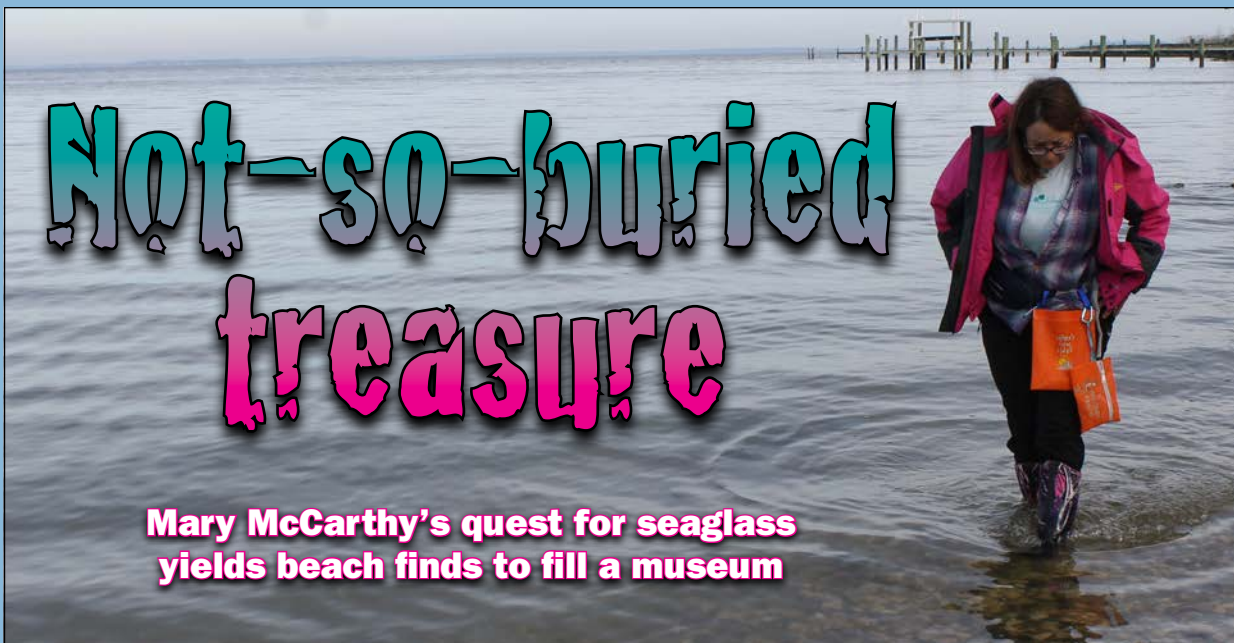


SCHOOL LUNCH MENUS	C6
CELEBRATIONS	C6
CROSSWORD	C6
MID-SHORE CALENDAR	C7



Not-so-buried treasure

Mary McCarthy's quest for seaglass yields beach finds to fill a museum

PHOTO BY JESSICA DUERSTINE



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY MARY MCCARTHY

Mary McCarthy wades through the water, searching for sea glass and other treasures during a beachcombing excursion on Friday, Jan. 24, at Claiborne Landing.

Mary McCarthy posted this photo of beachglass on her Instagram page, @marymccarthy.

By JESSICA DUERSTINE
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ST. MICHAELS — For some, beachcombing is something fun to do when visiting a sandy beach. For others, it's an exciting treasure hunt, looking for unique and rare finds to share with a community of beachcombing fanatics across the world.

Mary McCarthy fell in love with beachcombing after moving to the Eastern Shore in 2001. She was looking for a sandy shoreline to visit with her young children, and she found Betterton Beach in Kent County.

"We were just on the beach, and I looked down and found a marble," McCarthy said. "I bought a book on sea glass, and I just fell in love."

On a recent trip to Claiborne Landing, McCarthy was looking just off the beach and stopped to wade into the water. That's when she found a historic artifact.

"This is a clay pipe stem — they're from the 19th century," she said as she scooped her find out of the water. McCarthy said there's something for everyone in beachcombing.

"Kids collect different things than adults," she said. "They may be fascinated by these rocks that are actually bricks that have been worn down by the waves over time. Or they may be very into the oyster shells."

Different beachcombers also will see different things, based on where they're searching the shores.

"With the Bromo-Seltzer plant in Baltimore, people around the Bay can find lots of the cobalt glass," McCarthy said. "Lake Erie has more marbles, because there were a lot of marble manufacturers in Ohio."

What started as a fun hobby with her kids has turned into a mission to share her unique finds with others. She's traveled the world on her quest. She shares her love of beachcombing with others across the globe, speaking at international beachcombing conferences.

She's also authored a children's book, "I Sea: A Beachcombing Treasure Hunt." The book is an I-spy hunt for treasures hidden in photographs of rainbow waves of fun beach finds and designed to help promote beach



PHOTO BY JESSICA DUERSTINE

Mary McCarthy's stack of sea glass finds on Friday, Jan. 24, at Claiborne Landing.

conservation through words and images of actual beach finds from around the world.

McCarthy's Instagram page has nearly 25,000 followers and showcases unique finds from her trips to the beach. She posts videos to her feeds of rare finds as she comes across them.

When the Sea Glass Center in Kennebunk, Maine, was closing its doors, McCarthy had an idea.

"I had amassed a collection from around the world, and they had this large collection in Maine," McCarthy said. "So I went up there and got all of their glass, and then I started working on the museum."

McCarthy is heading up efforts to open a Beachcombing Center on the Eastern Shore. The GoFundMe campaign recently met its fundraising goals, and she's working on finding the right site. She said this area is the right place for a museum because the Shore is home to so many water attractions.

One of those is the Eastern Shore Sea Glass and Coastal Arts Festival in St. Michaels, the largest annual national sea glass festival. It's held the first weekend in April every year, drawing over 10,000 beachcombers to the area.

McCarthy will be one of the featured speakers at this year's festival, which will be held April 4 and 5 at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels. Tickets are available at seaglassfestival.com.

McCarthy's Instagram: www.instagram.com/marymccarthy/



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY MARY MCCARTHY

Mary McCarthy posted this photo of beachglass marbles on her Instagram page, @marymccarthy.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY MARY MCCARTHY

Mary McCarthy posted this photo of a red, heart-shaped shard of seaglass on her Instagram page, @marymccarthy.



PHOTO BY JESSICA DUERSTINE

Mary McCarthy holds some of her favorite finds from recent beachcombing trips on Friday, Jan. 24, at Claiborne Landing.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY MARY MCCARTHY

Mary McCarthy posted this photo of cobalt blue seaglass finds on her Instagram page, @marymccarthy.