The North Shore Weekend

SATURDAY APRIL 5 | SUNDAY APRIL 6 2025

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"The love of lonely people is the most authentic there can be. They love you by choice, not by necessity."

— Charles Bukowski

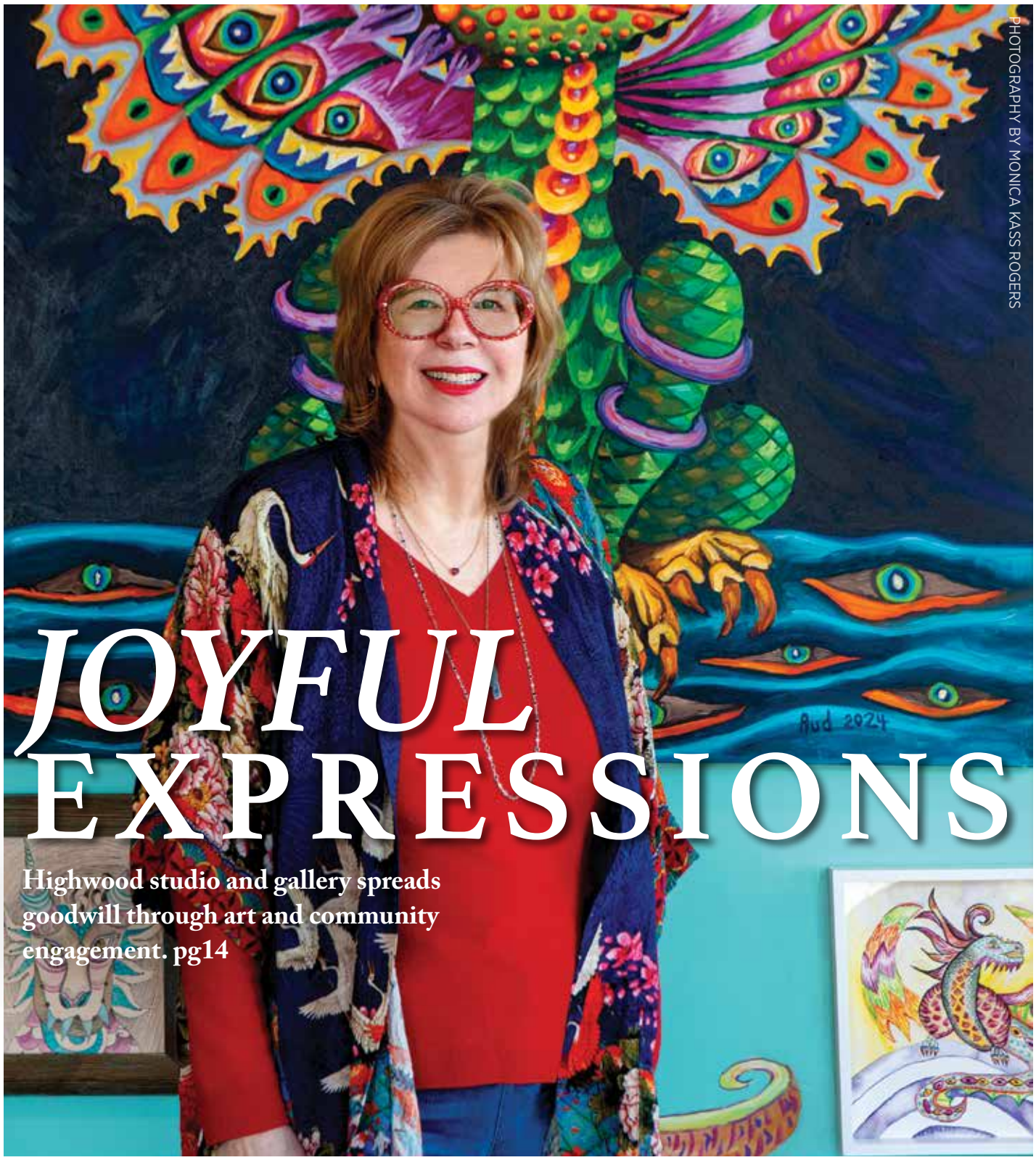
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#3 TEAM IN THE NATION[1]

#1 TEAM IN ILLINOIS & MIDWEST[2]

#1 TEAM IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA[3]

#1 TEAM IN PARK CITY[4]

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COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

NORTH SHORE DOINGS

EDITED BY CHEYANNE LENCIONI
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND

NOW THROUGH APRIL 13

LOVE AND PSYCHE

WHERE: North Shore Art League

This new North Shore Art League exhibit features work by Elizabeth McKenna. While each painting manifests its own individual style, the paintings included in the show tap into McKenna's passion for poetry. *northshoreartleague.org*

NOW THROUGH APRIL 24

PATTERNS AND POEMS IN NATURE

WHERE: North Shore Senior Center

Chicago Alliance of Visual Arts is hosting a joint exhibition with the North Shore Senior Center featuring Kathleen Haslwanter, Christine George, Maryse Richards, and Karen Beatty. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., celebrate spring and explore the beauty of patterns and repetition in art. *wearecava.org*

NOW THROUGH APRIL 26

WINTER MARKET

WHERE: Elawa Farm

Elawa Farm invites guests to its Winter Market every Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The market highlights locally sourced produce and eggs from Elawa's farm partners, along with specialty pantry items from small businesses. *elawafarm.org*

NOW THROUGH MAY 29

SPRING BIRD WALK

WHERE: Chicago Botanic Garden

On Thursdays and Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. explore the best spots for locating late-winter bird residents and the early migrants of spring at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Each walk is approximately one to two hours long. Dress for the weather; binoculars and a field guide are encouraged. Participants will meet at the Visitor's Center. The price for this program is $24 for members and $30 for non-members. *chicagobotanic.org*

APRIL 5

FLY FISHING FILM FESTIVAL

WHERE: Gorton Center

Join Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOLA) at Gorton Center for the 19th annual Fly Fishing Film Tour (F3T)! It's back, hitting the road with the very best fly fishing films. Get ready to reel in the excitement with this selection of captivating films, showcasing the very best of fishing for the year ahead. Film details to come. This year the tour visits more than 14 countries with more than 300 shows. Two viewings available for all ages. Tickets for the 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. shows are available at *lfola.org.*

APRIL 11

WOODCOCK WALK

WHERE: Mellody Farm Nature Preserve

Join Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOLA) and Maureen Marsh of the Lake Cook Audubon Chapter Society from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. for this popular session on the natural history of the American Woodcock. The presentation will be followed by a short walk into the prairie at Mellody Farm Nature Preserve, where you can witness the intricate courtship dance of this remarkable bird. *lfola.org*

APRIL 12

BUNNY BRUNCH & EGG HUNTS

WHERE: Lakeview Center

From 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., children ages 2 and older can meet the Easter Bunny, take part in an Easter egg hunt, and enjoy a delicious breakfast in this Wilmette Park District program. Registration is required and all children must be accompanied by an adult. *wilmettepark.org*

APRIL 18

EGG DECORATING

WHERE: Northfield Public Library

From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., decorate pretend eggs using markers, stickers, gems, and more at the Northfield Public Library. All children must be accompanied by an adult. *wnpld.org*

APRIL 24

WINGS 2ND ANNUAL BLOSSOM FASHION SHOW

WHERE: 21c Museum Hotel, Chicago

WINGS will host its second annual BLOSSOM fashion show from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the 21c Museum Hotel in Chicago. The fundraiser supports programs that allow the nonprofit to continue eliminating the stigma surrounding domestic violence and celebrate victors who have blossomed. Hosted by Nigel Barker, the event features hors d'oeuvres, an open bar, raffle, and L'Oréal swag bag. Proceeds will be used to launch new domestic violence programming and critical support services in the North Shore and beyond. *wingsprogram.com*

APRIL 24

KGC'S ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

WHERE: Glen View Club

Kenilworth Garden Club's (KGC) will hold its annual luncheon at Glen View Club. This year's guest speaker is Linda Jane Holden, the renowned author who brought the story



of Bunny Mellon, one of the nation's premier garden designers, to life. Holden's talk will be accompanied by a seasonally-inspired seated lunch. Those attending will have the opportunity to purchase a selection of the author's books and KGC-designed and arranged topiaries. *kenilworthgardenclub.com*

APRIL 26 TO MAY 25

LAKE FOREST SHOWHOUSE AND GARDENS

WHERE: Pembroke Lodge

The Lake Forest Chapter of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago will transform a Georgian-style Lake Forest estate, designed in 1895 by architect Henry Ives Cobb, for the 2025 Lake Forest Showhouse & Gardens. Featured in the 1935 redesign of the majestic 30-room home is a pool house and pool designed by David Adler, a tennis court with a warming hut, and a reflecting pond with English walled gardens. More than 45 leading landscapers and interior designers will reimagine the 15,000-square-foot mansion and its 3.5 acre grounds. Tickets are $50 per person. *akeforestshowhouse.com*

APRIL 26

HOLLYWOOD IN GLENCOE TRIVIA NIGHT

WHERE: Glencoe Union Church

Back by popular demand! The Glencoe Historical Society (GHS) is once again hosting Hollywood in Glencoe Trivia Night with trivia based on movies filmed on the Chicago North Shore such as *Risky Business*, *Home Alone*, *The Breakfast Club*, and many others. The event will start at 6:30 p.m. and will include trivia, food, and drinks. Create your trivia team of eight or allow GHS to create one for you. Costumes are welcome! Tickets are $100 per person. *glencoehistory.org*

MAY 10

ALZHEIMER ASSOCIATION'S RITA HAYWORTH GALA

WHERE: The Old Post Office

Join the Alzheimer's Association at 6:30 p.m. as it honors Rita Hayworth and her courageous battle with Alzheimer's disease at the annual Rita Hayworth Gala. Proceeds from the event benefit research and are used to provide Alzheimer's care and support. *alz.org*

MAY 15

JOSSELYN'S SPRING LUNCHEON IN LAKE COUNTY

WHERE: Northmoor Country Club

Enjoy friends, curated boutique shopping, and delicious food while learning more about Josselyn's impact in the community. Since 1951, Josselyn has worked to ensure that everyone has equitable access to the highest quality mental health care. Josselyn was the only non-profit named to Crain's Fast 50 list in 2024. All proceeds benefit Josselyn's youth programs and services. *josselyn.org*

MAY 15

BISTRO EXPERIENCE WITH ZELDA FITZGERALD

WHERE: History Center Lake Forest-Lake Bluff

Join historical re-enactor Lynn Rymarz at 6 p.m. for a private, bistro-style experience hosted by Zelda Fitzgerald, the wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of such bestselling novels as *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby.* Learn about their love story, how they rubbed shoulders with the rich and famous, how Zelda became a writer and painter in her own right, and then how their beautiful world began to fall apart. *lflbhistory.org*

To submit your event for consideration, please email events@nsweekend.com.



Danielle Wylie

With over a decade of experience as a market expert on the North Shore, Baird & Warner real estate broker Danielle Wylie has built a reputation for providing exceptional service and insight to her clients. Since moving from the city to the North Shore with her husband and three children in 2013, Wylie has leveraged her deep understanding of the area's real estate landscape to guide, educate, and assist her clients at every step of the process.

What trends are you currently seeing in the real estate market, and how do you anticipate it evolving over the next year? How do you think the local real estate market differs from other regions in the U.S.?
The North Shore market remains strong, particularly for well-maintained, move-in-ready homes. Inventory is tight, and well-priced properties are selling quickly, often with multiple offers. While mortgage rates have influenced affordability, many serious buyers are adjusting their expectations rather than stepping out of the market, and a significant number of buyers on the North Shore are making cash offers, sustaining demand. Over the next year, I anticipate a competitive landscape, especially in the luxury segment, where buyers are less affected by financing constraints.

What do you consider the biggest challenge in the local real estate market today, and how are you addressing it?
Low inventory, which makes it difficult for buyers to find their ideal home. At the same time, sellers sometimes have concerns about whether they'll find their next home before listing their current one. To navigate this, I ensure my clients are thoroughly prepared—whether it's having a mortgage pre-approval in hand, understanding off-market opportunities, or developing a strategic plan for buying and selling simultaneously.

What would you say is your key to success in this competitive market?
Success in real estate comes down to expertise, adaptability, and client service. I've built a strong reputation for knowing the North Shore inside and out—from its neighborhoods and schools to market trends and pricing strategies, and how to position my clients for success. Given that many transactions here involve cash buyers, I know how to help my clients remain competitive, whether by structuring a compelling offer or negotiating effectively. I take a proactive and strategic approach to every transaction—ensuring no detail is overlooked, from home preparation to closing. Ultimately, my success is driven by a commitment to excellence, deep market knowledge, and a results-oriented approach.

Danielle Wylie is a broker with Baird & Warner Winnetka, 594 Green Bay Road in Winnetka. For more information, call 312-502-3264. You may also follow Wylie on Instagram @daniellewylie.bairdwarner or on Facebook at Danielle Wylie Real Estate-North Shore, Baird & Warner.

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NORTH SHORE SPORTS

GREEN IS GOOD—VERY GOOD

New Trier Green wins yet another Amateur Hockey Association Illinois Red Varsity championship, claiming a record 18th state title with a 1-0 defeat of Benet.

BY BILL MCLEAN
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GEORGE PFOERTNER
AND JOEL LERNER

Way back in the fall, New Trier Hockey Club Director/Green Coach Adam Cheris went one-on-one with each of the 150 players in the program.

Off the ice.

"I told them all, in each sit-down, 'This club is about you and everybody else, not about Green (the club's top team) only.'"

Cheris then backed up that pronouncement, organizing a "Friday Night Lights" event for each of the club's six teams, including the two JV units.

"Our New Trier Green games sometimes draw 500 fans at arenas," Cheris says. "We wanted our other teams to feel the love, too, and they did on those Friday nights.

"It made every player," he adds, "feel supported."

On a Sunday afternoon in Chicago, those 150 young men—a good chunk of them on the ice, with many others watching from the stands at United Center—felt a whole lot of collective pride as New Trier Green (NTG) edged Benet 1-0 for the Amateur Hockey Association Illinois (AHAI) Red Varsity state championship on March 16.

It extended NTG's state record for number of AHAI Red Varsity titles to 18.



Wyatt Schmidt

Ethan Baker scored the goal off an assist from Connor Hirschtritt, and goaltender Wyatt Schmidt recorded the shutout for a squad that improved its season record to an astonishing 61-5-3.

"They all bought in," says Cheris, in his seventh year overall with the New Trier Hockey Club and third year at the helm of NTG. "The big key was creating a strong bond, a brotherhood. That became a significant part of our culture. There were peaks and valleys, like there are every season.

"The guys," he continues, "were up to meet any challenge. They scrapped it out for wins."

The AHAI named Baker Most Valuable Player of last month's championship game on the Chicago Blackhawks' home ice.

"I gave the game puck to Wyatt, who made some great saves down the stretch," Cheris says. "He deserved it after getting a shutout at the United Center in such a big game. Both Ethan and Wyatt played great."

Both earned AHAI all-state recognition as well, along with Hirschtritt and NTG defenseman Zackary Huebsch and forward Garrett Chong.

Hirschtritt and forward Michael Pedraja served as NTG's captains in 2024-2025, while Huebsch, Schmidt, and forward Harrison Miller were named alternate captains.

A little more than a week after the AHAI Red Varsity state final, most of the champs traveled to Irvine, California, for the Chipotle USA High School National Championships. NTG got off to an inauspicious start in pool play, falling 8-0 to a team from the host state on March 26.

"We had arrived shorthanded," says Cheris. "Guys showed up near the end of their spring break, looking tan. Six of our players couldn't make it because they play spring sports at New Trier."

NTG had to face the top-seeded team, the Springfield (Massachusetts) Thunderbirds, the next day and fell behind 4-1 early in the second period.

"That's when I told them, 'Hey, let's rebound from this and show people who we are,'" says Cheris, who played travel hockey for the Winnetka Warriors and suited up for NYG for one season before transferring to Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut.

NTG bounced back impressively, scoring five unanswered goals to stun the Thunderbirds 6-4. Backup Mark Pauly, who had won 25 of 27 games as the club's No. 2 goaltender, stopped 35 shots, and Baker finished with two goals and an assist.

Huebsch had a goal and an assist and Pedraja delivered a pair of assists.

"We're deep," Cheris says of a strength that makes NTG a perennial powerhouse. "Deep and highly skilled."

NEW TRIER GIRLS RULE, TOO: New Trier's Varsity 1 club defeated Barrington 5-4 in overtime in the AHAI girls' state championship game March 16 at UC.

TOGETHER AS ONE

Cohesiveness helps the girls' basketball team at Lake Forest Academy net 22 wins in 27 games.

A spirit of gratitude pervaded the girls' basketball team at Lake Forest Academy (LFA) during the 2024-2025 season.



Angel Allen

That, more than anything else—even more than the Caxys' impressive 22-5 record—brought joy to LFA coach Tameka Carter.

"My players had such a great attitude all season long," Carter recalls after season at the helm. "They loved being together, and appreciated being together, together. and winning with all "As a coach here, our international student-athletes, the aim each season is to make sure those new to our country have a great experience," adds Carter, who played basketball at Downers Grove South High School and Stetson (Florida) University ahead of her two-year professional stint with Caja Segovia in Spain. "You know who else had great experiences? Our (domestic) players, because they got to play alongside players from all over the world."

LFA senior Lilla Szilvassy, a forward from Hungary, had an outstanding winter, posting team-high averages of 17.1 points and 13 rebounds per game for a team that won its first six games and capped its season with a seven-game winning streak.

New York native Angel Allen, as exciting of a guard as she is a galvanizing leader, netted nine points per game and averaged four assists and three steals.

"A classic, old-school type of basketball player," Carter says of Allen. "She and Lilla will play college basketball somewhere and will have an impact at the next level. And they'll have options. I'm excited for them and I'm excited about the players who will return for us next season."

LFA junior guard and Glencoe resident Lindsay Farbman and sophomore forward Blanka Devai—another key contributor from Hungary—each averaged seven points and two assists per game, with Devai pulling down three rebounds per game.

"Lindsay will be a player to watch," Carter says. "I can't wait to see what she'll do for us as a senior."

Caxys forward and Hoffman Estates resident Akshara Ginjupalli paced Carter's quartet of freshmen, tallying six points per game to go with her three boards per contest.

"Akshara," Carter says, "played dominant basketball for us in the post. She, too, will be one to watch next winter."

LFA got off to a fantastic start in November, winning all five of its games to capture the Vernon Hills High School Thanksgiving Tournament. Less than two months later, Allen, Szilvassy, and Farbman were named to the all-tournament team at the Martin Luther King Tournament held at Lakes Community High School in Lake Villa.

The Caxys might have played their best overall game in Indiana. Carter's crew downed La Lumiere School 77-51 in the Hoosier State on February 1.

"What I remember most about that game was how close we were as a team, from getting off the bus to competing on the court," Carter says. "Everything about that game pleased me. We shot well, we passed well—so many assists—came together well. Our girls talked to each on the court, which helped us tremendously. Communicating like they did in that game is going to help them in life, too."

Other North Shore members of LFA's girls' basketball team included freshman guard Sadie Haupt (Winnetka), sophomore guard Callie Matthei-Schmidt (Wilmette), and sophomore forward Beatrice Franklin (Lake Forest).

Junior forward Queenie Wu and freshman guard Ly Nguyen hail from Taipei City, Taiwan, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, respectively.

"We're going to lose some special players to graduation," Carter says of Szilvassy and Allen. "But we're always looking to build. I see us succeeding again next year.

"Be sure to check us out."

NORTH SHORE SPORTS

WINTER WOWS

Slew of North Shore teams and athletes turned heads and dropped jaws during the 2024-2025 high school sports season.

We're still reeling from being blown away by the numerous notable achievements of North Shore teams and star athletes this past winter.

But not so much that we can't return to an upright position and recall performances that triggered roars of approval and lasting looks of awe.

And now, in no particular order, a look back at some fantastic feats.

Loyola Academy (LA) senior **Harlee Hiller** captures her second state wrestling title in three years, defeating Mount Zion High School senior Sydney Cannon 12-0 in the final at 115 pounds in Bloomington and improving her record to 27-1.

New Trier Township High School (New Trier) senior **Clara Crossgrove** tops the floor exercise field at the state gymnastics meet with a score of 9.55, becoming only the second Trevian in program history to earn a state gold medal.

The New Trier Green (NTG) hockey team edges Benet 1-0 in the Amateur Hockey Association Illinois (AHAI) Red Varsity state title game at United Center (UC) in Chicago. **Ethan Baker** scores the goal, and goaltender **Wyatt Schmidt** records the shutout as NTG claims its 18th state championship. The New Trier Varsity 1 girls' team also wins a state title, nipping Barrington 5-4 in overtime at UC.

New Trier senior **Stuart Timmerman** touches the wall first in the 50-yard freestyle (20.39) and second in the 100-yard breaststroke (54.18) at the boys' swimming and diving state meet in Westmont. The Trevians finish third (156 points) in the team standings.

LA senior basketball guard and Vanderbilt University-bound **Aubrey Galvan** has a quarter for the ages, pouring in 20 straight third-quarter points—including 18 via the three-pointer—in the Ramblers' 55-30 defeat of Maine South High School in a Class 4A sectional final at Glenbrook North High School in Northbrook. LA (34-4) would go on to place fourth at the state tournament in Normal.

Loyola Academy junior **Kai Calcutt** (215 pounds) and freshman **Niko Odiotti** (106 pounds) each finish runner-up in their respective weight classes at the boys' wrestling state meet in Champaign.

Lake Forest High School (LFHS) sophomore **Lyla Drowne** takes fourth on vault (9.525) at the gymnastics state meet in Palatine.

Highland Park High School (HPHS) sophomore **Andrew Blauer** wins the 100-yard butterfly (49.86) at the Libertyville High School Sectional meet in February.

Highland Park High School's girls' basketball team, coached by **Jolie Bechtel**, captures the Central Suburban League North title.

LA junior basketball guard **Samuel Golden** hops out of his sickbed and tallies 27 points in the Ramblers' 67-57 defeat of visiting Mount Carmel High School on January 24. LA later beats Niles North High School 45-42 in a Class 4A sectional semifinal behind **Donovan Robinson**'s 26 points.

The Lake Forest Academy (LFA) boys' basketball team finishes with a 25-6 record behind senior forward **Arnas Simaitis** (12.3 points per game) and junior point guard **Levente Tallos** (10.8 points, 7.1 rebounds, 4.6 assists, and 2.3 steals).

The Lake Forest Academy girls' basketball team finishes 22-5 behind seniors **Lilla Szilvassy** (17.1 points and 13 rebounds per game) and **Angel Allen** (averages of nine points, four assists, and three steals.

HPHS senior basketball guard **Simon Moschin** surpasses 1,300 career points and winds up fourth on the program's all-time scoring list.



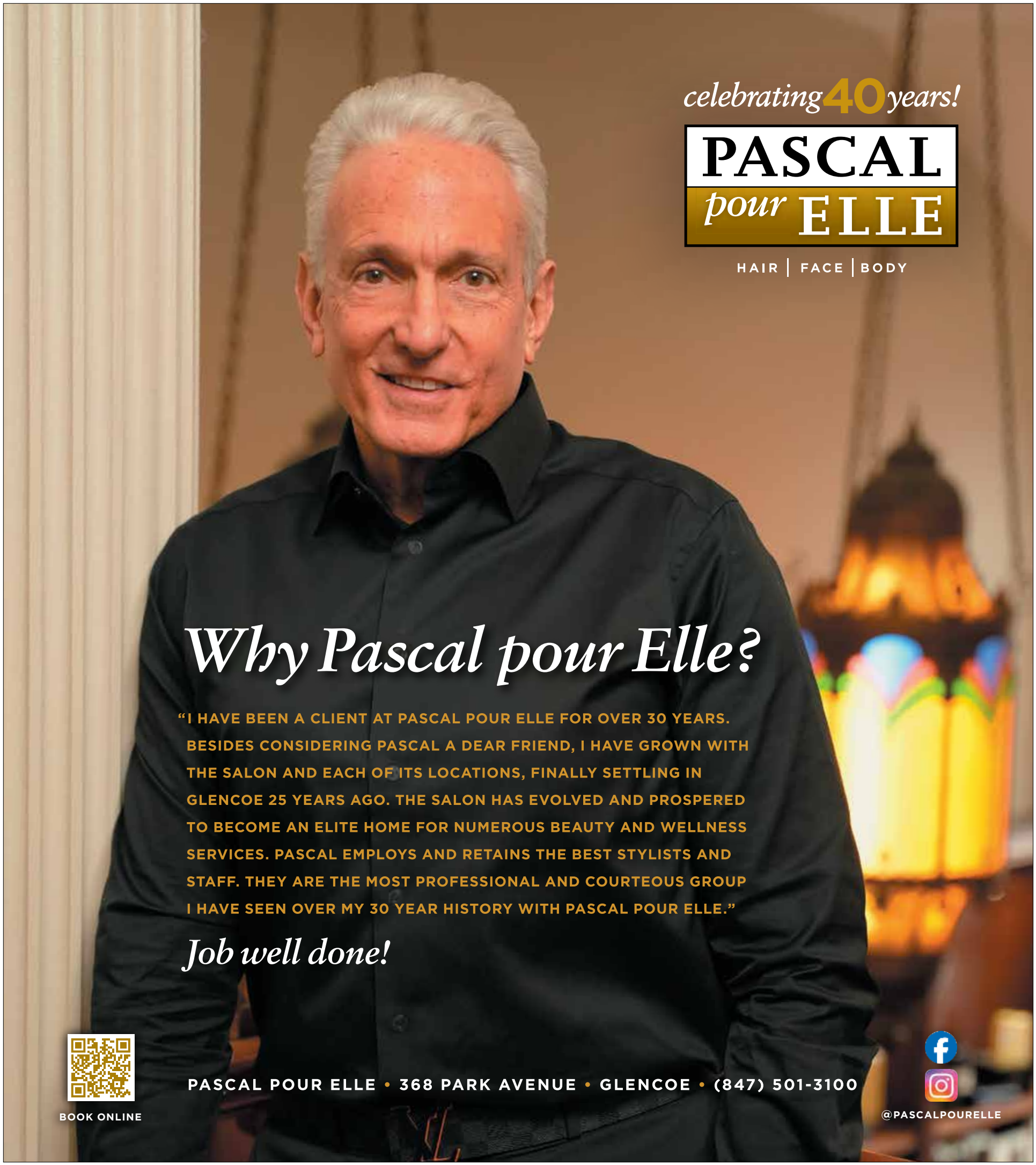
Harlee Hiller

LA junior **Devon Bone** zips to a 44.92 split as the anchor leg of the Ramblers' 400-yard freestyle relay at the boys' swimming and diving state meet. The quartet places third with a time of 3:03.3, capping off the team's fifth-place showing (133.5 points).

LFHS senior **Stefan Cucuz** clocks a rapid 21.64 to win the 50-yard freestyle at the North Suburban Conference boys' swimming and diving meet in Libertyville.

New Trier senior basketball guard **Colby Smith** scores 27 points—14 in the fourth quarter—in a 66-56 loss to visiting William Fremd High School on February 4.




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EDITED BY REDDING WORTH
ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL

Chef **GAVIN FINE** developed a passion for the culinary world as a young boy growing up in Chicago. While he was raised on the north side of Chicago, his connection to the North Shore grew stronger when his father moved to Evanston, where he lived for several years. After working for Rich Melman's restaurant group, Lettuce Entertain You, he followed his passion to Cornell University and then to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. While his visions of becoming a ski bum never fully materialized, he gained invaluable restaurant experience working in nearly every role from front-of-house to back-of-house. In 2001, Gavin joined forces with friend and business partner Roger Freedman to open Rendezvous Bistro, the first in a series of successful ventures. His culinary empire now includes Bistro Catering, Il Villaggio Osteria, The Kitchen, Bin22, Bodega, Roadhouse Pub & Eatery, The Bistro, Melvin Taproom & Kitchen, and Code Red. Beyond restaurants, he has launched two retail concepts, Bovine & Swine, and Cream + Sugar, and co-founded Roadhouse Brewing Co., whose craft brews recently made their debut in Chicago. This entrepreneurial chef takes a moment between openings to share how he stays current in a busy world.



#ON MY NIGHTSTAND

Right now, I'm reading two books for two entirely different reasons. *The House in the Cerulean Sea* is what I'm reading when I want to get lost in a book. *White Indian Boy: My Life Among the Shoshones* is the other—it's the story of Elijah Nick Wilson, an interesting figure in American history who also went on to form the town of Wilson, where I live in Jackson Hole. He's a commonly referenced person around this area and I wanted to learn more about who he was and why he did the things he did.

#ON MY MOBILE

Last summer I couldn't get enough of the Olympics. On a regular basis I follow European soccer, the Cubs, Bears, Blackhawks, and, of course, all things food.

#IN MY EARBUDS

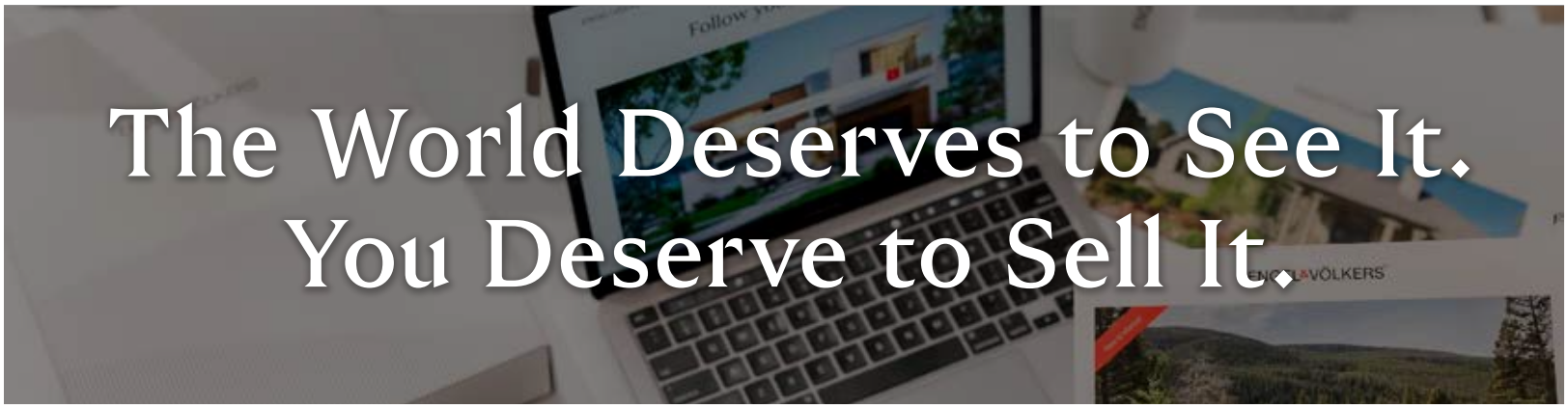
So many things! Podcast-wise I listen to *SmartLess*, *Hidden Brain*, and *The Daily*. For music, I'm listening to Metallica, Pearl Jam, Coldplay (the live last tour), Bob Marley, Mumford & Sons, Ben Harper, and Yo-Yo Ma.

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JOYFUL EXPRESSIONS *From PG 1*

BY MONICA KASS ROGERS
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND



Entering Audrey Langer's Aud Originals studio and gallery, an undeniable feeling of goodwill spills through the door along with her cheery greeting.

Perched at a drawing table with a rainbow of watercolor palettes arranged willy nilly around her, Langer is hard at work on a painting.

"Please feel free to look around while I finish," she says, waving a brush, and pushing up the glasses that keep slipping down her nose. "Nothing is off limits."

Those last four words say a lot about Langer. As a child in Wisconsin, Langer's irrepressible artistic spirit was always getting her in trouble for stepping outside the bounds. Once, she was punished for coloring on the walls of her childhood home. And another time, stern nuns reprimanded her for coloring on her crib during a stay at the hospital. As a result, when raising her own kids in Highland Park, "They never got in trouble for any creative endeavor they tried," laughs Langer. "And when people come in here? I just want them to feel a sense of joy, peace, and freedom."

Since opening in November 2024, Langer's bright gallery has overflowed with finished art and work-in-progress in many different mediums—tapestries, watercolors, oil paintings, crocheted pieces and leatherworks all begin in nature, but then take flight with her imagination.



In fact, "overflow" is what prompted Langer to buy the building and transform it into her studio and gallery in the first place.

"I was going to stop painting because there was just no more room in my house to store all of my work," she explains. "But my family really didn't want me to stop, and suggested I get a studio to keep doing my art."

Because she was fearful about the business aspect of things, Langer's youngest son Dylan stepped in and serves as the gallery's business manager.

Langer says Aud Originals is something she dreamed of for years. After meeting her husband at Lakeland College in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Langer studied at the American Academy of Art in Chicago. Together, the couple raised three boys "in the big yellow house just down the road," she explains. "So, this was my neighborhood, and I love it here. When I tell people that this building is now my gallery, I start to tear up, because it is really a dream come true."

Before she bought the building, the previous occupant was also a gallery business where Langer had shown some paintings.

"When I started looking for a building to house my studio and gallery, I first looked at another space across the street, but it just wasn't the right fit. So, I said to the realtor, 'What I really wish I could buy is that building over there, (pointing out this space,) but it's not for sale.' The realtor said, 'Well, let me get back to you on that,' and within three days, it was mine!"



Determined to use the space not only for making and selling her art, but also for the good of the community, Langer prices her work very reasonably, "so that everyone can afford to bring home a little piece of joy," and uses the space to host events.

An animal lover, Langer hosted her first benefit in January to raise funds for a new building for Orphans of the Storm animal shelter in Riverwoods. As part of that, Langer created 20 paintings of dogs and cats—many of which are still available. "All proceeds from the sale of each go to Orphans of the Storm," she adds.

Next up, on Thursday, May 1, Aud Originals will be one of the stops in Highwood's 5 to 8 p.m. "Ladies Night Out: Run for the Roses," which has a Kentucky Derby theme.

"We really hope everyone has the chance to stop in to meet and mingle, have some snacks, and enjoy the art," sums Langer.

Aud Originals is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., or by appointment. For more information or to commission a painting, please visit sites.google.com/view/aud-originals or follow her on Facebook at AudOriginals.















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MAGAZINE DREAMS

This film offers a harrowing exploration of the human condition, delving into the depths of ambition, isolation, and the insidious nature of obsession.



BY FELIX MCMILLAN,
MAN ABOUT FILM
ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL

VERDICT: Jonathan Majors delivers a tour de force performance that is as compelling as it is unsettling, anchoring a film that challenges and provokes in equal measure. It's a stark reminder of the thin line between aspiration and madness, and the profound human need for connection in a world that often overlooks the most vulnerable. So, steel yourself and step into the world of *Magazine Dreams*. It's a journey that will leave you both shaken and contemplative—a cinematic experience that lingers long after the credits roll.

In the dimly lit corners of the human psyche, where ambition wrestles with obsession and dreams morph into delusions, resides *Magazine Dreams*, a film that grips you by the throat and refuses to let go. Directed by Elijah Bynum, this cinematic descent into the world of bodybuilding is as mesmerizing as it is unsettling, anchored by a performance from Jonathan Majors that sears itself into your consciousness.

Majors portrays Killian Maddox, an amateur bodybuilder whose life is a relentless pursuit of physical perfection and validation. Living with his ailing grandfather, Killian's existence oscillates between grueling workouts, a monotonous job at a grocery store, and court-mandated therapy sessions for his anger issues. His idolization of bodybuilding icon Brad Vanderhorn borders on the fanatical, with letters penned to his hero that echo the haunting desperation of Eminem's "Stan."

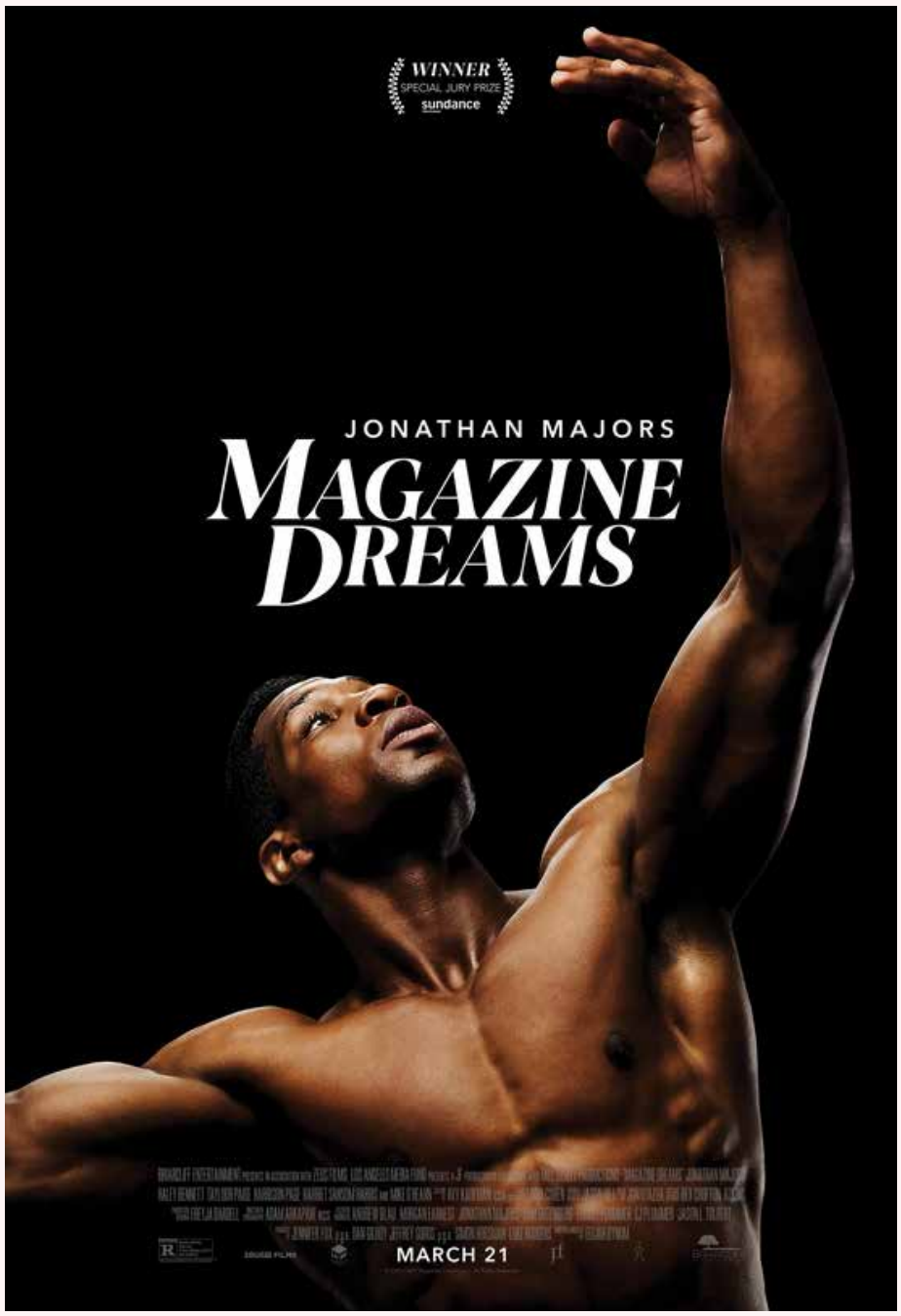
The film draws inevitable comparisons to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, with Killian embodying a modern-day Travis Bickle. Both characters are isolated, mentally unstable men yearning for recognition in a world that continually dismisses them. However, *Magazine Dreams* carves its own niche by delving into the subculture of bodybuilding—a world where the pursuit of aesthetic excellence can mask profound psychological scars.

Bynum's direction is unflinching, presenting Killian's world in stark, unvarnished detail. The cinematography captures the claustrophobic environments he inhabits, from dimly lit gyms to his cluttered apartment, mirroring the confinement of his mind. The sound design is equally immersive, with the clanking of weights and the rhythmic cadence of his workouts serving as a relentless backdrop to his internal turmoil.

Majors' portrayal of Killian is nothing short of transformative. He embodies the character's physicality with an intensity that borders on the terrifying, yet it's the vulnerability beneath the muscle-bound exterior that renders his performance truly heartbreaking. In scenes where Killian attempts to connect with others—such as a painfully awkward date with a kind-hearted coworker played by Haley Bennett—Majors lays bare the character's profound loneliness and yearning for acceptance.

The film doesn't shy away from the darker aspects of Killian's psyche. His interactions are often tinged with an underlying menace, and his outbursts of violence are sudden and jarring, reflecting a man teetering on the edge of control. Yet, despite his flaws, there's an undeniable empathy elicited for Killian—a testament to Majors' ability to humanize even the most troubled souls.

It's impossible to discuss *Magazine Dreams* without acknowledging the real-life controversies surrounding Majors. His legal troubles and subsequent industry fallout have cast a shadow over the film's release, leading to its shelving by Searchlight Pictures and eventual acquisition by Briarcliff Entertainment. This context adds a meta-layer to the viewing experience, blurring the lines between art and artist, and challenging audiences to grapple with their perceptions of both.



The supporting cast delivers commendable performances, with Bennett's portrayal of Jessie offering a glimmer of warmth in Killian's otherwise cold world. Taylour Paige's brief appearance as a sympathetic stranger provides a poignant counterpoint to Killian's isolation, highlighting the human connections he so desperately seeks yet continually sabotages.

However, the film is not without its shortcomings. Some narrative threads feel underdeveloped, and the relentless bleakness can be overwhelming, bordering on gratuitous. The pacing occasionally falters, lingering too long on certain scenes, which may test the patience of some viewers. Yet, these flaws are overshadowed by the film's unyielding commitment to its character study and the powerhouse performance at its core.

A THOUSAND BLOWS

Every punch has a purpose in this new period-pugilism series streaming on Hulu and Disney+.

VERDICT: *A Thousand Blows* is not just a series; it's an experience—a visceral plunge into a world where every punch echoes with purpose, and every character battles not just opponents, but their own demons. It's a testament to Steven Knight's storytelling prowess, delivering a narrative that's as compelling as it is complex. So, lace up your gloves and step into the ring. It's a bout you won't want to miss.



There's something delightfully deranged about Steven Knight's new period-pugilism series, *A Thousand Blows*—a sort of Victorian fever dream where fists do the talking, women do the thieving, and men (mostly) do the bleeding. Set in the soot-choked maze of 1880s East London, it's part history lesson, part bare-knuckle opera, part Dickens-on-a-bender.

Our central figure is Hezekiah Moscow (Malachi Kirby, soulful and sinewy), a Jamaican immigrant who arrives in London only to be tossed headfirst into purgatory. With his friend Alec (Francis Lovehall), he tumbles from one grim tableau to the next—pub brawls, alley ambushes, and the unregulated bloodsport of boxing, which here feels more like gladiator theatre staged in gin cellars.

Enter Erin Doherty as Mary Carr, queen of the Forty Elephants, a pickpocketing syndicate with more style than Parliament. Doherty plays Mary like she was born with brass knuckles and a Shakespeare soliloquy in each hand. Her scenes sizzle with ruthless charm; she's East End royalty with a dagger for a smile.

And then there's Stephen Graham's Sugar Goodson—a man whose menace lies in the grin. Graham, as ever, is electric: a twitch of the eyebrow can suggest a childhood trauma, a grudge, and a threat of immediate violence. His Sugar is a beast of contradictions—brutal, vulnerable, magnetic.

Knight gets the tone just right. The series swings between operatic grandeur and street-level grit, myth and mud. The fight scenes are less choreography than catharsis—brutal, intimate, and shot with grimy elegance. You can practically taste the rusted iron and blood in the air.

If there's a flaw, it's narrative sprawl. Subplots multiply like street urchins, and now and then the story buckles under its own ambition. But what a beautiful buckle it is.

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WEEKEND FASHION

SUIT UP

Pack light and chic with these looks for sunny travel escapades.

EDITED BY MEGAN WEISBERG
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND



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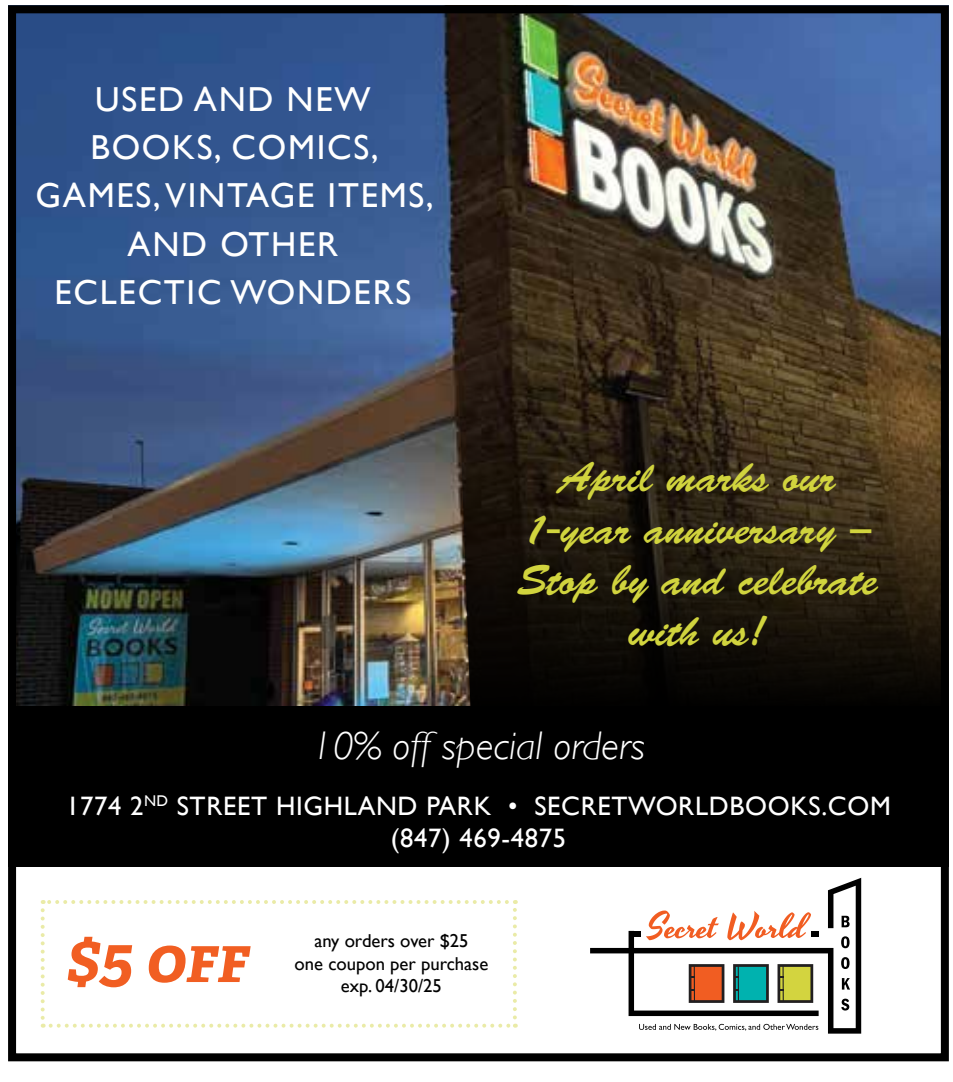
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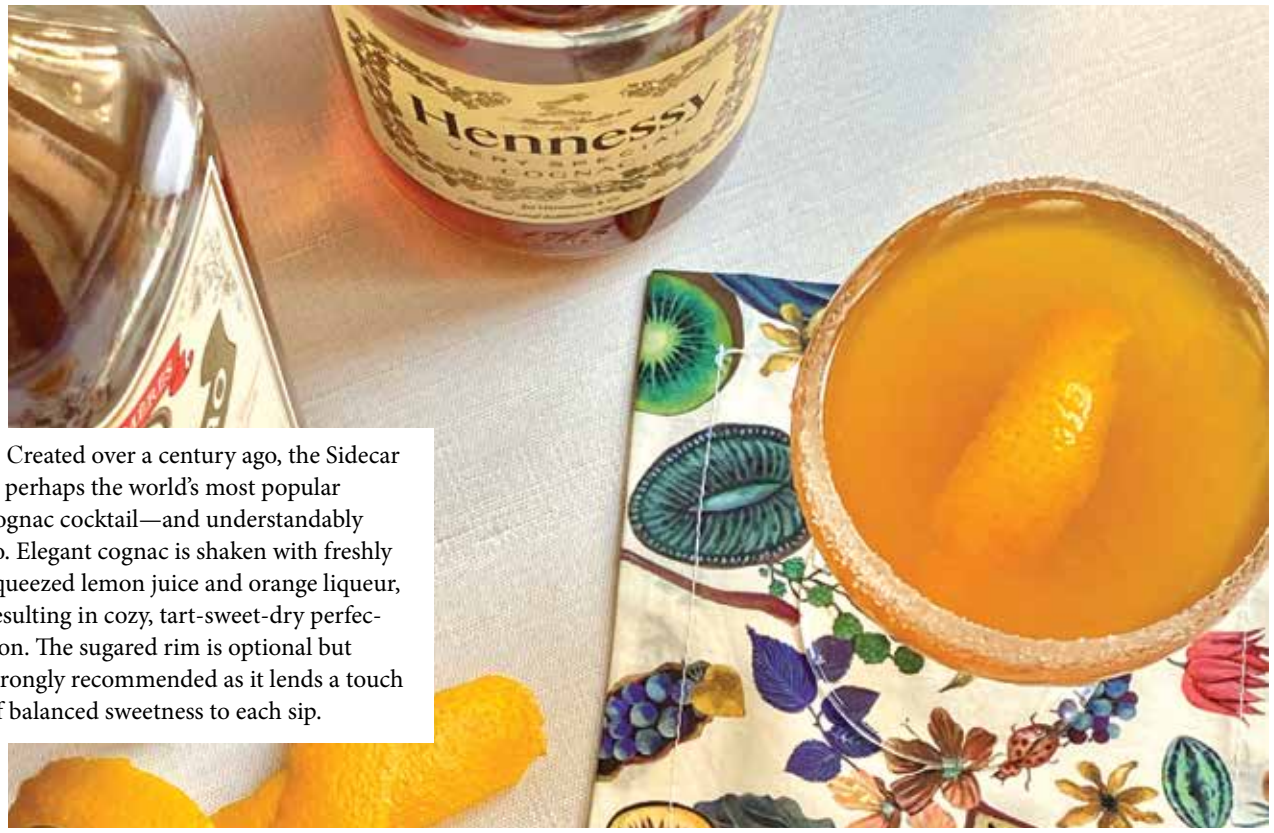
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WEEKEND COCKTAIL

BY WEBDY FRANZEN
THE NORTH SHORE WEEKEND

THE SIDECAR



Created over a century ago, the Sidecar is perhaps the world's most popular cognac cocktail—and understandably so. Elegant cognac is shaken with freshly squeezed lemon juice and orange liqueur, resulting in cozy, tart-sweet-dry perfection. The sugared rim is optional but strongly recommended as it lends a touch of balanced sweetness to each sip.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WENDY FRANZEN

MAKES ONE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ounces cognac
- 1 ounce best-quality orange liqueur (such as Cointreau or Pierre Ferrand Dry Curaçao)
- ¾ ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice
- White sugar and a lemon wedge, for rimming glass
- Strip of lemon or orange peel, for garnish

METHOD

- Thoroughly chill a coupe glass.
- Sugar the rim: add sugar to a saucer or small plate, then lightly run a lemon wedge around the rim of glass. Turn glass upside down and dip rim directly into sugar—no twisting necessary.
- Add ingredients to a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake until icy cold, then strain through a fine mesh cocktail sieve into glass.
- Garnish with a twist of lemon or orange.

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MASTERFUL

Lake Forest filmmaker Maryilene Blondell aces her first documentary, chronicling the life of a two-time Masters champion's caddie that's more about love and kindness than it is about pins and putts.

BY BILL MCLEAN
ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT RISKO

Ben Crenshaw had just won the Masters in 1995 when he let go of his putter, bent his 5-foot-9 frame over, and held his head with his hands on the 18th green at Augusta National.

Teardrops fell from the man whose longtime golf teacher, Harvey Penick, had died recently.

A 6-foot-5 man approached Crenshaw and gently placed his right hand on Crenshaw's shoulder. Moments later, Crenshaw, still sobbing, used the middle of the tall man's chest to rest his head.

The consoler was Crenshaw's caddie, Carl Jackson.

The men embraced. Crenshaw is white. Jackson is Black.

Click. A camera had captured the moving moment.

"So powerful," says Lake Forest filmmaker Maryilene Blondell of the iconic photograph that stirred golf lovers worldwide—and people who had never gripped a putter.

"A friend of mine knew Carl's brother, and that's how I met Carl seven, eight years ago," she continues. "We're good friends. Carl can be simultaneously intimidating and inviting, but what jumps out at you is his calm nature. You can feel his strength, his silent strength, when you're around him."

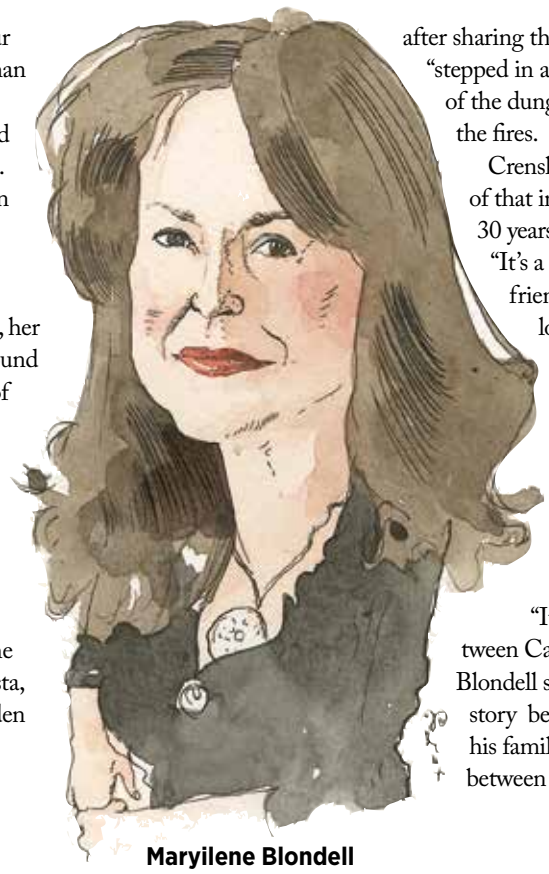
You can also watch the 2024 documentary *Rise Above: The Carl Jackson Story*, thanks to the creative and indefatigable Blondell, who wrote, produced, and directed it as a first-time documentarian. It won Best Documentary Feature at the Cannes Indie International Film Festival last year.

"When Carl decided to tell his story, I was thrilled for him," recalls Blondell, who, as a producer of the 2022 film *The Road Dance*, won the Audience Award for Best Picture at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. "He then told me, 'You're the one to tell it.' I told him, 'You've got the wrong woman. A Southern lady should do it, not a Irishwoman from Chicago who has only golfed twice and feels strongly that your story is about more than just golf.'"

But Jackson insisted and Blondell relented.

"When Mr. Jackson tells you to do something," Blondell says, "you do it."

Blondell crushed it, her 53-minute work as sound and crisp as a round of 59. What the documentary chronicles: Jackson's challenging childhood—he had to drop out of school at the age of 11 to work and help his mother support the family—in the Augusta, Georgia, poverty-ridden enclave of Sand Hill; his career as a highly knowledgeable, unflappable caddie at the Masters, beginning in 1961 when he was 14; his decades-long friendship and working relationship with investment banker Jack Stephens; his resilience after fire destroyed two of his houses in a three-year span; and Jackson's enduring "on-the-bag" bond with Crenshaw, culminating with that memorable 18th-green embrace after Crenshaw's second Masters championship in 12 years.



Maryilene Blondell

"That's the way America ought to be—the Black man taking care of the white man, and the white man taking care of the Black man," Jackson, 78, says in the documentary after sharing that Crenshaw had "stepped in and lifted me out of the dungeons" following the fires.

Crenshaw's recollection of that indelible moment 30 years ago this month: "It's a friend helping a friend—a friend. It's love."

Exactly.

Love is at the heart of *Rise Above: The Carl Jackson Story.*

And Blondell presents it beautifully and deftly.

"It's a love story between Carl and his mother," Blondell says. "It's a love story between Carl and his family. It's a love story between Carl and (the late) Jack Stephens. And it's a love story between Carl and Ben Crenshaw. We had decided early on that it would be a story about resilience, courage, dignity, and sacrifice.

"But love, with its power to connect people and strengthen relationships," she adds, "is the overriding theme of the documentary. I believed in my heart that people needed a message of love, and Carl delivered that through his kindness, gentleness, and humility."

> "I believed in my heart that people needed a message of love, and Carl delivered that through his kindness, gentleness, and humility."

The doc also features, among others, interviews with former professional golfer Gary Player, Mike "Fluff" Cowan (Tiger Woods's former caddie), World No. 1 golfer Scottie Scheffler, two of Jackson's children (Carlisa and Jason), and Paul Purcell, a Chicago financier and a friend of Jackson.

"Rise Above doesn't get made without Paul Purcell," Blondell says. "Paul called me one day and said, 'I hear you're working on a documentary about my friend Mr. Jackson. What do you need?'"

Blondell grew up with three brothers in a mad-about-sports household, playing tennis and sprinting for track and field teams at Glenbrook South High School in Glenview. One of her opponents at a track meet was future three-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersee. Blondell competed in one track season in college, dashing in the 100- and 200-meter events at Southern Methodist University in Texas.

Initially a Political Science major, she ended up with a degree in Journalism and worked in TV news for the BBC in London before landing similar positions at NBC and ABC. Blondell covered a Republican National Convention for ABC News.

"I didn't have the ambition to claw my way up the ladder in the field of national TV news," says Blondell, now the CEO of Whole Theory Productions in Chicago and the mother of daughters Estee, Anafrancesca, and Lieselle.

She's also a co-director of the 2026 Little Fort Environmental Film Festival, to be held at Genesee Theatre in Waukegan.

"I've had two careers, one being news and entertainment, the other philanthropy," says Blondell, alluding in part to her work with the late Jean Kennedy Smith, an advocate for people with intellectual disabilities. "I've lived a great, big, gigantic life, but I'm very introverted; I like silence, quiet."

Which brings us back to Carl Jackson, a man of few words who uttered four for Blondell after viewing *Rise Above: The Carl Jackson Story.*

"Carl told me, 'You done good, Maryilene,'" Blondell says.

This year's Masters begins on April 10. Golf Channel will air Rise Above: The Carl Jackson Story on April 7. It's available on Apple TV+ and Prime Video.

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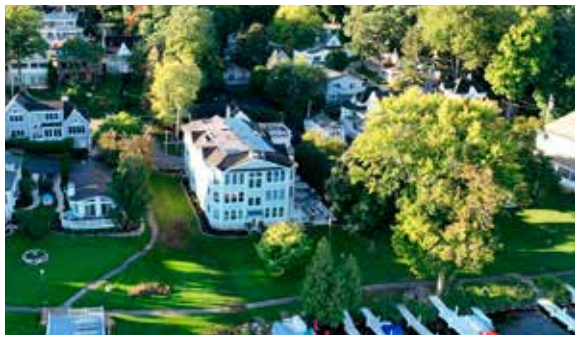
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