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Hannele Lahti

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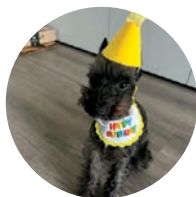
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"My corgi Billy's secret talent is bravely guarding the neighborhood against giant blow-up holiday lawn decorations by barking angrily at them."



"My mini-schnauzer, Maisie, is really good at standing and walking on her hind legs. We did not teach her that. She just does it."



"My Airedale terrier, Blue, and collie, Willow, know how to open doors, cabinets, and gates. So I'm back to 'childproofing' the house."



"Luna, my 11-year-old springer, takes such good direction and is able to stay so still that she's modeled for ads I shot for Purina and Rover."

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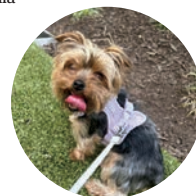
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"My five-pound dog, Archie, is a pro at burrowing into couch cushions and under blankets—he's so good at it, I sometimes think he's run away."



"Lucy, my Lab, has the ability to take away sadness."

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— Catherine Merrill, President and CEO

FEEDBACK

December 2024



On the Trail of Love

RUN CLUBS ARE HAVING A MAJOR MOMENT. Among other stories in our October cover package about running in Washington, writer Kim Habicht reported on the trend of people treating these clubs as de facto dating pools—with mixed results. One woman said she has to flash her wedding band to get overeager men to back off on group runs. Many Instagram commenters were more inclined to cut single runners some slack.

—IKE ALLEN

“Why is this person complaining that their wedding band did its job?” —@soooo-clutch

“I wish I could run....I literally and figuratively cannot chase after a man.” —@lexmarriedmv

“Honestly, where do you expect people to meet each other? No one goes to the office. Very few people go to church. What other social places are there? Exercise clubs

are inherently social. If you don’t want to talk, go run by yourself.” —@djgerrish

“Desperate times call for desperate measures, I think. And nothing is more desperate than DC dating.” —@tausif_sanzum

“... If a nice man talks to you at a running club, maybe think of a single friend you could set him up with. Win win!” —@jackiequinlan

“Who cares? Post COVID why are we discouraging people from connecting? If you’re married, why do you need to be like, ‘singles are ruining my running club.’ It doesn’t belong to you. Next you are going to tell us which bars and restaurants to go to if we want to meet other singles. Just be happy you’re not in this mess and that single people are attracted to you.” —@adzhivago

“Forget the dating aspect... Can y’all not run in the bike lanes? Especially going the wrong way?” —@justanotherplantdaddy



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CAPITAL COMMENT



Love Is Bland

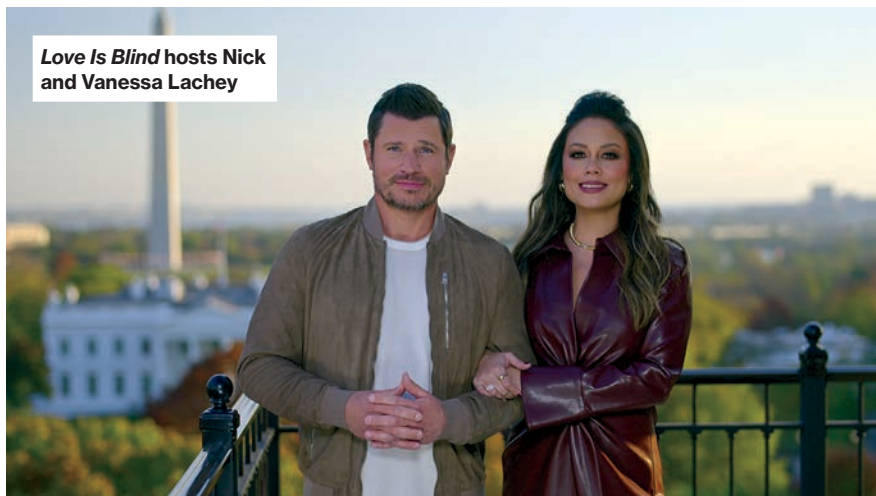
The DC season of the Netflix hit *Love Is Blind* wasn't great. What does that tell us about the District?

By Kate Corliss and Molly Szymanski

FOR SIX SEASONS, *LOVE IS BLIND* WAS ONE OF NETFLIX's most discussed and dissected shows, an insane concept in which single people date without seeing each other, then decide whether they want to get married. Only at the point of engagement do they get to see what their fiancés look like, and the rest of the show follows them to see how their “blind” match plays out. Will they actually get married in the finale?

Season 7, which premiered October 2 and recently

Love Is Blind hosts Nick and Vanessa Lachey



aired its final episode, has the distinction of focusing on the people and places of the District of Columbia, and—in the opinion of these two writers and also apparently most of the internet—it was kind of a dud. Still, we gulped down every minute, eager for drama but also insight into what it's like to live in the District right now. What follows are some of our takeaways.

DATING HERE REALLY IS THAT BAD

One thing this season definitely got right: It's hard to find true love in DC. This time, only two couples made it to the altar (in most previous seasons, four or five got that far), which seems like an accurate reflection of partner-hunting in a city where your degree of career success is often paramount and a higher-than-average number of residents are literal experts in image management and spin. Too often, the packaging is slick but the reality proves less appealing. Who hasn't dated somebody like **Nick Dorka**, a Virginia real-estate agent who tells his partner early on that he has "a brand" to uphold but later reveals he doesn't know how to boil pasta? Or **Ramses Prashad**, a progressive nonprofit worker who turns out to be both condom- and commitment-averse? The depressing depictions onscreen seemed like a pretty accurate representation of the reality on dating apps.

THE SHOW DIDN'T CAPTURE DC

Which high-profile area location did the producers select for contestants to live in during the second phase of the show? Washingtonians might have guessed the

Wharf or Union Market. Instead, the HQ ended up being . . . an apartment-style hotel in Arlington. Things improved when contestants went on dates at places like Artehouse, the Logan Circle bar the Crown & Crow, and the Kalorama plant shop Plntr. Still, B-roll of the Washington Monument and other visual clichés dominated. The worst sin of all? A fifth of the cast members were actually from Baltimore.

WE'RE TOO IMAGE-CONSCIOUS FOR GOOD DRAMA

One big issue with the DC season is the lack of blowout fights. Whereas previous editions featured mid-series partner swaps, screaming matches, and mean girls galore, most of Season 7's craziness happened offscreen, apparently because these media-savvy couples waited until the cameras stopped to have their fights. Then producers later had them hash out the aftermath—far less exciting to watch.

DC NEEDS BETTER REALITY TV

This isn't the first reality show set here that whiffed: 2010's *The Real Housewives of D.C.* is the only American installment of that franchise not to be renewed for a second season. Now we get *The Real Housewives of Potomac*, which, after nine seasons, is a grueling bicker-fest, and OWN network's *Love & Marriage: DC*, which returns for a fourth season in January. If you're looking for an actually endearing and entertaining DC-related reality show, we do have one suggestion: *The Golden Bachelorette*, which just wrapped its first season, is filmed in LA, but the central figure, **Joan Vassos**, lives in Rockville. Close enough for us! **W**

SHELF LIFE

Holiday shopping will be a bit easier this year with four new bookstores to check out. Here's a look.

BARNES & NOBLE

3040 M St., NW

Over the past decade, Georgetown has seen the same building transform from a longtime Barnes & Noble into a Nike Store . . . and now back to a Barnes & Noble.

FRIENDS TO LOVERS

103 S. Saint Asaph St., Alexandria

The area's first bookstore entirely dedicated to romance novels is in Old Town, with titles from across the genre, including historical romance, small-town romance, and "romantasy."

JF BOOKS

1509 Connecticut Ave., NW

At this revival of Shanghai's Jifeng Books—a political and intellectual hub that shut down in 2018 due to pressure from cultural authorities—you'll find rare Chinese political-science texts, English-language books on Asian studies, and works by Asian Americans.

WONDERLAND BOOKS

7920 Norfolk Ave., Bethesda

Filling a years-long gap in Bethesda, the independent shop—set to open in time for the holidays—is owned by two local women who previously worked as a lawyer and a journalist at the *Washington Post*.

—DANIELLA IGNACIO



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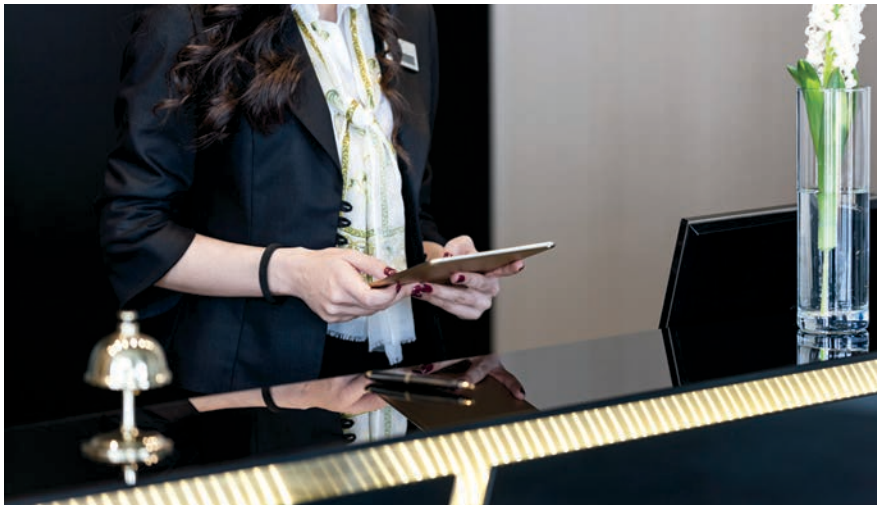
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Tales From the Desk

Local hotel concierges share some of their war stories



WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION fast approaching, DC's hospitality industry is gearing up for one of its busiest periods. Hotels tend to book up months in advance, and staffers never know what craziness will ensue. It will be an especially hectic time for the city's concierges. To get a sense of what that means—during both inauguration season and the rest of the year—we reached out to several of the District's top practitioners: **Jeff Morgan**, head concierge at the Conrad hotel and president of the Washington

Area Concierge Association; **Michael Chase**, head concierge at the Four Seasons; and **Robert Watson**, head concierge at the Willard InterContinental.

Much of what top concierges deal with involves minor travel emergencies, as when, Chase recalls, he had to rush to Neiman Marcus for seven pairs of designer shoes because a guest had forgotten to pack her inauguration heels. He also leaped into action when a head of state split the seam of his tuxedo pants shortly before he had to be at the White House.

Chase duct-taped the trousers and got him to his meeting with **George W. Bush** on time. And Morgan says he's the go-to bow-tie for "numerous celebrities and CEOs" who frequent the Conrad: "Even the wives are like, 'Ugh, I can never do it as good as you, Jeff.'"

Sometimes the challenges can be a bit more, uh, stiff. When the Conrad hosted a medical conference a number of years ago, a cadaver was set to be used as part of a presentation. It wasn't until the body was en route to the hotel that staff realized they couldn't legally receive it, per DC regulations. After doing a bit of research on regional dead-body policy, Morgan determined that such a delivery would be permissible in Virginia. Within the afternoon, he had the conference—and cadaver—moved.

The job also involves assisting visiting celebrities in various ways. Chase was once asked to buy sanitary napkins for a *Saturday Night Live* star's leaky pet, and **Marvin Hamlisch** thanked him during a Kennedy Center performance after he recovered the musician's lost notebook. But Chase's favorite story occurred in Detroit, where he happened to pass by a certain superstar crooner who was a regular at DC's Four Seasons: "I'm walking through the Detroit Airport and **Tony Bennett** says, 'Hi, Michael,' and continues to walk."

—KATE CORLISS

TOP PHOTOGRAPH BY GUVENDIMIR/GETTY IMAGES.
BOTTOM COURTESY OF VIGILANTE COFFEE COMPANY

WHY LATTES ARE PRICEY

If, like us, you're a fan of the occasional afternoon latte, you may have found yourself wondering why these beverage treats seem to cost so much. With tax and a bit of a tip, you're likely to drop \$7 on a cup of milk and espresso. What's the deal? We asked **Chris Vigilante**, owner of the coffee shop and roastery Vigilante Coffee Company in Hyattsville, to explain why this isn't just a rip-off. He gave us the breakdown of his expenses to the penny.

—MOLLY SZYMANSKI



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Some Like It Hut

New life for familiar old red-roof pizza eateries

WHAT DO A TAQUERIA, A KOREAN-CHINESE restaurant, and a barbecue joint have in common? They all used to be Pizza Huts. The restaurant chain ditched its distinctive red-hut architecture in 2016, but you can still find the structures around the area, now housing other eateries.



Pupatella, RESTON

"That was the Pizza Hut of my childhood," says **Michael Berger**, managing partner at Pupatella, which has several area pizza spots. Berger has many memories of hanging out there for little-league and swim-team parties.



Taqueria El Patron, LAUREL

Owner **Jose Chavarria** and his family were regulars at the Pizza Hut before he took over the repurposed space in 2018, picking the building due to its location in an area that's heavily Latino. Originally from Guatemala, Chavarria decided to open a Mexican restaurant because "it's what sells the most around here. Everyone loves it."



Jang Won, ANNANDALE

Occasionally, diners will let restaurant owner **Sonny Kim** know that his business used to be a Pizza Hut. But most customers are focused on the current offerings, he says, with the success of K-pop driving a lot of new interest. Kim was once a consumer of fast-food pizza, but "not these days," he says with a laugh. "Not even Domino's."



Sloppy Mama's BBQ, ARLINGTON

Local diners regularly come by and reminisce about days spent at this former Hut, says owner **Joe Neuman**. One couple told him they found love there as teens: The woman worked as a waitress and would invite her crush to come by and ply him with free pizza and beer. They've now been married for decades.



Galazio Restaurant and Bar, LA PLATA

When co-owner **Dionissios Gressis** took over the building to open a Mediterranean eatery, he did a lot of work to reduce evidence of its former Hut life. Even so, the red roof periodically reappears, poking through chipped brown paint. "I feel like Pizza Hut keeps trying to come back," he jokes.

—JENNIFER ALBARRACIN MOYA

PHOTOGRAPH OF PIZZA HUT COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA; OTHERS BY JENNIFER ALBARRACIN MOYA

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Barry's Berries

The history of marionberries and the former DC mayor

THE DC-BORN CHAIN & PIZZA FACED A big backlash for marketing its new sugar-dusted marionberry pizza knots with tone-deaf references to former mayor **Marion Barry's** drug arrest. (The company later pulled the campaign and apologized.)

It wasn't the first time locals have noted the amusing similarity between the names of the Oregon-grown blackberry variety and the late DC political giant. Marionberries—a relatively new fruit whose name has nothing at all to do with Marion Barry—are a sweet-tart blackberry crossbreed developed in the Willamette Valley in the 1950s by the US Department of Agriculture and Oregon State University.

"Every time we have a trade show on the East Coast, that's the primary time that people go, 'Marion Barry?'" says **Darcy Kochis** of the Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission, which represents marionberry farmers. "And, you know, people are surprised, they're confused, they get a chuckle."

In 1996, when McCormick & Schmick's

opened its first East Coast restaurant in DC, owners **Bill McCormick** and **Doug Schmick** invited Barry to taste their marionberry cobbler, a longstanding menu item for the Oregon-based chain. **Jill Collins**, the restaurant's publicist at the time, recalls that Barry and a group of about 20 staffers came in to taste it and that Barry returned to the restaurant many times, always ordering the marionberry dessert. He was apparently a fan of the fruit at home, too: His widow, **Cora Masters Barry**, previously told

Washingtonian that they kept marionberry jams in their cupboard.

Marionberry has also proved to be a popular ice-cream flavor. In 1998, as Barry prepared to leave the mayor's office, Milwaukee Frozen Custard in Chantilly introduced a "Goodbye, Marion Berry" flavor, according to the *Washington Post*. In more recent years, it's been a signature seasonal scoop at Ice Cream Jubilee. Although not explicitly referencing Barry, owner



Victoria Lai once said that "the name makes people laugh. Anything that can make strangers laugh is a joyful moment."

In 2013, the now-defunct DC brewery Chocolate City Beer released an imperial stout brewed with marionberries, called Mister Mayor. Its tagline:

"Beer for Life," a reference to Barry's "mayor for life" sobriquet. It was a far safer slogan than one the Frederick brewery Flying Dog had used a year before to promote the release of its Underdog Atlantic Lager. The beer didn't contain marionberries, but it did make light of Barry's drug use with a poster reading CRACK ONE OPEN D.C. At the request of Barry's lawyer, the ad was quickly taken down.

Marionberry spokesperson Kochis notes that Barry isn't "the cleanest person that you want to be associated with," but if it brings some education about marionberries, "we'll take it."

"Just like a Pink Lady apple is a variety of apple, a marionberry is a variety of blackberry," Kochis says. "And maybe Marion Barry is just a different variety of mayor."

—JESSICA SIDMAN



MUPPETS AND MORE

The National Museum of American History's "Entertainment Nation" exhibit is full of fun pop-culture objects, such as Dorothy's ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* and Grandmaster Flash's turntables. In February, the museum will add a bunch of new stuff. Here are some highlights.



Original Bert, Ernie, Fozzie Bear, and Wilkins Muppets

You know three of these fuzzy puppets. The fourth, Wilkins, is part of how it all started—an early Muppet that **Jim Henson** created to advertise a coffee brand in the 1950s.



Indiana Jones Costume

Harrison Ford wore this jacket during the filming of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. The braided kangaroo-leather whip (not pictured) is from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.



Hazmat Suit From Breaking Bad

Bryan Cranston's meth-lab getup will be instantly recognizable to anyone who watched the award-winning TV drama.



Bob Ross's Easel

The beloved TV artist's hand-made easel, circa 1983, will be displayed with one of the artworks he created during an episode of *The Joy of Painting*.

—MOLLY SZYMANSKI

PHOTOGRAPH OF BARRY BY NANCY OSTERTAG/GETTY IMAGES; BERRIES BY GETTY IMAGES; "ENTERTAINMENT NATION" PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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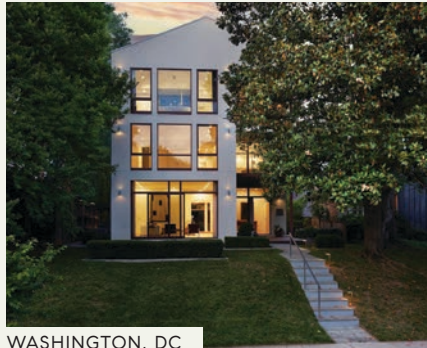
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Guest List

A monthly roundup of people we'd like to have over for drinks, food, and conversation

Darren Walker

He recently became president of the National Gallery of Art.



Nancy Silverton

The celeb chef has teamed with **Stephen Starr** for Georgetown eatery Osteria Mozza.



Terry McLaurin

The fan-favorite Commanders receiver is having another great season—this time as part of a winning team.



Brian Joyner

Rock Creek Park's new superintendent is a DC native.



Marie Bucoy-Calavan

Choral Arts has hired this conductor to be its artistic director.



DISINVITED!



Jeff Bezos

A huge wave of cancellations ensued after he spiked the *Washington Post's* endorsement of **Kamala Harris**.

A Space Fake

Why GMU and NASA are teaming up to launch an artificial star

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY'S LANDOLT

Space Mission is a collaboration with NASA on a scientific initiative that will eventually send an artificial star into orbit around the Earth. Why do we need a fake star when so many real ones are already out there? The impostor will allow scientists to better calibrate their tools here on Earth and to gather more precise measurements of star brightness.

As NASA scientist **Eliad Peretz** explains, measurements of light are needed in order to learn things about stars' temperature, distance, radius, age, and other significant information. That kind of increased accuracy has the potential to "change our understanding of the universe in a fundamental way," Peretz says. "I've never observed an accurately calibrated star in the sky. This will be the first time."



A rendering of the spacecraft

So how do you make a fake star? George Mason professor **Peter Plavchan**, who's leading the mission, says it will likely take five years of design, production, and testing before it can be launched. Right now, the team is still at the project's beginning phase, fine-tuning their proposal so NASA can approve it by next year. But the spacecraft will essentially be a satellite outfitted with lasers that communicate with instruments on Earth.

In addition to NASA, George Mason will be partnering with the National Institute of Standards and Technology and other organizations on the venture. The university will also employ the talents of a bunch of students: 11 undergraduates, five graduate

students, and two high-schoolers.

The \$19.5 million project will be the first mission run from the university's interdisciplinary Mason Space Center, which the university is currently building. New facilities will include an operations center, mission control, and uncontaminated "clean rooms" in which the spacecraft will be constructed.

For Plavchan, one of the most intriguing possibilities is that this artificial star could help bring about discoveries of star properties "that we haven't even thought of yet," he says. "The ones we already know of are exciting. What else are we going to learn?"

—DANIELLA IGNACIO

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TIFFANY & CO. THERMADOR TUMI VINCE **DINING** CENTROLINA DEL FRISCO'S DOUBLE EAGLE STEAKHOUSE DOLCEZZA ESTUARY FIG & OLIVE FRUITIVE
PICCOLINA SEVEN REASONS SUMMIT TATTE BAKERY & CAFÉ **EXPERIENCE** MUSEUM OF ILLUSIONS **HOSPITALITY** CONRAD WASHINGTON, DC





Moonument

IN LATE OCTOBER, PHOTOGRAPHER

Josh Steele captured this striking image of a crescent moon behind the Washington Monument. The photo was taken in an Arlington parking lot around 5 AM. “I thought it would make for a creative shot for Halloween,” Steele says. “It looks like the Washington Monument has horns.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSH STEELE

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS?



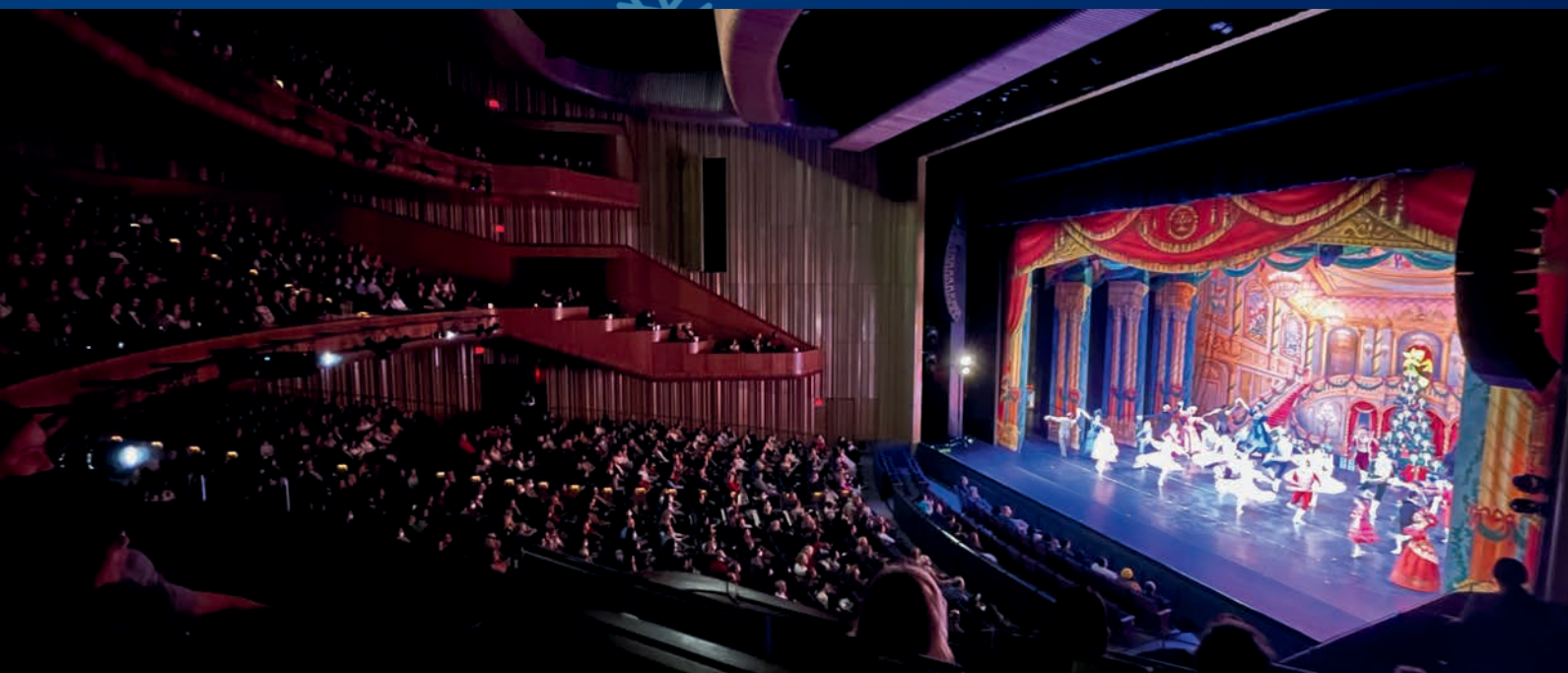
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Dan About Town

Party photographer Dan Swartz's monthly roundup of bashes, balls, and benefits

▼ Nailsaloon 10-Year Anniversary Bash at El Presidente October 7



Colada Shop's Daniella Senior, Nailsaloon's Andréa Vieira, CNN's Eva McKend, and Nailsaloon's Amanda Moreno

▼ JW Marriott Washington, DC 40th-Anniversary Celebration October 10



JW Marriott's Bruce Rhor, Marriott International's Michele Klarman, and Matt Felix, general manager of JW Marriott Washington, DC

▼ Argent x CAA #VotingSuitsYou Shopping Event at Argent Georgetown October 15



Argent's Sali Christeson and CNN's Laura Coates

Christine Lancman, Rachel Adler, and Ali Spiesman of Creative Artists Agency with Judee Ann Williams of CAA Sports

▼ 56th Annual Meridian Ball at Meridian House October 18



Cordell Hull, Olivia Igbokwe-Curry, and Chris Howell of Amazon Web Services



Meridian Ball chair Deborah Lehr and Stuart Holliday of Meridian International Center



Counselor to the President Steve Ricchetti, Mark Dumas, Amy Ricchetti, and White House social secretary Carlos Elizondo

▼ **2024 Chefs for Equality at the National Building Museum**
October 21



Prestige-Ledroit Distributing's Vanessa Cominsky (left) and Alexa Jaenicke (far right) with Sarah Horvitz of Plant Wines and former DC Craft Bartenders Guild president Andrea Tateosian



Ama co-owner and chef Johanna Hellrigl, Human Rights Campaign president Kelley Robinson, Chefs for Equality's David Hagedorn, and Hank's Oyster Bar owner and chef Jamie Leeds



The Fried Rice Collective's Danny Lee (left) and Scott Drewno (second from right) with Omakase @ Barracks Row sushi chef Aaron Hsu and Brent Kroll, owner of Maxwell Park and Pop Fizz Bar

▼ **Book Celebration for Tony Blair's *On Leadership: Lessons for the 21st Century* at the St. Regis**
October 24



David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee and former foreign secretary of the UK with chef/restaurateur José Andrés, World Central Kitchen founder and chief feeding officer



Washington Speakers Bureau's Ryan Heil, former British prime minister Tony Blair, and *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman



Sumi Somaskanda of BBC News with former Finnish prime minister Sanna Marin

▼ **Osteria Mozza VIP Preview Party**
November 1



Adrian Fenty, former DC mayor and managing general partner of MaC Venture Capital, with DC mayor Muriel Bowser



Osteria Mozza's Stephen Starr and Nancy Silverton



Joshua Levine of Starr Restaurants, chef Nora Pouillon, and Osteria Mozza partner Joe Bastianich

DR. DESPINA M. MARKOGIANNAKIS



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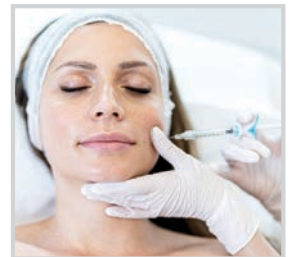
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WASHINGTONIAN *Style* Setters

On October 23, *Washingtonian* celebrated the area's most fashionable people with an elegant dinner party at one of CityCenterDC's finest restaurants, Seven Reasons. The night was filled with vibrant energy, delicious bites, and elegant looks from our current and past Style Setters.

CityCenterDC's Timothy Lowery and *Washingtonian* fashion and weddings editor Amy Moeller welcomed guests with brief remarks, and Something Vintage provided a stunning tablescape, elevating the room. This year's Style Setters were presented with framed covers from their photo shoots as well as custom fragrances in engraved bottles by B Parfums.

Thank you to our venue, Seven Reasons, and to our partners: Something Vintage, B Parfums, and Lee's Flower and Card Shop.

Photographs by Annette Lee Photography

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSOR:



CityCenterDC



CityCenterDC's Timothy Lowery



2024 Style Setters Kelly-Lynne Russell and David McCombs



Melissa King of Hines and Midori Jackson of Akris



2024 Style Setter Sara Azani and 2023 Style Setter Libby Rasmussen



2024 Style Setter Ashley Davis



Carolina Furukrona, Don Love, David McCombs, Ashley Davis, Navin Singh, Gary Williams Jr., Kelly-Lynne Russell, and Sara Azani



Guests enjoyed dinner in the exclusive Green Room at Seven Reasons.



2022 Style Setter Chris Anderson and 2024 Style Setter Don Love



2024 Style Setter Dr. Navin Singh



Donald Syriani, Dani Sauter, Kelly-Lynne Russell, Libby Rasmussen, and David McCombs



Guests enjoyed Seven Reasons' signature butternut-squash soup.



Attendees could create a custom fragrance courtesy of B Parfums.

WASHINGTONIAN TECH TITANS RECEPTION 2024

On October 29, DC's tech leaders gathered at Ilili Restaurant to celebrate being named among *Washingtonian's* 2024 Tech Titans. The cocktail reception brought together honorees to connect, enjoy food and drink, and, of course, get their picture taken at the *Washingtonian* faux cover-photo booth.

Washingtonian president and CEO Catherine Merrill opened the evening by congratulating the honorees and thanking the event sponsors. Verizon's Mario Acosta-Velez followed with remarks highlighting Verizon's work in the tech industry and shared information on its new initiatives.

Ilili's lively atmosphere created the perfect backdrop for guests to enjoy the restaurant's Lebanese cuisine. Those who wished to share more intimate chats could sit in the customized PepsiCo or Verizon lounge.

Photographs by Joy Asico-Smith

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Verizon's Mario Acosta-Velez giving remarks with Washingtonian president and CEO Catherine Merrill



The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Rohit Chopra with the Federal Trade Commission's Lina Khan, Sam Levine, and Stephanie Nguyen



Guests pose with their Washingtonian cover photos.



Steve Hartell of Amazon, Grace Abuhamad of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Amazon's Jena Gross, and NTIA's Alan Davidson



SoundExchange's Emily Fulp and Mike Huppe, a 2024 Tech Titan



PepsiCo's Shantise Mathis, Kathryn Dunning, Ghiliane Soto, Jonathan George, Greg Yahr, Andrea Moribe, Sarah Towles, and Taylor Lustig



Keri Henderson of the Kickback With Keri, Jennifer Schretter of PROOF, Kirsten Tucker of ItinAFairy, and Krystin Hargrove of CoTripper



Maryland TEDCO's Jack Miner and ALIVE Podcast Network's Yusuf Henriques



Chatmeter's John Mazur and Revolution Ventures' Tige Savage



Verizon's Mario Acosta-Velez, Washingtonian's Catherine Merrill, ASPR's Adam Shapiro, and the DC Innovation & Technology Inclusion Council's Thomas Sanchez



J.P. Morgan's Vivienne Pham, Lexi Allner, and Tom Michael



Scott Frederick (left) and Nick Graziano (far right) of Sands Capital Ventures with Phil Bronner of Ardent Venture Partners



Everfi's Ellen Patterson, Vox Media's Jim Bankoff, and Washingtonian's Catherine Merrill



Ilii served its specialty baklava for dessert.

THINGS TO DO

Our 10 picks for the month in culture

By Pat Padua



MUSIC

SUKI WATERHOUSE

THE ANTHEM

December 11

Contrary to her summer single “Supersad,” the English singer-songwriter/model-actress has a lot to be happy about this year: She had a baby with Robert Pattinson and opened for Taylor Swift in London. Even if your year hasn’t reached those heights, Waterhouse’s indie-pop will make you superglad.



COMEDY

JOHN OLIVER

KENNEDY CENTER

December 27–31

From his stint on *The Daily Show* to his deeply researched HBO program, the British comedian is one of the sharpest observers of American politics. Here he’ll deliver a set of thought-stimulating stand-up material.



MUSEUMS

“IN SLAVERY’S WAKE”

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE

Opens December 14

With fascinating displays—including a tapestry created by prisoner-volunteers at the hospice center of the Louisiana State Penitentiary (above)—this exhibit looks at the myriad ways in which race and slavery have been depicted over the centuries.



CLASSICAL

A MASS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

FOLGER THEATRE

December 6–15

The Folger Consort performs Marc-Antoine Charpentier’s “Messe de Minuit pour Noël,” a late-17th-century work that incorporates traditional Christmas carols into church music.

PHOTOGRAPH OF WATERHOUSE BY JEREMY SOMA; OLIVER COURTESY OF JOHN OLIVER; “THE BLUE PRINT” COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE; GIFT OF LORI WASELCHUK; FOLGER CONSORT BY BRITTANY DILIBERTO



THEATER

**ANNIE COSTIA
BEAT YA FEET**

LINCOLN THEATRE

December 20–21

The classic comic strip “Little Orphan Annie” turned 100 this year—a perfect time for a new and highly localized musical adaptation, with an east-of-the-river Annie learning about African culture to a go-go beat.



THEATER

**A BEAUTIFUL
NOISE: THE
NEIL DIAMOND
MUSICAL**

NATIONAL THEATRE

December 3–8

Diamond himself probably won't perform “Sweet Caroline” from a seat in the house, as he did at the New York premiere of this hit-stuffed jukebox musical, but the audience likely will: These rousing songs—and their goofily charismatic singer—remain beloved.



FILM

**EUROPEAN
UNION FILM
SHOWCASE**

AFI SILVER THEATER
AND CULTURAL CENTER

December 4–22

One of the highlights of the filmgoing year, the AFI's annual showcase highlights tomorrow's arthouse favorites to-day. This year's slate includes the Julianne Moore/Tilda Swinton morality tale *The Room Next Door* (below), the first English-language feature from Spanish provocateur Pedro Almodóvar.



OPERA

RIGOLETTO

EDLAVITCH DC JEWISH
COMMUNITY CENTER

December 7–15

Verdi's mid-career masterpiece revolves around the eponymous court jester, so this playful production is set under the big top, with a circus band and a ribald new libretto by Bari Biern.



MUSIC

**49
WINCHESTER**



9:30 CLUB

December 31

Ring in 2025 with this self-proclaimed Appalachian country-soul band who come from the small town of Castlewood, Virginia, offering big beards, twangy vibes, and memorable tunes.



FILM

**SALAAM BOMBAY!
WITH MIRA NAIR**

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

December 8

The director's 1988 crime drama (left) depicted the harrowing lives of children in the bustling city now known as Mumbai. Nair will deliver a lecture here before a screening of her breakthrough feature.



PHOTOGRAPH OF ANNIE COSTIA BEAT YA FEET BY LISA R. BELL; RIGOLETTO BY PLUNKERT; A BEAUTIFUL NOISE BY JULIETA CERVANTES; THE ROOM NEXT DOOR COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS; 49 WINCHESTER BY THOMAS CRABTREE; SALAAM BOMBAY! COURTESY OF PARK CIRCUS AND ALAMY

THARSEŌ / thar-seh'-ō/ To be courageous, confident, and bold.



Johnny C. Taylor, Jr. President and CEO of SHRM concluding the evening.



The 2024 Tharseo CEO of the Year, Horacio Rozanski with Johnny C. Taylor, Jr. President/CEO of SHRM and Wendi Safstrom, President of SHRM Foundation



The 2024 Ram Charan HR Innovation Awardee, Kathleen Hogan, accepts award at 2024 Tharseo Awards.



The 2024 Tharseo Policy Transformer of the Year, former Governor of Arkansas, Asa Hutchinson.



Wendi Safstrom, President, SHRM Foundation.



From Left to Right: Johnny C. Taylor Jr., Kathleen Hogan, Asa Hutchinson, and Horacio Rozanski.

BOLD LEADERS. BETTER WORKPLACES.

On October 17, SHRM Foundation hosted the 2024 Tharseō Awards at the Andrew Mellon Auditorium in Washington D.C., recognizing leaders who are transforming the workplace and the world. This annual celebration honors those who lead with bold ideas and courageous vision — creating workplaces that empower people, connect employees to company mission, and strengthen communities. Learn more: www.tharseo.shrm.org



2024 WINNERS



**RAM CHARAN
HR INNOVATION AWARD**
Kathleen Hogan
Chief Human Resources Officer,
Microsoft



CEO OF THE YEAR
Horacio Rozanski
Chairman,
Booz Allen Hamilton



**POLICY TRANSFORMER
OF THE YEAR**
The Honorable Asa Hutchinson
Governor of Arkansas,
2015-2023

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IQ

IDEAS. ARGUMENTS. REPORTING.

She Just Might Save Your Life

Dr. Christine Trankiem oversees trauma surgery at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Her advice? Do not get hit by a dump truck.

By Sylvie McNamara

DR. CHRISTINE TRANKIEM'S HANDS ARE

big and graceful, nails manicured a delicate ivory, steady as they move through the air. She's a trauma surgeon, so her hands save lives—the victims of stab wounds, folks who have been hit by cars. In 2017, when Representative Steve Scalise was shot at a practice for the Congressional Baseball Game, Trankiem was on the surgical team that treated him. She's the chief of trauma and acute-care surgery at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, the region's busiest Level I trauma center, which handles some of the most dire medical emergencies in DC.

When I met Trankiem, she'd just done an exploratory laparotomy ("It's when we open someone up to see what's going on inside," she said) and was en route to a gallbladder surgery. We spoke at a table in her office, a model of a torso between us, its plastic flesh held open with a metal retractor. On the wall to her right was a hand-drawn grid with quadrants for "humble," "cocky," "wrong," and "right." As a surgeon, you have to be confident but not cocky, she explained, and it's good to be right. "I think it's thought-provoking," she said.

In a trauma center, Friday and Saturday nights are the busiest. What's that like?

Every trauma center sees people who have been in car crashes, or when our elderly population falls, they might have bleeding in their body or in their brain. But we are unique in that we have a very high percentage of what's called penetrating trauma: shootings and stabbings. We receive more trauma than any other hospital in Washington, DC.

On the weekends, we might have an older person with a brain bleed who we're monitoring. We might have some college kids who were riding scooters and got in a crash. We might have some gun violence that comes in, and we bring them into the trauma bay, do a quick assessment, then bring them right to the operating room to do an exploratory surgery. It only takes one very sick patient to change the whole night.

What's an example of that?

Sometimes the patients are basically pulseless, and in those cases, we might



OPERATING PRINCIPAL:
Trankiem at work.

"Sometimes patients are basically pulseless and we might literally open up their chest and deliver their heart into our hands."

have to do what's called a bay thoracotomy, where we literally open up the left side of their chest, deliver their heart into our hands, and then perform manual cardiac compressions.

How long is the time between the ambulance arriving at the hospital and the heart being in your hands?

Less than five minutes, for sure. For some people, they really thrive on routine. But trauma surgeons thrive on not knowing what the next thing is. It keeps it very interesting.

What made you want to become a doctor?

My parents wanted me to be a physician, but I was always very rebellious and I didn't want to be a doctor. I went

to the University of Pittsburgh on a full scholarship, so I felt empowered to study whatever I wanted. I didn't take science. I was a religious-studies and classics major. And then I was an infomercial marketing manager.

I thought I wanted to go back and get my PhD and teach at the university level—my specialty was the origins of Christianity. And then out of the blue, my father died in an accident. That was the moment when I realized I needed to be more realistic and practical. There aren't a whole lot of jobs teaching the origins of Christianity. That's when I decided I was going to medical school.

Are you personally religious?

No, I'm not.

But you work at the extremes of life and death. Does that influence your worldview?

I believe there's something greater than us. And a lot of times our patients have a very deep faith. One of the hardest things that we do is deliver devastating news to a family when the patient is still alive, but it's not a survivable situation. They tell us that they are waiting for the miracle, and our job is to crush that hope.

What do you say?

If they say, "I'm waiting for God to deliver the miracle," then I say, "God has



Photo credit: Moy Dumadag Photography

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given us certain medical abilities, and right now God has not made it in our capability to treat or reverse the condition that your loved one has, and I'm really sorry to tell you that." I try to respect their tradition. But taking away hope is awful. It eats away at your soul.

How do you handle it when you lose a patient?

It's kind of devastating. No one knows the devastation of that kind of loss like your partner trauma surgeon does, so we tell each other the typical platitudes—"Well, you weren't the one who shot them," or "You didn't run over them"—but it takes a little time. And sometimes a patient dies but there's, like, two more in the other trauma bay, so you have to sort of acknowledge the loss and then compartmentalize because that person in the next bay and the one next to them—they deserve your best, too. So you have to refocus. It's important to acknowledge the emotion, but you can't let it incapacitate you.

What's a part of trauma surgery that you really like?

One of my favorite things is the first time I hear the patient's voice—like, once the breathing tube is out and I hear them speak. It affects me really deeply.

Right, I guess you're often operating on people you've never spoken to before.

I try to, actually. When we're assessing whether or not we need to put a breathing tube in, we do speak with them. Because even if they're not making sense, if they're able to phonate, that means they might be able to protect their airway. So we will oftentimes speak with them. And sometimes the patients will grab your hand and say, "Doc, don't let me die. I have to live for my daughter," or something like that. You don't want to make a promise you can't keep, but it makes you fight even harder to try to save that life.

What's the worst physical trauma you've ever seen someone survive?

There are people who get run over by dump trucks. When I see a dump truck

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“One of my favorite things is the first time I hear the patient’s voice once the breathing tube is out. It affects me really deeply.”

on the road, I just give it a wide berth. I think all pedestrians should be very far away from a corner if there’s a dump truck coming by. [The trucks] can’t feel if they’re hitting or running over something.

And you’ve seen people survive that?
Yes, but we mostly see people not survive it.

Do you have hobbies?
Yeah, I like whitewater rafting.

You like adrenaline.
In some ways, I find it similar to trauma surgery, because you have to focus and mitigate your panic response. With panic, the wrong thing to do is to ignore it or try to push it down, because then it’s going to rear its head even more. I find that you [should] accept it quickly, acknowledge it, and then move on. It’s the same thing in trauma surgery. There’s some injuries I see that make me—let’s say, concerned [about the patient’s chances]—and I acknowledge the feeling that the injury is giving me and then I move on.

How did you train yourself to do that?
Time and repetition. As the team leader for the trauma team, if I express panic, everybody’s going to panic. So it is my responsibility to the patient and the team to maintain a calm external demeanor, even though I might have some internal panic.

There are a lot of fictional trauma surgeons on television shows. Is that strange for you to see?

If there’s one thing I could dispel on TV, it’s that they’re always so focused on getting the bullet out. Like that’s the purpose of a lifesaving surgery: to get the bullet out. And then when [the surgical team] comes out, the family says, “Did you get the bullet?” And they say, “Yeah, I got the bullet.” But removing the bullet in that lifesaving surgery is not the focus. There are implications of the bullet: some physical ones and certainly some emotional ones. But as far as lifesaving, the retrieval of the bullet is not important. That is my public-service announcement.

Do you like doctor shows?
I used to like *House*, and maybe the reason I liked it is that it didn’t have much to do with trauma surgery. But I will tell you what I don’t like to see, and it’s actually kind of funny. I am not good at watching depictions of surgery, either real or simulated on the screen. They actually make me a tiny bit nauseous.

Why?
I think it’s because, as a surgeon, I’m usually in control of the situation. I’m not in control if I’m watching it on TV.

You have a really intense job. How do you recover from the bad stuff?
My son is in college now, but I used to just hug him. He knew why I would do that. And when he was little, I could come home and be exhausted and feel terrible, and he would look at me and be like, “Mom, where’s my snack? Where’s my juice box?” And so I couldn’t be dwelling on all these other things, because he was there showing me real life. He was keeping me present.

And one thing that my partner [trauma surgeons] and I remind each other is that when you stop feeling that deep sadness in your soul over the loss of a patient, it’s time to hang it up.

What does hanging it up look like for you?
I don’t know. I love what I do. I’m not really thinking about my endgame right now. W

Staff writer Sylvie McNamara is at smcnamara@washingtonian.com. This interview has been edited and condensed.



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Stages of Grief

For decades, I refused to engage with my family's dramatic Holocaust story. Then Tom Stoppard's play *Leopoldstadt* came to town.

By Rob Brunner

TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO, MY FATHER sent a letter to me that I never had the courage to open. I put it away in a drawer, the envelope still sealed, thinking I might get around to it someday. I knew what was in there; I couldn't bear to look.

My family's Holocaust story wasn't something I'd ever much engaged with. I knew the basics, dimly, but it all felt far away and abstract—somebody else's nightmare. So when my father wrote up what he knew and sent it to me and my two

siblings, I made the easier choice: to keep living in protective ignorance.

Then, in early 2020, a play called *Leopoldstadt* premiered in London. Written by Tom Stoppard, it was loosely inspired by the playwright's own Holocaust history, and the story seemed remarkably similar to my family's past: an assimilated Austrian Jewish clan is ripped out of its comfortable Viennese life by the arrival of the Nazis and, ultimately, destroyed. I read everything I saw about *Leopoldstadt*,

especially as it moved to Broadway in 2022 and then won the Tony Award for Best Play. I was weirdly drawn to this story about a doomed family that wasn't my own. Perhaps *Leopoldstadt* was a way to access my history without having to stare directly at it.

And yet I didn't see the play. My father, for whom this history is far more personal and immediate, did attend a Broadway performance, and he found the experience to be moving and somewhat uncanny. He tried to convince me to go, but I never made it up there. I figured *Leopoldstadt* would eventually arrive in Washington. Maybe I'd see it then, I said. I wasn't sure that was really true. As with the letter, it was easier to push it away.

Earlier this year, Shakespeare Theatre Company announced that a new production of *Leopoldstadt* would be opening here at the end of November. Directed by Carey Perloff and produced in association with the Huntington Theater Company

in Boston, it's the first staging of the play after the Broadway production closed. I'm not sure why, but this time something felt different. I decided I needed to stop hiding—from *Leopoldstadt* and from my family's past. I bought a copy of the published play and read it. Then I pulled my dad's letter out of the drawer.

MY GRANDPARENTS, ROBERT BRUNNER

and Louise Koblitz, were deeply assimilated Viennese Jews during that pre-WWII period when the city—though racked by economic and political crises—was a center of cultural innovation, much of it driven by Jewish genius. More than 200,000 Jews lived in Vienna before 1938, and they weren't merely tolerated—they were at the heart of the city's intellectual life.

A couple not yet married, my grandparents were immersed in that thrilling swirl of culture and ideas. My grandfather owned a bookselling business, Robert Brunner Books. My grandmother had worked as an elementary-school teacher. Though they didn't have a lot of money, they were non-religious, middle-class Austrians who felt at home in a sophisticated place that accepted them as its own. Vienna was their entire world.

The extended Merz family—the focus of *Leopoldstadt*—are similarly drawn to the cultural heat of that extraordinary moment. Their textile business has made them wealthy, but “we literally worship culture,” says Hermann, the patriarch.

That's all eventually shattered, of course. *Leopoldstadt* follows the Merzes from 1899 through 1955—the good years, the terrifying collapse, and the aftermath. Some of the characters escape; most do not. The question of whether and when to leave haunts the play. “Things will calm down,” one character says. “No, things will get worse,” another replies. By the time most Jews realized they needed to flee, it was too late.

For my grandparents, leaving didn't feel like much of a choice. My dad's letter lays out an extraordinary story of luck and courage, an escape saga that began when my grandfather had the good fortune—if that's the right way to put it—to get hauled in by the Gestapo.

It was 1938, not long after the Nazis annexed Austria, and my grandfather, who was involved with Socialist politics, knew the leaders of a banned leftist political party. The Gestapo believed, incorrectly, that



Sima Koblitz and her daughter, Erika, in 1935. Like most of the rest of the author's Austrian family, they would both be murdered by the Nazis.

he was one of them. He was interrogated and then temporarily released. In a panic, my grandparents confronted tough options: stay in Vienna and face the further attentions of the Nazis or flee into the unknown, with slim prospects for escape. They had no legal path out of the country; the Gestapo would likely consider him a fugitive.

My grandparents heard a rumor about a particular German government office on the French-German border that might let Jews cross in return for a bribe. It seemed like their best option—their only option. They almost made it there. If they had, they probably would have been arrested and sent to a camp.

My father wrote about what happened next:

“While they were on the trolley en route to the government office, they were approached by an ordinary ‘commercial’ smuggler, who correctly deduced their situation and plans. He warned them off of going to the Gestapo and offered to get them to Paris in exchange for some jewelry that my mother showed him. In a snap judgment, my parents opted to trust him.”

The smuggler hid them in a barn for a few days, then brought them to the edge of a field and told them France was on the other side. A French taxi would be waiting, he claimed. The story seemed highly unlikely—they were convinced they were headed to their deaths. But what could

they do except believe him?

My family will never know who that smuggler was or what might have motivated him. He could have taken the jewelry and sent them to die. But he kept his word: The taxi was there. It took them off to Paris, where my grandparents would spend more than a year, trying to find a country that would take them. Finally, they received a phone call from the US Embassy: If they could get there by the end of the day, they could have two precious American refugee visas. The documents are dated August 31, 1939. The next day, Hitler invaded Poland and the war began. They were later told these were the last two refugee visas issued by the US government in Paris until the end of the war. My grandparents arrived in New York in early 1940, with \$20 and no idea what lay ahead. Neither of them ever went back to Austria.

With a handful of exceptions, the rest of my grandparents' family—my family—remained in Vienna. From their new home in New York, my grandparents tried everything to get them out. (Their desperate letters from this period are now in the collection of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.) But nothing worked. Their relatives were eventually sent to Poland, where, after who knows what horrors, they were murdered.

The same end awaits most of the Merzes. At the end of *Leopoldstadt*, characters

speak the names and fates of various family members:

Ernst: Auschwitz.

Hanna: Auschwitz.

Kurt: Dachau.

Nineteen members of the Merz clan, most dead at the hands of the Nazis. The scene tends to leave audiences sobbing.

LEOPOLDSTADT FEELS PERSONAL TO me, but for Carey Perloff, the director of this new production, it actually is: Stoppard was partly inspired by her own family's escape from Vienna in 1938, after a prescient relative pressed them to leave while they still could. "They believed him and went," Perloff says. "I always think that was a miracle."

Perloff, who grew up in DC, is a well-regarded theater director now based in San Francisco. She's known Stoppard for more than 30 years and has directed a dozen of his plays. Perloff's mother, Marjorie—a prominent poetry and culture critic who died this past March—was a child when her family fled Austria. Her strong memories of that time became a memoir, *The Vienna Paradox*. In 2018, when Stoppard was writing *Leopoldstadt*, he visited Marjorie in Los Angeles, where they spent a day talking about her life and her book.

Of course, Stoppard famously has his own Holocaust history and tale of escape. Raised in Czechoslovakia, he was a toddler when the Germans invaded in 1939. His family fled to Singapore, then India. Stoppard's father was killed when the Japanese bombed a ship he was on. His mother then married an Englishman, and from the age of nine, Stoppard lived in the UK, never learning much about his past as a refugee. It wasn't until the early 1990s, when he had coffee with a relative he'd never before met, that he learned the full story. He hadn't even really known he was Jewish.

"While my mother was alive, she discouraged looking back at family history," Stoppard told me in an email. "But I think the main impetus for writing *Leopoldstadt* was more to do with my habit of referring to my own 'charmed life.' I found myself transformed into a little English schoolboy, and I never looked back. I suppose you could say that I began to feel bad about not looking back, and in the end the result was a play called *Leopoldstadt*, which of course

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was not my story at all, because we were not Viennese Jews and my family was lucky to . . . [get] out of harm's way."

Leopoldstadt both is and isn't Stoppard's attempt to grapple with that past. There are parts of the play that speak to his own story, yet Stoppard says he was trying to capture something broader. "Because my mother did not like looking back, and I had no special urge to unpack her story until it was too late, I missed my chance to have the conversations which no doubt would have added some facets to the story I was trying to tell," he says. "Writing a play is not like writing a memoir or anything else. Drama has a special dynamic which playwrights are trying to exploit. In the end, I was helped by treating the family as a fiction."

But for descendants like me, it all feels very real—the first time I've seen the world that was taken from my forbears brought to life. "It's a completely invented story that is very close to your family history and my family history and many, many people's family history," Perloff told me. "The ghosts of my family are everywhere in the play. And I think the ghosts of Stoppard's family are also."

THE NAZIS STOLE EVERYTHING FROM my grandparents—their relatives, their friends, their entire world. They also took something less tangible: their Austrian citizenship. During the pandemic, I decided to get it back.

The Austrian government now offers citizenship to descendants of people who lost it due to Nazi persecution, and over the past few years, thousands have taken them up on it. My dad and I filled out the paperwork together. It was easy to prove our claim; among other things, my father has plenty of old government documents with my grandparents' names on them, some bearing truly chilling ink stamps with swastikas.

The approval process went pretty quickly, and in November 2021, I received a certificate declaring my new nationality. I'm officially Austrian now, a dual citizen. The burgundy EU passport sits on my dresser, both a minor point of pride and a potential exit strategy during an era of fear and uncertainty in the country where I live.

Yet by accepting the government's effort to make amends with my family, I'm not sure what I'm really signing up for. I'm literally only Austrian on paper; I don't

speak German, and I've been to Vienna just once, many years ago. As a foreigner and a Jew, I'm certain I would be seen by many as an outsider. And I struggle with an unsettling question: By tying myself to a country that was complicit in the murder of my family, am I signaling a forgiveness that I'm not sure I'm ready to confer? Or am I simply getting back something that was, in a real sense, taken from me?

Not long ago, I went with my dad to an event here in DC, at the Austrian ambassador's residence, for people who had recently become citizens under the program. The hosts were warm and welcoming; they said the right things about accountability and the ongoing need to fight antisemitism. But I knew I didn't really belong. Standing there amid all these actual Austrians chattering away in their native language, my dual citizenship felt fragile, even false.

There's a moment in *Leopoldstadt* that haunts me, a harrowing scene in which a Nazi shows up at the Merz apartment and informs them, in the most dehumanizing and contemptuous terms, that he's taking their home. "Did you think you were Austrians, you old parasite bitch?" he spits at one member of the family. In the play, the Merzes certainly did think that. My family believed it, too. But citizenship—Austrian-ness—didn't save them. In the end, it didn't mean a thing.

NEAR THE END OF MY FATHER'S LETTER, he mentions my grandmother's three young cousins, Erika, Heinz, and Felix. The siblings were just eight, six, and three years old when, in 1942, they and their parents—my grandmother's older brother, Rudolf, and his wife, Sima—were sent to Wlodawa, Poland. Soon after, they were all killed. It's not clear whether they were taken to the nearby Sobibor extermination camp or simply brought out to a field and shot.

Their deaths hit my grandmother particularly hard, I knew, but the specifics of this history weren't discussed in my family—certainly not by my deeply scarred grandmother, who lived in Bethesda for most of my childhood and was a frequent but ghostly presence in my life. (My grandfather, whom I'm named after, died before I was born.) Most of her family and friends had been murdered. She was tormented by survivors' guilt. She didn't want to burden me and my siblings with things that were too awful to face. She told my father it was

all too “boring” to talk about.

But I also never asked. It seemed too big, too horrible. None of it felt like it belonged to me. That was a delusion that I held onto for too long. “I do perceive my three children as carrying on in some sense for their three cousins who were roughly 35 years older,” my dad writes in the letter. I didn’t have any idea he thought about it that way—I’d never bothered to learn much about them or consider the parallels to my own life. But had the cousins survived, they would have been my family, my son’s family. They would have come over for Thanksgiving dinner; I might have been friends with their children. Their loss isn’t some abstraction, I have finally come to realize. It’s my loss, too.

In *Leopoldstadt*, Stoppard wrestles with his own alienation from his Holocaust story. He was eight when his family fled, the same age as my cousin Erika when she was deported and killed, just a year older than Marjorie Perloff when she escaped. Toward the end of the play, some characters who survived meet up in Vienna, where one confronts Leo, an obvious stand-in for Stoppard, about how he avoids his past. “No one is born eight years old,” he tells Leo. “But you live as if without history, as if you throw no shadow behind you.”

I, too, have always avoided my history. But I don’t feel able to look away anymore. It will be on my mind when I go see *Leopoldstadt* at the Shakespeare in December. At the end, as they read off the names and fates of all the characters, I expect to be in tears along with everyone else. But in my head, I’ll be hearing the names of my own dead relatives:

Agathe Koblitiz
Rudolf Koblitiz
Hermine Brunner

The full list would go on and on, a procession of Brunners and Koblitizes who—like the fictional Merzes—were sent to their deaths only because they were Austrians who happened to be Jewish. Their names are now inscribed on Vienna’s Shoah Wall of Names Memorial. They’re my grandparents’ siblings and parents, their uncles and aunts, their nieces and nephews and cousins. These people I never met aren’t actually strangers, I now understand. They belong to me. They’re my family. My identity. My shadow.

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long time ago, my family had a backyard pool. I would waddle toward the water, a curious and determined toddler, unaware that I didn't know how to swim. Unfailingly, our dog—a high-strung collie/Australian shepherd named Sheila, a dead ringer for TV's Lassie—would swoop in and knock me flat on my butt, averting potential disaster. Years later, when I was a teen, Sheila would still bark like the house was on fire every time I took a dip.

Looking back, I can't blame her. She was only doing her job.

Humans and dogs have been laboring together for thousands of years, and scientists believe that many of the canine qualities we love are rooted in generations of purposeful breeding for particular tasks. Dogs have herded our livestock, guarded our property, hauled our sleds, helped us hunt. We've taken them to war (as far back as a battle in what is now Turkey, circa 600 BCE) and to outer space (a Russian dog, Laika, was the first animal to orbit the Earth).

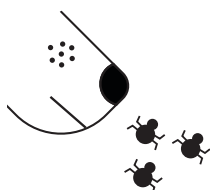
Today, many dogs enjoy lives of domestic companionship: Belly rubs and playing fetch is their job. But others are still hard at work. Three years ago, the federal government employed about 5,600 dogs in roles ranging from detecting bioweapons and nuclear material to helping rangers traverse Denali National Park in winter. In Washington, working dogs are sniffing for bedbugs, helping wounded veterans live fuller lives, keeping the National Mall free of pesky geese, and otherwise getting the job done. Here are a few of their stories.

—PATRICK HRUBY



Ellie wears shoes on the job so as not to track dirt into clients' homes.

THE BEDBUG SNIFFER



ELLIE
German shepherd,
almost 2

AFTER ABOUT A YEAR and a half of training, Ellie is at the beginning of her career. A few months back, she saw her first client, a woman in DC who was still getting bedbug bites, even after her apartment was chemically

treated three times.

Bonita Parker, owner of Potomac Working Dogs, led Ellie around the apartment. She hit on the scent in a closet, pointing to several infested bags of clothes. Ellie also hit on a suitcase, and a light bulb went off for the client: This might be the source of the infestation, since she'd traveled with it right before the bites began.

Such is the advantage, Parker says, of hiring a dog like Ellie. Compared with a typical pest-control company, she can better help determine the scale and location of the problem, thereby allowing the subsequent treatment

to be targeted. Parker and Ellie take this work very seriously; Ellie trained with a man who teaches military dogs to hunt for explosives. "He is very much about precision, because in explosive detection, there is really no room for error," Parker says.

Still, Ellie remains a playful adolescent—during a Zoom call, Parker tried to coax her into her lap, then settled her dog on the floor with a treat. "She has a great on/off switch," Parker says. "She's like, 'I'm in my play mode. I'm gonna do all the puppy things.' And then it's like, 'Oh, I'm working.' It's a complete personality change."

THE THERAPIST



CAPTAIN ELLIE MAE Golden retriever, 6

DESPITE HER BADASS camo vest, honorary Navy captain Ellie Mae hasn't seen combat. As much as a dog can, though, she understands the toll of war on the human body and psyche. Specially bred and trained, she's hypersensitive to the needs of veterans and injured servicemembers—a perfect fit for

the therapy-dog program at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where she and seven other dogs roam the halls with a team of handlers.

While Ellie Mae can care for patients with mobility issues by opening doors and retrieving fallen objects from the floor, much of her work is emotional: Have you ever felt the rush of serotonin when a big, fluffy dog leans loving-

ly against your legs? "Her skill is love," says Amy O'Connor, who heads the therapy-dog program. "That's her superpower."

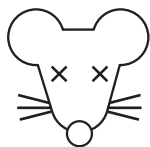
Walter Reed isn't just for Presidents and wounded warriors. Military family members are treated here, too. Ellie Mae spends a lot of time in the pediatric oncology ward, where the cartoons and patterns painted on the walls can lift spirits only so

much. She's often the dog of choice for kids going through chemo and other taxing treatments, because she pours on the affection, clambering into bed with them. In the hospital's halls, passing families will often call to her by name. "They don't know us half the time," says Patty Barry, Ellie Mae's dog mom and the program's business manager. "But they certainly know her."

For her efforts, Ellie Mae is paid in belly rubs and "nonstop treats," says one of her handlers.



THE RAT HUNTERS



THEY CALL THEM- selves the Renegade Rebel Ratters, and on a Saturday night in October, they gather in Adams Morgan to do what they do best: hunt rats. “The dogs like doing it, and we like doing it,” says group cofounder Bomani Mtume as his cairn terrier, Barto, readies himself for battle by looking, well, adorable. Mtume and Barto have hunted rats all over DC, but in the past year and

a half, they’ve made this their favorite haunt after striking a deal with the local business district: free parking for a night of hunting.

There’s a rich history of dogs hunting rats—a similar New York City group first formed in the mid-1990s. But the need has never been greater in DC, recently named the nation’s “rattiest” city. Mtume helps organize hunts in which different

dogs play different roles. “Push” dogs go into tight spaces, such as behind dumpsters, to flush rats out of hiding. “Catch” dogs, like Barto, are “genetically hardwired to hunt vermin,” Mtume says. “All they want to do is kill rats.” Then there are “lurchers”—bigger and faster dogs who mop up the rats that escape.

The dogs shake the rats violently by the neck. Groups such as

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and DC’s Humane Rescue Alliance have criticized this practice. The dogs’ owners counter that death via canine happens within seconds, whereas rat poison used by exterminators causes internal bleeding and organ failure that can last as long as two weeks.

The dogs have never gotten sick, Mtume says, though they do



LEFT TO
RIGHT:

CHOIR BOY
Staghound,
whippet, and
pit-bull mix, 2

MIKE
Smooth fox
terrier, 4

BARTO
Cairn
terrier, 3

PEBBLES
Patterdale and
American pit-bull
terrier mix, 2

JUNIOR
Patterdale
terrier, 1½

suffer occasional bites. At 10 PM, the hunt begins behind a pair of green dumpsters and loops through the alleyways behind 18th Street. When it ends around midnight, the group has caught 29 rats, short of their record of 47. Along the way, a passing reveler voices his approval. "Thank you for your service," he says. "Can I get a picture with the dogs?"



R.J. Reeves, Bomani Mtume, and Jordan Savoy on the hunt with Choir Boy, Barto, and Pebbles

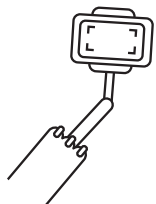


Mtume (with Barto) and Webb Moncure (with Mike) check dumpsters for rats.



Choir Boy and Pebbles dispatch a rat.

THE INFLUENCERS



ELLIE AND EMMA Golden retrievers, 8 and 2

INSPIRED BY HIS experience with a smile-spreading dog while deployed in Afghanistan, Kevin Bubolz got Ellie and decided to train her as a therapy dog, visiting hospitals and veterans. When the pandemic kept her out of those settings, Bubolz moved online, expanding Ellie's paw

print across the digital world. Emma joined the family two years later, following her older sister into a therapy and social-media career.

Today, the duo have 2.8 million followers on Instagram and 7.1 million on TikTok (@elliegoldenlife on both), where their extreme cuteness (donning bandannas! snuggling with sick children!) has earned them worldwide recognition. They've also

scored paid brand deals with companies such as Target, Starbucks, and Yeti—though their real reward is fruit (Emma) or a good cut of meat (Ellie). “They know when we’re about to film—they just go nuts for it,” says Bubolz.

Ellie and Emma remain working therapy dogs, and once a week they have a day dedicated to philanthropy. The pair visit Children's National every other

week and have also stopped by the Pentagon and military bases across the world to snuggle servicemembers. Their signature move? When asked, “Could you hug your sister?” Emma will pop up and wrap her arms around Ellie with a grin. “A lot of people take photos, so it's like, how can we add a little surprise?” Bubolz says. “You get this candid response from people. It's really unique.”

Ellie (left) and Emma have a worldwide following.





Carol Baillie rides the Metro to her office—where Norm has a bed and a ball for playing fetch.

THE SERVICE DOG



NORM Labrador retriever, almost 5

YEARS OF RESPONDING to hurricanes, oil spills—including the Deepwater Horizon explosion—and other disasters as a Coast Guard member left Carole Baillie with an injured foot and posttraumatic stress disorder. She struggled with physical balance, depression, and anxiety that produced cold sweats.

Then Baillie con-

nected with Hero Dogs, a Maryland nonprofit that places service dogs with veterans and disabled first responders. During her initial visit, Baillie met with staff to discuss her needs. “All I saw was giant paws,” she says. “That was Norm.”

The two are now inseparable. When Baillie is anxious, Norm will nudge his nose against her leg, place a paw over her foot, or lay his head on her chest to soothe her nerves and

remind her to breathe deeply. If Baillie drops a debit card at the grocery store, he’ll pick it up. If Baillie’s drop foot causes her to fall, he’ll position himself as a support to help her get up.

Norm went to class with Baillie at George Washington University—and was by her side when she received her master’s in environmental-resource policy. He’s traveled to California, Illinois, Texas, and Ha-

waii, folding himself under Baillie’s legs during flights. He’s visited congressional offices as she’s advocated for veterans and is popular at the Environmental Protection Agency’s downtown headquarters, where Baillie works. “Norm has been life-changing,” she says. “He grounds me and keeps me sane. I appreciate things more, and I keep putting one foot in front of the other, all because of him.”

THE GOOSE CHASER



COWBOY Border collie, 10

EVER NOTICE A SUSPICIOUS lack of geese near the Washington Monument? Thank Cowboy and his three collie colleagues at Capital Goose Control. Hired by the National Park Service to patrol the area between the monument and the

Lincoln Memorial, each dog also visits about two dozen other sites a day, including parks and golf courses in DC and Virginia.

Athletic and highly intelligent, border collies thrive with jobs—prior to his goose-chasing career, Cowboy herded sheep, learning the basics of controlling and cor-

ralling other animals. His most important skill? “The eye,” which Capital Goose Control owner Doug Marcks says is the quintessential method for intimidating geese. Combining a hypnotic, wolf-like glare with low-to-the-ground stalking, Cowboy is able to make geese *think* they’re in danger,

prompting them to leave an area without being touched—a removal technique approved as humane by the USDA Wildlife Services and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

To succeed, goose dogs need the right temperament—if they’re quick to nip perceived prey, they

To convince geese they’d be better off elsewhere, Cowboy and his canine colleagues visit sites like the National Mall several times a day.



could risk causing harm. Lucky for the birds, Marcks says, Cowboy is friendly, gentle, and on his best behavior at work—keeping the National Mall free of geese, as well as the smelly stuff they tend to leave behind.

Once a rescue dog, Nadine has been on the job seven years and commands \$75 an hour—plus treats such as bacon and hot dogs.



THE TRUFFLE SNIFFER



NADINE
Redbone
coonhound, 13

STRAINING AT THE leash attached to a harness embroidered with her name, Nadine beelines through the neat rows of English oak at a local orchard. She circles a tree, nose to the ground. Suddenly, she stops and begins pawing, throwing up dead leaves and clumps of moss.

Nadine's handler eases her away, rewards her with a treat, and reaches into the hole, unearthing a bumpy, golf-ball-size sphere covered in dirt. It's a Périgord black truffle, worth \$800 to \$1,200 a pound. For seven years, Nadine has been hunting these rare fungi at Virginia Truffles, a truffière (truffle farm) in Rixeyville, Virginia, seven miles north of Culpeper. Because truffles grow underground, Nadine's keen sense of smell is required to determine where they're growing and when they're ripe enough to gather.

To train for her work, Nadine first spent a few days learning truffles'

scent. Next, she had to find hidden tea infusers containing truffles while ignoring empty ones. Finally, she had to ferret out truffles buried by her trainers—only then was she ready for live hunts like this one, which produces a few more Périgords and lasts just an hour or so. "You don't want to overwork a truffle dog," says Vanessa Shea, the truffière's operations manager, "because they will either lose interest, get overly tired, or get cold. So after they harvest, you give them all the couch time, porch time, and nap time they want."

W

Scattered, fatigued, and bingeing on screen time to cope, the author
needed an escape from the relentless demands of life.
Would two days of solitude at a Brookland hermitage help her reconnect
with herself—and find some elusive peace?

Alone Time

By Sylvie McNamara
Illustrations by Sally Deng





At the beginning of September, I found myself on the back-acreage of a magnificent church— among oak trees and shrines and grottoes and birds—completely alone with my thoughts.

The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America is home to a busy hive of Catholic friars, but I never met them. I was there spending 46 hours as a hermit, a person living in solitude, contemplating the mysteries of God.

I am not a religious person. I don't pray. I'd come to this hilltop in Brookland not to grow closer to my faith, but to myself—to hear myself think, to be alone inside my own mind. I currently share a 1,000-square-foot apartment with an adult man, our chatty son, and a half-blind elderly dog. Everywhere is clanging pans and dinging phones. The dog whines, my son makes odd Darth Vader noises from the kitchen. There are only three rooms, and not one

of them is properly mine; there's nowhere I can go and shut the door.

When I'm reasonably well, I can spend limitless time on my own. But these days, my mind is not the kind of room I want to dwell in; no interesting thought has crossed its threshold in months. Instead, in rare contemplative moments, I feel dread. My mortgage is burdensome, my marriage strained. I have a chaotic extended family, many of whom seem poised to fall off the face of the Earth. The bills don't stop coming and neither do the emails from my son's school. It's shredding my consciousness. I'm scattered and fatigued.

In response, my screen time has ballooned. There I am, night after night,

Googling things I'm not curious about, scrolling various feeds, hoping something stimulating will appear. I've tried to fix it—with therapy, sobriety, exercise, Klonopin. Microdosing psychedelics. Burying myself in work. But intuitively, I figured I just needed some time alone. In solitude, I could offer myself up to the rapacious birds of my thoughts, and maybe, once picked clean, I'd have some peace.

Hence the hermitage: a 350-square-foot cottage overlooking a hillside behind the church, open to the quiet-seeking public for \$120 a night. I walked there from the Brookland Metro, passed through a gate, and suddenly all was bucolic: a small cemetery of white marble crosses, manicured gardens, outbuildings with peeling paint. Inside, the hermitage felt austere—a bed and a desk atop blond-hardwood floors, big windows that looked out onto the woods. The church did not provide internet. It was my choice to turn off my phone.

Those initial moments felt strange, unsettled. In a rocking chair on the porch, I forced myself to be present—to notice the breeze heaving through the stands of spindly maples, which sounded like snow on the television, like a faucet running in another room. But I struggled to sit still. Within hours, I was constructing to-do lists (things to Google, people to call), then inventing errands I could run—my idle brain creating stimulus in the form of chores.

And wasn't this, the slog of daily life, exactly what I'd come to escape? Explicitly, yes; I wanted distance—from my family, from work, from the cascade of relentless demands—but beneath that, I was scared. Perhaps that's why, at 5:28 PM on that first afternoon, I felt a pressing compulsion to text—not even to converse, just to hurl a few missives into the atmosphere, to jostle the people I love, to insert myself into the stream of their lives.

In my notebook, I tried to make sense of that feeling. "It's a type of loneliness," I wrote, "not hunger for social interaction, but for the safety and comfort of being woven into the world." I was afraid to step outside the rhythms of my family—that not being needed, I might cease, in some odd way, to exist.

My hermit experiment seemed precarious, given the ease with which I could turn on my phone. So I decided to clarify

some goals. In my notebook, I recorded them: “To be free of technology. To sit with myself. To deepen my attention and attend to sensory experience. To push through fear and discomfort and boredom. To notice things. To orient myself back towards ecstatic experiences of the world.”

I roved the grounds for hours, preoccupied with the state of my life. My existence is strewn with gifts: laughing with my son, the sunrise gleaming through the houseplants. But without a noticing mind, I don't feel present to receive them.



For a few months when I was 18, I slept in a tent on the lawn of a stranger, an Egyptian man who'd made money on

Wall Street, then moved to a hillside in LA. I'd found him online, in a database of organic gardeners. He needed help with the permaculture farm in his yard. I didn't go to have an enraptured experience of solitude; I was underemployed and on an indefinite hiatus from college, so it seemed like a reasonable idea.

I flew to California without a laptop. My phone, the prepaid kind that charged ten cents per text, sat idle at the bottom of my bag. I had some friends, I

saw them sometimes, but mostly I read books from the library and wandered the streets by myself. It never felt lonely, moving silently alongside other lives: the owner of the cluttered used-book store watching John Wayne movies behind stacks of dusty novels. The boy in the cheap arcade thumbing the mouths of machines for coins while his dad shot aliens in the dark.

I noticed things in LA. Devoid of the usual input—the chatter, the feeds—the farm was like a juice fast for my brain. My mind clarified, refocused. The ordinary texture of the world seemed to glow. In a marbled composition book, I described whatever felt meaningful: the shape of the terra-cotta tiles on the roof next door (little arches, dried in antiquity on Italian women's legs), the way the lemons in the orchard gleamed pale at dusk, and the puffed neck of a particularly fat pigeon, which rippled like a bare thigh as it walked.

For those months, perception felt alchemical—the world slipped into me, as through a prism, and refracted into ideas, which all seemed connected and alive. “Having a noticing relationship to things” is a phrase I use to describe that quality of attention—of being awake to sensory experience, of finding a sacredness in the world by which everything radiates meaning. It's secular but numinous, a little like proximity to God.

There's a Richard Wilbur poem about this—about seeing laundry on a line, furling and billowing in the wind, and mistaking it for angels. Or not mistaking it, exactly; to the poem's speaker, the angels are literally there, the morning air “awash” with them. It's a poem about how the divine infuses the ordinary, even when we can't see it. In the end, the linen has been pulled from the line and placed onto the backs of thieves, invisible traces of God mingled in the workaday world.

A small-town poetry professor in Na-



bokov's *Pale Fire* makes a similar point in inverted terms. He declares, essentially, that he'd skip the afterlife unless various quotidian things—the marks snails leave on flagstones, “the claret taillight of that dwindling plane”—are found there. I'm moved by that notion: that the world, not heaven, is what's sacred. That whatever the rewards of eternal life, they couldn't possibly compare to the beauty of an airplane taillight as it descends towards the earth.

I used to experience my life that way—as ecstatic and brimming: angels in the laundry, the claret taillights of dwindling planes—but not lately. This feeling has dimmed. The leakage of the world's radiance corresponds to my diminished time alone, and also to my phone—its frictionless glide into oblivion, into games and apps and the infinite scroll. A friend once described this as “the infosphere polluting the psychosphere.” In LA, my psychosphere was crystalline, pristine. Now it's sludgy and dank.

At the hermitage, I hoped to recapture the noticing. It didn't immediately come. That first night, I sat on the porch for probably an hour, watching the moon amble across the sky, clutching a mug of tea to my stomach, entertaining miscellaneous thoughts—about my brother's illness, the man smoking behind the church in a cone of fluorescent light, the craggy stone paths behind my high school, a friend I hadn't talked to in years. With sudden violence, a tree branch fell, cracking and crashing to the ground. I felt neither bored nor engaged.



On the porch the next morning, I opened a notebook from 2013, the fall I went back to college after some bleak years of drifting around. There are class notes, architectural drawings, then a short list of personal goals. First, to use the internet



only when unavoidable. Second, no texting unless I actually have something to say. They're so persistent, these twinned anxieties: lacking solitude and using too much tech.

Throughout the morning, I moved the rocker desperately around the porch, chased into slivers of shade, perusing that notebook. Mingled between to-do lists and study schedules, I'd written extensively about solitude; after years of self-estrangement, of drinking my way through grim jobs, I thought it would heal my brain. “Respect for myself comes from spending time alone and becoming deeply engaged with my own mind,” I wrote. Or: “This week, I'm not interested in performing my personality for acquaintances. I want to be by myself.”

Back then, I described my brain as a “half-dead lump of fat-congealed matter that mostly lies inert.” I feel that now, too. My attention lurches and frays,

pulled between dough-crusted spoons in the sink, the dog vomiting on the rug, the millionth fight about homework, a backpack spilling onto the floor. Atop that unremarkable grind is a smog of baroque familial crises, whose contours would be unkind to publicly describe. But the combination has left me saturated, closed off to people and things. Every stimulus—my son requesting a carrot, a call for volunteers at his school—has come to feel like an assault. I've become fortified against strife, but also walled off from joy.

My second day at the hermitage, I roved the grounds for hours, preoccupied with the state of my life—how I don't recognize the person I am at home (sullen, distracted), but because of my responsibilities, I can't step away to quiet my mind. My existence is strewn with gifts: laughing with my son, the sunrise gleaming through the houseplants. But

without a noticing mind, I don't feel present to receive them. My life radiates—I recognize that it does—but I seem to be locked out of its warmth.

That new Miranda July book, *All Fours*, is basically about a hermitage. The narrator receives a surprise check for 20 grand, plans a vacation from her family, blows the money redecorating a motel room to her precise and whimsical specifications, then holes up there for weeks. She didn't feel right within her life, so she created another one—solitary and idiosyncratic, unencumbered by the domestic script. At her hermit motel, she allows herself to sink into her desires, and one of them is to return to her child, to be back inside their shared life. Her family is meaningful. Existing within it makes her less herself.

By early evening, I'd whipped myself into a frenzy over this dilemma, so anxious that I almost took a pill. But pharmaceutical calm seemed at odds with my hermit aspirations, an off-ramp from my unruliest thoughts. Instead, I went for a run. I passed through the church gardens—palms, rosebushes, winding flagstone paths—and into the neighborhood with its fig trees and wrap-around porches, shady yards that tumble into ravines.

For half an hour, I ran loops around the streets, struggling up and down hills that undulated every couple of blocks.

I didn't actually want to be a hermit, to abandon my obligations and leave all of that behind. I wanted to be open to my life, not protected from it. I wanted to feel immersed.

There were chattering crows. Tall oaks. The gold sunset lying thick and then wearily across lawns. A child's poem taped to a daycare door ("Pour on lotion, rub it in / Perfect for my summer skin"). Rails strung with lanterns. Fire pits and patio chairs. A fenced park with an angel statue, stark and white in the dusk.

Somehow, I got lost. Without a phone, I trawled the neighborhood for anything familiar. It was the commuting hour:

People walked dogs, watered small patches of lawn, and pushed strollers while toddlers ran madly ahead. It was jarring, actually, how beautiful this felt—people enmeshed in their days, sweating through poly-blend suits while lugging a briefcase up their front steps.

All these lives, I understood, were mirrors of my own. These were people raising their families, negotiating schedules and hardships and griefs. From the inside, it's relentless. Was it false to find it gorgeous from afar? Does the radiance appear only from a distance? What, in each day of my life, was I failing to see?



The next morning—my last—I brought a cup of green tea to the orchard, tracing a cracked path, ramshackle and overgrown, through the dark valley behind the church. As I walked, my reentry loomed. It seemed remarkable, all the things I wasn't curious about: Instagram, news, email, Slack. Those leeches on my attention, devouring my wak-

ing life. What I actually wondered was what my family was up to, what my friends were thinking about, and how my sister's camping trip had gone. It's irrepressible, this theme in my life: the need for intimacy, the need for solitude, and the perpetual conflict between them.

In my old notebooks, the richest parts are about people: things that happened to friends, new thoughts they enabled

me to think, provocations that settled into me like a toothache, bothering me, while I played with them for days with my tongue. Constantly, people say vulnerable, revelatory things. I didn't actually want to be a hermit, to abandon my obligations and leave all of that behind. I wanted to be open to my life, not protected from it. I wanted to feel immersed.

At the hermitage, I had not fallen back in love with the world. I'd hardly even seen it; I'd been ruminating more than noticing, indulging this tedious fixation on the state of my brain. "Letting my mind spin in isolation is only good when the fodder is good," I'd written the night before. "But if you're living well, the fodder is always good. Life is always sufficiently rich." I had not been living well, and the hermitage—a single dose of concentrated isolation—couldn't fix it. "It's like tuning an antenna," I wrote in my notes. "If I'm not regularly by myself, the reception grows poor, and the pathos of things floats into the atmosphere, unremarked."

But by that last morning, I'd been tuning for days. I'd grown bored with my neuroses. I'd exhausted myself. There was a moment, walking to the orchard, when I felt my eyeballs turn outwards and my mind unclench. Out in the field by the orchard, a hawk flapped across the sky and tucked itself into an evergreen tree. A tendril of black landscaping fabric rose from the ground like a snake. I gulped the air. The tang of grass hit my throat, vegetal and earthy. Everywhere, the consecrating light.

Towards the rising sun, grapes grew over a chain-link fence, sheer fabric draped around them, protecting them from pests. The sunrise swept long, angular shadows onto the grass. And then it happened—I felt astonished, pierced. Here, like in the laundry poem, was an angel: White fabric hung over cascading bundles of grapes, lit and shining, as if the fruit were luminescent itself.

Describing it seems to demand a religious vocabulary: "sacred," "ecstatic," "miracle," "grace." But really, I was only seeing, experiencing the world as it is. **W**

Staff writer Sylvie McNamara is at smcnamara@washingtonian.com.



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Paella

SPANISH GETAWAY

Even if you know how to make paella, you may not have a two-foot-wide Valencian paella pan at home. But chef **Gustavo Huapalla** does, and he breaks it out to demonstrate the proper technique for the classic Spanish dish in his Shaw backyard. For larger classes, Huapalla moves to the Latin food hall La Cosecha near Union Market. The paella class, “Flavors of Spain,” costs \$115; hands-on courses in Peruvian, Chilean, and Argentine cuisines go up to \$135 a person. *Location shared after sign-up; chef-gustavo.com.*

Cooking Skills

DISASSEMBLY REQUIRED

The spiffy industrial kitchen at **Mess Hall** in Edgewood is a culinary incubator where rising chefs can launch restaurants of their own. It’s also a place where aspiring chefs—and everyone else—can learn serious skills such as breaking down a whole 180-pound tuna into sashimi, preparing pufferfish sushi, and understanding vermouth and sake. One recent highlight: a lamb-butcher class with Maydan chef Rose Preville. Most classes include dinner or a take-home component and cost \$75 to \$90. 703 Edgewood St., NE; messhalldc.com.

International Cuisines

WORLD CAPITAL

The **Hill Center** at the Old Naval Hospital offers an international slate of cooking classes. This winter,

offerings include basic knife skills, a course centered on duck gumbo, and a Filipino-inspired class from chefs Paolo Dungca and Pichet Ong. Students can also learn how to make dumplings, macarons, and pasta. Classes cost \$49 to \$150. 921 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; hillcenterdc.org.

Cooking Skills

SERIOUS EATS

Take classes in kitchen skills at **Skillette**, a cooking program in La Cosecha market. The lineup of instructors includes chefs such as Rachel Bindel (of the restaurants Gravitas and Michele’s) and

Emily Horn (pastry chef at Blair House, the President’s guest quarters), among others. Each month features four different lessons—though you can pick and choose which to attend—as well as seasonal recipes, such as chilled soups in summer and hearty braises in fall. Classes are \$50 each, or you

Skillette classes are designed to teach different techniques, depending on the season.



can sign up for a four-class series for \$185. *1280 Fourth St., NE; skillettecooking.com.*

Italian Cuisine

THAT'S AMORE

Many of chef Daniele Catalani's classes at **Toscana Market** in La Cosecha focus on regions or cities in Italy: Tuscany (tortelli and pici pasta with wild-boar ragù), Sicily (branzino, spaghetti alle vongole, and cannoli), and Torino (taglierini with white truffles). Others are hands-on crash courses in a single artisanal item such as burrata, limoncello, or everyone's favorite Roman dish, cacio e pepe. Classes are \$120. *1280 Fourth St., NE; toscana-market.com.*

Cheese

GOUDA NEWS

You don't need any special knowledge to love cheese, but **Each Peach**, the gourmet corner store in Mount Pleasant, helps you appreciate its many regional forms as well as figure out the right wine pairings. Each Peach hosts the event about once a month at neighboring cookbook shop Bold Fork Books. In January, a \$75 après-ski-themed lesson will pair Alpine cheeses and wine. The shop also offers customized private classes. *3068 Mount Pleasant St., NW; eachpeachmarket.com.*

Cooking Skills

BACK TO SCHOOL

Classes at **Cookology** are more immersive than the typical lesson—and the next-best thing to culinary school. The Ballston kitchen offers hands-on classes for

all ages, including half-day, all-day, and multi-day cooking camps for kids five to 17. (There are also occasional kid-friendly options such as pizza making and gingerbread decorating.) For grownups, there's continuing education: a six-week boot camp (\$900) in which you learn essentials such as knife skills and fine French recipes. A single class starts at \$79. *4248 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; cookologyonline.com.*

Pasta

GET SAUCY

Learn to fold delicate capelletti and knead dough for hearty gnocchi at **Osteria Morini** in Navy Yard, where executive chef Kris Jimenez holds pasta-making sessions each month. Lessons are accompanied by mimosas and a three-course pasta meal. At the end, take home your eggy, deep-yellow noodles for a future meal. The course is \$125 a person. *301 Water St., SE; osteriamorini.com.*

Cake Decorating

SWEET ESCAPE

Have you found your way onto CakeTok, scrolling through videos of pros decorating desserts? Go from spectator to student at **Fran's Cake and Candy Supplies** in Fairfax, where lessons every weekend cover topics such as fondant and piping. "Introduction to Cake Decorating" is \$120; specialty workshops, such as one on TikTok-worthy geode cakes, can run up to \$185. *10927 Main St., Fairfax; franscakeandcandy.com.*



WHAT I LEARNED

Wheel of Fortune

DANNIA HAKKI, 39

COFOUNDER AND CEO OF PUBLIC-RELATIONS FIRM MOKI MEDIA

SKILL: POTTERY

Going to some amazing DC schools was the introduction I had to pottery. I did pottery in college as well, and then took an eight-year break. My best friend told me her cousin had joined a DC pottery class. At the time, I was kind of down—I had just ended a relationship, my job was so intense. Her cousin went to this place called Hinckley Pottery, and there happened to be an opening in their Monday-night class. Nine years later, I'm still in the Monday class.

"When you're centering the clay, you're centering yourself. I can't touch my phone because my hands are covered in wet clay, and that's a beautiful physical wall created. When you have a fast-paced job where you're answering a ton of emails and you're staring at the screen, stepping into a place where you start using your hands to mold something—and that's where all of your focus goes—is incredibly therapeutic and relaxing."

"Every time somebody has a wedding, I make them serving bowls, and on the bottom I put their names so it feels really special. I think about those eight years where I didn't do pottery, about how much work I missed out on making. I should have jumped back in way earlier."

Hinckley Pottery offers weekly wheel classes for all levels. Two-month minimum enrollment, at \$215 a month. 3132 Blues Alley, NW; hinckleypottery.com.



GROWING SEASON

ULRICH BOSER, A DC EDUCATION RESEARCHER AND THE AUTHOR OF *LEARN BETTER*, SHARES TIPS



Embrace the Uphill Climb

For many adults, learning something new starts as a search for a fun hobby, which means we expect it to be, well, fun. But according to Boser, if you're not a little uncomfortable, the lessons might be less productive. "Some type of struggle tends to benefit your learning," he says. Leveling up the difficulty forces you to develop new abilities, and a little challenge helps an experience stand out in your mind.



Experiment With Different Strategies

It's the same idea from our school days—that to make something really stick, you can't rely just on memorization. Boser uses the piano as an example: Rather than rehearsing the same song over and over until it's perfect, you'll benefit from your practice more if you alternate among different pieces. It's the difference between passively knowing the right notes and understanding how they work in tandem. Another solid method is to teach what you're learning to someone else, in turn breaking it down for yourself.



Don't Box Yourself Into One Method

According to Boser, one of the most enduring fallacies is that some people learn better in a single specific way. However, the idea of being an auditory, kinesthetic, or visual learner is considered a myth among education experts. Boser says the best kind of learning depends more on the skill than on the person. After all, you wouldn't listen to a soccer podcast to master dribbling, even if you're someone who prefers absorbing information through listening.

All the World's a Stage

POLISH YOUR CRAFT AS A PERFORMER

Shakespeare

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Pay homage to the Bard during classes led by **Shakespeare Theatre Company** in its Capitol Hill rehearsal space. Whether you imagine yourself a Macbeth or a Juliet, you can master monologues in a course that ends with a performance for friends and family. The eight-week course is \$299. *516 Eighth St., SE; shakespearetheatre.org.*

Comedy

PLAY FOR LAUGHS

Grab a mic at the **DC Improv Comedy School** and start practicing your punchlines. The intro standup class (\$450) breaks down how to write and deliver jokes, and students finish with a "tight five" set. You can also sign up for sketch or improv lessons. One-day workshops start at \$70, six-week sessions

at \$295. *1140 Connecticut Ave., NW; dcimprov.com.*

Instruments

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

Jack Black won't be your teacher, but it's never too late to live out your rock-star dreams by learning to play guitar, bass, keyboard, or drums at **School of Rock**. A program places students in a band, with one private lesson and one group jam a week, culminating in a live performance. Prices vary by course. *Multiple area locations; schoolofrock.com.*

Improv

YES, AND...

Think on your feet during classes at **Washington Improv Theater**. Five levels of instruction range from



Washington Improv teaches you how to act on the spot.

TOP LEFT PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM RIGHT BY JOHN WINDMUELLER



School of Rock brings together budding musicians to perform in a band.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SCHOOL OF ROCK; ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLAIRE MCCrackEN

“Foundations of Improv” to “The Harold,” named for a classic storytelling technique. Sessions run eight weeks, with a showcase at the end to flaunt your new skills. Each session is \$350. *Locations vary; witdc.org.*

Singing

ON A HIGH NOTE

Belt your heart out at **Levine Music**, which offers voice lessons at studios

across the region. Sessions (starting at \$65) are one-on-one, and you set the focus, whether that’s finding your voice or refining your technique. Instructors have experience in opera, choir, and orchestra. *Six area locations; levinemusic.org.*

Acting

BREAK A LEG

The **Theatre Lab** offers a wide range of acting courses, from two-hour drop-in classes covering the basics (\$50) to multi-week sessions on specific topics (starting at \$310). Courses include scene study, video-game voice acting, the Meisner Technique, and more. *900 Massachusetts Ave., NW; theatrelab.org.*

LEARN HOW NOW

Shuck an Oyster

Known as the “Oyster Ninja,” nationally ranked shucker Gardner Douglas operates the mobile bivalve bar S.S. Shucking.



1

Begin by rinsing your chilled oyster to ensure that no dirt is caught inside. Wearing gloves, hold the oyster with a towel.



2

Insert a sturdy oyster knife that won’t break or bend through the back of the bivalve between the two shells. Turn it “like a doorknob,” Douglas says, until the top shell disconnects.



3

Once the two halves separate, slide the knife along the shell to sever the adductor muscle, the only part of the oyster connected to the shell.

Budding Prospects

PLANT SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE WITH THESE FLORA-FOCUSED CLASSES

Flower Arranging

PETAL POWER

Turn stems into floral masterpieces with guidance from the pros. At the Eckington flower shop **She Loves Me**, instructor Makenzie Delmotte and owner Holley Simmons teach an hourlong class (\$95), spilling industry secrets on bouquet design and maintenance. In Chantilly, **Metro Flower Market** has classes (starting at \$89) in building arrangements with specific blooms such as roses, plus seasonal courses on Thanksgiving-chic centerpieces and holiday wreaths. 1550 Harry Thomas Way, NE, shelovesme.com; 4151 Lafayette Center Dr., Chantilly, metroflowermarket.com.

Herbalism

HEALING LEAVES

Four times a year, herbalist Holly Poole-Kavana leads a free class on the medicinal properties of plants at

Common Good City Farm in LeDroit Park. She often starts with a walk through the farm to identify flora before students put the knowledge into practice, sometimes processing fresh and dried plants into tinctures, honey, or tea. Past courses have centered on calming herbs and digestive bitters. 300 V St., NW; commongoodcityfarm.org.

Orchid Care

GET TO THE ROOT

Orchids are notorious for being complicated to maintain, but according to Lily Cox, cofounder of the plant shop **Rewild**, they're more intimidating in reputation than in reality. Tame orchid anxiety during a \$60 workshop that teaches you about watering, lighting, and life cycles for common varieties. 1924 Eighth St., NW; 700 N. Randolph St., Arlington; 232 Seventh St., SE; 7937 Tuckerman Ln., North Bethesda; rewilddc.com.

She Loves Me can teach you how to turn flowers into art.



WHAT I LEARNED

Pedal to the Metal

MATTHEW GREEN, 37

COFOUNDER AND LEAD CAPTAIN OF DISTRICT RUNNING COLLECTIVE

SKILL: MOTORCYCLE BUILDING

In the pandemic, I was really interested in cafe racers [motorcycles that are stripped down and modified]. I had been looking

at YouTube videos and Instagram. I didn't know much of anything about bikes. I just got inspired, and then I bought a 1978 Honda CB 550 motorcycle. I had to get my friend that rides to go with me to pick it up because I didn't know how to ride. It was all original, but what I wanted to do was chop it and make it into a cafe racer.

"It's a whole other world I didn't know existed. There used to be a motorcycle shop in Ivy City called Dunn Lewis. It was a DIY bike shop. The owners were really hands-on to try to help you configure it.

"I learned how to do wiring from YouTube, to use different tools to cut the metal and fabricate pieces. It was an unreal experience, having a vision to being able to do it.

"It's a tight-knit community, and the way people share resources and knowledge, it's just such an easy thing. And yes, I know how to ride now."

PowerRide University offers a beginner course for driving two-wheel motorcycles, starting at \$359. Multiple Virginia and Maryland locations; powerrideuniversity.com.

THIS PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN NWOSU PHOTOGRAPHY; TOP RIGHT BY MAGDALENA PAPAIOANNOU; OPPOSITE PAGE, COURTESY OF DILL DINKERS

Active Learning

TAKE RECREATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH GUIDED TRAININGS AND SPORTY CLASSES

Pickleball

DINK RESPONSIBLY

Finally ready to find out what the pickleball craze is about? Take a swing at it during a group class or clinic for newbies at **Dill Dinkers**. A Professional Pickleball Registry-certified instructor covers the basics, including footwork and serves. Paddles and balls are available for loan. Classes range from \$25 to \$30; clinics are \$54. 4942 Boiling Brook Pkwy., North Bethesda; 40-C Southlawn Ct., Rockville; 8300 Sudley Rd., Manassas; dilldinkers.com.

Scuba Diving

DEEP STATE

Maybe you're an aspiring underwater adventurer who's always wanted to explore the ocean. A scuba-diving certification course at **SPE Dive School** in Chevy Chase can push you one step closer. The process starts in a classroom before getting your fins wet, with seven hours of confined water training in the indoor pool and four open-water dives. The course is \$495, plus the cost of materials and gear. 4601 N. Park Ave., Chevy Chase; scubaedu.com.

Running

THE AMAZING RACE

Shave some minutes off your personal best with training sessions led by **Reston Runners**. The group holds a 12-week training program (the next starts February 1) in which coaches run targeted workouts and share tips on form, pacing, and endurance, in preparation for the Run through Reston Half-Marathon and 5K in April. The group is open to newbies, casual runners, and experienced racers alike. 11911 Democracy Dr., Reston; restonrunners.org.

Kayaking

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The rapids on the Potomac are premier spots for kayaking, but before battling whitecaps, you should get your sea legs in flat water. **Potomac Paddlesports** can school you in paddling and rolling a kayak as well as getting comfortable underwater and freeing yourself from a capsized. A four-hour lesson is offered once a week starting in May and costs \$200. Locations vary; potomacpaddlesports.com.

Fencing

EN GARDE

Pick up an épée to learn the elegant sport at **Nova Fencing and Archery Club** in Falls Church. Under the guidance of coach Nadia Dreyer, beginners can master the fundamentals, from precise handwork to correct stances. Classes meet twice a week, and equipment is provided. Eight sessions cost \$175, and a USA Fencing Membership (\$29) is required. 3505 Carlin Springs Rd., Falls Church; novafencingclub.com.

Bike Repair

REBUILD THE WHEEL

If you're a cyclist, consider saving some cash—and acquiring a new skill—with DIY repairs. The Ivy City bike shop **Bicyclespace** hosts free beginner mechanics classes on how to maintain a two-wheeler, from fixing tires to managing chains. The lessons are Wednesday evenings, and the shop also has free clinics the third Thursday of each month to help with specific repairs. 1512 Okie St., NE; bicyclespacedc.com.

Hit the pickleball court at Dill Dinkers for beginner sessions.



LEARN HOW NOW

Do a Dip

Debra Huston, assistant dance director of Hollywood Ballroom in Silver Spring, shares how to achieve the perfect finale to your partner dance.



The leader places their left hand between the follower's shoulder blades and their right hand on the follower's waist. The follower wraps their arms around their partner's neck. The position should look like a hug.



The leader slides their left foot out to the side, bending the left knee and shifting their weight onto it. Staying upright, they lower the follower over their knee.



The lead then straightens their left leg and brings it back toward their body, lifting the follower up.

Get Grooving

THESE CLASSES ARE A CHANCE TO TWIRL, POP, AND SHIMMY ON THE DANCE FLOOR—

Belly Dancing

HIPS DON'T LIE

Channel your inner Shakira during belly-dance classes at **Sahara Dance** in Tenleytown. The studio offers beginner, intermediate, and advanced, with each level containing three courses for easy progression. Instructors also provide cultural context

for traditional Middle Eastern styles. You'll see dancers of all ages, so don't be intimidated if you're coming to this later in life. Sessions typically last eight to 16 weeks and cost \$220 to \$425. For those who crave the stage, even beginners can join one of the performance troupes.

4433 Wisconsin Ave., NW;
saharadance.com.

Ballet

POINT YOUR TOES

Maryland Youth Ballet in Silver Spring may have "youth" in the name, but it's also a space for adults looking to return to their balletic roots or try the

CityDance offers a range of classes, from jazz and tap to hip-hop and modern.



EVEN IF YOU HAVE TWO LEFT FEET

classical style for the first time. Enroll in drop-in classes (\$20 each) seven days a week to master everything from basic technique to fouettés and arabesques. Tights and leotards aren't required—instead, you can opt for form-fitting clothes

you feel comfortable in. 926 Ellsworth Dr., Silver Spring; marylandyouthballet.org.

K-Pop

DANCE LIKE AN IDOL

Born 2 Dance in Arlington and Vienna (and soon Chantilly) offers an array of international styles, from bachata and zouk to Bollywood and Afrobeats. It also teaches K-pop, a hip-hop riff that echoes the choreography of legendary groups such as Blackpink and BTS. Depending on the class, students learn original choreography or a routine from a music video. Enroll in 12-week sessions for \$255 or drop in for \$25. 262 Cedar Ln., Vienna; 3700 S. Four Mile Run Dr., Arlington; born2dancestudio.com.

Pole Dancing

VERTICAL MOTION

If you're looking to feel stronger and sexier, head to **Pole Pressure** on 14th Street and learn the athletic art of pole dancing. Classes are capped at nine people for focused instruction, and the space is body-positive, with students leveling up at their own pace. Beginner classes start with basic spins and strength building. The studio also offers flexibility training and aerial hoop. All lessons are drop-in; \$37 per class or \$165 to \$185 for a monthly membership. 1322 14th St., NW; polepressure.com.



Pick up new moves at Born 2 Dance.

Salsa

IT TAKES TWO

Salsa group **Baila DC** breaks down basic footwork and turns during six-week sessions (\$150) at La Cosecha. Partners rotate throughout, so no need to BYO. The organization also hosts beginner footwork tutorials followed by a salsa social dance in the same location, so you can take your moves from classroom to dance floor. 1280 Fourth St., NE; bailadc.net.

Jazz

STRUT YOUR STUFF

Practice Broadway moves in a musical-theater jazz course at **CityDance**. A class for all levels is offered in eight-week sessions (\$160) and one-off lessons (\$22.50). If you've got some background, opt for the advanced beginner class (\$144 for eight weeks, \$20 drop-in). The Friendship Heights studio is also committed to showing the less intense side of dance: "Sippin' With CityDance" is a monthly class (\$30) that starts with a glass of wine before you learn choreography to a music video. 5207 Wisconsin Ave., NW; citydance.net.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLAIRE McCracken; PHOTOGRAPH AT LEFT BY JONATHAN HSU OF JHSU MEDIA; RIGHT COURTESY OF BORN 2 DANCE

Fill Your Glass

QUENCH A THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE IN THESE BEVERAGE CLASSES

Whiskey Cocktails

WITH A TWIST

Starting January 3, **Catoctin Creek Distillery** in Purcellville is holding its “Art of the Cocktail” class (\$39) every Friday for six weeks. Whiskey is the spirit of choice, and each hour-and-a-half session covers how to shake and stir a different simple cocktail. *120 W. Main St., Purcellville; catoctincreekdistilling.com.*

Wine

GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

Gain the knowledge to navigate a restaurant wine list at **Capital Wine School**. Beginner classes, focusing on how to taste wine and pair different varieties with food, start at \$95 and run two hours. For serious sommelier hopefuls, the school also

offers levels 1 through 4 of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust certification course. *5207 Wisconsin Ave., NW; capitalwineschool.com.*

No-ABV Cocktails

ZERO PROOF

Gigi Arandid, founder of the alcohol-free bar **Binge Bar**, and guest mixologists teach a class on nonalcoholic cocktails at the H Street establishment. Learn about different no-ABV spirits and botanicals before making your own creation. The class is \$20 to participate, or watch the demos for free. *506 H St., NE; binge-bar.com.*



Get familiar with different wine styles at Capital Wine School.



WHAT I LEARNED

Strumming Along

ANDREA KLEE, 46

PUBLISHER AT *ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR* MAGAZINE

SKILL: UKULELE

“During the pandemic, I jokingly mentioned to my husband that I wanted to learn the ukulele because I thought it would be adorable. He bought me one for our pandemic Christmas, and I used an app to try and learn it. I wasn’t sure that what I was doing was correct, so I put it down for a long time. Recently, we were having a day of midlife angst—what do we want to be when we grow up, that sort of thing. We were wandering the streets and came across [the school and shop] Music on the Hill. I was like, ‘I guess I should go in and see what they have.’ They said, ‘Registration opened today,’ and I was like, ‘I have to actually do this.’”

“I’m glad it’s something I’m doing, but I’m right at the moment where it feels harder than I was thinking going in. There’s so many elements to learning an instrument, and then also putting yourself in a place where you’re performing for another person. As a shy person, it’s really hard.

“The goal is to put myself out there, learn something different, and try and get myself unstuck in other parts of my life with this new pursuit. Once you start learning something, you start looking at other things you can navigate differently. It brings you back to the present: What do I need to do now, not 20 years from now?”

Music on the Hill holds private and group lessons for a variety of instruments. Group classes are \$225 for six weeks; weekly lessons start at \$212 a month. *801 D St., NE; musiconthehilldc.com.*

Natural Talent

DEMYSTIFY THE OUTDOORS AND GET READY TO EXPLORE

Camping

TENTS INTENSIVE

An overnight in the wild can seem intimidating, but **REI** holds hands-on camping courses to help you feel more confident there. Head to a store location for an indoor “Winter Camping Workshop” (\$50), in which you learn how to build the perfect campsite to brave the winter elements, from a cold-proof sleeping area to firing up a camping stove. *Multiple area locations; rei.com.*

Birdwatching

FLYOVER STATE

For those ready to let a bird-watching passion take flight, Nature Forward (formerly the Audubon Naturalist Society) leads educational bird walks through **Woodend Nature Sanctuary** in Chevy Chase. Seasoned hobbyists teach proper binocular techniques to spot migratory songbirds, pointing out fowl and how to identify them. The active lesson happens the second Saturday of every month and is \$16 a person, with the option to bring a free plus-one. 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase; *natureforward.org.*

Foraging

ISPY

Searching for snacks in the wild? The **Fairfax County Park Authority** hosts periodic foraging sessions (\$10) guided by a naturalist. Per county rules, you can’t take plants home, but you will leave with a sense of which mushrooms, roots, and leaves you can harvest elsewhere and eat. Another class covers items in nature that can be used in crafting projects (\$12). *Locations vary; fairfaxcounty.gov.*

Peer through binoculars at a birdwatching course with Woodend Nature Sanctuary.



LEARN HOW NOW

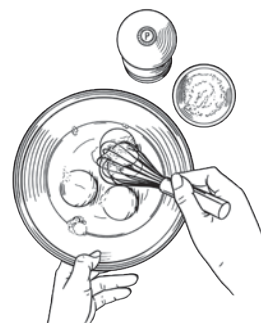
Scramble Eggs

Upgrade breakfast with these pointers from Haidar Karoum, chef and owner of the Navy Yard restaurant Chloe.



1

Use a thick-bottomed pan, or any kind that distributes heat evenly. The key, Karoum says, is that “you want to go gentle—you never want to have high heat.”



2

Add butter to the pan, approximately one tablespoon per three eggs. While the butter melts, beat your eggs in a separate dish, adding salt and pepper.



3

Pour eggs into the pan and stir in a folding motion using a rubber spatula. Karoum likes his eggs “slightly creamy,” which can be achieved by adding a tablespoon of crème fraîche as the eggs finish cooking.

Artsy Ambitions

FROM KNITTING SWEATERS TO DEVELOPING FILM, CREATE YOUR OWN MASTERPIECES

Jewelry

HEAVY METAL

Sure, you can scour shops for one-of-a-kind jewelry, but what if you could make your own custom bling? In Capitol Hill, jewelers **Daniel Valencia** and **Carlos Muñoz** lead a “Metals I” course in which novice smiths can learn soldering, stone-setting, polishing, forging, and other skills. By the end of eight weeks, you walk away with at least four hand-crafted sterling-silver pieces. The cost is \$645, including materials. Creative couples can also take a course to forge their own wedding

bands, starting at \$895. *1502 Massachusetts Ave., SE; jewelryclassdc.com.*

Photography

FIRST IMPRESSION

Learn how to capture precious moments on camera—and get lots of moody Instagram photos in the process—at the **Art League** in Alexandria. In “Black & White Darkroom Photography,” instructor Peter Duvall takes you through the entire process, shooting photos on 35mm, then heading into the darkroom to unveil the results. The course costs \$285, and cameras are available on loan. *105 N. Union St., Alexandria; theartleague.org.*

Drawing

GO FIGURE

At **Capitol Hill Arts Workshop**, five-week “Figure Drawing” classes feature live models, so students can master the human form in charcoal. Classes centered on acrylic paint and colored pencil are other ways to bring creativity into your weekly routine. Most courses run \$150 to \$300 for five weeks. *545 Seventh St., SE; chaw.org.*

Pottery

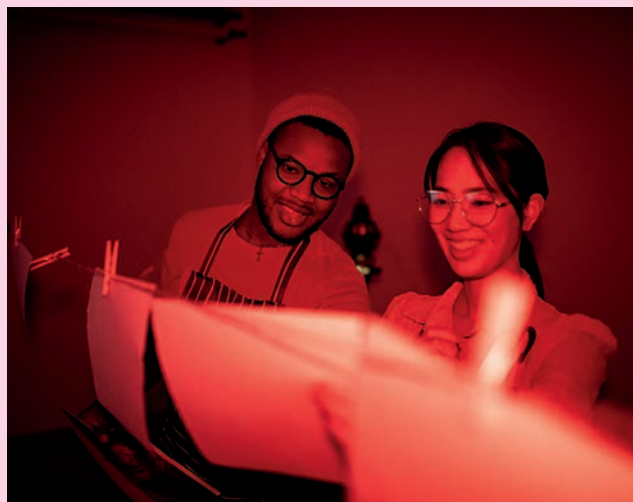
LICENSE TO KILN

Get your hands dirty at **District Clay Center**, where a beginner-friendly wheel class takes you from a lump of clay to ready-to-use pottery in ten weeks (\$390 to \$410). If you want to try your hand at the wheel before committing, the \$80 “one shot” class is a great way to experiment—or even makes a fun date night. Ready to level up? The center periodically offers workshops on all things ceramic, from tea sets to human busts. *2414 Douglas St., NE; districtclaycenter.com.*

Draw live models in charcoal during a course at Capitol Hill Arts Workshop.



Learn Something New



Get comfortable working in the darkroom during a photography class with the Art League.

Glassblowing HOT SPOT

Not afraid of a little heat? Instructor Paul Swartwood of **Glen Echo Glassworks** can ease you into the ancient art of glassblowing. Swartwood encourages students to be bold with color and work together while infusing molten glass with air to form eye-catching, moldable bubbles. Classes are kept to six or fewer to ensure individual attention. Try a one-time workshop (\$145 to \$155) or enroll in “Beginning Glassblowing” (\$575) for four weeks. 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo; glenechoglassworks.com.

Knitting IN STITCHES

Whether you’re just learning to knit and purl or need help tackling your next project, **Fibre Space** in Alexandria has courses for all levels. Pack your needles for “Sweater Camp,” in which beginners and pros alike can

drop into weekly Sunday sessions (\$40) for hands-on aid in making a warm fall knit. During \$90 intro classes, students learn the basics of knitting over three sessions, taking home the beginnings of a scarf. 1319 Prince St., Alexandria; fibrespace.com.

Stained Glass PICK UP THE PIECES

Colorful stained glass is typically seen in houses of worship, but you also can create a piece for your home. At **Monroe Street Studio** in Herndon, artisans teach intimate groups of four how to make a vibrant Tiffany-style sun catcher. The \$295 five-week course, which includes materials, covers cutting, grinding, foiling, and soldering. 761 Monroe St., Bldg. A, Herndon; monroestreetstudio.com.

Practice Makes Perfect

Once you’ve learned a skill, here’s where to hone it

If You’re Getting Steady on Rollerblades and Skates . . .



CHECK OUT Skate DC

While the group offers frequent sessions for different levels, the every-other-Sunday-morning skate is the best fit for beginners who know how to brake. Meet at Freedom Plaza at 9:30 AM for a two-mile glide along bike lanes to the Capitol. The group also provides a free clinic for skating neophytes. skatedc.org.

If You’re Polishing Your Rock Step . . .



CHECK OUT New Columbia Swing

Learn moves right before you put them into action. This swing-dancing group hosts weekly social dances from 9 to 11 PM every Tuesday at the Josephine Butler Parks Center next to Meridian Hill Park. Sometimes a live band or DJ provides music, and the vibe is relaxed, ideal for picking up partners as you lindy-hop around the room. Admission includes an introductory lesson at 8 (\$10 on DJ nights; price varies when bands play). newcolumbiaswing.org.

If You’re Mastering a New Language . . .



CHECK OUT District Language Exchange

Whether you’re saying “nǐ hǎo,” “olá,” or “privet,” pull up a chair for free conversational practice every Sunday. The group rotates around DC venues, from bars such as Dacha to the National Portrait Gallery courtyard or a local park. It’s an informal gathering: Don a name tag with your language of choice and find like-minded peers to engage with. Sessions typically last two to three hours, and popular tongues include Arabic, English, French, Italian, Mandarin, and Spanish. [instagram.com/dclangx](https://www.instagram.com/dclangx).

W



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NOT HOMELESSNESS.**

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LIFE, TRAVEL & HEALTH

IN YOUR DREAMS

Turn the page for our guide to sleep—from great hotels for a good night's rest to the worries keeping Washington awake.



PHOTOGRAPH BY EKATERINA BOLOVTSOVA/PEXELS



Rest for the Weary

It's been an exhausting year. If you're in need of sleep, here are some local hotels and nearby getaways that can help you get it. Plus—strategies for better slumber.

By Kathryn Streeter



The Morrow Hotel

Sleepy Staycations

BE A SLEEP TOURIST IN YOUR CITY AT hotels with amenities for a restful night.

PILLOW TALK

The Morrow Hotel

Northeast DC

The two-year-old property in NoMa encourages sleep wellness through a “Self-

Care Menu,” a series of add-ons with varying fees. You might prepare for bedtime with the Sleep Enhancement Kit, stocked with a pillow mist, facial roller, and eye mask. Or get a cozy cup of tea delivered to your room, such as a calming caffeine-free blood-orange-and-hibiscus blend.

Sweet dreams: Give housekeeping a call to experience the pillow menu: feather for side and back sleepers, buckwheat to stay cool through the night, body pillows for spinal support, and memory foam that molds to your body. Satin pillowcases are also available for a variety of beauty benefits, from protecting hair to preventing nighttime wrinkles.

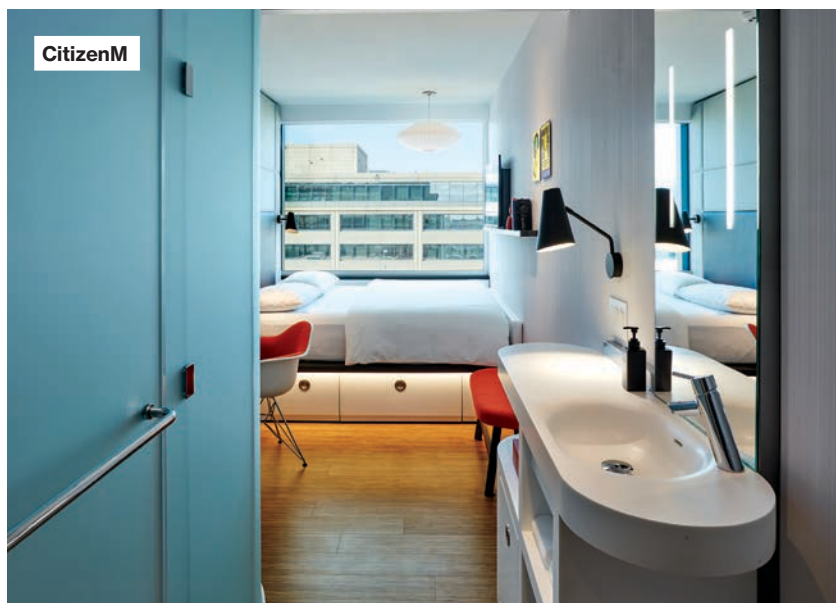
ON BED REST

CitizenM

Capitol Hill and NoMa

Sleep is a focus of each guest room at these two CitizenM properties—literally. If you like to spread out or tend to toss and turn, there's plenty of space to do so on the extra-large king-size beds that extend from wall to wall. The hotel also recently launched a quiz to determine your sleep type, with recommendations for better rest.

Sweet dreams: Along with oversize beds, the hotel offers other amenities to help you catch up on sleep. Blackout



TOP PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CITIZENM; BOTTOM COURTESY OF MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL; ILLUSTRATION BY NIKY CHOPRA

blinds and soundproof windows make for a dark, quiet space, and you don't even need to get up to achieve the optimal environment: A bedside pad controls temperature, lights, and blinds.

ONCE UPON A MATTRESS

Westin National Harbor

Oxon Hill

Start winding down before getting into bed. A nighttime menu features light bites with sleep-promoting properties

such as magnesium-rich edamame plus whole-grain crackers with peanut butter, which contains tryptophan. The hotel on the harbor also offers a balm to dab on pulse points, with a whiff of soothing lavender and chamomile essential oils.

Sweet dreams: Westin has highlighted sleep health since debuting the plush Heavenly Bed in 1999. Recently, it released the "next gen" of this temperature-regulating foam mattress, developed with sleep experts. Dogs also get special treatment: The Heavenly Dog Bed means your four-legged companion can drift off on a sleep staycation, too.

THE STRESSED AND THE RESTLESS

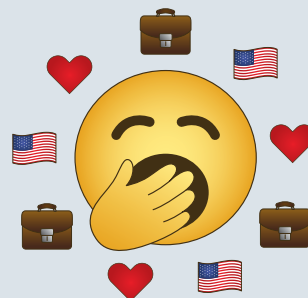
Local therapists share the common anxieties getting in the way of a good night's sleep

It's no secret that DC is full of stressed-out people. Unfortunately, those feelings don't turn off when it's time for bed, which means tossing and turning across town. So what's keeping Washington awake?

Political unease is an "occupational hazard" for government workers, says Monica Band, a Capitol Hill therapist. The election only magnified it: "Job security as an extension of a potential administrative change is an interesting niche worry that people have in our city specifically." Lots of high-powered workaholics in Washington also lie awake, she says, grappling with the question "What is my purpose and meaning, and does it have to be in work?"

It's not just professional woes. DC's dating scene is also the waking nightmare that blocks singles from sweet dreams. Band says many of her clients, especially women, are concerned about finding a partner—and whether Washington is even the place to do it. The feeling isn't limited to romantic relationships. Takoma Park therapist Sara Mindel reports that many of her clients are reevaluating their friendships, especially after the pandemic. During that time, Mindel believes many of us learned to ask, "Wait, who do I want to be spending time with?" The answer is complicated enough for some that it's disrupting REM cycles.

And there's always the possibility that being unable to fall asleep is its own restless feedback loop. "More people know they have anxiety, and they're really aware of it," says Mindel. "So they're up at night, and they're worried about it." —KATE CORLISS



BEYOND COUNTING SHEEP

We asked Keisha Sullivan, a sleep-medicine physician with Kaiser Permanente in Largo, if three trending sleep techniques work—or should be put to bed



MOUTH TAPE

This is exactly what it sounds like: You place a strip of tape over your mouth, forcing yourself to breathe through your nose. Mouth breathing narrows the upper airways, so the idea is that redirecting how you breathe will reduce snoring or waking up during the night.

Does it work? Depends. For those with snoring or mild sleep apnea, it can be successful, says Sullivan. But for those with significant apnea? Sorry, but a piece of tape can't replace medical treatment.

SLEEPY "MOCKTAIL"

SleepTok is full of videos praising this bedtime concoction. The drink mixes prebiotic sodas with tart-cherry juice, which contains melatonin, and magnesium powder, a supplement that promotes muscle relaxation.

Does it work? "There is no science backing it up. I say if it's not harmful, it's okay to try," says Sullivan. However, she recommends talking with your doctor before taking magnesium, which can impact other medical conditions, or drinking prebiotic sodas, which can agitate GI problems.



BROWN NOISE

You're probably familiar with white noise—"brown noise" is less harsh and has more low frequencies. The ambient sound is constant and consistent, making it a popular choice for focus and, yes, sleep.

Does it work? In general, noise with a consistent pattern—brown noise, white noise, or even just a fan—is useful for calming down thoughts, which helps people drift off. "For patients who are especially anxious, any type of noise will help distract you from thinking of other things while you're trying to sleep," says Sullivan.



Dreamy Destinations

A TRUE VACATION IS ALL ABOUT RELAXATION, so sleep should be a priority. Here's where to stay when you want to travel to dreamland.

SERIOUS SLEEP RETREAT

Eupepsia Wellness Resort

Bland, Virginia

This resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains is centered around Ayurveda, a healing philosophy focused on maintaining balance across mind, body, and spirit. Sleep is a foundational pillar, believed to contribute significantly to that balance as well as to healing. Eupepsia has a number of sleep therapies and experiences available, including spa treatments that incorporate essential oils and physical techniques.

Sweet dreams: Rooms are designed to maximize slumber, including an infrared fireplace that uses color therapy to encourage calm. Bed frames are adjustable to accommodate sleep-disrupting conditions such as acid reflux and sleep apnea. For cold sleepers, sheets are temperature-regulated, and cooling mattresses use the latest technology from the sleep company Bear, exclusive to Eupepsia. Those requiring more support can book Sleep Therapy Rooms, with blackout conditions and a special air-filtration system.

SLUMBER IN THE CITY

Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore

Baltimore

Just because you're visiting a bustling city doesn't mean you have to sacrifice sleep. Every room in this Inner Harbor hotel has blackout curtains and down duvets and pillows to create the most conducive conditions. To start unwinding early, guests can stop by the spa for a massage to promote restfulness.

Sweet dreams: Sleep hygiene starts in the bathroom with the Soak Service, an experience curated by the clean beauty-and-bath company Bathorium. Before winding down, pick from four soak experiences. A spa attendant draws the bath, imbuing it with your choice of sleep-promoting products such as magnesium bath flakes or wintergreen and spicy ginger aromatherapy, designed to break up congestion.

NATURE SANCTUARY

Hummingbirds Hideaway Treehouse

Waterford, Virginia

This Loudoun County rental is a luxury stay perched in the trees, with a soothing creek steps away. Surrounded by woods, the hidden gem is off the main road, up a narrow two-mile gravel drive for maximum quiet. A spiral staircase awaits at the base

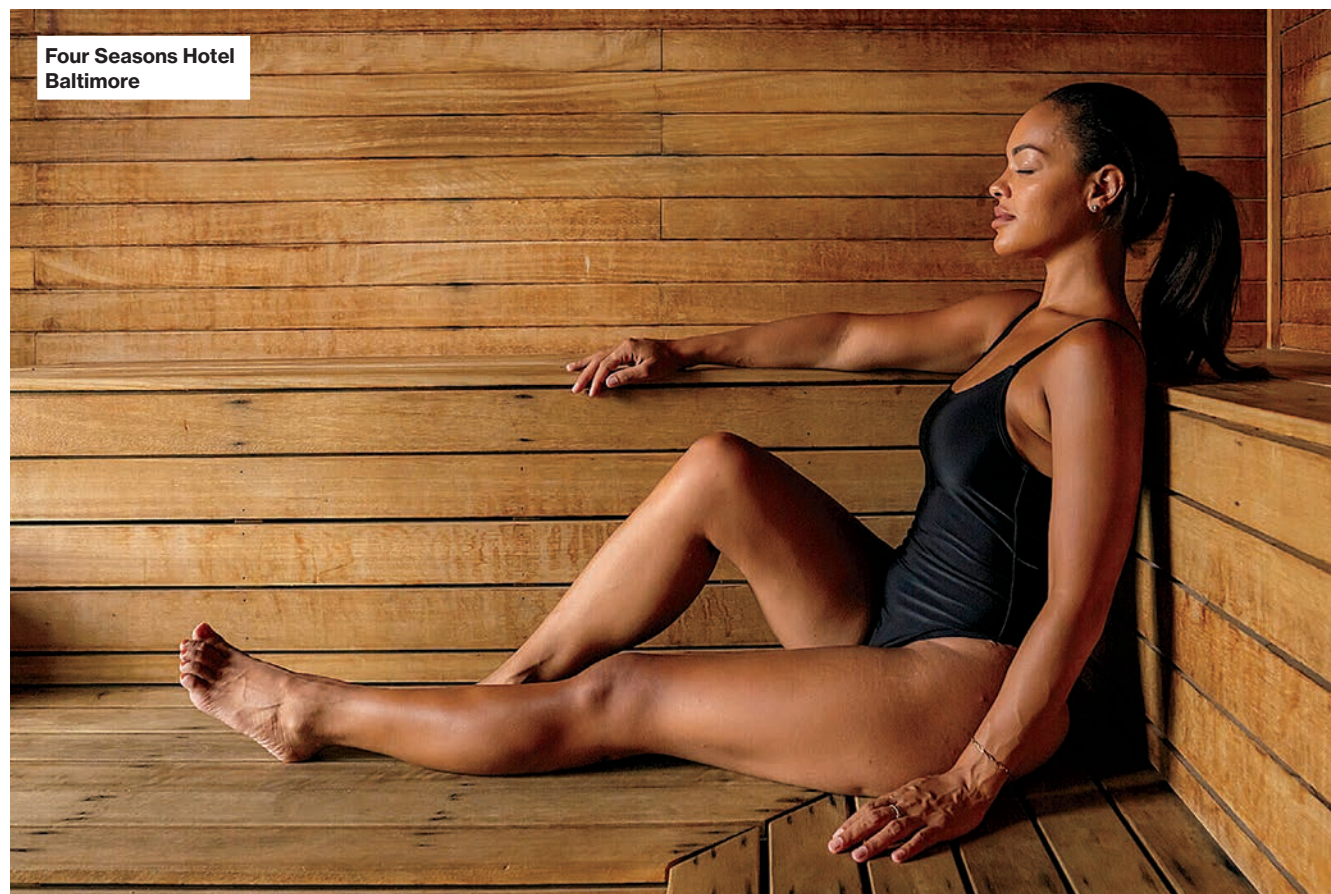
of the treehouse, and the rental sleeps up to six, with two bedrooms and king beds. After hiking or hitting the nearby wineries, grab a seat around the fire pit under the stars.

Sweet dreams: Far from city lights and noise, the refuge offers sleep-enhancing

measures beyond seclusion. For guests with light sensitivity, the floor-to-ceiling windows in the primary bedroom are fitted with blackout shades to facilitate sleeping in, no matter sunrise time. Complimentary eye masks and earplugs are also provided on request.



Eupepsia Wellness Resort



Four Seasons Hotel
Baltimore

TOP PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF EUPEPSIA WELLNESS RESORT; BOTTOM COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS



Sleeping on the Job

Could a spa treatment solve my nightmare slumber situation?

LYING ON A TREATMENT TABLE AT THE Four Seasons spa, I'm convinced I must be the least relaxed person in the Georgetown facility. My desperate pursuit for sleep has landed me on a zero-gravity bed with vibrations running up and down my back. Through headphones, I'm listening to a combination of a chanting woman, ambient noises, and the occasional piano. It's the spa's newest treatment, the Mind-Sync "Delta Dreams" meditation, billed as a technique using specific sounds and a special vibrating table to give the recipient six hours of REM sleep within an hour. Five minutes in, I'm thinking it's a pipe dream.

According to the National Health Interview Survey in 2020, more than 25 percent

of adults don't get seven hours of sleep a night, as recommended by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Furthermore, nearly 15 percent have trouble falling asleep most nights, while almost 18 percent struggle to stay asleep. I fall into the latter category: While I've easily dozed off on planes, couches, and even my desk once or twice, I tend to wake up around 3 every morning. If I'm able to get back to sleep, I'll wake up every hour after that until my alarm goes off.

Needless to say, I could use the sleep. When the Four Seasons spa completed a renovation this spring, it unveiled its Mind-Sync treatment table, the first available at a spa in North America. The meditations (\$115 for 30 minutes, \$205 for an hour) can be paired with a massage for maximum relaxation and an additional price. According to Jill Carlen, VP of business development for Earthlite, which manufactures Mind-Sync, the technology was created through a government program and designed to relax fight-or-flight syndrome in veterans with PTSD. In Delta Dreams, the noises and movement are

I'm wary I've essentially paid \$200 to experience what I suffer for free every night.

supposed to bring cells vibrating at different frequencies into alignment, lowering brain activity to the delta and theta states, which promote sleep. The goal is to calm mind and body, priming you for a REM cycle that's deeper—and more rejuvenating—than the typical power nap.

Which is how I found myself under a sheet with a towel over my eyes and noise-dampening headphones connected to the Mind-Sync screen. The treatment table—now sending pulses up my leg—is set to a cooler temperature, after an attendant



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asks if I run hot or cold while sleeping. But what do night sweats matter when the thoughts racing through my mind are getting louder, competing with the sounds and sensations engulfing me? I'm wary I've essentially paid \$200 to experience what I suffer for free every night. As I talk myself into another 53 minutes of reclining supine, the vibrations begin to ebb into a softer hum. The voice fades into a rushing waterfall punctuated by an occasional gong. Suddenly, I slip away, my consciousness surrendering to the steady flow of water.

When I return to the waking world, my eyes are still covered and my first thought is that I've slept through my morning meeting. After getting my bearings, I realize I have no idea how long I've been asleep. My thoughts and time seem to move with a buttery slowness, meandering up and down with the waterfall and lightly dissolving into space with each dull tone. Emerging from the moody purple room, I notice that the symptoms that plague me during a rough sleep—headache, breathlessness, muscle

fatigue—have subsided, though it's hard to tell if it's the result of the treatment or just taking a midday siesta.

If you want to realign your sleep long-term, says Carlen, six sessions are required. However, a one-off treatment is supposed

to help reset for a couple nights of healthy rest, depending on the individual. The next morning, I'm just as confused when I wake up in my own bed. As I pull off my eye mask, it's already light outside: For once, I've slept through the night. —DANIELLA BYCK



PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIELLA BYCK



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Gifts to Give— and Give Again

Shopping for someone who has everything? Looking for one present that'll delight several people on your list? Here are ten ideas to make things a little easier this year.

By Amy Moeller



1. Trinket Dishes

Useful and chic, trinket dishes, or “catchalls,” can be good for anyone on your list with a nightstand or an entry table—and you can find them to suit a variety of styles. DC hairstylist Shannon Marie Sheridan, who often gives catchalls, loves the vintage ones at the local website Rare Form (rareformshop.com; \$18 to \$185) and also hits up Libby & My in Union Market. One of that shop’s popular “bathing beauty” dishes (\$40, shown here) is on her own nightstand.

2. Olive Oil

A beautiful bottle of high-quality olive oil is a classic gift most people can use in the kitchen. Public-relations professional Ashley Arias is especially fond of the oil—plus balsamic vinegar—from Dimitri Olive Farms (\$18 to \$45 a bottle), a local family-owned Greek brand available at area farmers markets.

3. Monogrammed Duffel Bags

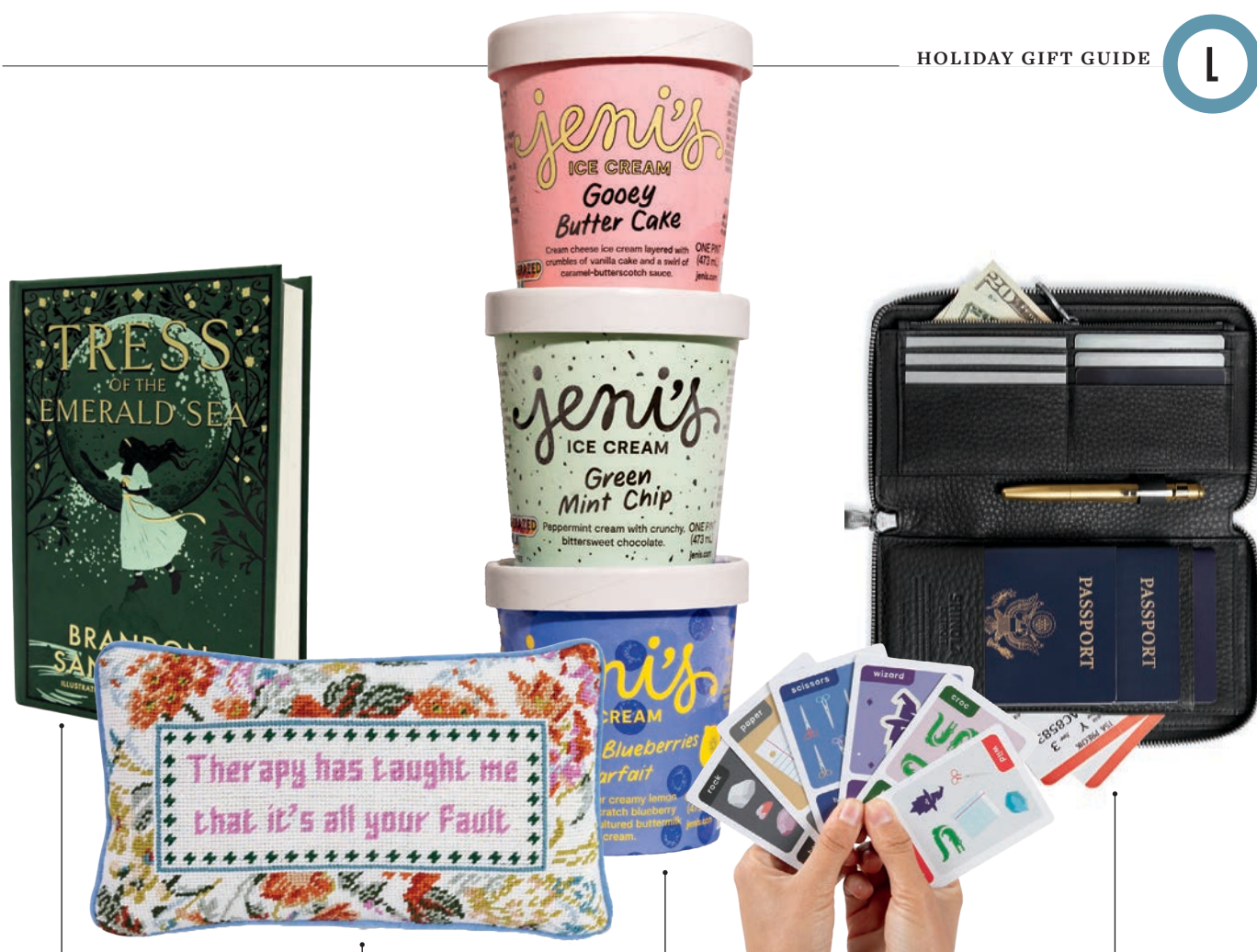
McLean plastic surgeon Navin Singh says one of his favorite things to give has been duffel bags from L.L. Bean, which he has monogrammed for a personal touch. This one (\$159) comes in five timeless color combinations.

4. Locally Made Candles

Local candle maker Handmade Habitat offers a line of “typewriter note” candles (\$36). They come in five scents—designed for coziness, clarity, love, self-care, and rest—and can be inscribed with a custom message printed on a vintage typewriter. Design one to fit everyone on your list (with a bulk discount) or personalize each.

5. Apple AirTags

Style blogger/influencer Kelly-Lynne Russell Guy often gives loved ones AirTags (\$29) for keeping track of keys, luggage, and other easy-to-misplace items. “My family is perpetually losing things,” she says. “Even last year’s AirTags.” Fancy it up by adding an AirTag holder, from brands including Anthropologie (starting at \$15) and Hermès (\$299, pictured; in-store only).



6.
***Tress of the Emerald Sea* by Brandon Sanderson**

Jamie Fortin, owner of the Alexandria romance bookstore Friends to Lovers, says this novel has universal appeal: “There is something delightful about cuddling up in winter with a story about adventure and found family. I love the idea of someone giggling when they learn the plot twists and closing the book with a comforting sigh, like I did with my first read.”

7.
Needlepoint Pillows

Dawn Crothers, who owns the event-rentals company Something Vintage and is known for her fun, colorful style, says the quirky needlepoint pillows (\$88 to \$98 at furbishstudio.com) are among her favorite presents to give.

8.
Ice Cream Subscription

Fans of Jeni’s swear by the brand’s decadent flavors, such as Brown Butter Almond Brittle and Green Mint Chip. A three-month “pint club” subscription (\$199) includes three shipments of four pints each, often including a yet-to-be-released flavor. Or opt for a single-shipment bundle such as the Best Sellers (\$58 for five pints) or one of more than a dozen holiday-themed combinations (\$12 to \$108).

9.
Rock Paper Scissors Wizard Croc

Inspired by the children’s pastime “rock, paper, scissors,” this card game (\$17 at rpswc.com; use the code GOWILD for free shipping) is a great pick for kids in your life. Created by Ready Player N in Herndon, it’s rated for ages seven and up—though with a little guidance, younger ages can join in, too. Ideal for two to four people, it can be played at home or on the go.

10.
Shinola Organizer Wallet

This new pocket-filled leather organizer wallet by Shinola (\$295) is a great gift for jet-setting loved ones. It comes in black and tan and can hold three passports, up to six cards, a pen, and more.

Red Wiggler Community Farm in Germantown



Giving Back

Make a difference in someone's life this holiday season. These 20 organizations are recommended by Spur Local, an annual catalog highlighting area nonprofits.

By Daniella Byck

If You Want to Support Education and Youth Mental Health

PEACE OF MIND

This nonprofit provides a curriculum for DC pre-K-through-eighth-graders, teaching them to deal with stress, emotions, and conflict. It uses tools such as storybooks to meet kids at a developmentally appropriate place. **\$100 will buy:** One Storybook Series for a school.

GOPLAY

The DC organization (formerly CRYSP) helps kids get involved in sports, connecting them with the scholarships and equipment they need to participate. Athletic opportunities go beyond the typical: Soccer and baseball are options, but so are trapeze and Ultimate Frisbee. **\$100 will buy:** A pair of cleats and shin guards.

COMUNIDAD

This group runs programming for elementary-through-high-school kids in Fairfax

County's Seven Corners neighborhood, including reading tutorials and art therapy. In addition to an afterschool STEM program, a summer camp teaches teens coding basics. **\$500 will buy:** A laptop for the summer coding boot camp.

COLLEGE TRIBE

This nonprofit pairs Black elementary- and middle-school boys in DC's Wards 7 and 8 with Black male mentors who hold a college degree or military rank of staff sergeant or higher. Students can also participate in afterschool and summer programs for STEM, arts, and reading. **\$1,000 will buy:** Clothing and shoes for five kids.

If You Want to Support Civic Engagement and Justice

ALLY THEATRE COMPANY

This DC group aims to highlight oppression and issues in the criminal-justice

system via artistic works. The Voices Unbarred program gives people impacted by incarceration the chance to share their stories through scriptwriting and performances. **\$100 will buy:** A previously incarcerated artist's participation in one performance.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

This organization's expertise is to provide free mediation between a variety of parties: landlords and tenants, neighbors, divorcing parents creating a plan for their kids, and others. Conflict-mediation training empowers residents to safely deal with disputes. **\$100 will buy:** Two hours of family mediation.

SHAW COMMUNITY CENTER

About 150 students engage in after-school and summer-camp programs at the community center each year—the only community-based afterschool program in the neighborhood. Educational initiatives for kids and teens range from performing arts to yoga. **\$500 will buy:** Six hours of programming for 20 kids.

THE SECOND LOOK PROJECT

This organization works on behalf of people who are eligible for reduced sentences under DC laws, providing legal services and support as well as advocating for a smooth reentry post-incarceration. **\$1,000 will buy:** A month of litigation for a client.

If You Want to Support the Environment

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

To raise awareness about the climate crisis, this nonprofit runs an annual festival showing documentaries and feature films related to the environment. The group also provides grants for BIPOC filmmakers making their first climate-related feature. **\$100 will buy:** Closed captioning for a virtual post-screening talk.

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

The arboretum's nonprofit partner helps maintain the 451-acre urban oasis with events and educational initiatives. Its core

program is the Washington Youth Garden, a teaching garden that's also a source of produce for food-insecure families around the District. **\$100 will buy:** Seeds for a school garden.

RED WIGGLER COMMUNITY FARM

This sustainable farm in Montgomery County is an inclusive operation employing adults with and without developmental disabilities. The team plants and harvests produce and offers a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program. **\$500 will buy:** Continuing education for staff and volunteers.

SOUL TRAK OUTDOORS

With a mission to bring more people of color into nature spaces, the nonprofit aims to inspire and support more diverse leadership in outdoor settings. Youth programs include a six-week exploration of local parks, an adventure summer camp, and an Appalachian Trail backpacking trip. **\$100 will buy:** Equipment rental for a nature program.

If You Want to Support Women and Girls

AMARA LEGAL CENTER

Serving sex workers and survivors of sex trafficking around the region, this group provides free legal services such as securing civil-protection orders against abusers, helping clients regain custody of their children, and expunging records with charges related to the commercial sex industry. **\$100 will buy:** Criminal-defense support for a misdemeanor case.

GIRLS ON THE RUN DC

This nonprofit empowers elementary- and middle-school girls by having them train for and run a 5K. Groups meet twice a week for practice, creating a support system among the girls while working toward a common goal. **\$320 will buy:** A season scholarship for one girl.

DC ABORTION FUND

The high cost of an abortion can keep residents from safely seeking treatment, so this fund provides monetary support with no eligibility requirements. Once someone calls a helpline, that person is connected

within 48 hours to a case manager to figure out next steps. **\$750 will buy:** A first-trimester abortion.

DC RAPE CRISIS CENTER

Survivors of sexual violence can receive free trauma-informed counseling, regardless of whether an assault happened recently or farther in the past. Advocates help survivors move through the legal and medical systems, respecting their right to choose how they want to proceed. **\$2,000 will buy:** 24 therapy sessions for a sexual-assault survivor.

If You Want to Support Food and Housing Security

FIELDS 4 VALOR

Area veterans and their families can access produce and eggs grown at a Maryland farm run by veterans who also volunteer to take care of everything from the beehive to growing seeds. **\$100 will buy:** Garden scissors, a thorn stripper, and gloves.

FATHER McKENNA CENTER

It can be challenging for unhoused single men to access resources, and this DC organization fills that need with a food pantry, a case-management program, and a shelter at night during winter months. **\$500 will buy:** 375 meals.

GAITHERSBURG HELP

This needs-based nonprofit supports residents by funding medication, arranging food drop-offs, and transporting seniors to social-service and doctors' appointments. It also connects people with programs that can help them buy more affordable prescriptions. **\$1,000 will buy:** 20 prescription medications.

COMMUNITY LODGINGS

Based in Alexandria, this group works with the community in the Arlandria-Chirilagua neighborhood to provide affordable housing and meals for food-insecure students. Families can participate in education programs, including computer classes and academic mentoring. **\$1,000 will buy:** A summer-camp experience for five kids.

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Top Lawyers

The area's best legal talent—including divorce attorneys, criminal defenders, employment lawyers, and estate planners
By Damare Baker

IN SOME RESPECTS, FINDING A LAWYER

in Washington is easy. DC is home to some of the nation's most prominent legal talent, with more attorneys per capita than anyplace else in America. Yet cutting through the crowded field to identify true standouts can be a challenge. That's why we've done the work for you.

We surveyed our past Top Lawyers, asking them to nominate those they consider to be the best among their peers. From there, we conducted additional reporting and research. Whether you're seeking representation for a make-or-break business deal or a complex custody battle, these are the legal pros you'd want in your corner.

If no firm is given, the lawyer is a solo practitioner.

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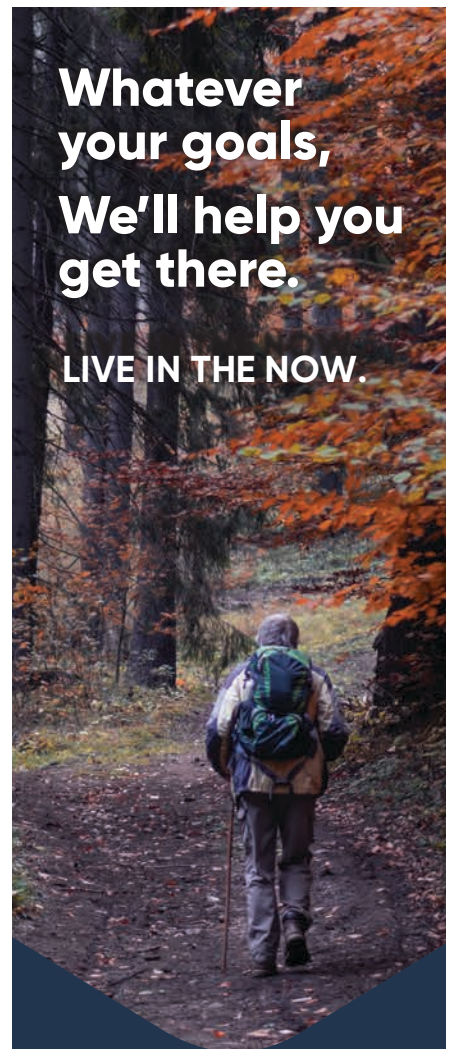
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Melissa Schefkind, Cheryl New, Jeff Lowinger

New & Lowinger, PC

DIVORCE AND FAMILY LAW

We're first for a reason.

New & Lowinger is the area's leading boutique family law firm.

Cheryl New is consistently rated among the top divorce lawyers in the region. According to *Washingtonian*, "nobody can size up a case any quicker than New."

Holding a Master of Law in Taxation, Jeff Lowinger tackles complex financial issues and asset division with precision.

Melissa Schefkind is a standout presence in the courtroom and at the negotiation table, always three steps ahead of the competition.

Serving clients in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, these no-nonsense partners serve high net worth clients—crafting intricate settlements and prevailing in the courtroom.

Confident.
Skilled.
Focused.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce
Family Law
Prenuptial Agreements

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Big Guns: Washington's Top 30 Lawyers
— *Washingtonian*

Top Lawyers: 30 Stars of the Bar
— *Washingtonian*

Top 25 Divorce Lawyers in Washington
— *Washingtonian*

Top 25 Divorce Lawyers in the Area
— *Bethesda Magazine*

"Best Law Firms" Tier 1 Ranking for Family Law in Washington, DC

— *U.S. News & World Report*

MD and DC *Super Lawyers*

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snlfirm.com



Ain & Bank, P.C.

TRUSTED PERSONAL ADVISORS PROVIDING PREMIER FAMILY LAW SERVICES

Ain & Bank, P.C. is a preeminent boutique family law firm, serving clients in Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia. Ain & Bank attorneys represent their clients with integrity and an acute understanding of the challenges that arise when navigating family law matters. Civility and professionalism are cornerstones of our practice. While we strive to resolve all of our cases in an amicable manner, we are also sophisticated litigators.

We pride ourselves on our discretion and are committed to preserving client confidentiality and privacy. We represent a wide range of clients, including those with substantial assets and complex business interests. We are committed to a successful outcome for all our clients.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Our lawyers have received numerous awards and recognition including features in *Town & Country*, selection as *Washingtonian* Top Divorce Lawyer; selection to *Woodward White's* The Best Lawyers in America for both family law and real estate and *Super Lawyers*; elected Fellows of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; elected as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and International Academy of Family Lawyers.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, asset valuation and division, custody and support issues, pre-marital and post-nuptial agreements, business succession, related tax issues, and integrated solutions for wealth management and preservation

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Washington, DC 20036
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ainbanklaw.com

Hicks Crandall Juhl, PC

FAMILY LAW ATTORNEYS

The attorneys at Hicks Crandall Juhl, PC understand that during a client's time of crisis it is their role to offer guidance based on the law and their considerable experience. All the while, they work to maintain a balanced view of the case at hand.

While each case is unique, the firm operates under the premise that achieving resolution without litigation is almost always optimal for the client. However, when negotiations fail, the attorneys are prepared to litigate at trial and on appeal, vigorously advocating for their clients. All attorneys in the firm have extensive experience representing clients in mediation as well as court proceedings.

The firm handles a multitude of family law matters, from simple pre-marital agreements to complex divorce cases with business valuation and deferred compensation issues, as well as high conflict, volatile custody disputes. The firm frequently deals with various pension division issues including military and civil service pensions as well as private retirement plans.

Our attorneys are seasoned litigators with experience arguing before courts throughout Virginia. We provide our clients with the support and knowledge to navigate the tough decisions that must be made during the divorce process.

The attorneys of Hicks Crandall Juhl, PC believe that gaining a client's trust is a privilege, and they are invested in you and your case. They are skilled practitioners who are reasonable at the settlement table yet ready and prepared to thoroughly represent their clients in court. They establish a respectful, compassionate rapport with all clients during an intensely difficult, stressful time. They consider themselves to be not just attorneys, but also counselors at law.



From L to R: Sarah A. Piper, Susan Hicks, Haley S. Heston, Camille A. Crandall, Dana M. Wolfson, Kelly M. Juhl

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Hicks Crandall Juhl, PC handles divorce, including complex equitable distribution, property division, high conflict custody disputes, spousal support, child support, negotiating and drafting marital, premarital, and postnuptial settlement agreements, representing clients in mediation, protective orders, and collaborative law.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND AWARDS

Known for experienced and respected, advocacy, Susan Hicks, Camille Crandall, Kelly Juhl, and Sarah Piper have been named 2023 Top Lawyers in Divorce and Family Law by *Northern Virginia Magazine*. The firm has also routinely been recognized by *Washingtonian*, *The Best Lawyers In America*®, *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch*® in America, *Super Lawyers*™, *Virginia Business Legal Elite*, and *Martindale-Hubbell AV*®

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Pictured from left to right - Joseph Cammarata, Allan M. Siegel and Ira Sherman.

Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, PC

THE PERSONAL INJURY ADVOCATES

The lawyers at Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, PC have been representing victims injured due to the carelessness of others for more than 50 years. The firm has built its reputation on an unwavering commitment to aggressive and creative litigation strategies, seeking to ensure clients receive complete justice. The firm focuses on helping individuals who have suffered personal injury, including brain injury or death, from motor vehicle, truck and tractor-trailer collisions, mass transit collisions, medical malpractice, and unsafe premises. The firm also represents whistleblowers who report fraud, waste and abuse in federal or state governments.

Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, PC and its partners have been recognized as leaders in their field and the legal community. The law firm has been named a "Best Law Firm" by *U.S. News and World Report* and *Best Lawyers*®. The law firm has produced four Presidents of the Trial Lawyers' Association of Metropolitan Washington, DC (TLA-DC) and Partner Allan M. Siegel was named the 2024 Trial Lawyer of the Year by TLA-DC. Two partners have been named to the 2024 *Washingtonian* "Top Lawyers" list. The law firm has also been a leader in brain injury litigation for over two decades. Partners Joseph Cammarata and Ira Sherman founded The Brain Injury Association of the District of Columbia, and Joseph Cammarata served as the President of that organization. Partner Joseph Cammarata was the Chair of the American Association for Justice's Traumatic Brain Injury Litigation Group.

The firm's dedication and compassion for our injured clients has resulted in the recovery of hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation for its clients.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Automobile, Tractor-Trailer & Mass Transit Collisions; Premises Liability; Traumatic Brain Injury; Wrongful Death; Medical Malpractice; Whistleblower

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

- "Best Law Firm", *U.S. News and World Report* & *Best Lawyers*®
- *Washingtonian* "Top Lawyers" since 1997
- Washington DC *Super Lawyers*™ since 2007
- Washington DC *Super Lawyers*™ "Top 100" since 2016
- Four Presidents, Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, DC – 1982, 1993, 2008, 2015
- 2024 Trial Lawyer of the Year, Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, DC
- Past President of the Brain Injury Association of Washington, DC
- Two partners are board-certified in civil trial advocacy by the National Board of Trial Advocacy
- The firm was chosen as Preferred Lawyers by the Brain Injury Association of America
- "AV®" rated - the highest available - by Martindale-Hubbell®

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202.659.8600 | chaikinandsherman.com

Sogand Zamani

ZAMANI & ASSOCIATES, PLLC
A TRUSTED FAMILY LAW FIRM

Zamani & Associates is a leading boutique law firm dedicated exclusively to all aspects of family law. As trusted family law advisors, we are known for:

- Protecting our clients' financial security and assets with discretion;
- Advocating for the emotional and physical well-being of children during family crises;
- Collaborating, mediating, negotiating and litigating with integrity, skill, and creativity.

As a team, we work to understand our clients' goals and take a holistic approach by involving professionals who can best support the needs of the family, ensuring our clients can make informed decisions with confidence. When negotiation alone does not suffice, our attorneys draw on our extensive courtroom experience to skillfully and strongly advocate for clients in the District of Columbia and Maryland courts. Our long-standing recognition in the area of family law means that we offer our clients sound judgment, innovative strategies, and effective advocacy to bring efficient and final resolution to their family matters.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Top Divorce Lawyers, *Washingtonian*; Top 50 Women Attorneys, Washington, DC *Super Lawyers*™; Top Attorneys for Family Law and Adoption, *Bethesda Magazine*; *Best Lawyers in America*® (Tier 1), Best Law Firms®, *US News & World Report*; Preeminent Martindale-Hubbell AV® rating, *News & World Report* rating

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Family Law (divorce, asset valuation/division, pre/ post-marital agreements, alimony, child custody/support, LGBTQ+); Assisted Reproductive Technology (donor/ surrogacy arrangements); Adoption

2121 K Street, Suite 900, Washington DC 20037
 202.510.9112 | zamaniassociates.com



Burr Law Firm

FOR FAMILY MATTERS

The Burr Law Firm's practice is wholly devoted to family law—and to all of family law. Our style—what we believe distinguishes us—is the combination of personal expertise and experience with sensitivity and compassion. There are no “cookie-cutter” solutions to the complex issues of divorce and family matters. Through a tailored process—including negotiation, mediation, Collaborative Process and advocacy—our goal is the optimal resolution of each issue for each client.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Family law. Collaborative Practice, mediation, settlement, negotiation, advocacy. Also serving as mediators.

AWARDS

Recognized repeatedly in “*Best Lawyers*®,” “*Best Law Firms*,” and “*Super Lawyers*™.” Selected as one of the Top 100 Lawyers and Top 50 Women Lawyers in DC.

1666 Connecticut Avenue NW
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Thomas C. Mooney, ESQ.

CRIMINAL DEFENSE

Thomas C. Mooney, Esq. was honored with the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award by the Maryland Association for Justice (MAJ). The MAJ Trial lawyer of the year Award is bestowed upon the Maryland trial lawyer who has made the greatest contribution to the public interest by litigating cases of precedential value-either because they changed the law in a way that is beneficial to Marylanders or has, for other reasons, "sent a message"; to those who might otherwise trample upon the rights of Maryland citizens.

Thomas C. Mooney is a natural-born criminal law attorney and the son of a Prince George's County criminal trial lawyer. He leads a legal team in Upper Marlboro that practices aggressive and intelligent criminal defense strategies that get results. Thomas has been named as a "Superlawyer" every year since 2011.

Our clients have peace of mind knowing we are going to bat for them, seeking the best possible outcome. We don't sit back; we initiate action in motions, hearings and trials. As your criminal defense lawyers, we will do whatever it takes to protect your freedom, your future and your reputation.

When the big cases come up, our firm is sought. We're persuasive before juries. We know the law not just on the books, but also in precedents and rulings all over the U.S. We're good at what we do. The results speak for themselves.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

The Law Offices of Thomas C. Mooney strictly handles criminal cases. The practice is intentionally limited, ensuring maximum focus on our clients facing serious criminal charges. There is no margin for error in criminal defense.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND AWARDS

Bar Admissions: Maryland, 1998; U.S. Court of Appeals 4th Circuit, 1998

Professional Associations: Maryland Association For Justice, Member; Maryland State Bar Association, Member; Prince George's County Bar Association, Member; Maryland Criminal Defense Attorneys' Association

Education: Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Lansing, Michigan J.D. - 1998; University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland B.S. Major: Psychology

Honors: Maryland Association for Justice Trial Lawyer of the Year
Baltimore Magazine's Maryland Top Attorneys in Maryland Super Lawyers, 2011 to Present

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Bean, Kinney & Korman

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Bean, Kinney & Korman understands the importance of putting clients first. As a full-service, multi-disciplinary firm, our attorneys provide versatile and experienced legal counsel to businesses, individuals, and families in a wide array of practice areas including domestic relations, commercial and civil litigation, employment, mergers & acquisitions, government contracting and more.

The attorneys recognized here (Christian Lapham, Jennifer McCammon, Richard Kelley, and Lynn Hawkins) are longstanding leaders in their practice areas of family law, civil litigation and government contracting, regularly providing the best service and counsel to their clients to help them achieve their desired outcomes.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Domestic Relations, Civil Litigation, Government Contracting

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Best Lawyers®, *Super Lawyers*™. Best Places to Work in Virginia, Best Places to Work in Arlington.

2311 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500
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beankinney.com



ShounBach

FAMILY/ELDER LAW, ESTATE PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

What sets us apart? We actively work with our clients to develop constructive, long term solutions to family issues. We are committed to achieving the unique goals of each client by providing tailored solutions to individual family needs.

ShounBach can help protect your interests and achieve your goals. We have seasoned attorneys trained in mediation and Collaborative Divorce if your case would benefit from out-of-court resolution. If court is in your future, we have a team of experienced litigators. Our elder law, estate planning and administration team can help assess and plan for your family's needs. Contact us for help navigating your family's future.™

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Best Lawyers in America; American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; International Academy of Family Lawyers; *Northern Virginia Magazine*, *Super Lawyers*; Virginia Legal Elite; *US News & World Report* Top Ranked Law Firm

4000 Legato Road, #400
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shoun.com



Regan Zambri Long PLLC

PERSONAL INJURY LAW FIRM

President Patrick M. Regan has spent the last 40 years fighting on behalf of victims injured in car and truck accidents, bicycle accidents, and through medical malpractice. Pat was honored as "Lawyer of the Year" in 2022 by *Best Lawyers*® for Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions. Since 2007, *Super Lawyers*™ has recognized Pat as a "Top 100" lawyer and has repeatedly acknowledged him as a "Top 10 Super Lawyer." He is a Past-President of the DC Trial Lawyers Association, which has named him "Trial Lawyer of the Year," and he is a member of the International Society of Barristers.

VP and Senior Partner Salvatore J. Zambri has over 30 years of experience representing victims of personal injury, from car and truck accidents to food poisoning and medical malpractice cases. Sal has been named "Lawyer of the Year" in 2020 for Product Liability Litigation by *Best Lawyers*®; has twice been named a "Top 10 Super Lawyer" by *Super Lawyers*™; is a Past-President of the DC Trial Lawyers Association, which has named him "Trial Lawyer of the Year," and he is a member of the International Society of Barristers.

Partner Paul Cornoni works to secure compensation for victims involved in complex personal injury claims, including automobile accidents, product liability, and medical malpractice. Paul has been named a "Best Lawyer" by *Best Lawyers*® since 2016. He has also been named a "Super Lawyer" every year since 2014 by *Super Lawyers*™, and he is Past-President of the DC Trial Lawyers Association, which has named him "Trial Lawyer of the Year."

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Personal Injury, Wrongful Death, Traumatic Brain Injury, Medical Malpractice, Defective Products, Consumer Fraud

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Best Lawyers in America®, *Super Lawyers*™, *Washingtonian* Top Lawyers, American College of Trial Lawyers, International Society of Barristers

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Blankingship & Keith, P.C.

RESULTS. THAT'S OUR FOCUS.

For more than 40 years, Blankingship & Keith has made our clients the top priority. Our clients range from large corporations, small businesses, to individuals. The firm is dedicated to serving each client with integrity, expertise, and comprehensive attention. Our attorneys recognize that law is a service profession, and have committed ourselves to delivering services at the highest standards. "Our focus is on providing exceptional service — and results — for every client," says founding partner John Keith. "The talent, creativity, and sound judgment of our lawyers give us depth and flexibility rarely seen in firms of our size."

Blankingship & Keith serves our clients' diverse needs by offering a range of practice areas, including civil litigation, divorce and family law, employment defense, bankruptcy (creditor), trusts and estates, personal injury, appellate work, business law, commercial real estate and leasing, foreclosure, education law, eminent domain, and land use. The firm is known not just for the quality of its legal work, but also for its members' dedication to bar associations and volunteer efforts. The firm remains committed to providing pro bono services to civic, charitable, and religious organizations, as well as to community members in need.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Civil litigation, Personal Injury, Family Law, Employment Defense, Bankruptcy, Trusts & Estates, & more

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Recognized by: *Best Lawyers*®, Best Law Firms, *Washingtonian*, *Arlington Magazine*, *Northern Virginia Magazine*, *Virginia Business*, and *Super Lawyers*™.

4020 University Drive, Suite 300
Fairfax, VA 22030
703.691.1235



G. Allen Dale, PLLC

PASSIONATE, KNOWLEDGEABLE, EXPERIENCED AND EFFECTIVE

The Law Offices of G. Allen Dale, PLLC, is a litigation firm with a national practice in criminal and enforcement matters. Its founder, Allen Dale, has over 45 years of experience in white-collar criminal defense and regularly represents individuals in high-stakes criminal matters. Clients rely on Mr. Dale for his legal expertise and skill, innovative thinking, and zealous advocacy. He is solution oriented and approaches each case with the passion, drive, and tenacity his clients deserve. His extensive knowledge of criminal law, his seasoned insight, and his passionate commitment to preparation and excellence has earned him the top honors and accolades in the legal industry, including an AV Preeminent rating from Martindale-Hubbell.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Criminal Defense, Nationwide Federal Criminal Defense, Government Investigations

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Perennial selection to *Best Lawyers*® and *Super Lawyers*™, Top lawyers *Washingtonian* magazine, Top 100 Trial Lawyers, *Expertise*-Best Defense Lawyers in DC

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Standing: Stephen Metz, Bankruptcy; Sandra Brooks, Family Law; Edward Bloom, Real Estate; Cheryl Hepfer, Family Law; Marshall Yaap, Family Law; Erin Golding, Family Law. Seated: Joseph Condo, Family Law; Alison Noll, Estates and Trusts

Offit | Kurman

FAMILY LAW, ESTATE PLANNING, REAL ESTATE, & BANKRUPTCY

Offit Kurman attorneys deliver creative yet practical legal solutions to businesses, individuals, and families in more than 30 areas of practice.

With a nationwide presence, Offit Kurman is a full-service AmLaw 200 firm providing comprehensive representation to privately held companies and affluent families throughout their respective business and personal journeys.

No matter your sector, Offit Kurman offers a progressive approach to safeguarding your business, preserving family wealth, and resolving complex legal matters. Our commitment to excellence and diverse legal services, coupled with our collaborative and entrepreneurial culture, ensures unparalleled access to seasoned counsel across all legal domains.

Our offices span California, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Business and Corporate Advisory, Commercial Litigation, Construction, Creditors' Rights, Bankruptcy, Employment and Labor Law, Estates and Trusts, Family Law, Landlord Representation, Mergers & Acquisitions, Real Estate

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

- Our attorneys are regularly listed by *Super Lawyers*™, *Best Lawyers*®, Martindale-Hubbell and regional business magazines for their outstanding commitment to their clients and practice.
- Listed as #180 on the Am Law 200
- Ranked #167 by the NLJ 500
- 90+ Attorneys Recognized in 2025 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*®
- Recognized Among 2025 "Best Law Firms" by *The Best Lawyers in America*®

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240.507.1700



Curran Moher Weis, PC

ATTORNEYS DEDICATED TO FAMILY LAW

Curran Moher Weis, PC congratulates attorneys Gerald R. Curran and Steven Goldman for being named to the *Washingtonian's* list of 2024 Top Lawyers!

At Curran Moher Weis, PC, we pride ourselves on providing goal-oriented legal representation for individuals with complex separation, divorce, and post-divorce related issues. With over 150 years of combined experience, our lawyers craft tailored legal strategies for optimal results. We are skilled litigators in the courtroom as well as the largest group of Collaborative Divorce practitioners in the DC Metro area. Our attorneys have received many of the highest awards and distinctions in the legal field and we are proud of our reputation in the legal community.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce litigation, Collaborative Divorce, Mediation, Child Custody, Spousal Support

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Best Law Firms and Lawyers in America, AV Preeminent Rating Martindale-Hubbell®, *Super Lawyers*™, *Ten Leaders*, *Virginia Business Legal Elite*

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Paradiso, Taub, Sinay & Kostecka, P.C.

FAMILY LAW

Over the past almost 40 years, Paradiso, Taub, Sinay & Kostecka P.C. has established a well-earned reputation for excellence and adherence to the highest ethical standards in the practice of family law. The firm concentrates its practice in all areas of family law in Maryland and DC, including divorce, custody, spousal/child support, equitable division of property, and pre/post-nuptial agreements. In collaboration with financial experts, counselors, and other professionals, the attorneys have developed strategies designed to achieve the best possible outcomes for their clients. They are experienced litigators, mediators, arbitrators, and collaborative law practitioners, recognized for their skill and professionalism.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Family Law Litigation, Mediation, Collaborative Law, and Arbitration

AFFILIATIONS & AWARDS

AV Rating, Martindale Hubbell®; *Washingtonian* (Lifetime Achievement Awards), *Best Lawyers of America*®, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *Bethesda Magazine*, *U.S. News & World Report*; *American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, *International Academy of Family Lawyers*, and *Chambers & Partners*.

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Catherine Bertram

PLAINTIFF'S MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

Catherine "Katie" Bertram, co-founder of Bertram & Murphy, built her boutique firm on decades of experience as both a medical malpractice attorney and as former director of risk management at Georgetown University Hospital. She knows how doctors and hospitals work, as well as how the hospital attorneys evaluate claims against them. She draws this knowledge to advocate for injured patients and their families.

Recent Trial Results 2019-2024

\$2.5 million verdict Maryland (2024)

\$4 million verdict DC (2024)

\$17.1 million verdict DC

\$35 million verdict VA

\$12 million verdict VA

She has obtained settlements totaling over \$100 million for her clients and their families over the past 5 years.

Bertram focuses on medical malpractice and personal injury in part because her mother is a nurse. "It allows me to combine the law and medicine," she said. "I enjoy talking to juries and teaching them about complicated medical cases in a way that is easy to understand." Bertram has an in-house nurse on her team who is involved in every case from the first intake through trial to help her clients every step of the way.

Bertram has received several distinctions throughout her career and is committed to serving her community. She co-founded Power100 DC, a local charity giving circle and volunteers with the DC Bar Pro Bono Center committee, which finds lawyers to meet the legal needs of DC's low-income residents, nonprofits, and small businesses.



AREAS OF PRACTICE

Medical Malpractice, Birth Injuries, Wrongful Death
Licensed in DC, MD, and VA.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND AWARDS

Washingtonian Best Lawyers

Top 5 Medical Malpractice Firms, 2019

The Best Lawyers in America®, 2024

Top 100 Lawyers, 2024

Super Lawyers™, 2024

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blg-dc.com

Farr Law Firm

ELDER LAW, TRUSTS, ESTATES, PROBATE

The Farr Law Firm, one of the top law firms in the U.S., is led by Certified Elder Law Attorney and 4-time Best-Selling Author Evan H. Farr, widely recognized as one of the top Elder Law, Estate Planning, Veterans Planning, and Special Needs Planning attorneys in Virginia, Maryland, and DC, and one of the foremost experts in the nation in the field of Medicaid Asset Protection and related Trusts. Evan has been named by *Super Lawyers*® as one of the top 5% of Elder Law and Estate Planning attorneys in Virginia, Maryland, and DC every year since 2008, and has been listed in *Best Lawyers in America*® every year since 2013. Evan is the creator of the Living Trust Plus® asset protection trust used by over 60 attorneys around the country, along with the proprietary 4-Needs Advance Medical Directive® and Long-term Care Directive® used by clients wanting to receive the most appropriate medical care and the best possible long-term care if and when needed.

The Farr Law Firm's team of over 15 legal professionals assists people in all areas of Elder Law, Estate Planning, Special Needs Planning, and Estate Administration.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Medicaid Planning; Wills/Trusts/Estates; Special Needs Planning; Asset Protection Planning; Powers of Attorney & Advance Medical Directives; Long-term Care Planning; Guardianships/Conservatorships; Trust Administration & Probate Proceedings.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Certified Elder Law Attorney, NELF; NAELA Council of Advanced Practitioners; Academy of Special Needs Planners; 4-time best-selling author in the field of Elder Law; Estate Planning and Elder Law monthly columnist for *The Practical Lawyer* magazine

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1775 I Street NW, #1150, Washington, DC
1 Research Court, #450, Rockville, MD
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Grover & Badalian

**ANNE E. GROVER, ESQ.; KRISTINA BADALIAN, ESQ.;
CAROLINE C. PALMER, ESQ.; AND CAROLINE F. CLARKE, ESQ.**

Custody and divorce litigation can be the most difficult point in a person's life. At Grover & Badalian, we recognize that a negotiated settlement may be the least costly and best resolution for a family. However, a negotiated settlement is not always possible. The attorneys at Grover & Badalian are pragmatic, innovative, hard-working, and excellent trial attorneys. When settlement is not possible, we handle complex and difficult cases that involve hidden funds, voluntary impoverishment of a parent, alienation of children, tracing of assets and we work diligently to protect our clients' interests. We work **with** our clients to pursue the best resolution in each case.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

At Grover & Badalian, LLC, we are experienced in complex financial and hotly contested custody cases, prenuptial agreements, domestic violence cases, and negotiated settlements.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

- *Washingtonian* "Top Divorce Lawyers"
- *Bethesda Magazine* "Top Lawyers"
- *Best Lawyers*® 2022-2024
- Top 100 Lawyers in DC and Maryland, *Super Lawyers*™

11 N. Washington Street, Suite 630
Rockville, MD 20850
301.358.1813 | gbfamilylawyers.com



Holtzman Vogel

THE NATION'S MOST POWERFUL VOICES IN BUSINESS, POLICY, AND GOVERNMENT RELY ON HOLTZMAN VOGEL FOR THEIR HIGHEST-STAKES LEGAL CHALLENGES

Holtzman Vogel is nationally recognized as a premier firm providing cutting-edge legal strategies to the country's highest-profile clients. With offices across the U.S., the firm's more than 50 lawyers provide counsel to Fortune 500 companies, trade associations, PACs, campaigns, lobbyists, non-profits, and private donors on complex legal and regulatory matters.

POLITICAL, REGULATORY AND LITIGATION POWERHOUSE RANKED TOP IN THE NATION

Chambers USA ranks Holtzman Vogel as one of the top political, environmental, and land use law firms in the U.S. Attorneys are listed as top lawyers by *POLITICO*, *Best Lawyers*® and Campaigns & Elections, among others. The firm's unprecedented consolidation of talent in political law includes former Federal Election Commissioners, former State Supreme Court Justice, White House and Department of Justice counsel, and high-ranking federal agency counsel. Our lawyers have also served as presidential campaign counsel, national political party counsel, and senior counsel in the US Congress and state legislatures.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Appellate; Campaign Finance; Commercial Litigation; Constitutional Law; Corporate Governance; Corporate Internal Investigations; Election Law; Environmental; FARA; Government and Congressional Investigations; Government Ethics Compliance; Land Use; Lobbying and Grassroots Advocacy; Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Organizations; Political Law; Privacy; and White Collar Criminal Defense

Holtzman Vogel Baran Torchinsky & Josefiak PLLC
DC | Virginia | Florida | Arizona | New York
www.holtzmanvogel.com



Front row: Anne Marie Jackson, Darryl Feldman. Back row: Magdalena D'Aiuto, Bryn Baffer, Rachel De Rose, Rebecca Shankman

Feldman Jackson, PC

LEADERS IN FAMILY LAW

We understand family disputes are difficult. When the stresses of the legal process are added, the experience can seem overwhelming. At Feldman Jackson, we strive to reduce stress by providing compassion, guidance and, most importantly, a sense of control for our clients over their future. Our entire practice concentrates on family law. Our singular focus ensures we are well-equipped to handle any divorce, from the most straightforward to the most complicated. Routinely, our cases involve complex valuation issues related to assets and business interests, as well as issues regarding custody of children—including high conflict cases. All our partners serve as mediators to assist parties in reaching a negotiated resolution. All our attorneys are also adept in advocating for our clients in mediation. While a negotiated settlement is almost always preferred, we strategically pursue litigation if that is the best way to achieve our client's goals or protect their interests. Our attorneys are ranked among the top national and local family law professionals and frequently teach other family law attorneys, including teaching trial advocacy. With this experience comes acumen, knowledge, and the ability to creatively solve the complex problems that arise in family law cases.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Mediation, Child Custody & Support, Property Division, Pre- & Postnuptial Agreements, Litigation.

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Best Law Firms 2025, DC, Family Law Tier 1; Top Divorce Attorneys; *Washingtonian's* Top Lawyers; American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; *Best Lawyers* in America® & *Ones to Watch*® 2024; Lawyer of the Year, Family Law-DC Metro Area; *Super Lawyers*™ & *Rising Stars*®, MD & DC.

7600 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite #625
Bethesda, MD 20814

301.715.8110 | FeldmanJackson.com



Brandi J. Harden

HARDEN | LAW, PLLC

Brandi Harden is highly regarded as one of the nation's best trial lawyers. Ms. Harden specializes in criminal defense, police misconduct, and wrongful death cases. With 25 years of litigation experience, Ms. Harden has developed an unrivaled record of success in state and federal courts.

Ms. Harden is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and a Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School's Trial Advocacy Workshop. Harden | Law offers premiere client centered representation, and Ms. Harden litigates each case with a zealous and effective edge.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Federal and State Criminal Defense
Civil Rights and Police Brutality, and
Wrongful Death

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

American College of Trial Lawyers, The Barristers of Washington, D.C., and Lawyer of the Year-D.C. Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

400 7th Street NW
Washington, DC 20004

202.621.8268

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Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight

CIVIL RIGHTS FIRM

Sanford Heisler Sharp McKnight is a nationwide, plaintiffs-side law firm founded twenty years ago by David Sanford and Jeremy Heisler to litigate public interest and social justice cases that make a significant difference in society. The firm has offices in Washington, DC, New York, Palo Alto, San Francisco, San Diego, and Nashville.

David Sanford has served as lead counsel in more than 50 class actions, and he has represented over 100 lawyers and C-Suite executives in discrimination claims against their law firms and companies. David was named in 2024 by Forbes to its first-ever America's Top 200 Lawyers list.

In 2024, H. Vincent McKnight Jr., Co-Chair of the firm's Whistleblower and Qui Tam Practice Group, became Co-Vice Chairman of the firm and the fourth named partner. He is a leading voice on whistleblower law who has generated approximately \$5 billion for the U.S. government and clients during the past ten years. Vince currently serves as chairman of the board of The Anti-Fraud Coalition (TAF).

In Washington, the firm also has a very active practice representing victims of sexual violence. The firm has litigated numerous cases representing members of the US armed forces and students at colleges and universities. The firm has also waged and won lawsuits that have protected thousands of employees' rights to have their 401(k) retirement plans appropriately managed as required by the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act ("ERISA").

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Discrimination and Harassment; Wage and Hour Violations (Wage Theft); Whistleblower and Qui Tam; Executive Representation; ERISA Retirement Fund Mismanagement; Sexual Violence, Title IX, and Victims' Rights; Asian American Finance and Litigation; Public Interest Litigation

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

The firm has been recognized by the National Law Journal as Civil Rights Firm of the Year, Employment Rights Firm of the Year, and Human Rights Firm of the Year; by Benchmark Litigation as Labor and Employment Firm of the Year; by Law360 as Employment Practice Group of the Year; and is nationally ranked by Chambers & Partners.

202.499.5200
sanfordheisler.com

Florance Van Scoy LLC

A PREEMINENT BOUTIQUE FAMILY LAW FIRM

We exclusively practice family law, allowing us to provide the level of service and attention we know families need during this time in their lives. We understand the importance of being with our clients every step of the way, and we know our clients appreciate and value the level of support and guidance we provide.

We are like-minded in terms of serving the profession – we are each actively engaged in and serve in leadership roles in the legal community, and we each have a deep commitment to improving the legal profession.

Our goal is always to effectively guide each client through their matter with courtesy, with professionalism, and with a focus on the client's preferred outcomes. When an out-of-court resolution is not possible, we are fierce advocates for our clients in the courtroom. We each have reputations for being skilled litigators and formidable opponents in any conflict. We are seen as "go-to" attorneys in the family law community, and we serve clients in Maryland and the District of Columbia.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Custody, Support, Alimony, Marital Property Division, Mediation, Pre- and Postnuptial Agreements, Parent Coordination, Best Interest Attorney

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Lawyers, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; *Best Lawyers in America*®, *Super Lawyers*™

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Casey Weinberg Florance and Donna E. Van Scoy



Michael Nakamura, Heather Mehigan,
Jay Eisenberg & Michael Lichtenstein

Shulman Rogers

MICHAEL NAKAMURA, HEATHER MEHIGAN, JAY EISENBERG & MICHAEL LICHTENSTEIN

Michael Nakamura is an authority in the fields of personal injury, wrongful death, and medical malpractice, as well as Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) cases. Heather Mehigan is a recognized leader in a full range of family law matters including complex business and property valuations, division of marital property and custody/visitation issues. Jay Eisenberg excels in sophisticated trust and estate planning, using proven techniques to minimize estate and gift taxes and assist with transitioning wealth to the next generation. Michael Lichtenstein leads the Bankruptcy, Restructuring and Creditors' Rights Group and delivers successful outcomes for clients in Chapter 11 and other bankruptcy proceedings across the U.S.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Business and personal legal services for national, regional and local clients including Medical Malpractice/ Personal Injury, Divorce and Family Law, Estates and Trusts and Bankruptcy/Restructuring

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Lawyers, *Best Lawyers*®, *Super Lawyers*™, Chambers and Partners, ACTEC, Martindale AV rating

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Peter C. Grenier, ESQ.

GRENIER LAW GROUP

Peter Grenier has amassed more than **\$500 million** in verdicts and settlements, and has been named “Washington’s Hottest Personal Injury Lawyer” and “Lifetime Lawyer” by *Washingtonian*. Most recently, Peter won a record \$107 million verdict in Prince George’s County. Grenier Law Group is a hard charging litigation boutique law firm, focusing on serious injury, death, and civil rights cases nationwide. GLG works harder and smarter than its opponents, out-maneuvers, out-strategizes, and gets blockbuster results that speak for themselves: a record-setting \$98 million verdict against the DC Police; a \$14 million wrongful death settlement with DC Metro; an historical \$11 million settlement in the Virginia Tech Massacre cases; the only successful case in the Columbine High School shootings (\$1.5 million); \$8.5 million and \$6 million settlements in two brain injury cases; \$11.9 million verdict in a wrongful death case; plus countless other multi-million dollar verdicts and settlements. The firm regularly handles high profile cases locally and nationally, including the Washington Navy Yard shootings. GLG was even recognized as having one of the Top 100 Settlements in California. Peter has regularly been recognized, both locally and nationally.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Serious Personal Injury/Wrongful Death; Medical/Nursing Home Negligence; Police Misconduct/Governmental Liability

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian’s “Hottest Personal Injury Lawyer” and “Lifetime Lawyer;” *Washington Post’s* Top Lawyers; *Best Lawyers In America*®; *Washingtonian’s* “Best Legal Minds”

1920 L Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20036

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grenierlawgroup.com



Marina Medvin, ESQ.

MEDVIN LAW

Initially added to the *Washingtonian* Best Lawyers list in 2017, Marina Medvin stands at the forefront of criminal defense advocacy. Renowned for handling high-profile and complex cases in federal and state courts, Ms. Medvin delivers vigorous representation and a trusted commitment to her clients’ legal interests. With over 15 years of experience as a trial lawyer, she has handled the full gamut of criminal cases—from homicide to reckless driving and a bit of everything in between. Beyond the courtroom, Marina is a fervent defender of American liberties and is sought for legal and political commentary by the media. After October 7, Ms. Medvin dedicated her large social media platform to advocacy for the hostages.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Washington DC Federal Criminal Defense and Political Prosecution Defense; Virginia Criminal Defense, DUI, White Collar

AWARDS

Washingtonian Best Lawyers, *Northern Virginia Magazine* Top Lawyers, *Super Lawyers*™, *Virginia Business Magazine’s* Legal Elite, *Arlington Magazine* Top Attorneys

MEDVIN LAW PLC

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K. Leigh Taylor, Attorney at Law

TAYLOR HUGULEY POWERS PLLC

K. Leigh Taylor is one of the founding partners of Taylor Huguley Powers PLLC. For more than 20 years, she has helped clients navigate their family law cases in and out of courtrooms throughout Northern Virginia. Leigh provides her clients with sound advice that enables them to make positive decisions for their best interests, their family's best interests, and the path that's right for them. She can negotiate, mediate, and/or collaborate for her clients' cases for settlement purposes and is trained in collaborative law. Leigh is also an experienced litigator and zealous advocate for her clients in the courtroom. She works with clients that have pre-marital needs and/or post-divorce modification issues as well. Leigh frequently speaks at continuing legal education seminars and pro bono events for her peers, and among other accolades, she is rated AV Preeminent® by Martindale-Hubbell and recognized as a top family law attorney in Virginia by *The Best Lawyers in America*® and *Super Lawyers*™.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce and Family Law, Complex and High-value Equitable Distribution, Custody/Visitation and Support, Post-Divorce Modifications, Protective Orders

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Immediate Past President, Fairfax Bar Association
Past President, Northern Virginia Chapter, VWAA
Director, Fairfax Law Foundation
Gold Member, Rule 6.1 Society, LSNV

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thpfamilylaw.com



Masterman Krogmann P.C.

FAMILY LAW

The choice of a family law attorney can be a difficult one. Divorce cases involve tough financial issues and emotional custodial issues arising from the already difficult change to every aspect of a person's life.

The attorneys of Masterman Krogmann P.C. pursue their clients' objectives on a variety of ways. They obtain desired results through court decisions, mediated settlements, and other types of negotiations. With significant experience in all aspects of family law, they tailor their advice to fit the goals of a broad range of clientele. David Masterman has been recognized in *Washingtonian* Top Divorce Lawyers 2024.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Family Law – divorce, property division; spousal and child support, custody, modification of custody and support.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Masterman Krogmann P.C. is listed as one of the Best Law Firms in the field of Family Law in *Best Lawyers*®. Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Peer Rated Attorneys.

1760 Old Meadow Road, Suite 310
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mastermanlaw.com



*Left to right, back: Heather Hostetter, Sheila Kadagathur, Alexandra Strollo, Emily Folio, Chelsie Deusa
Left to right, front: Rebecca Cohn, Jessica Vinnik, Amy Strent, Jessica Saunders*

Hostetter Strent, LLC

DOMESTIC RELATIONS ATTORNEYS PRACTICING THROUGHOUT DC & MARYLAND

Hostetter Strent LLC's niche area of practice is domestic relations law in all its forms and degrees of complexity at any stage in your relationship. Our focus is on delivering an individualized case plan to each client with a high level of responsiveness, attention to detail and accessibility. Our clients' input in solving their legal issues is important to us, and we employ the team approach to problem solving with the clients and within our firm. The firm's reputation in the legal community means success in both litigation in court and negotiation with other attorneys. We look forward to working with you.

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Hostetter Strent LLC takes pride in its team of nine attorneys, who possess diverse experience from various practice areas and regions. **Heather Hostetter, Amy Strent, and Sheila Kadagathur** are honored to be recognized as *Washingtonian* Top Lawyers for 2024.

7201 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 675
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301.657.0010
hostetterstrent.com



Sarah A. Piper

FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY

Sarah Piper has handled equitable distribution, support and custody matters throughout Northern Virginia. She has a passion for helping clients navigate custody issues, with the goal of helping them move forward and co-parent effectively. She has served as a Guardian ad litem for children, and believes that experience gives her a different perspective in custody matters. Sarah's practical approach to solving family law problems helps clients achieve a fair, equitable, and prompt resolution. Although she enjoys assisting clients in the process of reaching agreement, she is skilled at balancing the collaborative nature of that process with litigation.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Family law: divorce, property division, support, custody, premarital agreements

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Super Lawyers™ – Top 50 Women & Top 100 Attorneys; *Virginia Business* Legal Elite

Sarah A. Piper
Hicks Crandall Juhl, PC
3201 Jermantown Road, Suite 200
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703.691.4848



Correia & Puth, PLLC

ADVOCATES FOR EMPLOYEES

Correia & Puth is a nationally recognized law firm representing employees confronting workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, sex assault, unpaid wages and commissions, and whistleblower retaliation. Correia & Puth represents employees at all levels, from executive severance agreements to federal employees and private sector employees confronting bias and retaliation.

Washingtonian has long recognized Linda Correia and Jonathan Puth as among the best employment lawyers in Washington, DC, and both are leaders in the legal community. Their team of attorneys work tenaciously to advance their clients' interests and protect employee rights. The lawyers at Correia & Puth are skilled litigators with a proven record of success, and have earned a reputation as accomplished, talented, and passionate advocates for their clients.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Retaliation, Discrimination, Severance Negotiations, Whistleblower, Title IX

AFFILIATIONS & AWARDS

Washingtonian Best Lawyers; *US News & World Report* Best Law Firms; Martindale AV® Preeminent Rating; *The Best Lawyers in America*®, *Super Lawyers*™; *Lawdragon*; College of Labor and Employment Lawyers

1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 450
Washington, DC 20036
202. 602.6500 | correiaputh.com



Andrew M. Beato

STEIN MITCHELL BEATO & MISSNER LLP

Andrew Beato has successfully represented whistleblowers in actions recovering more than \$3.8 billion for federal and state governments. Stein Mitchell is a leading litigation firm successfully delivering results for clients in matters in the United States and internationally. For more than 30 years, Mr. Beato has represented clients in high-profile government matters and complex claims involving financial, tax, securities, commodities, and healthcare laws. Whistleblowers can rely on Mr. Beato for confidential solutions under government programs that reward individuals who report wrongdoing.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

False Claims Act & Whistleblower; Civil Litigation; Government Investigations

DESIGNATIONS & AWARDS

US News Best Law Firms (First Tier); The National Trial Lawyers Top 100 Trial Lawyers (2014-current); *Washingtonian's* Top Lawyers (2013-current)

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Deborah L. Webb, Howard B. Soypher, Rhian McGrath, Lisa Fishberg, Christina P. DeVault, Malorie Letcavage

Webb Soypher McGrath

DEBORAH L. WEBB, HOWARD B. SOYPHER, RHIAN MCGRATH, LISA FISHBERG

Choosing the right family law attorney is an important decision. Judges and other lawyers view Webb Soypher McGrath as a prominent law firm whose attorneys are respected leaders in family law. Our dynamic group of attorneys provide sound judgment and creative solutions to help clients preserve assets and achieve the best outcomes for themselves and their children. We are experienced in resolving high conflict and dynamic family issues. Our colleagues often ask us to serve as mediators and to provide expert witness opinions in their cases. Understanding the importance of being responsive and available to our clients, we provide thorough legal counsel while being cost-effective. Our family law firm is located in Bethesda, making us accessible to our clients in both Maryland and the District of Columbia. Trust us to help you protect what matters most.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Custody, Support, Alimony, Marital Property Division, Mediation, Pre-Nuptial Agreements, Collaborative Practice, Estate Litigation

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers; International Academy of Family Lawyers; *Washingtonian* "Top Lawyers"; *Bethesda Magazine* "Top Lawyers"; Top 100 Lawyers in DC and Maryland, Super Lawyers

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Bethesda, MD 20814
301.298.8401 | wsmfamily.com



Laura C. Dove, Jennifer A. Bradley, and Jennifer A. Mullett

Mullett Dove & Bradley Family Law, PLLC

DIVORCE & FAMILY LAW

With an emphasis on comprehensive service, our attorneys are dedicated to assisting clients in a wide variety of family related matters. The attorneys of MDB have significant experience handling complex divorce and custody issues. Our services are tailored to the unique circumstances of each client. We make every effort to reach resolution through amicable negotiations, mediation or the collaborative process, but are known for producing positive results in the courtroom and zealously advocating for clients when litigation is necessary. Our practice is focused primarily in the trial courts of Northern Virginia and D.C., as well as the appellate courts of the Commonwealth.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Domestic relations

DESIGNATIONS & AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Lawyers
U.S. News Best Law Firms
Best Lawyers
Rated by *Super Lawyers*
Northern Virginia Magazine Top Lawyers
Arlington Magazine Top Lawyers
Virginia Business Legal Elite

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703.522.8100
mdbfamilylaw.com



Wayne R. Cohen



Jill Stanley



Adam R. Leighton



Kim Brooks-Rodney

Cohen & Cohen

SERIOUS INJURIES DESERVE EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS

Founded in 1993, Cohen & Cohen is regularly identified as one of the top injury law firms in the Washington metropolitan region. Founder Wayne Cohen has been called by *Washingtonian* as one of the “most feared personal injury lawyers,” one of the top 50 lawyers in DC, and one of “Washington’s top trial lawyers.” Mr. Cohen is a past president of the Trial Lawyers Association of Washington, DC (TLA-DC) and an Associate Professorial Lecturer of Trial Skills at the George Washington University Law School. He has also been interviewed by the Today Show, Good Morning America, Dateline, CNN, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, and WTOP radio. Partner Adam Leighton is also a past-president of the TLA-DC. In 2024, Mr. Leighton resolved a bus accident case on behalf of his injured client for \$7,000,000. Partner Kim Brooks-Rodney has spent 30 years litigating personal injury cases. Ms. Brooks-Rodney represented victims of the 2009 Metro crash in Washington, DC, as well as the 2015 Metro incident where the trains filled with smoke. She obtained a \$5,134,000 verdict in a medical malpractice case in Virginia. Founding partner Jill Stanley began her career as an Assistant District Attorney, and a reporter for America’s Most Wanted. The firm represents catastrophically injured victims throughout the DMV.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Auto/Motorcycle/Truck Accidents, Wrongful Death, Medical Mistakes, Product Defects, Work Injuries, Serious Personal Injury Matters

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Appearances: ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, WTOP, *USA Today*, etc. Designations: *Super Lawyers*™ (multi-year); Law Professor—GW Law, Best Lawyers, Washington DC

202.955.4529
cohenandcohen.net



Pictured (from left to right): Back Row - Callie Carnemark, Bear Bruun, Sara Furlow, Sean Stein. Seated - Lin Delaney, Hope Stafford.

Delaney Stafford LLC

FAMILY LAW FIRM

Delaney Stafford LLC is a boutique family law practice in the DC metropolitan area. Founding partners, Lin Delaney and Hope Stafford, have worked together for over 15 years, tackling some of the most difficult issues that arise in divorce and custody cases. Lin and Hope have both dedicated their careers to working for families experiencing difficult custody issues and co-parenting dynamics. Hope’s engineering and finance background also provide a strong foundation for analytical work in complex financial cases. Joined by four associates and a dedicated legal staff, Delaney Stafford is committed to serving each client with compassion, integrity, and dignity.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Child Custody, Property Division and Valuation, Alimony, Child Support, Domestic Violence & Protection Orders, Prenuptial/Postnuptial Agreements, Mediation & Settlement Agreements, Appeals

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

Super Lawyers, 2007–2024; Chambers and Partners, High Net Worth, 2024; MD Network Against Domestic Violence Community Partner Award, 2019; Tier 1 Ranking, Family Law & Mediation in U.S. *News-Best Lawyers*; Top Lawyers, *Washingtonian* & *Bethesda Magazine*

301.660.6745 | delaneystafford.com

Wendy H. Schwartz and Associates

FAMILY LAW

Wendy H. Schwartz and Associates, PLLC is a boutique family law practice serving clients in Washington, DC, Virginia, and Maryland. Our team of dedicated and knowledgeable attorneys and staff help our clients through the emotional and financial aspects of their family law matters. We are knowledgeable about the effect of mental health and substance abuse issues and their impact on custody, support and the division of assets. We provide clients with personal attention and creative solutions and most often settle disputes through negotiation, mediation and collaboration. If we are unable to settle disputes, our reputation as strong advocates and litigators in Court is widely recognized. In addition to her law practice, Wendy is a trained Mediator and is certified as a High Conflict Divorce Coach working with individuals (married or otherwise) before, during and after litigation.

Wendy has been named a top Family Law lawyer by the *Washingtonian* including most recently in the 2023 Top Family Lawyers list.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, asset valuation and division, custody and support issues, spousal support, pre-marital / post-nuptial agreements, collaborative practice, mediation, high conflict divorce coach.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Member, Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC); Vice President of the Maryland Chapter of the AFCC; Member, International Academy of Collaborative Law and DC Chapter; recognized repeatedly in *Best Lawyers*®.

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Washington, DC 20006
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info@schwartzlawpllc.com



Kristin Henrikson, ESQ.

HENRIKSON LAW

Kristin's practice encompasses the full range of family law issues. Her cases include amicable matters requiring brief assistance, as well as high conflict and complex litigation.

Kristin provides case-specific analysis and advice, honest counsel, and a child-centered and solution-oriented approach. She also brings to her cases the benefit of 25 years' experience and larger firm sophistication, with the attention, responsiveness and flexibility of a solo practice. With a keen understanding of the cost — both financial and emotional — of protracted negotiations and litigation, Kristin works with each client to find a path to resolution.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Asset Division, Alimony, Custody, Child Support, Premarital Agreements, Mediation, Arbitration, Appeals

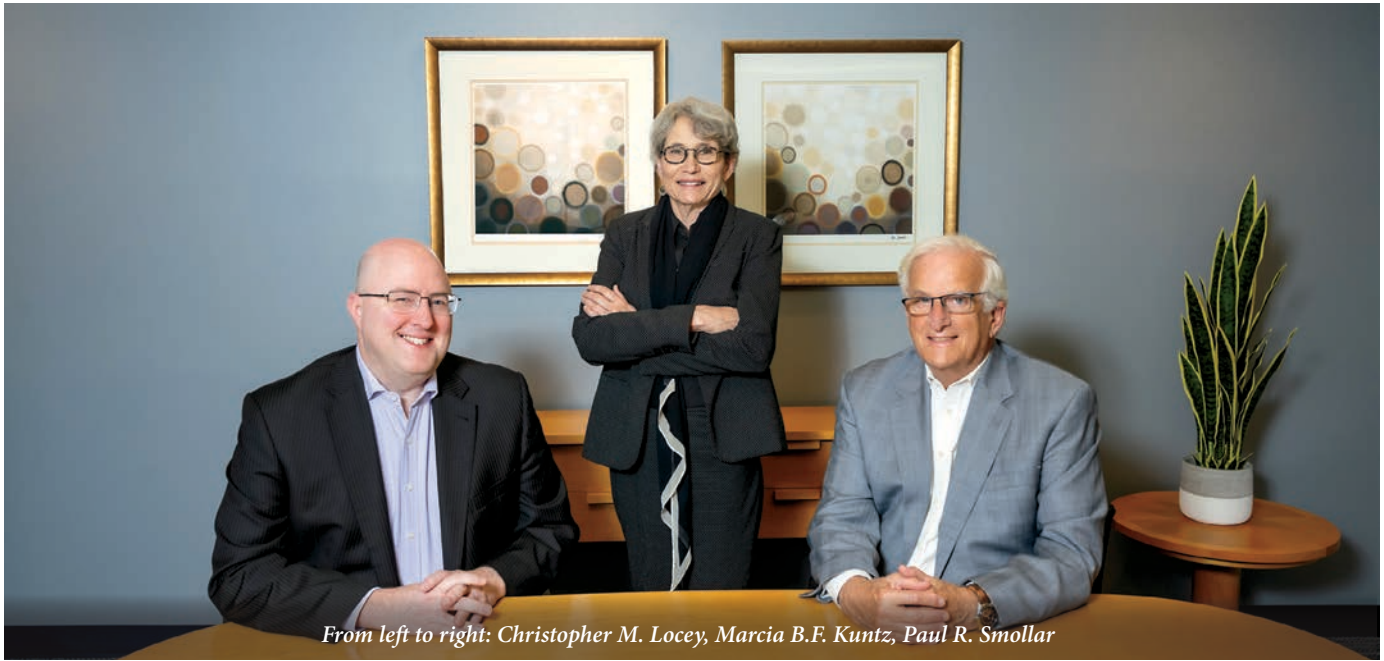
DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Top Divorce Lawyer — *Washingtonian*
Family Law — *US News, Best Lawyers*®
Family Law — *Super Lawyers*™
Platinum Level Donor — DC Raising the Bar Campaign

Certified Mediator and Arbitrator

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From left to right: Christopher M. Locey, Marcia B.F. Kuntz, Paul R. Smollar

Smollar Kuntz Locey, PLLC

DC, MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA FAMILY LAWYERS

The attorneys of Smollar Kuntz Locey, PLLC, have decades of experience practicing family law in DC, Maryland and Virginia and are known for their compassionate service and zealous, strategic advocacy for their clients. In 2022, the *Washingtonian* named Paul Smollar to the Top Lawyer Lifetime Achievement Honor Roll.

Separation, divorce and custody disputes are extremely challenging for families. Having an experienced and committed attorney by your side is of paramount importance to help guide you during these times. Our firm will work with you towards a resolution that best supports you, your children and your family through negotiation, mediation, or the Collaborative Process. When the circumstances warrant, our attorneys are experienced litigators and prepared to advocate for your rights in court. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for every case. During an initial consultation with an attorney, either virtual or in-person, your case will be evaluated, options discussed and a plan put in place, with your input and collaboration, to move forward and accomplish the goals you want to achieve.

All of us at Smollar Kuntz Locey, PLLC, wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Separation, Property Division, Custody, Child/Spousal Support, LGBTQ matters, International Matters, Prenuptial/Postnuptial Agreements, Mediation, Collaborative Law

AFFILIATIONS and AWARDS

AAML, IACP, DCACP; 2024 *Washingtonian* Top Lawyer; 2024 *Northern Virginia Magazine* Top Lawyer; 2024 *Best Lawyers*®; 2024 *Super Lawyers*™

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www.SKLfamilylaw.com



Leffler Phillips, PLC

TRIAL ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

Our boutique law firm of former prosecutors has worked hard to earn a reputation for honesty, integrity, and advocacy. We understand the care and attention that is essential to top-notch representation, both inside and outside the courtroom. We routinely take our cases to trial or hearing and never settle for an outcome that is unsatisfactory to our clients. Locally and nationally, our peers recognize and appreciate our expertise and work ethic and often call on us for consultation or representation. We are routinely named among the best lawyers in Virginia in the most reliable publications in the practice of felony and misdemeanor criminal law.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Criminal and Traffic Defense, Juvenile, Protective Orders, White Collar, Personal Injury, Expungements, and Police Investigations

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Best Lawyers in America®. *Super Lawyers*™; *Super Lawyers*™ – Rising Stars. National Trial Lawyers: Top 100. *US News Best Law Firms*.

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703.293.9300
lefflerphillips.com



Stein Sperling Bennett De Jong Driscoll, PC

At Stein Sperling we work with you, not just for you. We appreciate how your legal issue affects you, your family, your business, and your future.

We congratulate our colleagues included in the *Washingtonian*: David De Jong, Eric Rollinger and Mark Schweighofer in Tax; Adam Abramowitz, Sarah Broder, Jeffrey Kolender and David Torchinsky in Trusts and Estates; Sara Donahue in Divorce and Family; Jeffrey Schwaber in Civil Defense; and Beth McIntosh Irving in Real Estate. Their experience, in collaboration with the firm's 50 other lawyers across 9 practice areas, provides a broad range of resources for your legal needs.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Business, Commercial Litigation, Construction, Employment, Estates, Trusts & Probate, Family, Personal Injury, Real Estate, Tax.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Recognized by numerous organizations including Best Law Firms, *Best Lawyers in America*®, *Super Lawyers*™, *Bethesda Magazine*, and *The Daily Record*.

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steinsperling.com



Christopher Leibig

THE LAW OFFICES OF CHRISTOPHER LEIBIG

Chris Leibig started his career at the Alexandria Public Defender's Office in 1996 and began his own private practice in 2002. He has practiced exclusively criminal defense since then, including seven years as a partner at Zwerling, Leibig, and Moseley in Old Town Alexandria. In 2012, he formed his current firm in Alexandria which handles serious felony cases throughout Northern and Central Virginia, and from its satellite office in Charlottesville, Virginia. The firm also represents clients in misdemeanor cases on a select basis. Chris is a regular speaker about criminal defense at law schools and legal seminars.

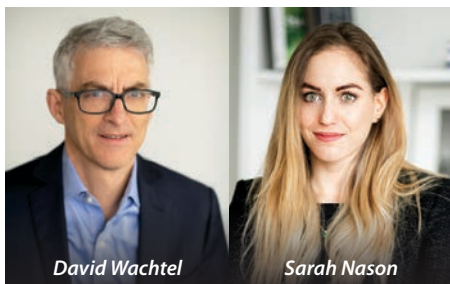
AREAS OF PRACTICE

Defending individuals being accused of or investigated for serious crimes in state and federal court throughout Virginia

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Named a Top Criminal Defense Attorney in the DC area by *Best Lawyers*® (U.S. News & World Report) since 2011, *Super Lawyers*™ since 2007, and *Northern Virginia Magazine* since 2010.

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Chris@chrisleibiglaw.com



David Wachtel

Sarah Nason



Karen Tanenbaum

Carly Mee

Trister, Ross, Schadler, & Gold, PLLC

EMPLOYMENT LAW PRACTICE

We've represented workers and whistleblowers, students and survivors.

Now, we have a highly versatile practice litigating, negotiating, investigating, advising, and making employment policies for a variety of individual clients and for the many national and local non-profit organizations ably served by Trister, Ross, Schadler & Gold.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Employment law, including discrimination, sexual harassment, disability accommodation, wage payment and collection, and whistleblower retaliation.

AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian 2024 Top lawyer
Employment Plaintiffs (D. Wachtel)
Virginia Attorney General's Unsung Hero Award (C. Mee)

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Powell Radomsky, PLLC

FAMILY LAW ATTORNEYS

We provide a high level of personal service and care that traditional firms often lack. Our team of attorneys and staff is focused solely on attending to the unique needs of family law clients. After understanding your history, concerns, and goals, we will educate you about the law, and we will discuss all of your options and our recommendations. We are able to represent you in mediation or the collaborative divorce process, which can be private. We are also able to represent you in litigation, and we take great pride in our trial work and reputation in the local courts.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Complex asset division, business valuation, support, custody, trial work, collaborative divorce, and mediation

AWARDS

U.S. News & World Report Tier 1, *Northern Virginia Magazine*, *Super Lawyers*™ – Top 50 Women and Top 100 Attorneys

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Roberts Family Law

CHRIS ROBERTS, HEATHER COLLIER, AND RITIKA MALKANI

Chris Roberts, Heather Collier, and Ritika Malkani are family law and divorce attorneys who represent clients in all aspects of family law, including divorce, property, child custody, support, post-judgment issues, prenuptial and postnuptial agreements, and domestic violence matters. Chris and Heather regularly handle complex financial and child custody matters, are trained in collaborative divorce and as mediators, and both are frequently appointed by the court as Best Interest Attorney's to represent children. Heather also serves as a Parent Coordinator. The firm offers creative and practical solutions to each client's unique challenges and represents its clients with compassion, skill, tenacity, and versatility.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, Separation Agreements, Custody, Support, Property Division, Prenuptial/Postnuptial Agreements, Mediation, Collaborative Law, Parent Coordination

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian's Top Lawyers, *Super Lawyers*™ and *Best Lawyers*®. Chris is a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

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Roop Xanttopoulos Babounakis & Klam, PLLC

DIVORCE LAW

The lawyers at Roop Xanttopoulos Babounakis & Klam understand that three of the perils of divorce are harm to the children, the parties, and the parties' net worth. We attempt to resolve the matter efficiently, and concern ourselves with the cost of litigation, so as to protect from harm the children, the parties' relationship, and the parties' net worth. Many of our peers do not. Whether it is via litigation, mediation, or collaborative law, we are on your side. Ranked Tier 1, Washington, DC Metropolitan Area, *Best Lawyers*®, *U.S. News & World Report*.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, child custody, visitation, litigation, mediation, collaborative divorce, child and spousal support; cases involving business valuation, complex assets and estates.

AWARDS

AV – Preeminent rating of the Martindale-Hubbell Bar Register®, *Best Lawyers in America*®, *Northern Virginia*, *Ten Leaders*, *Super Lawyers*™ & *Washingtonian*.

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rooplaw.com



Edward Lee (Eddie) Isler

ISLER DARE, P.C.

With offices in Tysons, Richmond, and Columbia, Maryland, Isler Dare, P.C. is the DMV's premier management-side labor, employment, and employee benefits firm. Founded in 1997, the firm's 22 attorneys counsel and advise employers in every facet of the employer-employee relationship, and vigorously advocate for their clients in Federal and State Court, and before the EEOC, NLRB, DOL, and IRS. The firm's motto, Your Workplace, Our Insight, reflects Isler Dare's commitment to understanding the particular nature of each workplace in applying the experience and wisdom the firm's attorneys have developed through many years of practice. Co-founder Eddie Isler is past-Chair of the Labor & Employment Section of the Virginia Bar Association.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Defending Discrimination and Wage-Hour Claims; ERISA/Employee Benefits Compliance; Advice on Employment Issues; Traditional Labor Relations

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

CHAMBERS USA; *U.S. News & World Report* - Best Lawyers; *Virginia Business Magazine* "Legal Elite"; *Super Lawyers*™

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Brian K. Pearlstein, Esquire

BRODSKY RENEHAN PEARLSTEIN & BOUQUET, CHARTERED

Brian, the managing partner at Brodsky Renahan Pearlstein & Bouquet, Chartered, practices all aspects of family law including complex financial issues, business ownership, real estate holdings, securities and alternative investments, personal property, as well as domestic and international custody and support matters. Brian has been practicing for over thirty years. His strength is his advocacy, and he is skilled both in and out of the courtroom. He is committed to advocating for his client's best interests through diligent settlement negotiation, mediation, or aggressive litigation.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce & Separation, Property Division, Alimony, Child Custody & Support, Agreements

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers, AV Preeminent, *Super Lawyers*™, Top 100 *Super Lawyers*™ 2010-2024, Daily Record Power List 2022, *Washingtonian* Top Lawyer 2015-2024, *Best Lawyers in America*® 2015-2025

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Kiyonaga & Soltis, PC

PAUL KIYONAGA & DEBRA SOLTIS

At Kiyonaga & Soltis, PC, we represent people in trouble. Victims of assault, harassment, discrimination and retaliation, as well as those who have been fired, sued, investigated, arrested, tried or convicted. The accuser, and the accused. That's because we believe that all persons in crisis deserve zealous and competent representation. As husband and wife, we are partners in every sense, proud to be recognized by *Washingtonian* for our work and for continuing to stand up for those who need us.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Employment/Civil Rights
Criminal Defense
Title IX
School bullying/suicide
International matters
General civil litigation

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Recognized by *Washingtonian* and *Super Lawyers*™ as top attorneys for over 20 years

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Schertler Onorato Mead & Sears

EXCELLENCE IN LITIGATION

Schertler Onorato Mead & Sears is a boutique litigation firm best known for its trial successes and its white-collar criminal defense practice. David Schertler, Danny Onorato, Chris Mead, Stuart Sears, Mark MacDougall, and Hank Asbill lead the firm's white-collar practice and represent individuals and corporations in high-stakes criminal investigations and administrative enforcement matters. The firm's substantive expertise includes antitrust and securities matters, the Foreign Agents Registration Act, the False Claims Act, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, tax matters, patent litigation, civil litigation, and appellate litigation. Our small firm has a deep bench of seasoned trial attorneys, including seven Fellows in the prestigious American College of Trial Lawyers.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

White-collar defense; antitrust and securities enforcement; False Claims Act litigation; internal investigations; civil litigation; appellate litigation.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Chambers USA (White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations); Best Law Firms; Benchmark Litigation; American College of Trial Lawyers.

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Eileen P. Blessinger, ESQ.

IMMIGRATION LAW

Ms. Blessinger is the founder and managing attorney of Blessinger Legal PLLC. She leads presentations at national and local conferences and is an active member of the Federal Bar Association's Immigration Law Section, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the Acacia Center for Justice, and the Amica Center Legal Advisory Committee. The firm handles various immigration matters, including asylum, criminal immigration, U visas, and family-based petitions. Bilingual and a dual citizen of Ireland and the U.S., Ms. Blessinger serves clients from diverse backgrounds and is committed to advancing the field of immigration law and advocating for immigrant rights. She is licensed in Virginia, Maryland, D.C., New Jersey, and New York.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Removal proceedings, Affirmative Applications with the Department of Homeland Security, State Child Custody Petitions.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Recognized as a top immigration attorney by *Washingtonian*, *Arlington Magazine*, *Northern Virginia Magazine*, and *Best Lawyers*®. Awards include the Federal Bar Association's "Younger Lawyer of the Year Award" (2017) and the *Irish Echo's* "40 Under 40."

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Shannon & Wright LLP

G. CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT

As a founding partner of Shannon & Wright LLP, attorney and CPA, Christopher Wright provides private client services such as Tax Planning and Consulting in addition to Estate Planning and the administration of Trusts and Estates. Chris has extensive experience working with sophisticated clients to identify their estate planning needs to create strategic wealth transfer strategies. Shannon & Wright LLP is recognized by *Best Lawyers*® as a Best Law Firm for its robust services across the DMV in the areas of Real Estate, Land Use and Zoning, Business Transactions, Employment Law, Estate and Trust, Tax and Litigation.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Tax and Wealth Planning, Estates and Trusts, Real Estate, Land Use and Zoning Business Transactions, Employment Law, Litigation

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

CPA, *Best Lawyers*®, Best Law Firms, *Super Lawyers*™, VA Business Legal Elite

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shannonwright.law



Jezic & Moyse, LLC

ANDREW JEZIC, TAMARA JEZIC, DAVID MOYSE, HIMEDES CHICAS, JONATHAN CARROLL

Tamara Jezic and Himeides Chicas have won several precedent-setting immigration appellate cases and have lectured to lawyers around the country.

Andrew Jezic, a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers, has won dozens of acquittals in felony jury trials, including recent murder trials in Annapolis, Frederick, and Upper Marlboro. He is a former prosecutor and is a co-author *Maryland Law of Confessions*, in its 20th edition published by West.

David Moyse has won numerous acquittals in felony trials, including two homicide trials in 2022. He is one of the premier DUI attorneys in Maryland.

Jonathan Carroll has achieved several large jury verdicts and seven-figure settlements in accident cases.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Criminal and Traffic Defense; Personal Injury; Immigration - Consequences of Criminal Convictions, Removal Defense; Family

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

American College of Trial Lawyers; American Immigration Lawyers Association

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Caroline D. Ciraolo

KOSTELANETZ LLP

Kostelanetz LLP congratulates Caroline Ciraolo on being named to *Washingtonian's* Top Lawyers!

A former Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's Tax Division, Caroline is a founder of Kostelanetz's Washington, D.C. office. Her practice focuses on tax controversies, including representation in sensitive audits, administrative appeals, and litigation, providing tax advice, internal investigations, mediations, expert engagements, and representing individuals and entities in criminal tax investigations and prosecutions.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Civil and Criminal Tax Controversies and Litigation; White-Collar Defense; Voluntary Disclosures; Government & Internal Investigations

AWARDS

Best Lawyers®, Lawyer of the Year – Litigation and Controversy – Tax (DC 2022, 2024, MD 2012); Lawyer of the Year – Tax Law (DC 2025); *Chambers* ranked in Tax Controversy, Tax Fraud, High-Net-Worth

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Carroll & Nuttall, PC

A PASSION FOR JUSTICE & COMPASSION FOR CLIENTS

Mr. Carroll and Mr. Nuttall are accomplished trial lawyers noted for their experience in Criminal Defense, Family Law and Personal Injury. The best measure of our reputation for quality is the high referral rate from our previous clients as well as from other members of the Bar. Both are former prosecutors and incorporate that experience in developing strategies for the representation of clients in civil and criminal matters. The firm has significant experience in high conflict situations and the skill sets to recognize, understand and manage client needs to foster resolution of legal controversies. When settlement is not possible we utilize our wealth of litigation skills to achieve results.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Criminal Defense, Family Law & Personal Injury

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Rated, *Washingtonian* magazine Top Lawyers, *Northern Virginia Magazine* Top Lawyers, *Super Lawyers®*, Top 100 Trial Lawyers

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Beach-Oswald Associates, PC

IMMIGRATION LAW

Beach Oswald Immigration Law is a preeminent boutique law firm with 5 full time attorneys with over 34 years experience in Immigration. We represent clients from all over the US and from over 80 different countries to achieve their goals and dreams of becoming green card holders or citizens. Complex cases are our specialty ranging from employment cases, removal proceedings, Appellate federal, consular processing, U, VAWA, Special Juveniles and other cases. All our clients are handled with extensive preparation, and passionate advocacy enabling us to succeed with high level grants. Our rating is AV Preeminent from Martindale- Hubbel and included in *Super Lawyers*™, 50 Top Women Lawyers in DC.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Employment, Family, Humanitarian. Removal and Federal Appellate work, Consular Processing Immigration.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

50 Top Women Lawyers in DC; *Best Lawyers*® in DC; *Super Lawyers*™; AV Preeminent Martindale- Hubbel

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immigrationlawdc.com



Sean P. Schmergel

SCHMERGEL & MERSBERGER, PLC

With over 20 years of family law practice with Schmergel & Mersberger, Sean P. Schmergel is recognized as one of the region's top divorce lawyers. He has successfully represented clients in highly complex domestic matters in both Virginia and DC, frequently litigating high-conflict cases involving significant assets and child custody disputes. Mr. Schmergel vigorously advocates for his clients in court, and, as a well-respected and seasoned trial attorney, often resolves cases without the need for protracted litigation. He is committed to achieving the best possible outcome for every client.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Divorce, property division, custody, child and spousal support, premarital and separation agreements, protective orders.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Recognized as a top family law attorney by *Washingtonian*, *Super Lawyers*™, *Best Lawyers*®, *VA Business Legal Elite* & *Arlington Magazine*; Martindale AV rated; Sec'y, Arlington Bar Assoc; Co-Chair Judicial Screening Comm., Alexandria Bar Assoc.; Chair, VSB Disciplinary Comm.; Admitted in VA & DC; certified guardian ad litem for children in VA.

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William C. Brennan, Jr.

BRENNAN MCKENNA & LAWLOR, CHTD.

William Brennan is Senior Partner at the law firm of Brennan McKenna & Lawlor, with a practice focused on criminal defense and professional responsibility matters. He has litigated criminal cases in federal courts across the country, including some involving the federal death penalty. Mr. Brennan is well known in the legal community for his representation of clients before the Maryland Commission on Judicial Disabilities and the Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland. Considered by his peers as one of the best trial attorneys in Maryland, Mr. Brennan has been successfully trying cases in both federal and state courts for over 45 years.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Criminal Defense, Professional Responsibility Representation

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Fellow, American College of Trial Lawyers; Robert C. Heeney Award – Maryland State Bar Association; John Adams Award – Federal Defenders of Maryland

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Julie Hottle Day, ESQ.

CULIN, SHARP, AUTRY & DAY, PLC

Julie Hottle Day, chair of the family law group at Culin, Sharp, Autry & Day, PLC, has over twenty-five years' experience mediating and litigating divorce and family law matters. Her attention to detail, empathy and capacity for creative problem solving well serve her clientele, whose personal, business and financial issues are compounded by the many complexities of divorcing parties. She views client relations as a partnership, keeping clients well informed and prioritizing hearing their concerns and often incorporating their ideas into the case process. Julie represents parties in all jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. She is a frequent presenter of continuing legal education seminars.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Complex Divorce Mediation, Litigation, Modification and Enforcement; Child Custody; Child and Spousal Support; Retirement Benefits

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Expertise recognized in Martindale-Hubbell, *Best Lawyers in America*®, *Super Lawyers*™, and *Washingtonian*, *Northern Virginia*, and *Virginia Business* magazines.

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Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP

JAN PEDERSON

Jan Pederson is the "go to" lawyer for complex immigration cases, foreign physicians and journalists. Her tireless effective advocacy is admired by government officials which enables her to obtain stellar results for clients. She represents physicians, hospitals, medical practices, broadcast networks, Fortune 500 companies, professional athletes, actors and entertainers with great success. Her clients call her a "blue-eyed angel", a miracle worker and the queen of perseverance. In her over four decades practicing immigration law, she has become a legend of the immigration bar internationally. She prides herself on platinum concierge services to all clients.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

J-1 Physicians, Consular Visas, O-1 Visas, National Interest and Extraordinary Ability Waivers, Investor Visas, Artists & Entertainers

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

The Washington Post's "Seven Leading Lawyers", *Washingtonian* Top Lawyer, *Super Lawyers*™ 2007-present, The Edith Lowenstein Award, President of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), AILA Board of Governors

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Partners Steve Frei, Gary B. Mims, Matthew Perushek, Matthew Roberson

Gary Brooks Mims

FREI, MIMS AND PERUSHEK, LLP, PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS.

Frei, Mims & Perushek congratulates Gary B. Mims for earning *Washingtonian's* Top Lawyer distinction for the 15th time. We are one of the region's most experienced personal injury and medical malpractice firms, with a solid record of success in helping the injured for over 40 years. We have tried or resolved hundreds of cases dealing with medical errors, catastrophic accidents and injury, defective products, and death. We are effective trial lawyers. To deliver the highest standards of legal representation, we keep our caseload small, work with the nation's top experts, and aggressively pursue the results you deserve.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Medical malpractice, catastrophic personal injury, wrongful death, product liability.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Best Law Firm, Best Lawyers, AV Preeminent Rated, "Lawyer of the Year," Medical Malpractice, DC.

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Joni C. Robin

THE LAW OFFICE OF JONI C. ROBIN, PLLC

In the heart of Old Town Alexandria, The Law Office of Joni C. Robin handles federal and state criminal cases in Virginia and Washington, D.C. Ms. Robin has over 20 years of experience advising and defending clients accused of crime. An award-winning attorney with a focus on serious felonies, she accepts only a select number of cases to ensure that each client receives individual time and attention. Ms. Robin is a relentless advocate for her clients, guiding them through every step of their case with clarity and insight. Her fierce drive and unyielding work ethic make her a standout force.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Criminal defense in federal courts throughout Virginia & Washington, DC; Criminal defense in Virginia state courts.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

Washingtonian Top Lawyer, Virginia Super Lawyers™, Best Lawyers in America®, US News Best Law Firms, Northern Virginia Magazine Top Lawyer

Law Office of Joni C. Robin

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Vincent H. Cohen Jr.

DECHERT LLP

Vincent Cohen is a member of the leadership team at Dechert responsible for setting strategic priorities and driving the firm's focus on client service, innovation, and diversity and inclusion. He is also a member of Dechert's global policy committee, serves as regional chair of the white collar practice, and is consistently recognized as a leading attorney in litigation by *Chambers*, *The Legal 500* and *Lawdragon*. Vince, former acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, serves on the D.C. Judicial Nomination Commission, which recommends to the President candidates to the D.C. Superior Court and Court of Appeals, and sits on the Boards of Syracuse University and The Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

High-stakes litigation and civil/criminal investigations (domestic and international) on behalf of individuals and corporations.

DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS

- America's Top 200 Lawyers—*Forbes*
- Most Influential Lawyers—*Savoy*
- Ollie May Cooper Award (2024)—Washington Bar Association
- Black Leadership Award—*Profiles in Diversity Journal*

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Cipriani & Werner, PC

Cipriani & Werner's DC Based Family Law Group is one of the premier family law firms in the Metro area, experienced in high net-worth, complex and multi-jurisdictional divorce; property division; custody and support issues; business evaluation and maintenance; related tax issues and solutions for wealth management and preservation. With offices in D.C., Maryland, Virginia, as well as Florida, Carlos and Eva are highly skilled strategists, negotiators, and litigators, who also work with national, state and specialty bars to improve the practice of law and to increase diversity in the legal profession. They stand ready to zealously advocate on your behalf.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

High net-worth and complex divorce, custody and support matters. National and international inter-jurisdictional matters. Estate planning and probate. LGBTQIA+ legal issues. Second parent adoption, third party custody, and child advocacy.

DESIGNATIONS and AWARDS

Lastra: Best Lawyers in America, *Washingtonian* Magazine Top Lawyers
Junker: *Washingtonian* Magazine, Top Lawyers; "25 Best Divorce Lawyers in Montgomery County," *Bethesda Magazine*

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TASTE

SUPER BOWL

The Sicilian-style seafood soup at Cucina Morini is one of our 23 favorite dishes of the year. Turn the page for more.



PHOTOGRAPH BY NINA PALAZZOLO



Dishes of the Year

Cacio e pepe pizza, Cool Ranch onion rings, and 21 other great things we ate in 2024

By Ann Limpert, Jessica Sidman, and Ike Allen



Lamb-Stuffed Grape Leaves

Albi

1346 Fourth St., SE

If you're into lamb, Michael Rafidi's Levantine hit in Navy Yard is the place to go. While the dramatic skewers of barbecue lamb capture a lot of the attention (they're delicious), we're just as enamored with Rafidi's riff on the grape leaves he grew up on, which took his Palestinian grandmother days to prepare. Here, they're filled with lamb belly, baked in a wood-fired hearth, and brightened with tangy tomato molasses and lemon.

Fried Half Chicken

Reveler's Hour

1775 Columbia Rd., NW

This wine-centric Adams Morgan restaurant is well known for its handmade pastas, but on a recent visit, it was the half chicken that seemed to be on every table. Rightly so: The sweet-spicy bird is glazed straight from the fryer in a saffron-infused hot honey, then encrusted in crushed fennel seeds, fennel pollen, and flaky Maldon salt. It's paired with even more hot honey and a fresh fennel salad.

Loaded Queso

La Tejana

3211 Mount Pleasant St., NW

Texas native and co-owner Ana-Maria Jaramillo wanted to pay homage to the famous "Bob Armstrong dip" from Austin institution Matt's El Rancho when she and her husband, Gus May, opened a cocktail bar in their popular Mount Pleasant breakfast-taco joint this year. The dip combines La Tejana's housemade refried beans, queso, guacamole, and brisket from barbecue favorite 2Fifty. "It's basically like the dreamiest Tex-Mex combo you could imagine," Jaramillo says.

Zuppa di Pesce

Cucina Morini

901 Fourth St., NW

Traveling throughout coastal Sicily, chef Matt Adler loved the tableside servings of traditional seafood soup. He's recreated the experience at this Southern Italian restaurant with a pot of tomatoey shellfish broth loaded with scallops, calamari, mussels, clams, and shrimp—all carefully added in stages so they don't overcook. Pearls of fregola pasta add a little texture, while Calabrian-chili butter, fresh herbs, and a squeeze of lemon bring some extra zip.

Arepas

Mita

804 V St., NW

Arepas get the fine-dining treatment at this plant-based Latin American restaurant. Five bite-size variations—plantain, corn, wheat, yuca, and smoked potato—are presented in a basket. Mix and match them with a trio of dips, including tropical-peach/palm-fruit “butter,” creamy guac, and a cashew “sour cream” with chili oil. The dish is an opener on the top-tier tasting menu, but you can also add it to shorter prix-fixe menus or order it à la carte at the bar.



Hot Pants

Compliments Only

2029 P St., NW;

526 Eighth St., SE

No sandwich is boring at Compliments Only, which packs a lot of playful oomph into the format of the basic Italian-style sub. It would be wrong to ignore everyone's potato-chip-filled favorite Crunchy Boi, but lately our attention has turned to the Hot Pants, a classic Italian combo hero that slowly warms your mouth with buzzing spice from pepperoni, hot and sweet peppers, and a shot of vinegar heat from a house Cholula mayo.



Fava Bean and Dill Rice With Tahdig

Joon

8045 Leesburg Pike, Vienna

Cooks in Iran work marvels with rice, from fluffy pilafs laced with herbs and dried fruits to crispy tahdig rice crusts. At Joon, Najmieh Batmanglij's paeon to all things Persian, an impossibly good dish combines the two. A circular pan of baghali polo—fava-bean rice redolent with earthy dill—is inverted onto a plate so that the layer of crunchy rice at the bottom becomes a buttery shell on top. It's hard to imagine a higher form of rice and beans.





Mezze Board

Medina

1328 Florida Ave., NW

The mezze spread at this Bedouin-tent-style cocktail bar is as beautiful as it is bountiful: Tunisian olives, tea-poached dates, fresh figs, extra-plump grapes, tomato-eggplant jam, mint-lemon cucumber salad, a soft housemade cheese drizzled with Tunisian olive oil and chermoula, and more. It all comes with warm pita and tins of branzino or tuna (swap in canned oysters or mussels for a little extra). A brunch version includes other goodies, such as lamb merguez sausage, Tunisian baked-egg tagine, and bomboloni doughnuts.



Chileajo

Taqueria Sabor Mixteco

2462 Ennalls Ave., Wheaton

Chileajo, a pungent Oaxacan pork stew with potatoes, roasted garlic, and a rainbow of dried chilies, grabbed our attention when we first visited this new Wheaton eatery. With a base of red rice and black beans seasoned with anise-scented epazote, the stew makes a heady and distinctive dinner. Co-owner Juan Solano says he's not sure suburban Maryland diners are interested in a full slate of Oaxacan regional dishes, but we say bring them on!



Vegan Clam Dip

Chay

6351 Columbia Pike, Falls Church

Chef Lan Tran does an impressive job making vegetarian versions of classic Vietnamese dishes, and her "clam dip" has quickly become a signature. Chopped soy protein mimics baby clams with lime, vegetarian fish sauce, and a sprinkling of peanuts. Scooping it up with rice crackers, you'll forget it's vegan.

General Tso's Chicken

Songbird

10940 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax

Owners Jason Lau and Angela Zhang make this Chinese American restaurant hip with sophisticated cocktails and nightlife vibes. Still, Zhang's mom, Helen, who leads the kitchen, used to run a more traditional Chinese American spot in McLean and has carried over her signature General Tso's chicken. While others often make the dish syrupy-sweet, this version is more tangy, with a nice kick of heat.

Bún Bò Huế

Truong Tien

6763 Wilson Blvd., Falls Church

Tucked away in the depths of Eden Center, this Vietnamese gem specializes in Hue-style cooking from the central Vietnamese city once home to emperors. Our go-to: this spicy lemongrass noodle soup with rustic meatballs, pork blood, and other gelatinous bits. Sure, you can find it at many other area Vietnamese restaurants, but this is one of the best renditions around.

Stuffed Chole Kulcha

Chaatwala

1050 Elden St., Herndon

No indulgence is spared at this Bollywood-themed vegetarian snack bar, where the ghee flows like water and even diehard carnivores won't miss kebabs. One particularly satisfying plate: pockets of pillow bread filled with a chunky chickpea curry and decorated with slender pieces of raw white onion and rough-chopped cilantro.

Halwa Puri

Desi Breakfast Club

3065-J Centreville Rd., Centreville

Malik Ahmad, the owner of this Pakistani strip-mall spot, insists it's a kind of diner. If that's true, then the halwa puri is the chicken and waffles here—a sweet, savory, slightly greasy, and soul-warming start to the morning. The classic Pakistani breakfast consists of two huge puris, ballooned up in the deep fryer like funnel cakes from a county fair, beside modest portions of halwa (sweet, saffron-scented semolina porridge), chickpea curry, and a cardamom-spiced ground-chicken keema with green peas.



Hoe Crab

Dōgon

1330 Maryland Ave., SW

The year's hottest restaurant? This newcomer in the Salamander hotel, which marks former Kith and Kin chef Kwame Onwuachi's return to DC. (He travels between here and New York, where he runs Tatiana, deemed the city's number-one restaurant this year by the *New York Times*.) If you manage to land a table, we have two pieces of advice: Dress up in something chic and order Onwuachi's contribution to the blue-crab canon. Lump meat is served inside a crab shell and topped with a chili crunch made from a peppery Ghanaian sauce. Take one of the tiny plantain hoecakes served on the side, pile it with crab, and finish it with the terrific ají verde sauce, which was inspired by DC's Peruvian-chicken joints.



◀ Chayote Salad

Pascual

732 Maryland Ave., NE

Isabel Coss and Matt Conroy, the co-chefs at this new-wave Mexican spot, were looking for, in Conroy's words, "a crunchy, fresh thing to have on the table while you're picking at everything else." Thanks to chayote—an under-appreciated vegetable that tastes like a cross between jicama and apple—the side dish has become the star. The chefs serve the chayote raw, with Asian pear, a sunflower-seed/agave crumble, and a piquant dressing made with sunflower tahini, chilies, lime, and rice-wine vinegar. Coss calls the salad an Easter egg for fans of Lutèce, the pair's French restaurant in Georgetown, where napa cabbage with sesame tahini is one of the must-get dishes.

Cacio e Pepe Pizza

Parachute Pizza

1309 Fifth St., NE

Cacio e pepe fever has died down, but our love of this Union Market stall's pizza-fied rendition of the peppery Roman pasta dish sure hasn't. The crusts—made from two-day-fermented dough baked in an olive-oil-slicked pan—are square, crisp on the bottom, and airy on top. This pie (you can also order it by the slice) gets layered with provolone, a garlic-confit/cream sauce, deeply caramelized onions, and—the key—enough black pepper to cut through the richness.



◀ Cool Ranch Onion Rings

Your Only Friend

1114 Ninth St., NW

Think of this beer-battered bar snack at Shaw's nostalgia-seeking cocktail-and-sandwich bar as a cross between a Bloomin' Onion and Cool Ranch Doritos. Owners Paul Taylor and Sherra Kurtz nailed the addictive chip flavor with a dusting of buttermilk and cheddar powders, classic ranch herbs (dill, parsley, and chives), plus lactic and citric acid—the secret ingredients behind that irresistible tang. On the side: their own "fancy" ranch dipper.

TOP PHOTOGRAPH BY DEB LINDSEY; BOTTOM BY VINA SANANIKONE

Shanxi Zhajiang Noodles

Northwest Chinese Food

7313 Baltimore Ave., College Park

The scrambled-egg-and-tomato stir-fry is a staple of Chinese home cooking. So is zhajiang, a fermented black-bean sauce, and minced pork braised with cooking wine and star anise. At Northwest Chinese Food—the reigning champ of the UMD food scene—you get all three dishes in one, spooned generously onto chewy knife-cut noodles. The menu is so wide-ranging, with so many tempting items, that this do-everything bowl of noodles is a welcome compromise.

Summer Rolls

Hello Vietnam

2200 Veirs Mill Rd., Rockville

Summer rolls—rice-paper sheaths filled with vermicelli, mint, cilantro, cucumber, carrots, and shrimp—are a pretty standard offering at area Vietnamese restaurants. At this Rockville strip-mall spot, chef/owner Luc Pham adds his own smoky-sweet spin, switching out the typical plain, boiled shrimp for crustaceans that are marinated in brown sugar and pepper, then grilled. His peanut-butter dipping sauce gets points for being more tangy with lime than cloyingly sweet.

Shrimp Mofongo

Mecho's Dominican Kitchen

2450 Market St., NE

At this fast-casual Dominican outpost in a Northeast DC shopping center, the simple plantain mash with shrimp is elevated by a scream of garlic from its golden mojo sauce. The garlic oil seems to make the shrimp juicier and the mounded lumps of plantain mofongo more exciting—and as filling as the mofongo is, you'll still search for some bread or more starch to soak up the delicious remains of the sauce.

Wagyu Fried Rice

Beloved BBQ

200 Massachusetts Ave., NW

Fried rice—that workhorse of a dish that brings together any veggies hanging around your fridge—turns fancy at this Japanese steakhouse. Its

inspiration isn't a Chinese take-out joint but sobameshi, a mix of stir-fried rice and noodles that's a popular street food in Kobe. Chef Makoto Okuwa starts with a mix of rice and sweet-potato noodles, gives

it a dash of smoky charred-garlic oil, scorches it all in an iron bowl, then adds accents such as ginger aioli and pickled cabbage. It's tossed tableside with an onsen egg and lush Wagyu-beef tartare.



Pappardelle With White Ragu

L'Ardente

200 Massachusetts Ave., NW

What do you get when you put a French chef in charge of an Italian restaurant? If you're lucky, winning creations like this pasta from David Deshaies, inspired by the blanquette de veau, or veal stew, he grew up on. Ribbons of housemade pappardelle are gilded in a creamy sauce made from braised veal, morel mushrooms, bone marrow, crème fraîche, and egg yolk. What catapults it to greatness is its palate-awakening garnishes: serrano chilies and pickled beech mushrooms.



And the Winners Are . . .

For the 47th year, *Washingtonian* readers voted on their favorite places to eat

By Ann Limpert

Best New Restaurant

1. Pascual, **H Street corridor**

Lutèce chefs Matt Conroy and Isabel Coss make even more magic at their plant-filled upscale Mexican spot.

2. Moon Rabbit, **Penn Quarter**

Kevin Tien's modern Vietnamese restaurant moved from the Wharf to a new (and improved) Penn Quarter space early this year.

3. Cucina Morini, **Mount Vernon Triangle**

Sicilian-style seafood comes in the form of lovely pastas, crudos, and stews. (Bonus: \$7 martinis in the lounge.)



Cinnamon-sugar-dusted buñuelos (fritters) at Pascual



Fancy dishes meet warm, relaxed service at Rose's.

Service

1. Rose's Luxury, **Capitol Hill**

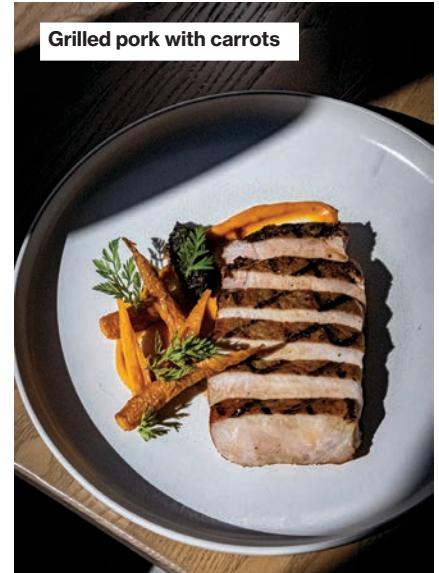
The warm, personable servers have a habit of gifting treats like a free lychee salad now and then.

2. Albi, **Navy Yard**

This waitstaff's knowledge of Levantine ingredients and dishes runs deep.

3. Reveler's Hour, **Adams Morgan**

Want to learn about esoteric wine? There are few better places than this cozy spot.



Best in DC

1. Albi, Navy Yard

Chef/owner Michael Rafidi's artful Levantine cooking keeps raking in accolades—including this year's James Beard Award for Outstanding Chef.

2. Maydan, 14th Street corridor

If you can't get a table at this Middle Eastern place, pick up owner Rose Previte's *Maydan* cookbook, released last year.

3. Rose's Luxury, Capitol Hill

The shareable four-course menus at this 11-year-old dining room always have a sense of fun.

Best in Maryland

1. Aventino, Bethesda

The latest restaurant from the Red Hen/All-Purpose crew opened earlier this year and is still Bethesda's hottest reservation.

2. Cielo Rojo, Takoma Park

The vegan-friendly Mexican cafe is turning out its moles and heirloom-corn tortillas in a new, bigger space.

3. Melina, North Bethesda

This pretty Pike & Rose restaurant specializes in inventive Greek mezze.

Best in Virginia

1. Thompson Italian, Falls Church and Old Town

Housemade pastas and killer desserts keep both locations packed.

2. Ellie Bird, Falls Church

A \$65 prix fixe is a nice way to try dishes like kimchi bouillabaisse and focaccia with miso butter.

3. Ruthie's All Day, Arlington

Show up in the morning for takeout biscuit sandwiches or at night for a leisurely Southern-accented meal.



Decor

1. El Presidente, Union Market

Taxidermy atop the bar and a theatrical velvet curtain in the dining room are just a few eye-catchers at Stephen Starr's ode to Mexico City.

2. Maydan, 14th Street corridor

The Middle Eastern dining room is centered around a huge, high-drama copper hearth.

3. Residents, Dupont Circle

This buzzy cafe/cocktail bar features lush greenery that changes with the seasons.



Udon carbonara with
crispy prosciutto

Japanese

1. Perry's, **Adams Morgan**

You know it for sushi, but have you tried chef Masako Morishita's delicious udon carbonara?

2. Izakaya Seki, **U Street corridor**

Look to Cizuka Seki's hand-drawn specials menu for finds like grilled whole squid.

3. Sushi Taro, **Dupont Circle**

Go all out with omakase in the back room or line up for the 25-percent-off sushi happy hour.



Local Beer

1. Aslin, **Logan Circle, Alexandria, and Herndon**

Cold-weather releases include a pecan-pie-inspired IPA and a rich porter.

2. Atlas, **Ivy City, Navy Yard, and Alexandria**

Grab a six-pack at Whole Foods or swing by one of the taprooms to taste the latest seasonal brews.

3. Right Proper Brewing Company, **Shaw and Brookland**

Its Senate beer is a recreation of a DC-made corn lager that dates to 1890.

Thai

1. Siam House, **Cleveland Park**

Three generations of women from the Siri family run this gracious, homey restaurant.

2. Beau Thai, **Mount Pleasant and Shaw**

Our go-to for takeout pad see ew and drunken noodles.

3. Baan Siam, **Mount Vernon Triangle**

Chili-heads should run to this dining room, which serves fiery curries, soups, and salads from all over Thailand.



Khao soi with chicken



Ginger-rum punch

Cocktails

1. Jane Jane, **Logan Circle**

You could bring your date—or your mom—to this retro-cool cocktail den.

2. Green Zone, **Adams Morgan**

Sample drinks shaken and stirred with under-the-radar Middle Eastern spirits.

3. Silver Lyan, **Penn Quarter**

Even the Jell-O shots are swank at the Riggs hotel's subterranean bar.



Bakery

1. Rose Ave, **Woodley Park**

This airy cafe's can't-miss pastry: a flaky tart laden with butternut-squash curry.

2. Yellow, **Georgetown and Union Market**

Head to the new (and bigger) Union Market location for Palestinian olive-oil cake and orange-blossom croissants.

3. Bread Furst, **Van Ness**

The godfather of DC's bread scene, Mark Furstenberg, founded this always-packed market/bakery/cafe.



Chicken and waffles

Brunch

1. Unconventional Diner, Shaw

One of DC's few weekday brunch spots serves up apple-pie French toast and shakshuka until 3:45 PM daily.

2. Ambar, Capitol Hill, Shaw, and Clarendon

Want bottomless drinks *and* food? Head to these dining rooms for unlimited rounds of Balkan dishes.

3. Ruthie's All Day, Arlington

The strapping weekend plates show off the kitchen's way with barbecue.

Italian

1. Caruso's Grocery, Capitol Hill and North Bethesda

The pastas at these Italian American dining rooms taste familiar—but somehow always better than other versions we've had.

2. The Red Hen, Bloomingdale

One of the coziest date-night spaces in DC.

3. L'Ardente, Judiciary Square

At this glam hot spot, you can go big with, say, a \$90 grilled lobster or hang out over a simple \$18 pizza.



Chinese

1. Chang Chang, Dupont Circle

Peter Chang's sole location in the District satisfies our cravings for Peking duck, dim sum, and numbingly spicy stir-fries.

2. Tiger Fork, Shaw

This chic Blagden Alley hideaway offers cocktails inspired by Chinese medicine and upscale versions of fried rice and chow fun.

3. Astoria, Dupont Circle

Pass around plates with a Szechuan bent at this cool cocktail bar.



Cheeseburger with arugula and aioli

Burger

1. Lucky Buns, Adams Morgan, Union Market, the Wharf, and Reagan National

Juicy double Creekstone beef patties get toppings such as green-chili relish, Gouda, and cotija crema.

2. Duke's Counter/Duke's Grocery, Dupont Circle, Foggy Bottom, Navy Yard, and Woodley Park

This Brit gastropub will soon bring its hefty "proper burgers" to Potomac.

3. Le Diplomate, Logan Circle

Imagine a fast-food burger gone luxe, with special sauce, American cheese, pickles, and double smash patties.

Pizza

1. Andy's Pizza, multiple area locations

Big New York-style pies (and slices) with crusts worth savoring on their own.

2. 2 Amys, Cathedral Heights

We love the blistering Neapolitan-style pies, but the menu's sleeper hit is the plate of deviled eggs.

3. Pupatella, multiple DC and Virginia locations

What started as a Neapolitan-pizza food cart in 2007 now has ten locations—and one in Columbia on the way.



Burrata-and-pepperoni pizza



Bring on the Hot Cheetos!

A new Sinaloan seafood restaurant breaks all the sushi-purist rules

By Ike Allen

JAPANESE COOKING TECHNIQUES AND recipes have circumnavigated the Pacific Rim for years. Seattle takes its ubiquitous teriyaki takeout counters for granted. Foodies travel to Lima for the ají-spiced wonders of Nikkei fusion cuisine.

And idiosyncratic takes on Japanese cooking can be found all over the Pacific coast of Mexico, in the state of Sinaloa. Cooks along that rugged strip of coastline—a center of both brassy banda music and drug cartels—take a wild and exuberant approach to raw-fish dishes.

Sinaloa's unorthodox fried maki and fiery aguachile have spread north to California, but the cuisine took its time reaching the East Coast. It's finally arrived.

The new Mariscos Culiacán in Takoma Park feels transported from somewhere many miles southwest of DC. Outside its beige-and-brick strip-mall storefront, the parking lot was full of heavy pickup trucks with Spanish-language bumper stickers. Inside the cavernous restaurant, Los Tigres del Norte were on the sound system and LA graffiti-style art decorated the walls.

The latest wave of hip DC Mexican eateries—El Presidente and Amparo Fondita, for example—have highlighted a few Sinaloan seafood preparations. But at Mariscos Culiacán, owner Hugo Jiménez devotes his entire menu to recreating the Sinaloan capital of Culiacán, one piece of raw fish at a time.

"In Culiacán, they took sushi and made it Mexican," he says. "All our corridos [traditional Mexican ballads] talk about Culiacán and sushi."

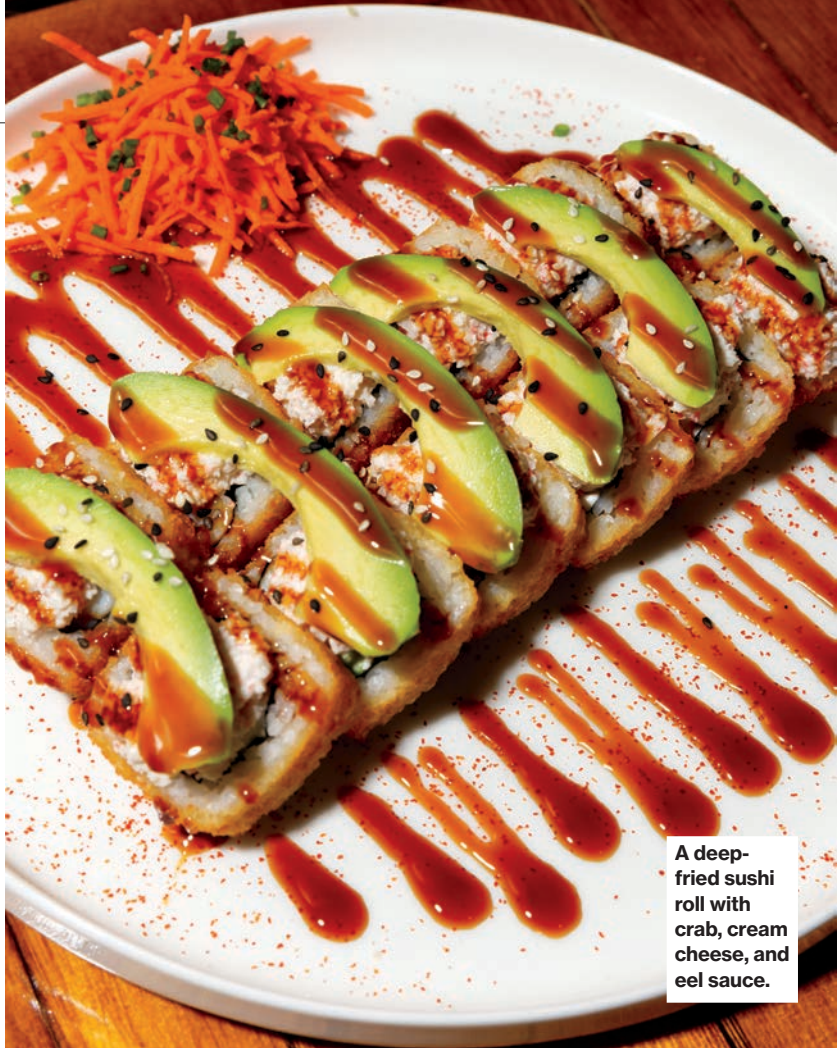
Jiménez is an unlikely restaurateur. By trade, he installs fiber-optic cables for tech and phone companies. You can often find him sitting at his restaurant's bar in his Carhartt gear, fresh from a job. This summer, he

decided to invest in a friend's business idea: a Sinaloan sushi-and-seafood spot in Takoma Park. (The friend is no longer involved.)

The aguachiles at Mariscos Culiacán are made the traditional way—with raw shrimp cured in lime juice and tiled on a plate beside slices of cucumber and avocado. They come sauced in red or green salsa made with tiny chiltepin chilies—or blackened with soy sauce. It's worth upgrading to tosti-aguachiles to get a layer of corn chips.

Sinaloa's fondness for surf and turf is represented here, too—the state is where ranching culture meets the Pacific. The kitchen griddles cheese into a crunchy shell, stuffs it with steak and shrimp, and tucks it into a housemade corn tortilla.

Here's where purists should stop reading. Sinaloan sushi is to traditional omakase what *Pink Flamingos* is to *Citizen Kane*. But it's also a rollicking good time. Grilled steak makes its way into a number of the sushi rolls here. A section of the menu is devoted to deep-fried sushi, and each of those rolls contains cream cheese. Jalapeños, popcorn shrimp, and hot Cheetos all make appearances. If there's one roll to try, it's the Guamuchilito, a fried concoction of



A deep-fried sushi roll with crab, cream cheese, and eel sauce.



Raw tuna and avocado on a wonton tostada.

avocado, shrimp tempura, crab, and cream cheese that's the signature roll in the small Sinaloan city for which it's named.

The menu is wide-ranging: You can also get something like a simple shrimp soup or fried fish with rice (and many do). But it's the no-holds-barred fried sushi and raging raw-shrimp aguachiles that are the best reasons to visit.

1341 University Blvd. E., Takoma Park



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HOME

RISING TIDES

The luxury real estate market thrived in 2024: Witness the sale of this McLean property. Turn the page for more market trends.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TOWNSEND VISUALS



State of the Market

We crunched the data and identified the trends. Here's what was hot—and not—in real estate this year.
By Eric Wills

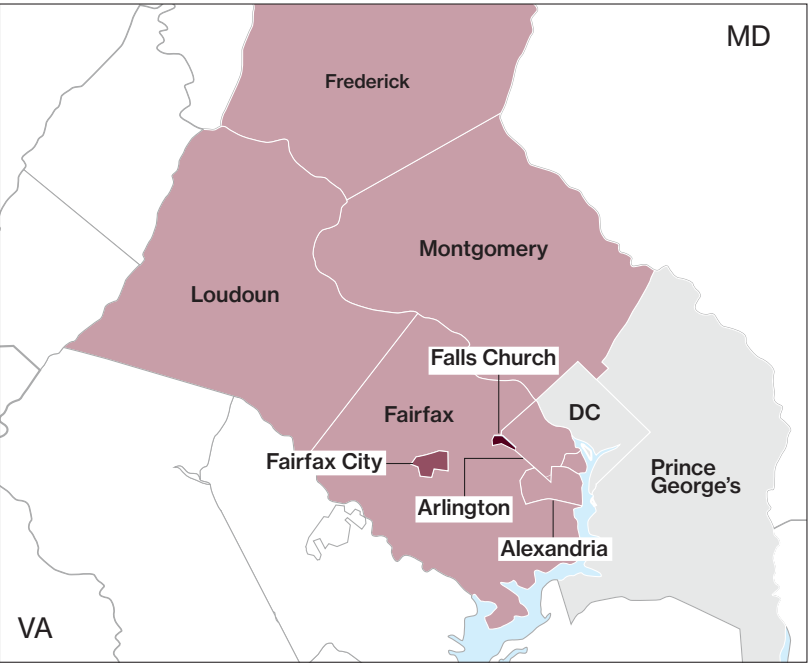
THE RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET IN 2024 WAS defined by an attitude of wait and see. Would interest rates fall? And when? But even as many prospective buyers huddled on the sidelines, the market exhibited surprising strength—a fact that we confirmed after digging into the data. Matt Cheney, a vice president with Compass, calls it a “tale of many cities.” Meaning that certain neighborhoods flourished as others stagnated, that certain market sectors boomed as others languished. Here, we’ve highlighted some of the big takeaways from this year.

Rise of Falls Church

Prices increased across the region in 2024, but nowhere was the rise more pronounced than in the City of Falls Church. “The competition is absolutely insane to get a home,” one longtime agent told *Washingtonian*. The supply of houses is small (just 116 sales this year, as of October) and demand has boomed, not only because of the appeal of

the public school system but also because of new restaurants and other development. One house that recently listed for \$1.2 million sold for \$1.55 million—the winning bidders had tired of losing out on other listings and escalated their offer. The agent we spoke to said he sees demand coming from young families moving from the District and Alexandria.

Data provided by Bright MLS. Charts compare market activity from January 1 to October 22 in 2023 and 2024.



Year-Over-Year Percentage Change

Below 5% 5%–10% 10%–15% 15% and above

	Year-Over-Year Change in Median Sales Price
Falls Church City	↑ 31.9%
Fairfax City	↑ 10.3%
Alexandria City	↑ 9.8%
Arlington	↑ 7.4%
Fairfax	↑ 7.3%
Frederick	↑ 7.0%
Montgomery	↑ 6.9%
Loudoun	↑ 6.3%
Prince George's	↑ 4.8%
DC	↑ 4.3%



Location, Location

Prices are up everywhere, but the strongest demand, says Compass's Matt Cheney, has centered around established neighborhoods: Georgetown, Bethesda, McLean. Some of that activity, especially in McLean and Great Falls, has been fueled by transplants from places such as Texas, California, and New York, says Lilian Jorgenson, a Long & Foster agent in McLean. In DC, meanwhile, a few neighborhoods near downtown that have been gentrified in the past decade or two—Shaw, H Street, Columbia Heights—have witnessed softening demand.

Median Sales Prices in 2024

Change
Since 2023

DC	\$655,000	↑ 4.6%
MD	\$498,000	↑ 6.2%
VA	\$735,000	↑ 7.3%

Supply and Demand

The number of listings ticked up this year across the region, giving buyers more options in a competitive market. But as Roby Thompson, an agent with Long & Foster, points out, some of those listings aren't attracting much attention: "Especially the upper-end market for condos, there's just not any demand at all." Higher interest rates, coupled with condo fees, have contributed to the softening. Thompson also notes that the condo-buyer profile has changed. He's seeing fewer younger people looking to trade up and more empty-nesters and other cash buyers rejecting a walk up to the upper units (what, no elevator?).

Active Listings in October 2024

Change
Since 2023

DC	7,055	↑ 12.5%
MD	10,593	↑ 16.4%
VA	9,046	↑ 7.4%

More Cash Buyers

The luxury market—defined as the top 5 percent of sales, or homes priced at about \$1.4 million and up—may have slowed in DC, but Northern Virginia experienced something of a boom. "There's been a trend of more cash buyers," says Long & Foster's Jorgenson. And, she adds, more luxury buyers in general looking at McLean and Great Falls: "Prices have certainly risen in that \$3 million-to-\$4 million price range. It's amazing what's going on." Jorgenson says there's been some negotiation over those high-end properties, but she also had a buyer close on one of her listings sight unseen, apparently among a handful of houses they bought in NoVa.

Number of Luxury Sales in 2024

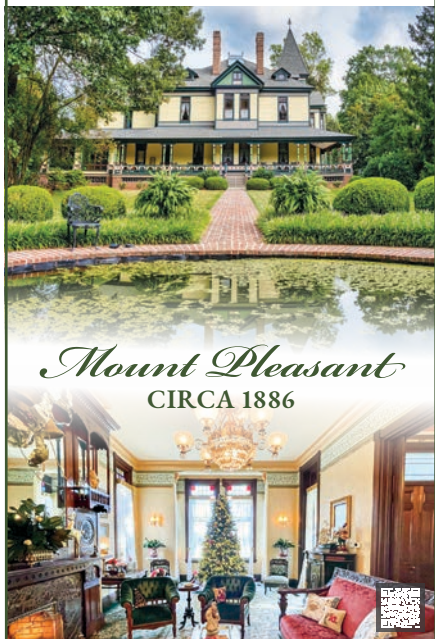
Change
since 2023

% Cash
Purchases

DC	452	↓ 13.6%	42.5%
MD	470	↓ 3.7%	38.3%
VA	1,019	↑ 4.8%	27.7%



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REAL ESTATE

Top Sales

Nowhere was the high-end luxury market hotter than in McLean this year, as demonstrated by the area's top sales of 2024 (as of press time in late October). Mark Lowham, CEO of TTR Sotheby's International Realty and the listing agent for the \$25.5 million McLean sale, thinks it "portends some pretty significant activity in that top sector of the market" in the coming months. "There's going to be at least a couple more of these that go."

NO. 1

\$25.5 million

McLean

Roger Mody, a partner with Monumental Sports, and his wife, Kyle, built this 32,785-square-foot house along the Potomac but never lived there. An anonymous buyer bought it in October.



**NO. 2**

\$14.75 million

Great Falls

Wildersmoor House, as it's called, sold in February. The 17.3-acre estate features equestrian facilities and a lake. The 27,000-square-foot house includes an indoor swimming pavilion, a billiards room, and 11 fireplaces.

**NO. 3**

\$11.8 million

Georgetown

This circa-1805 brick rowhouse, built by onetime mayor of Georgetown Colonel John Cox and renovated recently by architect Robert Gurney, was sold in an off-market sale in October.

**NO. 4**

\$10.5 million

McLean

Artisan Builders and GTM Architects designed and constructed this Scandinavian-inspired contemporary house, which sold in October.

NO. 5

\$10.1 million

McLean

A new-build by Buchanan Price Homes and Foster Zimmerman Architecture, this six-bedroom, eight-and-a-half-bathroom contemporary house sold in February.

**NO. 6**

\$9.95 million

McLean

This stone residence by Harrison Design and Artisan Builders, which sold in June, features six fireplaces, a wood-paneled elevator, a 1,200-bottle wine cellar, a billiards room, and a four-car garage. **W**



WASHINGTONIAN *Retirement Living*

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By Lauren Reisig

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Living in the epicenter of American politics during a presidential election year can make Washingtonians either fall in love with DC all over again or scramble for the nearest escape hatch.

But these tumultuous political cycles do have one benefit. They bring into stark relief the importance of finding happiness and community wherever life takes you.

In times of despair, it's the people around you who help you make it through. In times of celebration, you want to relish those moments with your friends and family. In day-to-day life, it's easier to find a sense of purpose and belonging when you have a vibrant community just outside your front door.

The communities featured in this winter's Retirement Living Guide offer their own unique perspectives on the best way to thrive in this next chapter of life. Some communities are a true escape from the District, while others keep you in the heart of the city's cultural ecosystem. Some prioritize the comfort of your home, and others embrace the warmth of the entire community.

Each of these communities, however, share a core value: happiness.

From warm welcomes when you walk through the entrance to member-driven activities that foster intellectual and social engagement, it's amazing how quickly these dynamic communities become more than a welcoming and secure place to live.

These communities truly become home.

Tribute Communities' warm welcome home

Whether you're a first-time visitor or simply returning from your daily walk on the property's scenic path, you're always greeted with a friendly smile and a warm welcome when

you enter Tribute at One Loudoun (Ashburn, VA) and Tribute at the Glen (Woodbridge, VA).

From cozy couches to hydration stations, from coffee bars to passers-by who are eager to strike up a conversation, these communities encourage engagement at every turn.

"It instantly felt like home to me," said Connie Dawson, Tribute at the Glen's community relations director (CRD).

Although the lush tree lines make these communities feel like a secluded escape, Dulles Airport is only a 20-minute drive, and popular dining, entertainment, and shopping venues are just minutes away.

Find happiness in a thriving community

Cogir Senior Living, which operates these Virginia-based communities, fosters a vibrant atmosphere in its exceptional independent living, assisted living, and memory care lifestyle options.

"This isn't just a home; this is a community where residents thrive through purpose and engagement," said Tammy Walker, Tribute at One Loudoun's CRD.

Connections, a staple of Cogir communities, is a comprehensive program that prioritizes emotional, social, and physical wellness. This bridge between assisted living and memory care helps to slow the progress of early memory loss by keeping minds sharp and spirits high.

"Whether it's a handyman who joined forces with a gamer to build a cornhole set for the community or a resident council that creates a weekend store, the residents make these communities truly their own," said Dawson.

Cogir communities are set up to provide whatever residents need, from nurse-led care to chef-prepared meals. But that's not the only reason residents thrive. It's the

care and attention from the staff.

"I don't ask a family, 'what do they need?'" said Walker. "I ask a resident, 'what makes you happy?'"

To learn more about Cogir Senior Living, visit cogirusa.com. For tours or additional information, contact Tribute at the Glen (571-621-6993) or Tribute at One Loudoun (571-554-1579) directly.

Location, location, location—and so much more—at Inspīr Embassy Row

It may be time to say goodbye to your home, but that doesn't mean you have to bid farewell to DC.

Inspīr at Embassy Row, slated to open this winter, brings comprehensive assisted living to an iconic locale. Nestled between Dupont Circle and Sheridan Circle, Inspīr at Embassy Row boasts one of the most coveted neighborhoods for DC seniors.

Amid a sea of diplomatic residences, this vibrant location offers walkability to restaurants, museums, shopping, and our city's iconic landmarks. Inspīr at Embassy Row not only encourages residents to make the most of the District; it brings the District right to you.

Venture out to one of Smithsonian's famed museums or participate in a master class for some social and intellectual stimulation. To keep your mind engaged on quieter days, pick up a title written by a visiting author. And while this elite location does offer easy access to some of the best restaurants in the city, Inspīr at Embassy Row's world-class chefs—or perhaps even a guest ambassador chef—bring decadent international fare straight to your dining room.

"We are in the heart of the na-

tion's capital, and the melding of our location with our programs gives us a really great opportunity to show that flavor," said Tim Cox, general manager at Inspīr at Embassy Row.

Inspīr treats residents like royalty

Inspīr at Embassy Row's central location mirrors the community's ethos to foster a holistic and individualized approach to comprehensive care.

As residents adjust to their new abode, it may take some encouragement to venture out of their apartment and make the most out of their new luxury accommodations.

"The entire residence is your whole home, not just the apartment," said Cox. "We're merely your guests. We're here to serve you."

Care managers are expertly trained to get even the most reticent resi-

dents out of their room. The care team may partner up people with shared interests, escort residents to the penthouse to enjoy some live music, or encourage them to let off some steam—or enjoy a steam!—in the spa.

Inspīr at Embassy Row has a full complement of services to enhance quality of life, with an entire floor of the community dedicated to health and wellness. Aptly named The Sanctuary, this luxury retreat boasts a Himalayan salt room, sauna, steam room, saltwater pool, exercise area for yoga, and a gym with weight training and cardio equipment.

"It really is a holistic approach and not just a care approach," said Cox.

Holistic approach at every level of care

When a couple requires different levels of care, it may unnecessarily

delay a move to senior living. Don't make that mistake.

Inspīr at Embassy Row solves that obstacle with the Aura program, a companion piece that enables a resident to receive additional care in their apartment without having to physically move to a different level.

As Cox explained, "You're making a lifestyle change now in anticipation of needing additional assistance as opposed to having a crisis and being forced to move."

Inspīr at Embassy Row offers two primary levels of care: Sol, where residents only pay for the care they need, and Oceana, a full-service dementia care in a secure setting with personalized holistic wellness programming. This model is ideal for families who need some assistance, now or in the future, but don't want to sacrifice a luxury environment.

"We'll tailor the level of care to each resident's wants and needs," said Cox. "It's not a formulaic re-

cogir
SENIOR LIVING



Tribute at The Glen

*Offering Assisted Living
& Memory Care*
4151 Old Bridge Rd,
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Call Connie Dawson at
(571) 946-1354



Tribute at One Loudoun

*Offering Assisted Living
& Memory Care*
20335 Savin Hill Dr,
Ashburn, VA 20147

Call Tammy Walker at
(571) 946-2699



Inspir | EMBASSY ROW

elevate your expectations

MODEL APARTMENTS NOW OPEN AT INSPİR EMBASSY ROW

Discover a new standard in assisted living and memory care in the heart of Washington, D.C.

We're excited to announce that our model apartments are now open,
offering you a glimpse into the exceptional lifestyle that awaits at Inspir Embassy Row.

Your Best Life Begins Here.

Schedule Your Private Tour Today.

Leasing Gallery | 1417 22nd Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037

www.InspirSeniorLiving.com | 2100 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008 | 202.293.2100

*Inspir Embassy Row is currently under construction and is not licensed by the D.C. Department of Health. Upon completion of construction, Inspir Embassy Row will apply to the D.C. Department of Health for a license to operate as an Assisted Living Residence. The anticipated opening for Inspir Embassy Row is January 2025.



sponse. At Inspīr, that's the level of individuality that you'll receive."

The grand opening of Inspīr at Embassy Row is scheduled for early 2025. Call 202-293-2100 or visit inspireniorliving.com to reserve your future today.

Don't settle for any location when you can have one of the best

In the heart of the walkable West Alex neighborhood, Benchmark at Alexandria enjoys one of the most coveted retirement destinations—and not just in the region. Alexandria placed second on a BankRate.com list of the top 10 best U.S. cities for retirement.

West Alex is one of those rare locations that appeals to young families as well as retirees. Whether you

prefer to walk to Silver Diner and Harris Teeter or hop in the car to explore local attractions, West Alex's proximity to the District and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood makes it the ideal home base.

Thanks to Benchmark's underground garage, you'll never have to endure the stress of circling for a decent parking spot. Honestly, the full complement of wellness amenities at Benchmark at Alexandria will make you wish you downsized sooner.

This beautiful building features a rooftop deck with Washington Monument views; all-day, chef-inspired dining; concierge service; expansive patios; and an outdoor grill. Residents also enjoy private, spacious apartments with large windows to call home.

Benchmark is committed to elevating the human connection

Benchmark's culture, which has been carefully refined over the past 27 years, is as intentional as its location. Team members are hired for heart and trained for skill. They are committed to providing experiences that nurture passions, connections, and enhance quality of life to keep residents active and engaged.

Benchmark designs programs around each resident's interests and goals. Through social events, lifelong learning and fitness classes, creative arts programs, trips to DC attractions, and clubs, there are ample opportunities to explore and connect with others who share your interests.

"Our experience designing quality programs for seniors and operating communities that families have counted on for nearly three decades is evident not only in our beautiful community, but in the genuine caring I see in each inter-



Introducing Benchmark

EXPERIENCE CARE LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

At Benchmark, we work tirelessly to set ourselves apart. While best-in-class amenities, personalized care, gourmet dining and exceptional programs set us apart; our true differentiator is human connection. The powerful relationships between our residents and staff gives an indescribable, warm feeling we call the Benchmark Experience. We are proud to bring this award-winning experience to Alexandria.



BENCHMARK

AT ALEXANDRIA

Independent Living

Assisted Living • Mind & Memory Care

571.520.6623

3440 Berkeley Street | Alexandria
BenchmarkAtAlexandria.com



action,” said Seba Samuel-John, regional director of operations for Benchmark Senior Living.

Living at Benchmark comes with peace of mind for now and the future. As residents age and needs change, the high levels of 24/7 personalized care and on-site nursing and supportive healthcare services offer continued wellness opportunities. Benchmark associates are committed to providing residents with the best possible experience so they remain connected to who and what matters most to them.

“It’s been a beautiful experience helping this community come to life,” reflected Samuel-John. “I look forward to seeing all the great things they do together in the upcoming year.”

Benchmark at Alexandria is now open. For more information or to book a tour, call 571-322-8106.

Vibrant senior living at an Erickson Senior Living Community

There’s a reason Erickson Senior Living is a trusted leader in senior communities. In fact, there are many. From expertly designed floor plans to a conscientious financial model, Erickson Senior Living communities deliver an exceptional, resident-driven experience.

Seniors looking to stay in the DC Metro area for retirement have three conveniently located Erickson Senior Living communities from which to choose: Ashby Ponds in Ashburn, Virginia; Greenspring in Springfield, Virginia; and Riderwood in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Ashby Ponds has one- and two-bedroom apartments, while Greenspring and Riderwood offer a studio option in addition to their one- and two-bedroom floorplans. As continuing care communities, assisted living,

memory care, and nursing care are available right on campus.

No matter which Erickson Senior Living community you decide to call home, you’ll enjoy access to a state-of-the-art fitness and aquatics center; multiple dining venues; and abundant spaces for the hundreds of resident-run clubs, classes, and activities.

“Everything is in one place,” said community residents Alan and Georgia O. “There are classes, movies, and transportation right here. It’s especially nice in the winter.”

That’s because all buildings are connected by glass-enclosed, climate-controlled walkways. Your plans will never again be at the mercy of winter weather.

The stress-free, affordable lifestyle you’ve earned

When not out and about enjoying the community’s amenities and ser-

Get **MORE**
from your retirement.



- 1. More for your money** with our inclusive Monthly Service Package.
- 2. More amenities**, including a pool, fitness center, and restaurants.
- 3. More peace of mind** with additional on-site care should you need it.

“Moving was a great decision for me! I feel confident in my future, and I know that my needs will be taken care of.”

—Marge V., A community resident

Discover more great reasons to choose an Erickson Senior Living®-managed community.

Call **1-844-689-5007** or visit DMVSeniorLiving.com for your free brochure.


Erickson
SENIOR LIVING®

**ASHBY PONDS
GREENSPRING
RIDERWOOD**



vices, you'll have a beautiful apartment to call home.

"It's actually very affordable," said resident Francine A.

No more worrying about piles of bills. With the community's monthly service package, day-to-day expenses are streamlined into a single, monthly bill. That means one check covers everything from utilities to standard maintenance in and around your home.

If a senior community sounds appealing but the thought of downsizing feels too overwhelming, Erickson Senior Living makes it manageable. Erickson Realty and Moving Services is a comprehensive program that helps with every aspect of the move, from organizing to connecting you with a realtor.

"The lifestyle is stress-free here," remarked Francine. "I'm glad I made the decision to move."

To discover which Erickson Senior Living managed community is right for you, visit DMVSeniorLiving.com or call 1-844-689-5007.

Happiness is the foundation on which Schell Brothers is built

When Chris Schell founded Schell Brothers, he did so "with the sole intent of creating a company that put the happiness of its employees and customers above all else."

If happiness is what you seek in your retirement years, you'll find it at Schell Brothers' Delaware properties, conveniently located minutes off the Delaware coast and just a short drive from Washington, DC.

"Delaware is a laid-back lifestyle where you can relax and truly enjoy

our local culture," said Alyssa Titus, director of marketing at Schell Brothers. Delaware living transcends summers at the beach. Coastal Delaware's year-round vibrancy is one of the many reasons this location remains popular among homebuyers who are looking for a second home or forever retirement home.

"All of us at Schell consider our homeowners part of our family in perpetuity," said Titus. "If we run into you at a coffee shop or bar, don't be surprised if we buy you a drink or even pick up your tab!"

A personalized design creates a tailor-made look

A recipient of ProBuilder's Builder of the Year award—the highest honor for a new home builder—Schell Brothers' mission of happiness is apparent at every level of the company and every step of the homebuilding process.

THE RESIDENCES AT THOMAS CIRCLE *a Senior Lifestyle community*

Get a special VIP GIFT if you mention the *Washingtonian* during your tour!



Bert and Mark with Maine Coons Lusya and Lera

"When we first walked into the stately Residences at Thomas Circle, we felt welcomed. On our 1st visit, my husband Bert Kubli even recognized an old friend he had not seen in 25 years! We feel safe here. The building itself is a safe zone. The apartments are beautiful and designed to be accommodating as life changes. We are impressed with the care, concern, and good humor of the professional staff, especially the wait staff in the dining room. The consistently good food is often enhanced by delicious mealtime conversations.

After decades together in our lovely home on Capitol Hill we decided it was the right time and right move for us—while we still had our wits about us and remain open to meeting new people and new experiences—all the while monitoring our health and wellbeing. The quality of the people living and working at the Residences at Thomas Circle makes us feel confident each day that we are living in the right place for us."

Mark McElreath, Independent Living Resident

The Residences at Thomas Circle a Senior Lifestyle Community
1330 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005
202-628-3844

In the early stages, design consultants walk you through the dozens of architectural options, numerous floor plans, and countless design choices to create a home that feels uniquely yours. During construction, managers track progress in Schell's proprietary platform, Heartbeat, and will call you every Friday to discuss updates. When it's time to hand over the keys, don't be surprised if the Schell team surprises you with small, meaningful gifts for your new home.

"We had the pleasure of working with a well-informed, knowledgeable team that welcomed our questions," said Devon and Mustafa, homeowners in Schell's Arbor-Lyn community. "When we asked to see every possible feature, the team dove in headfirst and helped us maximize our favorite bells and whistles to give us the home of our dreams."

Schell designs provide abundant natural light, options for excep-

tional outdoor living spaces, and unmatched curb appeal. Behind the walls, Schell's standard features are equally impressive.

"Our homes are built with our patented Schellter Technology," said Titus. This technology lets homeowners breathe easy knowing that the systems in their home have unparalleled durability and create a living environment that is both healthy and energy efficient.

Friendly taxes are nice; friendly neighbors are even better

Beyond the aesthetics and comfort, there's a lot to be happy about when it comes to living in a Schell Brothers' Delaware community.

"Delaware has tax-friendly living," said Titus. "No sales tax, very low property taxes, beaches, shopping, great coastal dining, James Beard chefs, awesome downtowns."

Schell Brothers' Delaware residents also get to enjoy community-exclusive, high-end amenities that foster a social and active community. Hit the links to work on your golf game. Grab a friend and boost your cardio with a hike on the walking trails or a swim in the indoor or outdoor pools. Up your happiness factor with some pampering at the spa. At the end of the day, enjoy an impromptu happy hour at the full-service bar followed by dinner at the on-site restaurant.

"It comes as no surprise that our communities become families," said Titus. "When you meet our homeowners, they always say that not only do they love their new home, but thanks to Schell Brothers, they have met lifelong friends."

If you're interested in finding happiness with a Schell Brothers' home, call 302-569-9698 or visit schellbrothers.com.

Coming in 2025: Key issues for Retirement Living

March issue

Relevant editorial feature, adjacencies, and Retirement Living Profiles

May issue

Retirement Living Guide, adjacencies, and Retirement Living Profiles

November issue

Top Doctors cover package and adjacencies

December issue

Retirement Living Guide, adjacencies, and Retirement Living Profiles

Contact Anna Williams

202-862-3521 | awilliams@washingtsonian.com

WASHINGTONIAN



THE FITZGERALD OF PALISADES

The Fitzgerald of Palisades
202-929-1846
4865 MacArthur Boulevard NW
Washington, D.C. 20007

HIGHLIGHTS

As a Kisco Signature Community, The Fitzgerald of Palisades offers exceptional senior living with refined lifestyle that delivers five-star service, personalized programming, and exclusive experiences with local and cultural partnerships.

The Fitzgerald Welcomes You Home

Imagine a world in which moving was simple and uncomplicated. A place where you could be part of a vibrant community before you even have a key. Members of The Fitzgerald of Palisades, Kisco Senior Living's newest community in the DC area, already live in that reality.

Anticipated to open this spring, The Fitzgerald treats its members to a "Welcome Home" onboarding experience that makes the transition as seamless as possible. They'll schedule movers, connect you with downsizers, and offer assistance every step of the way through move-in day and beyond.

This mindset helps members find their people within The Fitzgerald and discover—or in many cases, rediscover—the idyllic Palisades neighborhood that blends residential tranquility with urban convenience.

Because many founding members already reside in the Palisades community, the "Welcome Home" experience has reintroduced friends who lost touch over the years.

"'Welcome Home' is not just connection, it's reconnection. Yes, it brings to light how small their circles became, but it also helps people see how big their circle can once again become," remarked Gia Aron, assistant general manager of The Fitzgerald.



The Art of Living Well

Whether you join The Fitzgerald as a founding member or after the grand opening, Aron and her team will utilize the information they gather during your “Welcome Home” experience to curate programming that reflects your lifestyle and interests. The result is a unique member-led experience rooted in The Art of Living Well, The Fitzgerald’s signature whole body health philosophy.

The Art of Living Well, a hallmark of Kisco, embraces nine dimensions of wellness to engage mind, body, and spirit. With all the penthouses and two-bedroom apartments in The Fitzgerald’s 137-unit community fully committed, Aron is hard at work finding ways for members to start “living well” before the doors even open.

To encourage social connectivity, The Fitzgerald established partnerships with neighborhood favorites, including BlackSalt, Black Coffee, and Politics & Prose.

To promote artistic expression, they hosted a Blooms & Brews event that combined members’ love of crafts—local craft beer and seasonal décor, that is.

To engage members in intellectual programming, The Fitzgerald held its inaugural Red Carpet Speaker Series with a thought-provoking fireside chat followed by a reception featuring refreshments from

neighborhood partners.

“The thought process and intention behind all our events is the same level of detail that goes into care,” said Aron.

An elevated hospitality experience

At The Fitzgerald, hospitality is woven into the Kisco Confidence® care model. It prioritizes safety, security, trust, transparency, health, and well-being while delivering an exceptional lifestyle experience.

“Kisco Confidence® is really the core behind everything we do. And the reason why we have all our systems and processes in place is to make sure that nothing is left behind and no rock is unturned,” said Aron.

Prior to joining Kisco, Aron worked across the hospitality industry. She has a keen ability to create memorable, personalized experiences that are enhanced by the care she puts into member relationships.

“Going from one five-star hotel to another is the same. A building is a building. The amazing people are what make it a home,” said Aron. “The 1% that I looked forward to in hospitality is what I get to do 100% of the time at The Fitzgerald.”


THE FITZGERALD
 of Palisades
A KISCO SIGNATURE COMMUNITY



As a Kisco Signature Community, The Carnegie at Washingtonian Center is an exceptional retirement community, located in the heart of Gaithersburg. Now open, The Carnegie provides the full spectrum of care: independent living, assisted living, and memory care.

The Carnegie focuses on providing opportunities that encourage each resident to make choices to live their healthiest, most enjoyable life. From lifelong learning classes, mentorship programs and state-of-the-art wellness facilities to diverse programming and entertainment, The Carnegie team is well equipped to ensure residents engage not only their bodies but also their minds and spirits. These elements are enhanced with engaging and stimulating programs in collaboration with esteemed wellness, cultural and local artisan partners that bring a unique element to their wellness programming.

The community stands as a hub for intellectual pursuits, offering a meticulously curated selection of events and activities. Kisco's signature wellness program, The Art of Living Well, takes a holistic approach to the nine dimensions of wellness, including intellectual, spiritual, vocational, physical, emotional and social well-being. The Carnegie fosters an environment where residents can engage in meaningful discussions, expand their horizons, and form deep connections with fellow intellectuals.

The Carnegie at Washington Center is redefining elevated retirement living in the heart of Gaithersburg. To experience The Carnegie lifestyle for yourself, schedule a personal tour of their exceptional amenities and model residence. **Call 240-301-7679 or visit lifeatthecarnegie.com.**

THE CARNEGIE AT WASHINGTONIAN CENTER

The Carnegie
10100 Washingtonian Blvd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
240-301-7679

HIGHLIGHTS

Luxury Retirement, Five Star Service, Signature Amenities, Five Star Dining, Customized Wellness, Heart of Gaithersburg, Curated Programming, Signature Kisco Lifestyle



THE CARNEGIE
at Washingtonian Center

A KISCO SIGNATURE COMMUNITY



The Village at Providence Point—A National Lutheran Community, is the place to dream, explore and discover a new way of senior living in Annapolis, Maryland. This vibrant new Life Plan Community will offer an active, independent living experience that combines natural beauty, metropolitan culture and small-town charm. Set on 35 wooded acres, the community will be just two miles from City Dock and downtown. Once construction is complete, our Engage Center will be the hub of on-campus activity, offering a wealth of life-enriching amenities and programs.

THE VILLAGE AT PROVIDENCE POINT

1997 Annapolis Exchange Pkwy, Suite 310
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-883-5639
thevillageatprovidencepoint.org

HIGHLIGHTS

- Apartment homes and cottages with high-end finishes
- Fully equipped fitness center
- Indoor aquatic center with lap pool and spa
- Options for lifelong learning, recreation, and more

INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING, SOCIALLY ENGAGING

Residents can anticipate a robust schedule of cultural, arts, entertainment, lifelong learning and educational programs, as well as day trips, movies, lectures, concerts, classes, events, parties and more.

WELLNESS PROGRAMMING TO LIVE YOUR BEST

Multi-dimensional wellness programs and healthy fitness options are part of the community's ConnectedLiving philosophy to help enrich the mind, body and spirit.

DINING OPTIONS FOR EVERY PALATE

The campus will offer six dedicated dining venues ranging from formal to casual, with tempting menus and wholesome selections to enjoy while dining with friends or from the comfort of your own home.

NOW ACCEPTING RESERVATIONS!

Contact us today to schedule your visit and tour a model apartment.

The Village at Providence Point is affiliated with National Lutheran Communities & Services, a faith-based, not-for-profit ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, serving people of all beliefs. The Village at Providence Point is subject to the final approval of the Maryland Department of Aging.





MOSAIC BY WILLOW VALLEY COMMUNITIES

600 Willow Valley Square
Lancaster, PA 17602
888-893-1423
MosaicLancaster.com

HIGHLIGHTS

Twenty-stories, 55+ high-rise featuring 146 two- and three-bedroom residences and premier amenities located in the heart of Lancaster, PA. Type A Lifecare ensures a secure future while you live richly today.

Willow Valley Communities introduces its newest 55+ community, Mosaic, coming to the heart of Lancaster, PA, ranked a top place to retire in the country. Mosaic combines the vibrancy of Lancaster, PA with Willow Valley Communities' 40-year tradition of excellence. Mosaic will rise 20 stories above the heart of the city with Lancaster's offerings just outside its front door. Worldwide cuisine, live theater and music, diverse galleries, eclectic boutiques, and so much more in the manageable and walkable city of Lancaster -- convenient to Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, DC. Mosaic will be crafted with an aesthetic of timeless, casual elegance and offer exclusive amenities and services including the exceptional value of Willow Valley Communities' Type A (extensive) Lifecare contract providing you with a seamless continuum of care, if needed in the future, at no increase to monthly service fees.



KNOLLWOOD LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY

6200 Oregon Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20015
202-541-0149
knollwoodcommunity.org

HIGHLIGHTS

Don't wait to experience our on-campus events, one-of-a-kind staff—and so much more. Call (202) 541-0149 to schedule your tour or visit knollwoodcommunity.org for more.

Nestled just next door to NW Washington, DC's Rock Creek Park, you'll find Knollwood's beautiful campus—and access to a vibrant social community with top-tier medical services and so many exciting programs.

Knollwood makes it easy to stay connected to the things residents love, whether that's staying social or discovering new hobbies. From the tight-knit community to a robust roster of unique, engaging activities for those of all needs and abilities—Knollwood's staff is dedicated to maintaining a sense of purpose for all seniors.

Plus, with onsite 24-hr nurses, a primary medical care practice, and outpatient rehab services available, you'll have total peace of mind. That's the beauty of worry-free living.



“Whatever you think you want, think about doing even more,” says Barbara Harbison. “Because that’s what Asbury is all about.”

Welcome to Asbury Methodist Village.

Asbury offers unmatched programs and amenities—including a mentoring partnership with Montgomery County schools, resident-run continuing ed, and a well-being and brain health center complete with boxing and a climbing wall.

ASBURY METHODIST VILLAGE

Asbury Methodist Village
301-453-8101
201 Russell Ave, Gaithersburg, MD 20877
AsburyMethodistVillage.org

HIGHLIGHTS

- Apartments, Villas, Courtyard Homes
- 134-acre campus with Wildlife Preserve
- Award-winning wellness and resident programs
- On-site health continuum
- Research-based brain health program

Our 134-acre campus includes a large, wooded Wildlife Preserve. And with welcoming, service-oriented residents and unparalleled clubs and programs running the gamut from the arts, to computers, to environmental stewardship, it’s a place with room to grow.

Asbury welcomes people of all backgrounds and beliefs and proudly holds SAGECARE platinum certification as an LGBTQ-friendly community.

Here’s how a few other residents describe their decision:

“Where you live can make all the difference. Asbury has green pastures, lovely flowering trees and ponds with walkways. Maintenance is taken care of by excellent associates, giving us more time for walking, swimming, and exercising, getting a bite with friends and enjoying cultural programs and movies in the theater. We looked at other communities, but nothing was as nice!”

“Asbury has exceeded all my expectations. The variety of opportunities is unlimited. We have made many new friends. We’ve restarted yoga, attend Keese School lectures and find that there are more things than we have time for each day.”



Asbury Methodist Village offers apartments, Courtyard Homes and Villas. On-site health services provide future peace of mind. **Visit AsburyMethodistVillage.org or call 301-453-8101.**



WOODLEIGH CHASE

9805 Woodleigh Lane
Fairfax, VA 22302
1-888-518-9619
WoodleighChase.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- State-of-the-art clubhouse
- On-site restaurants
- Full-time maintenance
- On-site medical care
- Pool and fitness center
- Stylish residences

Woodleigh Chase Is Now Open!

For distinctive retirement living, look no further than Woodleigh Chase, the premier senior living community now open in Fairfax. Enjoy a variety of stylish floor plans, exciting amenities, and services to enhance your health and well-being—all in a location you love!

Stay active and enjoy countless opportunities to explore hobbies, entertainment, education, and more. The on-site medical center is just steps from your door and security staff trained in emergency response is just moments away.

Only a limited number of residences remain. Call 1-888-518-9619 or visit WoodleighChase.com for your free brochure.

HIGHLIGHTS

As an accredited Life Plan Community, Kendal at Lexington offers diverse living options, natural beauty, and an active community.

We're better together.



KENDAL at Lexington

KENDAL AT LEXINGTON

160 Kendal Drive, Lexington, VA 24450
540-463-1910
Kalex.kendal.org | info@kalex.kendal.org

Kendal at Lexington residents enjoy exploring intellectual concepts, sharing cultural experiences, and socializing in physical activities that build friendships and memories that last a lifetime. Kendal offers amazing amenities including Independent Living, Assisted Living, Rehabilitative and Long-Term Care. Residents gather to plan events, share in activities, and grow together as participants in the surrounding Lexington community. Learn more about what brings us together at Kalex.Kendal.org and call us to schedule a tour today at 540-463-1910.

HIGHLIGHTS

Ingleside at Rock Creek delivers an exceptional, engaging lifestyle with top-notch offerings, modern amenities, and on-site higher levels of care.



INGLESIDE AT ROCK CREEK

3050 Military Road NW, Washington, DC 20015
202-470-2208
www.ircdc.org

Discover a vibrant sense of connection at Ingleside at Rock Creek, a not-for-profit life plan community on 14 spectacular acres by Rock Creek Park. Embracing diversity and accredited by CARF and SAGECare, an engaging lifestyle can reflect your passions. Enjoy opportunities to build friendships, meaningful interactions, and live your best life. Our Center for Healthy Living has a fitness center, art studio, cultural arts center and provides endless possibilities for growth. Ingleside at Rock Creek provides a seamless continuum of care and peace of mind for the future.



IMAGINE *Your Best Retirement in the Shenandoah Valley*

Embrace an exciting new chapter in your retirement at The Village at Orchard Ridge—A National Lutheran Community. Crafted for today's older adults ready to enjoy the rewards of a lifetime of hard work, you can live your best retirement every day in a community celebrating choice, growth, and connection.

Nestled on 130 acres in Winchester, Virginia — a top retirement destination — our Life Plan Community attracts residents from across the country seeking a peaceful, small-town atmosphere with easy access to Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia amenities.

EXPERIENCE *Retirement Designed Especially for You*

With spacious independent living apartment homes and cottages, The Village at Orchard Ridge provides peace of mind through a tiered approach to health care, offering flexibility in how services are delivered.

ENGAGE *in Community Life the Way You Choose*

At The Village at Orchard Ridge, you have the freedom to choose your own adventure. Neighbors become friends, and countless opportunities await to spark new passions or rekindle old hobbies. With a focus on the seven dimensions of wellness, residents shape programming, fostering meaningful opportunities for growth and well-being. Many residents also share their passions with neighbors, exchanging rich knowledge and experiences that make our community unique.

Schedule a visit to see what your best retirement can look like.

The Village at Orchard Ridge is affiliated with National Lutheran Communities & Services, a faith-based, not-for-profit ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, serving people of all beliefs.

THE VILLAGE AT ORCHARD RIDGE

400 Clocktower Ridge Drive
Winchester, VA 22603
540-306-4661
thevillageatorchardridge.org

HIGHLIGHTS

- Aquatic and fitness centers, walking trails and dog park
- A wealth of opportunities for lifelong learning
- Service-oriented residents dedicated to community



THE VILLAGE AT
ORCHARD RIDGE
A National Lutheran Community



WESTMINSTER AT LAKE RIDGE

12191 Clipper Drive
Lake Ridge, VA 22192
703-854-9614
www.wlrva.org

HIGHLIGHTS

Westminster at Lake Ridge's Center for Healthy Living embraces wellness and provides an abundance of amenities and services along with a variety of engaging events and programs.

Find serenity and connection at Westminster at Lake Ridge, a not-for-profit life plan community nestled within 62 picturesque acres in Northern Virginia. With forested trails, two ponds, and landscaped gardens, our CARF-accredited, SAGECare-certified campus brings nature's beauty together with a vibrant social atmosphere. Our Center for Healthy Living offers a variety of wellness programs, fitness activities, and cultural events, providing countless ways to enrich your life each day. From artistic groups to community socials and intellectual pursuits, you're sure to find meaningful engagement. Whether you seek independent living or require supportive care, Westminster at Lake Ridge provides a continuum of services and peace of mind in a welcoming, close-knit community. Embrace a lifestyle that blends tranquility, fulfillment, and connection.

HIGHLIGHTS

Ingleside at King Farm is part of the highly desirable and conveniently walkable King Farm neighborhood, and is just a quick metro ride to our nation's capital.



INGLESIDE AT KING FARM

701 King Farm Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850
240-380-2665
www.ikfmd.org

Wellness is a way of life at Ingleside at King Farm, Rockville's premier, not-for-profit life plan community. Situated in a walkable neighborhood just steps from the metro, our community thrives on engagement and adventure. Explore our Center for Healthy Living, featuring diverse educational, cultural, and artistic programs and events, fitness classes, and wellness opportunities. Embrace your optimal lifestyle surrounded by friends, top-notch amenities, and a continuum of care all available on one campus.

HIGHLIGHTS

One-of-a-kind retirement community offering beautiful maintenance-free apartments and homes, small-town charm, and dozens of amenities designed for today's active seniors.



CORNWALL MANOR

1 Boyd Street, Cornwall, PA 17016
717-274-8092
www.cornwallmanor.org

Discover Cornwall Manor....an active senior living community nestled on 190 wooded acres in Central Pennsylvania. Cornwall Manor offers a continuum of care including a variety of independent living apartments and houses and high quality personal care and skilled nursing care. Many amenities and services available including dining, physicians' office, fitness center, pool, library, movie theater, walking paths and much more. Enjoy less traffic and a lower cost of living....at Cornwall Manor. Call for more information or to schedule a visit.



Experience refined senior living at The Village at Rockville—A National Lutheran Community, where 135 years of service to older adults meets contemporary elegance and dynamic lifestyle opportunities. As a leading Life Plan Community in Rockville, Maryland, we offer a home base for your next chapter, designed to support a vibrant, wellness-centered lifestyle. Our tiered approach to health care ensures you have access to a full spectrum of options, all within our 27-acre tree-lined, walkable campus.

EXPLORE. EVOLVE. THRIVE.

Whether expressing your creativity in our art studio, discovering tranquility through Tai Chi or immersing yourself in a new language, endless possibilities await you. Our aquatics and fitness centers, a well-curated library, a vibrant game room, a fully equipped workshop, and a beautiful chapel are just a few of the thoughtfully designed spaces you'll find here.

WELLNESS PROGRAMMING TO LIVE YOUR BEST

More than a calendar of social events and convenient amenities, we offer an environment where residents can live with joy, purpose, and meaning — nurturing every dimension of wellness and promoting personal growth and well-being.

DINING OPTIONS FOR EVERY PALATE

The campus offers five dining venues with tempting menus and wholesome selections. Each meal is thoughtfully prepared by our talented chefs, using fresh, locally sourced ingredients to bring flavor, nutrition, and joy to your table.

Contact us today to schedule your visit. *The Village at Rockville is affiliated with National Lutheran Communities & Services, a faith-based, not-for-profit ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, serving people of all beliefs.*

THE VILLAGE AT ROCKVILLE

The Village at Rockville - A National Lutheran Community
9701 Veirs Drive, Rockville, MD 20850
301-679-1286
thevillageatrockville.org

HIGHLIGHTS

- A Life Plan Community with on-site health services
- Apartment homes, cottages and villas
- A wealth of opportunities for lifelong learning, inspiring pursuits, and personal discovery





Off the Market!

A peek inside some of Washington's recent high-end residential transactions

MARYLAND

1 **WHERE:** Potomac.
SOLD BY: **Rebecca Howard**, a vice president at the education consulting firm EAB.
LISTED: \$4,500,00.
SOLD: \$4,500,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 5.
BRAGGING POINTS: A 23,792-square-foot Italian-style villa with eight bedrooms, 11 bathrooms, three





half baths, 11 fireplaces, a gym, a playroom, a heated pool and pool house, a koi pond, and a separate apartment above the three-car garage.

2 **WHERE:** Chevy Chase.
BOUGHT BY: **Clive Gilmore**, CEO and co-founder of the energy-management-solutions company Hanley Energy.
LISTED: \$3,300,000.
SOLD: \$3,325,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 9.
BRAGGING POINTS: A 1900 Mediterranean Revival house with four bedrooms, three and a half bathrooms, four fireplaces, a heated pool, and a pergola-covered porch.

DC

WHERE: Wesley Heights.
SOLD BY: **Michael Sabel**, CEO, executive co-chairman, and founder of the gas company Venture Global LNG,

and **Charlotte Sabel**.
LISTED: \$6,200,000.
SOLD: \$6,000,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 66.
BRAGGING POINTS: A renovated 1937 house with five bedrooms, seven and a half bathrooms, an in-law suite, three laundry areas, a gym, a sports court, and a heated saltwater pool with a cabana.

3 **WHERE:** Spring Valley.
SOLD BY: **Curtis Cox** and **Dolly Oberoi**, co-founders of the business consulting firm C2 Technologies.
LISTED: \$3,995,000.
SOLD: \$3,995,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 20.
BRAGGING POINTS: A brick Colonial with five bedrooms, four and a half bathrooms, three fireplaces, a media room, a deck, and a gazebo.

VIRGINIA

WHERE: McLean.
SOLD BY: **Stephen Strasburg**, former Wash-

ington Nationals pitcher.
LISTED: \$9,750,000.
SOLD: \$8,550,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 75.
BRAGGING POINTS: A Tudor-style mansion with six bedrooms, seven bathrooms, three half baths, five fireplaces, an entertainment center, a gym, a pool with a recently constructed pool

house, a four-car garage, and a motor court.

4 **WHERE:** McLean.
SOLD BY: **T. Timothy Tuerff**, an international-tax expert and retired partner at Deloitte Tax.
LISTED: \$4,375,000.
SOLD: \$4,175,000.
DAYS ON MARKET: 28.

BRAGGING POINTS: Six bedrooms, five bathrooms, and three half baths, with four fireplaces, an elevator, a loft, a recreation room, an exercise room, a gaming area, and two porches.

W

Sales information provided by Bright MLS.





GEORGETOWN \$12,500,000
1534 28th St. NW
Washington, DC
Jamie Peva 202-258-5050
Nancy Taylor Bubes 202-256-2164
Lenore G. Rubino 202-262-1261



GEORGETOWN \$6,250,000
1537 28th St. NW
Washington, DC
Nate Guggenheim 202-333-5905



KENT \$5,995,000
3065 University Ter. NW
Washington, DC
Ben Roth 202-465-9636
The Roth Team



PHILLIPS PARK \$5,595,000
4410 Meadow Rd. NW
Washington, DC
Cailin Monahan 804-874-1847
The NTB Group



KALORAMA \$4,995,000
2120 Bancroft Pl. NW
Washington, DC
Liz D'Angio 202-427-7890
The NTB Group



CLEVELAND PARK \$3,995,000
3307 Newark St. NW
Washington, DC
Margot Wilson 202-549-2100



KENT \$3,895,000
3115 Chain Bridge Rd. NW
Washington, DC
Margot Wilson 202-549-2100



CHESAPEAKE BAY \$3,500,000
1071 Gum Thicket Rd.
Gwynn, VA
Nelson Marban 202-870-6899



CHEVY CHASE VIEW \$2,595,000
3904 Dresden St.
Kensington, MD
Nate Guggenheim 202-333-5905



SOLD

GEORGETOWN PL \$2,500,000
8001 Greenwich Woods Dr.
McLean, VA
Marianne Prendergast 703-626-7500
Will Prendergast 703-434-2711



GTOWN/BURLEITH \$2,375,000
3721 Reservoir Rd. NW
Washington, DC
Lenore G. Rubino 202-262-1261



PRIVATE OFFERING

QUARRY SPRINGS \$2,225,000
8213 River Rd.
Bethesda, MD
Marilyn Charity 202-427-7553



RIVER FALLS \$1,585,000
7822 Hidden Meadow Ter.
Potomac, MD
Anne Killeen 301-706-0067



SOLD

CHEVY CHASE \$1,525,000
6121 32nd Pl. NW
Washington, DC
W. Ted Gossett 703-625-5656



PRIVATE OFFERING

SEMINARY HGHTS \$1,500,000
1307 Cleveland St.
Alexandria, VA
Gary Dopsloff 703-795-0697
Aaron Scruggs 703-403-8970



CAPITOL HILL \$749,500
1247 Maryland Ave. NE
Washington, DC
Nate Guggenheim 202-333-5905



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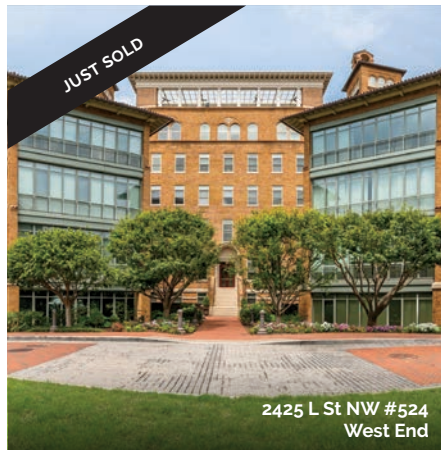
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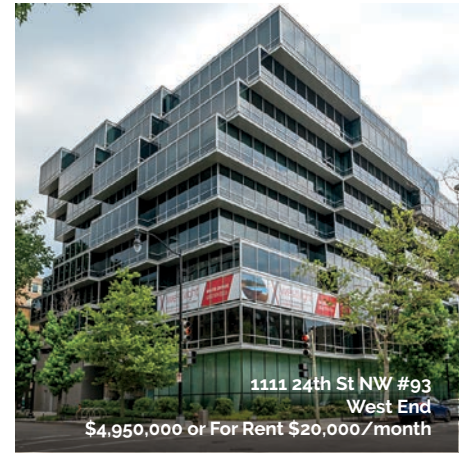
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Kalorama



2425 L St NW #524
West End



2145 California St NW #203
Kalorama | \$299,000



1111 24th St NW #93
West End
\$4,950,000 or For Rent \$20,000/month



1901 Wyoming Ave NW #77
Kalorama | \$425,000



800 25th St NW #903
Foggy Bottom | \$950,000

Sylvia Bergstrom has been a top producing agent since starting real estate in 1973, and Marin Hagen joined her mother's successful real estate practice in 2007. They count among their clients Presidential candidates, Senators, Members of Congress, Cabinet secretaries, ambassadors, governors, leaders in the arts, medical, business, legal, non-profit and more. Their business is nearly 100% repeat and referral, a testament to their high ethical standards, strong negotiating skills, energy and discretion. Sylvia and Marin consistently rank among the top 3 Coldwell Banker teams in the Mid-Atlantic, among over 2,000 associates in 30 offices.



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Former NIH Head Francis Collins on Bringing People Together to Sing

It bolsters his belief that music has helped our species survive



ROCK DOCS: Collins (center) plays guitar at the Kennedy Center with a band of fellow physicians, part of a 2012 Celebration of Science event.

FRANCIS S. COLLINS IS AN ILLUSTRIOUS PHYSICIAN AND SCIENTIST—former head of both the Human Genome Project and the National Institutes of Health. But lately, he's become passionate about bridging political and cultural divides, which is a subject of his new book, *The Road to Wisdom: On Truth, Science, Faith, and Trust*. In his personal life, Collins is a devotee of music. He spoke with us about how he and his wife have been bringing people together through song.

"EVERY HOLIDAY SEASON, starting when I was six or seven, my parents would host a singing party at their home near Staunton, Virginia. There might be show tunes around the grand piano, fiddle music in the kitchen, and songwriters in the upstairs hall singing original things. That was always the best night of the year.

"Ten or 15 years ago, my wife and I wanted to create something similar, so we began having singing parties. We'd invite 40 or 50 people, many of whom did not necessarily think of themselves as musical. But I'd say, 'Come on anyway—maybe you'll discover something about yourself.' We'd invite people from vastly different perspectives—from the Hill, from academia—and just start singing, often straight through to midnight. I like to start off with something everybody knows, like 'Wagon Wheel' or 'Take Me Home, Country Roads.' Both have great choruses that people can warm up with.

"The thing I love most is that, after a while, you realize you've got a real choir. There are stronger and weaker singers, but together, it's quite an instrument. So you'll get to a song that has a really good chorus, and I'll make the instru-

ments stop so it's just a cappella, and something just happens: People's faces light up with 'Look what we're creating here.' There was a moment like that where I looked over and saw a very conservative news commentator standing next to a very progressive scientist, a Nobel Prize winner—and the joyfulness in both of their faces, with arms around each other, it was like, okay, that's the perfect snapshot of what music can do, the way it brings us together.

"Music is an example of something that's hard to explain on a purely scientific basis. It's an example of beauty, and I think of beauty as a signpost we're supposed to pay attention to. It's pretty clear our brains have special circuits designed for music, and those wouldn't be there if music had not been something that gave us the opportunity to survive over long periods. Music has kept us together through millennia, has helped us work together, grieve together, go to war together, and support each other through hard times. Those ancient circuits can help us if we can figure out how to tap into them. They can knock back the divisiveness and bring us joy."

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