

WE ARE WINCHESTER

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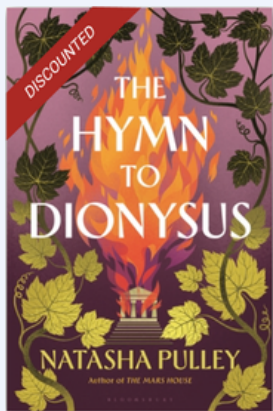
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## Winchester Book Gallery Recommends:



Raised in a Greek legion, Phaidros has been taught to follow his commander's orders at all costs. But when Phaidros rescues a baby from a fire at Thebes's palace, his commander's orders cease to make sense: Phaidros is forced to abandon the blue-eyed boy at a temple, and to keep the baby's existence a total secret.

Years later, struggling with panic attacks and flashbacks, Phaidros is enlisted by the Queen to find her son, Thebes' young crown prince, who has vanished to escape an arranged marriage. The search leads him to a blue-eyed witch named Dionysus, whose guidance is as wise as the events that surround him are strange. In Dionysus's company, Phaidros witnesses sudden outbursts of riots and unrest, and everywhere Dionysus goes, rumors follow about a new god, one sired by Zeus but lost in a fire.

Natasha Pulley transports us to an ancient empire on the edge of ruin to tell a love story about a man needing a god to remind him how to be a human.

[WinchesterBookGallery.com](http://WinchesterBookGallery.com) | 7 N. Loudoun St

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We say it every spring, but it feels especially true this year—Winchester is buzzing. This month reminds us that community doesn't just happen. It's built. Carefully, creatively, and with a whole lot of heart.

In this issue, you'll meet Heidi Hiller, who made the leap from spreadsheets to stemware as the new owner of Murphy Beverage Company. You'll read about Emma and Juliana Dobbs, high schoolers who turned a homeschool assignment into a published book as a family project. We'll also introduce you to Rachel Smith, a lifelong artist who is now passing on her passion to budding young artists through her Hive Studio.

We're so excited to continue spotlighting the people and places that make this town feel like home. Whether you've been here a week or a lifetime, there's always more to discover—on the Walking Mall, in our parks, or inside a tucked-away gallery.

We'll see you in Old Town!



*Misty Weaver  
& Katie Jordan*

**WE ARE  
WINCHESTER**

## ROTARY CLUB: HEALING FIELD OF HONOR

This Memorial Day weekend, hundreds of American flags will once again fly in a powerful tribute as the Winchester Rotary Club presents its annual Healing Field of Honor. The stirring display will transform Handley High School's lawn into a sea of red, white, and blue, offering a moving opportunity for the community to come together and honor the heroes in our lives.

Each flag in the display represents an individual—current military members, veterans, first responders, and everyday hometown heroes. Sponsors can dedicate flags to those who have served, sacrificed, and made a lasting impact. More than just a visual tribute, each flag tells a story of courage, service, and gratitude.

You can celebrate someone by buying or adopting a flag to fly at the Healing Field of Honor. Volunteers will be at the event to direct you to the flag you purchased. Flags may also be purchased during the event. In addition, worn and damaged American flags can be brought to the event and placed in the designated receptacle for proper and respectful disposal. Opening ceremony takes place Thursday, May 22 from 6-7pm. You won't want to miss the skydiver who parachutes into the ceremony!

Closing ceremony is Monday, May 26 from 3-4pm. To sponsor a flag, make a donation, or learn more about the Healing Field of Honor, visit the Winchester Rotary Club's website. Your support ensures that the spirit of service continues to thrive in our community.

[RotaryClubOfWinchester.org/healing-field-of-honor/](http://RotaryClubOfWinchester.org/healing-field-of-honor/)





# A COMMUNITY OF COMPASSION: THE ADULT CARE CENTER OF THE NSV



For more than three decades, the Adult Care Center in Winchester, Virginia, has been a cornerstone of support for adults in need of daytime care and meaningful engagement. Founded by Jane Bauknecht 31 years ago, the Center began as a modest, part-time operation in a local church. Jane recognized the need for adult day services in the community—particularly for those aging or living with cognitive challenges—and set out to fill that gap. Within a few years, the program expanded to five days a week, and in 2011, it found a permanent home on North Cameron Street, where it now can serve up to 35 participants each day.

The Adult Care Center is dedicated exclusively to adults aged 18 and older, though most of its participants are older adults living with dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or recovering from strokes. Others may be adults with special needs. The Center offers a flexible schedule, allowing participants to attend as often or as little as they like. It provides not just supervision and care, but enriching activities in a safe and compassionate environment. For many families, the Center offers a vital option—supporting their loved ones without the immediate need for assisted living.

The Center's current Executive Director, Katie Devolites, first encountered the Adult Care Center in 2016 as a student intern. Just two hours into her first day, she called her mom, moved to tears by the kindness and dedication she saw in the staff. She knew instantly that she had found her calling. Katie had grown up surrounded by grandparents and great-grandparents and took a gap year after high school to help care for her great-grandmother, who had dementia. That experience, combined with the care her family received from hospice, inspired her to pursue psychology and public health at Shenandoah University, with a concentration in geriatric psychology.

Katie joined the Adult Care Center full-time in 2018 as an activity assistant and, in May 2021, was promoted to Executive Director. Under her leadership, the Center continues to prioritize not only the well-being of its participants but also the needs of their caregivers. The team is made up of individuals with deep personal connections to caregiving—many of whom have cared for family members with Alzheimer's or other conditions. They are specially trained in working with this population and understand how essential it is to provide both care and respite.

The Center's programming is diverse and enriching. Participants can enjoy coffee hour, exercise classes, music, singing, word games, expressive arts, and even group story writing. Volunteers are always welcome and encouraged to lead activities that align with their own passions or expertise. One of the Center's most beloved offerings is its intergenerational partnership with Fremont Street Nursery. Each week, preschoolers are paired with a participant, known as their "grand friend," and the two share time reading, crafting, and laughing together—a relationship that brings joy to both young and old.

As the Center looks to the future, it is preparing to move to a new home in the future Youth Development Center on South Loudoun Street. This move will allow for more space and the addition of outdoor areas, giving participants increased independence and new ways to engage with their surroundings. Remarkably, the Adult Care Center remains the only adult day care facility between Winchester and Fredericksburg, highlighting its critical role in the region.

The mission of the Adult Care Center is grounded in compassion, dignity, and community. As a nonprofit, it relies on the support of volunteers and donors to continue its important work. Those interested in contributing can send donations to 411 N Cameron St, Suite 100, Winchester, VA 22601. To learn more about the Center's mission, programs, or ways to get involved, visit [AdultCareCenter.net](http://AdultCareCenter.net).

At its core, the Adult Care Center is about connection: connecting participants with joy, caregivers with peace of mind, and the community with a deeper understanding of what it means to care.



# MURPHY BEVERAGE: WINE WITH FRIENDS

You don't accidentally end up owning a specialty wine and beverage shop like Murphy Beverage Company. For Heidi Hiller, it was a slow burn—one that started with a few Finger Lakes winery trips.

Heidi's story with Murphy starts in earnest in 2017, when she decided to earn her sommelier certification. At the time, she was working in internal finance at Booz Allen Hamilton. "I needed a way to structure learning about wine," she said. "Not just drinking it, but understanding it—its history, agriculture, culture, how it's made." She started studying with Charlie Fish, then co-owner of Murphy Beverage, along with Tammy, another wine-loving friend. It was serious study—structured tastings, blind tastings, theory. And a few cases of Cava at home, so she could practice restaurant service on her friends.

"I'd ask, 'Hey, can I practice serving you wine properly?'" she laughed. "Because the sommelier exam includes a service component—how to open the bottle, who to serve first." Heidi passed the exam, and though she didn't know how or when she'd leave corporate life, she knew she would.

By then, she had already mentioned to Charlie: "If you ever think about selling Murphy, let me know." A year later, Charlie did. Heidi talked it over with her husband, Chad, and the deal was on. "We both knew we wanted this. The trust was there, and Charlie and JP were incredibly generous sharing everything they knew to make the transition smooth."

That was nearly three years ago. Since then, Heidi's been navigating the joys and jolts of small business ownership—with an infant and a toddler in tow. "People think leaving corporate life means I'm sipping wine all day. But I traded one full-time job for five," she said. "Licensing, scheduling, ordering, social media. It's all you, unless you contract it out." She's quick to credit Chad for being her "anchor," both emotionally and logistically. "He works remotely, and he's in accounting professionally, so he keeps the books here, too," she said. "It kind of just happened that way, but he's really good at it."

Murphy Beverage, under Heidi's care, still has the same soul customers remember—deep knowledge, curated selection, and a casual vibe that doesn't take itself too seriously. "We're not here to intimidate anyone," she says. "I want people to feel like wine can be a part of their everyday life." But she's also thinking ahead. The wine industry is in flux—climate change, changing tastes, younger consumers drinking less or switching to THC and CBD-based beverages. "Wine has a real problem attracting younger drinkers," she says. "If we wait until people are 50 or 60 to get into it, that's too late—for the industry, for the culture, for the farmers."

She's adjusting Murphy's shelves accordingly. "I've expanded our non-alcoholic options. We carry brands like Best Day Brewing and Go Brewing. And we have some really fun stuff like artisanal bitters from Clinton and botanical sodas from Knoxville. Things with flavor, that don't feel like a compromise."

Whether it's adjusting her product mix, changing business hours, or rethinking how to market to the next generation of wine lovers, Heidi's always thinking ahead. Recent tastings have featured Misty Mountain Meadery and other local and regional producers. She has a long-standing partnership with the Winchester Book Gallery combining the book club with wine tastings locals can join.

As for the future? She's hopeful but clear-eyed. "We need to cultivate curiosity about wine—not just the fancy stuff, but everyday wine. Wine with dinner. Wine with friends. It doesn't have to be precious." Just thoughtful. Just local.

Visit and learn more at [MurphyBeverage.com](https://MurphyBeverage.com)



Murphy Beverage is part of The History of Us project. You'll find QR codes on each participating building. Scan to discover the past businesses and people that inhabited your favorite buildings in Old Town!





# SEE AND BE SEEN

*May events*

## 10

### DANCING IN THE VINES

We'll gather under a charming pavilion nestled among the trees and vines, students will be treated to wine and charcuterie boards. [Briede Family Vineyards](#)

## 17

### WBW 9TH ANNIVERSARY

Our theme is Nine Niche Ales, experimenting with not-so-mainstream styles this year to celebrate! [Winchester Brew Works](#)

## 17

### SENIOR EXPO

A FREE community event dedicated to enriching the lives of seniors in Winchester. Find resources from healthcare to financial planning and more! [Sportsplex](#)

## 30

### PARKS & REC SUMMER KICK OFF

Join us for an exciting Summer Kick-Off Event! Celebrate the start of the season with delicious food, bounce around on inflatable slides and obstacle courses, take a pony ride, and much more. [WPR](#)

## 30

### WINCHESTER ROYALS

Join the Winchester Royals baseball team for opening weekend! [Bridgeforth Stadium](#)



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# LET'S EXPLORE WINCHESTER: A FAMILY PROJECT

If you ever needed proof that a homeschool project can turn into something much bigger, look no further than *Let's Explore Winchester: Discover the Magic of Our City*, a locally-written, locally-loved book created by mother-daughter trio Lisa M. Prodywus and her twin daughters, Emma P. Dobbs and Juliana M. Dobbs.

What began as a homeschool writing assignment quickly grew into a full-fledged community resource—equal parts local history, scavenger hunt, photo tour, and passion project.

"It was Mom's idea," Juliana says. "She wanted to help us remember the places we grew up visiting. But also, we'd always see people asking online, 'What can I do with kids in Winchester?' and we were like—there's actually so much."

They're not wrong. The book is packed with Winchester's charm: from the Old Town Walking Mall to local parks, splash pad, and historic landmarks like Fort Loudoun. Through carefully chosen stops and short, kid-friendly historical explanations, the book introduces readers to the story of Winchester—including the often-overlooked founder, James Wood.

"I didn't even know he founded Winchester until we researched this," Emma says. "And we still don't really know what he looked like." So the family got creative. Using a photo of one of Wood's descendants and AI image generation, they created several visual representations of what he *might* have looked like—and let readers vote on their favorite version.

"It was part of the process," Lisa adds. "We were taking a writing master class that said every good story needs a character, so we made James Wood our guide."

The book is interactive, with a question on each page to encourage families and classrooms to engage more deeply with the content. It's designed for kids but written in a way that brings something new to locals of any age.

The girls did all the photography themselves, snapping shots of everything from historic markers to favorite hangout spots. The book went through multiple print runs—first on one platform, then another, until they found what worked. What's clear is the sense of ownership the girls have over the final product. "I really liked the book launch," Juliana says. "Getting to talk, and seeing how many people were excited."

Emma adds, "I learned a lot more about Winchester than I expected—about the tribes that lived here before, and the Great Warrior Path. It was interesting." As Juliana puts it: "It helps you see your town differently. Like, really see it."

And for kids who might be wondering if they could ever do something like this? "You absolutely can," says Lisa. "This was one of our most fun family projects. You learn so much by creating something of your own. You don't have to wait to be grown-up to make something meaningful."

Their work isn't done, either. The family will have tables promoting the book at Fort Loudoun Day on May 17<sup>th</sup>, and again for the VA250 Bike Ride with History on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The book can be purchased at Incredible Flying Objects, online through Amazon, and is available to check out at all Handley Library branches.



We are proud to announce the first ever official vanity license plate commemorating the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival®. **SHOW YOUR PINK AND GREEN PRIDE** year-round with the floral design that is sure to turn heads wherever you travel, from the Commonwealth and beyond!

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# HIVE STUDIO: A CREATIVE HAVEN FOR YOUNG ARTISTS



On Main Street in Stephens City, Hive Studio is buzzing with creativity and purpose. Founded by artist Rachel Smith, Hive Studio was born from her personal need for a focused, creative space—one that could also become a hub for community art and learning. What she has created is more than an art studio; it's a nurturing environment where kids can explore the world of fine art, develop their skills, and discover the joy of creating.

The studio itself is thoughtfully laid out to support both creativity and connection. The front room serves as a gallery space, where Rachel plans to host rotating art shows featuring local artists. The middle of the studio is dedicated to teaching—a classroom designed for small, intimate groups of 5 to 8 students. At the back, Rachel has her personal office, which opens to a peaceful yard, creating a seamless flow of inspiration throughout the space.

Hive Studio is unique in its focus on fine art rather than arts and crafts. Rachel offers general overview classes that introduce children to a variety of styles and mediums, allowing them to explore and discover the type of art that resonates most with them. Each week, students learn about a different artist from history and create a piece inspired by that artist's style. Along the way, they're taught the core principles and rules of art, giving them a strong foundation for future creative endeavors.

The studio welcomes children ages 5 to 14 through its regular classes, which meet weekly over six-week sessions, and also offers summer camps and art-themed birthday parties. The goal is simple but powerful: get art into kids' lives as much as possible. Rachel wants young artists to feel empowered to share their work, to see mistakes as part of the process, and to understand that creating is a natural and vital human need. "Put yourself out there and develop the confidence to keep creating," she often tells her students. "You don't have to start over. You can still create something good."

Rachel's passion for art is lifelong. She recalls her father building her an easel as a Christmas gift when she was just five or six years old. That early encouragement stuck with her through school and led her to earn a BFA in painting and drawing from Brigham Young University. During college, she had her first solo art show—a formative experience that helped her realize that being an artist was truly possible. Now, she's determined to give children a similar opportunity: a place where they can dream big, create freely, and feel seen as artists.

Rachel is also a mother to four daughters who share her love for art and have grown up surrounded by it. From 2022 to March 2025, she served as program manager for the Shenandoah Arts Council, where she expanded access to kids' art programs. She launched the Kids Art Club at Bowman Library and drastically grew the Kids Art Month show, which featured 219 pieces from 116 young artists in March 2025—up from just 25 participants when she began.

The name Hive Studio holds deep meaning for Rachel. Bees have long been a personal symbol of creativity and community for her. Her grandmother tells a family story about how a bee once saved her life as a baby—buzzing persistently until her mother brought her inside, just moments before a tree fell on the balcony where she had been resting. That story became family lore and perfectly reflects the spirit of Hive Studio: a place where small things can make a big difference, and where community and creativity thrive together.

Rachel believes that creating art helps people take a closer look at the world, that it's not something to put off until you "have time." She encourages everyone to make space for creativity now and to enjoy the process—not just the final product. "Don't worry about if you're good at it," she says. "There are so many different styles of art. Just enjoy the steps to get there."

To learn more about Hive Studio and upcoming classes or events, visit [HiveStudio.art](https://HiveStudio.art) or in person at 5324 Main St, Stephens City.



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