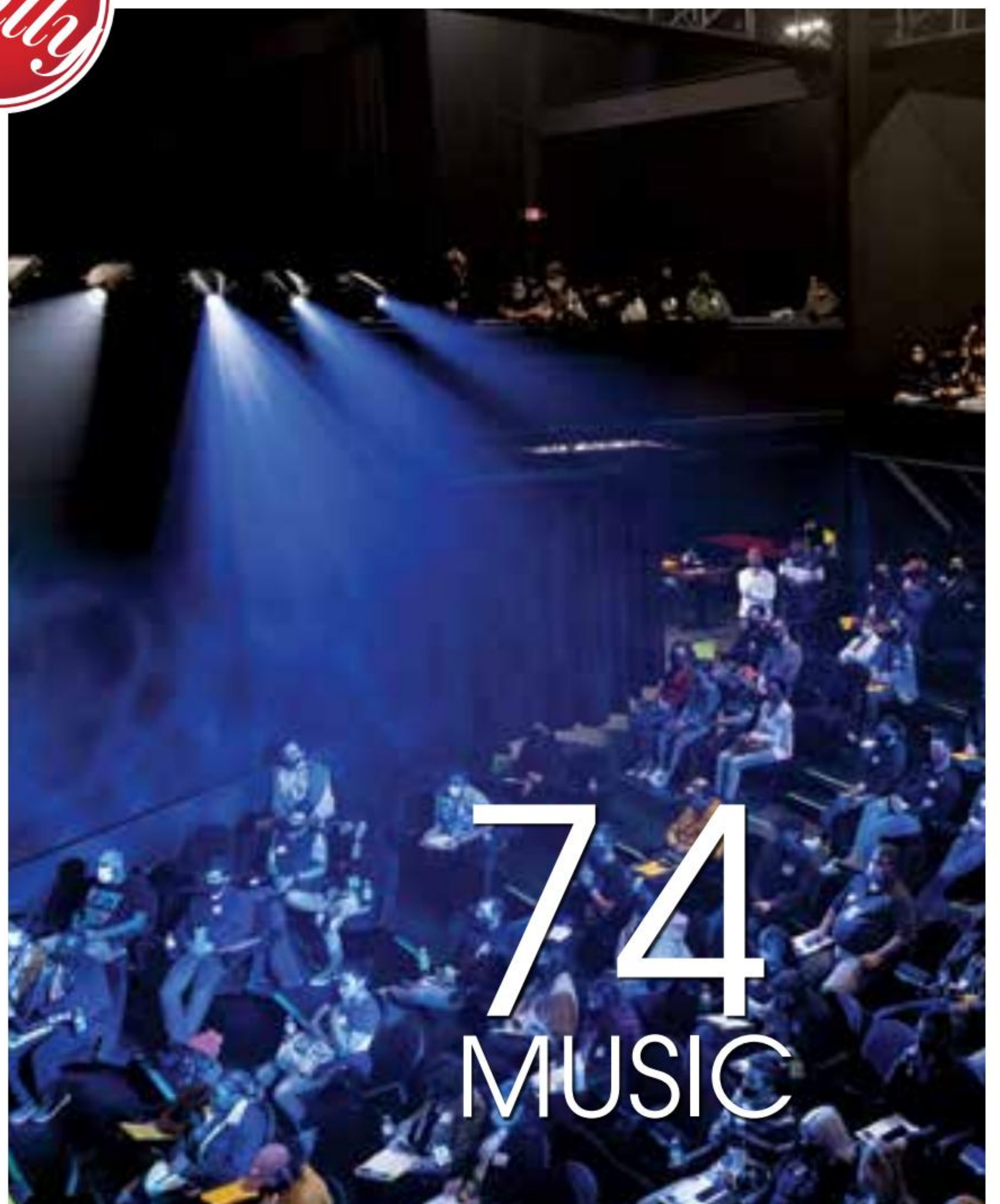
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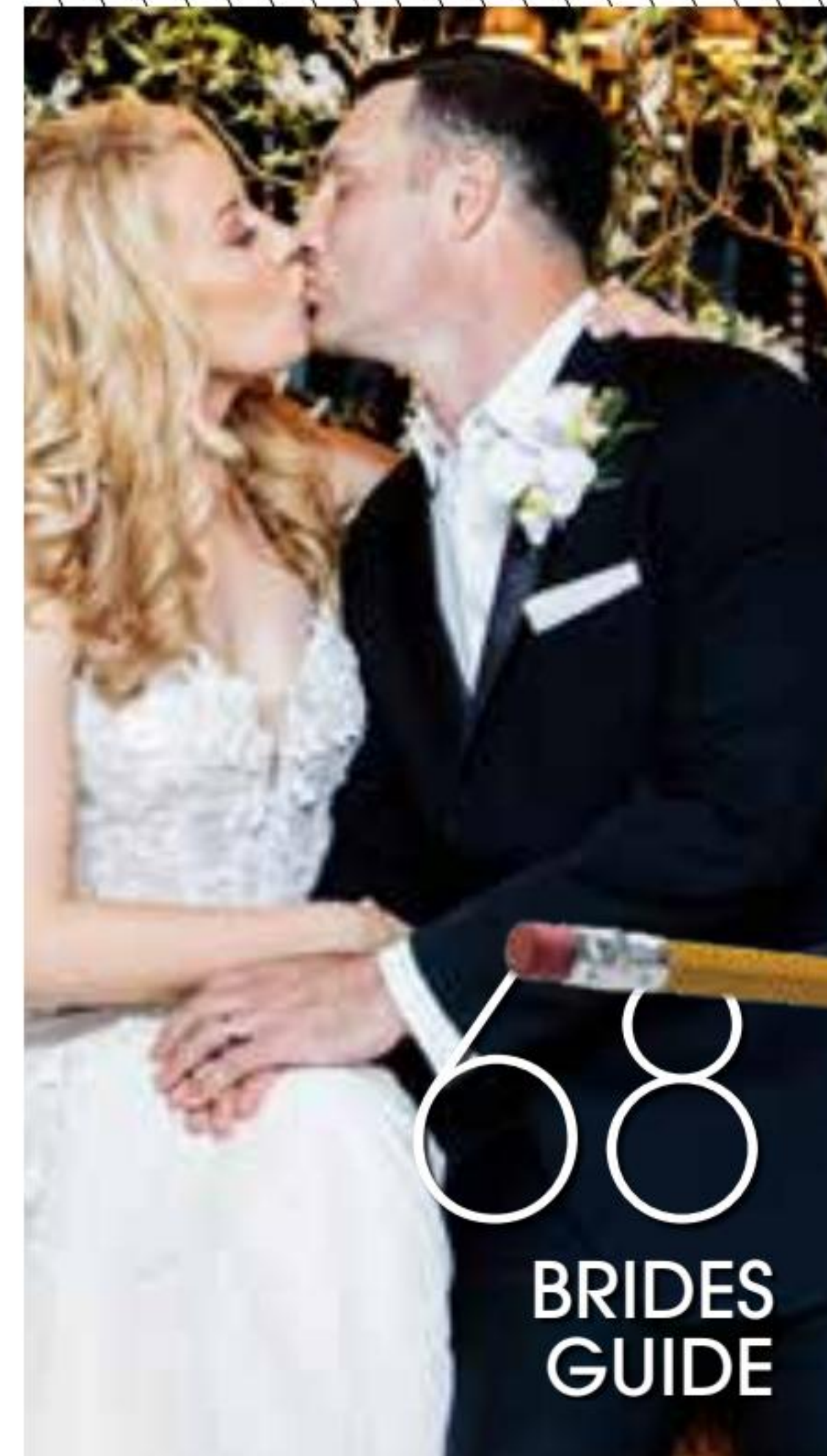
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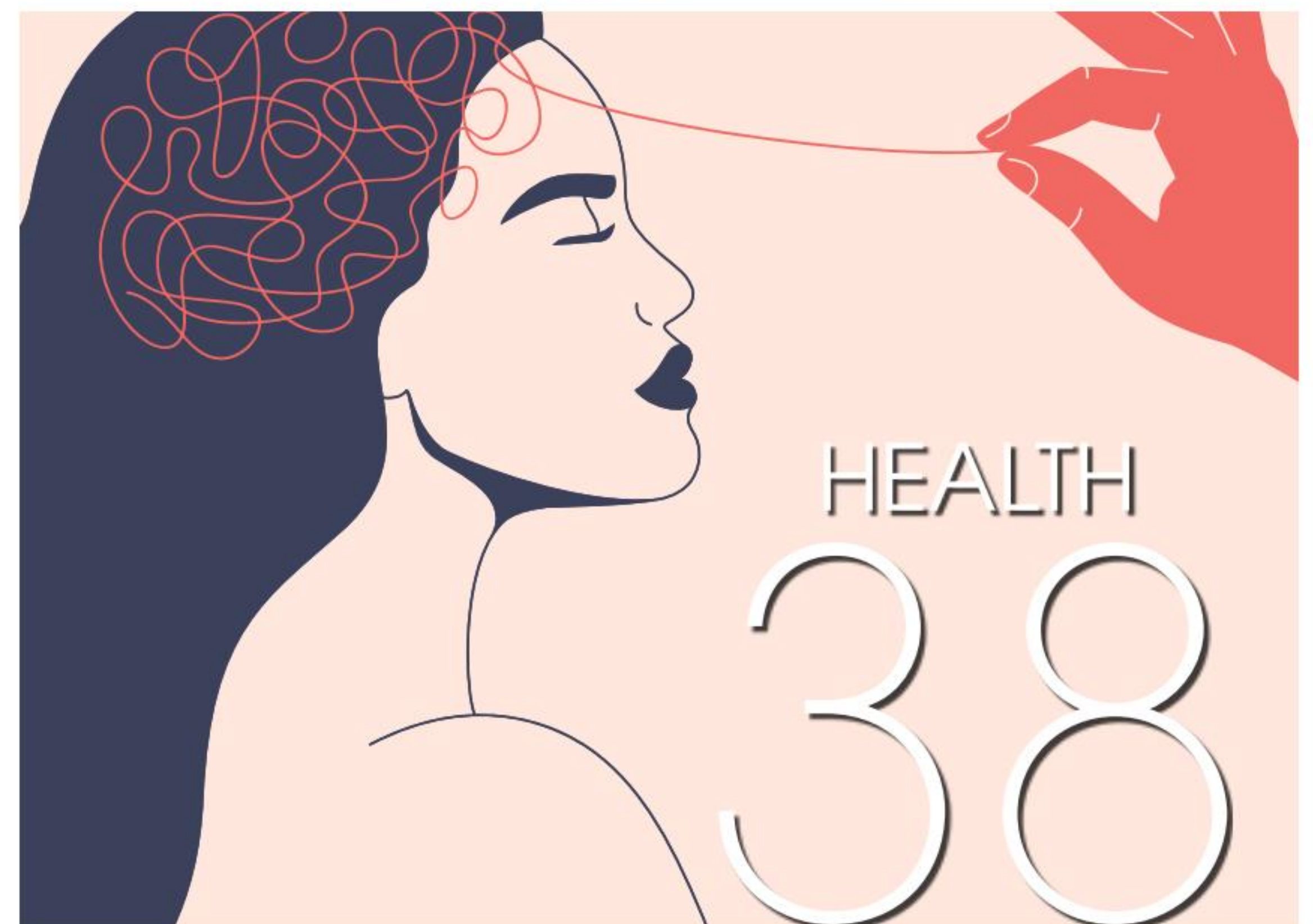
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**FUHGEDDABOUT
CHRISTMAS**

South Philly filmmaker Joan Roman makes an Italian American Christmas movie with mega stars & influencers inspired by the feast of the 7 fishes. See page 22

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Our mission is to preserve the traditions, showcase the neighborhoods and promote the local businesses that strengthen the economy and improve the quality of life for all of us.

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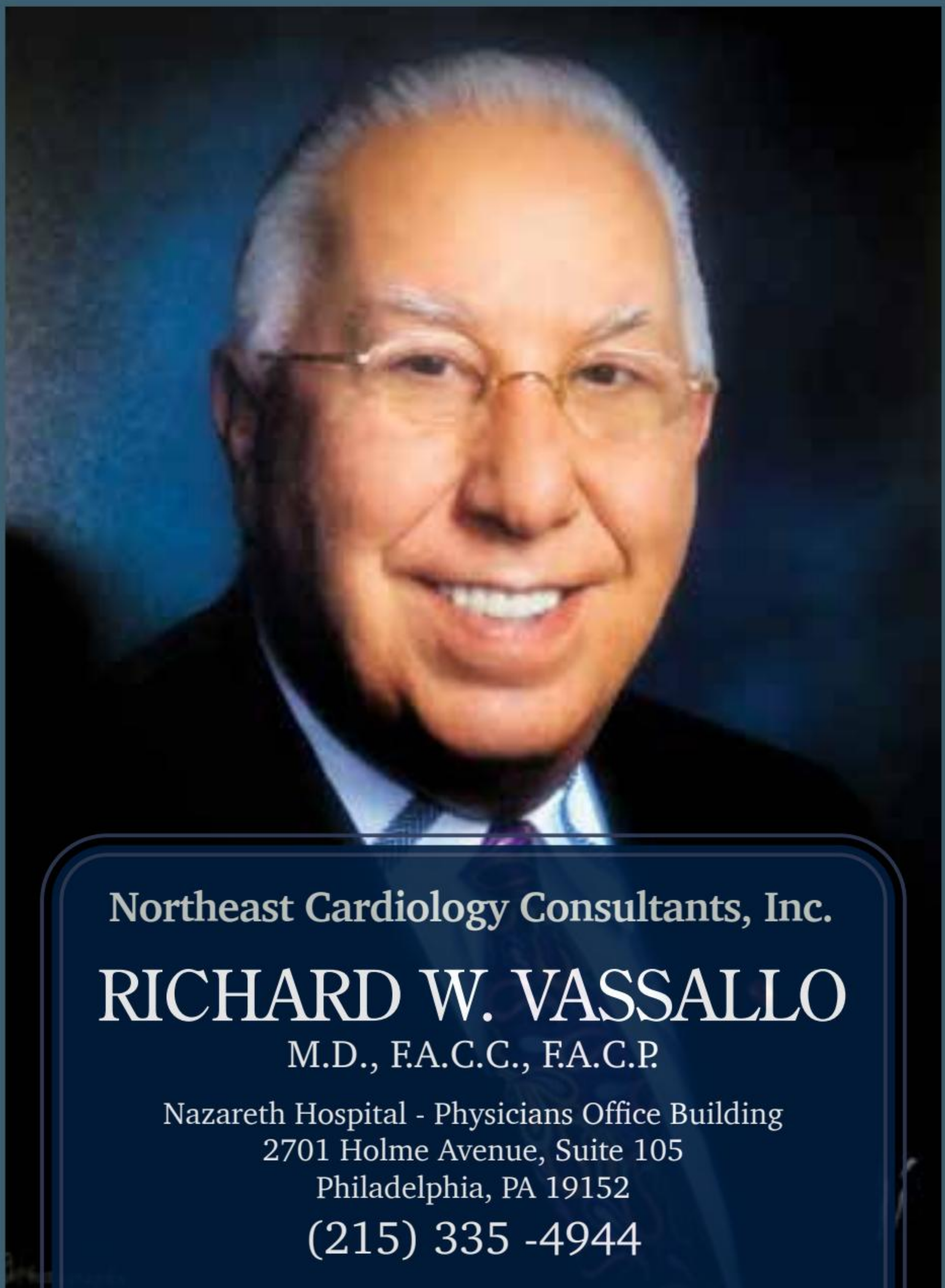
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Published by
 Philadelphia RowHome Inc.
 P.O. Box 54786, Philadelphia, PA 19148
 Phone - 215.462.9777

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photo by ANDREW ANDREOZZI

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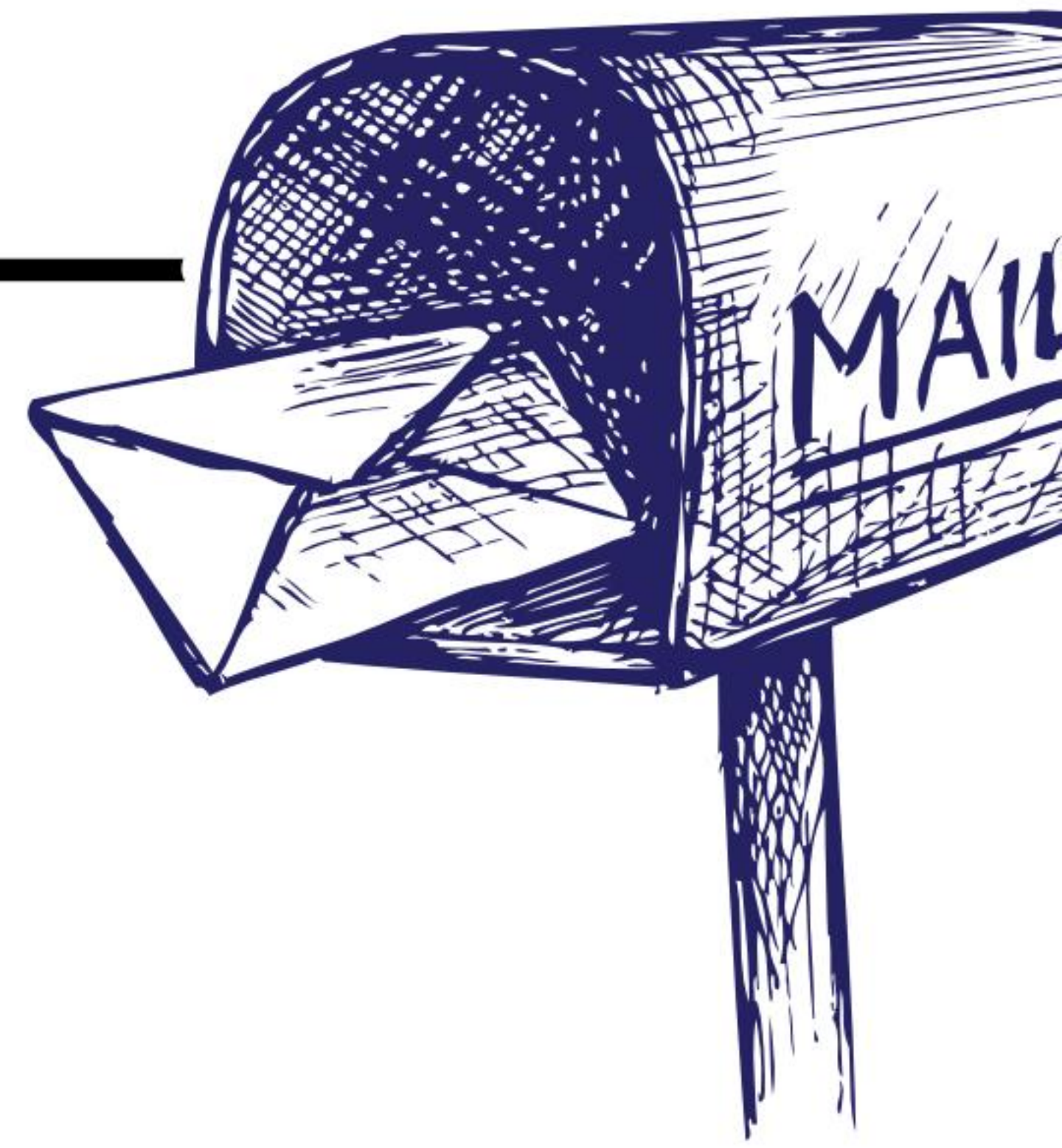
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THE MAILBOX

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DEAR PRH READERS:

You have no idea what you are missing if you are not reading the last page of *RowHome Magazine*. When it arrives, I always read the last page first because I know it's literally going to make me laugh out loud. Dawn & Dorette, you seriously should have cameras following you around! "Haste? You wouldn't know haste if it ran you over!" Literally. I can't. *Monique Impagliazzo* ✉

DEAR PRH:

I always look forward to getting your magazine. It brings back lots of memories growing up. Thanks for featuring an article on Bobby Rydell. We will miss him so much. He was one of the great ones who came out of South Philly. *Maria Scocca* ✉

DEAR PRH:

I received my new issue. Well worth the wait! I love my *Row-Home* and will be sending two friends subscriptions, as well. The service is great, and the magazine is top quality. Beautiful layout and engaging stories. *Gail Avicelli* ✉

DEAR PRH:

Do you believe we have to order three subscriptions – one for every person in our house – so no one has to wait to read it! Thank you for giving us something to look forward to! My mom loves the recipes. My dad loves the old black & white photos, and I can't wait to read *Pressed*. Last page first! *Mary Schaefer* ✉



Paul Stolfo, Director • Marianne Stolfo, Director

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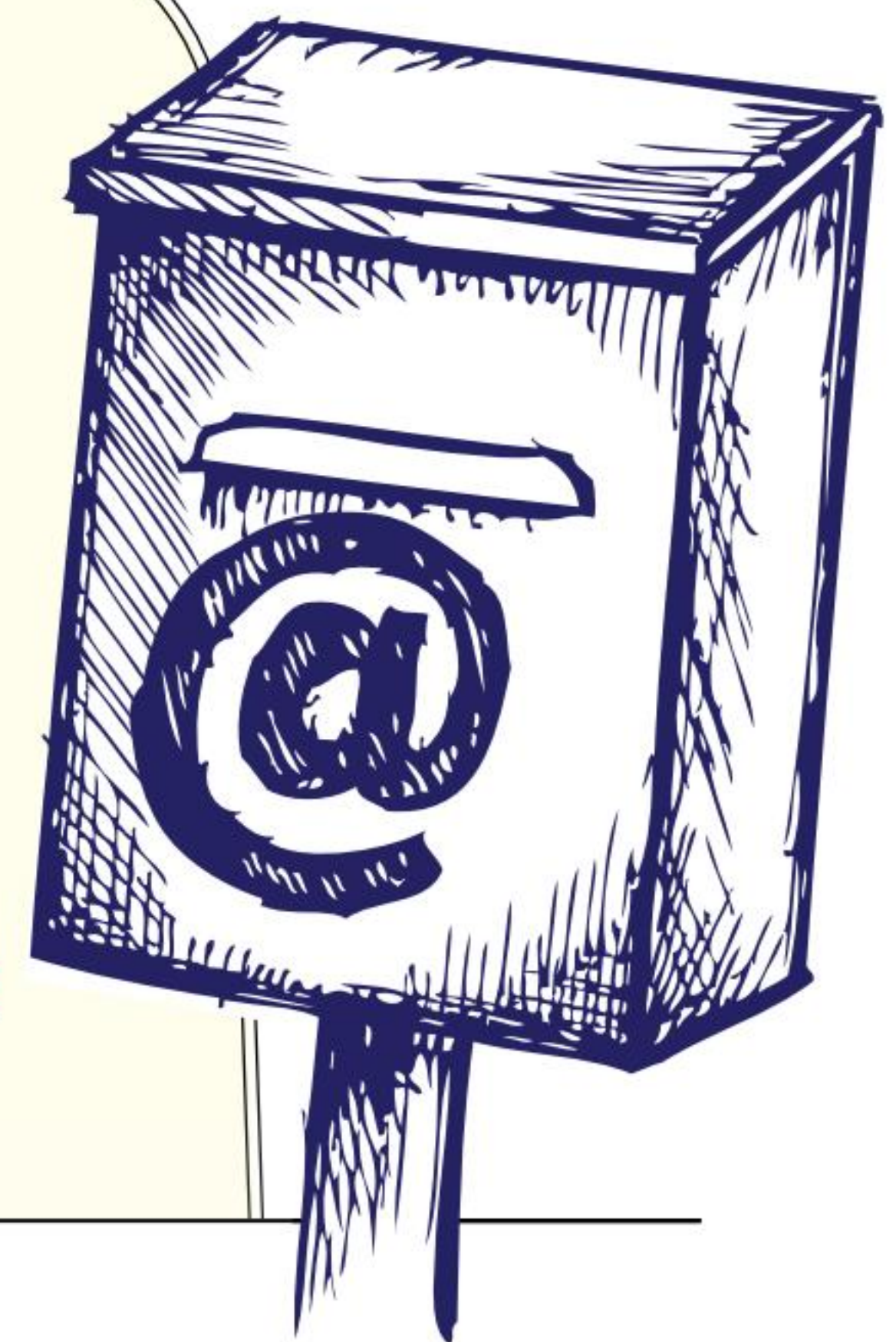
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IBEW 98

IBEW Local Union 98

Mark Lynch, Jr. Business Manager

Salutes Philadelphia RowHome Magazine's

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Sonny Hill

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Service to Community Award

Charles Ingui (Soul Survivors)
Lifetime Music Achievement Award

Kenny Jeremiah (Soul Survivors)
Lifetime Music Achievement Award

John Nash

Harry Kalas Memorial Sports Award

Bob Pantano

Entertainment Award

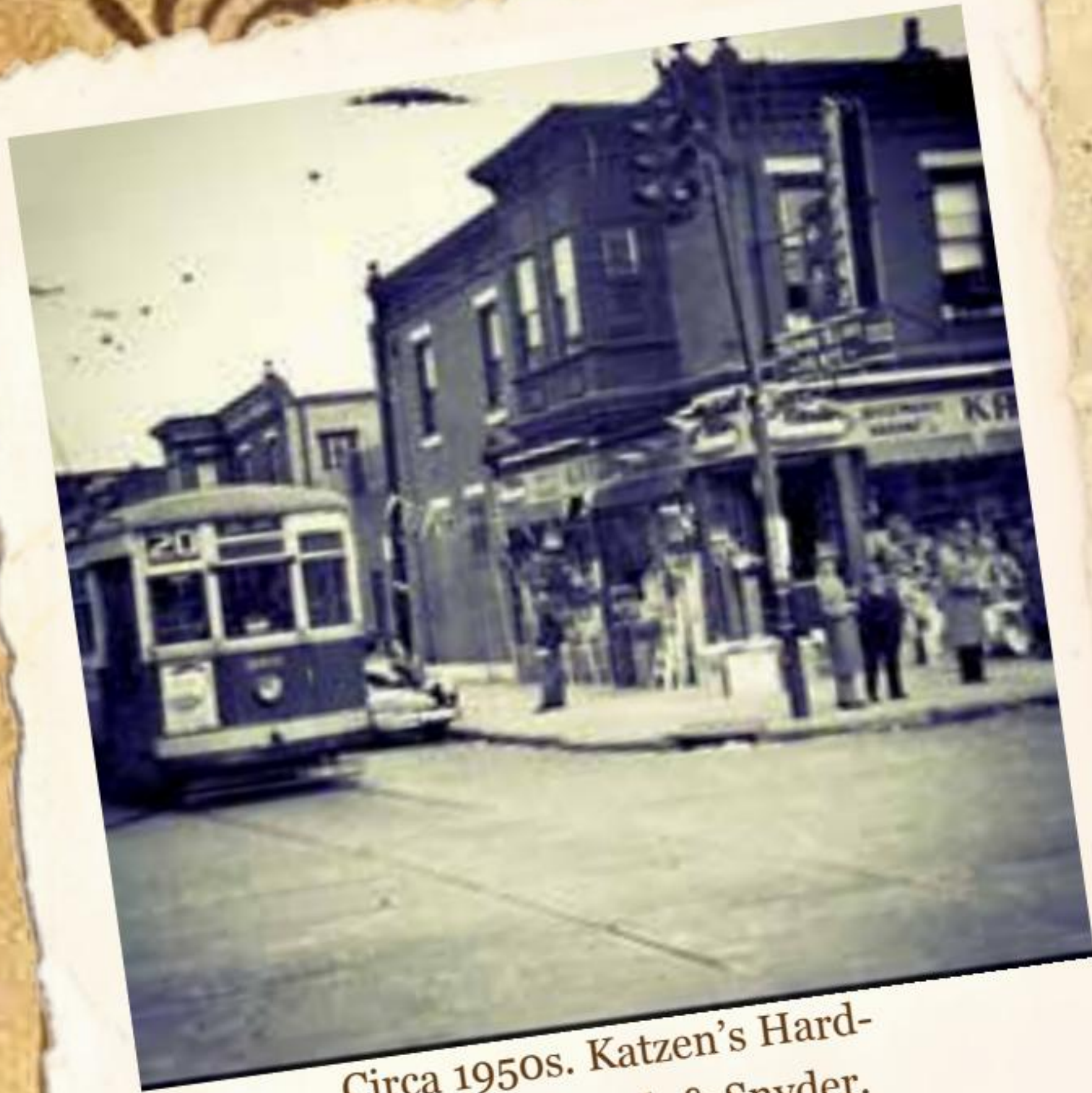
John and Joann Vacca

(The Petal Pusher Florist & Decorators)
Local Business Success Story

WISHROCK WINNERS:

Brianna Mazzola

Mike Raymond, Jr.



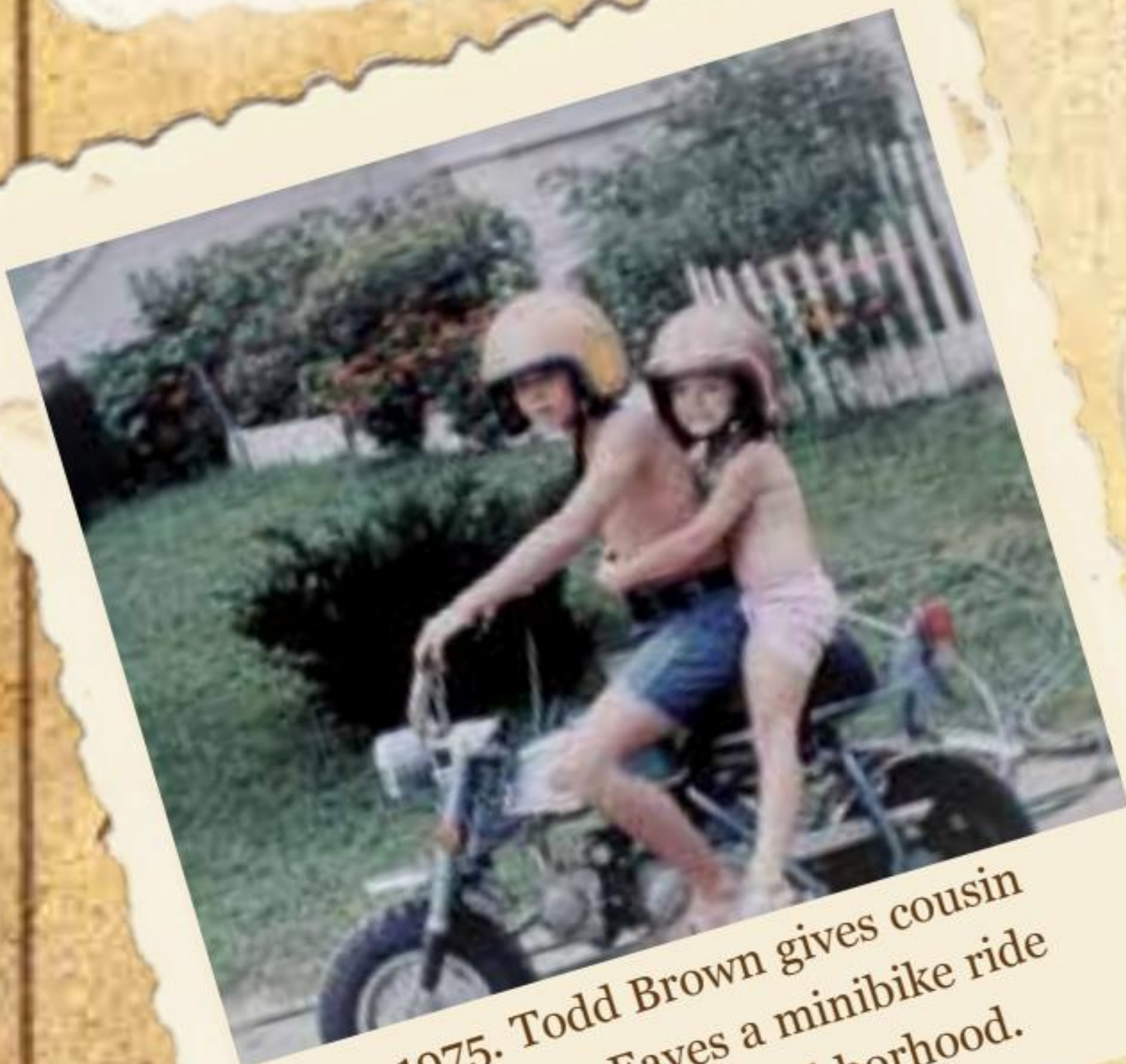
Circa 1950s. Katzen's Hardware Store, 12th & Snyder.



1977. Jackie & Joey Persiano see Santa for Christmas at John Wanamaker's.



1953. Katherine "Kass" Palestino.



1975. Todd Brown gives cousin Margaret Eaves a minibike ride through the neighborhood.



1968. The Angerome sisters - Loretta & Carolyn "Cookie."



1960. Queen Street. Danny Vanore & sister Angela on Christmas Eve with Dad (Donnie) & Mom (Chickie).



Class of 1952. Roman Catholic High School. Thomas Joseph Retallick.



1961. Joseph Donatucci enjoys Christmas at his family home on the 1800 block of Watts Street.



1966. Pam Iannacone at McDonald's, Broad & Snyder.



1964. Dorette (on chair) and sister Dawn at Nana & PopPop's house on Schley Street in Packer Park.



1960. Spending time with neighbors on Schley Street. Caroline (Carrie) & Anthony (Tony) Angerome with Francis Clause and mom Elizabeth, Vincent Clause & baby Dorette.



February 11, 1929. Wedding Day for Mary Giordano & Joseph Testa.



Circa 1941. Bill Retallick (left) & brother Richie.



The Puccini sisters – Kathleen, Patty & Roselyn.

Neighborhood *Noir*

Please send your neighborhood memories to PRH PO Box 54786 Phila PA 19148
Or post them to our Facebook page www.Facebook.com/PhiladelphiaRowHomeMagazine
or Email them to rowhomebrenda@gmail.com



Easter Sunday 1958. Annin Street. Julia & big brother John Salerno. "He still holds my hand."



Easter Sunday 1966. 1900 Sartain Street. Theresa Lombardo (left) with sister Angel in Grandmom's backyard.



May 12, 1951. Wedding Day for Carmen & Marie Scalfaro.



HANGIN' OUT



1. GiaCapri Locascio is hangin' out with baby brother Santino & new baby cousin Alessia Lana.
2. Denise Larosa, Janet Hagen & Marie Elena Abbruzzi are hangin' out at Memories in Margate, Labor Day Weekend.
3. Brothers Nick & Ralph Laino are hangin' out with Jeffrey Cargini.
4. The Cousins - Anthony Liberato, Maria DeTheodore & Gloria Liberato are hangin' out at Nitty's.
5. Donna Lamaine & friends are hangin' out at the annual "Girl's Day at the Shore" in Gardner's Basin, Atlantic City. This year's theme was "Our Flock Rocks!"
6. Hangin' Out with Johnny Luciano & Nicholas DiRenzo at a party at Memories in Margate.
7. Hangin' out at a surprise party for Elisa Pescatore at Swan Caterers' Waterfall Room.
8. Amanda, Brenda, Meg, TeriAnn & Christine are hangin' out at the Grand Hotel in Cape May.
9. Elle Madylin Rhoades (EMR Trucking) tries her Daddy Michael's boots on for size!
10. PRH's Mark Casasanto Sr. & Mark Jr. are hangin' out on-site at MLB's Field of Dreams Ballpark in Dyersville, Iowa.
11. Coach Ron Malandro Sr. is hangin' out with Billy Fulginiti & Ronnie Malandro Jr. of PHL Athletics. These longtime friends, teammates & business partners finished first and second in the Atlantic City Triathlon, ages 30-34 division.
12. Nicholas DiRenzo, The Geator & Frankie Pierantozzi are hangin' out at Memories in Margate.
13. RowHome Dawn is hangin' out with childhood friends Jeffrey Cargini & Johnny "Pompo" Pescatore.
14. Father/Son Day in Ventnor Heights! Hangin out' with Jerry & Joe Persiano & Carmen & Lil C LaRosa.
15. Albert "Sugar Bear" Barbieri is hangin' out at his office.
16. Santino Truscello & Bernie DiGabriele are hangin' out at the Hot Wheels Monster Bash at the Wells Fargo Center.
17. Dorette & Joe are hangin' out with Brett Jackson & Alexa Zepp at Alfe's in Wildwood.
18. Happy 60th birthday to Karen Wagner Sferra who celebrated with family & friends at a surprise party hosted by daughter Carissa!
19. Hangin' out with Maria DeTheodore & great friends celebrating Janice Jones' 60th Birthday at the Vassar in Ventnor.
20. Ralphie Pung, Anthony Liberato & Stevie Gongs are hangin' out at the Borgata.
21. Hangin' out with the Innovative Catering & Operations team from MLB Field of Dreams Game 2022 who celebrate with a wrap dinner at Woodfire Grille at Diamond Jo Casino in Dubuque, Iowa.





THE MAN *in* THE CHAIR

ON THE CORNER *with* MARK CASASANTO

photos by MARK CASASANTO & SARAH MORMANN

Although I spent a relatively short time on earth with him, every day I grow more fortunate in knowing I am my father's son. What can I say? He was a classic. Back in the day, I think we all knew that one person.

When my dad asked you to take a ride with him, it was usually something just short of a three-hour tour. No maps, no written directions, not a single luxury. In fairness, these were the days long before cellphones, GPS and MapQuest. 'Follow your nose!' he would say in response to any query regarding his navigational know-how. When you road-tripped with my father, you learned to prepare for anything because you could wind up anywhere, return anytime, with just about anything or anyone.

These little life adventures with my dad unleashed the curiosity in me, not to men-



tion the *nerveen*. It created a forever quest to find or do something unique and different. It was the fire that fueled that desire to look at life through varied lenses. The roadside stands, quirky attractions and even useless junk acquired along the way are etched into the fabric of who I've become. I've logged more check-ins to custard castles, hubcap Christmas trees and backroad bazaars than most seasoned truckers. Hell, if travel and adventure series were a thing in the '70s, I'd probably be writing this from the family compound in Malibu rather than under a plastic poolside palm at a Wildwood Crest motel. We were *Expedition Unknown*, *American Pickers*, and *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* wrapped into our own little reality show.

My building blocks as a writer are certainly rooted in those impressionable early years. Essentially, I could find a story in just about anything. Imagination was fostered by a genuine sense of community from the off-the-beaten-path towns and their side streets to nowhere. My father, chief cheerleader amongst the beautiful strangers. Me, along for the ride with an indelible sense of Americana.

Through the years, I've learned as a writer to tackle what's in front of you and write the story later. Last summer, I wrote about my very own amazing father and son experience while working at the inaugural Field of Dreams MLB Game. Talk about gift-wrapped. Still, I left Iowa with a blank canvas waiting to be painted.

Dyersville is at least a half-hour from anything and not just on a John Deere. To get to the movie site from our place on the Mississippi River in Guttenberg, we'd have to pass through a couple of small towns. Proceeding carefully so not to blow through the speed limit, there was something special about the daily New Vienna pass. As if specifically scripted, there, in front of the weathered brick facade of a corner store, sat a man in a retro-styled beach chair. We didn't know him. He didn't know us. Yet there he sat, duty-like, waving his flyswatter ('Doncha know the flies are devil-sent in Iowa?') to say hello to a bunch of strangers "just-a-travelin" through.

This past August, we again dropped anchor at the house on the banks of the Mighty Mississippi. And although there's a certain comfort in familiarity, something was missing this time

around. As we passed through town, that man in the chair was no longer there. I asked the locals. Each had a story and a version or two, thereof, yet nothing definitive. I grew genuinely worried.

With load-out looming, following a monstrous grind the day before, we were afforded a well-deserved late crew call. Two hours off the norm felt like a full vacation. Somewhat refreshed and now traveling in the morning bright, we set out on our way. As I throttled down to 25 mph to adhere to the limit, up ahead in the distance, something appeared in my peripheral. "There he is!" I shouted while drifting towards a dead stop.

I powered the windows down and quickly condensed a year's worth of conversation into mere minutes. He with a smile and a flyswatter; we, as only city slickers knew how. "Yo cuz, where ya been?... Mah man! ... S'up OG!" And in this moment in time, when East met Midwest, absolutely nothing else mattered.

Never discount the fortune of good timing and a slight change of plans. Somewhere out there, you might just roll up on your own Pete Weyant in small town USA.

Just be sure to treasure every moment. **PRH**

When
*did I become a
Dinosaur?*



BY TONY SANTINI

W

hen I hear someone say that getting old is no fun, I always respond, “Maybe. But it sure beats the alternative!” Getting old doesn’t bother me. What does bother me is trying to figure out when I became a dinosaur.

I recently traveled by air on a business trip. I had my paper boarding pass in hand but, at the gate, everyone else was placing their cell phone

on the scanner. I carried my laptop on the plane and my laptop bag was bigger than everyone else’s carry-on luggage. After settling in my seat, the young guy in the window seat next to me pulls out an iPad; a Think Pad; an iPhone; and his wireless earbuds and uses them all simultaneously in conjunction with his Apple Smart Watch. I marveled at his ability to multitask. I also was embarrassed to pull out my paperback book; the crossword puzzle I tore out of the *Metro* newspaper; and my iPod with the attached headphones complete with the wire

connection that sits around my neck.

Instead, I figured I would order a cocktail. When the flight attendant approached, I had a nice, crisp \$20 bill in hand. She said, ‘I’m sorry, Sir. We cannot accept cash on this flight.’ No problem. I pulled out my credit card. Once again, she says, ‘I’m sorry, Sir. You will have to pre-load the card information onto the United Airlines mobile app and then we can confirm your seat and charge your card accordingly.’ Sure, like I know how to do that. I passed on the cocktail and settled for the complimentary snack of a one-

ounce bag of pretzels or *two* biscotti which she offered to me as if it were lobster tail or a porterhouse steak.

I hesitated to buy a new car because I didn’t want to give up my six-CD changer and tape deck which allowed me to play all my homemade CDs and mixtapes. When I told the salesman this, he looked at me like I was nuts and explained that the new car had an on-board computer that would hold up to 10,000 songs.

Although happily retired, I did have a part-time job a few years ago. On my first day in the office, I proceeded to sharpen my pencils using my electric sharpener that I brought from home. The three young ladies in the surrounding cubicles all ran over to check on me when they heard the noise. When I told them it was just my pencil sharpener, they said, ‘YOUR WHAT? Who still uses a pencil?’ ▶▶

I now work part-time for a few companies that call me with a schedule. Once received, I pencil in the dates on my 8 1/2 x 11, spiral-bound calendar. My wife just looks at me and smirks. I still carry a pen in my pocket. You never know when you might have to write something down.

I own and use handkerchiefs. I wear Royal Copenhagen cologne and Puma suede sneakers. Not sorry!

I owe my daughter money. She says, 'Just Venmo me, Dad!' I guess she doesn't want to get paid. If I tell my kids that I have to go to the bank, they get hysterical.

When I say I have to go to the store to buy something, they ask me if I ever heard of Amazon Prime. They think we keep the landline phone in our house as a nostalgic gesture.

Even my three-year-old grandson is a critic. I tried to amuse him the other day by getting out some paper and pencils to play Tic-Tac-Toe and Dots. He said, 'What the matter, Pop? Is your tablet charging?'

My best friend took me to a Phillies game, last month. He stopped in the Pro Shop and bought a Bryce Harper jersey for \$140. I was wearing the same Phillies shirt that I owned for years. He said, 'Sometimes, you just have to upgrade your fan gear.' I said, 'Why? Did the team change their name?'

I've never listened to a podcast or streamlined anything in my life and would rather watch endless reruns on MeTV than any of the dozens of reality shows on network television. I did binge-watch *Yellowstone* during the pandemic. I watched two episodes a week for 8 months. That counts as binge-watching, right?

I stopped trying to memorize all my passwords for online stuff. Now, I just hit, "Forgot Password" since it is easier to recall my best friend's name; my first pet's name; and, that I met my wife in Philadelphia.

I relate to all those Progressive Insurance, "You turned into your parents" commercials and not in a favorable way. So, maybe I am a T-Rex or maybe I'm just old-school and reluctant to change. I guess I will just go to the library and get a self-help book to see if I could change. **PRH**

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Mary D'Anella
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A Montessori Preschool

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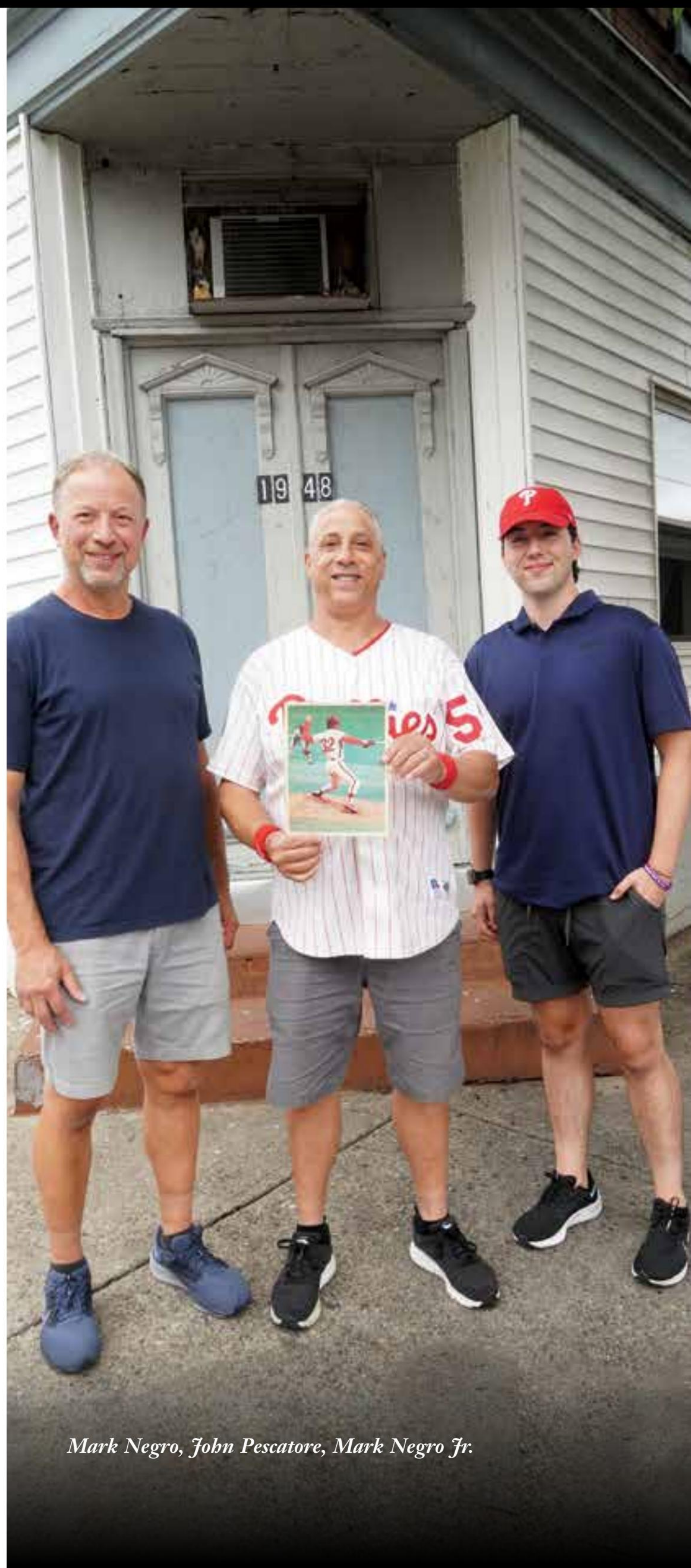
photos by MOORE IN FOCUS

THE 15TH ANNUAL EAST PASSYUNK CAR SHOW & Street Festival returned this summer to become one of South Philly's largest parties! Spectators enjoyed more than 150 antique, show, classic and custom cars, trucks and motorcycles. This family-friendly event is free to attend, and this year, included live music & DJs, regional crafters, plus street food and summer drinks from Avenue restaurants. Find more events and get ready for next year by following www.visiteastpassyunk.com for details. Thanks to all participating businesses and sponsors.





Mark Negro (center with long hair and glasses), John Pescatore (reclining with hand on bent knee), Matthew Negro (Mark's younger brother), Domenic "Meemo" Messina (far left).



Mark Negro, John Pescatore, Mark Negro Jr.

BOUND by
FRIENDSHIP,
LOYALTY

& *Steve
Carlton*

BY LARRY GALLONE
PHOTO BY ANDREW ANDREOZZI

Growing up in the summer and fall of 1972, two things were certain (no, not those two things as the cliché goes). It was the Phillies' ace Steve Carlton coming through and the Alder Street boys being together every day playing, laughing, enjoying their friendship. As is true for many row home friendships, these bonds last a lifetime. Let's jump ahead 50 years to 2022. The Alder Street

gang, who met growing up in St. Nicholas of Tolentine parish, is still together. As John Pescatore remembers, "About six-eight months ago, we called each other to meet up and go out to dinner." While enjoying dinner, one of the guys, Mark Negro, asks John, "Do you remember when you turned eight and had a birthday party, and I missed it because my dad had tickets to the Phillies Fan Appreciation Day?" It was a rare occasion that one of the guys missed another's birthday party. Mark, his brother Frank, and their dad went to the game at Veterans Stadium. As a giveaway for Fan Appreciation Day, a photograph of Steve Carlton was handed out. It was 1972 and Steve Carlton was the talk of Major League Baseball. Carlton went 27-10 that year, accounting for 45% of the wins for a last-place Phillies team that won only 59 games. He led the league in wins with 27, and ERA at 1.91, and strikeouts with 310. That picture of Carlton was gold to a young boy in 1972. But there's more. Mark was able to get Carlton's autograph on the

picture along with the autographs of several of the Phillies on that team. Mark, being the friend he was, took that photo and gave it to John as a gift for his birthday. "He missed my birthday party, gave me that picture. Now what 10-year-old does that?" John asks now. When the birthday party was brought up at the dinner, it got John thinking about that picture. "I think I still have that," he remembered. While cleaning up one of the rooms in his house shortly after, John found it.

"I said to myself, I'm going to spring it on him."

As John tells the story, he asked Mark to stop by his house (they still live only a few blocks from each other in South Philly). When Mark got to John's house, John handed him the picture and said, "Give this to your son."

The picture came full circle.

Mark couldn't believe the autographed photo survived 50 years and now that his son has it, he couldn't be more thrilled. The autographed picture is still in the "Alder Street family."

The photo is only part of the story. John says they started playing on Alder Street because the traffic on McKean or 10th Street made the other streets off limits. As a "little street" where some of the guys lived, Alder Street was the perfect place to play and hang out.

The guys did everything together. The older guys always looked after the younger guys. "It was Frank and Mark Negro, Rusty and Bruce Marconi, Frankie and Johnny Carto, Michael "Zeke" Scelsa and Mitchell Spera," John says.

He reminisces about walking from 10th and Mifflin to Vet Stadium to sit in the "Sky Deck" – the 700 level in the outfield. Kids under 14 paid 50 cents for a ticket.

The guys would joke around and tease each other as only 8-12-year-old kids can do. "We would walk by the hedges on 10th Street on the way to the stadium and ask, 'Have you ever been to Greenland?' and then we would push them into the bushes."

It was one of many little stories that binds the guys together for half a century.

The Steve Carlton picture and the story that accompanies it from 50 years ago is just a piece of the Alder Street gang history. It is the physical piece of an emotional and familial bond between friends that embodies row home living. Not only from river to river, but from generation to generation. **PRH**

PRH
ON THE
COVER

(CAN'T)

*Fuhgeddabout
Christmas*





On set with stars Brent Pella, Eric D'Alessandro, Justina Valentine, Mike Taverna & Conceited

I've done my fair share of globetrotting. I've toured internationally, lived in a handful of major US cities (a decade plus in NYC) and still, it stands, there's no place like South Philly.

No matter where life has taken me, I am grateful to have grown up in my row home. They say you're lucky if you have one good friend left from high school; we're a community that's on group threads with our grade school friends. You likely get together for a beach day at the shore, or the occasional gentlemen's dinner, and of course, we ALWAYS celebrate New Year's Day.

I went to my besties' kids t-ball practice back in March. I had a rare day off from the movie and couldn't resist a night under the lights at 18th & Johnson to see them practice...some for the first time. It felt like a Friday night from freshman year except with a bunch of mini me's running around. My heart was warm and my soul was nostalgic watching these kids now grow up together. My friends / former classmates are encouraging parents / coaches, teaching them to run around the bases while instilling important lessons... Don't quit! Be a team player! Just the way we all once did together, with our parents, on that same field.

The best is when I tell people I'm from South Philly. There's an immediate respect, fascination, and connection. You'd be surprised at how many people around the world "know a guy" or "have a cousin" from South Philly. Dawn, Dorette, and the *Philadelphia RowHome Magazine* team do a beautiful job highlighting our town with this magazine. Each issue is a reminder that we all remain connected through our neighborhoods, our businesses, our stories, and most importantly, our traditions. South Philly has taught me what it means to respect and maintain traditions...that message is the moral to the *Fuhgeddabout Christmas* story.

Nobody ever understands what I do for a living. I remember my first meeting with Dawn in 2009. I was in a coffee shop with my laptop explaining to her social media, content production, and how I was a visual storyteller.

She didn't get it at all, but they believed in me and let me write for their new magazine. I was pumped to have my words in print. They told me I was a writer. They mentored me and became a steady reminder that South Philly always had my back.

Now, more than a decade later, I am writing about a new movie that I co-wrote, produced, directed, and edited with one of the biggest stars on MTV.

For the last seven years, I've worked on the management team for TV Star & mega influencer *Justina Valentine* (20+ million followers). She's a north NJ Italian and we clicked instantaneously. With the help of an exceptionally talented cast & crew, we made this film independently from script to screen together in less than a year. I had the opportunity to work with stars like *Nick Cannon*, *Teresa Giudice*, *Vincent Guadagnino*, *Vincent Pastore*, *Eric D'Alessandro*, *DC Young Fly*, *Conceited* and many more.

Sharing our family sayings / holiday traditions was a memorable process. We realized that no matter what river you live near, as Italian Americans, we are loud, love hard, fight hard, and eat well! We exemplify unconditional love...there's nothing more important than family (and friends who become family), a life mantra growing up in a South Philly row home has taught me.

Fuhgeddabout Christmas is a laugh-out-loud Christmas comedy for the whole family to enjoy. Another fun fact is that I found out the movie was picked up while attending my 20-year high school reunion with my fellow GAMP classmates. Life really does have a way of coming full circle!

From the bottom of my heart, I hope this film speaks to you & yours. I hope my journey inspires you to have faith over fear and move towards freedom by living your purpose. You just might wake up one day on the cover of *RowHome Magazine*!

Thank you to Dawn & Dorette for your UNCONDITIONAL support. It is a privilege and honor to know you, to love you, and to be featured here where my professional writing career began. I wish you all a happy, healthy, holiday season. I'd like to leave you with a toast I often make:

"To those that came before us and the legacies we leave behind...Salute! Cin Cin!"

About "Justina Valentine presents *Fuhgeddabout Christmas*." When an Italian American superstar realizes her family is fed up with her workaholic ways, she gets help from her celebrity friends, Santa, and magical elves to give them the best Christmas ever. **Coming Soon.**

by Joan Roman
photos by
Andrew "Lopicc"
Lopiccolo

I'VE DONE MY
FAIR SHARE OF
GLOBETROTTING.
I'VE TOURED
INTERNATIONALLY,
LIVED IN A
HANDFUL OF
MAJOR US CITIES
(A DECADE PLUS
IN NYC) AND STILL,
IT STANDS, THERE'S
NO PLACE LIKE
SOUTH PHILLY

KEN EAVES TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Roman Catholic honors teacher for keeping kids on track – on the field & in the classroom

BY TOMMY RETALLICK



Ken Eaves with wife Stephanie & daughter Brookelin

Roman Catholic High School recently awarded Ken Eaves with its 2022 *Teacher of the Year* award. Eaves received his Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology from Temple University and earned a Masters of Exercise and Sports Science from the University of Florida. He returned to his hometown Philadelphia where he worked for several years at HealthSouth Sports Medicine and

Physical Therapy Corporation. In the summer of 1999, while still at HealthSouth, he became the outreach Athletic Trainer for Roman Catholic. He began teaching Honors Biology and Introduction to Sports Medicine at Roman in 2004, while still serving as the school's Athletic Trainer.

Q: How did you become the Athletic Trainer at Roman Catholic?

A: When I first started working for HealthSouth, the athletic trainers were responsible for four schools. After three years, when the contract with the Philadelphia schools ended, the administra-

tion asked the athletic trainers if we wanted to renew that contract and we all said 'no,' because covering four schools was near impossible. So, the trainer that was assigned to Roman left for physician assistant school and luckily, I was assigned to Roman.

Q: What made you leave HealthSouth and start teaching at Roman?

A: I was growing pretty tired of being in the clinic all summer. We did four hours in the morning in the PT clinic, and then four hours in the afternoon at the high schools. So, in the summer, you were in the clinic four hours a day and that just wasn't for me. After about three or four years at Roman as their athletic trainer,

one of the assistant principals approached me about teaching because they were increasing their enrollment. Luckily, I had enough undergraduate credits in Biology to start teaching.

Q: What sparked your interest in science?

A: My father was an electrician with a very science-based mind, my older brother was an electrical engineer, and my older sister became a nurse. There was always a lot of that going on in the house. I've just always had that inquisitive nature. Like when we would get something for Christmas, we would take it apart just to see what was inside. So, I guess I applied that to the human body.

Q: What do you intend to do when you retire?

A: I'm hoping to be able to retire from athletic training in the next few years and just teach, but I will teach as long as I can. I would love to be able to retire to a ranch, but I wouldn't be able

to work a ranch when I'm 70. I would love to retire out west and have a nice plot of ground, and see the sun rise in the morning and set in the evening.

Q: What are your favorite things to do on your time off?

A: Read. I love to read about history and about cars. I like to take care of my car and work in the yard. I work with a good friend of mine, who is a carpenter, all summer long. Besides working with your best buddy, you get to use your brain differently. It's a good change of pace.

Q: What is the best gift you've ever received from a student?

A: The one that comes to mind right away is a coffee mug that says my name on it and 'Biology.' But you know what? The best thing I've ever gotten was the appreciation and *thank you* from parents for basically being me and being honest with the kids. **PRH**



Ray in Rittenhouse Square. Photo courtesy of Temple University Press

RAY DIDINGER

After 53 years, Hall of Fame sports reporter says he's ready to transition from Ray Didi to Grandpop

BY ANTHONY PANVINI

Ray Didingler has covered approximately 884 regular season Philadelphia Eagles games as a sports reporter. With 53 years under his belt, there is not much that the Hall of Fame Philadelphia sports reporter hasn't accomplished in his career. In fact, Didingler is the only print journalist to cover the Flyers' Stanley Cup Championships, the 76ers Championship, the Phillies World Series Championship, and the Philadelphia Eagles Super Bowl 52 victory. He was present for every game and every parade. There is one thing, though, that Didingler has not done during his 53-year career - watch

a Philadelphia Eagles game with his son.

Didingler recalls being eight or nine years old, sitting at the end of his grandfather's bar in Southwest Philadelphia, Coca-Cola in hand, listening to the men talk sports. During the summers growing up, he attended Eagles Training Camp in Hershey, PA. with his parents.

The players had to walk from their sleeping quarters to the field and would often let children carry their helmets on the way.

"My parents were such big fans," Didingler says. "We used to go to practice every day

and back then, there were no restrictions about where you could go or where you could stand - it wasn't like there were fences or lines up. We could literally park our car, walk right up and stand on the sideline. So, I could wait right outside the locker room for Tommy McDonald [A Flanker for the Philadelphia Eagles] and when he came out, he would sign autographs and hand me his helmet and said, 'Come on, let's walk to the field.' For a kid who was really excited about sports, to be that in the 50s, when it was so available to you, was just a great blessing."

It was during these summers that Didingler

SPORTS



Eagles Post Game Live crew at Super Bowl LII. Photo courtesy of NBC Sports Philadelphia



Ray watches the game with his family in September 2022



Didinger with Tommy McDonald. Photo by Maria Gallagher

He began his professional career as a sportswriter in 1969 at the age of 23 when he was hired by the Philadelphia Bulletin.

formed a relationship that would not only last a lifetime, but also influence some of his future work. He began his professional career as a sportswriter in 1969 at the age of 23 when he was hired by the Philadelphia Bulletin. He went on to cover the National Football League (NFL) for The Philadelphia Bulletin and The Philadelphia Daily News for more than 25 years. He was awarded Pennsylvania Sports-writer of the Year five times.

The year 1985 marked the 25th anniversary of the Philadelphia Eagles' 1960 Championship. At the time, Didinger was penning a piece about the 1960 roster and what they remembered about the Championship run. One of the players he sat down with for an interview from that 1960 roster was Tommy McDonald.

"...I never took the conversation back to Hershey," Didinger says. "I just didn't do that, and it would've felt awkward. When I began the campaign to get him in the Hall of Fame, and he did get into the Hall of Fame, he asked me to be his presenter in 1998. When we got to Canton, I finally told him - I said, I was your biggest fan and I used to wait for you outside the locker room and he [McDonald] said, 'Wow, you were that kid who knew all the stats' [Didinger used to recite Tommy's stats to him while walking to the field at Training Camp]. I wasn't sure he'd remember after all that time. It was really cool and it brought our story full circle."

Didinger's push to get McDonald into the Hall of Fame inspired Didinger to write the play Tommy and Me, which made its debut in

2016 in Philadelphia. The play recounts the relationship that Didinger and McDonald formed over the years, from Didinger carrying the helmet as a child to presenting him into the Hall of Fame in 1998.

"In those seven years when he was with the Eagles, and we went up to training camp every year and I would do the same drill—it was in those years that he [McDonald] started calling me little brother and it was great," Didinger says. "I really felt like—this guy is your football hero, and you actually have this sort of relationship with him."

The first defining moment of Didinger's career, which he described as one that shifted the whole 'self-esteem' of the city, was the first Flyers Stanley Cup win in 1974.

"Philadelphia was in a bad way at that time. The city



Working from home. Photo by Maria Gallagher

wasn't doing very well, sports teams were just awful, the Phillies were awful, the Eagles were the worst team in the NFL, the Sixers were coming off that 9-73 season and they weren't even trying to tank," Didingar jokes. "Lo and behold, the Flyers came along and won the cup in a big upset which really kind of lifted the whole city and changed the whole feel in the town. Everybody got behind the idea of winning and by the time the Flyers beat Boston for the cup, everybody was a Flyers fan. It didn't matter if they knew a blue line from a red line. They were all in on the Flyers."

The most important moment, however, was the Philadelphia Eagles Super Bowl 52 victory. Didingar explained it as the moment everyone was 'waiting for.'

"...That's the one the whole city was waiting for, so seeing that happen, being there and the fact that that was the one Championship that we were all kind of waiting for—we've seen the Flyers, we had seen the Sixers, we had seen the Phillies, everybody was waiting for that Eagles parade and when it finally happened, it was really special," Didingar says.

That Super Bowl victory was what

prompted Didingar to return to a project that he originally turned down in 2016—a memoir of his career. Approached by the Temple Press in 2016, Didingar was approaching the 50-year mark on his career.

"[Temple Press] asked if I ever thought about doing a memoir and I said not really, but okay at 50 years. I kind of get it," Didingar says. "I sat down and started writing, but I called him back and said I just wasn't feeling it. We just kind of put it away."

Didingar felt as though the book didn't seem to have much focus or purpose to it. That feeling changed, however, when he was flying back to Philadelphia after the 2017-2018 Super Bowl victory.

"...Seeing everything that was happening in the city, I said, 'You know what, yeah, I think there is a book here, now. That was the missing piece. The book didn't seem complete without the Eagles winning a Super Bowl and when they won it, it really kind of gave the book an ending, a reason to exist. That's when I sat down and started writing - Finished Business: My Fifty Years of Headlines, Heroes and Heartaches.

It's kind of like these 50 years have brought us to this point."

The memoir, published in May of 2021, takes readers through the journey of Didingar's career and the ups and downs of the Philadelphia sports world. After 53 years of being a sports journalist, author, radio talk show host, playwright and theater producer, Didingar announced his retirement during his radio show on May 8, 2022, saying that May 29, 2022, would be his final show, citing, "I'm ready to transition from Ray Didi to Grandpop."

"...My granddaughter is a senior in college now and she was only going to have one more year of

"I have never watched an Eagles game with my son," Didingar says. "It's pretty amazing when you think about it and considering - I could be off a little bit, but not by much - 884 Eagles games, not counting preseason. I've watched a lot of Eagles football, but I've never actually sat down and watched a game with my son. I was always in the press box, or I was in the TV studio. I know David and I are both looking forward to it."

Sunday, September 11, 2022, marked the first time ever that Didingar got to watch an Eagles game with his son David when they opened the season



Press passes through the years. Photo by Maria Gallagher

field hockey. I wanted to be there for her. I knew my grandsons were going to be playing organized football this year and I wanted to be there for that," Didingar says. "Four years have gone by, and my wife and I haven't taken a vacation. All of those things said to me that it's just time. I just felt like my family had made tremendous sacrifices for me and I had missed out on a lot. It's important that I spend this time with my family."

Another thing that Didingar looked forward to being was simply a fan of the team opposed to a reporter. When asked what aspect of being a fan he most looked forward to, he paused and took a moment to think.

against the Detroit Lions.

"I never knew until someone asked, 'When was the last time you watched an Eagles game with your Dad?' that we had never done that," says David, Didingar's son. "To finally have a chance to do it was great fun. I couldn't believe he was still taking notes during the game. Best of all, the Eagles won so that was icing on the cake."

Didingar echoes David's statement. "It did feel strange sitting at home and watching the Eagles. For more than 50 years, I was always working. But here I was watching the Eagles and Detroit Lions with my son sitting next to me and my bulldog at my feet. And you know something? I really enjoyed it." PRH

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WYNDALE AVENUE *renamed* LADY B WAY

*Philly's first lady of hip hop
honored for her achievements*

BY BRENDA HILLEGAS
PHOTOS BY DARRYL MEDLEY OF THE PICTURE MASTER

Q: The City of Philadelphia renamed the 5700 Block of Wyndale Avenue "Lady B Way." What are some of your favorite memories growing up on that block?

A: Some of my favorite memories growing up on Wyndale Avenue were with the Daniels family. Hollywood producer Lee Daniels was like our manager and producer when we were just small children. We would sing, dance and reenact movies, songs, plays.

The entire block was like one big family. We respected all the family, and they looked after us as if we were their own.

Q: Where were you when you got the news of the street naming? What were your initial thoughts?

A: I received a phone call from my dear friend Malika Love on March 31st, ending

Women's History Month. She informed me that she and a group of others had a resolution passed to name Wyndale Avenue "Lady B Way." My initial thoughts? *I can't believe this is happening.* I immediately thought of my mom and how extremely proud she would have been. When I thought of that fact that would immortalize me, I got very emotional.

Q: Who were your hip-hop influences when you were younger?

A: Being that I was the very first female to record a hip-hop song, I didn't have many influences.

Q: RowHome presented you with a Blue Sapphire Award in 2015 for leaving your mark on this city for generations to come. Tell us a bit about the achievements you've been most proud of since then.

A: This might sound crazy but being fired from the radio

station in 2017 and having the entire city, as well as local politicians, express their anger and hold press conferences and literally picket outside of the station, showed me that all my hard work was not in vain. My city truly supported me.

Q: What's in store for 2023?

A: Moving forward, I would love to continue to make a difference in my community via standing up and working hard on the front lines to change things for the better.

Q: Who are you listening to these days? What hip-hop artists have been really standing out, in your opinion?

A: First, let me say, I will never stop listening to my hip hop pioneers! They are now, and will always be, my favorites. As far as today's artists, I like Kendrick Lamar, Lizzo and Ella Mai. **PRH**

GIVEADELPHIA

Young Professionals Give Back

photos by DESHIELDS PHOTOGRAPHY (@humblebuthungry)

GIVEADELPHIA ENCOURAGES YOUNG PROFESSIONALS to support local nonprofits through charity work and gatherings held around the city. Each year, Giveadelphia, founded in 2019 by Mike Rabinowitz, partners with a local nonprofit to support its efforts. The fundraising year ends with its annual *Love Back Ball*, held this September at Stotesbury Mansion in Rittenhouse Square. Visit www.giveadelphia.com to learn more about the organization.

This year's funds benefit Heroic Gardens, a Veteran Service Organization whose goal is to help veterans experience the healing power of nature. Heroic Gardens offers virtual, and in-person social therapeutic horticultural programming aimed at helping veterans reduce anxiety, depression and symptoms of PTSD, while increasing confidence and self-esteem. For more information, visit www.heroicgardens.org.



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*What have you been
up to since 2020!*

PRH catches up with our
**WISHROCK
AWARD
WINNERS!**



Brianna Mazzola is honored to be receiving RowHome's **WishRock Award**. Despite the setback from the Pandemic, she has continued to work hard and fight for her dreams. In the past two years, since receiving the award, Brianna has been traveling back and forth from NY to LA, and even Nashville, working with new teams and producers. It has been her goal to really find her sound this year and release new music. On top of her independent music venture, she also has been working on some exciting projects that she can't currently talk about. Keep your eye out at the end of this year and into 2023 to follow her journey.



"Since 2020, I've been studying jazz guitar at Temple University. I was selected to perform with the Temple University Jazz Band under the direction of the great trumpeter Terrell Stafford. In 2021, I was awarded the Paul Beller Scholarship for my musicianship. Later in 2021, I released my first album of original music, *The Oncoming Storm*, on all major platforms. I was given a great opportunity teaching guitar at Roman Catholic High School during the 2021-2022 school year. In my spare time, I enjoy studying a wide variety of music and learning more about music composition. Through 2023, I hope to continue performing and writing more music."

- Mike Raymond, Jr.

About the WishRock Award

Presented annually as part of *Philadelphia RowHome Magazine's* Salute to Service Program, the **WishRock Award** recognizes young individuals whose passion to succeed has inspired a new generation of believers.

The WishRock Award is a symbol of one of many successful steps you will take along your journey in life. May it always remind you that all great accomplishments begin with a dream.

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Yo' South Philly Phestival Fills the Air with Music!

photos by ANDREW ANDREOZZI

THE YO' SOUTH PHILLY PHESTIVAL KICKED THE FALL season into high gear for 2022! The annual community event, produced by Dan Vanore of local band *The Business*, brings together the neighborhood's local musicians, vendors, family, and friends for a daylong *phestival* of entertainment, food, games, and fun. Presented by Messa & Associates, this year's event, with MC King Arthur, was held at Stella Maris Schoolyard and included a live simulcast by Loochradio.net followed by performances by Carmine Yusko, Tony Mecca & the Heavy Mental Gypsies, The Mike Raymond Jr. Band, Ryan Sab courtesy of JBCMUSIC, Tommy C, Remember Then, Burning Sky, Seems Like Tuesday, The Business, and Billy Carlucci.



THE 1492 SOCIETY

celebrates
*Italian American
Heritage Month*

Dinner & a parade honor the contributions & achievements of **Italian Americans**

photos by ANDREW ANDREOZZI

THE ANNUAL ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PARADE AND FESTIVAL took place in South Philadelphia's Marconi Plaza on a sunny Sunday afternoon on October 9th. Singer and entertainer Deana Martin, daughter of legendary crooner Dean Martin, the parade's Grand Marshal, ushered the televised celebration. Following the parade, the community enjoyed a festival that included musical performances by local entertainers like The Business, Felicia Punzo, Carmine Yusko, The Mark Raymond Jr. Band, and others. Local businesses lined the park while people experienced the food, family, and traditions of the neighborhood.

Earlier in the week, the 1492 Society celebrated Italian American Heritage at a "Night In Italy" dinner at Galdo's. The Society honored individuals for their outstanding service to the Italian American community as well as their support of the annual Italian American Heritage Parade. Awards were presented to **Ed McBride**, PECO (posthumously); **Danny Olivieri** (posthumously); **Jim Snell**, Steamfitters Local 420; **Michael Barnes**, Stagehands Local 8; Fr. **Douglas McKay**, Our House Ministries; and **John Stabeno**, Minister.



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Feasts & Festivals bring families together

photos courtesy of Jeffrey Cargini, Michael Giangiordano II & the Sabatino family

THE ANNUAL PROCESSION OF SAINTS
 through the streets of St. Nicholas of Tolentine parish kicked off this year's annual Italian Festival, led by pastor, Fr. Nicholas Martorano, and a dedicated committee of volunteers who make this one of the neighborhood's most beloved traditions.

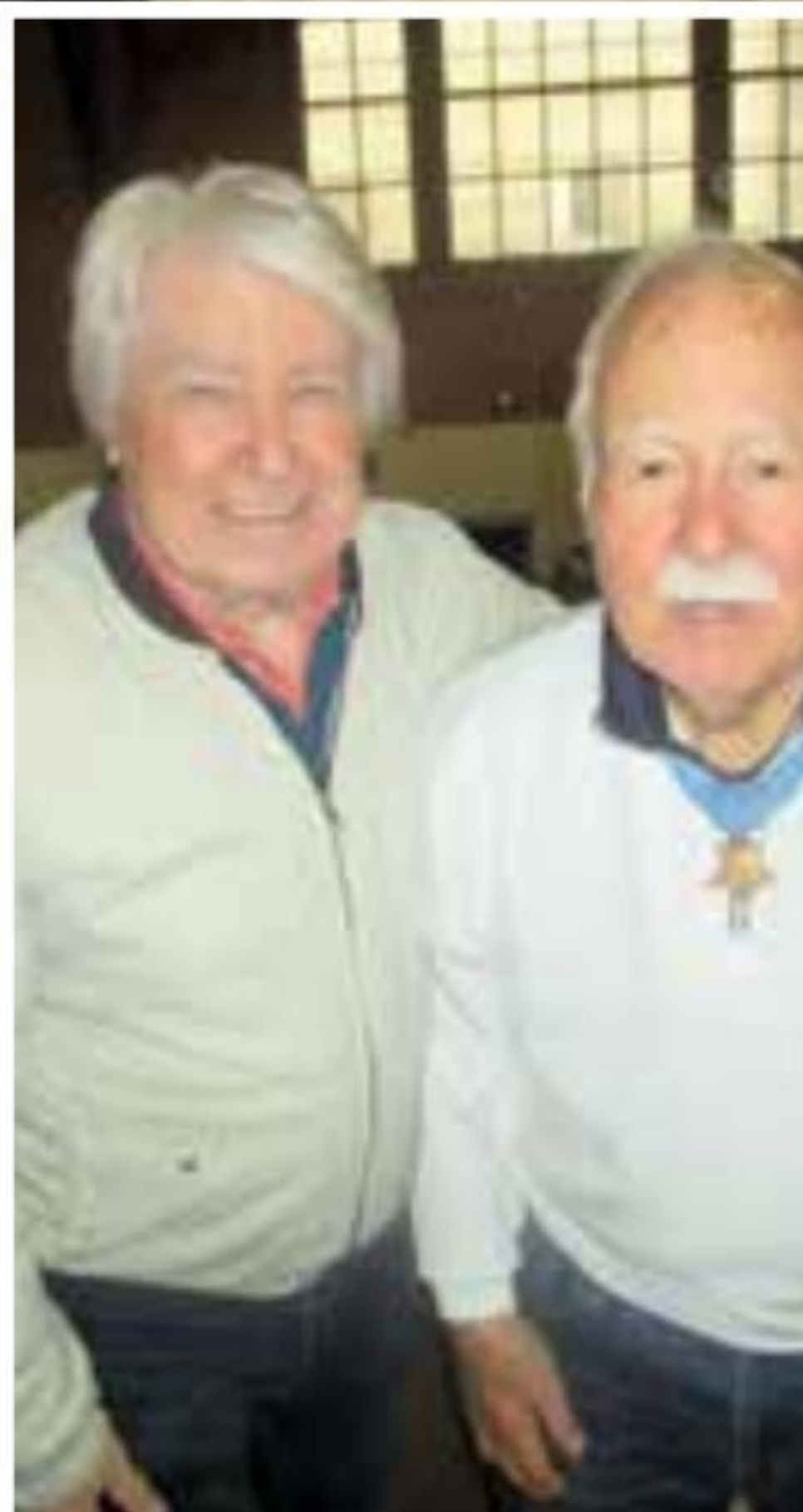




Kevin Kelly, Sean Dougherty, Col. (Ret.) Barney Barnum, Supreme Court Justice Kevin Dougherty and Ed Costello gather to support the MC-LEF.



Ken Adams with Medal of Honor recipient, Navy Seal (Ret.) Mike Thornton. Thornton has authored a new book with fellow Navy Seal Tom Norris called *By Honor Bound: Two Navy SEALs, the Medal of Honor, and a Story of Extraordinary Courage*.



Ken Adams greets Medal of Honor recipient Marine Corps Col. H.C. "Barney" Barnum, the fourth Marine to be awarded the nation's highest honor for valor in Vietnam.

THE MARINE CORPS-LAW ENFORCEMENT FOUNDATION

*Educating the Children of
those Who Sacrificed All*

BY MARIA MERLINO
PHOTOS BY ANDREW ANDREOZZI

Since its founding in 1995, the Marine Corps-Law Enforcement Foundation (MC-LEF) has been providing scholarships to children who have lost a parent while serving in the US Marine Corps or any federal Law Enforcement Agency. Jim Kallstrom, of FBI fame, served as chairman until his death in 2021.

When the Oklahoma City bombing occurred in 1995, 32 scholarships were awarded to the children of fallen agents. Since then, more than \$89 million in educational accounts – \$35,000 per child – have been distributed to more than 4,600 recipients, along with additional humanitarian assistance.

Overseen by a dedicated group of volunteers (there is only one paid employee), the MC-LEF organizes numerous events to raise the funds needed to accomplish the educational goals of its organization. Officers and Board members also volunteer their time and efforts to support the mission.



Flanked by Ken Adams (left) and attorney Brian Grady (right), Supreme Court Justice Kevin Dougherty and his son Sean share a happy moment with friends.

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INNOVATION, HARD WORK & TRUE GRIT

*a Pop-up Promo Helps Retailers
Avoid Pandemic Extinction*



BY GEORGE POLGAR

In these challenging times for traditional retail industries, and sponsorship and promotions models created in the last century, innovation and quick-thinking persistence saved the day for local marketing firm Old City Media and hundreds of clients and retailers across the country.

While traditional big-ticket sponsorships nearly disappeared during the pandemic, Old City Media created a new pop-up promo model in retail environments which were previously largely closed off to outside national brands.

BUSINESS

Through a combination of financial and promotional incentives, Old City Media is shaking up some very traditional retail networks. Already well-known for a hugely successful national series of sponsorship driven music, dance and food festival events at major professional sports stadiums and other big venues across the country, marketing boss Ray Sheehan and his creative and operations wing man Geoff Hazelwood, developed a pop-up promotion model to avoid pandemic extinction.

“Of course, our business for the last 25 years was dependent on large public events,” says Sheehan, who came up in the competitive nightlife scene and had graduated to more sponsorship driven mass attendance events like beer and wine tastings, taco, and pizza festivals.

Suddenly, the rug was pulled out from under them, and their entire calendar was wiped out. Initially, Sheehan and Hazelwood reasoned that at least they could scale back their sponsorship engagement promotion contracts to promos at restaurants and bars. Then the mandatory lockdowns and restaurant restrictions landed like a ton of bricks.

Just as Sheehan was marveling at his own misfortune, he tuned in momentarily to a news story in the background about how pandemic disruptions and loss of income were threatening Americans with extreme privations and food insecurity.

“It struck me like a bolt of lightning. I want to help wipe hunger in America!” says Sheehan, who had devised an on-site gift card promotion model where sponsored pop-up promo stations were offering in-store incentives to be redeemed by supermarket shoppers. The underlying benefit for consumers was to use the gift cards to stretch their supermarket budgets.

Major supermarket chains, which traditionally shy away from on-site promotion of products not for sale in their stores, were suddenly keen on maximizing the opportunity as sponsors were paying them fees to run the promotion and subsidize the gift card incentives.

“The program keeps evolving. Whether it’s a food drive, or helping brands give back to the community, we kept getting smarter. We had to keep figuring out ways to adapt and pivot from COVID and the economic repercussions,” Sheehan says.

In a few other retail sectors that stayed open, the pop-up activations were enormously successful. For example, when they placed pop-up promotions in hundreds of hardware stores across the country, the national trade journal *The Hardware Connection* featured the program for “Creating Excitement in Hardware Stores!”

“That has to be an accomplishment ... creating excitement in a hardware store?” Sheehan says with a chuckle.

The most recent variation of the program has been a focus on underserved communities working with retailers like ShopRite, Forman Mills and Ace Hardware.

“We’re finding that our sponsors are looking to develop new clientele in communities where immigrant and minority aspirational goals are a priority. They want to be a part of the process of bringing everyone along in terms of educating consumers in technology, home ownership and energy efficiency,” Sheehan explains.

In a sense, that is the lesson of the last two-and-a-half years for entrepreneurs like Ray Sheehan and Geoff Hazelwood. They took the traditional “win-win” deal-making strategy to a new dimension by adding a third “win” to the equation ... making promotions deliver benefits for sponsors, retailers, and consumers wherever they can be reached.

For this locally based national sponsorship and promotional events company, survival during the last few years was literally a matter of true grit! **PRH**



Blessing of the Animals

photos by ANDREW ANDREOZZI

Reverend Joseph Kelley, Pastor, St. Monica Parish, and Father Kenneth Cavara, oversee the Blessing of the Animals ceremony held in honor of the Feast of St. Francis, at FDR Park.



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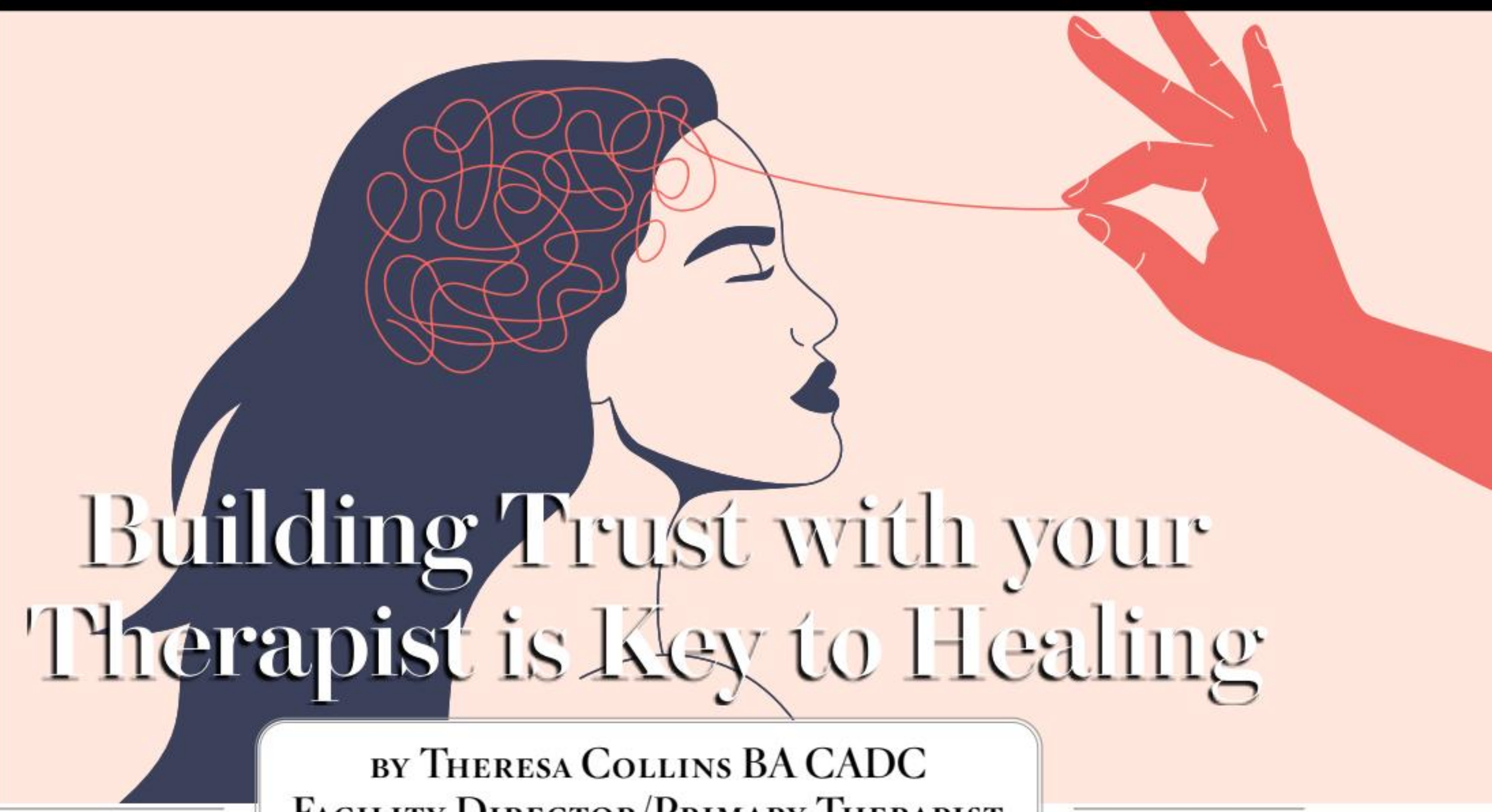


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PRH HEALTH



Building Trust with your 'Therapist is Key to Healing

BY THERESA COLLINS BA CADC
FACILITY DIRECTOR/PRIMARY THERAPIST
DIRECTIONS OUTPATIENT CENTERS

Having the right therapist and building a positive relationship with a therapist is an essential part of the recovery process. With the aftermath of COVID-19 still unfolding, more and more people are seeking treatment for mental health needs and substance use disorder. Directions Outpatient Center in both Philadelphia and Cherry Hill, NJ, offer a unique track that helps those seeking individual counseling in addition to psychiatrist and case management needs. Our therapists are trained in different psychotherapy techniques to help treat each client individually with their unique situations.

Some things to ask yourself when meeting with a therapist to make sure you are in the right hands:

DO I FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE PERSON I AM TALKING TO?

Diving into therapy is already an uncomfortable situation. Making sure you feel comfortable with the person you are sitting with is a vital step.

DOES THE THERAPIST APPEAR EMPATHETIC, A GOOD LISTENER, AND ABLE TO FOLLOW YOUR NEEDS?

You should feel heard by your therapist and an effective treatment plan that you are part of planning should be in place.

WHAT TYPE OF THERAPY DO THEY USE?

A good therapist will be able to tell you what type of therapy style they favor and why. Different approaches can be used for different scenarios, but most therapists lean toward a specific technique.

DOES YOUR THERAPIST HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE WHILE ALSO KEEPING A SCHEDULE?

Knowing that your therapist is holding you accountable for your own actions while doing the same for themselves, such as not canceling appointments, being on time, and making you a priority in the schedule, is important to continuum of care. Of course, emergencies and life get in the way, sometimes, but having a specific plan that is set in place together should be upheld.

The importance of rapport building is an aspect that therapists aspire to with every therapeutic relationship. Being able to recognize when a client might be better suited with another therapist is also part of the compassion and understanding the right therapist will provide.

The Directions family is fortunate to have a clinical team dedicated to connecting with patients on a human level and working intimately as a team on each individual case; ensuring that each patient that walks through the door is getting the absolute best care. No two facilities are the same and having a safe and therapeutic environment is our number one goal. When a safe environment is established with rapport building, the true miracle of healing can begin. **PRH**

Directions Outpatient Centers is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome Magazine (PRH) Business Network.

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After Sun Care Tips

*Treat Your Sunkissed
Skin to some TLC*

BY DR. DAVIDA KRUPNICK, MD,
DERMATOLOGY PARTNERS—SOUTH PHILLY

Summer's harsh UV rays can leave their mark on your skin and hair, one that's easier to spot in the dry winter air. As the weather starts to change from the hot summer sun to the crisp days of autumn, it's time to treat your sun-stressed skin with a little TLC.

What the sun does to our skin and hair

When the days get shorter, our tans start to fade and our skin starts to look pale and stressed, showing some of the consequences of

HEALTH those summer months. The top layer of skin has often thickened and discolored in response to the sun, leading to brown spots and flaking. The sun has also damaged the supporting tissues of our skin including collagen fibers and elastin, leaving our skin more wrinkled in appearance, and more prone to bruising due to increased fragility of blood vessels.

Our hair can also be affected by the sun and summer exposures. UV rays can impact hair, causing it to feel dry, brittle, and frizzy. Chlorine from swimming pools also commonly damages hair by dissolving into hair lipids, which are fatty acids in our hair that contain natural oils to coat the hair for protection. When your hair is submerged in a chlorinated pool, the chemical bonds of the lipids break down, causing split ends and damage.

Protection when you're in the sun

The number one way to protect your skin from UV rays is with prevention – using sunscreen and sun avoidance. While sunscreen is especially important during the long, hot summer days, don't let the shorter days of fall and winter fool you. Even though the sun isn't shining as brightly, our skin still needs protection from the harmful UV rays which penetrate even on the cloudiest days. UV rays specifically shine all year round, resulting in sun damage that can lead to premature aging, dryness, wrinkles, and pigmentation.

For many, protecting their hair is another component of sun protection. You can strengthen your hair by wearing wide brim hats when outside, swim caps when in the pool, washing your hair immediately after swimming, and even using hair products that contain SPF.

Treatments for post- summer rejuvenation

There are many products that can be purchased in your neighbor-

hood store without a prescription to help treat post-summer skin before the colder winter months.

- Facial Moisturizer can help hydrate our skin from dryness that occurs when it gets colder outside, and body creams can hydrate our arms, legs, and trunk. The back and legs are particularly prone to dryness.
- Use a good chemical exfoliator nightly (such as a retinoid or retinol) to even out skin texture and tone, and help prevent wrinkles by building up the collagen support network under the skin.
- Vitamin C serums can be applied in the morning prior to a facial moisturizer. These work as antioxidants, helping repair some of the damage caused by the sun.
- Keep your facewash gentle. Harsh cleansers can damage sensitive skin as winter approaches.
- Conditioning treatments and frequent trims can help repair some of the hair damage caused by sun and chlorine.

When to seek medical help

Inspect your skin monthly for **new bumps, spots, scaly patches that aren't healing, and new moles or dark spots.** Annual full-body skin cancer screenings can help catch any ab-

normalities that you may miss yourself. Skin cancers are highly treatable when detected in time, but early diagnosis and treatment is essential to avoid their spread to surrounding tissue, nerves, and bones. If you are concerned about a spot on your skin, see a dermatologist as soon as possible to get it evaluated.

David Krupnick, MD, specializes in the detection and treatment of skin cancers and treats a full spectrum of diseases of the skin, hair, and nails. She is accepting new patients; insurance is accepted; and immediate appointments are available. To schedule an appointment with Dr. David Krupnick at our Dermatology Partners - South Philly office, please call (215) 463-3939 or visit www.dermpartners.com to schedule online.

Dermatology Partners is a physician-led dermatology group with 27 offices in locations throughout Pennsylvania and Delaware. Since 2012, its providers treat a full spectrum of diseases of the skin, hair, and nails and specialize in the detection and treatment of skin cancers, including Mohs surgery. The organization prides itself on its ability to offer patients immediate appointments so there is no need to wait weeks or months to receive care. **PRH**

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A CONFIDENT CONFIDANT

CONCETTA
MILANO
HAS BECOME
A HEALTH
CRUSADER
BY EARNING
PATIENTS' TRUST



BY JOSEPH MYERS
PHOTO BY ANDREW ANDREOZZI

Gregarious and grateful, Dr. Concetta Milano prides herself on making connections. Thanks to the Cardiology Consultants of Philadelphia, the Drexel University College of Medicine-educated professional has forged ties with individuals eager to keep their hearts happy. Still calling South Philly home,

with husband David and sons, Luca and Christian, further enriching her life, Milano has proven herself loyal not only to her stomping grounds, but also to the call to better the lives of everyone seeking help.

RowHome: What led you to choose your specialty? How has the field evolved over your time within it?

Concetta Milano: My father, Pasquale Nestico, is a well-known cardiologist in the city and has served South Philadelphia for over 30 years. I grew up

working in his office, from adolescence, and fell in love with the idea of helping others. Some of his patients have watched me grow from a teenager to an adult and now to a cardiologist, which is an amazing experience, alone. Watching my father help so many people and seeing and hearing the gratitude from his patients really inspired me from such a young age.

RH: What thrills does your vocation provide to you?

CM: I love meeting and getting to know new people. Each patient

I see always has something to share that affects me in some way, and I absolutely love that about my job. A lot of my patients tend to confide in me about their personal problems, which is one of the most humbling parts of my job. They are trusting me with their story, which then helps me be a better physician for them. I can better understand obstacles someone may face that prevents someone from feeling and being genuinely healthy.

RH: Do you specialize in either men's or women's cardiovascular health in particular? If so, what lowdown can you provide about either? What advice would you offer to your select patients who are looking to improve this area of their lives?

CM: I am a noninvasive cardi-

ologist and help both men and women. Being a female, I do, however, have an interest in women's cardiovascular health. Women tend to take on a caretaker role, oftentimes putting themselves last, and, as a result, may dismiss a lot of the early signs and symptoms of heart disease. Women don't always present with the classic "elephant sitting on the chest" symptom of a heart attack and can have atypical, or unusual symptoms, such as jaw pain, shortness of breath, or even just extreme tiredness. This is where prevention comes in - talking to a cardiologist and understanding your own personal risks, knowing your numbers, such as your blood pressure and bad cholesterol level, and learning the unusual signs and symptoms.

RH: Regardless of gender, what can anyone look to do to strengthen cardiovascular health?

HEALTH
CM: Eat more of a plant-based diet and limit meat - chicken and turkey included. Put the bacon down! Eat wild caught salmon twice a week. Move your body every day, doing something that energizes you, such as walking, swimming, dancing, and aim for 150 minutes of moderately intense exercise a week. As a cardiologist, I would much rather prescribe taking a hike than taking a pill. Sleep for eight hours a day. Stop smoking! Stop drinking sodas, juices, and energy drinks. If you have or suspect you have sleep apnea, get treated. Eat less processed foods, with a focus on fresh fruits and veggies. Finally, spend time connecting with loved ones and enjoying hobbies to help reduce stress.

RH: What are some misconceptions that people have about cardiovascular health?

CM: Heart disease is an umbrella term for so many different conditions that can affect the heart. A lot of people think, "Well, I've never had a heart attack, I'm good." But there are other problems that can affect one's heart, like having high blood pressure, heart arrhythmias or irregular heartbeats, congenital heart problems, weakness of the heart muscle, and problems with your heart valves. Also, a lot of people believe that because they have "passed a stress test," they do not have heart disease and that's not the case at all. This is why it's so important to talk to your cardiologist about your individual risk and focus on a prevention program geared for your individual risk.

RH: What is your top cardiovascular tip?

CM: Know your numbers and your risks. Eighty percent of heart disease alone can be prevented with this knowledge and knowing what to do with it. You don't know what you don't know.

RH: What changes do you foresee in your field?

CM: The days of a paternalistic approach to the patient-doctor relationship are fading, with there now being a bigger focus on working with your doctor to come up with a health plan geared for you. There are more advances in diagnostic testing that help to detect heart disease earlier such as coronary calcium score and PET/CT testing.

RH: Why should people consider you as their cardiovascular health specialist?

CM: The doctor-patient relationship is special to me and one that

I never want to take for granted. I listen to my patients so that together we can come up with a long-term plan to be one's healthiest version.

RH: What are some non-job pursuits/interests that keep you going?

CM: I love being active and try to exercise every day in some way, whether it be running, weights, HIIT, yoga, biking, hiking, or yard work. Since Covid, I have found I actually love cooking and trying new recipes. I love reading and read way too late some nights! I hang out with my kids and I'm active with them outside. I watch them at their sports practices and games. I enjoy playing chess with them. And, of course, I love the beach!

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Michael Bove

(Bottom) Joey Carotozzola, Antoinette Bove, Frances Bove, Mark Carotozzola.
 (Middle) Victor Bove, Anthony Bove, Diane Carotozzola.
 (Top) Joseph Russo, Santo Hernandez.

LOCAL SOFTBALL
 LEAGUE RAISES
 AWARENESS FOR

Suicide Prevention

by JAMIE FLOWERS

Michael Bove took his own life in July of 2020. His aunt, Diane Carotozzola, already lost two other family members to suicide and knew that suicide rates were increasing in the neighborhood. What started as a small idea to celebrate the life of her nephew soon turned into a memorial that has touched the lives of dozens of people in South Philadelphia and beyond.

Carotozzola began raising money for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP) around the anniversary of Michael's death. His best friends Joe Russo and Santo Hernandez also organized a reunion softball game to celebrate his life. Softball leagues are huge in South Philly, with one of the oldest leagues starting in the 1940s at the old Southwark Schoolyard on 8th and Mifflin. Michael Bove and his friends grew up playing in that league. Russo and Hernandez were able to turn the loss of their friend into a celebration of friendship, resilience, and love by organizing a softball reunion game. Many of the people who played in the leagues wanted to come out and support the old league. In 2021, 35 participants took part in the first reunion game.

Since the old schoolyard at 8th and Mifflin was no longer usable, they played the game at Sacks Playground at 4th & Washington Avenue in 2021. By 2022, participation increased to 60 people and Carotozzola partnered with local vendors like Steak Em Up, John's Water Ice, Nick's Charcoal Pit and Anthony's Grub to raise \$2,300. Each partner got their own shirts to advertise the reunion/

Russo and Hernandez were able to turn the loss of their friend into a celebration of friendship, resilience, and love by organizing a softball reunion game.

memorial game and, as a result, awareness grew throughout the community.

In 2022, with an even larger crowd and mission, the game moved to the recently renovated field at Capitolo Park on 9th and Wharton. The field wasn't even open to the public at that time, but Russo worked with Councilmember Mark Squilla to get a permit to use the field for the memorial game. The fundraising event took place on July 28th, 2022, the anniversary of Michael Bove's death. Friends, family and the neighborhood got together to eat, drink and play ball. Next year, the group is planning to move the softball reunion tournament to September, Suicide Awareness Month. With the additional community support, they hope to raise even more money for the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention.

The American Foundation of Suicide Prevention (AFSP.org) saves lives and brings hope to those affected by suicide. Established in 1987 as a nationwide voluntary health organization, it's designed to empower communities with research, education, and advocacy against suicide. AFSP is trying to destigmatize suicide and create a caring culture with funding for scientific research, education for the public about mental health, advocacy for public policies in mental health and suicide prevention and support for survivors of suicide loss. Currently, suicide is the 12th leading cause of death in the US. In 2020, 45,979 Americans died by suicide and more than 1.2 million people attempted suicide.

Losing a loved one to suicide has a profound impact on individuals left to cope with the grief. The following was written by

Santo Hernandez after the death of his best friend, Michael Bove.

I've been friends with Michael since we started walking, it seems. We would be in the streets all day running or playing anything with a ball. We grew up like brothers, we competed like brothers, we loved like brothers and we fought like brothers. He was sharp, a quick thinker. It always seemed when I was down, he was up and vice versa, so we always had each other. He put his mind to something and excelled - basketball, baseball, football, pool, bowling, cards - he played and did it all well. I've dreamt about Michael a few times since he passed and it's always the same. Us goofing around like time hasn't passed...I just want to talk to him, laugh with him, see if he's okay. Tell him about my kids and tell him I love him and I'm sorry. As far as anyone contemplating suicide, I would say, talk to someone. Seek help. The stigma that you're weak or less than because you're dealing with something is real. Pride can take you to your greatest heights, but it can also take you to its lowest depths. There are people here that love and care for you. People and programs are out there and programs out there to help.

Joseph Carotozzola, Michael's cousin, wrote...

Michael was my cousin, but I viewed him as a brother. If anyone was in trouble, he was the first person there to help. I remember being young and attending all of his softball games, watching from the bench hoping one day I would share the field with him. I adored my cousin - a natural leader who probably never even realized the impact he had on the younger siblings and cousins in his life. I just wish I had the chance to let him know just how much he meant to us. Michael didn't have an easy life, losing his cousin Pat to suicide at a young age, He also lost his mother Debbie to suicide years later. He had issues with his health - both mental and physical- and the weight he carried ended up being too much to bear, leading to him taking his own life. Mental health issues such as depression are often difficult to detect. If you suspect someone you know is struggling, don't be afraid to offer assistance. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the world, and it is time to fight the stigma, raise awareness and encourage people to seek help. If you're struggling, you are not alone, I promise, you are not alone.

Risk Factors that may increase the chances of suicide

- Severe mental health conditions
- Previous attempts
- Access to lethal means including firearms & drugs
- Prolonged stress - harassment, bullying, relationship problems or unemployment
- Stressful life events - rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss
- Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide

Warning signs

If you are concerned that someone may be suicidal, you should look for the following signs.

A change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors, especially when related to a painful event, loss, or change.

Talk about killing themselves, feeling hopeless, having no reason to live, being a burden to others, feeling trapped, unbearable pain.

People who are considering suicide often display signs

of depression, anxiety, loss of interest, irritability, humiliation/shame, agitation/anger, relief/sudden improvement.

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change include

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family & friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide

Call or text 988 - the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
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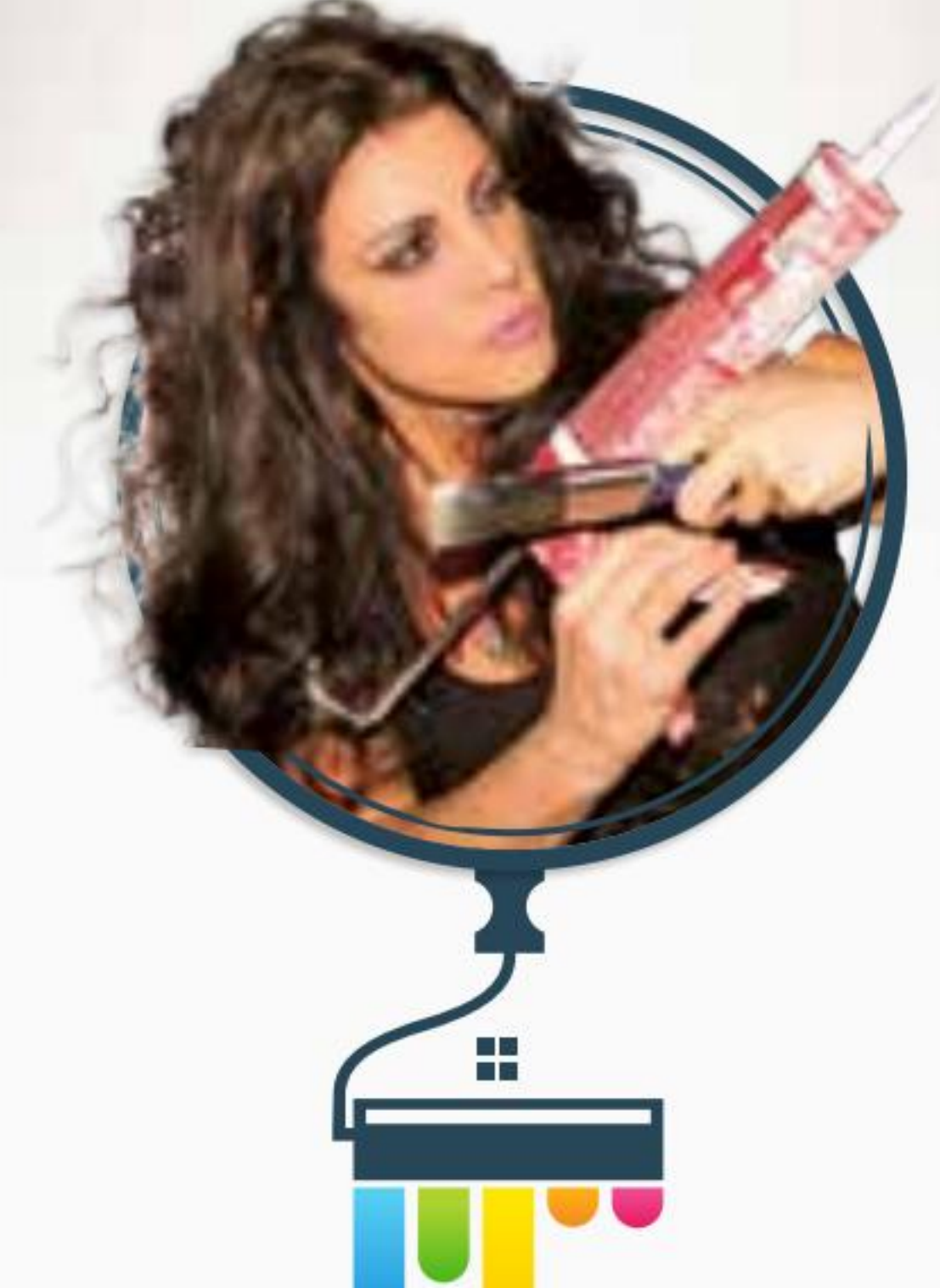
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PRHHEALTH



TIPS FOR BEING A BETTER FRIEND to Yourself

courtesy of DR. TARA DRAMES, PSY.D.
Live Better Therapy Solutions

Did you ever notice that it's typically easier to be understanding and forgiving of others than to be that way toward yourself? We are much more likely to give others the benefit of the doubt when they experience hardship but can be our own worst critic when it comes to our own mistakes. As licensed mental health professionals, we find that many people in our practice dealing with stress, anxiety and depression tend to benefit from learning the practice of self-compassion. Self-compassion, initially defined by Dr. Kristin Neff in the positive psychology literature, involves "being kind to oneself when confronting personal inadequacies or situational difficulties."

Neff described three components of self-compassion including: 1) self-kindness, being kind to yourself rather than self-critical; 2) common humanity, seeing one's shortcomings as part of the larger human experience; and 3) mindfulness, sitting with one's painful thoughts and feelings rather than avoiding them.

Self-compassion means being able to be forgiving and loving towards yourself when you likely need it most. It involves being encouraging when things become difficult or empathetic when we notice something we don't like about ourselves. It's no different than being compassionate or kind to a friend or loved one. It's taking the encouraging, understanding voice we have for loved ones and turning it inward, instead. Rather than being a harsh self-critic, we recognize we are all human and therefore - we're all imperfect!

If you tend to be tough on yourself, these tips for practicing self-compassion may be helpful to you.

1 When you're upset or going through something difficult, talk to yourself like you would your best friend. Would you encourage your friend to criticize themselves?

2 Remember that you are human. Aim to view your mistakes and shortcomings as a natural part of life. Remind yourself that many other people feel they're not good enough at times, too.

3 Forgive yourself for your mistakes. Try seeing them as learning experiences. Practice compassionate self-talk such as "I did the best I could at the time" or "I'm allowed to mess up sometimes."

4 Be patient with yourself. No one has it all together - we're all a work in progress. Try adding the word "yet" to statements (for example, "I don't know how to do this... yet.")

If you find that you become so critical of yourself, experience intense feelings, or notice changes in your typical behavior/ability to function, reach out to a mental health professional for support.

Live Better Therapy Solutions is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome (PRH) Magazine Business Network.

Now through December 10th, you can view a new exhibition at **TILT Institute for the Contemporary Image** (1400 N. American Street) featuring works from lens-based artists that focus on healthcare, grief, disability, illness, and healing as components of their practices. The exhibit is a collaboration with **The Photographer's Green Book** - a resource for lens-based artists and makers to learn more about their field through inclusion, diversity, equity and advocacy - and curated by editor-in-chief, Sydney Ellison.

If We Never Get Better opened in early September and encourages viewers to think about "worst case scenario" health issues in a new light. Instead of pitying someone or ignoring their circumstances, how can we study them and learn new skills that will allow us to relate to others differently? The work on display examines health and disability as intersectional experiences. How do issues such as ableism and access to healthcare directly impact racism, sexism, and homophobia? The artists contributing to the exhibit can be found at tiltinstitute.org/exhibitions/ifwenevergetbetter.

"When I began working with PGB early in the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, health and disability were undercurrents in nearly all of the conversations we were having as an organization," Ellison said. "I wanted to highlight the subjects in this exhibition because it was a gap I had noticed in the lens-based art community. I was inspired by the work in adjacent artistic communities exploring health, disability, life, and art with incredible nuance and care, most notably from the artist collectives Sins Invalid and Disability Visibility."

If you are not able to view the exhibit in person, you can join two upcoming virtual presentations. On November 3, from 6 to 7 p.m., Ellison and the artists are hosting a group discussion on their experiences related to health, disability, and art. On November 15, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., they will host a panel discussion on the exhibition with moderator Ally Caple, Director of Public Engagement at PGB. Visit the TILT website to register.

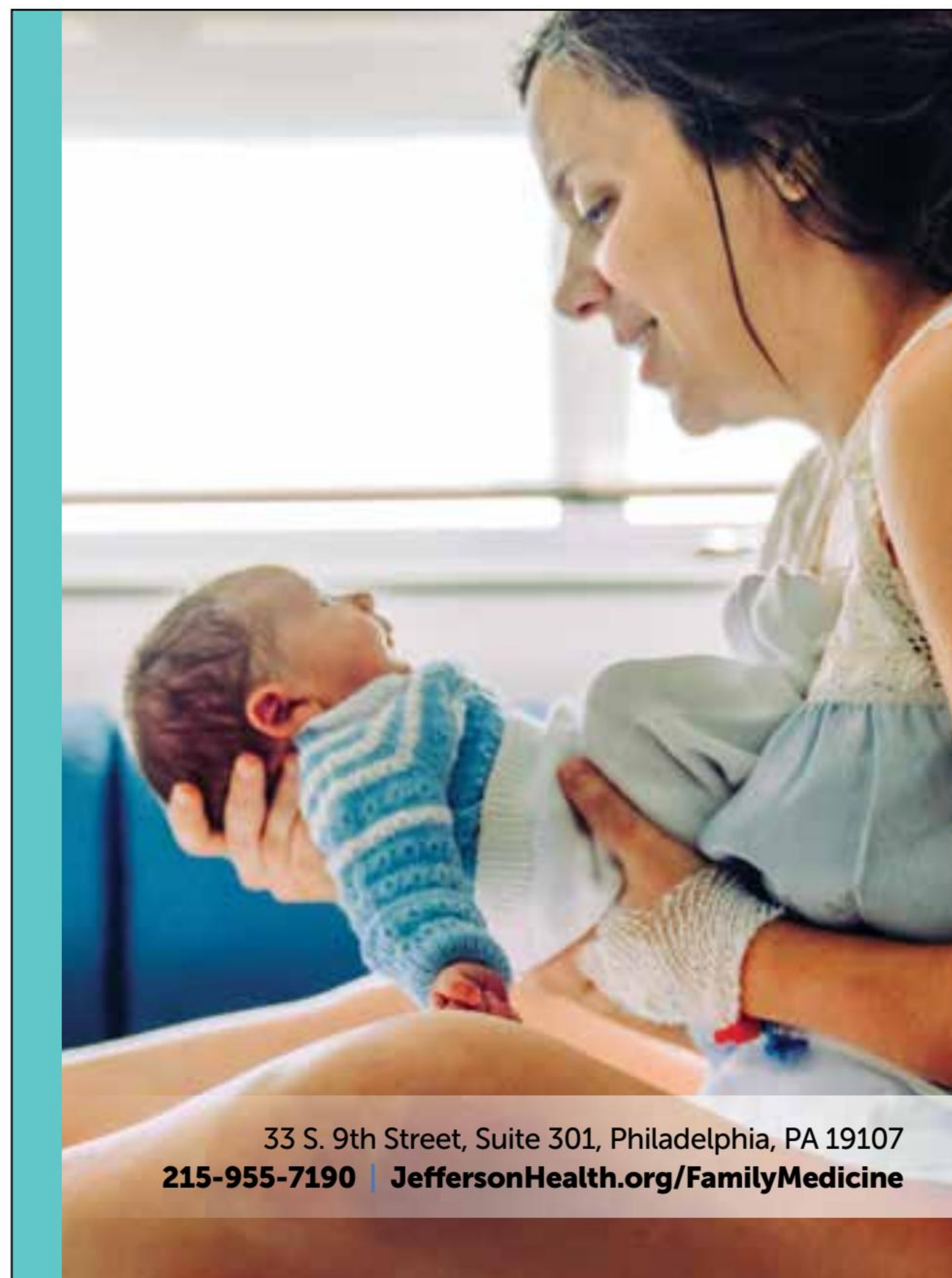
More info on the Photographer's Green Book can also be found at www.photogreenbook.com.

If We Never Get Better

A NEW EXHIBITION FOCUSES ON SOCIAL DISPARITIES THAT IMPACT HEALTHCARE & DISABILITIES

by BRENDA HILLEGAS

Access Denied by Jaklin Romine (2015)



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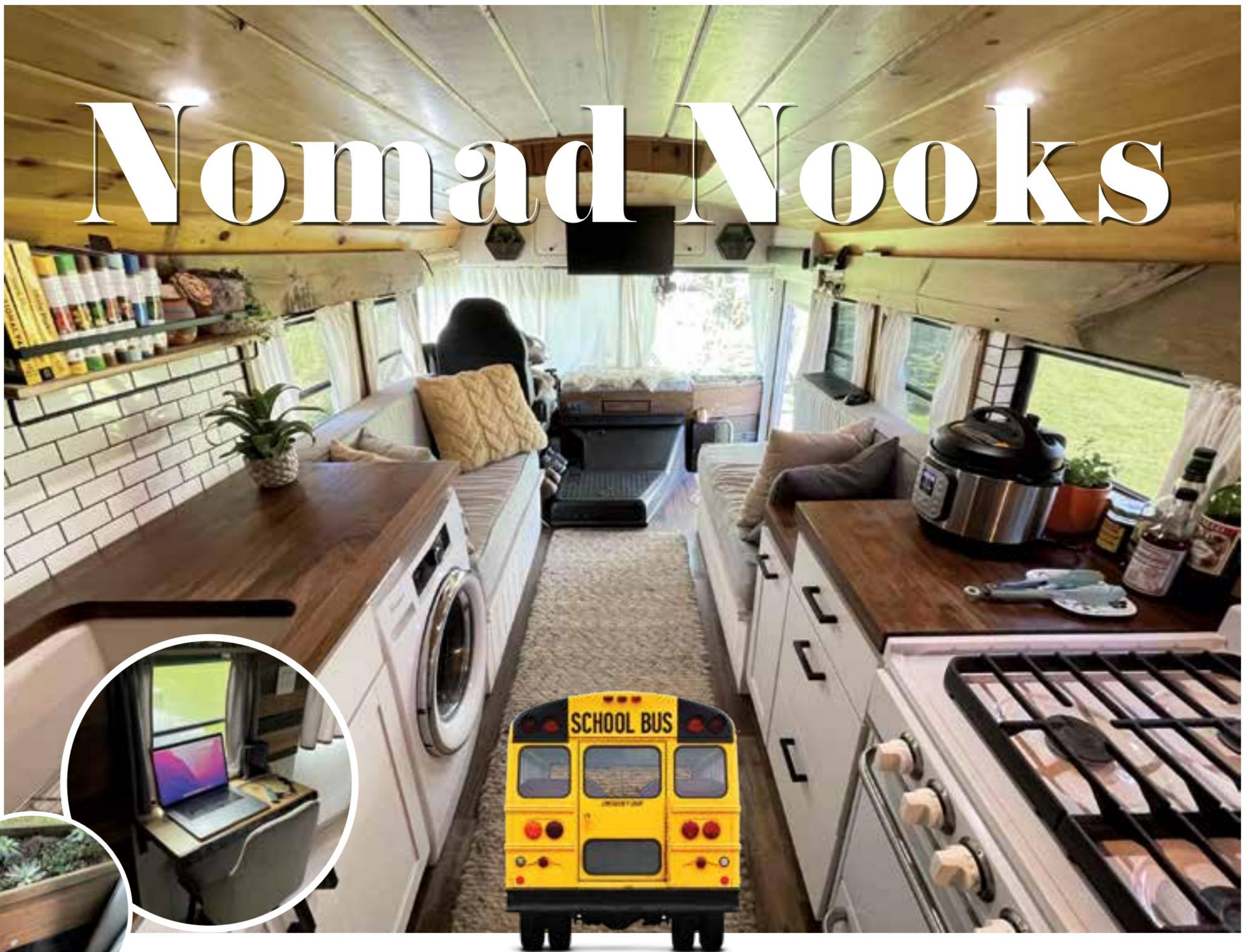
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BY GENO THACKARA

Dustin McCorkle sounds pretty happy with the world when he picks up the phone; partly because he's just finishing off a delicious breakfast of farm-fresh eggs. He and girlfriend Holly Helm are driving through central Pennsylvania and have passed by an Amish farm outside Chambersburg just that morning. One perk of life on the road - often the meals are as fresh as they can get. "On the road," is really no exaggeration. The

pair have been living in a converted school bus for more than two years.

REAL ESTATE Dustin tells me that while the desire to travel made a good starting point, it led them to a wider interest in sustainable living, which grew into an entire lifestyle and eventually, a business. They've been able to live and work from coast to coast because, especially these days, roaming everywhere doesn't

have to mean being out of touch.

"Of course, people have been doing this since the '60s," he says, "and I'd say in the last 10 years, it's really picked up, again. People are realizing they don't want to work in an office or a warehouse, then sit around on the weekend and wait for Monday, when they could travel and work from literally anywhere. I think a lot of people have started to learn that during Covid - because not only were the layoffs happening

and they had to figure out how they were going to make money, but a lot of companies allowed them to work from home and have been continuing that. So, it's really been eye-opening for a lot of people."

This particular journey actually began a while before the outbreak - the idea having grown ever since the two first met during Dustin's time at Shippensburg University. They'd done some homework on living in RVs but learning about construction issues led them to realize the greater benefits of refurbished school buses - vehicles that are much better built to be sturdy from the start.

"The plan from the beginning was to live in it full-time. We purchased the bus in 2016, and it took about three-and-a-half years to

“The plan from the beginning was to live in it full-time. We purchased the bus in 2016, and it took about three-and-a-half years to build”

build,” he recalls. “We’d always talked about traveling someday, and Holly had never gotten to do it much. We weren’t in a position at that age to purchase a house. We were just tired of paying rent and having all these bills. Fortunately, there are a lot of resources available now for people that want to do this.”

After a long uphill process in learning and finding their feet, the next natural step was to start passing along resources of their own. The pair began sharing their experiences on social media under the name Sasquatters (<https://Sasquatters.com/social>), which has grown into a combination of travel blog and DIY resource on mobile living. On the business side, Dustin offers his contractor services under the name Nomad Nooks (<https://NomadNooks.com/social>), helping others refurbish vehicles and prepare for their own version of the wandering life.

He explains that everything naturally grew by steps. “We were contacted by a couple people on Reddit that were also interested in having buses made. One was in Philadelphia, and by then I was pretty confident I could do one in six to eight weeks. I spent the summer of 2021 there building it, while Holly was living in our bus and working, and that’s when we realized, hey, we can do this. So, we formed our business, and it took off from there.”

The flexibility lets them split their time between their families’ home bases through Pennsylvania and also still take their jobs anywhere across the continent. “We’ve been to Mexico twice and we’re going again in December. We’re planning to go to Alaska next summer and looking forward to spending more time in the Pacific northwest. This past winter we spent in Arizona, Utah, and Nevada, then we got to hike the Grand Canyon and Angels Landing, and a couple of the more notable hikes out west.

“A lot of people think that if you’re living smaller, or you live in a tiny home or an RV, you have to sacrifice things,” he continues. “It’s been our experience that it’s the complete opposite! You end up with more money to travel and live your life, instead of putting it down to maybe a \$2500 mortgage or three car payments. There’s no sacrifice. We enjoy video games, we like movies - we set them up outside and watch by the fire sometimes. We do everything that normal people do, and then some, because we have those extra funds.”

As Dustin sums up, “Most good business ideas just come from doing something that you love first, then the money will follow.” With a still-packed travel agenda and the Nomad Nooks job list booked for months to come, he and Helm are still finding that the less-is-more life only keeps offering more.



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PRHREAL ESTATE

LAINO
Heating & Cooling



by ANTHONY PANVINI

"I grew up in South Philadelphia and, you know, you grow up and have odd jobs along the way," Nick

Laino says. "I was actually working in the tailor shop in my late teens right out of high school and I knew that wasn't going to be my career. A friend of mine did HVAC work and that's what kind of enticed me to get into the field."

Laino enrolled in a two-year night school program while working during the day. After getting his Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration diploma, Laino began working for contractors in the field. His end goal was to have his own HVAC (Heating, Ven-

tilation, Air Conditioning) business. "I almost knew from the very beginning that eventually I wanted to branch out on my own," Laino said. "I was 21 when I first got into the field and I liked everything about the HVAC industry - installs, service work. I was so enticed by it, but it wasn't until maybe a good 10 years in that I said I needed to start my own business."

Laino Heating & Cooling is currently located in South Jersey but licensed to do work in Philadelphia, as well. Since it's a small company, he offers strictly residential work.

"Commercial and industrial is way too big for what I'm able to handle," he says. "I do residential service work - furnace servicing, boiler servicing, central air conditioner servicing and now, people have

more concerns about those ductless mini-split units, so I'm into installing and servicing them, as well.

"It's been hard to get parts and materials because the pandemic forced everything to be in a standstill," Laino says. "The beginning of last summer, I had to put a new air conditioner in for someone and it took me maybe about a month or a little longer for it to come in."

He also explained that being a one-man crew can present challenges. Laino has learned over the years that staying organized and prioritizing each order is critical.

"Working for myself does get a little hard, sometimes. But I just try to balance it out and pick which one needs the most attention first," Laino explains. "You want to give customers a timeframe to let them know if you're busy but assure them that you won't forget them."

Laino says that while most of his business and referrals come via word-of-mouth, he is working on increasing his online presence. "My son is helping me get a Facebook page up and running, again, but I am on Instagram (@nickyhvac)," he says.

His advice for anyone interested in HVAC careers is that it benefits to have thick skin. "Sometimes, an install can go bad for whatever reason, that may not be your fault. If somebody just wants a new air conditioner, sell them a new air conditioner. Don't overdo it. Listen to what [the customer's] concerns are and that's half the battle, right there."

Laino Heating & Cooling also offers Veteran discounts on services and installs.

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Is *NOW* a good time to buy a house?



JEANNE POLIZZI, REALTOR
Coldwell Banker Realty

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Everyone is talking about the mortgage interest rates, these days. According to some recent surveys, many consumers are hesitant to buy a home in the coming months. But there's more to consider than just interest rates when deciding whether to buy a home. If you're hoping to move in the coming year, you may be wondering, "Is now a good time to buy a house?" The reality is, there is not one cut-and-dry answer. There are many factors you should consider before deciding whether to buy now or later.

The question is, "Is there *ever* a great time to buy?"

In previous years, there was a lot more demand than supply of homes, which forced buyers to pay much higher prices for their dream house. In 2021, interest rates reached historic lows, which made buying a home seem like a more attractive option, even if the average sale price had increased. However, this leads to stiffer competition.

Now, the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates to help combat inflation. As a buyer, hearing about higher interest rates is never welcome news – higher rates mean a higher monthly mortgage payment. Before you assume this means it's a bad time to buy, you should consider three things:

DECREASE IN PRICES

First, with higher interest rates, a decrease in future home prices typically follows (again, supply and demand). This is good news for buyers.



BETTER NEGOTIATIONS

Second, over the past few years, to be competitive and win "the bidding war," buyers often have been willing to give way in negotiations, in many cases, foregoing certain important steps like home inspections and appraisal contingencies. In a more "even" market, where the pool of buyers does not heavily outweigh the number of homes available for sale, buyers can take their time to find the home that is right for them and negotiate from an informed position.



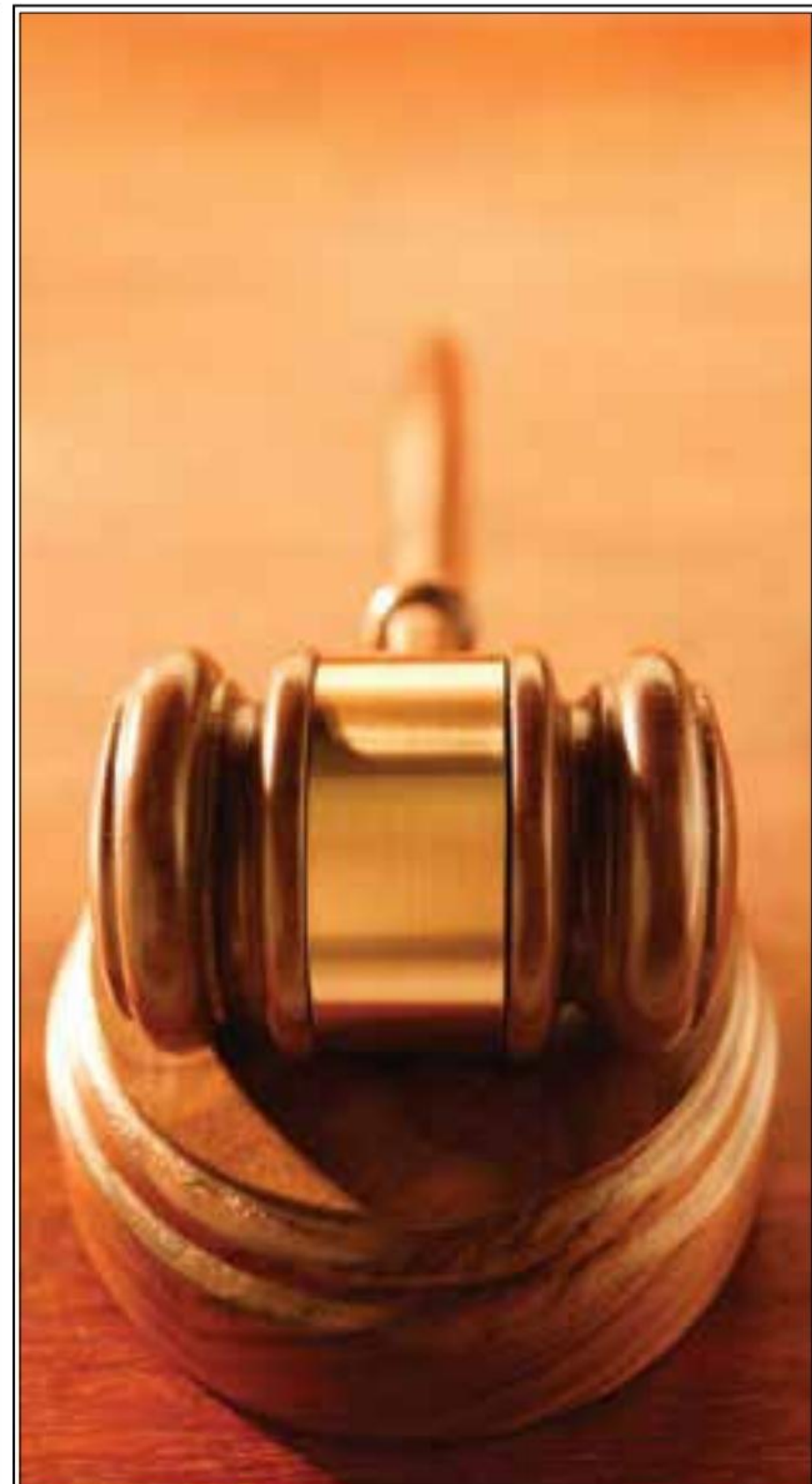
STILL A GREAT TIME TO BUY

Third, it's important to keep these rising mortgage rates in perspective as your potential mortgage rate will still be lower than what many borrowers have historically locked in. Rates were 17.48% in 1982, 8.43% in 1992, and 7% in 2002, to put things into perspective.

According to John Casey, from Guaranteed Rate Affinity, "It's still a great time to buy as we haven't seen a decrease in home values. The biggest issue in the housing market is still the lack of inventory across the country. I'm advising my buyers to "marry the house and date the interest rate." Should rates drop, a buyer can always look to refinance. Start building equity in the property and take advantage of the tax benefits of homeowners.

So, the moral of the story - there are many factors aside from interest rates that should be considered when deciding whether to buy a home now or in the near future. A skilled local real estate agent and a knowledgeable, experienced local mortgage lender will be able to provide you with the best guidance. If you are considering buying or selling a home, don't hesitate to contact Jeanne Polizzi from Coldwell Banker Realty @ 215-767-7814.

Jeanne Polizzi, Coldwell Banker Realty, is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome (PRH) Magazine Business Network.



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The kitchen Triangle Rule

Is it the Only Approach to Designing a Kitchen?

courtesy of

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The season is approaching where we'll be spending more time at home. Creating a kitchen that meets the needs of both daily living and large family gatherings is a must. The first step to consider when designing a functioning kitchen is the layout.

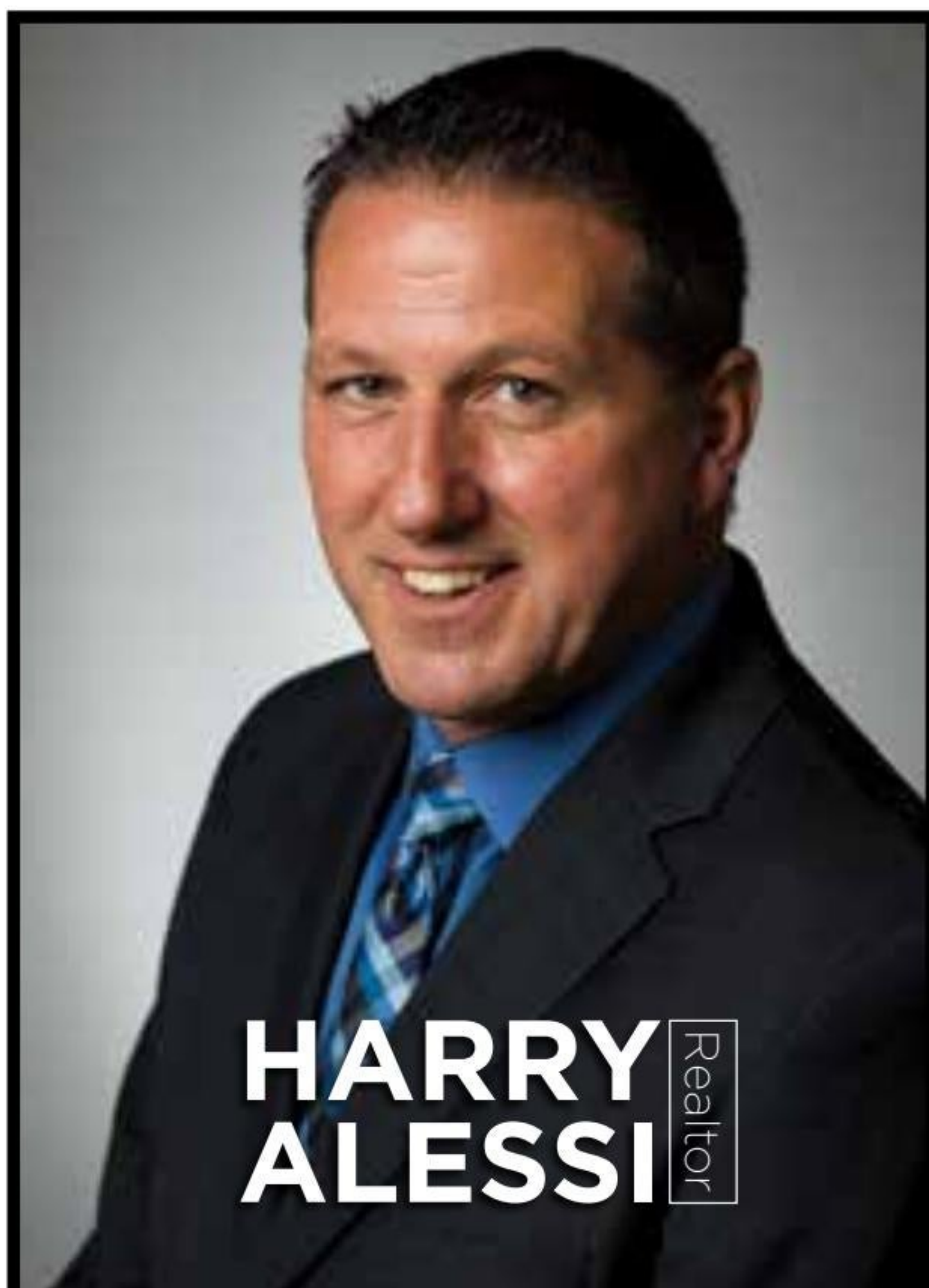
For years, experts considered the *working kitchen triangle* as a non-negotiable. First, what is a kitchen triangle? It is a layout based on the distance between three main areas: the range, refrigerator and sink. This rule creates an unobstructed triangle between those items, stating that typically, all sides of the triangle should be no less than 4' and no more than 9' in length. This layout enables individuals to perform their daily living tasks more efficiently. But this rule works best in smaller spaces where we have more limitations.

Times have changed and the kitchen is no longer an isolated area in the home. The heart of the home is now a focal point where we spend most of our time. We not only cook and prepare food there, but it also serves as our workstation, entertaining space and the best place to do homework.

There is another design style that is making its presence known. It's called the *Zone Method* and categorizes the kitchen based on five zones: *cooking, preparation, cleaning, consumables, and non-consumables*. This option works best in larger kitchens that are not limited by space. Enough room to fit a side-by-side refrigerator and pantry.

Each space and family is unique. Examine your priorities before beginning this journey. Evaluate pros and cons to both layout applications. Taking this approach will help you fashion a fully functioning kitchen.

Fetterman Design Group is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome (PRH) Magazine Business Network.



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BY RACHEL PORTER
PHOTO BY ANDREW ANDREOZZI

In August 2020, sisters Savannah, Paige, and Miranda of the Andrew family opened **MVP Hauling LLC**, a waste management and recycling service for the Philadelphia area. The business provides general commercial waste and recycling for bars, restaurants, apartment buildings, and warehouses in the city.

The sisters credit their father Anthony for the inspiration to launch MVP Hauling. With 25-years in the sanitation industry, he knew all the ins and outs of the business. Miranda followed in his footsteps but, unfortunately, they both lost their jobs when the company sold to new owners. The sisters were looking for an opportunity that would include their father. He could continue working in the business he loved, with a flexible schedule and the ability to retire with ease of mind.

After a few family discussions, the women submitted the paperwork to start an LLC and register with the city of Philadelphia. For six months, they planned the “who,

what and where” aspect of their operation. *Where* to begin and *how* to promote it. The name, they say, was a no-brainer. MVP was a perfect fit for **Miranda**, Savannah (her nickname is **Vann**) and **Paige**.

“My sisters and I just knew we would be able to make it all happen if we really did it together, especially with our father’s support,” Paige says.

MVP Hauling LLC currently works in South Philadelphia, Center City, Old City, West Philadelphia, and Southwest Philadelphia, providing services including weekly cleanups, dumpster services, and cleanouts for concrete and construction debris as needed. Event cleanups have been in demand, as well, and MVP recently assisted with the East Passyunk Avenue Annual Car Show, Flavors of the Avenue, and the 9th Street Italian Market Festival.

To maintain their commitment to staying green and sustainable, the team finds ways to reuse as much materials as they can. Daily routines include separating cardboard from trash for recycling. Some materials

are hazardous, and it is not always easy to notice from a full trash load, they say. MVP Hauling continually stresses to customers the importance of separating hazardous waste so it can be properly disposed.

The sisters share the responsibilities that come with running a business – customer service, social media, billing, and handling all general operations. All hands on deck. Asked about the competition, they aren’t concerned. They are confident that their work ethic and familiarity with the industry will help them succeed.

“Philadelphia is big enough to go after many accounts,” Miranda says.

In the past two years, they’ve expanded their business from one pickup truck to use for a handful of trash stops, to three trucks throughout multiple neighborhoods in the city.

“We’re extremely blessed to see how far we’ve come. It is very exciting for us to see our company continue to grow,” Paige says.

Customers can contact MVP Hauling through their social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook.

MVP Hauling is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome (PRH) Magazine Business Network.

THE LOFTS AT *Bella Vista*

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Kitchen layout by **Elena Obelnus / Colmar Kitchen Studio**
Benjamin Hale, photographer

When Ron Rabena Jr. was looking for the perfect place to call home, he started his search in the same South Philadelphia area where he was born and raised. With the help of realtor Michael Giangliordano (Century 21 Forrester), he found the perfect place. The Lofts at Bella Vista. Built in 1911 and home of the former Curtis Publishing Company, the space was converted to condos in 2006.

"The building spoke to me for several reasons," Rabena says. "My grandfather was a

printer and knew the building well. Taking him to see my unit after renovations was a full circle moment. He's 94 and I grew up listening to stories of him running a printing press. When you see the vast concrete beams and photos of the building in its original form, you can almost hear the loud printing presses, like my grandpop always talked about."

Rabena, who designed the unit himself, is thrilled with the way it turned out. "I'm so thankful this building was restored. It has so much life left in it. It's part of Philadelphia's story."



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PRHREAL ESTATE



HISTORIC HOME

Mill Grove House at John James Audubon Center

by BRENDA HILLEGAS

photo courtesy of

VALLEY FORGE TOURISM & CONVENTION BOARD

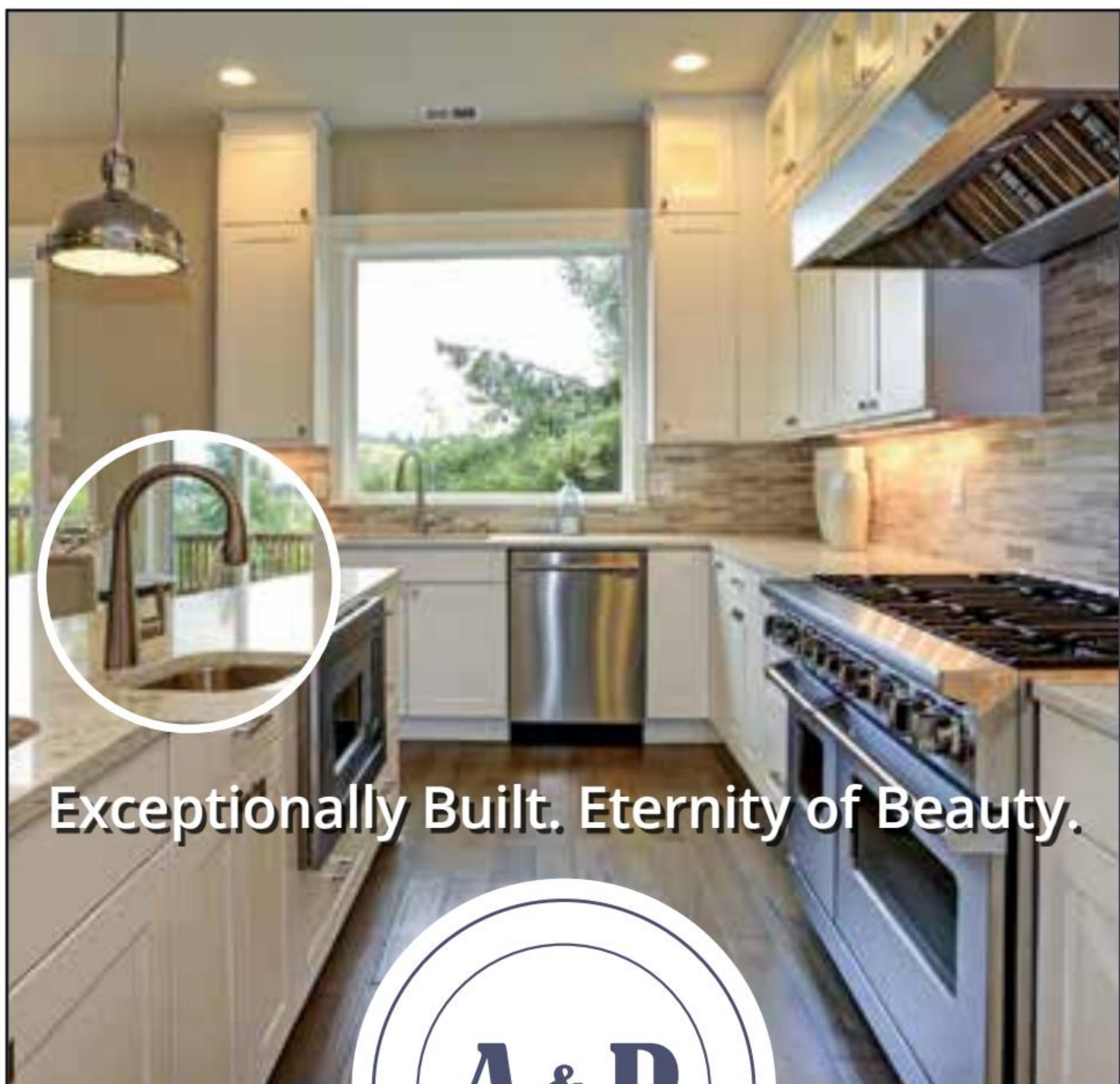
Mill Grove, a historic site in Montgomery County, was built in 1762 by James Morgan who came to the area to operate a mill and lead mine (Morgan is believed to be the first person to discover lead in our area). The property was purchased from Morgan in 1789 by Jean Audubon, a French sea captain who planned to have his son oversee further development on the mine. John James Audubon arrived from Haiti (known as Saint-Domingue at the time) in 1803 at the age of 18 but ended up having no desire to do what his father had hoped.

Instead, John James Audubon became a famed artist and naturalist, after becoming so inspired by the natural beauty and birds of the area around him. He taught himself ways to track birds and draw them in the most realistic forms. His published color-plate book, *The Birds of America* (1827–1839), is known to be one of the most complete ornithological works and his contributions to ornithology (Audubon discovered 25 new species of birds) is why he is the eponym of the National Audubon Society - a nonprofit dedicated to the conservation of birds and their natural habitats.

The historic stone farmhouse, Audubon's first home in America, reopened in 2017 after a two-year renovation. You'll find a new rebuilding of the home's chimneys and space for new exhibits, artifacts, books and more. Look for his original drawings on display through the home and Visitor Center, as well as tools he used, and a lot of hands-on educational materials to help learn more about the birds around us.

The John James Audubon Center spans 175 acres with more than five miles (8 km) of trails. There is an entry fee for the Visitor Center (open Wednesday through Sunday, 10am-4pm) and Historic House, but the grounds are free to the public during daylight hours only. The Historic House is *only* open for guided tours Wednesday through Sunday at 1pm. Please sign up at the Visitor Center.

For more info, visit www.jobnjames.audubon.org



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courtesy of RON RABENA
Chief Client Officer, Allied Universal

Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters in the United States. The effects can be local, hampering neighborhoods and communities, or widespread, causing damage to entire river basins that may affect multiple states.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR FLOODING

Standard homeowners' insurance doesn't cover flooding. Take flood insurance into consideration to protect your home and possessions.

Take an inventory of all household goods making sure to document model numbers, brand names, ages, purchase prices, and places of purchase. Place the information in a waterproof container or safe deposit box.

Clear debris from gutters and downspouts for smooth water flow away from your house and place furniture and appliances on risers above your home's projected flood elevation.

Create an emergency kit that has enough supplies for three to seven days, including one gallon of water daily per person, non-perishable food, handheld can opener, paper plates and plastic utensils, blankets and pillows, rain gear, a First-Aid kit, medications and prescriptions, toiletries and battery-operated radios and flashlights with spare batteries. Make sure your cell phone is fully charged.

DURING A FLOOD

- Comply with all evacuation instructions.
- According to the National Weather Service, just one foot of flowing water is powerful

enough to sweep vehicles off the road. Do not attempt to walk or drive through flooded roadways.

- Monitor flood advisories on the radio, television or the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration website.
- If you are in a vehicle and water is rising, exit the vehicle quickly and move to higher ground. If in your home or office, prepare to evacuate or move to the highest level of the building or the roof.

AFTER A FLOOD

- Make sure your community's water is safe to drink after a flood.
- Avoid local water sources such as rivers and streams and puddled floodwater as it may be contaminated with oil, gas or sewage.
- Use caution when returning to your home or office. Foundations and walls may have been weakened due to water damage.
- Clean and disinfect anything the flood waters touched. Discard unsalvageable items as soon as possible to prevent the spread of bacteria.
- If power lines are down, do not touch or stand in water near them.

For more information on flood and flash flood safety, visit the National Disaster Education Coalition at <https://www.disastercenter.com/guide/flood.html>

About the Author: Ron Rabena, Chief Client Officer at Allied Universal, is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome Magazine Business Network. Allied Universal is the leading global security and facility services company. www.aus.com



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Similac® Recall What's going on?



by FRANK C.
DEPASQUALE JR., ESQUIRE

Q: What is the role of an executor/trix? Do I have to pick a family member?

A: The role of an executor/trix is to carry out the wishes of the decedent as stated in the Will. Following the formal appointment by the Register of Wills, the executor/trix has several duties including notifying all potential beneficiaries, gathering all estate assets, paying all valid debts of the estate, filing an inheritance tax return within 9 months of the date of death with payment of inheritance taxes and, following appraisal of the return by the PA Department of Revenue, distributing the estate's assets to the proper beneficiaries.

Most people choose to name a family member or friend to serve as executor/trix. There is no law in PA preventing you from choosing your attorney as your executor/trix. In fact, an attorney can serve in both capacities at the same time – executor/trix and attorney. However, to

avoid the appearance of a conflict, we recommend that you select a family member or good friend to serve as your executor/trix.

Q: What is the story behind the Similac® plant closings? Have any lawsuits been filed against them because babies got sick?

A: Abbott Nutrition shut down operations at its Sturgis, Michigan, plant and initiated a recall of infant formula on February 17, 2022. The plant reopened on June 4th but again shut down their plant two weeks later due to flooding. On August 26th, Abbott resumed producing Similac® infant formula. As far as lawsuits, following its recall, Abbott has been sued at least 30 times in federal courts around the country involving claims that its powdered formula contained bacteria that injured or caused the death of infants. Those suits are pending.

Once again, **Frank DePasquale** has been recognized by his peers as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer for 2022. He heads DePasquale Law Offices, 2332-34 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145. P: 215.755.4410. Email him at frank@depasquale-law.com or visit www.depasquale-law.com

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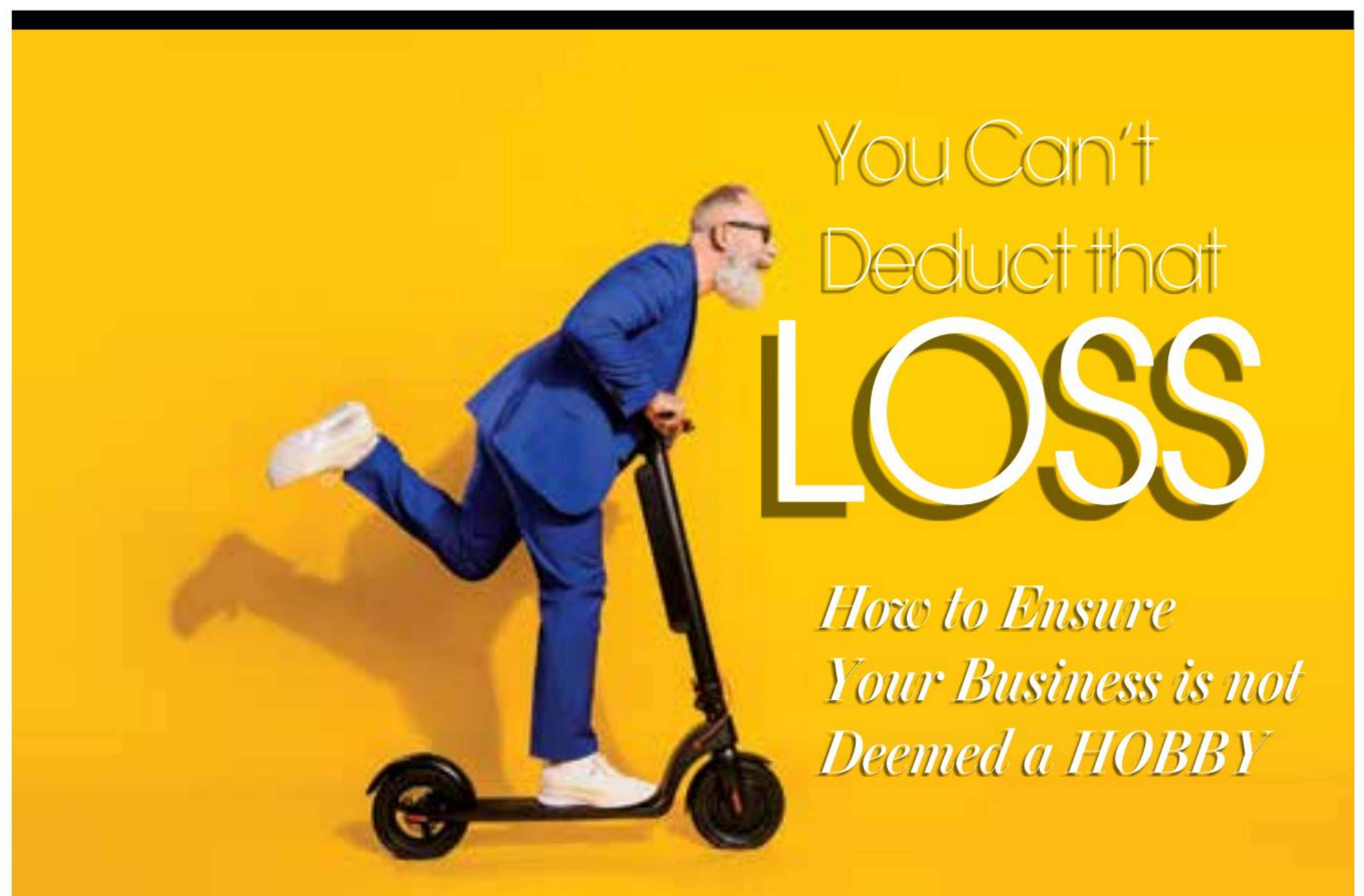
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PRHTIPS FROM THE PROS



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You've loved dogs all your life, so you decide to breed them and start a dog training business. Is this a business in the eyes of the IRS or a hobby? Knowing what the IRS is looking for and properly positioning your small business can save taxes and headaches if you ever are questioned by the IRS.

Why you should care

If your activity is a business, your income can be reduced by all your qualified business expenses even if it results in a loss. If your activity is deemed a hobby, no losses are allowed on your tax return, and even worse, after 2018, you cannot deduct expenses against this revenue.

Tips to make it a clear business

Profit motive. You must show that you intend to make a profit with your activity. The old rule of thumb was to show a profit at least three out of the past five consecutive years to safely qualify your activity as a small business. But this is no longer the case - you can show profit motive without ever showing a profit by your ongoing activities around the business.

Active participation. If you simply invest money in the dog business but are never there to care for them or give lessons, you will have a hard time justifying the business nature of the activity.

Be professional. Businesses have separate checkbooks, business cards and stationery. They have financial statements and show the same disciplines one would find in a "for profit" venture of the same type of activity you are pursuing. And they are organized as a business, ideally through a simple business structure like a single member LLC.

Pleasure factor management. If your business has a large enjoyment factor, you will need to be even more cautious about having proper records. If you claim to be a golf pro giving lessons, but spend all your time playing golf, you will have a

hard time justifying the activity as a true business.

Have multiple customers. If you only have one or two customers, who also happen to be relatives, your activity may be deemed a hobby. Having a number of customers, even without profits, can make all the difference in allowing for expense deductions.

Showing profit motive without profits. Advertising is one way to do this. Keep copies of all ads trying to drum up business. Keep a daily diary of business activities, noting who you meet and for what purpose. Create and keep sample product, even if it is not yet sold.

Understand your risk. There are certain business types that are under the IRS microscope when it comes to hobbies. Key among these are multi-level marketing businesses. It also includes parttime sellers of goods on sites like eBay. You will need to prove the business nature of your involvement and be prepared to be challenged.

Wondering if your business activity may be considered a hobby? The more yes answers, the better your chances of defending your position.

- Conducted activity in a business-like manner?
- Created a business entity?
- Have expertise in your activity?
- Put time and effort into the activity?
- History of income/profits?
- Have had prior success in a similar activity?
- Is there a low element of pleasure/recreation involved?
- Are there appreciating assets or an expectation that there will be?

Having a business activity reclassified as a hobby can mean a big tax bite at tax time. But by keeping proper records and pro-actively knowing the pitfalls, you can avoid most problems.



RIVERS CASINO

Philadelphia

YOUR DESTINATION FOR PHILLY FUN!



by JUSTIN MOORE,
General Manager, Rivers Casino Philadelphia

With 2022 winding down and an exciting 2023 ahead, Rivers Casino continues to be one of Philly's best entertainment destinations. From thrilling casino games to star-studded performances, you'll have a great time at Rivers Casino Philadelphia.

Located along the banks of the Delaware River, with stunning views of the Ben Franklin Bridge, Rivers Casino has plenty of dining and music options. The stage at **Jack's Bar + Grill** has free weekend music on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, and it includes DJs, bands and Sing Like a Rockstar Karaoke, where your performance is backed by a live band.

In our **Event Center**, you'll find national touring comedians, singers, and bands, including well-known jazz performers. Scan the QR code to get information on the most up-to-date performances.

Celebrity cook and South Philadelphia native **Steve Martorano** recently announced he'll open **Martorano's Prime** at Rivers Casino Philadelphia in early 2023, adding another dining option for guests to enjoy. The Italian-American Steakhouse will be

part of Rivers' growing restaurant lineup, which includes *Jack's Bar + Grill*, *Geno's Steaks* and *Mian. Rita's Italian Ice* opened earlier this year.

When it comes to gaming, we'll "bet" you have a great time at Rivers. Sports betting is exploding, especially during football season, and you'll love the game-day atmosphere in the **BetRivers Sportsbook**. Also, on the casino floor, there's always a party at the blackjack and craps tables, while big wins await you at our progressive slots.

In addition to holding monthly casino and poker promotions, we recently enhanced the **Young at Heart** program. Guests 50 years and older can "Swipe & Win" up to \$500 in **Free Slot Play** while enjoying live music and all-you-can-eat soup and salad on Wednesdays.

With the **New Rush Rewards Member Super Spin**, new members who sign up for a Rush Rewards card can spin to win up to \$250 Free Slot Play or \$500 in food credits. Rivers is open 24/7 and has easy access from I-95 and free parking.

See what's new today at Rivers Casino Philadelphia, your destination for fun.

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JACK'S BAR + GRILL ESPRESSO MARTINI



MENU

When you can't get to Rivers Casino to enjoy a night on the Waterfront, try this decadent espresso martini in the comfort of your own home, courtesy of our friends at Jack's Bar + Grill.

Yields 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 oz Absolut Vanilla
- 1 oz Kahlua
- 1 oz Creme De Cocoa

- 1 oz Espresso
- .5 oz Simple Syrup

DIRECTIONS

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with three espresso beans for health, wealth, and happiness!

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COURTESY OF
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Blue Sapphire Spritz

WWW.375PARK.COM

INGREDIENTS

- 1 part Sobieski Vodka
- 1/2-part Marie Brizard
- Blue Curacao
- 2 parts lemon-lime soda

DIRECTIONS

Combine Blue Curacao and Sobieski Vodka in a shaker with ice. Shake hard to chill, strain into a champagne flute. Top with lemon-lime soda.

375 PARK AVENUE SPIRITS IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF PHILADELPHIA ROWHOME MAGAZINE'S 2022 AFFAIR TO REMEMBER / BLUE SAPPHIRE AWARDS GALA.

RECIPE COURTESY OF GINA RUCCI

VEAL

CECILIA

by JOHN NACCHIO

POPIRESTAURANT.COM



“It is a joy to serve quality foods and traditional recipes to our many repeat customers over the years,” Gina Rucci says of Popi’s Italian Restaurant’s 30th anniversary year. “My father [founder Nick Rucci] is looking down from Heaven and smiling with satisfaction at what we have accomplished.”

MENU This holiday season, look for special feasts and family dinner events. Details will be released soon. In the meantime, follow Popi’s Restaurant on *Instagram* and *Facebook* to see all the happenings taking place to celebrate 30 years in business.

“We would love to host your next big event any time of year,” Rucci includes. “From special occasions to corporate functions. Our restaurant has a private entrance and room for up to 200 guests.”

Nick Rucci was known for his “hands of gold” in craftsmanship and had a passion for quality food ingredients. He enjoyed preparing many traditional recipes that have been showcased on the menu since the 1990s. Below is the *Veal Cecilia* recipe, prepared at Popi’s from day one. It is named proudly after Gina Rucci’s grandmother.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 eggplants, peeled, sliced thin (long way) & grilled
- 2 oz vegetable oil
- 3 each, veal leg cutlets (2 oz per)
- Add All-Purpose flour, as needed
- 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- Pinch kosher salt
- Pinch ground black pepper
- 1 tsp finely sliced fresh basil
- 2 oz dry white wine
- 4 oz chicken stock
- 1/4 tsp fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 2 slices fresh tomato
- 1 oz grated mozzarella

DIRECTIONS

Preheat a large sauté pan on medium high heat. Dredge the veal cutlets in flour on both sides. Add vegetable oil to the pan and then add the veal cutlets. Sauté until golden brown on both sides. Remove veal cutlets from the pan and dispose of the oil. Turn heat down to medium low. Add 1 tsp butter, olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper, and basil to the pan and sauté briefly until the garlic is cooked, but not browned. Deglaze the pan with the white wine, making sure to scrape up any brown bits that are stuck to the bottom of the pan – that’s where all the flavor is! Reduce the wine by half and add the chicken stock. Dredge the remaining 1 tsp of butter in flour. Once the chicken stock comes to a boil, whisk in the butter and lemon juice. Return the veal to the pan and flip to make sure the sauce is coating both sides. Top the veal with eggplant, tomato and mozzarella. Melt the mozzarella in a 350F oven for 1-2 minutes. Plate the veal and top with the remaining sauce from the pan.

POPI’S ITALIAN RESTAURANT IS A MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA ROWHOME (PRH) MAGAZINE BUSINESS NETWORK.

COURTESY OF
GIANCARLO CAMBRIA

GNOCCCHI

CARLO'S CATERING

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Giancarlo was born and raised in a South Philly home and spent many Sundays in the kitchen where he learned the Italian classics from his parents.

He began his culinary journey as a bus boy and worked his way up to culinary school at the Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College. His background spans the restaurant gamut from fine dining delicacies, authentic Italian specialties, seafood, and even some American classics he served from food trucks throughout the Philadelphia area. With the launch of his latest venture, Giancarlo is ready to bring his diverse culinary background right to your home.

MENU

INGREDIENTS

- 3 large russet potatoes
- 1/2 small container of ricotta
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- salt & pepper to taste

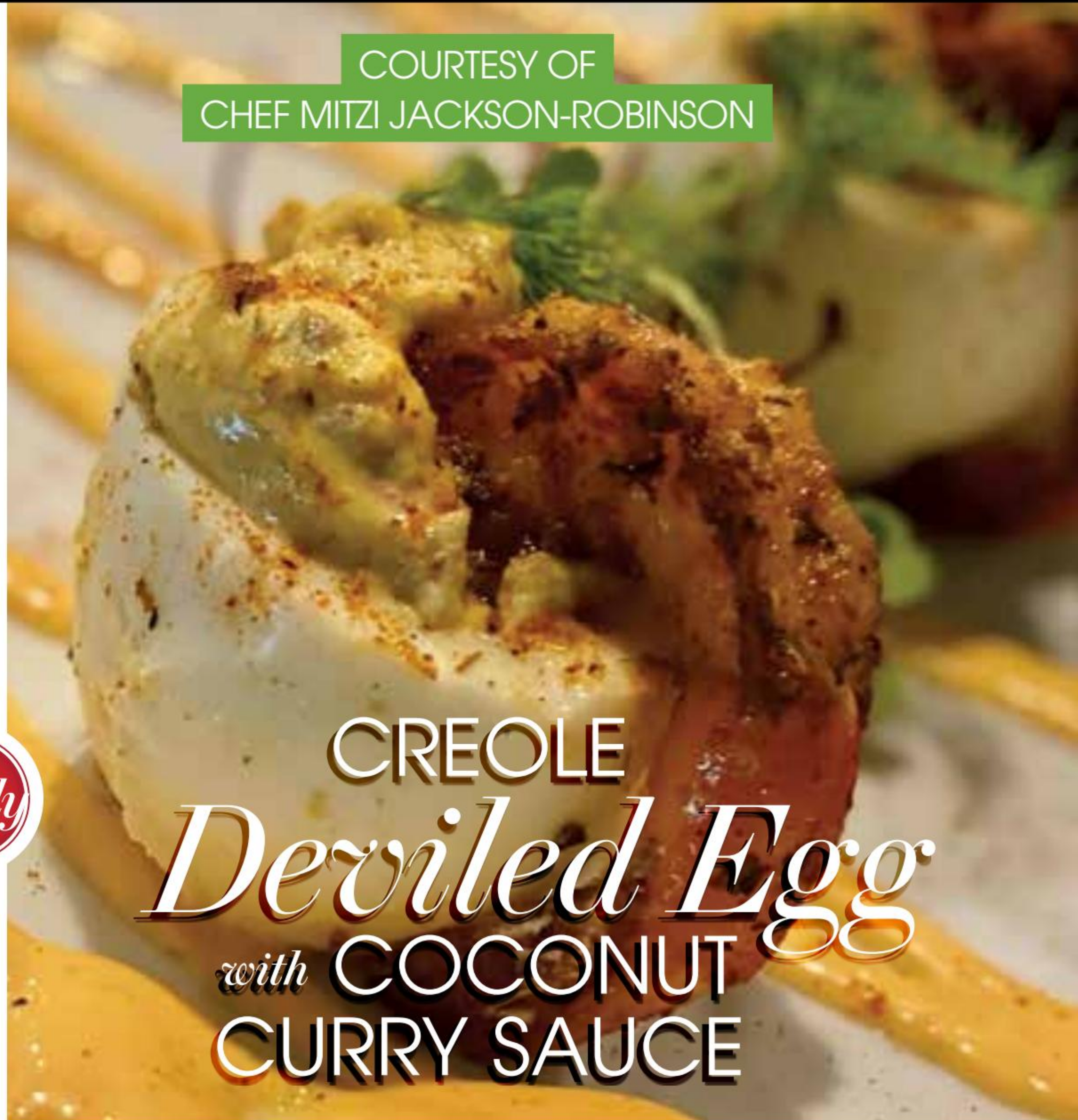
DIRECTIONS

Bake the potatoes in oven until soft. Let cool. Fork out filling into a mixing bowl. Add ricotta, eggs, flour (gradually) and salt/pepper. Fold until the ingredients form a dough. Cut dough and roll out logs, sized to your liking. From there, cut into bite size pieces. Freeze or add fresh to salted boiling water. Serve with your favorite sauce!

CARLO'S CATERING IS A MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA ROWHOME (PRH) MAGAZINE BUSINESS NETWORK.



COURTESY OF
CHEF MITZI JACKSON-ROBINSON



CREOLE Deviled Egg with COCONUT CURRY SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

for the sauce

- 1 can coconut milk
- Diced onion
- Curry powder
- Spice Blends by Chef MJ Veggie-licious seasoning

for the shrimp

- 12 peeled & deveined uncooked shrimp
- Spice Blends by Chef MJ Sea-
- food Bang Bang seasoning
- 1 stick of unsalted butter

for the eggs

- 12 boiled & peeled eggs
- (Shortcut, buy them already boiled and peeled)
- Mayonnaise
- Smoked paprika
- Salt & pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

For the sauce: Sauté the diced onion until soft. Stir in curry powder, Veggie-licious seasoning and cook for about 2 minutes before adding coconut milk. Reduce. Bring the sauce to a simmer and let it reduce over a few minutes. Allow the sauce to cool before drizzling it on your eggs for serving.

For the shrimp: Pat dry your shrimp to remove excess water. Season with the Seafood Bang Bang seasoning. Melt your butter in a sauté pan and cook seasoned shrimp for about 3-4 minutes. Remove from sauté pan and let cool.

Make the filling for your eggs: Cut the top of your egg 1/4 of the way to reveal the yolk and remove it. Cut the bottom tip of your egg, just enough that it will sit flat. Remove the yolk from the eggs. Mash the yolk with a fork and combine with 1/3 cup mayo, paprika, salt & pepper. Fill the egg white with your yolk mixture, then stuff with your cooked shrimp. **Important!** Do not leave eggs out of the refrigerator for longer than two hours. If you do, they need to be thrown away to eliminate any food-borne illness.

CHEF MITZI JACKSON-ROBINSON IS A MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA ROWHOME (PRH) MAGAZINE BUSINESS NETWORK.

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LOMBARDI'S PRIME MEATS

GARLIC BUTTER HERB CRUSTED PRIME RIB

LOMBARDIMEATS.COM



INGREDIENTS

- 4 to 6 pounds prime rib, boned & tied
- 1 cup butter softened
- 5 cloves garlic minced
- 1 tbs thyme, finely chopped
- 1 tbs oregano, finely chopped
- 1 tbs rosemary, finely chopped
- 1 tbs salt
- 1 tsp pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Remove the prime rib from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before to bring it to room temperature. In a small bowl, mix butter, garlic, thyme, oregano, rosemary, salt and pepper. Rub all the butter mixture on the outside of your prime rib and place in a roasting pan or large skillet with the fat side up. Cook for 15 minutes and reduce the temperature to 325 degrees. Continue to bake approximately 15 minutes per pound of meat or until roast reaches an internal temperature of 110 degrees.

Remove from oven and let it rest with foil for at least 20 minutes. The temperature will rise to 130 degrees for a medium rare prime rib. Serves 4-6.

MENU

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PRH THE MENU

Chef MJ'S Corner

Star-Studded Dishes!

CHEF MJ'S CORNER

by chef Mitzi Jackson-Robinson
@mj_thechef

Welcome to Chef MJ's Corner, where we feature stories about food, nutrition, health, the latest trends and hotspots and, last but not least, stories that give inspiration to each reader. You know my motto...

*Food is a segue into intimate conversation!
So, take a load off and let's get intimate.*

STAR -STUDED DISHES

You've all heard of a star-studded cast, but what is that exactly? Well, it's when a group of famous people gather in one place for an event or movie. Since *RowHome Magazine's* Blue Sapphire Awards ceremony is right around the corner, I thought this would be a great time to discuss star-studded dishes.

As a Professional Chef, or even as the chef for your family, you want the people you are serving to eat with their eyes, first. This means you have placed a beautiful, mouth-watering dish on the table. So, presentation is *key*.

WHAT MAKES A BEAUTIFUL PLATE?

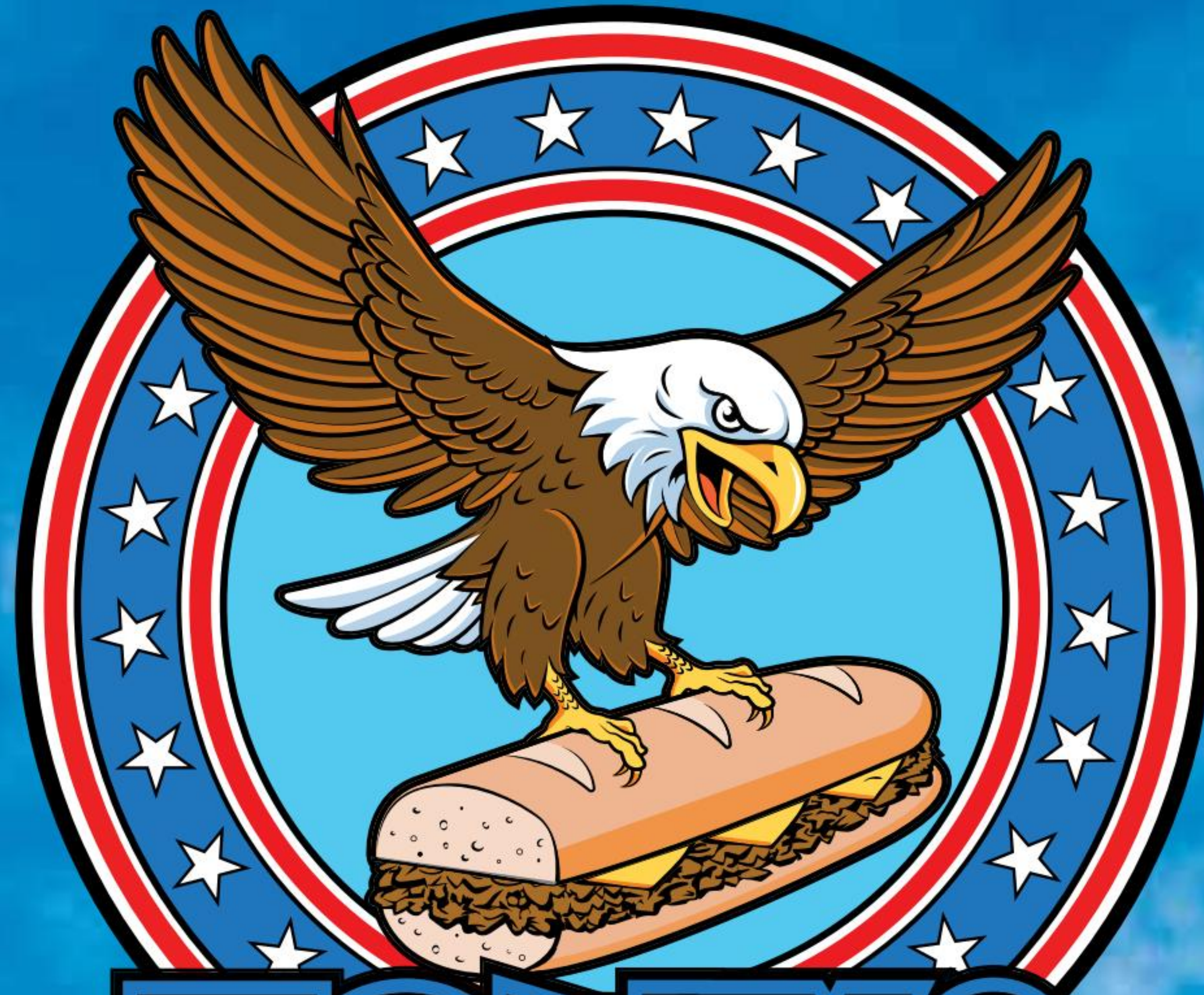
There are 5 basic elements

- 1. Create a framework.** Start with drawings and sketches to visualize your plate.
- 2. Keep it simple.** Pick one ingredient that you will focus on and use the space on your plate to simplify your presentation.
- 3. Make sure your dish is balanced.** You want spicy, sweet, fatty, and crunchy all on the same plate with a perfect balance.
- 4. Portion sizes.** Picking the correct plate is important, but also make sure you have the correct portion sizes for your dish.
- 5. Highlight your key ingredient.** For example, if salmon or steak is your main ingredient, you want to highlight that "star" and make it pop from your plate.

If you follow all these steps, you are well on your way to creating the perfect dish for your family and elevating their dining experience.

CHEF MITZI JACKSON-ROBINSON IS A MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA ROWHOME (PRH) MAGAZINE BUSINESS NETWORK.

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PRH THE MENU

COURTESY OF CHRIS RUGGIERO

WILDWOOD ROAD TRIP SICILIAN CALAMARI & GNOCCCHI

introduction by JOHN NACCHIO



Chris Ruggiero does more than just sing! On his website, you'll find out just how much he loves being in the kitchen - chrisruggierosings.com/in-the-kitchen/ is filled with recipes for every tastebud and diet! Chris recently went on a road trip to Joey M's La Piazza Cucina in Wildwood, New Jersey, to meet-up with owner Joey Montello. Both Joey M and Chris Ruggiero have a passion for culinary skills *and* singing. Thanks to Joey M's good friend, radio personality legend Bob Pantano, Joey M got his start when Bob unexpectedly put him onstage in a room of more than 1000 people, and broadcast it live to an audience of more than 35,000. In December 1988, Bob put Joey M on the radio for an entire hour of Christmas music with accomplished songwriter/composer Richie Rome of South Philadelphia. After opening La Piazza, he has performed with and encouraged many legendary musical acts. Enjoy this culinary duet from Joey M and Chris at home!

MENU

SICILIAN CALAMARI

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 lb calamari
- Mixed cherry peppers
- 2 tsp capers
- 1 stick butter
- 8 cloves garlic
- Flour (enough for coating calamari)
- Salt, pepper to taste
- Sliced lemon
- 3/4 cup white wine

DIRECTIONS

Coat the bottom of pan with olive oil and melted butter. Sauté garlic until golden brown. Add white wine, capers, sliced lemon and mixed peppers to taste. Let it come together for 10 minutes on medium heat. While the sauce is cooking, toss uncooked calamari in flour and fry at 350 degrees for about 2 minutes or until crispy and tender. When calamari is finished, pour sauce on top and mangia! Feeds four.

SPINACH GNOCCCHI

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb fresh spinach
- 1 stick salted butter
- 2 tsp salt
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 8 cloves fresh garlic
- Olive oil
- 1 lb gnocchi, cooked

DIRECTIONS

Coat the bottom of the pan with oil and melted butter. Sauté sliced garlic until golden brown. Pour chicken broth in the pan along with spinach and let cook for 5 minutes or until spinach is soft. Add in cooked gnocchi, salt, and pepper flakes. Sauté on high heat for 2 minutes to let the sauce and gnocchi come together. Add grated cheese to taste and enjoy! Feeds four.

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"I WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I JUST LOVE THE ALBUM! IT'S BEAUTIFUL. THE LAYOUT IS JUST SUPER! I REALLY APPRECIATE ALL OF THE HARD WORK & CREATIVITY THAT WENT INTO THE EFFORT; IT REALLY PAID OFF! I CANNOT WAIT TO SHOW IT TO EVERYONE!!" -KRIS

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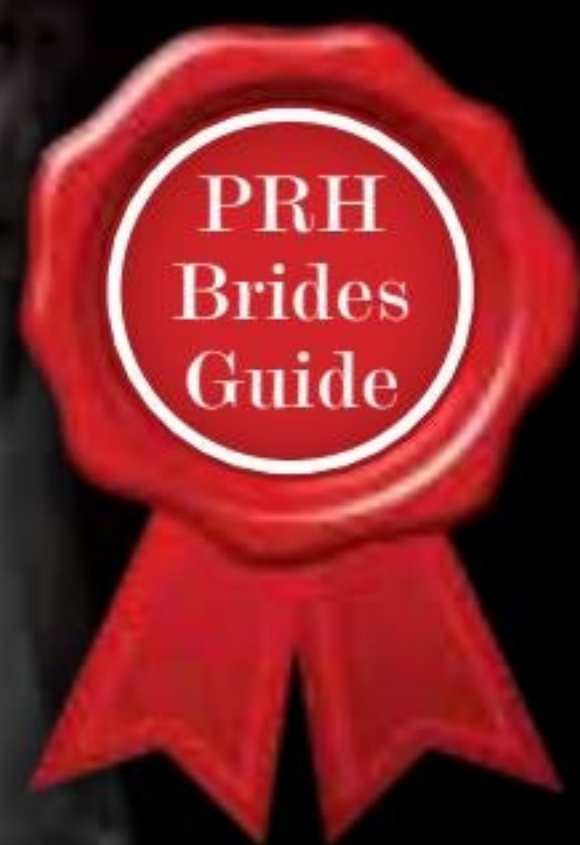
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JACLYN & BRIAN MITCHELL
Majestic Elegance & Breathtaking Views

by

Joe Volpe



Hello Brides Guide readers! This season, we are over the moon to introduce you to the Mitchells, who hosted their special day at Cescaphe's *Down Town Club*! Jaclyn and Brian make a stunningly beautiful couple, which clearly can be seen as we relive their wedding day. You could feel the love and excitement from the very first moment to the last dance. Jaclyn and Brian's teamwork and dedication to planning their event in just three months is an inspiration to us all. We are so excited to share their story with you!

How did you meet?

We were introduced in late February 2021 by my friend, Annie, who is now known as “Cupid.” She told me, “I think you and my chiropractor would get along really well. You both have the same personality!” Our first conversation happened when I slid into Brian’s DMs on Instagram. We transitioned to a phone call where we set up our first date. It was love at first sight, even while meeting with masks on in Macaroni’s in Northeast Philadelphia. Brian went into work the day after our first date and told his boss, “I am going to marry that girl!”



VENDOR CREDITS

Venue: **Down Town Club**

Florist: **Quinn’s Florist**

Band/DJ: **Schaffer Sound - Chris Romanelli**

Invitations & Stationery: **Sealed with a Kiss**

Photographer: **Artistic Imagery- Elena Jasic**

Transportation: **Galaxy Limousine**

Dress Designer/Dress Shop: **Sposabella**

Menswear Designer/Shop: **Ozzy’s Tux**

Rings: **Feiner’s Ltd.**

Seating Chart: **Memorable Moments by Marissa**

Hair: **Love Me Do Salon - Julie Poberezhnyuk**

Makeup: **Mark Sileo**

How did the proposal happen?

All throughout the winter of 2021, we would sit in Brian’s truck and listen to music. Our favorite song was Allen Stone’s “Consider Me.” Ten months after we started dating, we planned a trip to Fort Lauderdale, FL, for an Allen Stone concert, where, unbeknownst to me, Brian had planned to propose. Unfortunately, a few weeks before the trip, we both tested positive for COVID-19 and decided to quarantine in Wildwood, NJ together for two weeks. Not knowing Brian’s proposal plans, I decided to call the airline and bump up our trip departure date, which only gave Brian five hours to make a miracle happen. He

bought my engagement ring, went to visit my dad, played the Allen Stone track for him, and asked him for my hand in marriage – all while I was taking a nap!

Fast-forward to the night of the concert, after an exclusive pre-show mini concert with Allen Stone, we were invited to follow Allen to his tour bus. Brian gave the security guard his phone so he could “take a picture” of us in front of the bus. I was surprised to later find out that a video was being recorded, so, instead of posing for a picture, Brian got down on one knee and asked me to ‘consider him’ in marriage.





Why did you choose a Cescaphe Wedding?

Both Brian and I are Philadelphia natives and have experienced Cescaphe Weddings as guests. Their epic cocktail hours paired with renowned hospitality and catering really stood out to us. Naturally, we wanted to give our family and friends the same level of excellence we'd experienced ourselves. So, with a short booking window, we knew Cescaphe would deliver for one of the most important days of our lives. We saw and fell in love with the Down Town Club, with its majestic elegance and breathtaking views of the city.



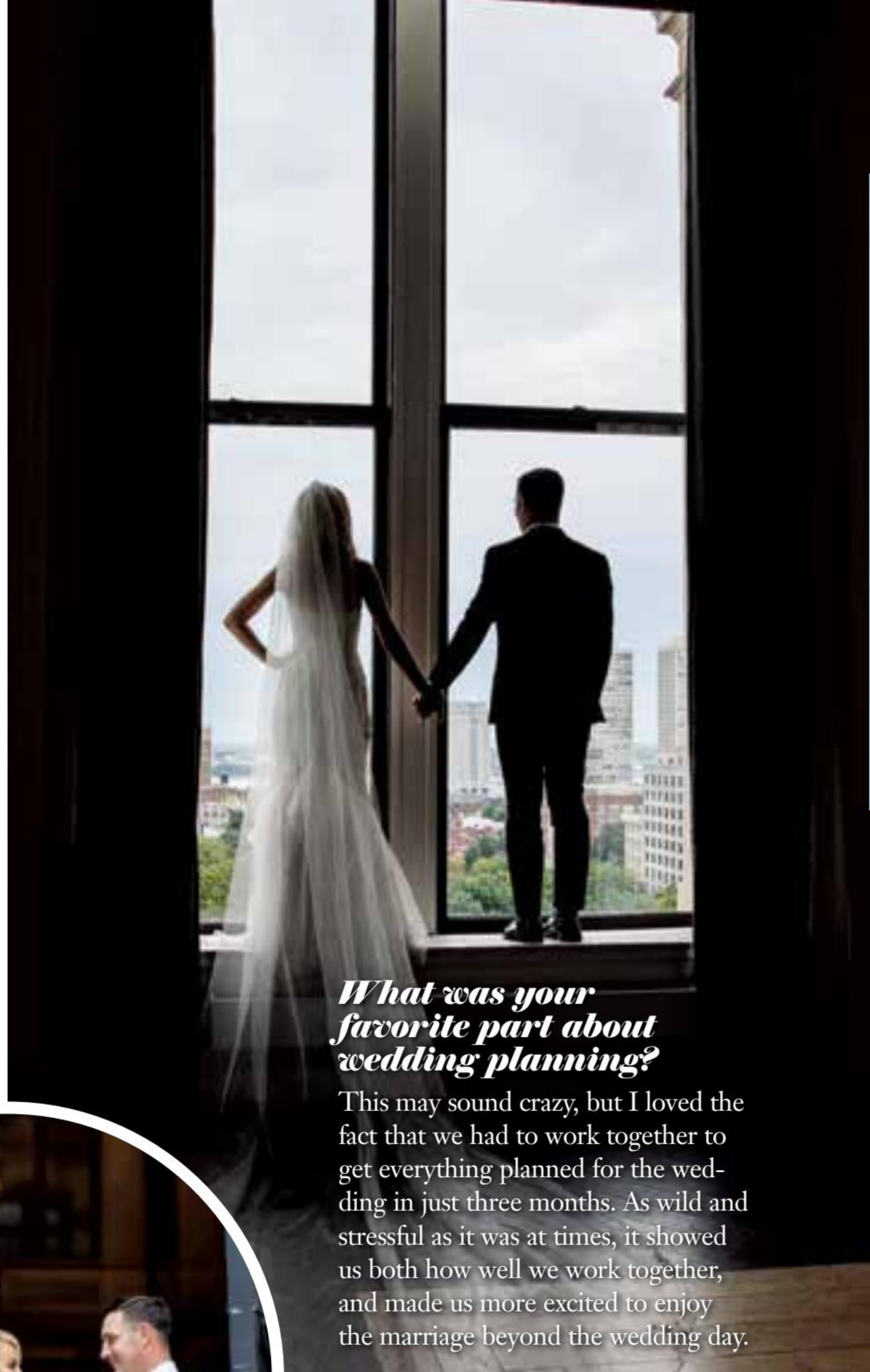
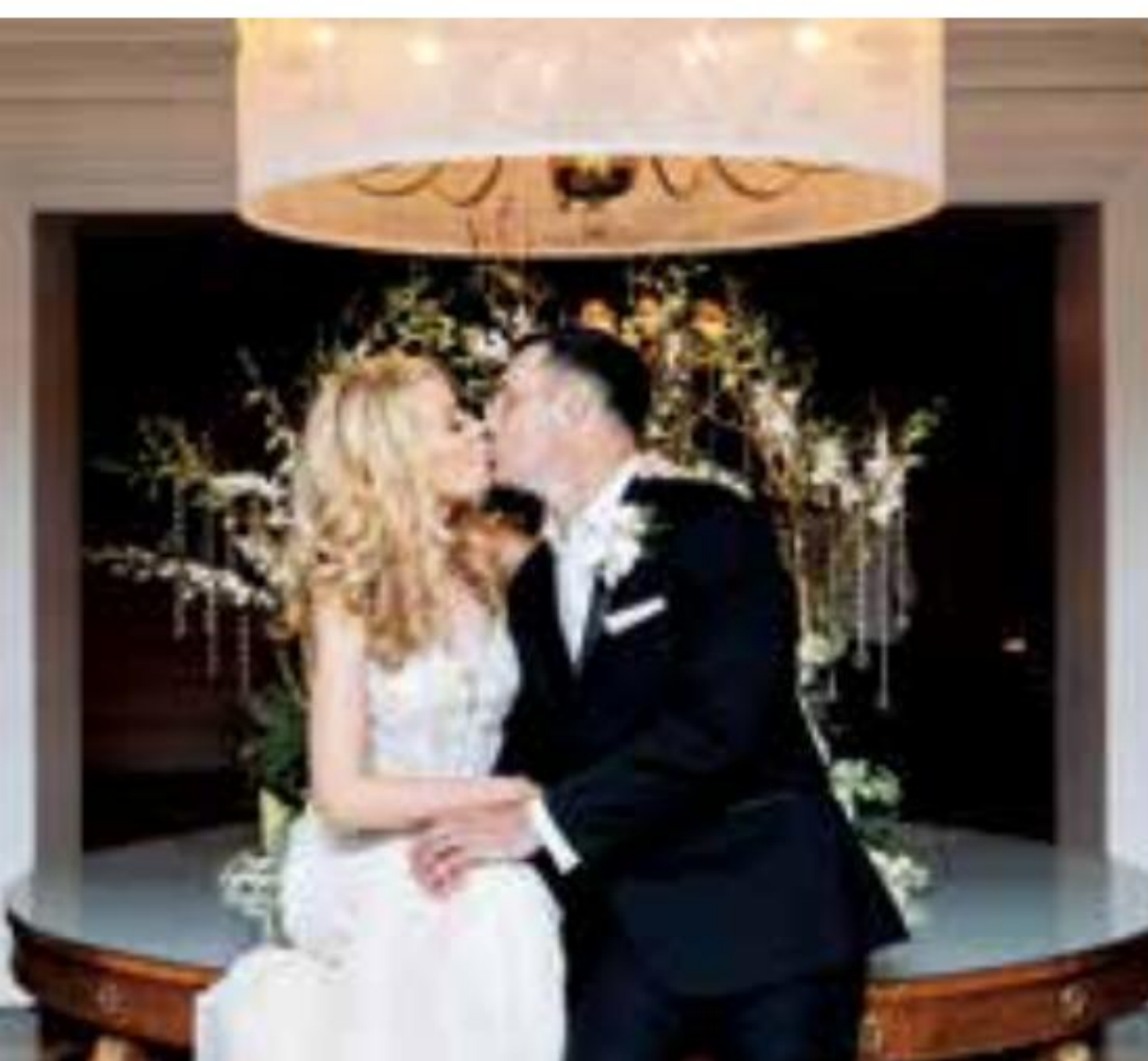
What was your favorite part about the wedding?

Our favorite wedding day experience was reciting our vows to each other during the Mass. Another favorite part was during the reception, sitting at the sweetheart table as husband and wife, surrounded by our family and friends, soaking up all of the love.



What did you do to make your wedding day extra special?

I have always been close to my maternal grandfather, so I was elated when he gave the blessing at the reception.



What was your favorite part about wedding planning?

This may sound crazy, but I loved the fact that we had to work together to get everything planned for the wedding in just three months. As wild and stressful as it was at times, it showed us both how well we work together, and made us more excited to enjoy the marriage beyond the wedding day.



What advice would you give to future brides and grooms?

Be kind to each other. At the end of the day, all the wedding planning is a drop in the bucket as compared to what matters most – your relationship with your partner. Also, bring *Tupperware* because you'll want the leftovers.

CESCAPHE Credits

Client Development Associate:
Lisa Lucke

Event Coordinator:
Katie Wiswall

Event Manager:
Maia Ben Shoshan

Maitre D / Head Server:
Carlene Acello

by **JOSEPH VOLPE,**
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TIPS
from the
PROS

Fall Makeup Trends

Deep Oranges
& Juicy Cherry
Shades are a Must!

by VICTORIA DIPIETRO

WWW.BELLA-ANGEL.COM

MAKE NO MISTAKE. AT ALL TIMES, YOU SHOULD BE

rocking makeup looks that make you feel good.

At times, when your go-to looks are no longer exciting you, it is time to try something new. This past summer, we wore bright shadows and bold lips along with sun-kissed skin.

This Fall, the time is right to swap out that bright pink lipstick and cool shadows and instead move for a warmer palette. **Deep oranges** and juicy **cherry** shades are a *must* this Fall. My preferred Fall shadow palette is **Urban Decay™ Naked Cherry**. That palette has some of the best colors to choose from that match the atmosphere of the season. It offers mattes, metallics and shimmers for Fall and is perfect well into Winter. **Urban Decay™ Naked Honey Palette** is also great with classic **golds**, warm **ambers**, and rich **chocolates**.

Embrace your Skin

Cream is the preferred makeup consistency for Fall and it's the perfect choice for everyone. Show off and embrace your skin with lighter colors and tones. Dewy skin is in, and nothing truly brings that gorgeous sheen to your complexion like blush, bronzer, and highlighter in cream form.

Moisturizers

If you're looking for the perfect moisturizing skin cream, the Thatcha™ brand delivers. **The Dewy Skin Cream by Thatcha™** is, without a doubt, one of my top moisturizers right now. The price

is somewhat high at \$69 but it is well worth it. It keeps my skin hydrated and dewy all day. You can also wear this before bed, so that it works its magic while you sleep. This is the perfect skin prep to use before you apply your makeup.

Foundations

Less is more when you're trying to achieve a natural skin look. This Fall, set aside your full coverage concealers and heavy matte foundations and try a **sheer foundation**. For a glass-like finish with a hint of color, try a **skin tint**. Skin tints are lightweight and provide the perfect amount of light coverage. Some tints also moisturize your skin and create the most beautiful glow. One company I constantly talk about is Charlotte Tilbury™. I'm obsessed with Charlotte Tilbury's **Hollywood Flawless Filter™**. It's a light complexion booster that blurs, smooths, and illuminates the skin for a real-life filter effect. I love to use this product on all skin types and skin of all ages, and everyone's skin looks so young and beautiful. Another favorite is **Morphe 2 Hint Hint Skin Tint™**. This is a lightweight foundation that will even out your skin tone so that it has a uniform appearance. It's sheer and buildable and will not slip, slide, or cake off your face.

Use these Fall makeup tips to bring out a different shade of your personality. Enjoy these looks with some pumpkin spice and some apple cider. You will look fabulous in the light of the fire pit. **PRH**

Victoria DiPietro, Bella Angel Bridal Hair & Makeup, is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome (PRH) Magazine Business Network.

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Colder days are ahead, but you can keep your sun-kissed glow year-round with a luxury spray tan in the comfort of your own home. We custom mix our solutions to guarantee a gorgeous bronze, perfectly suited to your needs. Sunless tanning has come a long way since first popping onto the scene decades ago and orange is *NOT* an option. Spray tans are becoming more mainstream as awareness of the negative impacts of too much sun exposure grows - sun damage, skin cancer, and accelerated wrinkles and signs of aging are just a few. Taking proper care of your skin is vital to aging gracefully, keeping your largest organ healthy, and attaining a flawless makeup or spray tan application. You can achieve your very own "J.Lo glow" in minutes. Before your session, just follow these prep tips to make sure of that.

FASHION

|| **Hydrate!** Water is the key to everything, so make sure you drink plenty of fluids.

|| **Exfoliate about 24-48 hours before your session.** Use an exfoliating mitt, not a loofa. You can find inexpensive ones on *Amazon*. This will remove any prior tanner, dead skin cells, and dry flakes.

|| **Avoid taking a shower within 12 hours of your session.** You do not want to leave any soap residue on your body or open up your pores, so shave further in advance, as well.

|| **Moisturizing soaps are not your friend.** Avoid using heavy soaps at least 72 hours prior to your session.

|| **Avoid using lotions, deodorant, makeup, and perfume before your tan.** These will create a barrier on your skin and the solution won't be able to penetrate it.

But I'd say, the most important spray-tan rule is **DO NOT APOLOGIZE**. Do not apologize for stretch marks, cellulite, body fat, wrinkles, scars, or anything else that has to do with your body! You are perfect as you are. There is no one like you, and that should be celebrated. **PRH**

Blush Bridal and Event Artistry is a member of the Philadelphia RowHome (PRH) Magazine Business Network.



CHRIS RUGGIERO

Shines with Rock & Roll Music

BY JOHN NACCHIO
PHOTO BY LEESA RICHARDS

Chris Ruggiero is a singing sensation who has distinguished himself by specializing in vintage Rock & Roll. He is strikingly handsome, charismatic with a dashing classic gentlemanly charm and just 23 years old. This is the kind of young man you'd find on Dick Clark's *Bandstand* or as a welcomed addition to the South Philly teen idols like Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell, Fabian or Eddie Fisher.

Raised in a small town in Westchester County, NY, Ruggiero found that he loves songs from the golden age of Rock & Roll. As a teen, he felt musically out of place with others his age. He embraced strong family traditions,

culture, and progressively found an extraordinarily successful niche of performing and recording music from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Ruggiero says he feels like an "old soul" and was born to sing.

He first came to national attention during a PBS coast-to-coast broadcast special, asked by the producer to join The Duprees, the 1960s Doo-wop style group, live on stage for the telecast. "I was a nervous wreck," Ruggiero says. "That was the first time I was ever on stage with a band!" Having only slight preparation, he was able to rock with the best and the audiences immediately fell in love with him.

Ruggiero has continued to

impress audiences for the last several years by touring the country, engaging enthusiastic audiences, and establishing relationships with a number of well-known musical artists and friends of the Rock & Roll era.

Q: Who influenced your musical style?

A: Well, early on, I'd have to say that Jerry Vale, Paul Anka, Bobby Rydell, and Frankie Valli were tremendous influences. But I carry a torch for Bobby Darin and Sinatra who set the bar extremely high. Later, I got turned on to more '60s music and I've since fallen in love with a lot of music written by Lennon & McCartney, Brian Wilson, Burt Bacharach. That's what comprises my album *I Am Chris Ruggiero* – all those great songwriters of the 60s. I'm very lucky to have some pretty famous and successful mentors like Clint Holmes, who was a headliner in Las Vegas. He's coached me quite a bit on stage presence. Charles Calello,

who worked with Frankie Valli and did an entire Frank Sinatra album, is my primary musical arranger, and I've thrilled to spend some time in the studio being coached by Bill Medley of *The Righteous Brothers* on phrasing, and his partner, Bucky Heard, is my vocal coach.

Q: What musical Artist inspires you?

A: Bobby Rydell was special, as he became a personal friend. His style - the way he swings, and how big and round his voice is - he put a very special touch on everything he sang. I don't know that I'll ever capture that, but it certainly was a big inspiration. I still recall standing in the wings and watching his entire show, beginning to end, no matter how many times I saw it. He was a master.

Q: When did you realize you wanted a career in music?

A: When I was 12, I fell in love with the music of the '50s and '60s as a result of my grandfather's passion for it. He grew up singing on the street corners in the Bronx and even had a singing group that made a demo. His favorite group was The Flamingos, so when I decided to record "I Only Have Eyes for You," I asked him to come into the studio

to sing with me. His last time in a recording studio was making a demo with Phil Spector when he was my age, but he didn't miss one doo bop shoo bop. On my *Time Was* album, I kept a lot of the arrangements pretty close to the originals, so if you're a purist, this is for you.

Q: You have a viral recording with Don Danneman who was the lead singer of Easton, PA's 1960s band, The Cyrkle. Can you tell us more?

A: Yes! Don and I hooked up to record "What's Your Name." We put it on *Facebook*, and it got over 200,000 views, so we said, "Let's do some more." The fans really seemed to connect with it.

Q: Any news about your Christmas album for 2022?

A: I can't reveal the list of songs yet. Also, I have a surprise duet included - with Darlene Love, who has become a dear friend. She's a 2011 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee and *Rolling Stone* lists her as one of the top 100 greatest singers.

Q: How can fans find out more?

My website is www.ChrisRuggieroSings.com and I'm on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ChrisRuggieroSings. **PRH**

MUSIC

a field of
ROCK MUSIC DREAMS



Rock Lititz Campus, Hotel Rock Lititz on left and Rock Lititz Studios on right / Photo credit Rock Lititz



Production execs, Amy Gaio & John Stevenson on site at "Phish" rock concert, Atlantic City beach, August 2022 / Photo credit Pat Ciarrocchi



Andrea Shirk, CEO + President at Rock Lititz, at construction site for Pod 5 / Photo credit Rock Lititz

BY PAT CIARROCCHI

Lititz, Pennsylvania, is a quintessential Lancaster County community. The cornfields and rich farmlands stretch to the horizon. If you listen attentively, you may hear the clomping of horses on the roadway, followed by the sound of wooden wheels turning on the gravel. The horse drawn buggy of an Amish family just might be nearby. Generations of farming families infused the soil with their dreams. Now, an artistic vortex has opened across a 96-acre tract of land that once saw stalks of corn lifting from the earth. Two towering black boxes stake a claim at the center of a sprawling 35 company office, manufacturing, and

hotel complex. Fifteen hundred are employed on campus. Protected farmlands surround the campus, making for a collaborative spirit between farmers and business. A 10-letter marquee spells out ROCK LITITZ, pointing to a very different "field of dreams" – waiting for those willing to dare to follow their passions. The boxes, easily mistaken for airplane hangars, are rehearsal studios for the touring shows of international rock music and elite artists. You ask, "Rock music superstars in Lancaster County where a good ear of corn or juicy tomatoes are usually center stage?" The answer is a reverberating, "YES!"

MUSIC

“The owners of the company had a unique idea about community,” said Andrea Shirk, Rock Lititz President and CEO.

Leading vendors in the live performance industry with offices and business operations on campus could support every tiny detail of a show tour, while building the spectacle that audiences crave.

Shirk shared her passion as we talked in a meeting room on the edge of an employee café, with the ambiance of a Rock Music theme park.

“I love the intersection of art and technology here. It’s a place where the techie nerds can find passion and excitement. And it’s also where artists can touch their passions and interests. It’s immersive.”

The work is also uniquely magnetic. Rock Lititz and its vendor companies have become a world resource for producing touring shows for concert venues that only the biggest headliners would book.

Need a rotating stage?

Need a sound system that can energize an audience in the last seat of stadium-sized concert venues anywhere in the world?

Need show lights, that hang on trusses and are automated?

Need special effects creating a spectacle to dazzle any concert goer?

Need to move stages, video screens, or lighting on cue that only sophisticated computer programs can activate consistently?

Check. Check. Check. Check. Check.

The Rock Lititz magic is taking a show designers dream from paper to stage... and then, booking the headliner and all the performers for weeks in studio to rehearse the production to perfection.

The two enormous rehearsal studios each can re-create the precise staging for expansive concert venues like Madison Square Garden. By the numbers, Studio One is 125 feet wide, by 240 feet long and 100 feet high, with Studio Two at 140 feet wide by 200 feet long and 80 feet high.

And if that is not spectacular enough, all the gear is built or tooled on site in manufacturing pods and can be loaded without an inch to spare into tractor trailers so the show can get on the road.

Shirk, a dynamic executive who crafted a career first in engineering, sees the value in creating her own industry pipeline of eager and passionate employees who can envision a career in this billion-dollar live performance industry.

At Rock Lititz, days dedicated to “Live Event Career Exploration” are big days on campus. 2022 marks the fourth year of high school students invited in the Spring, and college, post-graduate or early career individuals invited in the Fall.

In packets sent home with high school students who have rock music stars in their eyes, and no real desire to pursue a traditional college education, CEO Shirk writes to their parents.

“Take a deep breath. Yes, your child can make a living in this industry doing something they love.”

This year, 300 participants are having “immersive” days interacting with 80 live event professionals, who become their educators for a day.

Among the professionals sharing industry enthusiasm are Amy Gaio and John Steven-

son. They are veteran production managers of world-wide rock music tours and live events – where the headliners have included Elton John, Beyonce, Justin Bieber, and Pope Francis.

Yes, Pope Francis needs a stage set, speakers, and lights, too, when his live events travel the world.

In August, from the cornfields of Lancaster County to the beaches of Atlantic City, I met Gaio and Stevenson in the sand, mid-beach from the concert stage where the rock band “Phish” was to perform that night. Stevenson, who is a Production Manager for the entertainment company, Live Nation, was on the job managing the site for the multiple show booking.

“For the concert goer, you want the show to feel effortless and be flawless,” Stevenson said. “Anymore, we rely on computer technol-

now known as TAIT – was building stage sets with elaborate lighting, while growing what’s become a global business with 1,500 employees.

The Rock Lititz magic was sparked... when the Clair family and TAIT CEO Adam Davis partnered. Together, they founded Rock Lititz and seeded this entertainment business concept that would grow beyond their wildest dreams.

The Rock Lititz campus was “planted” in 2014. The vendor companies supporting live entertainment began to establish a presence here.

“Having a rehearsal studio on campus, too, was a game changer,” said Gaio, Rock Lititz’s Account Manager.

Now, not only could an artist’s show be designed and built. It could be rehearsed. Gaio manages bringing account show tours on campus, with



Live Event Career Exploration 2021 at Rock Lititz / Photo credit Rock Lititz

ogy to handle all the moving parts. But you still need the “hands-on” of a good crew.”

Riggers, electricians, carpenters, stagehands, audio, and lighting techs – are just some of the people who respond when the call goes out – “Let’s put on a show!”

We stood next to what’s known as a “speaker delay.” It was one of several amplifiers mounted individually on a steel tower to carry the sound of the show to the back of the venue. In this case, the music was carried across the beach.

That speaker and most of the “gear” needed to put on the show for Phish, originated at the Rock Lititz complex.

Manufacturing these components is rooted in the early work of the founding partners. In the 1960’s, the Clair brothers of Lititz started building audio systems for local bands, encouraged by their father who gifted them a public address system. They were innovators, putting speakers in boxes that would stack and could fit in a truck, to get the show on the road.

Simultaneously, Tait Towers, a company –

first booking the rehearsal studio. That’s the critical booking on which all the other work pivots.

“Complicated touring shows may need a six-week rehearsal schedule,” she said. “Competition for rehearsal slots became intense. Building a second studio seemed an imperative.”

Check.

Studio 2 opened in April 2022.

CEO Shirk has a master plan and is always looking ahead, strategically. Developing workforce talent is among her priorities.

Innovative approaches for next-stage development are job fairs, programs for younger students – meant to ignite their creative interests – and additional early-career training. In the “field of dreams pipeline,” an “education center” right on the Rock Lititz campus could take shape.

In Lititz, Lancaster County, there’s magic in the cornfields waiting for new dreams to be planted. **PRH**

Information on job opportunities, internships and career exploration days can be found on the Rock Lititz website www.RockLititz.com.



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PRH MUSIC & ARTS



CARMINE YUSKO

Music, Movies & a New Record Deal

BY BRENDA HILLEGAS

Q: What have you been up to since receiving RowHome Magazine's WishRock Award in 2019?

A: Although it seems so long ago, I have been up to a great deal. I have continued to grow my reputation in not only the musical world, but in the screen acting world, as well. I have secured multiple residencies in restaurants, country clubs, and other music venues on the east coast. I was fortunate enough to befriend Federico Castelluccio (Furio from the hit TV series *The Sopranos*). I have also been in touch with Malcom McDowell, John Fiore and William Forsythe. This has been a great benefit and will definitely be open to working with them in the future. I was invited to Los Angeles to be on the Jeff FM Podcast. While in LA, I also participated in the filming of a promo video for his new product, *Jeff's Barber Shop*. Jeff and I still keep in touch and are constantly thinking of collaborations we can do in the future. The big news is, this past July, I signed a record deal with Elektra Records, so stay tuned.

Q: You recently were featured in a crime drama set in South Philly, Not For Nothing. How did you land that role? And where can we see it?

A: The directors, Frank Tartaglia and Tim Dowlin, reached out to me through Joseph Destefano and asked me to audition for the role of Frankie. At first, I didn't think I was going to land the role. I had never acted on screen before, so it was all very new. I was able to channel what I learned from acting in plays and brought it to the big screen. They offered me the role and I accepted. We actually had our world premiere at the Philadelphia Film Festival this October.

Q: Tell us about some of your favorite places to hang out or grab a bite to eat in Philly!

A: Where do I start! If it's a quick bite to eat, something like a cheesesteak, pizza, or a burger, I have to say Philip's Steaks is my go-to. Also, I never turn down a Nick's roast beef sandwich. If you are looking for a more sit-down restaurant, I like to frequent Pesto, Ocean Prime, Villa Di Roma, and Dante and Luigi's, just to mention a few.

Q: What are you listening to these days? Any bands that should be on our radar?

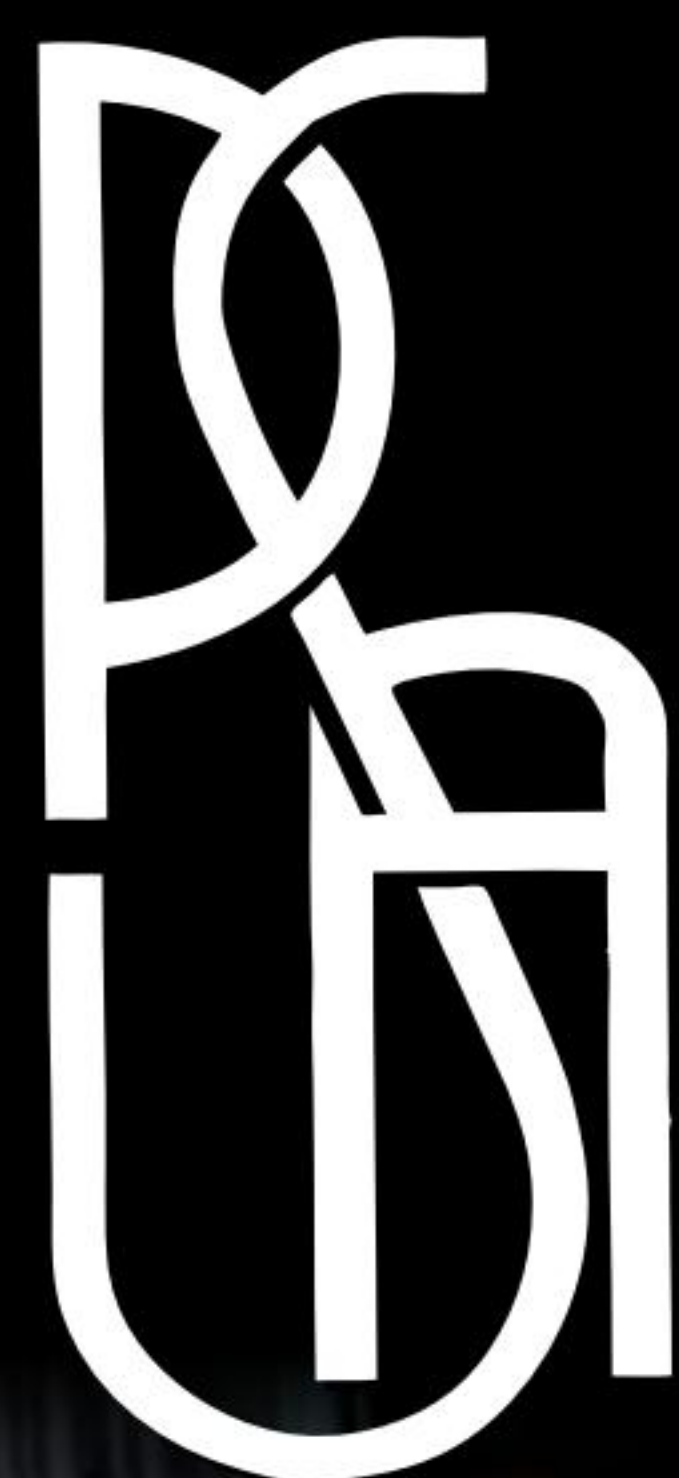
A: I am a fan of all types of music. Anyone who knows me knows I love music from the Jazz era to present. In particular, I am a fan of rock & roll and big band. I recently saw Motley Crue and Michael Buble when they came to Philly. Both concerts were full of excitement and tailored to each individual's palette. I would definitely recommend seeing both acts.

Q: If we want to see you perform live, where should we go?

A: I always post all of my upcoming shows on my social media accounts, so please take a look for future dates.

Q: What do you have planned for 2023?

A: 2023 will be a busy year. Signing the record deal has projected my music career in the direction I could have only dreamed of. We still have a lot of plans, but you can expect a high-level, high-energy show in the future. **PRH**



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Disco Inferno



GENO THACKARA

Not every electric funk group breaks out with a touch of classic Hollywood, but then *The Trammps* have never quite been a group to stick to just one niche. Synonymous with disco in most people's minds, you may not realize the group always had more than its share of blues and soul to go with the groove and bounce. But that's what happens when you help introduce a new style of music that is attached

to your most famous success.

When Philly first heard the name *The Volcanoes* in the mid-'60s, they were a soul group first and foremost. Before too long, a few changes led them to become known as *The Moods*, instead. By the time

MUSIC

Earl Young, Jimmy Ellis, and Harold and Stanley Wade emerged from those shifting lineups and solidified as the core of a new band in the early '70s, the culture was offering them a whole new range of bright tones and sounds to draw from. The newly dubbed Trammps were happy to hop on the Philly soul bandwagon and dabble in the new electrified branches of the R&B tree that were spreading all over the map.

Still, it was a piece of golden-age culture that made the first springboard to their career. A self-titled debut put them on the radar. "Where Do We Go from Here" and "Love Epidemic" showcased a crew with several well-meshed voices in the tradition of classic R&B groups, crossed with the string-happy electric fusion that made the Philly soul sound world-famous. A few months later came *The Legendary ZING Album*, which borrowed the affable '30s tune "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart" and gave it a brightly skittering makeover that no one could have foreseen back when Judy Garland made it famous.

Naturally, their star continued to rise just as the style itself did.

They went all-in on the new groovy pop-funk recipe with 1976's *Where the Happy People Go*. "Disco Party" was just the thing to make a natural dance hit at the time with its rollicking piano and unstoppable cheers. The title track climbed almost into the top 10, as well, perhaps best showing the essence of the band to date. On top of the snazzy suits and sharp unison dance moves, it was the Trammps' brightness and positivity that sealed the deal. If they've had one defining characteristic through their decades in existence, it's that determination to give everybody a lift.

A little later in the year, that happy energy was in full force again to bring them to the peak of their career. "Disco Inferno" nailed the recipe of the day - relentlessly stomping rhythms, cooking horns, bubbling bass, and soupy guitar wah-wahed to within an inch of its life. The groove (as the lyrics kept repeating) just couldn't stop. The LP devoted a full 10 minutes to the track, giving Ellis

room to lead an extensive call-and-answer vamp suitable for a gospel revival. The band's live videos of the time back up the feeling with a whole lot of joyous clapping and throwing hands in the air.

The piece burned up the clubs, then the charts, then the movie theaters with the release of *Saturday Night Fever*, which gave it the honor of closing one of the best-selling movie soundtracks in history. The rest is, indeed, history. The piece is one of those staples universally known to people of just about any taste, having proved adaptable to the likes of both Cyndi Lauper and Tina Turner. The Trammps themselves inevitably slid back down the ladder of fame but never disappeared. They continued performing right up until the Covid shutdowns hit.

And though disco had a shorter shelf life than most genres, The Trammps and "Inferno" are forever burned into the minds and memories of music aficionados around the globe. **PRH**



AN AMAZING LINEUP MARKS THE START OF A NEW THEATER SEASON

Grace Slear, Jackie Hoffman, Sophia Ramos, Katie Thompson, Anastacia McCleskey, Kim Blanck rehearse *The Tattooed Lady*. Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade



BY MARIALENA RAGO
THE THEATER GEEK

Fall is my favorite time of year. The leaves change color, pumpkin spice is in the air and the start of a new theater season is upon us! Here are just some of the upcoming shows in Philadelphia. Visit <https://www.theatrephiladelphia.org/calendar> for more theatres and performances in the city and suburbs.

Walnut Street Theatre *Rocky: The Musical*

This season starts off with a bang - or a punch - at the Walnut Street Theater with the regional premiere of *Rocky: The Musical*. Rocky Balboa is a small-time boxer who has the chance to become a heavyweight champ. Based on the Academy Award Winning movie, the musical has all the hits like "Eye of the Tiger." If you are a true Philadelphian, you won't want to miss this inspiring story set right here at home. (October 4 - November 7)

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*

One of the most beloved stories is gracing the mainstage this November. The Broadway adaptation of *Cinderella* has all of Rodgers and Hammerstein's most beautiful songs

like "Ten Minutes Ago" and "Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful." It also includes classics like "Impossible/It's Possible" and "In My Own Little Corner." This holiday season, fall in love all over again. (November 22 - December 20)

Kimmel Cultural Campus *Les Misérables*

The Tony-Winning worldwide hit tells the story of love, war and redemption. Follow Jean-Valjean, a French peasant, as he breaks his parole and runs away from Javert, a police inspector. Along the way, he meets several characters and is swept up in the French Revolution. Fall in love, cry, and even laugh as you enjoy one of the most popular musicals to ever play on Broadway. (November 2 - 13)

Tina: The Tina Turner Musical

The story of Tina Turner comes alive with this rock n' rolling musical that features the superstar's much-loved songs. Celebrate an artist who defied all odds to become the Queen of Rock & Roll. See the musical that critics called "roof-raising" and is guaranteed to have you dancing in your seat. (November 22 - December 4)

Arden Theatre Company *The Glass Menagerie*

The memory play - a play told by one of the characters through their memories - follows the Wingfield family which consists of a histrionic mother and a fragile daughter. Set during the height of the Depression in St. Louis, *The Glass Menagerie* is one of America's greatest plays, written by one of America's greatest playwrights, Tennessee Williams. (October 6 - November 6)

Theatre Exile *Wolf Play*

In its Philadelphia premier, *Wolf Play* is about a young Korean boy who is passed from one American family to another. This heart wrenching play by Hansol Jung explores what family really means and finding your pack. (October 27 - November 20)

Philadelphia Theatre Company *The Tattooed Lady*

This world premiere rock musical highlights the history of sideshow tattooed ladies and celebrates empowering women and their autonomy. The all-star cast and creative team have been part of some of Broadway's biggest shows, recently, including Emmy-nominee and Obie Award-winner Jackie Hoffman as fictional sideshow performer Ida Gibson. (October 29 - November 20)

Azuka Theatre *A Hit Dog Will Holler*

Azuka Theatre's 23rd season kicks off with the Philadelphia premiere of *A Hit Dog Will Holler*. A popular social media personality must confront her own legitimacy when agoraphobia keeps her from being a part of the activism that she is known to advocate for behind the screen. (November 2 - 20)

Wilma Theater *School Pictures*

Writer/performer Milo Cramer was inspired by their real-life experiences as a tutor to create *School Pictures*, an intimate musical portraying struggling students and an inequitable educational system. This world premiere features original songs about teenage students, their parents, and the SATs, all surrounding a school in NYC. (November 2 - 20)

Lantern Theater Company *The Royale*

Set in 1905, *The Royale* takes inspiration from Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight world boxing champion. This drama is filled with the fight for freedom, dignity, and success, in an important chapter of American history. (November 10 - December 11) **PRH**

fall reads

Non-Fiction: *The Anthropocene Reviewed* by John Green

Essays adapted and expanded from his popular podcast, bestselling author John Green reviews different facets of humanity on a five-star scale.

Fiction: *Acts of Violet* by Margarita Montimore

A decade ago, magician Violet Volk vanished halfway through her act. Podcast host Cameron Frank is determined to get his big break with an exclusive interview with Violet's sister Sasha who begins to experience unsettling events as Violet's disappearance anniversary approaches.

Thriller: *Malice House* by Megan Shepherd

Artist Haven Marbury stumbles upon an unpublished manuscript about horrific monsters in her deceased father's house. She decides to illustrate the book while staying in her father's allegedly haunted house.

Beach Read: *Nora Goes Off Script* by Annabel Monaghan

When scriptwriter Nora Hamilton's marriage collapses, she turns her story into a film. When the leading man wants to stay after filming is completed, things go a bit off-script.

Children: *The Rhino Suit* by Colter Jackson

When a little girl is so empathetic and sensitive that she feels all the pain in the world around her, she puts on a tough-skinned rhino suit to protect herself.

Classic: *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons

A witty, well-educated woman in 1930s England goes to live with her eccentric relatives on a rural farm. A hilarious, fun romp that will make you question if there really is "no butter in hell."

Recent releases from *RowHome* local favorites

***Revenge of the Prodigal* by Michael Caudo**

Read more about the follow-up to 2021's Passyunk Avenue mystery in this issue of PRH.

***Lying Down With Dogs* by Natalie Pantaleo**

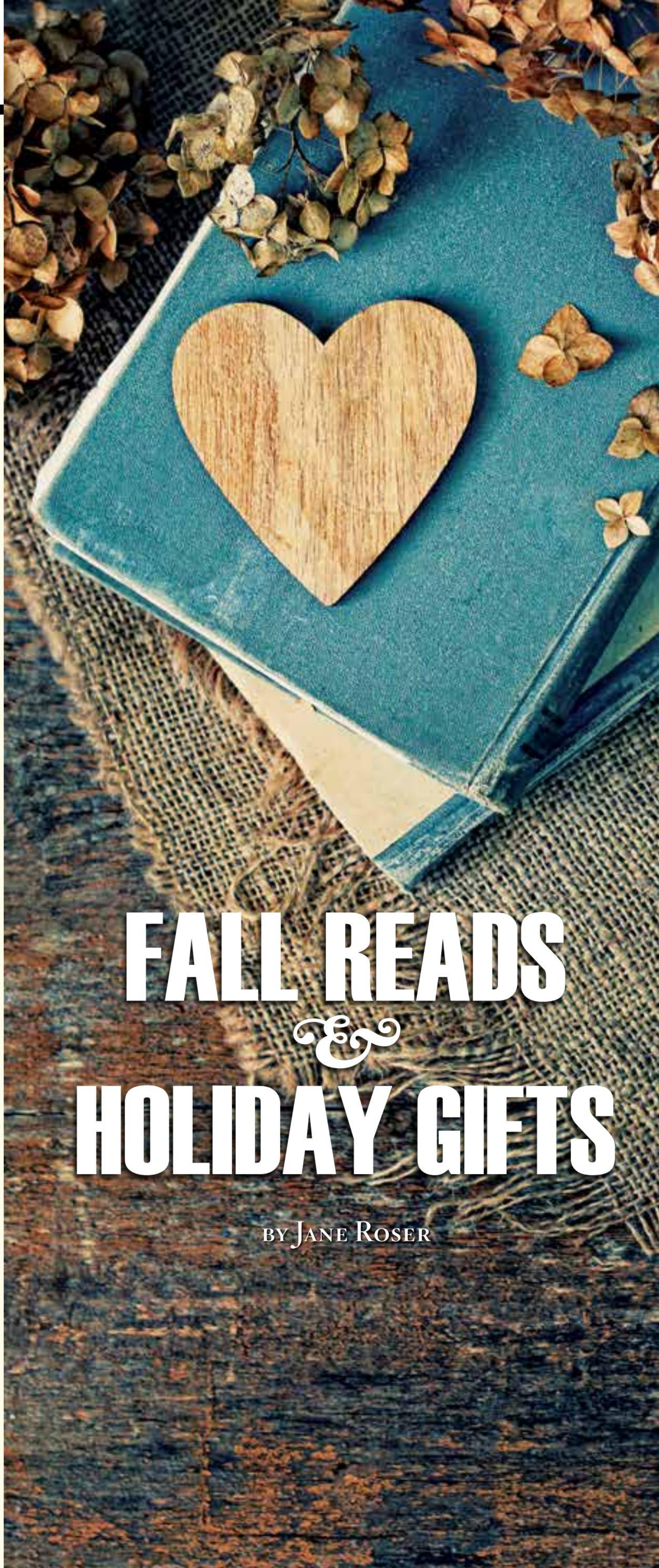
Valerie Imperato's life is about to come full-circle as the college-girl-turned-marketing-exec is launched into the lifestyles of the affluent and often famous patrons at one of Philly's top restaurants. This novella is based on a true story.

***What Happened to the Bennetts* by Lisa Scottoline**

Suburban dad Jason Bennett owns a court-reporting business. When a horrific act of violence changes his family forever, he has to take matters into his own hands.

***The Good Left Undone* by Adriana Trigiani**

Matelda, the Cabrelli family's matriarch, faces the end of her life and is determined to share a long-held secret with her family about her own mother's love story with a childhood friend and a Scottish sea captain.



FALL READS & HOLIDAY GIFTS

BY JANE ROSER



PRH
SPORTS



ANGELS

flying high

BY MARK CASASANTO
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BERGMAN & HATTY FAMILIES



Second Street in South Philly is noted for a lot of things. Almost immediately, the Mummies come to mind. Yet the strip of blacktop running south from Washington Avenue to Oregon Avenue often serves as an epicenter of all things celebratory. From New Year traditions to pro sports championships and all things in between.

Midway through that expanse, not far from 2nd Street, sits a nondescript ballfield, nestled neatly below a looming stretch of I-95. But it's not just any field – this is where Angels come to play.

Long a South Philadelphia staple of organized youth activities, rarely did anyone associate the Edward O'Malley Athletic Association (EOM) with women's sports. Memories of classic neighborhood rivalry football and baseball games come to mind, but softball?

"I'm a second-generation EOM ball player... as were our fathers," says Shawn Hatty, Assistant Coach of the 14U EOM Angels. "There was a huge boom of females born in our neighborhood to all the fathers who are sports fanatics...so we had to concentrate on softball at a young age."

As softball goes, EOM now boasts in-house programs as well as travel teams ranging from 6U through 16U. Hatty, in addition to his role as assistant coach on the 14U team, also serves as head coach of a 10U squad of skilled young ladies.

The EOM program, for the most part, is made up of girls that live in the area. As Hatty explained, the core of the 14U team started together when they were six years old. They trained hard, developed ties that bind and "grew up pretty much like sisters that live in different houses." As the team matured and developed, success bred attraction. Before long, former foes became friends and teammates. What was already a very talented team soon ascended to a top-tier tournament team.

The schedule is taxing for both the girls and their parents, who are on the road constantly through the Spring and Fall – three games on Saturdays, and then advancement through the bracket on Sundays. That very grind, though, coupled with impressive performances on the field, opened the eligibility door to last summer's Nationals in Myrtle Beach.

At Nationals, although the Angels were winning in pool play, the coaches knew they weren't playing great ball. Not until staring at elimination on day four did it finally come together. Suddenly the bats were alive, pitching was on point, and the defense on lock. Still, these cardiac kids pressed their luck all the way down to the last three outs in the semifinal before eventually advancing. With *no whammies*, and behind a potent offensive attack, these Angels ascended in a divine-like fashion - by a 10-run margin of victory – National Champions 2022!

Meanwhile, back in Pennsport, the neighborhood already had parade plans afoot. Houses were decorated, food and beverages were donated, the flatbeds were idling and the string bands were ready to lead these Angels, in grand fashion, back to the field where champions come to play. **PRH**



ATLANTIC CITY

Pickleball Open

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ATLANTIC CITY SPORTS COMMISSION

The 2022 Dietz & Watson Atlantic City Pickleball Open, presented by Total Pickleball, took place September 19-24, 2022 at the Atlantic City Convention Center in Atlantic City, New Jersey. This was the largest indoor sanctioned PRO / AMATEUR / JUNIOR / PARA-ATHLETE Pickleball Tournament in the Mid Atlantic area for 2022.

Save the dates: September 18th to 23rd, 2023.

For this year's results and more info on registering to play, visit atlanticcitypickleballopen.com.

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Recycle Read Repeat

by GENO THACKARA

It's like a beer-of-the-month club, only more personalized and easier on your budget (and the planet). Any reader knows that you get better suggestions from a thoughtful book person than any online algorithm. **Recycle Read Repeat** starts with that idea of individual recommendations, then extends the personal touch to every part of the operation.

The Norristown outfit began in early 2021 as a two-woman cottage industry (or whatever it's called when it's run from a basement instead of a cottage). Angela Smith and Kate Jaworski had been book-club friends and shared an interest in sustainable living for years. RRR developed as a way for them to benefit the Philly area with both. In addition to recirculating used books, they sell hand-

made merchandise such as glasses and tote bags - some of their own crafts, some from other local artists, and all made with reused and locally sourced materials.

Jaworski explains that the subscription service is based on providing the kind of suggestions you might get from a friend who understands your taste. The goal is to give that perfect surprise you didn't know you needed. "It takes a while for us to get to know a customer as a reader," she tells me. "Once we get an order, we look at the person's survey, what they like and don't like, and we go pick a book off the shelf. Every month, they also fill out a little feedback form and tell us about what they enjoyed and how they like the service."

Smith explains, "You'd be surprised at how many people say 'I like this book because of the *feeling*,' versus

'I like this book because of the plot.' So, what was the feeling we had when we read that, or what is the feeling that book evokes? Then we find them a new book based on that."

They've recently watched the business blow up almost overnight and still sound a little stunned. Two weeks before, they'd been handling RRR as a sideline with a few dozen regulars. Everything suddenly went topsy-turvy at the end of July, when a TikTok-savvy customer put her gratitude into a gushingly adorable video for a horde of followers. As the post started spreading, Smith relates, "It went bonkers wild. Within a day, we had *thousands* of orders pouring in.

"We thought our website got hacked," she says in disbelief. "It took us about 15 hours to realize what was really hap-

pening. Wow, we got 200 orders! Then we wake up the next morning and we're up to 1500, and then by that night it was maybe 2200. We had to shut down the site because we realized this might not be sustainable for just the two of us."

Jaworski concurs, "It's surreal. We had about 60 monthly subscriptions, and then we sold loose books and other things. We each had other jobs. Until the other day, at least," she adds as they both laugh.

Just like that, they've both had the project go from labor of love to main gig. While taking care of the immediate surge, the next step is to figure out how to manage the operation's new scale - finding a proper business space, hiring help, and developing their own social-media presence. If all goes well, the site will open again for new business this fall.

Jaworski makes clear that individual connections will remain the key to what they do. "We add personal touches to customers' orders. We include a little note to them, and stickers and bookmarks. Everything gets wrapped and shipped with reused or upcycled packing, or things made from 100% recycled materials. It's important to us that we not create more waste. We're trying to use what's already around, but still have it look cute and do something special for each person.

"We've had a lot of customers get very excited that we take that extra step," she continues. "We recently partnered with Shopify Planet, and we're going to be a completely carbon-neutral shipping company. We'll pay into Shopify's sustainability partnerships, which fund entrepreneurs who are working to reduce carbon emissions."

Besides the global green-living concerns, the pair are just as big on local connections. Jaworski adds that the crafty merchandise will still remain part of the game. "We have a few friends who are artists and have made some things like hand-painted bookmarks with artwork based on books and literature. All the glasses we get are from thrift shops. The bookmarks are painted on scraps of paper that we cut up and gave to the artists, so even our merch is upcycled as much as possible."

"Before this boom, we did a lot of pop-up bookstore events and things like that," Smith says. "We don't have as much time for that these days, but once we get some of this stuff figured out, we'll definitely be back into local events and community outreach. Being part of the Norristown community is really important to us."

While they catch up, anyone interested can still check out the handmade merch, donate some more books (they'll provide the mailing labels), or just throw a few dollars into their hat for support. All the info is at <https://recyclereadrepeat.com>. **PRH**



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The Sounds of Sunday Morning

PRH
WRITERS
BLOCK

by DAVID W. CAVA



My grandfather had this great radio that followed him from a shelf in the bathroom to an end table right next to his favorite chair in the living room of my grandparents' row home on 10th and Oregon. I thought about that radio as I reflected on the news that Sid Mark had passed away. Thirteen years ago, when I heard about the passing of another Philly radio legend, Harry Kalas, I wrote that I could never

remember hearing music come out of that radio. Maybe I was wrong.

The genre of music for which Frank Sinatra is recognized reminds me so much of my childhood growing up in Philadelphia. Whether I was helping my father with household projects, cooking with my mother, taking a Sunday drive with the family or picking up donuts after church, Sid Mark was playing the music of Mr. S in the background. As I grew older, moved away to start a family of my own, Sid was still in the background providing charming insights, personal anecdotes, and interesting stories behind the music.

The eye-opening aroma of freshly brewed coffee and crispy bacon accom-

panies the timeless music that echoes throughout the house. As enticing as it sounded, I ignored the suggestion from the radio to turn my pillow to the cool side and jump out of bed. Welcome to Sunday mornings where, after a hearty breakfast full of laughter, music and conversation, the promise of a fresh pot of coffee ignites and a panful of hot oil begins to pop as the fragrant notes of the room transition from morning breakfast to afternoon meatballs and gravy. The radio's volume increases along with the tempo of the tunes as we enjoy recognizable radio spots along with the music. "Thank you, Cento, for being the longest running sponsor on The Sounds of Sinatra." Sid Mark was a welcomed guest in our homes as he so reverently shared the stories and the music of

his old pal, Francis Albert Sinatra.

For more than 60 years, Sid Mark had an open invitation to join him on a musical journey throughout Frank Sinatra's career. From the viewpoint of a fan, as well as a personal friend, Sid's journey was so popular that it was broadcasted nationally on nearly 100 stations. As the longest running, single artist, syndicated radio program in America, it is abundantly clear that I wasn't the only one listening. The other day I woke up to the smell of freshly brewed coffee and a familiar voice suggesting that I turn my pillow over to the cool side. This time, I complied. I asked Alexa to turn up the volume and I listened a bit more intently to the soundtrack of all our lives. Sid's voice was young and vibrant on this particular Sunday as he conversed with Frank Sinatra Jr. in the studio. For a moment, I forgot that Sid was no longer with us, but thanks to his son Brian Mark, the legends will continue, and Sundays will not only be spent with Sinatra, but with Sid Mark, as well. God bless you Sidney, we loved you, too. **PRH**



Live for the day, not the date



BY DEBBIE RUSSINO

“It’s a bizarre but wonderful feeling, to arrive dead center of a target you didn’t even know you were aiming for.”

Lois McMaster Bujold

Sometimes, inspiration comes from the simplest places. These thoughts came to me on a routine trip to the supermarket. I was looking for the perfect dozen of eggs, with the latest expiration date. I somehow knew I would live long enough to make it to the date stamped on the back of the carton. I considered this a small, but significant, act of faith. I am somewhat obsessive when it

comes to certain things associated with food shopping. I can’t take the first item from the shelf. It has to be the one behind. I’m sure the employees who work in the back of the refrigeration department see me as I reach to grab the last container of milk or cream!

As I was writing this, it reminded me of a funny story. An older gentleman with a great sense of humor was one of my customers at the salon. Whenever he came in for a haircut, I would ask how he was feel-

ing, and he always had the same reply. ‘Well, not so good. My doctor told me not to buy any green bananas.’ We laughed, but as it turned out, his doctor was right. He passed away not long after that. I remember him so well because he had such a positive attitude. Even with his declining health, he found a way to turn a sad moment into a happy one. My dad had that kind of tenacity and wit until the day he died. I hope that I have inherited this trait from him.

The concept may sound silly, but it makes sense to me. We book trips and weddings, months and sometimes, years in advance. It is never a thought in our head that we may not be around to enjoy these events. We buy tickets for shows, set up dinner dates and plan vacations. These are all signs of faith that reassure us we still have time to enjoy many more hopeful tomorrows.

So, let us all raise a glass to second chances, new beginnings and very long expiration dates. **PRH**

WRITERSBLOCK

*Ss. John Neumann & Maria Goretti
Catholic High School*



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It's Saturday morning of Labor Day weekend. My routine for just about every Saturday and Sunday begins with a cup of coffee, my laptop, and the University of Pennsylvania's weekend morning broadcast, WXPN's *Sleepy Hollow*, playing in the background. Not surprisingly, today's radio host Chuck Elliot has peppered his playlist with melodies that both herald and bemoan the end of summer. I figured that such tunes would punctuate the airwaves this weekend. However, I didn't know that there were so many ditties that echo this particular theme.

Since Friday evening, our street has been riddled with cars, status quo for a summer holiday weekend. There are friends, family and guests visiting up and down my block, so day trippers, you might be out of luck when it comes to wedging in your vehicle anywhere nearby this weekend. Yet, come Tuesday, 35th Avenue will begin a drowsy, off-season stretch that will last until Memorial Day – a *Sleepy Hollow*, as it were.

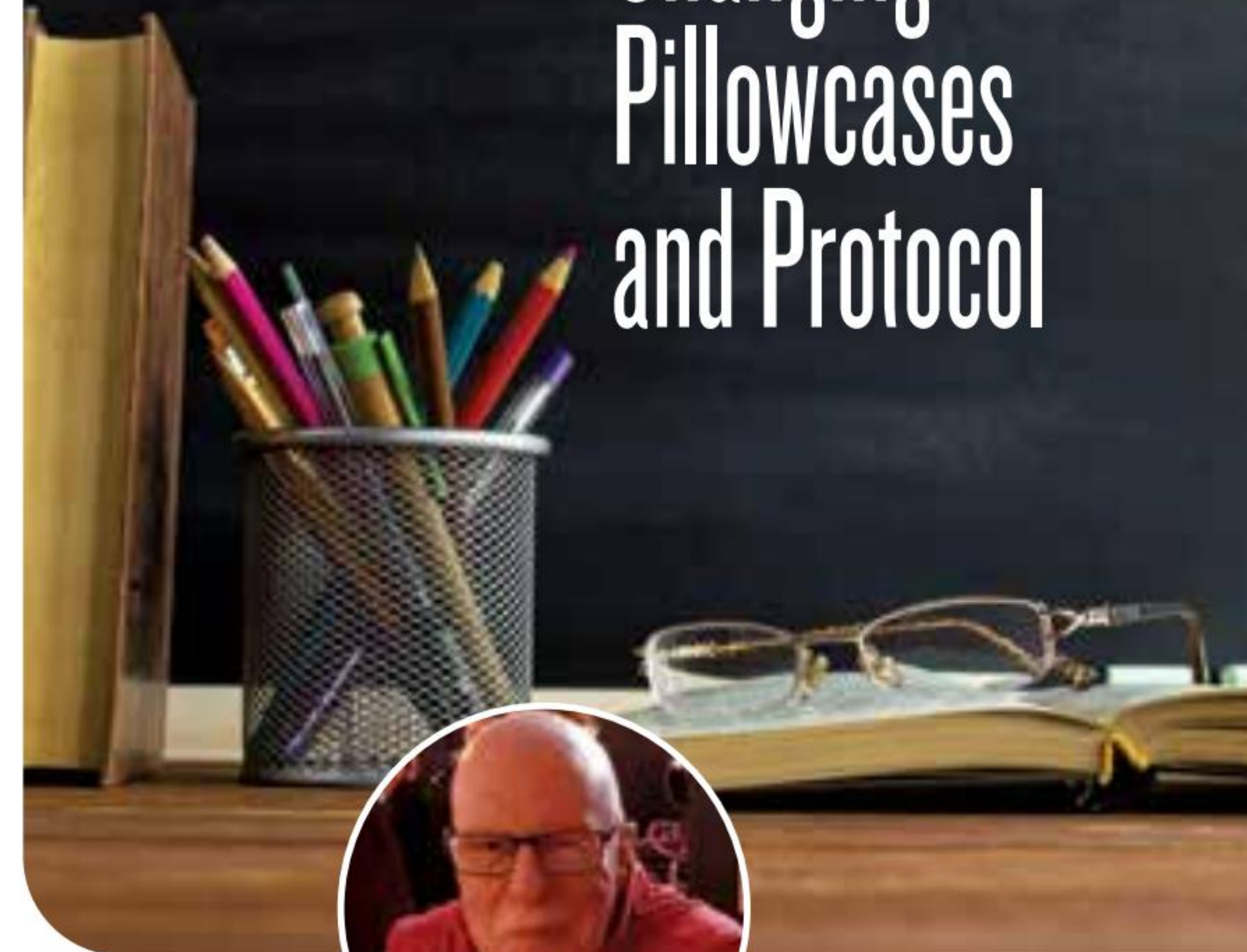
At the conclusion of each academic year, after saying a heartfelt goodbye to my five classes, I would use the summer's break to address and analyze any and all missteps and

mistakes I had made. I was then able to return to Neumann-Goretti at the end of summer, greeted by my colleagues – and a blank roll book and new class lists, surrounded by clean slates – literally and figuratively – everywhere, regenerated and resolved to start afresh.

I have managed to go from being a teacher, always on the go during the academic year, then relaxing during the summer months, into a retired teacher, looking for just about anything to occupy my time during the winter doldrums, then busily juggling calendars, guests, menus and bed linens during the summer.

A teacher should never ignore the importance of classroom management. *How* one teaches, as well as the guidelines established for one's students, is as important as *what* one teaches. However, it seems that I had never connected the dots, missing that it is just as important to formulate guidelines and protocol for summer guests – and for myself – as I did for my classroom.

After spending a summer that definitely needs reexamining and analyzing, it appears that I have plenty to think about when the winter winds of Longport hold me housebound. **PRH**



BY JIM GLIDEA

They say time changes everything, but you actually have to change them yourself.

Andy Warhol

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Food for thought



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BY CHARLIE SACCHETTI

uncle. *Mario*

I suppose, as you get older, you tend to look back on your life and appreciate all the blessings that God has provided. At least that is the case with me. And, as I do so, it becomes very clear to me how much my immediate and extended family has impacted me and given me moments to cherish. Regarding my extended family, I'd have to say that my father's brother, my Uncle Mario Sacchetti, has provided the most of these memorable moments.

Mario was the youngest of the four Sacchetti brothers, born in 1925 to Grand Pop Crescenzo and Grand Mom Maria Sacchetti. He preceded one girl, Pia, who was born two years later. Mario was five inches taller than any of his siblings, standing almost 6'2" when fully grown. As a kid, he was very thin, and his buddies said he resembled the hands of a clock, so they called him "six o'clock." He was a good athlete, playing baseball for BOK Technical High School in South Philadelphia, and was the only one of the siblings to graduate.

All of this being said, it is the man Uncle Mario became after this time who had the biggest effect on me.

He was drafted into the Army during WWII at the age of 18. As a 19-year-old tail gunner on the B-17 Flying Fortress, he participated in the Invasion of Normandy on D-Day, June 6th, 1944. On April 29th, 1945, he assisted in the liberation of the dreaded Dachau concentration camp. Uncle Mario rarely, if ever, spoke of his military service. As we grew closer during my teenage years, I came to realize how those memories had affected him. He came away from those experiences a more introspective, sensitive person. Once, when I asked him what he remembered most about the war, he described how wonderful it was one night, in an English meadow, when he was able to read the newspaper by only the light of the full moon. This was not the answer I expected, but I understood his need to find something good in what was surely a living hell for a nice, friendly teenager from 9th and Moore Streets. He never missed church on Sunday, ever thankful for having come home safely.

To say Uncle Mario had his quirks would be an understatement. A bachelor until the age of 42, he was a frequent, welcome dinner guest at all his married siblings' homes. One of his trademark moves was to sit next to one of us kids and hijack a meatball off our plates if we had the bad judgment to turn our heads and join in a conversation. An admission of guilt was never forthcoming. Uncle Mario used to enjoy riding with me on my Vespa. It was quite a sight, that big guy on the rear seat as we typically drove to shop for bargains at the nearest E. J. Korvette or Klein's department store. We would frequently go out for breakfast on Saturday mornings. That was an experience

One of his trademark moves was to sit next to one of us kids and hijack a meatball off our plates if we had the bad judgment to turn our heads and join in a conversation.

in itself. He had his favorite spots and the waitresses all wanted to take care of him because he was a very generous tipper. We would walk in and the waitress would have his large, take-out-size cup of coffee on the table before we even sat down. The regular cups were too small, hence the larger take-out cup. He **NEVER** let me pay the tab, even when I was a college graduate and working. I was still his nephew and that's the way it was. On the occasions when we would try a new restaurant, I'd ask him where he would prefer to sit, and he would say, "Anywhere is okay." I'd pick a spot and he'd always tell me it was no good!

Quirky!

Uncle Mario was an avid card player, coin collector, and opera lover. No one else in the family liked opera, even a little, and we all told him how strange he was for enjoying it. That didn't faze him one bit, and every Sunday afternoon, he'd listen to Puccini, Verdi, or one of his other favorites. He generously tipped the bank tellers he

knew, so he had no trouble getting bags of pennies, quarters, or half dollars to sift through in search of rare coins. He would play poker a few nights a week with his buddies, until the wee hours of the morning. He usually won a few bucks, but he greatly enjoyed playing with his brothers and father for only bragging rights. His beloved wife Rita passed away in March of 1982, and he remained widowed for 29 years. To combat the loneliness, Mario would take daily bus rides to Atlantic City, where he held his own at the poker tables.

As one of the few people on earth who actually liked my joke-telling, it was not unusual for me to call him during the evening while away on business to share a good joke I had heard. He had a unique delayed reaction after I delivered the punchline. One or two seconds would elapse, and then he would break out into a hearty laugh that might last for a whole minute. Admittedly, I had a reputation to live up to, so I wouldn't tell him a joke unless I thought it met my "high standards" (groan). On more than one occasion, while riding in the car, he would abruptly start laughing after recalling a joke I had told him weeks earlier. Now, *that's* an audience!

As Mario and I grew older, I came to appreciate and love him as more of a second father than an uncle. He passed away at 86 and I had the privilege of being his advocate and the overseer of his medical care in his later years. I considered this role both an honor and a blessing. He provided a lot of great times for all of us, and I just loved spending time with him.

I have even learned to appreciate opera ... now and then. **PRH**

WRITERSBLOCK

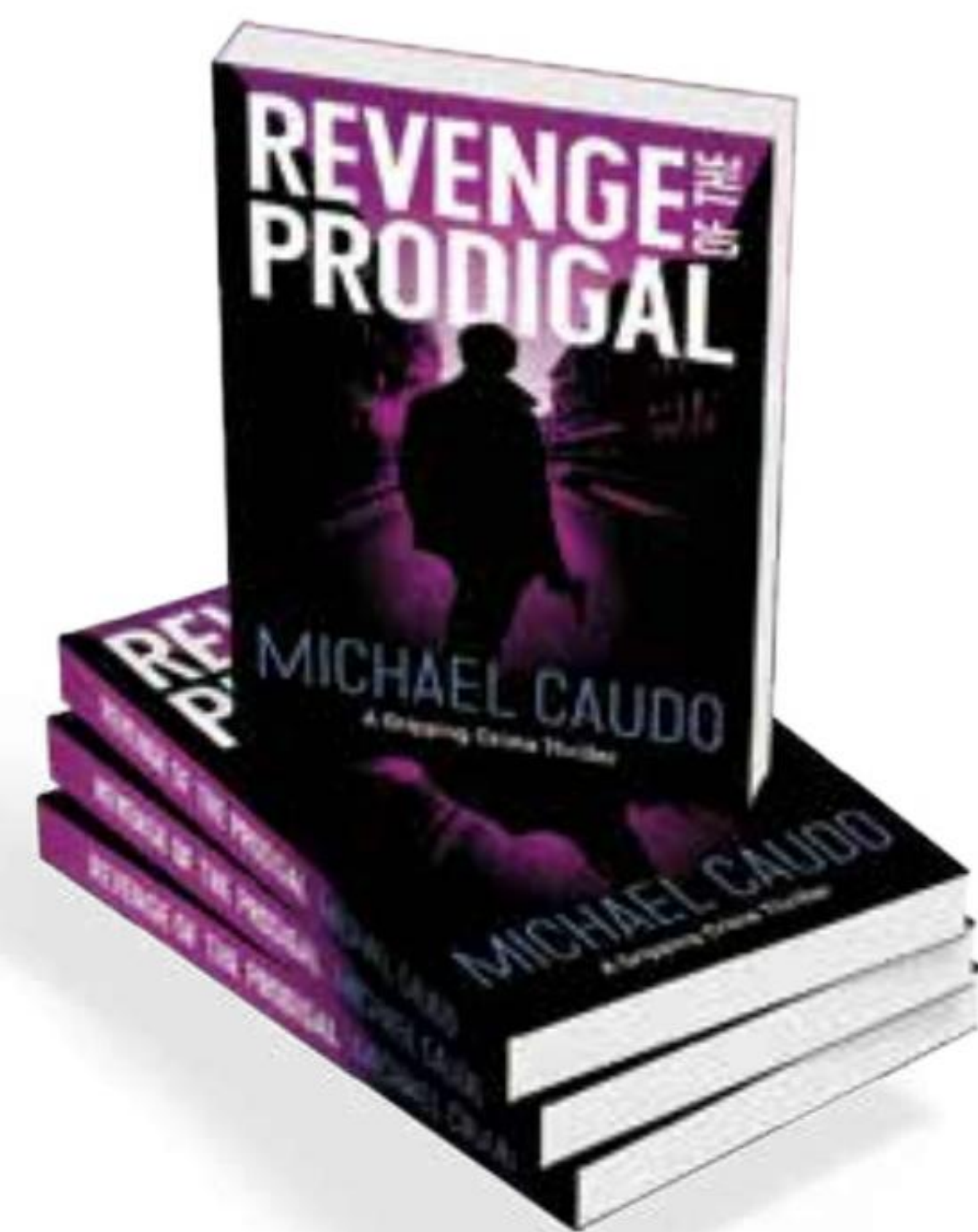
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Michael Caudo

Revenge of the Prodigal
Philly-centric tale is a thrill to tell

BY JOHN NACCHIO
PHOTO BY RALPH FRANGIPANI

Deep in the heart of South Philadelphia, near the intersection of the sacred and the profane, sits Caffè Vecchio, where angels and demons mingle within...and buy each other drinks...

Book two of Michael Caudo's intriguing series quickly follows the launch of *Return of the Prodigal*, published in May 2021. *Revenge of the Prodigal* promises to be a thrilling tale to tell.

On the canvas of Passyunk Avenue, fresh blood blends with ancient pigments...and a prodigal plots his revenge.

Once again, Caudo blends masterful paintings, spiritual themes, intelligent insights, and old-fashioned storytelling style to indulge us with multi-generational narratives that are driven by the momentum of evocative characters. Unexpected twists are sometimes brilliantly funny, especially as he teasingly writes *Rumors have begun to swirl about a Rembrandt stolen in the Gardner Museum heist in 1990. Could it really be stashed away in a Philadelphia church after all these years?*

Book two will be released shortly. In the meantime, we spoke with Caudo about the past year and what you can expect from the upcoming continuation.

Q: What has your life as an author been like this past year?

A: In a word - *surreal*. I've just been overwhelmed and humbled by the support, especially here at home. The story really seems to have resonated with readers and I've been blessed to have formed a strong bond with many. I love interacting with my readers on social media and in person. Without them, none of this works.

Q: We heard you did a movie pitch for *Return of the Prodigal*. What was that experience like and what does your dream cast look like?

A: I've actually pitched it quite a few times, includ-

ing at Thrillerfest in New York. It received some solid interest and I'm hoping something pans out. In the meantime, the best marketing plan is just to keep creating content. Readers have suggested Bradley Cooper as the lead, *Nick DiNobile*. Keeping it Philly-centric, I'd love to see Questlove as Big Gary. My sentimental choice for Ralph the Rifle is Lou Silver. He's doing great things and landed a big role recently in *Capo: Rise to Power*. I wrote his audition monologue and never miss a chance to remind him! My dream producer/director is Kevin Hart. Personally, I'd like a cameo as "Man in Bar."

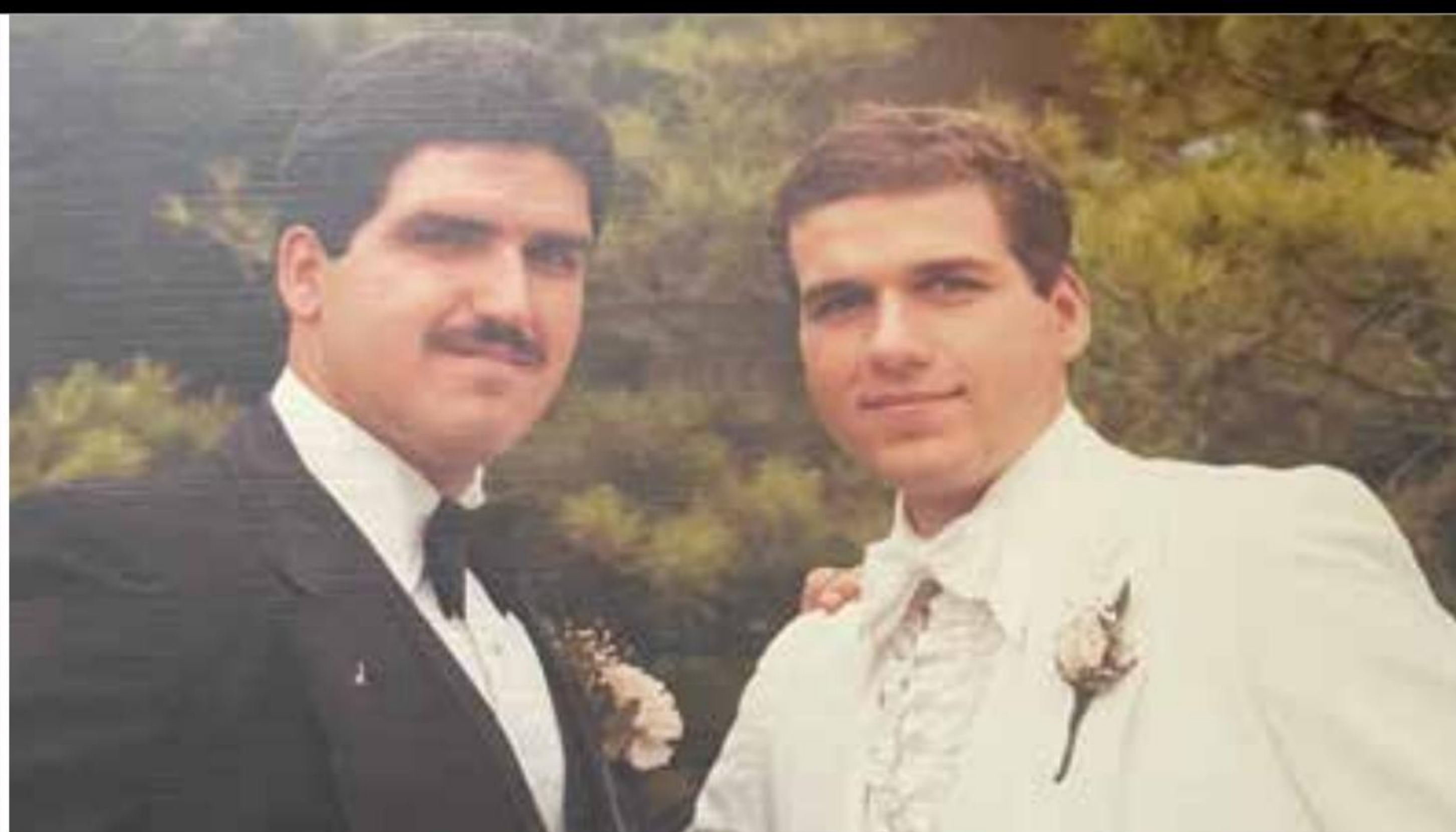
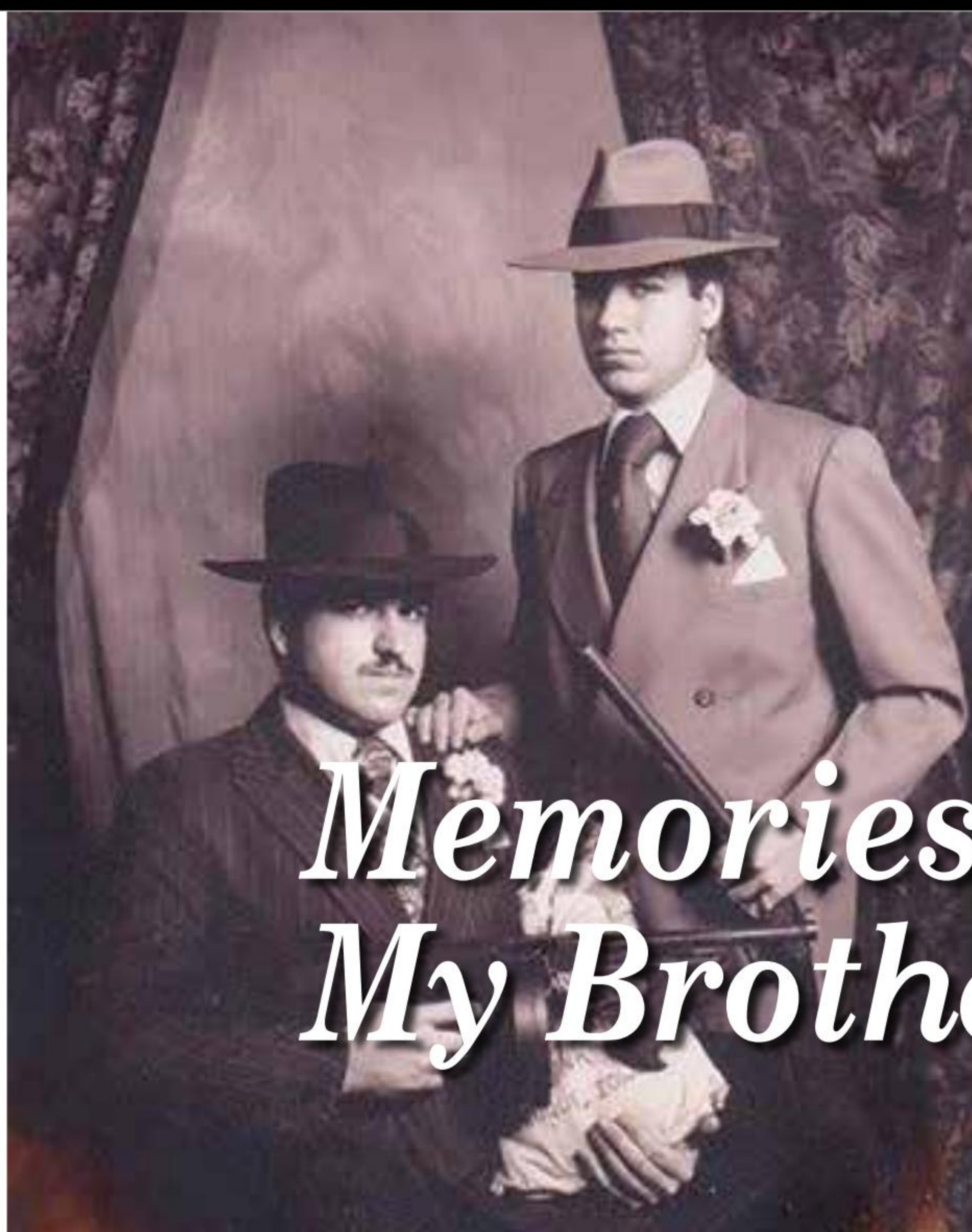
Q: How does it feel to be a successful author?

A: I measure success not in terms of books sold, but in souls touched. So, by that metric, I'll go along with the successful label. In all seriousness, though, the best part has been helping the many people who reached out to me to share their writing dreams. I started doing some videos with writing tips for aspiring authors, and I'm thinking about starting a writers' workshop. South Philly is a hotbed of aspiring writers, and we need to tap into our collective voice. I'm happy to be a small part of this burgeoning group.

Q: Anything else before we wrap up?

A: I would just like to add that if you have a dream - writing, acting, music, or whatever - it's never too late. Don't worry about what people will think. Just follow your bliss. Today would be a good day to start. I'm also happy to share that I have begun writing book three in the series, *Redemption of the Prodigal*.

Learn more about the series and Caudo's upcoming book release online at www.caudobooks.com **PRH**



Memories of My Brother

BY LOU PINTO

“It all started 13 years ago, my father pacing up and down; when the nurse brought in the fat sack and my father listened to my brother’s first sound. He was plump and round, 13 lbs. to be exact. Yes, he was a real clown but what would they name him, Manny, Moe or Jack? My mother was thinking of a name my grandfather began to con, and then the thought came that she would name him after my grandfather...John.”

WritersBlock
I wrote this in 1970 for a junior high school English assignment. We had to write a biography about someone. Me, as always, wanting to be a little different, wrote a ballad and we received extra credit if we sang it. I took poetic license and wasn’t completely accurate in what I wrote. The truth was, yes, John was a big baby (in fact, at the time, he was the biggest born in Philadelphia at 10lbs 8oz) and my mom did name him John after my grandpop, who was Giovanni translated to English, John. Grandpop did not “con” my mom into naming him after him. In fact, he cried about it, but was so proud that mom and dad made that decision.

We lost Johnny on September 15, 2021. John and I were known as “Irish Twins”- just 11 months apart. It took six years for mom and dad to have children. When mom

got pregnant right away after me, she and dad were told that it was a tumor and had to be removed. Thank God they waited for the doctor who delivered me to confirm that “tumor” was going to be running around in about seven months.

Growing up, John and I were your typical siblings - fighting, arguing, and sometimes getting into trouble, but we always had each other’s back. I have stories galore. John worked for PGW for almost 38 years. On his first day on the job, his partner was showing him the ropes. Driving down the street, they saw a sofa at the curb (trash day). His partner pulled over beside the sofa and said, ‘Watch this.’ He proceeded to check under the cushions and found about \$32 in change and said, ‘lunch money.’

About a week later, John, now on his own driving down the street, saw another sofa at the curb. He pulled over, got out and went looking for more “lunch money.” When this sofa

didn’t produce any cash, he took out his utility knife and cut open the back of the oblong chair, still looking for money. Just then, someone came up to him and said, ‘Hey man, what are you doing with my couch?’ Unknown to John, the very big gentleman was moving into his new home and had set his furniture down at the curb!

John was that person that everyone could count on, even a stranger that didn’t know him. He would give you the shirt off his back and if he didn’t have one on, he would find one for you.

I might be partial in writing this but ask anyone about Johnny Pinto and they’ll tell you how great he was. I miss him every day and have always considered it an honor and privilege to call him my brother.

John is survived by his loving wife Mary, two daughters Valerie and Tina Marie, son-in-law Dave, granddaughter Helen, many nieces, nephews, cousins, and a whole lot of friends that he was proud to call family. **PRH**



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A Friend Just Is...



by **Robert L. Woodard**
The Wynnefield Barber

Ms. Tracey Payton Younger is a person I can truly call a friend. She has made a wonderful impression on my life and on me as a person. The respect we have for each other goes beyond words. The word *friendship* does not get enough credit in today's society. If we, as human beings on

earth, could learn how to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, in this life, we then would understand how to appreciate those little things that make us whole persons in our day-to-day lives. In other words, we must make love an echo in our thoughts that continues to ring in our minds on a daily basis.

I can recall Tracey sharing with me how much she adored her childhood doctor. His name is Dr. Theodore Whitney. Dr. Whitney, of the Wynnefield area of Philadelphia, is a retired professional in his area of expertise. Even though he is now in his '90s, Dr. Whitney still drives his car to my barbershop to get a haircut. He has been my friend and good customer for as long as I have been cutting hair. I can

remember our first conversation about his professional skills on how to handle very young children as a pediatrician. I shared with the doctor that the first barber of Rome was known as a tonsorialist. His name was Ticinius Mena. To date, there's a statue in Rome that acknowledges Ticinius Mena that goes back to 296 B.C.

I have been blessed to have been behind the barber's chair all my professional life. If I have learned nothing else, I have truly learned just what a true friend really is. Hence, keep in mind, once a man, twice a child. A child has the natural ability to sense who and what is a friend. So, whenever I am not sure about who is a friend, I just simply go back to that little person who lives inside of me, and he always lets me know who a true friend is. That's how I know Ms. Tracey Payton Younger and Dr. Theodore Whitney exemplify what a true friend really is. The amazing part of this story is that we all knew one another, before we knew each other. I would like to salute the service and friendship of Tracey and Dr. Whitney. They are lessons we can all learn from. This proves to me, a friend just is.

Take the "RACE Test" today for a better way at www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org. **PRH**

NG leads all secondary schools in enrollment increase!



Joseph M. McColgan
President, Ss. Neumann-Goretti High School

Greetings from 10th Street!

As we begin the new academic year and as I write this column, it is bitter-sweet for me. I find it hard to believe that as of August 1st, I have been at the helm of Ss Neumann-Goretti Catholic High School as its president for five years. When I walked through our doors in 2017, SNG had a historically low enrollment of 423 students the previous year, along with a \$1.131 million hole in our budget. I'm happy to report to the community that enrollment this year continues to grow, leading all other secondary schools with an astounding 15 percent increase in enrollment over that time period and we're quickly approaching the healthy 600 number, something SNG has not seen in 11 years. As for the budget deficit? Gone! Academic outcomes continue to improve and though the facility is not where I would like it to be, it is in better shape than when I arrived. We accomplished much over the past five years, two of which were during a pandemic. But it is time for me to move on. I am leaving the school in great hands.

SCHOOLYARD

We have a young, vibrant, and

experienced leadership team now in place to continue the successes we have witnessed over the past five years. Enrollment is up, academic outcomes continue to improve, our graduating seniors have seen more than \$150 million in academic scholarships and financial assistance provided to them from a broad universe of colleges and universities around the United States. I know without any doubt that the team I am leaving behind is going to do wonderful things over the next five years. My advice to you is to buckle your seatbelt, sit back and watch the NEXT transformation of SNG take place right in front of you!

To the community – current students, parents, alumni, neighbors – thank you for all your support. As I often say, Neumann-Goretti is not only good for the community – we've been educating the neighborhood since 1934 – but the community is good for Neumann-Goretti. We truly are a partnership. This community is like no other, and that is a compliment. It truly has been one of my more memorable and enjoyable rides, and as I've said to the faculty and staff – I'm leaving, but I'm not going away. So rather than say goodbye, let me just say...I'll see you soon. **PRH**



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A Booming Christmas

PRHPRESSED



by
DORETTE ROTA
JACKSON

Are you a member of the Boomer generation? We ate *Cocoa Puffs* on the floor in front of the TV every Saturday morning as kids. Watching the *Three Stooges*, *Flintstones*, *Casper*, *Mighty Mouse*, the *Jetsons*.

We know Barbara Eden was *Jeannie*. Elizabeth Montgomery was *Bewitched*. Adam West was the real *Batman* & George Reeves as *Superman* could “change the course of mighty rivers, bend steel in his bare hands...”

Are you growing hair in places you prefer not to discuss? That was the topic at a recent girls’ night out after the second round of dirty martinis.

I think you all need a hobby. Too many years isolating, I remember thinking to myself as I ordered another round.

We can’t let it all slip away, I was thinking. It’s time to get back to the happy, friendly people we used to be. What better time to start than now! The Holiday season is here. We can embrace the traditions that made us who we are today. I thought it was a great idea until I brought my sister Dawn in on my plan.

‘We’re not the same people we used to be. Everybody changed these past three years. We all look stunned when we’re out in public. What’s that about?’ she asked.

We’re just tired. We all look tired, not stunned, I answer.

‘What’s up with these grocery prices? And the dime they’re charging us for a paper bag? A bag we *need* to carry home the ham and cheese we just bought for \$60.’

They just want us to be more mindful of the environment, I say. It’s a reminder to bring our own bags to the store when we shop for groceries.

‘Why don’t we just hang the bags around our necks when we leave for work every morning?’

This way, we won’t forget to bring them into the stores everywhere we go. It’s insulting! Just raise the price of your turkey 10 cents and don’t ask me for the dime! They charged my friend for the pizza box! How’s that one for you! Want a pizza? BYOBox. It’s out of control,’ she rants.

What about Christmas? Let’s focus on happy memories. We all share some of the same really happy memories of the holidays. Some of the same traditions we grew up with as kids in this neighborhood, I tell her. I sound like a preacher. She’s going to snap. I can feel it.

‘We really do,’ she answers after a long pause. I’m stunned. She agrees with me.

‘Like the 7 Fishes. Joan Roman made a movie about it! I never even liked fish when I was a kid. Except for Mommy’s fried flounder.’

And the shrimp, I remind her. You liked the crab gravy, the crab cakes, the Alaskan king claws...

‘I hated that fish that looked back at you from the plate. They scared me. I used to cover them with a napkin when nobody was looking,’ she confesses. ‘What were they?’ Smelts, I think. I didn’t like seeing their eyes, either.

‘You knew Christmas was coming when you saw that fish in the bucket outside Angie’s grocery store in the middle of December. Ugggh. What was that? Baccala? All dried out and stiff as a board.’

Salted cod, I say. I never ate that one, either. I counted the Italian tuna in the salad as my seventh fish. God forbid. I thought I’d go to purgatory if I didn’t eat all 7 fish.

‘Speaking of purgatory, how about all those nuts in the fruit bowl display. We were too little to use the metal nutcracker and everybody gave you dirty looks when you asked for help. I didn’t know what a walnut tasted like till eighth grade.’

I used to carry those nuts around in my beach bucket and pretend they were seashells, I laughed.

‘Figures,’ she says. ‘You turned everything into a fairytale. Even walnuts. It was so annoying.’

How about the olives! I laugh out loud!

‘We never had olives at our table! *Choking hazards*, mommy said. To this day, I have never eaten an olive. Obviously, an acquired taste we never acquired,’ she laughs back.

Don’t forget the ‘burn & serves,’ I snort.

‘Every year, never fail, the biscuits never made it out of the oven. Somebody always forgot about them. They were black and charred and big white puffs of smoke filled the kitchen. We’d flap dishtowels around in front of the open windows as we choked.’

Yeah. And never fail, somebody around the table always asked for the biscuits. With all that food in front of them, why would you ask for a missing biscuit?

‘I’d answer them every time, too. Remember the fire you just smelled from the kitchen? Forget about the burn & serve biscuits. Can you crack these nuts open for me before you eat that poor little fish?’

‘And then, the best tradition of them all,’ she smiled. ‘Opening all the presents on Christmas Eve before Midnight Mass.’

Not *all* the presents, I chime in. Only the presents from other people who came to dinner. We opened our Santa presents on Christmas Day, I say in my perky, I remember voice.

‘Santa presents? Really? You still call them “Santa” presents. You’re older than Betty White on the *Golden Girls*.’

Whew. You really know how to let the air out of my balloon, I tell her. How old was Betty White?

‘In the episode I watched last night, Rose (Betty White) was depressed because she was 55 and no one would hire her. You do the math.’

I hate math. I’m 49 and holding, I tell her.

‘Here. Hold onto these rolls and tomatoes ‘cause I’m not paying a dime for that paper bag,’ she says on our way out of the store.

Eat smelts. Be happy.

Merry Christmas to all! And to all a good night! **PRH**

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