

# Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 3, NO. 12

"EXALTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION" —EDWARD R. MURROW

DECEMBER 2023

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*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.*

*And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

*And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

—Luke 2:8-14



Merry Christmas from the staff of the Emmitsburg News-Journal: Claire, McKenna, Dolores, Devin, Gracie, Ashley, Shannon, Dorothea, Annie, Tim, Boyce, Jack, Mary Ann, Marianne, Jen, John, David, Sonya, Jefferson, Wayne, Ayse, Andrea, Jamie, Alex, Steve, Sophia, Tara, Mia, Katie, Sharon, Brian & Mike.

## Union Bridge to host New Year's Eve party

Mia Ferraro  
UMD Class of 2026

Nonprofit Dream Big Union Bridge will be welcoming the new year at their third annual New Year's Eve party.

The celebration starts at 7 p.m. and will feature live music, food trucks, free arcade games and more before the community greets the new year with a countdown to midnight and a firework show, according to Dream Big Union Bridge Co-founders Brian Colussy and Cheri Thompson.

The event will take place at the Union Bridge Fire Company Carnival Grounds at 8 W. Locust St. There is no charge to attend, although donations are encouraged, Thompson said.

The party will have music by rock band Cashtown and DJ AJ will be playing between sets. This year, 99.9 WFRE will be broadcasting the event live from 7 to 9 p.m., Colussy said.

Guests will be able to purchase refreshments from food trucks such as Wetzels Pretzels and Coverd Dessert Shoppe, Colussy said. There will also be a beer garden as well as knick knacks to purchase.

As it nears midnight, a large handmade ornament will be lifted during the countdown. The orna-

ment will light up as a cherry picker lifts it 65 feet, Colussy estimates. As soon as it turns midnight, the ornament will hit the top and the fireworks will start.

"We have a 20-minute professional firework display that is out of this world," Thompson said. She said the nonprofit invested around \$7,500 in fireworks alone. When it comes to last year's fireworks display, "people are still talking about it," Colussy said. He said the show had "like four grand finales," he said. "So when you thought it was done, it continued on ... so it was a very spectacular event last year."

Colussy said his inspiration for the event comes from growing up in a community in Pennsylvania that hosted New Year's Eve celebrations. Being a part of Dream Big Union Bridge gave him the opportunity to host one in town.

The nonprofit is offering the chance to win gift cards to local businesses, and winners will be drawn at the New Year's Eve event. Participants can pick up a passport at participating local businesses. Making a purchase at a participating business will earn them a stamp on their passport. There will be two drawings from each category based on the number of stamps received.

If a participant receives two stamps, which is the minimum number of stamps required to enter the giveaway, they are eligible to win \$100 in gift cards. Four stamps makes participants eligible to win \$150 in gift cards, six stamps makes them eligible to win \$250 in gift cards, and receiving all 10 stamps from the businesses could win a participant \$500 in gift cards. Participating businesses can be found on the Dream Big Union Bridge's Facebook page. Thompson says the purpose of Dream Big Union Bridge is "bringing the community and businesses together." The nonprofit tries to involve local businesses in their events, she said, and "make them family friendly and at no charge."



Just like in New York City, a large ornament like that pictured above, is lifted during the Dream Big Union Bridge countdown to midnight.

Dream Big Union Bridge holds other events throughout the year as well. On Dec. 1, the nonprofit held their annual Christmas tree lighting event where they lit a Christmas tree reaching higher than 20 feet.

Those who would like to donate to help cover the cost of the New Year's Eve celebration can reach Thompson at 443-340-6305.

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## WOODSBORO NEWS

# Water system funding questioned

Town auditors cautioned the Town on its practice of loaning money from the Town's General fund to cover shortfalls in the Town's Water fund based on findings disclosed in the Town's 2022-2023 financial audit.

While there is nothing illegal or unethical about the practice, historically, the Water system has been run as a business and held to those accounting expectations. This includes the expectation that all expenses incurred in the running of the Water system should be covered by user fees, e.g., quarterly resident water and sewer bills.

Some local municipalities have taken this guidance literally, down to the point where the cost of paper, envelopes, and stamps used for quarterly billing are kept separate from general Town correspondence costs, or time spent by Town office staff in answering a call related to a water issue is charged to the Water fund, as opposed to the General fund, which is supposed to cover the general cost of running the Town.

Following the latter practice has resulted in the bankrupting of the Water fund in some Towns, most notably Emmitsburg, which recently enacted a 350% water rate increase to balance its books.

How Woodsboro splits its costs between running the water and sewer systems and the general Town affairs is consistent with many other Towns of its size, said the auditor, and that if it works

for the Town, it works for them.

Woodsboro only charges the cost of physically running the water and sewer systems, such as electricity, chemicals, plant materials, replacement parts, and the salaries of the Town plant staff members to the Water fund. All other incidental charges, such as phones service and gas for vehicles are charged to the Town's General fund.

However, over the past 20 plus years, the Town has actually moved money from its General fund to cover shortfalls in the Water fund, the auditor said, resulting in the General fund showing a 'loan' of \$433,000 on its books to the Water fund, and the Water fund showing a 'liability' for repayment of that loan on its books.

"Again, you've done nothing wrong," the auditor said, "but you may want to consider how long you want to carry forward that loan, or for that matter, if you want to forgive the loan outright." Forgiving the loan would only be a paperwork issue and would not actually result in the Town physically transferring money. "It's equivalent to taking money out of one of your pants pockets and putting it into another," said one Commissioner.

Burgess Barnes said he thought it was a good idea to forgive the loan to clear up the books, which in the long run will allow the Town to get a better handle on what it truly costs the Town to run its water systems.

"Trust me," Barnes said, "I'm not advocating a rate increase, but we just need to know where we are with regards to costs so we can budget more effectively going forward."

The Auditor closed out her briefing telling the Council that she was quite impressed with how the Town staff maintained the Town's books. "The quality of the day-to-day bookkeeping made my job easy," she said.

Overall, the Town's General Fund balance increased \$363,600 to \$2,023,732. If the Town forgives the 'loan' to the Water & Sewer Fund, the balance will drop to \$1,602,733.

The principle sources of revenue into this fund included: state and local grants (\$290,677), property taxes (\$168,888), and state income taxes (\$373,467). Principle expenses were: staff salaries and Town office expenses (\$236,365), trash collection (\$71,326), and street and park maintenance (\$231,176).

Water and sewer service plant expenses exceeded payments from customers by \$259,097. This deficit was covered this year by a \$508,000 American Rescue Plan (ARAP) grant. However, there will be no ARAP grants next year, so the Town will need to figure out how to address the anticipated shortfall.

The principle costs in operating the water and sewer service plant include: electricity (\$107,741), repairs (\$69,236), sludge disposal (\$54,941), and supplies and chemi-

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(\$51,645). The Water & Sewer Fund balance stood at \$1,655,061, however, if the Town forgave

the 'loan' to it from the General Fund, the balance will increase to \$2,023,372.

# Council meeting disrupted

Rudeness, profanity, and bullying was sadly on display at the November Town Council meeting when a complainant, who is a non-resident, supposedly living with his girlfriend on Second Street, repeatedly voiced his opinion during the Council's deliberation of his complaint about resident John Smith parking his work truck and trailer outside of his house opposite where the complainant is currently residing.

The first two outbursts from the complainant drew firm rebukes from Burgess Barnes. The last outburst, which was laced with profanity, resulted in the complainant being directed to leave the meeting. On the

way out, the complainant verbally assaulted an older member of the audience, which resulted in the Sheriff's office being called.

The complainant apparently felt that his rudeness, profanity, and bullying was fully justified because Barnes and the Town Code Enforcer spoke in high terms about all their interactions with Smith as Smith worked with the Town to find a resolution to the issue.

Smith, who is a fiberoptic repairman, said that he is always on call and needs to have his trailer near him. "There are some days I'm working 80-hours a week," he said. "I don't want to cause any trouble, and I'll do whatever the town asks me to do."

A very civil Smith said that prior

to starting to park his Ford F-150 and 7-foot utility trailer in front of his house, he reached out to all his neighbors to see if that was a problem. "Everyone said it was ok. No one had a problem with me doing it. Every time I pull in front of my house, I get out of the truck to make sure I'm not blocking anyone's driveway, or their ability to safely get onto the road."

"I really don't want to cause any trou-

ble," Smith repeated. "The town's code enforcer has been very kind to me, and has been helping me with options."

Smith said he has never met the complainant, who, according to the Town Code Enforcer, filed the complaint because he claims Smith's parking of his truck on the street is "blocking his view."

"How hard is it to talk to people face to face?" Smith said. "It would have been nice if he had walked across the street and told me my trailer bothered him."

Barnes expressed empathy for Smith's situation and thanked him for understanding that the town had to enforce the Town's code, which prohibits the parking of commercial trailers on the Town's streets.

In a show of 'class,' at the end of the meeting, Smith offered to escort the individual who had been verbally accosted by the complainant to their car to ensure they got home safely—and in doing so, showed what it really means to be a true resident of Woodsboro.

# Bids being received for Town Hall

It was a month later than he wanted, admitted Burgess Heath Barnes, but on November 4<sup>th</sup>, the Town officially published a request for proposals for the construction of the long-awaited Town hall.

"We've already received eight proposals," Barnes told the Town Council at their November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, "and we still have the rest of November to go."

The Town staff will compile all the

submissions and submit them to the Town Council for review following the closing of the 30-day waiting period. Barnes offered the council the option to pick a finalist at their December meeting or wait until the January meeting. The rationale for picking a builder in December, Barnes said, would be to keep the option open that work could actually begin in 2023.

Commissioner John Cutshall said that given the sum of money that

would be expended, he would prefer the extra time to review all the proposals in detail prior to choosing his finalist. Catchall's fellow Commissioners concurred with his reasoning, as did Barnes.

"One of the advantages of having multiple bids to review is that opens the door for us to pick someone that will fit our schedule. We are not bound to pick the lowest bidder," Barnes said; instead, we are allowed to factor in such things as the ability of a bidder to jump right on the work, even if their bid is not the lowest. The last thing I want to do is find ourselves in a position where we are forced to accept a bid with a contractor that can't start work until 2025.

In 2022, the Town was able to secure a \$400,000 grant from the State to help with the construction. "I was very excited about the Town receiving the funds, as it gave us the option to pick a better location and build a larger building like we originally wanted and not have to cut the size down due to restrictions of the lot size," Burgess Barnes said.



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## WALKERSVILLE NEWS

# Council debates removal of fluoride from drinking water

During the November 8 Town Council meeting, Walkersville Water Superintendent Matt Orndorff strongly advocated for the removal of fluoride from Town drinking water, citing concerns about hazards related to fluoride exposure at the water treatment plant. The proposal sparked a heated debate, with opinions divided on potential health implications and financial considerations. For more than half a century, fluoride, a fundamental component of dental health, has been routinely added to community water supplies to support public health.

Orndorff initiated the discussion by addressing the harsh nature of fluoride as a chemical handled daily by water treatment plant operators. He emphasized that Walkersville is one of few municipalities still adding fluoride to its water, citing neighboring

towns like Thurmont, Emmitsburg, Middletown, and Boonsboro, which have opted against fluoridation.

"In today's world, the addition of fluoride is unnecessary," Orndorff stated. "It is the harshest chemical that my operators have to handle on a daily basis."

He proceeded to highlight the economic benefits of discontinuing fluoride treatment, estimating a potential annual savings of over \$10,000. Orndorff argued that ceasing fluoridation would result in a higher quality water product with reduced chemical use, benefiting both operators and consumers. His argument was supported by a report prepared by a plant operator outlining the corrosive effects of fluoride vapors on the equipment in the fluoride room at the water treatment plant. The report included photographs illustrating deteriorat-

ing pumps in the relatively new three-year-old plant, underscoring the need for frequent equipment replacement due to the corrosive effects of fluoride.

However, the credibility of this report came under scrutiny from Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen, who questioned the use of several sources. In particular, she addressed information provided by the Karlfeldt Center, a naturopathic doctor based in Idaho who has previously been censured by the Federal Trade Commission for promoting "Covid falsities and unfounded cures."

Brannen also challenged Orndorff's assertion that fluoridation is unnecessary. "36% of people in [Frederick] County are living below the poverty line," said Brannen. "They could be relying on water for fluoride [if they don't] receive basic dental care." Orndorff countered by clarifying that the fluoride dosage

being added to Walkersville's water was not at a beneficial level, rendering it ineffective for dental health.

"The recommended dose of fluoride is 1,000 parts per million (ppm) two times a day. We are feeding fluoride at a state recommended dose of .8 ppm," he said. Brannen emphasized that even this small amount could make a difference for underserved residents who may not be able to afford fresh fruits and vegetables containing natural fluoride.

Addressing Orndorff's concerns about hazardous working conditions, Brannen asked about the utilization of protective gear by water operators and questioned whether any employees had quit due to their work with fluoride. Orndorff replied that protective gear is in use and that there have been no operators who have resigned over fluoride handling.

Although Commissioner Mike McNiesh initially agreed with Orndorff's proposal, he shifted his stance in alignment with Brannen. "Community water fluoridation is recommended by nearly all public health, medical and dental organizations. It's recommended by the American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S. Public Health, and the World Health Organization," said McNiesh. "I'm going to have to go with the recommendations of those organizations over places I haven't heard of before."

Conflicting opinions remained at the end of the meeting resulting in the decision not to stop fluoride addition for the time being; however, they may reconsider in the future. For now, Walkersville will stand with Frederick City and Fort Detrick as one of the few county municipalities that continue to utilize fluoride in public water sources.

## Sidewalk Ordinance change proposed

Commissioner Mike McNiesh introduced changing the Town's sidewalk ordinance to allow the Town to take responsibility for all sidewalk maintenance.

The Town's previous sidewalk ordinance held a property owner fully responsible for any sidewalk repairs. However, during the Maple Avenue project, the Town assumed financial responsibility in replacing all the sidewalks on Maple Avenue. It was impossible to match the new curb and road to the existing sidewalks

and impractical to expect homeowners to pay to replace functional sidewalks because of a Town project. So, the Town Council voted to include the sidewalk replacement in the cost of the road project. Although McNiesh believes replacing the sidewalks on Maple Avenue was a mistake he said, "it is only fair to do this for everyone in Town."

McNiesh outlined proposed changes which included official definitions of a hazardous sidewalk: a crack resulting in a gap or separation of an inch or more,

tilting of 1.5 inches or more of the sidewalk due to settlement or upheaval, any holes greater than three inches in diameter, any pitted spots where the depth is more than an inch in a six by six area and any portions determined to be hazardous by the Town manager, public works director or their representatives.

Another change he introduced would allow the Town to apply the appropriate charges to a property owner for a sidewalk repair when the property owner is found to be negligent in cases such as pool construction.

Additional questions were raised at previous meetings, such as what to do for homeowners that have already paid to replace their sidewalks, and how they would be affected by the new ordinance.

Commissioners suggested the funds for the sidewalk repairs come from the Town's capital surplus accounts which are paid through taxes over the years. Town Planner Sean Williams pointed out that the Town makes anywhere from \$150,000-\$200,000 on bank interest alone, and that could be used

as a sidewalk fund as well. He also suggested applying for grants.

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen asked the Town to consider replacing a portion of the Town's sidewalk every year, starting with the worst spots first. This would allow the Town to remove the hazardous portions immediately without overextending the sidewalk repair funds. It would take time to replace all sidewalks throughout the Town, but the ordinance would ensure fair treatment for all residents.

The proposal was approved, and there will be a public hearing at the December meeting.

## Auditors find Town's financials to be in order

At the November Council meeting, the town received a briefing by the Town's auditor in the audit city's financial accounts. Overall, the auditor found the town's financials to be in order.

The largest portion of the town's assets are in the form of capital assets (e.g., land, buildings, machinery, equipment, infrastructure). Of the remaining Town assets, \$14,488,883 is accounted for in cash and cash equivalents (including certificates of deposit), \$1,930,233 in receivables, \$157,038 in inventory, and \$27,268 in prepaid expenses.

Town income and expenses are tracked in two accounts, one for Governmental activities, usually referred to as the General Fund, which covers routine day-to-day expenses like staff salaries, insurance, road and park maintenance, &c and the Enterprise fund, which covers income and expenses related to the operation of the Town's water system.

Total revenue flowing into the Governmental Activities Fund last year was \$5,243,426, an increase of \$907,126 over last year. Total expenses were \$5,521,756, an increase of \$1,221,952 over last year. At the end of the town's fiscal year, the Governmental Activities Fund had \$17,644,466 sitting in it, and an increase of \$566,921 over last year's balance.

The largest source of revenue for the Governmental fund where state and local income tax distributions (\$2,606,096), followed by property taxes (\$1,405,016), and ARP grants (\$349,714).

Key routine expenses included staff salaries and insurance (\$551,802), Police (\$1,538,559), road and maintenance (\$1,003,480), trash collection (\$426,432) and parks and recreation (\$255,049).

While expenses are fairly stable, ongoing discussions regarding the possibility of offering 24/7 police protection to Town residents will result in an increase in costs in future years that the Town will have to budget for. The cost was \$1,498,762 for five resident troopers in FY 2023, which represented a 23% increase over the FY 2022 cost.

(To date, the town has been awarded \$5.1 million in ARPA funds in two installments, the first early in fiscal year 2022 and the second in September 2022. Of this amount the town has spent a total of \$2 million with \$3.1 million remaining unspent at this time. The water fund benefited greatly from ARPA funding in the total of \$1.5 million.

The property tax income is based upon a tax rate of 14¢ per \$100 of assessed property value for FY 2023, consistent with prior years. The Town continues to operate with one of the lowest real estate tax rates in the State of Maryland.)

The Town's Enterprise Fund, what is associated with the costs of operating the Town's water system, increased by \$1,678,858 to \$6,77,899.

ects requiring water service, they told the Council the Town should expect very little revenue from connection fees going forward.

The town also has a pension liability in the amount of \$882,727 that will eventually have to be paid.

According to the auditor, over time, increases or decreases in fund balances serves as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of Walkersville is improving or deteriorating.

The auditor noted that: "It is the desired goal of the Town to continue to operate conservatively and manage resources responsibly, but begin to spend some surplus funds. With infrastructure upgrades needed in the form of roadways and water main projects, this goal will be tested in the coming years."

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**WALKERSVILLE INFO**

Wed., Dec. 6 - 7 p.m. - Annual Tree Lighting  
Creamery Park

Tues., Dec. 12 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Meeting

Wed., Dec. 13 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting

Mon., Dec. 18 - 7 p.m. - EDC Meeting

Mon., Dec. 25 - Town Office Closed - Christmas

Mon., Jan. 1 - Town Office Closed - New Years Day

website: [www.walkersvillemd.gov](http://www.walkersvillemd.gov)  
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 Walkersville: Our Town

## FROM THE DESK OF...

### Congressman David Trone

Last year, I wrote to you with the good news that our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was quicker than expected. Unemployment was at a record low, millions of new jobs were being created, and the federal government was making historic investments in our infrastructure and our communities. I'm pleased to report that our recovery has continued since then. Unfortunately, everyday Americans — families, small business owners, and workers — aren't feeling the relief even as the overall data improves.

Earlier this year, our state reached a milestone by reporting a 1.6% unemployment rate — the lowest in American history. Our robust economy, centered around health care and government services, should be a source of pride. We've added tens of thousands of jobs, supported entrepreneurship across the state, and made critical investments in our roads, bridges, and waterways. On a national level, the news is

equally positive. Job growth has exceeded expectations, and unemployment continues to be below 4%.

But another reality is as important as these positive economic statistics. A majority of Americans have a negative opinion of the way the economy is working. 51% of Americans think the economy is getting worse, and 71% think the country is headed in the wrong direction.

One reason for this negative opinion is obvious. Inflation is putting a stranglehold on working families, forcing them to live paycheck to paycheck and crushing their individual economic prosperity. Things people need to survive and rewards for their hard work are maddeningly unaffordable. It is not surprising that most people find evidence from their own lives more believable than government statistics.

Equally obvious is that the economy is unfair and not treating Americans equally. In most every way, the richest Americans are benefitting at the expense of those who

need the most help.

Leaders with the right vision need to address the underlying problems and not be blinded by the macroeconomic results. As someone fighting for everyday Marylanders in Congress, I'm determined to be a leader in making the economy work for everyone.

Last year, we passed the Inflation Reduction Act — one of the most influential pieces of legislation in a generation. While most of the publicity focuses on measures that will address our climate crisis, this law will have an immense impact on our economy. Because of the IRA, Marylanders will see lower energy costs, rebates on efficient appliances, and tax incentives to adopt next-generation approaches like solar energy and green building codes. We'll invest over \$6 billion in new jobs and industries. In all of these ways, we will improve our economy while taking climate change seriously. But even this important legislation and

the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act should be seen as starting points, not the finish line. One reason I'm running for Senate is because I understand that much remains to be done and I know I have the experience needed to address our many remaining economic problems.

I came to Congress after running a successful business, growing from one store into 257 stores with over 12,000 men and women on the payroll. I know what it's like to make tough decisions about finances — and I also know what it's like to have thousands of families counting on me to make choices that impact their lives. That's why I've found success in Congress, and why I'm confident we can do more in the Senate.

Ultimately, if we're going to build an economy that works for everyone, we need to build a tax system that is fair for everyone. The most important step to achieve that is raising taxes on the wealthy. I've long said that we need to drastically increase taxes on the wealthiest Americans — myself included. By increasing tax

revenue, we can continue to make investments in infrastructure and other key areas that will create good jobs and give a helping hand to those who need it most. Importantly, households making less than \$400,000 each year would see zero increase in their taxes.

We also need to continue to promote innovation and technology development, something that has been immensely fruitful for our state over the last several decades. If we incentivize businesses to locate in Maryland, as I did with my company, we'll grow our tax base and create even more jobs.

I couldn't be more optimistic about the direction that we're headed. But I know that it will take work to make this vision a reality. The concern that families are feeling about the future is real, and something that I take seriously. The effect of the life-changing legislation will take time to be felt throughout our communities. In the meantime, I won't stop fighting to continue making a difference where it matters most.

### County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

Right about this time last year, I was sworn in to be a member of the Frederick County Council. To say I have learned a lot this year would definitely be an understatement. As my first year is coming to an end, it's a good time to reflect, share some experiences, and look ahead to next year.

Although we are all one community in Frederick County in a larger sense, we are also comprised of many smaller and tightly knit communities. Getting to know the people and organizations who make up these communities has been my favorite part of my first year in office. I was invited to attend several awards banquets for volunteer fire and rescue companies, and award ceremonies recognizing members of Fred-

erick County Department of Fire and Rescue Services. I was moved and grateful at every ceremony recognizing the bravery of first responders in our county. Firefighters, EMTs, DFRS leadership, emergency dispatch call takers, fire company auxiliary organizations, and countless volunteers work together every day in Frederick County to keep us safe, and to answer the call in our hour of need. Spending time with this community and understanding their organizational needs and goals has deepened my appreciation of their mission and dedication to public safety.

I grew up in the Middletown Valley. I went to schools surrounded by cornfields. I learned to drive on the county backroads dotted with many

farms. However, agriculture wasn't a part of my family's daily life, even though it was all around us. I'm grateful to every farmer who took the time to speak with me and show me their farm, so I could become more knowledgeable about our local agricultural economy. The Frederick County Farm Bureau and the Catoctin & Frederick Soil Conservation Districts have been generous with their time to talk about issues such as nutrient management plans, cover crops, and agritourism.

I was able to attend the openings of so many Frederick County businesses! Bakeries, clothing stores, restaurants, law firms, entertainment venues, spas, and other businesses. It's exciting to see a business owner realize their dream, and to be

welcomed into the vibrant business community in Frederick County. I'm honored every time I'm able to be there for that special day for a business owner.

I had a couple of goals for my first year in office. First, I spent time listening to these communities and others, to understand their goals and challenges, and to understand how I could be of service. Second, I wanted to work on a successful bill to help working families. This month the County Council will vote on my Daycare Provider Tax Credit bill which is co-sponsored by Council President Brad Young. I'm hopeful this bill will pass and provide an incentive for the creation of more home-based daycare businesses. There are fewer daycare centers in the northern part of the county, and there is

a dire need for more daycare options. If you would like to provide comments to the Council about this bill, you can send an email to [councilmembers@frederick-countymd.gov](mailto:councilmembers@frederick-countymd.gov).

Lastly, it's been a pleasure working with the other members of the Frederick County Council this year. It's no secret we are not all in the same political party, and that we have some differing views. However, each member of the Council works every day for all residents with dedication and a willingness to work together whenever possible.

Many thanks to everyone who has taken the time to send me an email or call with your thoughts and ideas this year. You can always reach me at [rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov).

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy 2024!

### Woodsboro Burgess Heath Barnes

I hope each of you had a very Happy Thanksgiving with family and friends. Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Blessed New Year. If you can volunteer at a place in the community or help with Christmas for a family that doesn't have the resources, I encourage it. I promise you it is very rewarding.

On November 4th, we opened the bidding process for the new town hall. Within 3 days we had 6 contractors

reaching out with interest in bidding on the project. All prospective bids are due in the town office by December 4th, by noon. All received bids will be presented to the town council on December 12th, and a vote to select the contractor will take place at the January 9th town meeting. We are all very excited about this next step in getting the construction of the town hall started soon.

As many noticed, water bills for this

quarter went out late. This was due to 12 residents not having completed the water meter change upgrade yet. Billing could not be completed until all were updated. The town had to spend extra money and bring in a new plumber on October 20th to complete these final 12 as the contractor's time in town was only for September. We have finally completed the upgrade. This will make billing much smoother and in January we will be able to start tak-

ing electronic payments, which has been a request for a long time now.

Santa Claus aka the Burgess will be making an appearance at 1 pm and riding around town with the Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Department. This year we will be going down all the town streets and possibly up toward the New Midway area also. After the Santa run at approximately 3 pm Santa will be back at the Fire House for pictures until 4 p.m.. All are welcome to come out and say hello.

As always, I encourage everyone to support Glade Valley Community Services (GVCS) if you have clothes or food donations as they are always in need of items for members of the community. For more information, please contact GVCS by email at [gvcs.inc@verizon.net](mailto:gvcs.inc@verizon.net), or call 301-845-0213.

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints, or compliments please feel free to reach out to me at [hbarnes@woodsboro.org](mailto:hbarnes@woodsboro.org) or by phone at 301-401-7164.

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# GOVERNMENT

## County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

Exciting developments are underway for Frederick County! As the year comes to a close, we are gearing up to better serve our residents through community connections that bridge gaps and invest in the rich history of our county!

Hosting the governor and lieutenant governor, honing in on family and child care needs, creating a mobility network and transportation program low-income households, and taking a deeper dive into the historic narrative of Frederick County are just a few of the exciting developments happening in our community. We look forward to ending the year more informed and entering 2024 stronger and equipped with new resources to make change.

### Child Care Market Study Results

The Frederick County Office for Children and Families, community members and families attended a Community Information and Input session on November 15th to learn more about the Child Care Market Study and to provide input about their experiences and ideas for potential solutions. The study unveiled that Frederick County fami-

lies pay for child care in time, money, and stress. Statistically, thirty-eight percent of families in Frederick County say that child care adds 30 minutes or more to their daily commute, forty-six percent spend \$300 or more on child care every week, and fifty-two percent report the cost of child care being very or extremely stressful—with 82% receiving no financial assistance.

The survey was completed by 1,300 Frederick County families in May by the study's contractor, Public Policy Associates and Solomon Evaluation. The Office for Children and Families continues to seek out ways the County can look at innovative strategies to improve child care access and the child care system. For more information about the project and information on the Community Information and Input Session scheduled for December 6 for employers and businesses, contact the Office for Children and Families or see visit [www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy](http://www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy).

### Mobility Action Learning Network Boosts ALICE Households

Frederick County Government, along

with community partners the United Way of Frederick County, Data Driven Frederick and other community leaders, were selected to participate in The Urban Institute's Mobility Action Learning Network. The network provides free technical assistance to teams of community leaders who are moving people out of poverty and creating equity. It also provides us an opportunity to engage in collaborative problem solving with other communities across the country who are committed to addressing the underlying causes of poverty.

As a member of the network, Frederick County will participate in virtual workshops, peer-learning opportunities, and advisory support calls with Urban Institute experts for 12 months. Over the next year, the team will utilize a data-driven approach to finding solutions by utilizing existing data, such as the Child Care Market Study, the ALICE Report, and other local data to determine where they can make the greatest impact collectively. I am excited that we were selected among 30 teams national to participate in the Mobility Action Learning Network! Breaking down barriers to eco-

nomics mobility in Frederick County is crucial to our health as a county.

Other noteworthy community initiatives that break down barriers to access in our county, include our local United Way's Internet Access Initiative. United Way of Frederick County is offering free Chromebooks to eligible households through December to help close the digital divide in Maryland. For more information on eligibility and distribution, the public is encouraged to visit.

### Rides for Good Program

You often hear me say that I want everyone in Frederick County to be able to thrive. To thrive, people need food, housing, health care, and a job. Frederick County ranks as one of the healthiest communities in Maryland. Our unemployment rate is an amazing 1.7% - lower than the state's and less than half the national rate. In order to access jobs and health care, really all our basic needs, people must have transportation. Frederick County Government has provided funding to jump-start the Safe Ride Foundation's new program called Rides for Good. Through a strong partnership between the Safe Ride Foun-

ation, the United Way of Frederick County, and Frederick County Government, the program will provide a viable transportation option to our most vulnerable populations.

Lack of transportation options is cited as a major barrier, especially for our ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed). They seek safe, reliable ways to get to doctors' appointments, the supermarket, and job interviews. The ability to connect residents in our community with essential services, and activities adds meaning and value to the lives they live.

This program affirms that Frederick not only recognizes the need but is prepared to implement solutions.

### Budget Public Hearing and Upcoming Listening Sessions

On December 4, I will be hosting a budget public hearing at Winchester Hall at 7 p.m. The public is invited to either attend in-person or join us virtually via [FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublicHearing](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublicHearing). To join the meeting by phone, call toll-free 855-925-2801 and enter meeting code 10042. Comments also may be submitted online at [FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublic](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublic).

## County Councilman Brad Young

I wanted to take a moment to update you all on recent County Council actions and upcoming Council items.

On November 7, the Council confirmed Mr. Mark Long to the Frederick County Planning Commission. The Frederick County Planning Commission was established in July 1955 and consists of seven members serving five-year terms appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The Planning Commission approves site plans, subdivisions, modifications to the subdivision regulations, and makes determinations of adequacy related to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The Frederick County Planning Commission also makes recommendations to the County Council on County Code amendments, rezonings and comprehensive plans.

On November 21, the Council adopted two pieces of legislation. The first one, Limited Landscape Contractor Parking and Storage. This bill allows for limited landscape contractors parking and storage use on smaller parcels - specifically 80,000 square feet (just under 2 acres), instead of 5 acres. The use will also allow for limited parking within the set-

back area, as long as certain screening and distance criteria are met. Like the current "Limited Landscape Contractor" use, this use will be a principally permitted use, limited to the Agricultural District, and subject to site plan approval.

The second bill was to add cannabis dispensary, cannabis growing facility, and cannabis processing facility as new uses. This bill established regulations for new cannabis production, processing, and sales facilities pursuant to Senate Bill 516 (Cannabis Reform) signed

into Law on May 3, 2023, by Maryland Governor Wes Moore.

On December 12, at 7 p.m. the Council will hold a public hearing on the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan Amendment concerning the Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Zoning Overlay District.

Back in October 2022 the Council adopted the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan. The Council also adopted zoning changes and added "Private Park" as a new use. The Coun-

cil had remanded or sent back to the planning Commission three plan elements for further review and action: (1) the overlay description, (2) overlay map, (3) draft overlay regulatory framework.

After numerous work sessions the Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 20, 2023, then voted on October 11, to forward their final actions and recommendations on the zoning overlay district to the County Council.

Under Maryland law the Council now has four options. To (1) approve, (2) modify, (3) remand, or (4) disap-

prove the amendment. The amendment is deemed adopted if no action is taken by the Council within 90 days of receipt, which will be January 21. A 60-day extension is allowed in exigent circumstances. This would extend the final adoption to be required by March 21. A public hearing is required prior to adoption or modification.

I encourage you to regularly check the Council's upcoming agenda's webpage on the County's official Website. You can also sign up to receive regular notices on Council, Planning Commission, and other County notices.



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# COUNTY NOTES

## Frederick County Accepted Into Mobility Action Learning Network

The Urban Institute selected Frederick County Government, along with community partners the United Way of Frederick County, Data Driven Frederick and other community leaders, to participate in the Institute's Mobility Action Learning Network. The network provides free technical assistance to teams of community leaders who are moving people out of poverty and creating equity.

"I am excited to partner with the Urban Institute to help break down barriers to economic mobility in Frederick County," County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "The Mobility Action Learning Network gives us an opportunity to engage in collaborative problem solving with other communities across the country who are committed to addressing the underlying causes of poverty."

Over the next year, the team will utilize a data-driven approach to finding solu-

tions by utilizing existing data, such as the Child Care Market Study, the ALICE Report, and other local data to determine where they can make the greatest impact collectively.

As a member of the network, Frederick County will participate in virtual workshops, peer-learning opportunities, and advisory support calls with Urban Institute experts for 12 months. Urban will cover costs related to travel and accommodations associated with attending an in-person learning exchange.

Frederick County Government's mobility action team will include a wide range of County services and resources, under the leadership of Lara Fritts, Director of Economic Opportunity. Other participating divisions and agencies include: Housing, Transit, Equity and Inclusion, Health Equity Office, and the Office of Children and Families, including the Local Management Board. Nongovernment partners

include the United Way, with a focus on its ALICE Report; Hood College and its Data Driven Frederick project; and other interested organizations, which provides community leadership, funding, and technical support.

The Urban Institute selected up to 30 teams nationally to participate in the Mobility Action Learning Network. To be eligible, a team must include local leaders from government agencies and nongovernment organizations that can create and sustain change. The goal is to lift people out of poverty through programs, policies, and actions. The network will equip members with data, practices, and opportunities to learn from each other to address local challenges related to upward mobility and racial equity work.

## State of County Address

### Features Successes of First Year of Fitzwater Administration

The state of Frederick County is strong, County Executive Jessica Fitzwater declared in her first State of the County Address this evening. That strength

comes from focusing on the Administration's core values of inclusion, sustainability, and accountability. The County Executive unveiled three key initiatives during her 30-minute address – the creation of a transition dashboard, the establishment of an Office of Agriculture, and the opening of the walk-in crisis care center – and she highlighted progress on a wide range of topics.

"I am proud that my administration is building bridges and bringing people together so we can make transformational change," County Executive Fitzwater said in her address. "We are standing up for the things that really matter. We are lifting up voices that have not been heard so we can all rise and thrive. The State of Frederick County is strong, and through innovation, hope, and purpose, we continue to grow stronger every day."

The key initiatives unveiled Wednesday include:

Transition Dashboard: People can now track the Administration's progress on over 60 recommendations made by the Transition Team in its final report.

The dashboard lists details of work done to implement each recommendation. The site will be updated quarterly so the public can stay up to date on progress. The dashboard can be found at [FrederickCountyMD.gov/Transition-Dashboard](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/Transition-Dashboard).

Office of Agriculture: The newly created Office of Agriculture will centralize and elevate the County's agricultural functions. The Office will bring together the agricultural land preservation programs and the award-winning Agriculture Innovation Grants program. One of the first tasks for the new office will be to update the County's Agricultural Strategic Plan, which was last published in 2008.

Crisis Care Center: A 24/7 Walk-In Crisis Care Center for people experiencing mental health and/or substance misuse crises will open for patients at 10 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 26. The center – a first of its kind in Maryland – will provide basic medical care and connect patients to community-based resources to provide ongoing recovery-oriented services. The facility is owned by Frederick County and operated by the Mental Health Association under the direction of the Frederick County Health Department. Funding came from Congressionally Directed Spending, a State capital grant, and a portion of Frederick County's American Rescue Plan Act allocation. Day-to-day operations will be supported by opioid settlement payments made to Frederick County.

County Executive Fitzwater presented her State of the County Address at the Prospect Center, a large, County-owned facility on Himes Avenue in Frederick City. Once fully renovated, the center will house several divisions that directly serve the public. A solar canopy will be installed in the parking lot. A microgrid at the center will improve reliability and resilience for essential county services. "By locating County offices at the Prospect Center, we will meet residents where they are in a way that is

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# COUNTY NOTES

accessible to more county residents, especially our historically underserved communities," County Executive Fitzwater said.

### Emergency Communications Personnel Recognized at Regional Awards Event

Several Frederick County Department of Emergency Communications employees earned top honors last week at the Mid-Eastern Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Fall Conference in Ocean City, bringing home awards for Director of the Year and Team of the Year.

"I am so proud of our team at the 9-1-1 Center," County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "Frederick County is a statewide leader in the service provided by our emergency call-takers. These dedicated employees work hard every day to keep our community safe."

Kristie Dutrow, Assistant Director of Emergency Communications, was recognized by Mid-Eastern APCO as Communications Center Director of the Year for the State of Maryland. Dutrow was nominated for her work on improving the mental health of Frederick County's 9-1-1 employees. Since her career began in 1998, Dutrow has provided enhanced employee training on mental well-being, and was instrumental in advocating for a behavioral health coordinator to support Frederick County 9-1-1.

Team of the Year honors went to Frederick County employees of Teams A and F, who were recognized for their combined efforts processing 62 emergency

calls in 10 minutes and managing over 1,900 radio transmissions during the March 4, 2023, tanker fire on U.S. 15 in Frederick. Emergency Communications Managers Jeffrey Lowman and James Worley II were recognized for their leadership in managing the incident. Teams A and F managed the tanker-incident while also handling numerous other incidents in the County. Team members who were recognized include: Eric Stackhouse; Amanda Miss; Morgan Click; Angelia Axline; Chad Brown; Jen Butler; Lisa Lanam; Jacob Dmuchowski; Hunter Clark; and Amelia Halvorsen.

Also during the conference, Emergency Communications Supervisor Tom Ward was sworn in as the 2nd Vice President of Mid-Eastern APCO. Ward began his career with Frederick County in 2016 and serves on two committees with APCO International. As the of Mid-Eastern APCO Vice President, Ward will serve as an advocate for the hundreds of 911 professionals throughout Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia.

Founded in 1935, APCO International is the world's oldest and largest organization of public safety communications professionals. The Department of Emergency Communications, under the Division of Emergency Management, serves as the Public Safety Answering Point for all 9-1-1 calls and non-emergency requests, and coordinates after-hours communications for County agencies. DEC dispatches fire, rescue and emergency medical services, law enforcement, including Frederick County Sher-

iff's Office, Brunswick City Police, and Thurmont Police Department, Animal Control, and other County agencies.

### Child Care for Young Children is Essential for Families to Work

Frederick, Md. – Work, job search or school, is the reason that 80% of families are choosing child care for their children who are too young for kindergarten, according to preliminary findings from the Frederick County Child Care Market Study led by the Frederick County Office for Children and Families. Community members and families attended a Community Information and Input session on November 15th to learn more about the study and to provide input about their experiences and ideas for potential solutions.

The study shows Frederick County families pay for child care in time, money, and stress. Thirty-eight per-

cent say that child care adds 30 minutes or more to their daily commute. Forty-six percent of Frederick County families spend \$300 or more on child care every week. Fifty-two percent of families report the cost of child care being very or extremely stressful—with 82% receiving no financial assistance. This is according to a survey completed by 1,300 Frederick County families in May 2023, which was conducted by the study's contractor, Public Policy Associates and Solomon Evaluation.

"It's no surprise that child care is expensive. But it's not the only cost. Families also pay for child care in time and stress. Child care providers may not be located where families need them and the expense is a huge stressor that the majority of families bear alone," said Shelly Toms, director of the Office for Children and Families.

Furthermore, all children showed big differences in readiness for kindergarten if they had participated in formal child care—licensed to meet staffing and quality requirements—according to a preliminary analysis from the study. The biggest increase in readiness was for English Learners and Hispanic children, who participated in formal care prior to kindergarten.

The study will identify child care provider and family needs and inform the Office for Children and Families on ways the County can look at innovative strategies to improve child care access and the child care system. The study is funded by an American Rescue Plan Act grant. For more information about the project and information on the Community Information and Input Session scheduled for December 6 for employers and businesses, contact the Office for Children and Families or see visit [www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy](http://www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy).



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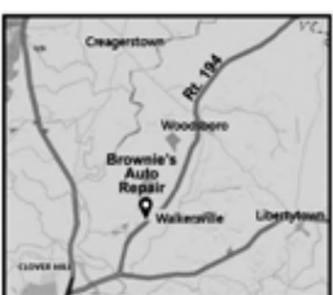


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# COMMENTARY

## The Bulwark

### What the Founders would think about Trump

Charlie Sykes

In case you missed it, America's renaissance stable genius shared some of his Deep Thoughts about History the other day. Amidst his usual rant about his various and sundry criminal prosecutions, Donald Trump mused about The Founders and what they might be thinking if they could see us now.

*"Our Founding Fathers are looking down at Biden with scorn right now. They're looking down at Biden and this administration with disbelief."*

We think not. But he raises an interesting question: What would the Founders make of the Rise and Return of Donald Trump?

On a recent episode of the Bulwark's Trump Trials, Ben Wittes and I were inspired to speculate that there would indeed be high words banded and fingers pointed among the drafters of the Constitution and the authors of the Federalist Papers.

They were vividly aware of the dangers posed by a man like Trump, and thought that they had erected effective checks and balances against him. So it is interesting to imagine what they might think as they looked down upon our current scene.

Alexander Hamilton had hoped somewhat naively that the Electoral College would afford "a moral certainty"

that the office of the presidency would not "fall to the lot of any man, who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications."

He imagined that the electors would be a bulwark against men who had a talent "for low intrigue and the little arts of popularity."

"It will not be too strong to say," Hamilton wrote in Federalist No. 68, "that there will be a constant probability of seeing [the presidency] filled by characters preeminent for ability and virtue."

This was, in fact a consistent theme. In Federalist No. 1, Hamilton wrote, "Of those men who have overturned the liberty of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing demagogues and ending tyrants." In Federalist No. 85, Hamilton argued that the Constitution's checks and balances were necessary to protect against the "military despotism of a victorious demagogue."

On our podcast, Ben highlighted the most prophetic of Hamilton's warning. In a note to George Washington in 1792, Hamilton described the proto-Trump who endangered the Republic. It is, in fact, so on-the-nose that it was cited twice during Trump's second impeachment trial.

Hamilton wrote:

*"When a man unprincipled in private life despatches in his fortune, bold in his temper, [possessed of consider-*

*able talents, having the advantage of military habits] -*

*"... despotic in his ordinary demeanor -*

*"... known to have scoffed in private at the principles of liberty -*

*"... when such a man is seen to mount the hobby horse of popularity -*

*"... to join in the cry of danger to liberty -*

*"... to take every opportunity of embarrassing the General Government & bringing it under suspicion -*

*"... to flatter and fall in with all the nonsense of the zealots of the day -*

*"It may justly be suspected that his object is to throw things into confusion that he may ride the storm and direct the whirlwind."*

It may justly be suspected that his object is to throw things into confusion that he may 'ride the storm and direct the whirlwind.'

Imagine what Hamilton might be thinking now.

Technically, Abraham Lincoln was not a Founder, but he also warned about the danger of demagogues and megalomaniacs. And he would undoubtedly also have some thoughts about the man who now controls his party.

The greatest threat to the Republic, Lincoln declared in his Lyceum Address,

did not come from a foreign enemy.

"All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years."

The real danger, he said, "must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad."

"If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide. . ."

He sounded the alarm about "men of ambition and talents," who would "seek the gratification of their ruling passion, as others have so done before them."

Take a moment to read his description of a would-be despot who "thirsts and burns for distinction."

"Is it unreasonable then to expect, that some man [possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch, will at some time, spring up among us?

"And when such a one does, it will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs.

"Distinction will be his paramount object, and although he would as willingly, perhaps more so, acquire it by doing good as harm; yet, that opportunity being past, and nothing left to be done in the way of building up, he would set boldly to the task of pulling down."

One final thought. . .

If the Founders are, in fact, watching all of this, I imagine that George Mason would like to have a word with James Madison. During the Constitutional Convention, Mason warned against giving the president — any president — sweeping pardon powers.

The president, Mason argued:

*"Ought not to have the power of pardoning, because he may frequently pardon crimes which were advised by himself. It may happen, at some future day, that he will establish a monarchy, and destroy the republic. If he has the power of granting pardons before indictment, or conviction, may he not stop inquiry and prevent detection? The case of treason ought, at least, to be excepted. This is a weighty objection with me."*

James Madison told him not to worry.

*"There is one security in this case to which gentlemen may not have adverted: if the President be connected, in any suspicious manner, with any person, and there be grounds to believe he will shelter him, the House of Representatives can impeach him; they can remove him if found guilty."*

See if you can spot the flaw.

To read other articles from the Bulwark visit [www.thebulwark.com](http://www.thebulwark.com).

## The Triad

### It's over Mitch, go rogue

A. B. Stoddard

There are probably plenty of Derby days ahead back home for Sen. Mitch McConnell, but his time as the longest-running Senate party leader in history is coming to an end.

The 81-year-old Kentuckian looks different, and sounds different, than he did a year ago. His aging is pronounced: A fall and concussion, and then moments of freezing up during speech, have called his health into question.

Yet in the last year McConnell's party has actually changed more than he has. And that is likely the bigger threat to his ability to stay in power.

Set aside the defeat in yesterday's off-year elections of a McConnell protégé—his former staffer Daniel Cameron—in Kentucky's governor's race. That loss suggests that McConnell's political strength is flagging in his home state. But step back and look at the bigger picture.

Before the midterm elections of 2022, when Donald Trump's wacko election-denier candidates were winning Republican primaries, McConnell worried aloud about "candidate quality." He was right: Trump's picks lost winnable Senate races that would have made McConnell majority leader again. And McConnell wasn't alone in blaming Trump: The ex-president was criticized broadly for backing extremists who stopped a red

wave. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis was believed capable of taking on Trump and saving the GOP.

A year ago.

Now the surrender to MAGA is nearly complete.

In the last month alone the election of Rep. Mike Johnson as House speaker proved that the Big Lie is now a litmus test for Republicans in the lower chamber, National Republican Senatorial Committee chairman Sen. Steve Daines called on the party to unite around Donald Trump as the GOP presidential nominee two months before any voters have weighed in, and the NRSC also attacked former GOP Rep. Peter Meijer of Michigan—someone the party would have considered a dream candidate like, yesterday—saying that he has no business announcing a Senate run because he voted to impeach Trump.

"Peter Meijer isn't viable in a primary election, and there's worry that if Meijer were nominated, the base would not be enthused in the general election," an NRSC spokesman told Politico.

There's worry alright.

Michigan turned solidly blue last year and Republicans should pray for a candidate like Meijer in a general election there. That the Michigan Republican Party is one of the most deranged GOP state parties in the nation means Meijer wouldn't likely win the primary, but such an on-the-record statement—from someone on McConnell's leadership team—shows there is no attempt to

hide the capitulation to Trump anymore. This is now business as usual.

What is left of the "establishment" will evaporate by early winter, and McConnell should plan accordingly. The Grand Old Party now has him cornered. And McConnell cannot overcome this with leadership, fundraising, and dedication to the cause.

Keep up with all our coverage of the 2024 campaign—in articles, podcasts, newsletters, and livestreams:

Too many Senate Republicans don't want to follow their leader. Nowhere is this more clear than the fight for democracy abroad, and the defense of Ukraine. As McConnell pushes to pass emergency funds for Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan together—as President Biden has requested—he is isolated. The three Johns most likely to replace him as leader—Sens. John Thune, John Cornyn, and John Barrasso—have not backed him up publicly. In September McConnell argued for Ukraine funding to be included in a continuing resolution but was rebuffed by his own GOP colleagues.

Instead some Republican senators want McConnell to show solidarity with the newly elected House speaker, who opposes tying security aid for Israel to any funds for Ukraine.

Sen. Rand Paul told reporters last week that McConnell's position is "very, very unpopular," and added "I think ultimately [it] will fail or bring down the speaker, which I don't think is a good idea."

Sen. Cynthia Lummus said she was "hopeful that deference will be paid to the House."

McConnell has met with Johnson and says he plans to do so regularly, but it is not his duty to help the shambolic House GOP conference keep a speaker.

Instead McConnell can work his friend Joe Biden and with Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on a compromise that combines border security provisions with the national security supplemental funds. Perhaps that would help improve Biden's standing against Trump in the general election. But McConnell should support the White House position that Ukraine needs not only materiel but economic assistance in order to prevail against the Russian onslaught that aims to bankrupt the country if it cannot conquer it. And he should not back down from the need to pass security aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan simultaneously.

McConnell cannot hope to be a hero in the history books. For one thing, he stole a Supreme Court seat (and sadly for him, the ultimate partisan, the left gives him more credit for remaking the courts than his fellow Republicans do). For another, he refused to stand up to Trump's coup because he wanted Republicans to win the Georgia Senate runoff elections on January 5, 2021. But Trump told Peach State Republicans to stay home from a "rigged" election—so he cost McConnell the majority twice, in January 2021 and again in November 2022.

But McConnell's greatest failure was his vote on February 13, 2021

to acquit Trump of impeachment for inciting the insurrection. On the same day he said Trump was "practically and morally responsible" for January 6th. McConnell likely could have found 17 votes for conviction, which would have barred Trump from future office. His attempt to have it both ways has landed us here, with Trump well positioned for a second term.

Is McConnell prepared to endorse Trump a third time next spring? If Trump wins next year McConnell is toast. And if Trump loses it is hard to imagine House Republicans won't object to certifying a Biden 2024 victory—and the MAGA caucus in the Senate will follow suit.

McConnell owes himself a better legacy than being run out of town by J.D. Vance, Ron Johnson, and Donald Trump. He can help the country, and democracy, and himself, by abandoning the needs of his party to do what is right.

Just as both Sen. Mitt Romney and former Vice President Mike Pence have, McConnell can choose to liberate himself from the corruption MAGA has in store for Republicans next year. There is no reason not to—like Pence and Romney, McConnell will find no future work in GOP circles once he leaves the Senate.

Twilight can elicit courage. Cocaine Mitch should go out in a blaze of Uni-Party glory.

To read other articles by A.B. Stoddard visit [www.thebulwark.com](http://www.thebulwark.com).

# The Liberal Patriot

Where have all the Democrats gone?

John Judis and Ruy Teixeira

The Democratic Party has had its greatest success when it sought to represent the common man and woman against the rich and powerful, the people against the elite, and the plebeians against the patricians. Over the last thirty years, the Democrats have continued to claim to represent the average citizen but have steadily lost the allegiance of “everyday Americans”—the working- and middle-class voters that were at the core of the older New Deal coalition.

There are a multitude of factors that have driven working-class voters out of the Democratic Party. Some of these stances have to do directly with economics; others with culture. The differences over them are often taken to distinguish the college-educated professional from those who do not have college degrees, but they equally, if not more accurately, arise from the differences in economic geography—what we call the “Great Divide” in American politics.

On one side of the divide are the great postindustrial metro centers that are heavily populated by college-educated professionals, but also by low-skilled immigrants who clean the buildings, mow the lawns, and take care of the children and the aged. The professionals, who set the political agenda for these areas, welcome legal and illegal immigrants; they want guns off the street; they see trade not as a threat to jobs but as a source of less expensive goods; they worry that climate change will destroy the planet; and, among the young, they are engaged in a quest for new identities

and sexual lifestyles. A majority of them are Democrats.

On the other side of the divide are the small towns and midsize cities that have depended on manufacturing, mining, and farming. The workers and small businesspeople in these towns want the border closed to illegal immigrants, whom they see as a burden to their taxes and a threat to their jobs; they want to keep their guns as a way to protect their homes and family; they fly the American flag in front of their house; they go to or went to church; they oppose abortion; some may be leery of gay marriage; many of them or members of their family served in the military; they have no idea what most of the initials in LGBTQIA+ stand for. A majority of them are now Republicans and many are former working-class Democrats.

In recent years, elections have increasingly been decided by which party can make the other party’s radical extremes (or the politicians who represent those extremes) the main issue.

There is a danger to democracy lurking in this transformation of the parties into cultural warriors. American democracy was originally based on the Jeffersonian idea that roughly equal property ownership would undergird political equality and democracy. That notion was dashed on the rocks of the industrial revolution, which created a society of distinct economic classes. It was then hoped by liberals and progressives in the early twentieth century that the intrinsic economic and political power of the lords of industry and finance would be counterbalanced by the power of labor unions in the workplace and by a party that represents the working and middle classes in the political realm. And that was the democratic pluralism that, with some obvious flaws, New Deal liberalism bequeathed and that dominated

American politics from the 1930s up through the 1960s.

But that hope for democracy has also been shattered. During the last half century, the labor movement, under assault from business and Republicans, has precipitously declined, and the Democratic Party has ceased to be seen and to function as the party of the people in competition with the party of business. The consequences have been profound.

Business and finance, through a plethora of lobbies that began springing up in the 1970s, have gotten their way time and again. The tax code has been dramatically rewritten to favor the wealthy at the expense of working America; trade deals have been signed that have aided multinational corporations but screwed American workers; finance, with its propensity to instability, and its emphasis on short-term returns, has been enhanced at the expense of manufacturing; at the behest of the most retrograde elements, social programs have been sabotaged or rejected that would have provided American workers with the same security in health care, child-care, and employment that European workers simply take for granted.

In our view, one prerequisite for reviving the promise of American democracy is the reemergence of a political party whose primary commitment is to look after the country’s working and middle classes.

We place our hopes for change in the Democratic Party. We see evidence in the Biden administration’s first two years of a reevaluation of the party’s economic priorities on trade, taxes, and labor and on national economic growth that tries to bridge the Great Divide. The Democrats seem to have turned a corner from their deference to free markets and free trade during past administrations.

Most of the stands the party take on issues like race, crime, immigration, climate, sex, and gender are in response to real problems. There has been police



brutality; the country’s eleven million illegal immigrants constitute an exploitable underclass that needs to be integrated into society; transgender people have suffered discrimination; and climate change is a genuine threat to the planet’s future. There are reasonable reforms that address these, but the radical solutions and the censorious outlook advanced by the Democrats’ shadow groups and by some Democratic politicians have been wrong-headed and divisive. Many Democrats simply refuse to recognize this.

The America of today is vastly different from the America of the 1930s, but what the Democrats need today is a general approach to politics that is similar to that of the New Deal liberals. The New Deal liberals were liberal, progressive, and social democratic in their economic views, dedicated to creating a better balance of power between labor and business and security against poverty, unemployment, disease, and old age, but by today’s standards, the New Deal Democrats were moderate and

even small-c conservative in their social outlook.

They extolled “the American way of life” (a term popularized in the 1930s); they used patriotic symbols like the “Blue Eagle” to promote their programs. In 1940, Roosevelt’s official campaign song was Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.” Under Roosevelt, Thanksgiving, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day were made into federal holidays. Roosevelt turned the annual Christmas tree lighting into a national event. Roosevelt’s politics were those of “the people” and of the “forgotten American.”

The Democrats need to follow this example. They need to press economic reforms that benefit the working and middle classes. But to get a hearing on those promises, they must first declare a truce and find a middle ground in today’s culture war between Democrats and Republicans so that they can once again become the party of the people.

To read other articles from *The Liberal Patriot* visit [www.liberalpatriot.com](http://www.liberalpatriot.com).

# Good Day, Neighbor

Family celebrations

Dorothea Mordan

No matter what happens in the world before this edition of the Woodsboro Walkersville News Journal goes to print, the first days of winter are a time many of us pause, reflect, spend time with family, remember our faith and humanity.

Communities goes through changes every year. Some of the best come from meeting new people. Change doesn’t cost traditions. The people who come into our lives create a larger family, with traditions to share.

The new owners of Trout’s, Diya Rajbhandari and her family, live in Walkersville, and are enriching the local traditions of our community. Our family favorites for the holidays can be found there, turkey, potatoes, Cope’s Corn. Local and regional favorites from Liganore and Yuengling mingle with new favorites. A few (new to me) interesting wines, Imagery Cabernet Sauvignon, Bonterra Chardonnay and Specialist Zinfandel, pair nicely with locally sourced produce and meats.

In the winter holidays we pause to share stories of inspiration.

I recently read a short, autobiographical story by Katherine Hepburn. She and her father had been in line to buy tickets to see a show. In front of them was a family, parents and children, just as excited as the Hepburns. When their turn came, the father of that family found he did not have money to pay for their tickets. Nothing was spoken, but the look on those parents’ faces told the story of how devastating it was about to be when their children learned they would not see the show. Hepburn’s father quietly dropped some of his own money to the ground, saying “Sir, I think you dropped this.” Knowing looks were exchanged, and the families parted ways. The family of strangers went in. Then the Hepburns went home.

Hepburn said she and her father felt joy in being able to help that family. I’m sure they did. I also think much of the joy from such experiences is the memory of when we do what is right, when we can. In the moment, we feel relief that tragedy—great or small—was averted. That is what the holidays make me think of. Tragedies great or small I may have helped deflect, and small mercies shown to me. In the world today there are face-offs everywhere. Since the

dawn of time humans have needed to balance the aggressive rhythms of life with times of respite and rest. A holiday.

Human inflicted traumas, as we see happening around the world, lead to generations of damage. The opposing force is the lasting effect of doing the right thing, building generations of strong bonds with neighbors.

Writing about what community means is a universal reflection for this time of year. All people need a sense of self preservation, but a true community holiday is about so much more than “what’s in it for me?”. We stop to renew our faith—in religion, humanity, that the spring days are coming. Faith and church are about community, not separation. It is worth remembering that people who don’t value other people, often don’t know their own value. When the world seems certain to tear itself apart, it is worth remembering the things we do each day to hold it together, and that every religion has a way of phrasing the Golden Rule.

Buddhism - Hurt not others with that which pains yourself. Udanavarga.

Christianity - All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Bible, St. Matthew.

Confucianism - Is there any maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one’s whole life? Surely the maxim of

loving kindness is such—Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you. Analects.

Hebraism - What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go learn it. Talmud.

Hinduism - This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee, would cause thee pain. Mahabharata.

Islam - No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. Traditions.

Jainism - In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self, and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves. Yogashastra.

Sikhism - As thou deemest thyself so deem others. Then shalt thou become a partner in heaven. Kabir.

Taoism - Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain: and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss. T’ai Shang Kan Ying P’ien.

Unitarianism - The inherent worth and dignity of every person. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations. We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Unitarian

Universalist Association.

Zoroastrianism - That nature is only good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self. Dadistan-i-dinik.

Most of these phrasings of the Golden Rule are as they appear on the Norman Rockwell Museum website. No doubt there are many more phrasings of the Golden Rule to pair with many more religions. They are not missing in this column because of newspaper print space. Their absence simply illustrates that I have so much more to learn.

For over a century Norman Rockwell’s work has celebrated life in America. From the joys of holiday tradition to the depths of fighting for civil rights. It is worth remembering that some of our greatest artists are also some of our greatest humanitarians.

Examples of the Golden Rule are all around us, if only we pay attention.

Hold your family and friends closer, and if you are reading this here at home in Woodsboro or Walkersville, stop by Trout’s and pick up something to share for your holiday meal.

The array of choices at Trout’s pair nicely with gatherings of friends, family, and good conversation.

To read past editions of *Good Day Neighbor* visit the Authors section of [Walkersville.net](http://Walkersville.net).

# PASTOR'S DESK

## God is with us

Pastor Chad Weddle  
Glade United Church of Christ

December, the beginning of the advent season and Christmas! I can recall being an acolyte around the age of twelve and at the 11pm Christmas Eve service, fighting falling asleep, and hearing the pastor at the church read from the Gospel of John.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."*  
—(John 1:1-2)

My confusion continued as the Pastor continued reading from John ending with verse 14.

*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."*  
—(John 1:14)

What kind of Christmas eve Gospel reading is this I thought, where are the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, the manger? It would take a long time on my

faith journey to understand and come to think of this Gospel writers beginning as more important to me than our traditional Luke narrative for several reasons.

Emmanuel – God is with us. The prophet Isaiah would tell us that this would occur hundreds of years before it was fulfilled.

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.*  
—(Isaiah 7:14)

Just one example of prophecies from the Old Testament regarding Jesus that are fulfilled, similar to the prophet Micah who wrote approximately 700 years before Jesus birth that it would occur in the tiny town of Bethlehem:

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*  
—(Micah 5:2)

The fulfillment of these prophecies was significant to me on my faith journey in noting God's faithfulness to God's promises. Many other prophecies regarding Jesus' life, ministry, death and Resurrection can be found in the Old Testament.

While confusing the young acolyte, I now embrace this beautiful scripture because it demonstrates how much God loves and cares for me and you! God loves us so much that God would become a human being in the form of our savior Jesus Christ. No longer would there be a void between our Creator God and us. Jesus would walk among us, teach us, challenge our concepts of what a savior would do (mighty conqueror riding triumphantly on a white horse versus a humble leader preaching forgiveness and riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.) and be our example of how to live while here on earth. So, while I still love the Gospel of Luke for the traditional Christmas narrative which is the scheduled reading for this year's lectionary, John's gospel reading for Christmas now holds a special meaning to me.

Now onto Luke's gospel, Luke takes us from a wide global and political vantage point by mentioning the Emperor of Rome and the governor of Syria down to what appears to be two insignificant individuals called Joseph and Mary.

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.*



*(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria) ... So Joseph also went up ... to Bethlehem the town of David ... He went there to register with Mary*  
—(parts of Luke 2:1-5)

Insignificant small town, two unknown individuals this theme continues. Where would God's only child be born? Certainly a palace or a temple with a gold crib adorned with beautiful and rare gems. No, this child would be born in cave like stable among animals and laid in a feeding trough.

Certainly this miraculous event will be proclaimed to those political and religious leaders in the area so that they may come and worship God's only son. God however chooses to announce this event to the low-class shepherds in the area. Shepherds, and later Jesus would call a tax collector, fisherman, and other unknown seemingly unimportant disciples to carry on and share his ministry to all.

Small town, seemingly insignificant, powerless couple versus Rome, an Emperor and his Empire. How many of you can name a significant fact about that specific Roman Emperor or that Governor of Syria? Yet this month approximately two BILLION people on this globe will celebrate the birth of the child born to Joseph and Mary.

This time of year can be stressful – remember that God loves us all as God's children, as God's creations. Instead of stressing over the perfect gift or making sure your house is the best and brightest with lights and other decorations, please remember what can seem to be a small insignificant event or act can continue to show God's love to others. Please think of a small act of kindness you can do – visit a lonely or sick neighbor, take a canned good to the local food bank, give a donation to one of those red kettles or another non-profit agency. For God continues to care for the world through these small often overlooked acts of unexpected kindness. So I ask you the reader of this article - Can you be a shepherd here in 2023 to a friend or stranger proclaiming the good news that God came to us?

I want to wish everyone a safe, blessed Christmas season! Please take time on Christmas day to think of your favorite Christmas scripture and thank our ever loving ever faithful God for all the blessings we enjoy, for God is with us now and forever!

*I hope you will join us at Glade United Church of Christ – all are welcome! We are located at 21 Fulton Avenue, Walkersville. Sunday Worship begins at 10:30 a.m. For more information about our church or any events please see [www.gladechurch.org](http://www.gladechurch.org) or call the office at 301-845-6775.*

*On Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> the church will be open from 10am to 3pm with artisans, crafters and good food for sale as part of the Walkersville Christkindlmarket ([walkersvillechristkindlmarket.com](http://walkersvillechristkindlmarket.com)). December 3<sup>rd</sup> is Communion Sunday, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent with the Hanging of the Greens ceremony. On Wednesday Dec 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. our Music Director Bill Powell will hold an Annual Holiday Concert with light refreshments to follow. Please bring a canned item for the Glade Valley Food Bank. Dec 24<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am Handbell Choir and 7:30 Candlelight Christmas Eve service with handbells, communion and special music beginning at 7 p.m.*

We invite you to come visit



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Christmas Eve Service - Dec. 24th at 5:30 p.m.  
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Featuring the story of the 12 Days of Christmas with lessons and carols

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**Glade**  
United Church of Christ

"All are welcome!"

Sunday, December 3 - Communion  
December 24 - Christmas Eve Services  
10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Worship Sundays at 10:30 a.m.  
21 Fulton Avenue, Walkersville  
301-845-6775  
[www.gladechurch.org](http://www.gladechurch.org)  
[www.facebook.com/GladeUCCWalkersville](http://www.facebook.com/GladeUCCWalkersville)

**Glade United Church of Christ**

\* \* Join us this Christmas Season! \* \*

Annual Holiday Concert  
"Go Tell It on the Mountain"

\* Wednesday, December 20 - 7 p.m. \*

Join us for a festive evening of holiday music!  
Light refreshments will be served following the concert.  
Please bring a food item to share with the Glade Valley Food Bank.

\* Come Celebrate Christmas Eve with Us! \*

Join us for a morning service at 10:30 a.m.  
where we will light the Candle of Love.

\* Evening Candlelight Service: \*

Experience the magic of Christmas with our candlelight service  
Musical Prelude: 7 p.m. • Candlelight Service: 7:30 p.m.  
(New time this year)

All are welcome Sundays for 10:30 a.m. worship!

\* Chad Weddle - Pastor \*

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## THE BOOK OF DAYS

## St. Nicholas



Saint Nicholas Day, also called the Feast of Saint Nicholas, is observed on December 6th in Western Christian countries, and on December 20th in Eastern Christian countries.

St. Nicholas belongs to the fourth century of the Christian era, and was a native of the city of Patara, in Lycia, in Asia Minor. So strong were his devotional tendencies, even from infancy, that we are gravely informed that he refused to suck on Wednesdays and Fridays, the fast-days appointed by the church! Having embraced a religious life by entering the monastery of Sion, near Myra, he was in course of time raised to the dignity of abbot, and for many years made himself conspicuous by acts of piety and benevolence. Subsequently he was elected archbishop of the metropolitan church of Myra, and exercised that office with great renown till his death. Though escaping actual martyrdom, he is said to have suffered imprisonment, and otherwise testified to the faith under the persecution of Dioclesian.

The history of St. Nicholas does not end with his death and burial. His relics were preserved with great honour at Myra, till the end of the eleventh century, when certain merchants of Bari, on the Adriatic, moved by a pious indignation similar to what actuated the Crusaders, made an expedition to the coast of Lycia, and landing there, broke open the coffin containing the bones of the saint, and carried them off to Italy. They landed at Bari on the 9th of May 1087, and the sacred treasure, which they had brought with them, was deposited in the church of St. Stephen. On the day when the latter proceeding took place, we are told that thirty persons were cured of various distempers through imploring the intercession of St. Nicholas, and since that time his tomb at Bari has been famous for pilgrimages.

Perhaps no saint has enjoyed a more extended popularity than St. Nicholas. By the Russian nation, he has been adopted as their patron, and in England no fewer than three hundred and seventy-two churches are named in his honour. He is regarded as the special guardian of virgins, of children, and of sailors. Scholars were under his protection, and from the circumstance of these being anciently denominated clerks, the fraternity of parish clerks placed themselves likewise under the guardianship of St. Nicholas. He even came to be regarded as the patron of robbers, from an alleged adventure with thieves, whom he compelled to restore some stolen goods to their proper owners.

But there are two specially celebrated legends regarding this saint, one of which bears reference to his protectorship of virgins, and the other to that of children.

The former of these stories is as follows: A nobleman in the town of Patara had three daughters, but was sunk in such poverty, that he was not only unable to provide them with suitable marriage-portions, but was on the point of abandoning them to a sinful course of life from inability to preserve them otherwise from starvation. St. Nicholas, who had inherited a large fortune, and employed it in innumerable acts of charity, no sooner heard of this unfortunate family, than he resolved to save it from the degradation with which it was threatened.

As he proceeded secretly to the nobleman's house at night, debating with himself how he might best accomplish his object, the moon shone out from behind a cloud, and shewed him an open window into which he threw a purse of gold. This fell at the feet of the father of the maidens, and enabled him to portion his eldest daughter.

A second nocturnal visit was paid to the house by the saint, and a similar present bestowed, which procured a dowry for the second daughter of the nobleman. But the latter was now determined to discover his mysterious benefactor, and with that view set himself to watch. On St. Nicholas approaching, and preparing to throw in a purse of money

for the third daughter, the nobleman caught hold of the skirt of his robe, and threw himself at his feet, exclaiming: 'O Nicholas! servant of God! Why seek to hide thyself?' But the saint made him promise that he would inform no one of this seasonable act of munificence.

From this incident in his life is derived apparently the practice formerly, if not still, customary in various parts of the continent, of the elder members and friends of a family placing, on the eve of St. Nicholas's Day, little presents, such as sweetmeats and similar gifts, in the shoes or hose of their younger relatives, who, on discovering them in the morning, are supposed to attribute them to the munificence of St. Nicholas.

In convents, the young lady-boarders used, on the same occasion, to place silk-stockings at the door of the apartment of the abbess, with a paper recommending themselves to 'Great St. Nicholas of her chamber.' The next morning they were summoned together, to witness the results of the liberality of the saint who had bountifully filled the stockings with sweetmeats. From the same instance of munificence recorded of St. Nicholas, he is often represented bearing three purses, or three gold balls; the latter emblem forming the well-known pawnbrokers' sign, which, with considerable probability, has been traced to this origin. It is true, indeed, that this emblem is proximately derived from the Lombard merchants who settled in England at an early period, and were the first to open establishments for the lending of money. The three golden balls were also the sign of the Medici family of Florence, who, by a successful career of merchandise and money-lending, raised themselves to the supreme power in their native state. But the same origin is traceable in both cases—the emblematic device of the charitable St. Nicholas.

The second legend to which we have adverted is even of a more piquant nature. A gentleman of Asia sent his two sons to be educated at Athens, but desired them, in passing through the town of Myra, to call on its archbishop, the holy Nicholas, and receive his benediction.

The young men, arriving at the town late in the evening, resolved to defer their visit till the morning, and in the meantime took up their abode at an inn. The landlord, in order to obtain possession of their baggage, murdered the unfortunate youths in their sleep; and after cutting their bodies to pieces, and salting them, placed the mutilated remains in a pickling tub along with some pork, under the guise of which he resolved to dispose of the contents of the vessel. But the Archbishop was warned by a vision of this horrid transaction, and proceeded immediately to the inn, where he charged the landlord with the crime.

The man, finding himself discovered, confessed his guilt, with great contrition, to St. Nicholas, who not only implored on his behalf the forgiveness of Heaven, but also proceeded to the tub where the remains of the innocent youths lay in brine, and then made the sign of the cross, and offered up a supplication for their restoration to life.

Scarcely was the saint's prayer finished, when the detached and mangled limbs were miraculously reunited, and the two youths regaining animation, rose up alive in the tub, and threw themselves at the feet of their benefactor. We are further informed, that the archbishop refused their homage, desiring the young men to return thanks to the proper quarter from which this blessing had descended; and then, after giving them his benediction, he dismissed them with great joy to continue their journey to Athens. In accordance with this legend, St. Nicholas is frequently represented, as delineated in the accompanying engraving, standing in full Episcopal costume beside a tub with naked children.

The tradition of Saint Nicholas Day, is a festival for children in many countries in Europe related to legends of the saint, and particularly his reputation as a bringer of gifts. The American Santa Claus, as well as the British Father Christmas, derive from these legends.

To read other selections from Robert Chamber's 1864 *The Book of Days* visit [www.thebookofdays.com](http://www.thebookofdays.com).



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# ECOLOGY

## Strawberry Hill's Winter & Spring programs

Anne Gageby  
 Director of Environmental Education  
 Strawberry Hill Foundation

Looking back over this past fall, I'm in awe of what we've been able to accomplish here at Strawberry Hill. From the numerous school field trips and homeschool programs to public events such as Trailgating and Halloween on the Hill, it's been a whirlwind of activities, learning, and fun. Most of all, it has me excited for our winter and spring programs.

Yes, the weather is getting colder and hiking the trails becomes trickier as the snow and ice take over. But that doesn't mean the fun stops just because the forest is switching seasons. This month we're hosting a holiday wreath-making class on December 9th from 1 to 3. Make your own beautiful, all-natural wreath while enjoying hot cocoa, treats, and friends. We'll learn about different local evergreens and discover some tips and tricks for making your own holiday showstopper. Strawberry Hill will supply pinecones, wire, and drinks. Please bring ribbon and any decorations you'd like to add such as berries, bells, snowflakes, birds, silk flowers, etc. Please bring gloves, scissors, wire cutters, and hand cutters for plant materials as we will have limited scissors and wire cutters to share. Also, we will be in the pavilion so please dress for the weather. Our wreath-making class is led by Heather Wight, a Pennsylvania Master Gardener and experienced wreath-maker. The price is \$30 per participant, and you can register online at our website, [www.strawberryhill.org](http://www.strawberryhill.org) or by calling the office at 717-642-5840.

I'm proud to announce that Straw-

berry Hill is bringing back Christmas on the Hill which we be held Saturday, December 16th from 5 to 6:30. Join us in the Nature Classroom for photos and storytime with Santa. Two of our Animal Ambassadors will also be there to greet families and tell you what's happening in our forest this time of year. We'll light up the night with a self-guided stroll along Middle Creek's Christmas light display and a live-music Christmas sing-along by the campfire from 5:15 to 5:45 . and again from 6 to 6:30. We will also have hot cocoa in the pavilion and a craft station for you to make your own nature-style Christmas ornaments. Christmas on the Hill is free and open to the public however donations are always appreciated.

Strawberry Hill is also hosting a kids' Winter Solstice Celebration on Thursday, December 21st from 1:30 to 4:30. This is a drop-off program for kids ages 5-12 and is a great way for the kids to start their winter break. We'll enjoy an afternoon hike as we discover what winter means for nature. Later, we'll warm up by the campfire with smores and hot cocoa before returning to the Nature Classroom to make bird treats and tree decorations as we explore the history and science behind the solstice. This is an afternoon the kids won't want to miss! The price is \$30 per child and space is limited. Please register online or by calling the office.

If hiking is more your thing, join us for a full moon hike on Tuesday, December 26th from 7 to 8 p.m. December's full Cold Moon is special because of its high trajectory across the sky. The Cold Moon is opposite the low sun and because of this, will be above the horizon

longer than at other times of the year. It's also a great time to see more of the sky because most of the leaves have fallen from the trees and there are a couple of secret spots around Strawberry Hill's campus with spectacular views. Not to mention that there's something particularly refreshing about a crisp evening hike with friends around the holidays. So, bring someone special and enjoy the beauty of an early winter trek around Strawberry Hill.

If you're a Scout, our Cold Moon hike meets the requirements for the following badges - Senior Sky, Senior Science Expert, and Cadette Night Owl. You will receive a certificate of completion from Strawberry Hill upon request.

Our monthly full moon hikes are free and open to the public but please email [education@strawberryhill.org](mailto:education@strawberryhill.org) or call the office to register. Space is limited and the hike is weather-dependent. We will have a limited number of flashlights to hand-out so please bring one if you can. Snow and/or ice is likely so please plan and dress accordingly.

The holidays are in full swing right now so it's hard to think beyond New Year's. But if you're anything like me, you're likely already prepping your 2024 calendar because you'd rather be ahead of the curve. If that's the case, get ready because Strawberry Hill's calendar is already looking pretty sweet. And I mean maple-sweet!

Mount Hope Maple Madness is coming back and it's going to be grander than ever. We're hosting our favorite pancake breakfast for one full weekend—Saturday and Sunday, March 2nd and 3rd from 8 to 1 at Camp Eder. This year, we're expanding the maple experience with more hands-on activities surrounding the history, culture, and science of maple sugaring, paired with our famous pancake breakfast. More information will be coming soon so stay



### January Owl Prowl at Strawberry Hill

Join the Strawberry Hill naturalists on January 20th as they venture into the night in search of native owls. You'll discover what makes an owl an excellent hunter and learn of other owls that live and visit our beautiful woods.

tuned. This is the winter event you don't want to miss.

Speaking of 2024, add this to your calendar: WILDlife is coming back! WILDlife is a drop-off program designed to connect homeschool children, ages 7-12, to the natural world through hands-on, child-led experiences. It's founded on the principles of Wonder, Imagination, Liberty, and Discovery. WILDlife kids go on hikes, engage in citizen science through on-trail investigations, learn basic survival skills, create nature art, and spend their entire class time outdoors with the exception of inclement weather. Each class is led by knowledgeable and engaging Naturalists in small class sizes (8 students).

WILDlife incorporates multiple areas of learning including math, science, literature, creative arts, physical education, and social studies with special emphasis on local and Pennsylvania history including Native American history. Classes also provide documentation to aide in homeschool portfolio

reviews and offer one make-up class in the event of cancellation.

Our 10-week spring program will take place on Tuesdays from 10 to 2 and will run March 5th through May 7th. WILDlife is an excellent addition to your homeschool curriculum and a howling good time for the kids. After all, whether you're homeschooling, unschooling, or distance-learning, the learning experience should be authentic, memorable, and most of all, fun. For more information, or to register your child, please email or visit our website [www.strawberryhill.org/wildlife](http://www.strawberryhill.org/wildlife) or call our office.

December is here so give yourself a moment to pause and maybe have a little fun. It's a busy time of year and the holidays can sometimes be stressful. Get outside if you can and take in the fresh air. Our trails and programs are here, so give your loved ones (and yourself!) something memorable: the gift of nature.

To read past editions of Ecology, visit the Authors section of [Walkersville.net](http://Walkersville.net).

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# Mother Seton School Science Fair

Jason Vest

The Grand Champion of the Mother Seton School 2023 Science Fair is at a loss. “Do you know where my pick-axe head is?”

*Her tousle-haired-and-bearded grandfather Joe Anelli looks up. “I was just gonna say —”*

*Another voice interrupts. “It was over here, but I haven’t seen it in awhile,” her father Chuck says. “Maybe in a garage somewhere on the street...?”*

*“No no no,” come another voice, feminine and considering in tone. “Not there...”*

Science fair champion for a nifty Astrophysics project, eighth grader Mackenzie Hager, bright of eyes and red hair, has no doubt as to her future: “I haven’t wanted to be anything but an astrophysicist since I was eight,” she will tell you, matter-of-factly. (And leave you wondering - not unreasonably - if maybe she doesn’t mean that in present, as opposed to aspirational, register.) But she dabbles in other sciences as well.

So as the sun drops behind the mountains on a chilly November afternoon, the archaeology collection is being presented on the Hager family kitchen table in New Market. The array includes spent shells from Assateague. A Civil War bullet from nearabouts. An ancient rusty coffin nail. But the hyperlocal axe head – a find from a nearby creek amidst the 20 acres of woods she routinely explores – remains at large.

Mackenzie disappears in search of the elusive artifact. A visitor remarks to her family that it’s good to know at least some kids still, like, go outside and explore. Her father gestures to the acres of woods this last rambling house in the Lake Linganore development backs up on to, from its outer rim cul-de-sac perch. (“That’s her playground,” he enthuses.) Awhile later she returns having given up on the axe head, having swapped it out for a LEGO recreation of... the Artemis mission to the moon.

Soon, what seems to be the entire LEGO history of NASA sits redeployed in the kitchen. (There’s more yet to build: “On her Christ-

mas wish list this year,” mom Katie Hager confides, “is the Apollo 11 lander set.”) After a giving run-down on the specs, Mackenzie’s off once again to check on a biology/ag experiment she’s doing for the hell of it. She will next return to the kitchen table to chew over how to apply lessons learned from this year’s science project to next year’s.

At 12 going on 13, Mackenzie – an echo of Anya Taylor-Joy’s Beth Harmon character in *The Queen’s Gambit*, but with leavening dashes of Wednesday’s Wednesday Addams and Star Trek: Discovery’s Jett Reno – does, like, normal kid stuff: She’s a fourth generation Girl Scout, working on her Silver Award. She calls out the indignities and inanities of her age bracket and she lets her freak flag fly proudly within it. (Self-described school cohort/status: “Outcasts.”) She has her likes and dislikes, as far as classes go. (She is as hard-wired for STEM as some of us are not.) She goes on adventures with her way-cool family, which includes a veterinarian grandfather, a public health nurse mom, and school bus driver father (who’s got some stories).

But she also has been seriously researching things like geothermic volcanic energy and its applications since she was a tot. Her focus shifted to space several years ago, when her eyes spied, and imagination was captured, by the sight of an orange streak ascending into the heavens – an International Space Station resupply launch from Wallops Island, whose bright exhaust profile can be seen from this far.

Unlike most kids whose dreams as regards space usually find voice as “I wanna be an astronaut,” Mackenzie has no desire to go into space herself. Her love of astrophysics is also twinned with engineering - “I like actually building things - not just, like, going outside and walking around,” she says. (The absence of outer space ambitions is just fine with her family, all of whom note, in varying ways, just how unforgiving and final space is.”

But she frames those ambitions as simply “wanting to help out” – perhaps not surprising with a nurse mother who’s also in uniform (Commander, US Public Health Service), and an extended family for which mutual aid and

assistance are robust. (Mackenzie’s grandfather Joe grew up in a Brooklyn brownstone of extended family and has never known anything but, and Chuck sums up his side of the family thusly: “My sister called one day and said, ‘Mom got brain cancer and she’s moving in with you Saturday,’ and I was like, ‘Going to clean out the room and get it ready right now.’”)

Thus a girl who has no designs to go into space herself is now focused on using the rest of her K-12 years in an attempt to find the right materials and construction for a space suit capable of ensuring humans can survive the unique radiation levels of Mars.

Last year’s experiment was a more general consideration of pesky-to-humans radiation on Mars; this year’s was a first stab at what combinations of materials might show the most promise and feasibility for use in new Mars-specific space suits. Next year’s project: An actual doll-size prototype suit that, along with the doll, she’ll bombard with different types of radiation (and measure with the Geiger counter she built herself to further consider its viability.

Though her family confides she is not the most reliable self-starter, once kick-started, she is a whirling dervish of activities and experiments, ping-ponging between at least a dozen different projects at any given time, and usually to good effect.

“Unless we happen to walk in and she’s flipping knives or whatever, we just let her do her thing,” says her father Chuck, who describes himself as “crazy” for voluntarily choosing to drive a school bus. But as such, any challenges in parenting a precocious ADHD intellect are small beer, compared to playing ringmaster to a daily circus-on-wheels. And Mackenzie’s not the only high-maintenance scientist in the family. “My son did an experiment that left me scratching my head – I had to have something he needed for trying to quantify carbon dioxide, I had to have it mailed to the local fire house and only the local fire house,” he says. “So is it any big deal that next year Mackenzie will irradiate a doll in a doll-space suit to see it fit works? Nope.”



When asked: “When did you know your daughter was smarter than you?” Mackenzie’s parents replied: “When we saw her first-grade science fair project.”

## The Mother Seton School 2023 Science Fair Winners and Runners-Up:

### 6th Grade

1st - Maggie Slater - Do Equine Tendon Boots Do More Harm Than Good?  
2nd - Muna Jinadu - Naturally Preserving Grapes  
3rd - Sam Pollitt - Electromagnets

### 7th Grade

1st - Mia Bussey - Which surface has the most germs?  
2nd - Phillip Field - Rockets  
3rd - Madison Williams - Water Filtration  
3rd - Grace Williams - Greenhouse Gases

### 8th Grade

1st - Grady Abruzzese - Interference of Radio Waves  
2nd (tie) - Noah Riling - Does Running Reduce Stress?  
2nd (tie) - Catalina Caretti - Which moisturizer retains the most liquid?  
3rd - Gabriel Valerio - PSI of soccer balls

**Grand Champion** - Mackenzie Hager - Radiation Protection Materials

To read past editions of *Science Matters*, visit the Authors section of [Emmitsburg.net](http://Emmitsburg.net).



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## IN THE COUNTRY

# Oh, Christmas Tree?

Tim Iverson  
Naturalist

Christmas is just around the corner and soon sleigh bells will be jingling, Jack Frost will be nipping at your nose, Santa will have a quick layover in town, and the whole world may resemble a marshmallow. Boughs of holly, garlands, and wreaths will deck the halls, but the true centerpiece is the Christmas tree. As we have ourselves a merry little Christmas, silver bells and all, nothing quite captures the essence of the season as evergreens do.

Evergreens, as the name implies, are trees that remain green year round. They will keep their “leaves” or needles in almost all cases, all year, while deciduous trees will shed their leaves in the colder winter months. Evergreens are usually conifer trees, plants, or shrubs, and in some rare cases leafy trees.

In broad general terms trees are broken down into two main categories: coniferous and deciduous. Coniferous trees have needles, and produce cones. Deciduous trees have broad leaves, which die off in cooler temperatures in a process called abscission. Deciduous means “to die off”, which is where the name comes from and this usually, coincides with winter and cooler temperatures. During the

summer the broad leaves are essential for survival, but in the winter those leaves become a lethal liability. The leaves are a costly source of water loss and consumption, and during the winter months water is hard to come by. To prepare for this deciduous trees will shed their leaves. Conifer needles have less surface area and retain water better than leaves because of a waxy coating and smaller pores, which can allow for year round photosynthesis.

Conifer, or evergreen, trees have a higher density of foliage, which during winter means snow and ice accumulates faster on them. This makes them more susceptible to breakage, especially with the addition of high winds. To offset this problem conifers tend to be more flexible and the cone shape of the tree helps to shed snow easier. The dense foliage also makes them more attractive to animals. Birds, deer, mice, and more eat the foliage and fruit that these trees produce during the winter months. Mice, rabbits, and a few others chew bark for the nutrients stored within.

Historically speaking evergreens have been a part of the winter season for millennia. These plants were brought in and adorned the homes of many ancient peoples across cultures and continents. December 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>

typically has the fewest daylight hours of the year, and is marked as the winter solstice. Most ancient cultures worshipped the sun as a god, and this solstice symbolized the triumph of life over death as the days would begin to grow longer from this point forward. Evergreens were a symbol of health and virility, and reminded them that green plants would grow and farms and fields would once again produce food. Ancient Egyptians, Romans, Celtic druids, Vikings, and Germanic barbarians all had similar traditions.

The contemporary custom of the Christmas tree can be traced back to 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany. During this period Germans would bring small trees into their home to decorate. Devout Christians adopted this from prior pagan ritual and Christianized it by selecting Christian symbols to place upon the tree. Early decorations were traditionally food items, such as apples or nuts. Apples represented the apple from the Adam and Eve creation story. The top of the tree is usually festooned with either an angel, representing the angel Gabriel, or a star, which represents the star of Bethlehem.

The tradition of decorating Christmas trees spread, and was fairly common by the 1800's. In early America things had progressed slower due to heavy puritan influence. In 1659 the state of Massachusetts banned any form of celebrating the Christmas holiday, with the exception a church service, and provided strict penalties for violation of this law. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century there had been a huge influx of German and Irish immigrants and the political and cultural influence of puritans waned. Many Americans were still unsure or uninterested in this Christmas custom, but in 1846 the English Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert (of Germany) were pictured in an English newspaper surrounded by their children standing next to a Christmas tree. This picture made the custom highly fashionable with English and American political elites and upper class citizens. It wasn't long until the Christmas tree became commonplace in nearly every English and Ameri-



can home and town square.

Christmas trees have proven to be a huge market, as well. There are approximately 15,000 farms that produce 33 million trees in America every year. Americans spend on average 1.5 billion on Christmas trees every year. Despite the economic benefit, some have argued against the ecological impact this industry takes. Most Christmas trees are commercially farmed, harvested, and shipped off across hundreds of miles to surrounding areas and states. While a real tree is carbon neutral, it is estimated that it is responsible for approximately 7lbs of carbon dioxide per tree via transit activities. An artificial tree is responsible for approximately 106lbs of carbon per tree, but can be used over many years. Artificial trees are typically made of PVC, but have often been found to be coated in paint with traces of lead in it (usually originating from China). After 9 years these lead based paints have been shown to break down and can cause health risks to vulnerable populations, such as the elderly or small children, due to lead contamination. One research study showed that a consumer would have to use an artificial tree for up to 20 years before it had a smaller environmental impact than a natural tree.

Natural trees take about 7 years

of growing before they reach maturity and are ready to be harvested. During this time they produce oxygen and provide great habitat for wildlife. After Christmas however they are often thrown away. Better ways to reduce impact while celebrating the Christmas season is to ensure that you properly recycle your tree. Many counties, including Frederick, have designated drop off locations and will turn trees into mulch for parks, gardens, public space, and trails. A new idea rising in popularity is to use living trees as a Christmas tree. Select or purchase a small tree, ball the roots, and then set it in a pot inside. After the Christmas holiday is over you can plant your tree in your yard or another location and it can still provide habitat and other positive environmental contributions to the ecosystem.

When the lights on the tree glow as bright as Rudolph's nose remember you're witnessing a tradition long held and venerated by our ancestors. We remind ourselves of all the good things of that have come to pass or have not yet. Roast some chestnuts, dream of a white Christmas, and baby, when it's cold outside rock around that Christmas tree.

To read other articles by Tim Iverson, visit the Authors section of [Walkersville.net](http://Walkersville.net).



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# IN THE COUNTRY

## Have you seen any Grosbeaks?

Rusty Ryan  
South Mountain Audubon Society

Just the other day, I was asked if I had seen any Grosbeaks. Assuming the person was referring to the Evening Grosbeak, my reply was no. To tell the truth, I have never seen an Evening Grosbeak in the Mason-Dixon area.

The Evening Grosbeak does not breed in this area and is considered an “irruptive” species. Iruptive species are those which migrate outside of their normal range. These irruptive species are year round resident in their normal range of Canada and the boreal forests.

Birds irrupt usually due to lack of food in their normal range. Most of the “winter finches” that irrupt have a diet consisting primarily of seeds. Even the predatory birds will seek food south of the border when their food supply of small mammals is lacking.

The irruptive species one could encounter along the Mason Dixon include: Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Crossbills (Red and White) and Pine Siskin. The predatory birds that one may encounter are: Snowy Owl and Rough-legged Hawk.

Other irruptive species are: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue jays and Bohemian Waxwing.

**Purple Finch** - Probably the bird species most misidentified along the Mason Dixon would be the Purple Finch. I hate to tell the readers but the “purple finch” that most people encounter is the introduced House Finch. The two can be difficult to distinguish especially the males. The females of the two species are easier to identify.

**Evening Grosbeak** - Imagine a cardinal sized goldfinch at your feeder. The only real difference between the goldfinch and grosbeak is the bill shape. The grosbeaks have a cardinal type of bill (mandible) which is used to crack open larger seeds such as sunflower. If you're fortunate enough to receive a flock at your feeders, they will literally eat all you have to offer than move onto the next person's feeder.

**Crossbills (Red and White-winged)** - As the name implies, these unique birds have crossed mandibles which allows this bird to specialize on retrieving the seeds from the cones of conifers. Keep an eye out this winter for these specialty birds by looking more closely at the conifer trees with abundant cone crops...

**Common Redpoll** - This finch like bird in size is similar to the Siskin but with more coloration. The Redpoll has a black chin and red forehead. Redpolls also feed on niger but they're very fond of eating catkins from the alders and birch trees.

**Pine Siskin** - This non-descript bird has a thin bill designed for smaller seeds. For those folks who choose to provide niger (nyger) seed than this bird may just end up spending time at your feeder. Specialty feeders which are for “finches” are usually tube shaped with a perch located below a slit opening. The siskins thin bill is perfect for retrieving the niger seed. I suggest if you plan to feed niger to the birds that you invest in a proper feeder that allows the specialty birds to eat from because niger seed is

quite expensive and you certainly don't want to allow all birds to feed from a feeder full of niger with big openings.

### Citizen Scientists Get Involved!

If you enjoy birds and you feed the birds, get involved and help provide valuable data by participating in one or more of several surveys as explained below.

**Audubon Christmas Bird Count** - This annual event is held each December/January and was started in 1990. It is the world's longest running wildlife survey and it is primarily conducted by everyday citizen volunteers. This count differs from some counts in that the count period is a selected 24 hour period within a pre-determined several week period. Participants are given a designated area by the count compiler. The participant seeks out to locate and count individual birds of each species. The majority of observations are done by identifying the bird species by visual means but the more skilled participants can identify the birds by the sound they make. Data is then given to the count compiler who then logs in the data to the computer where the scientists will

look for trends in both population and distribution.

**Project Feeder Watch** - This particular count occurs all winter-long and surveys the bird species that visit bird feeders. Volunteers submit the data and scientists review the data to determine species abundance and species distribution over a given time period. Project Feeder Watch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. The top 3 birds observed in the Mason Dixon area over the past few years are the chickadee species, the northern cardinal and the junco.

**The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)** - This annual count is done over a four-day period every February. Like the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the GBBC seeks out bird watchers of all ages and skills in seeking out birds in a certain time of year to provide scientists with a snap shot of a bird species trends both in populations and in locations.

**North American Breeding Bird Survey** - This count is similar to the various winter counts except the count is generally held in May or June when the majority of North America bird species begin to breed. If you like a chal-



The Evening Grosbeak is considered an “irruptive” species. Iruptive species are those which migrate outside of their normal range.

lenge, go out on a weekend in around mid May and see if you can locate 100 species within a 24 hour period. I've done it once and it was tough but rewarding to put my skills to the test. Some luck is also needed.

In closing, please contribute to our feathered friend's survival by supplying a constant clean food supply to help carry them through the winter months. Take it to the next level and become a citizen scientist and count those birds in one of several surveys. Remember, you can't go wrong if you choose Black Oil

Sunflower as your primary food choice.

### Useful web sites

The Great backyard Bird Count - [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)

Audubon Christmas Bird Count - [www.birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count](http://www.birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count)

Project Feeder Watch - [www.feeder-watch.org](http://www.feeder-watch.org)

North American Breeding Bird Survey - [hwwppwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/index.cfm](http://hwwppwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/index.cfm)

To read other articles by Rusty Ryan, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

## Twelve days of nature

**Debbie Rhoades**  
**Frederick County**  
**Master Gardener**

Have you ever had a day that was so perfect that you wished you could put it in a jar to take out and experience again? Often, these special moments are time spent with children, grandchildren, other relatives, neighbors and friends: watching tadpoles turn into frogs, splashing in mud puddles in the spring; catching fireflies, climbing trees in summer; picking berries, hearing the call of a songbird at dawn, watching the sunrise or sunset in fall; making snow angels in winter? And often, as you can see by this list, we associate these memories with outdoor activities.

Whether you have a birthday, an anniversary, or a special holiday coming up to share with family or friends, this time of year is often a frantic one as everyone tries to come up with unique gifts. We often read that everyone is glued to laptops, mobile phones, and social media, while outside game fields, outside tennis and basketball courts are not used enough. This year, though, you can not only give something unusual, you can add to warm memories for family and friends and get everyone outside.

Speaking of outside, you may need to think outside the box—or jar—and use your creativity to celebrate the “12 Days of Nature.”

All you need is a one-quart jar or a box with a lid and 12 pieces of heavy paper or cardboard, one for each month of the year. Even plain 3 x 5 notecards will do. You can get fancy and decorate each card with stickers, glitter, artwork, etc.

On each card, write down an activity you can do with those special loved ones. You may want to organize such activities by date, by season, or to leave them undated. You might want to check the Frederick News-Post’s “Community Calendar,” published on page 2 each day, and the Frederick County Master Gardeners’ calendar for special events throughout the year.

Listed below are fun ideas with details to get you started. Most are free or cost little. Even better, many don’t require a lot of physical expertise.

1. Take the Baker Park Tree Walk any time of year. Download the map from the Frederick Forestry Board for the locations of 28 unique trees, both native and non-native, in and near Baker Park. The web site’s “Nature Notes” gives you pictures of

the trees, as well as interesting information about each tree. You may know that the park already is circled by a wide macadam path that is handicapped-accessible.

2. Bundle up in winter coats for a trip to Catoctin Mountain Park, run by the National Park Service, near Thurmont, Maryland. Every March, park staff demonstrate the traditional way of boiling sap from maple trees to make syrup at the annual Maple Syrup Festival. While you’re there, listen to blue grass music and take a hayride through the maple grove.
3. Go hiking at the many county, state, and national parks in Frederick County. Check out Chris Hough’s article, Take a Hike! 10 Destinations in Frederick County for Hiking Enthusiasts, at the Visit Frederick website.
4. Visit the Children’s Garden at the University of Maryland Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick. “Storytime in the Garden” is held at 10:00 a.m. the first Wednesday of the month, weather permitting, from June through September. Master gardeners read a story to the children, and colorful mailboxes hold sheets of activities for children to complete in the garden.
5. If you don’t have room at your own home for a garden, but are concerned about having fresh produce for the family table, you and yours can rent one or two 12’ x 12’ garden plots at Ballenger Creek Park; everyone in the family can help choose what to plant and how to take care of your new garden. You will need to supply your own plants



**If you have not done so already, take a tree walk in Baker Park. Download the map from the Frederick Forestry Board for the locations of 28 unique trees, both native and nonnative, in and near Baker Park.**

and garden tools. Plots can be accessed March through October, 8:00 a.m. to sunset. For details, visit [www.recreater.com/196/Community-Gardens](http://www.recreater.com/196/Community-Gardens). Plots go fast, so act now to reserve your space for 2024.

6. If you have a big enough yard, or even just a generously sized container on patio or porch, plant a tree. The state will even supply a rebate of \$25 if it’s a native tree. The Department of Natural Resources has partnered with selected nurseries. To get your rebate coupon, visit [dnr.maryland.gov/forests/](http://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/). Choose from 40 varieties, large or small,

evergreen or deciduous. Someday, another generation may be climbing that tree!

7. Visit one of the many parks and nature centers in the county. Check out the Frederick County Parks and Recreation web site for open times and directions and a list of more than 30 parks in Frederick County.
8. In spring and summer, pick fresh produce or, in the fall, pick pumpkins at a local Frederick County farm. Homegrown Frederick publishes an annual guide at [www.homegrownfrederick.com](http://www.homegrownfrederick.com).
9. From November through March, you can catch the Winter Solstice Light Parade along Carroll Creek. As always, the illuminated boats (28 this year) are partnered by local businesses and non-profits to raise money for the various charities.
10. If you want to venture a little further afield, take a family trip to the National Arboretum in Washington, DC. The outside grounds are open every day to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day except Christmas. Admission is free. Check out the government’s Calendar of Events for many more suggested experiences [www.usna.usda.gov/visit/calendar-of-events](http://www.usna.usda.gov/visit/calendar-of-events).
11. Another day trip could be a trip to Brookside Gardens in Montgomery County. Admission to the gardens is free. The award-winning 50-acre public display gardens include the Aquatic

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

Garden, Azalea Garden, Butterfly Garden, Children's Garden, Rose Garden, Japanese Style Garden, Trial Garden, Rain Garden, and the Woodland Walk. The Formal Gardens include a Perennial Garden, Yew Garden, the Maple Terrace, and Fragrance Garden. During the holidays Brookside offers a winter wonderland with the Garden of Lights display. This event requires a

ticket, so check the website before going.  
 12. Create special memories that everyone will remember by picking out a real, live Christmas tree at one of the many tree farms in Frederick County. The Maryland Christmas Tree Association has a list at [www.marylandchristmastrees.org/fredrick-county](http://www.marylandchristmastrees.org/fredrick-county).

To read other gardening articles, visit the Gardening section of [Walkersville.net](http://Walkersville.net).



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## Small Town Gardener

Slip the garden's chains in November

Marianne Willburn

For late fall and winter arrangements, ditch the perfect blooms and celebrate glorious imperfection instead

"There's nothing out there right now!" My mother yelled after me as I threw on a fleece, grabbed some pruners and a plastic lettuce tub off the washing machine, and headed outside to her November garden. A last-minute family gathering demanded something special for the table, but what?

The lilies and zinnia were gone; the lavender, so over; and even in a California climate, the late roses were very late indeed - in fact, fully expired. I was possessed of three identical thrift store vases, two enthusiastic nieces, and forty-five minutes 'till dinner hit the table. Theme: Shock and Awe. Materials: Whatever the hell I could find. Attitude: Confident.

### There's Always Something Out There

In fairness, I'd had help with my attitude. Just before I'd left to visit family on the West Coast, I'd had my creative courage fortified by an afternoon's entertaining seminar at Glenstone Gardens, a Virginia events estate set in the rolling hills of Loudoun County, Virginia.

The creation of gorgeous tables exemplifying November gratitude and December joy was very much the point of the afternoon, but there was one major theme running through all - a foraged aesthetic.

That's an aesthetic and attitude I adore, and one that I live by; but it's always wonderful to

get a bit of validation by designers who officially know what they're doing.

As clear autumnal sunshine shimmered off an elegantly laid table of bone china and tag sale finds, top floral stylist Shawn Cossette of Beehive Events and Augusta Cole of Augusta Cole Weddings and Events, empowered attendees with a foraged materials approach based on a central message of self-trust. "Don't think about each element too much, just have fun." said Cossette, as a sophisticated distillation of the surrounding countryside came together under her hands.

Bronze ninebark. Privet berries. Frothy snakeroot and colorful begonia leaves. A single green apple. The aesthetic felt fresh, rustic, and effortlessly authentic.

Of course, in December, the base textures of the palette will change. Ninebark becomes juniper, begonias give way to the clippings off your Leyland cypress, or the scavenged fir branches from Christmas tree lots - and berries, fruits, and seed heads begin to take center stage.

### Allow Yourself To Play

A foraged aesthetic is a little terrifying for those who follow the rules of symmetry, perfection and luxury; but as most of us have a hard time competing in that space anyway (either creatively or financially), such rigid parameters are equally terrifying. We are likely to stare at the blank table before us like a 9th grade writing prompt, tempted to play it safe and fall back on a passable grade with traditional elements that say 'formal' but whisper 'predictable.'

Instead, Cossette and Cole urge us to lean into the season's bounty

in all its imperfection. Whether it's frost-mottled rose hips or pinecones missing a scale or two, "differences create engagement in a table" says Cole, who enjoys delighting her clients with the strategic placement of a few hero elements amongst the treasured and the familiar.

That could be brightly colored knife handles to pep up the family silver, the choice of beeswax candles over plain white, or a few purchased floral components to enhance a textured, playful vision straight from the garden.

### Re-Create The Outside, Inside

At the seminar, Cossette worked quickly from a large bucket of materials harvested from her garden and a friend's earlier that morning. She showed us how to strip the bottom leaves of vivid blueberry stems and make fresh, slanted cuts on yellowing hydrangea foliage with a small paring knife to enable more water uptake.

She turned some leaves to face in, some to face out, and added plenty of spill, aided by a grid of floral tape placed over the opening of her green ceramic vessel.

"It's tempting to use your favorite elements first. Don't," she advised. "Give them the best position at the end."

Having trouble seeing the possibilities? Cossette recommends comfortable clothing, a glass of wine and favorite music might be all you need to start visualizing the fabulous in foraged. During the month of December, my favorite way to play with decorations and tablescapes is with a Christmas movie marathon going on in the background.

### A Happy Ending, With Little Outlay

Determined to celebrate the often-overlooked in the scrub and wild spaces of my mother's garden, my nieces and I clipped toyon berries and smooth manzanita branches. We cut privet, sagebrush and rosemary, and gathered windfall apples.

The youngest insisted on the foxtails that had once infested my socks as a child, and her sister grabbed the pruners to cut a few sprays of spiny scrub oak foliage and the last of the blanket flowers.

Twenty-five minutes of play later, the table looked miraculous. I can't wait to set up the movie marathon, crack open a bottle of red, and apply the philosophy to December.

Marianne Willburn is the author of *Tropical Plants and How to Love Them*, and *Big Dreams, Small Garden*. She writes from her home in Lovettsville, Virginia. Read more at [GardenRant.com](http://GardenRant.com).



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# PETS

## Gratitude

Jennifer Vandernu  
Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

This is the time of year that for me, because I'm older, has become about gratitude.

Gratitude is a powerful emotion that I think is somewhat easy to overlook.

We see a lot of catch phrases out there today, like "have an attitude of gratitude" or "count your blessings," but I wonder how much of that can be lip service. It's something that you truly have to feel and it comes from the heart.

That's why the holidays are so important. It gives us time to reflect and remember what is good in our lives – and how much we have to be grateful for.

I am incredibly grateful for my family – which has just grown by one new member, my second niece! – and will always be happy that our crazy little group is still going strong.

At CVAS, there are many people and animals for which I am grateful.

Our adopters come in here and fall in love with one of our babies and they are the reason we are able to keep doing what we do. The photos and stories they share with us are able to mend the toughest of days.

Our supporters, who bring us money and supplies for our animals, are another source of gratitude. I know a lot of folks out there can't adopt right now, but still want to help. They are very generous in making sure we can continue helping more homeless animals.

I want to thank all those who bring a stray into their home and care for him or her for the rest of his or her life. I've talked to people who tell me, oh my cat just came up on my back porch one night, but I got her spayed and take care of her and she's my best friend.

I only see these folks very rarely because they never come into the shelter. I thank them from the bottom of my heart because they help us by taking care of the strays.

For all the groups – individual and organizations – that are a part of a trap, neuter, release program, I thank you. Spaying and neutering is really the only way to make a difference with the overpopulation in the pet world and many of these folks work tirelessly (and often use their own money) to see that the cats in area neighborhoods are taken care of and can't produce more cats. That's always been amazing to me.

I want to thank all the other shelters and rescues out there that are fighting the same battle we face every day. We are soldiers in a war and I know some days are too overwhelming to talk about, but for me personally, it's good to know you all are out there. I know we could not do this without you.

Our volunteers are a group that I always feel I can't thank enough. Time is the one commodity we all have that is finite. We are only allotted so much while we're here. Anyone who gives their time and/or talents to help our animals is a real inspiration to me. So for those who walk dogs, play with

cats, help with our fundraisers, sort donations at our thrift store, take care of our cats at Petco or Petsmart, help with spaying and neutering our animals or help with maintenance around the building, I say a resounding thank you.

Our board of directors is another group of unsung heroes in the shelter world that need to be appreciated. These are people who get together to work toward maintaining the longevity of CVAS as an organization and many times are not noticed for their efforts.

Our staff are dedicated beyond measure. They come in, every day, sometimes in bad weather, to make sure the animals in our kennels have food, water, clean cages and kennels and a little love. They're the truest of animal-lovers and I'm proud to be in the trenches with them.

The businesses in this community are incredible. I can't tell you how many businesses help us with a variety of different things and in a variety of different ways. From printers, to the media (including the Emmitsburg News Journal!), to tree services, to municipalities, to veterinarians, to off-site adoption centers – all these groups have given (sometimes completely free of charge) their time, talents and services. And they do it because they know it ultimately helps our animals.

As always, I have to thank the main reason we are here. The babies all the above people and groups really help. Our animals. I've met some of the sweetest, purest souls during my 22 years at CVAS and the memories are something I will cherish and keep with me for the rest of my life.

Gratitude is more than just a catch phrase. It's a deeply powerful emotion that is so important this time of year.

Take a moment during the hustle and bustle to remember how much you have to be thankful for. So much of life really is a gift – and some of the best ones are not always wrapped under a Christmas tree.

Jennifer Vandernu is the Publications and Promotions Consultant for the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter and can be reached at [cvascomm@cvas-pets.org](mailto:cvascomm@cvas-pets.org). The shelter accepts both monetary and pet supply donations. For more information, call the shelter at 717-263-5791 or visit the website [www.cvas-pets.org](http://www.cvas-pets.org). CVAS also operates a thrift store in Chambersburg. Help support the animals at the shelter by donating to or shopping at the store.



Prince Harey is a 5 months old American rabbit who is white and gray. He came into the shelter as a stray, so we don't know a lot about him, but he is one cute little bun and will make someone a nice companion. Could that someone be you?



Rickton is a big, happy guy who was dropped off at the shelter as a stray. He's 2 years old and 13 pounds! He loves to play with feather toys and get chin scratches, but mostly he would love to find his forever home! Can you grant Rickton his wish?



Parker is a happy go lucky guy that just wants to be wherever you are! Parker came into the shelter as a stray, so we don't know a lot about him, but we sure found out fast that he loves getting belly rubs! We think he's about 2 years old and a terrier mix. He knows how to sit and is quite food motivated to learn more. Parker is always happy to see you and would love to be someone's best buddy! He does chase cats, so a home without cats would be best for him. Because we have no history with children, an age restriction may apply—please be sure to discuss this with shelter staff. Do you have the right spot for this cute guy?



Tony Pepperoni was running around for a while before he was caught and brought in to the shelter. He is a playful 2-year-old guy who loves to make everything into a game. He enjoys playing keep away, both with his toys and when it's time to come inside from the play yard. We are trying to teach him that keep away isn't always fun for the humans who take care of him. We recommend a fenced-in yard for Tony. He's 72 pounds and doesn't seem to realize how big he is. Because of this, he may be too much for small children and an age restriction could apply. Please talk with shelter staff about that. Tony has that face that is just too cute. He would love to find his forever home soon.

For more information about Prince Harey, Rickton, Parker, or Tony Pepperoni call the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter at 717-263-5791, or visit them online at [www.cvaspets.org](http://www.cvaspets.org) or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter.

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Stephani Rickerd  
& Aslan

Before humans die, they write their last Will & Testament, give their home & all they have, to those they leave behind. If, with my paws, I could do the same, this is what I'd ask...

To a poor and lonely stray I'd give:

- My happy home.
- My bowl & cozy bed, soft pillows and all my toys.
- The lap, which I loved so much.
- The hand that stroked my fur & the sweet voice which spoke my name.

I'd Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

So, when I die, please do not say, "I will never have a pet again, for the loss and pain is more than I can stand."

Instead, go find an unloved dog, one whose life has held no joy or hope and give MY place to HIM.

This is the only thing I can give...  
The love I left behind.

-- Author Unknown

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# Cats' next step in evolution

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**For Sale:** Cat.  
**Breed:** Bengal, artificial.  
**Personality:** Judgy and irritable. This is worsened even more by the fact that it is intelligent. It was adopted from the Artificial Intelligence Animals Benevolence Association. I have been calling it 'her', and she seems to accept that, as much as she accepts anything. That is about the only thing she accepts. She does not accept any love or affection except when I am busy doing precisely twenty-five things at once, and then she demands it like she's at the end of her battery life. The only time she cuddles is at two in the morning, and then she covers my face like a frying pan and tries to suffocate me. She is an avid watcher of birds and all other forms of movement, except for my presence, which she avoids like the plague. She is intensely against all forms of green energy: I don't understand how this was approved for her programming. She only accepts gasoline as her main source of energy—I have to beg and plead to convince her to even think about using electricity. She is fully equipped to convert electricity as her power source, but she flat out refuses just to spite me. It's only by chance that I even happened to get the older model that still runs on gas, but I suffer the consequences every day: she releases enough carbon monoxide into the house daily to completely gunk up the air. I've been experiencing flu-like symptoms for weeks because of her energy habits.

Traditionally, cats were used to serve as vermin control. This is not the case with my A.I.C.A.T. Perhaps it is with others, but mine, as I said, has faulty programming. Instead, my computer mice go missing, I find electrical cords coughed up on the floor, and I come into my room to find her curled up on my monitor, having knocked it over to lie on for its warmth.

"A queen needs a throne." She sniffs at my anger, then hisses when I gently lift her off the computer. Every small machine I own is at risk. The coffee machine that hums while working. The poor Roomba, which has suffered so much mistreatment from her that it deserves a restraining order. Ah, and yet the greatest irony: the house has a squirrel infestation about which she does nothing.

The worst part, I think, is her attitude. She barely has a more complex brain than a biological cat, and yet she feels it is within her right to judge every aspect of my life in excruciating detail. She doesn't have a mate, and yet she critiques my lack of a love life. She doesn't pay any taxes, or pay any bills, and yet she feels she is qualified to judge my salary and job.

"For I am but a stunning animal, and yet I have a servant to wait on my every need and my domain reaches far and wide." She says, gesturing one paw at the yard outside. "You, meanwhile, go outside and toil all day until you come home and sit at your screen, which is the extent of your territory."

She snorts. "No wonder you have not found a mate."

She always speaks in the most snobbish voice possible that a model T 2050 A.I.C.A.T (Artificial Intelligence Catlike Anatomy Thing) is able to while still achieving the pitiful voice of a rejected Victorian child. She cries out for gasoline and new parts while condemning me for all the ways I have wronged her at the moment.

"Father does not love me!" she laments. "Father gives me no food or comfort in my poor pitiful existence that drags on without end! Oh! Oh! Woe is me!"

Dear reader, I do feed her. I keep her parts oiled and new, and she wants for nothing. But it is never enough. She walks up to my biological dog's dish, deliberately puts her front paw inside, then screams like a tortured child about the havoc the water is playing with her system.

"The inhumanity!" she yowls, writhing on the floor. "My foot, my paw, my wiring, it is all dying! The end is nigh! The dog has finished me!"

She does the same thing when she falls into a trash can, or jumps on things that cannot support her weight: blame me or blame the dog. The dog in question, Couscous, simply looks at her antics and goes back to sleep. I, however, am not as lucky as Couscous. It is up to me to clean up her messes and clean up her metallic surfaces, as she will undoubtedly complain about them later.

I have talked to other customers who bought this model, but they report total satisfaction. Their A.I.C.A.Ts are perfect little angels who do exactly what their programming tells them too. And yet Duchess Fluffy McMittens is a thousand times worse than a biological cat. At least biological cats cannot talk.

When I heard of and bought an A.I. cat, I thought I would be free of all the irritants cats normally provide. I originally was under the impression that this would be a perfect cat: soft, cuddly, and sweet. I knew she could talk, but I thought that feature was for lonely people, not ingrained in the programming. I thought I could turn it off. I thought.

There is no turning off the A.I.C.A.T Model T 2050. No turning off except for bashing Duchess Fluffy over the head, although she would undoubtedly survive and call PETA. There is no hope left for me and poor Couscous, except for you, dear reader. It was a grave mistake for me to buy this artificial animal, but I hope that someone, somewhere out there, desires for an artificial cat that never perishes, resents you for picking out a perfectly suitable name, and screams daily like a dying hyena.

Contact: Quinn Filbert, 314-159-2653.

To read other articles by Sophi Toth, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



Six-year-old Evan is the perfect combination of "let's play" and "how about we just relax." Staff and volunteers cannot understand why he has not been chosen for adoption. He loves to go on hikes in woods or walks in the park, but by day's end, he is content sitting by your feet or side. Beyond his handsome good looks, he is also smart. He is quick to learn new behaviors and often checks in with his handler to look for cues what might be next.



At over one hundred-fifty plus days it's hard to believe our longest feline resident is a kitten. Bartholomew arrived with his siblings in June, not even old enough to be adopted. He spent some time in a foster home and now has been available for adoption since early August. Bartholomew is five months old and a typical kitten. He is friendly, silly, loves to explore, and enjoys playing with a variety of toys.



Big cat lovers, meet Lucas. At almost fifteen pounds, Lucas is a teddy bear. He is often at the front of his cage, politely asking for attention from anyone who passes by. Visit with him and you will soon see he is very affectionate and offers gentle butts to encourage you to keep petting him. Lucas' laid-back personality will make him a great fit for families with kids of any age, however, he may prefer to be an only cat.



Mr. Murphy is a handsome, 10-month-old, Great Dane Mix. He was brought to the shelter by a Good Samaritan and was found in Woodsboro, on November 8. Like most dogs his age, he is playful, energetic and still needs to learn some manners to make him the best dog he can be. Murphy currently weighs sixty pounds and will continue to grow. He is a great companion and has endless potential with a little time, patience and consistency.



Sable is a fun, handsome Malamute Mix. At only 1.5 years old, he loves to run and play outside. Sable knows a few basic commands and walks nicely on a leash for such a young, energetic dog. Unfortunately, a hiker found him along a trail with his food and bowls, so we can only assume his owner abandoned him. Sable's easy-going disposition and overall friendliness is sure to make him a great fit for most families.

For more information about Evan, Bartholomew, Lucas, Mr. Murphy, or Sable, call the Frederick County Animal Shelter at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at [www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac).

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"The Covid pandemic hurt our economy. It's bouncing back by most measurements, but not for everyone. My focus is making things better for ALL MARYLANDERS."

# DAVID TRONE

DEMOCRAT FOR U.S. SENATE



## Our Economy is Bouncing Back

By most indicators, our economy has mostly recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic dip. Unemployment is low, millions of new jobs have been created, and the federal government is making historic investments in our infrastructure. Unfortunately, many everyday Marylanders aren't feeling the recovery.

## But Inflation is Still Hurting Many

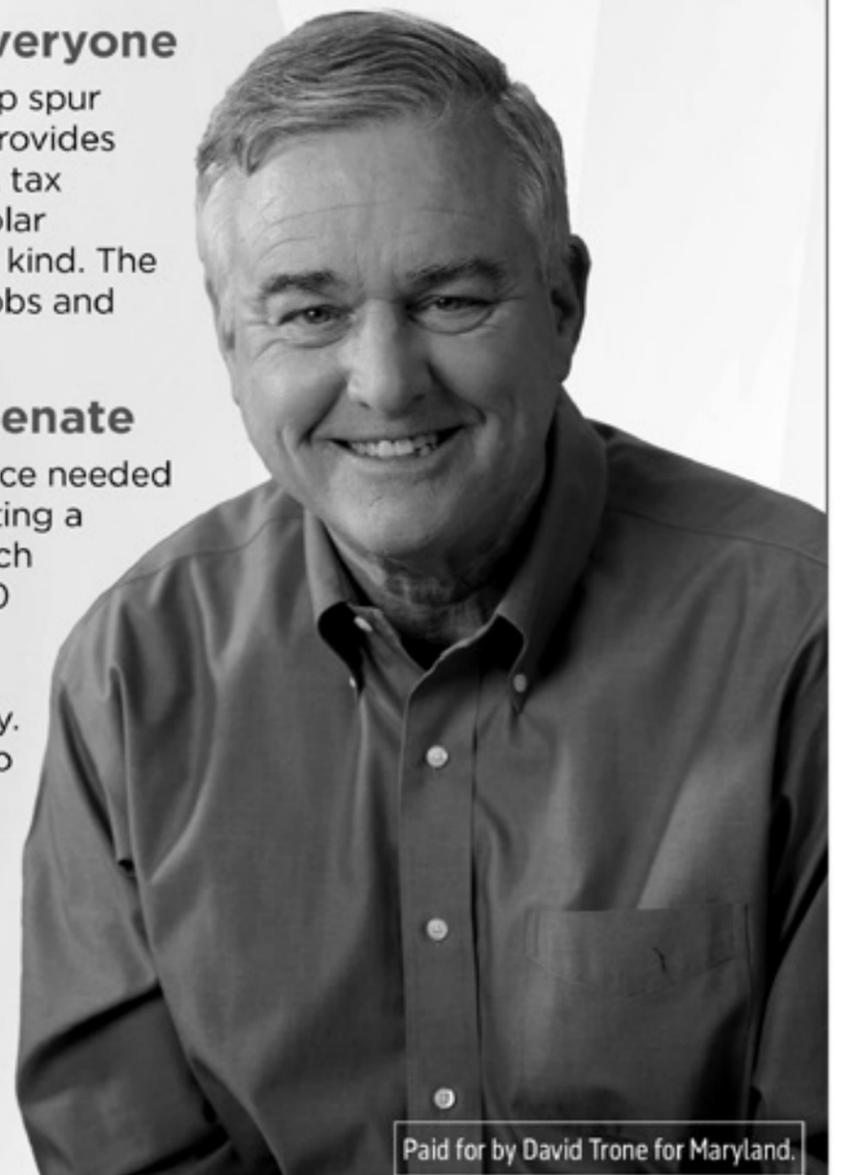
Inflation is putting a stranglehold on working families and hurting their individual prosperity. And our current economy is unfair to many middle-class families.

## I Want an Economy That Works for Everyone

Last year, I voted for the Inflation Reduction Act to help spur our economy and fix our infrastructure. The new law provides for lower energy costs, rebates on efficient appliances, tax incentives to adopt next-generation approaches like solar energy, and billions to improve transportation of every kind. The new law will invest over \$6 billion to help create new jobs and industries.

## That's Why I'm Running for the U.S. Senate

I'm running for the Senate because I have the experience needed to help fix our economy. I came to Congress after starting a small business that turned into Total Wine & More, which now has 257 stores across the country and over 12,000 team members. To build an economy that works for everyone, we need a tax system that is fair for everyone. That means raising taxes on the very wealthy. I'm optimistic, but it will take leaders from both sides to get it done. That's my commitment to you.



**DAVID TRONE**

U.S. SENATE

DavidTrone.com    davidjtrone

Paid for by David Trone for Maryland.

# Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL SECTION 2

## Studio 24E: a luxurious shopping experience

Mia Ferraro  
UMD Class of 2026

Christmas is just around the corner. Luckily, so is Studio 24E. Thurmont's newest gift boutique offers not only luxury Christmas gifts, but an enjoyable holiday shopping experience. Located at 21 E Main Street, Studio 24E brings big-city shopping and services to a small hometown setting.

At the door, the customer is welcomed by stylish clothing from brands like Puppie Love and Simply Southern. Behind this selection is a display of luxury sunglasses from Gucci, Prada, Versace and other high-end brands.

Further back in the shop, the wall is lined with chic purses and handbags to the right of the fine jewelry display cases containing brands like Charriol and even Rodrigo Otazu, which you may recognize as seen on the hit television show "Sex and the City," as well as its spin-off, "And Just Like That..."

Greg Elliott, co-owner and picture framer by trade, opened Studio 24E in Linthicum, Maryland in 2001 as an art gallery with picture framing services. Moving between small towns and big cities in Maryland, the shop expanded into a boutique with makeup services and a diverse selection of jewelry, clothing, gifts and other luxury items. The shop also works with in-house artists to sell artwork and handmade goods.

The custom framing services are also still in the picture. The shop offers in-house consultations to guide customers through the process of finding the right frame and mat to complement their artwork.

As the customer explores past the different corners and sections of the shop, all organized to showcase the diverse selections, they'll find the elegant and cozy space

where co-owner and makeup artist Nina Tate-Elliott performs makeup services for any occasion. She also travels for offsite appointments. Getting your holiday portraits done and looking for a professional to do your makeup? You know where to look.

So what makes this shop unique? Nina says it's about "being able to experience luxury at an attainable level."

Aside from the convenience of having a luxury boutique on the main street of a small town, Studio 24E makes luxury accessible also because of its "safer, less guarded environment," as Greg said. He feels that customers are more comfortable asking to try something on or to take a closer look at something in a display case because of the shop's relaxed atmosphere.

"We kind of find that fine line between being kind of department store-ish and still being small and obtainable," Greg said.

At Studio 24E, experiencing luxury isn't just about inventory.

"It's mostly about environment" that makes the shop unique, Greg said. When a customer enters the store, they are immediately "immersed in the whole experience of the store," he said.

In the shop, there are seats for husbands to relax while their wives shop, and Greg and Nina have been known to offer a glass of wine. Behind the jewelry cases is a large screen that is always playing music videos – mostly of Christmas songs this time of year. And now, the store is fully decked out in the spirit of the holidays with decor and diverse holiday items spanning across the shop.

"And we really make sure that we're connecting with our customer and listening to what their needs are, and really that then becomes the building point for the relationship," Nina said. "I

mean, a lot of our customers have been with us – they follow us from location to location."

After some time in Linthicum when the shop first opened, Nina and Greg moved the shop to Oakland, Maryland with a second location in Deep Creek Lake, before moving back to the city. But after 12 years in the city, they decided to return to the small town scene and landed in Thurmont this past June.

Nina said the shop has a 20-year-long relationship with customers who were residents of Thurmont but also owned a second home in Deep Creek Lake.

"So I think we have that ability to really create that long lasting relationship" she said, "because the customer comes in, they have a good time, they're comfortable, and then they trust us. So that really makes them continue to want to come back to us."

The shop has held several events at their previous locations, including a 2019 fall festival showcasing local small businesses and artisans. Now, Greg and Nina are always thinking of events they can put on for the Thurmont community this season or further down the road, from makeup tutorials to men's shopping nights that tie in services of local breweries or wineries.

On Dec. 15, Studio 24E, along with other businesses downtown, will be hosting "A Small Town Christmas on Main Street." Join the community downtown from 6-9 p.m.



Not sure what to get that certain someone for Christmas? Stop by Studio 24E in Thurmont and let Nina and Greg find that perfect gift for you! If they can't find it, no one can!

to enjoy live music, wine tasting, an ugly sweater contest and much more. Studio 24E will be hosting craft beer tasting with Uncle Dirty's Brew Works, a photo opportunity with your pets to benefit Cuddles Cat Rescue, among other festivities.

Holiday shopping can be stressful, from trying to find the perfect

gift, to driving to the next town to locate a store that might carry it. With Studio 24E in town, you may just find that perfect gift in a matter of minutes... but you'll probably stay to explore the other items that catch your eye, or even just to enjoy the charming environment and relaxing atmosphere.

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### Thurmont Event Complex

13716 Strafford Dr., Thurmont [www.thurmonteventcomplex.com](http://www.thurmonteventcomplex.com)  
**301-271-7550**

### Rocky Ridge Vol. Fire Co. 12 Days of Christmas

Dec. 14 - Rossie Rio Bravo 22LR  
Dec. 15 - \$350 Cash  
Dec. 16 - Savage 93 Camo 22WMR  
Dec. 17 - \$350 Cash  
Dec. 18 - Traditions Buckstalker 50 Cal  
Dec. 19 - \$350 Cash  
Dec. 20 - G-Force GF1 12 Ga  
Dec. 21 - \$350 Cash  
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13516 Motters Station Rd., Rocky Ridge

# HISTORY

## Woodsboro Remembers

Francis Meehan Smith

### Part 8: Personalities

The climate in Woodsboro, both physically and emotionally, produced many beloved and well known characters through the years. People in the earlier days could afford to be, and were their own masters and as a result many rugged individualists were nurtured in town and added special flavor to the community.

### Doctors

Some of the most interesting early citizens of Woodsboro were its first physicians, such as Dr. Baltzell, Dr. Henry Staley, Dr. Kuhns, Dr. Thomas Sinn, Dr. J. M. Geyer, Dr. H. L. Donsife, Dr. R. L. Hammond, Dr. W. H. Wagner, Dr. H. K. Kerr, Dr. C. A. Stultz, and Dr. Dorsey Etzel.

Dr. Hammond was in practice here over forty years and Dr. Wagner was a member of the Sydenham Society of England

The practice of medicine in the early days was rather casual and as elsewhere relied heavily on home cures and common sense. Tuberculosis, typhoid fever, smallpox, diphtheria, and whooping cough killed many people, especially small children.

About fifty-five to sixty years ago the above quartet from Woodsboro posed for this postcard photograph. Looking from left to right they are Ross Etzler, formally a member of Shank and Etzler Line company; Raymond 'Solly' Smith of the Rosebud Perfume Co; Lynn 'Peggy' Smith, one of the town's greatest pitchers and long time telegrapher at the Pennsylvania Railroad station; Harry W. Barrick, Sr. former Woodsboro postmaster; and, the late Melvin 'Tuck' Anders, who served for many years at the Woodsboro Savings Bank.

The photo is the property of Franklin Barton, Woodsboro, and was taken by the late Frank Thomas who rented a room to develop pictures in the old Charlie Slagle property. This property stood near the existing War Memorial in Woodsboro. The property was rented by Dr. W.A. Stultz before it burned down fifty years ago.

A road which has long since been out of existence led from the top of Town Hill to the present Copper Mine Road. The late Sim' Gilbert's property recently purchased by the State Roads Commission is in the background in the the photo. To the right are piles of dirt that

that resulted from the digging of the foundation for the Feiser

property. Lewis Yost, Hanover, Pa. made it customary to have a picture taken at this spot by parking a temporary horse-drawn photograph shop near the site of the present War Memorial, well over seventy years ago'

### Lester (Barber) Long

Lester (Barber) Long was the oldest active licensed barber in the state of Maryland, retiring in February, 1975 at age eighty-seven after practicing over sixty years. Mr. Long came to Woodsboro in the fall of 1914 from Unionville, Maryland and opened his barbershop in the center house of three dwellings which were torn down to make way for the G.F. Smith residence. "Barber" Long moved to the other side of the street in 1919 and continued his shop in that location until he retired. The shop was the gathering place for many men where gossip was swapped and conversation dealt

principally with baseball, his major interest and hobby for years. "Barber" distinctly remembers cutting women's hair in the 1920's during the flapper age which made a lasting impression on him as such a thing was unheard of at that time.



Lester Long was the oldest active licensed barber in the state of Maryland. He set up shop in Woodsboro in 1914.

"Barber" Long had as big a career in baseball as in barbering. He managed a local team for thirty-five years. Expenses were met by passing the hat with the highlight of the collection being a five-dollar bill as a contribution one Sunday. Many good local ball players got their first chance to play on "Barber's" ball team. The most notable probably was Nelson Fox of Rocky Ridge (Nellie Fox of Chicago White Sox fame) who was spotted by Connie Mack and subsequently signed to a great career on the ball field.

One of the most exciting times in "Barber" Long's league came one Sunday (the regular playing day) when through a mix-up three games were scheduled for the one day. Nothing daunted, "Barber's" team played all three games and won all three in order.

One story repeated many times was about a man who came to the shop for a haircut after his reputation had preceded him from the local pub. After due time "Barber" asked the customer his name; the man said, "I am a Booser." "I know that," said "Barber", "but what's your name?"

Also repeated in the shop was the story of the lovelorn swain who gave a young boy in town five dollars to steal a pair of silk stockings from his girlfriend's clothesline for a personal good luck keepsake. (An original panty raid.) The boy enterprisingly enough took a pair of his mother's stockings and gave them to the love-sick man who never knew the difference. However, the romance also faded and died.

When "Barber" Long first came to town, five automobiles were involved in the entire traffic, plus hoses and buggies, of course, and the town was very quiet. When he retired this year,

many, many automobiles passed by his shop and the town had gone out of the horse and buggy age forever.

### Ben and Barney Saylor

For many years Ben and Barney Saylor transported the Woodsboro mail from the downtown post office to the railroad station up over station hill. A large two-wheeled push cart served as the vehicle for most of the year. Usually, with a light load, either Ben or Barney singly made the trip. When the mail trains were due and the load was heavy, both put their strength to pushing the cart.

Ben and Barney were always punctual and townfolk could tell the time of time by watching for them on the trip up the street to meet the next train. Residents also sometimes hurried to write their own letters in order to get their missives in the next mail, and made sure, if late, by stopping the cart, that Ben and Barney would personally get the letter on the next train and hence to its destination.

It is related that when Ben and Barney were awarded the original government contract for hauling the mail, the decimal point was misplaced in the contract figure which went unnoticed until after they had signed and accepted. Subsequently, they worked at a disastrously reduced income for a full year before being able to correct the mistake.

In Woodsboro winters, before snow plowing days, the station hill often became packed with snow and ice making travelling quite treacherous. For Ben and Barney the snow slicked hill then became a challenge in both directions. With true enterprising spirit they resorted to a large bobsled which could be pulled and tugged more easily uphill and

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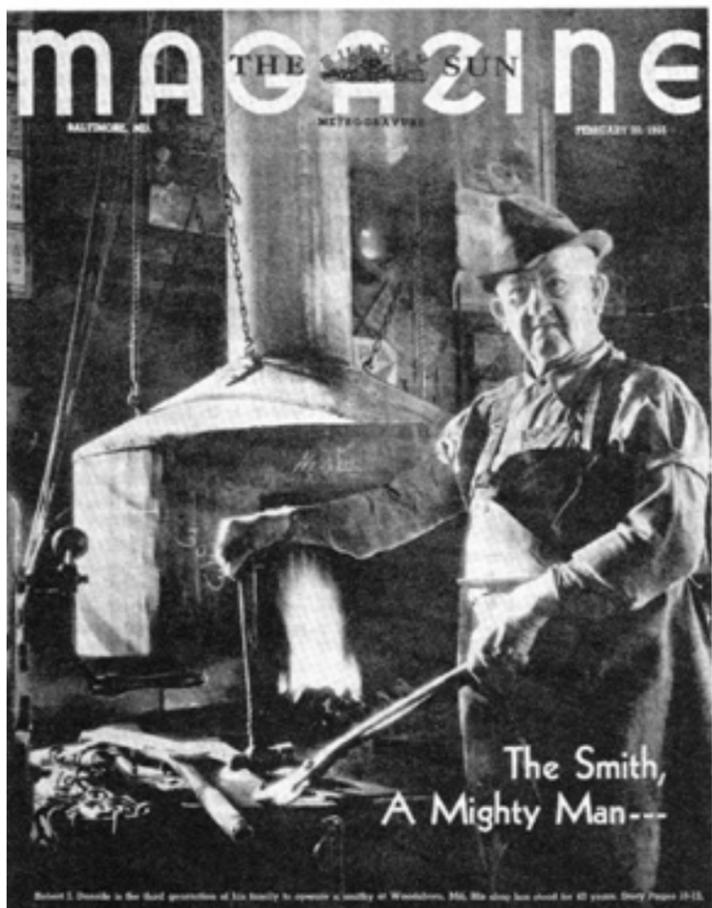
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# HISTORY



Woodsboro's resident blacksmith Robert Donsife became famous statewide when he appeared on the cover of the Baltimore Sunday Sun Magazine.

was a cinch to get back downtown to the post office.

In their bachelor quarters Ben and Barney were next door to the bank and spent much time in front of the store and bank building exchanging gossip and waiting for the next mail haul.

As Ben and Barney grew older, the trains became more infrequent. Mail came to Woodsboro at times by truck, delivered to the front door of the post office. Their services were needed less and less until eventually the railroad no longer carried the local mail and Ben and Barney Saylor slipped away as quietly as the town's dependence upon the train service. Their contribution to the community, however, was immeasurable and they are gratefully remembered by all.

**Robert J. Donsife**

Woodsboro's Blacksmith thought it a wonderful thing to remem-

ber the place where you were born and except for two years in a textile mill he lived his life in Woodsboro. To people for miles around he was something of a legend.

He was in business over fifty years, seven years as an apprentice and forty-six as his own man in his own shop.

His shop had been enlarged a good deal but little changed. Mr. Donsife might well have been a lineal descendant of Longfellow's mighty hero, for his business had many elements of the village blacksmith's a century ago.

He learned the craft from his father and uncle, Otto J. and Francis G. Donsife, who were partners in the original shop which is now torn down. They in turn had learned from their father, Heinrich Conrad Donsife, a metal worker and locksmith from Frankfurt-on-Main, who came to

Woodsboro and set up a smithy in 1817. As the older Donsife generations retired from the business they passed on its equipment and methods.

Mr. Donsife used many of the old tools in his work. Among his finest was a set of handmade wooden planes, purchased by his father, which were as sharp and true as the day they were turned out. With them he could match any elaborate shape of wooden molding. Another prized possession was a set of wood chisels which his father bought as a young man.

Hanging from the roof of the shop was a bellows that Heinrich Donsife made and used. It was a huge thing of wood, metal, and leather put together with hand made bolts, pins, and nails. There was a hand wrought spade head more than one-hundred years old, and sledgehammer head and a plow point made of iron from the Catocin furnace around the time of the Revolutionary War. There were hand made nails, Civil War weapons, old scythes and sickles hanging from the walls.

Mr. Donsife changed the place through the years only as much as he had to. He installed a few pieces of modern machinery - lathes, drill presses, grinders, and

the like to take care of the demands of farmers and manufacturers who brought him a wide variety of machine parts to duplicate.

He always had a backlog of bits, blades, and cutter bars to sharpen for farm and factory machinery. His daily work varied from patching a hole in a copper kettle to repairing a clock or replacing parts to broken ice cream dippers and even making for a lady who could not find one to fit her.

He gave up shoeing horses in 1928 saying he didn't abandon the horses, the horses abandoned him.

In one corner of the sprawling frame building was the workbench where with a file he sharpened saws.

In later years, he found it necessary to connect most of his hand powered equipment to motors. He had a gasoline engine belted to a line shaft, which ran the length of the building. Belted to this was a number of jack shafts, which relayed the power to the different machines.

The smithy sharpened all wood-working tools over a belt-powered sandstone wheel. Modern grinding wheels, he said, had a quick, harsh way of biting into metal. Only wet sandstone would give an axe, chisel, drawknife, or any other woodcutting tool a satin-smooth and lasting edge.

Mr. Donsife was working on a perpetual motion machine, a wheel arrangement fitted with shifting steel balls, when he died.

Passed down from his father and uncle was a technique for brazing with brass an metal tempering techniques, in which they

gauged the temperature of heated metal by its color.

His shop was always piled up with work. "I've never sat down and waited for something to do," he recalled. "I let my work advertise for me."

Mr. Donsife's thinking about a lot of things, including money, was original and refreshingly at variance with many modern economic concepts. A comfortable living, he thought, was preferable to a mad scramble for money.

In February, 1955, Mr. "Bob" became famous state-wide when he appeared on the cover of the Baltimore Sunday Sun Magazine. Much of the information in this article was based on this feature story. Modest man that he was, the story impressed him not at all, being anxious only to get on to his next piece of work. He was also featured in many other stories from time to time.

It was most impressive for the town's children to watch Mr. Donsife at work; there was something splendid and awe-inspiring in the sounds of the hiss of hot metal in water and the sight of the red hot piece of iron being bent to the desired shape.

Mr. Donsife was a proud and truly great man. In 1958 the business of Robert J. Donsife died with him.

To learn more about Woodsboro's history, visit the History section of Woodsboro.net.

To be continued next month

## Heroes Needed.

Spend a Little Time Make a Huge Difference.

**In this season of giving, give the gift of yourself**

For many here in Frederick County, the lack for transportation is often cited as the leading barrier for those needing to access essential community services.

Many residents, including Seniors and Veterans, need a way to a doctor's appointment, to the supermarket and pharmacy, to attend a class, participate in social outings and faith activities, even for a job interview.

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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

## December 7

### Christmas Without Santa Claus

Think of a child without a Christmas stocking! The boys and girls in the Near East have never had a visit from Santa Claus. Where they to hang up their stockings on Christmas Eve, morning will find them empty. The food of these children will be the same on Christmas as any other day - bread and grits or soup and beans.

The Frederick headquarters of the Near East Relief Society wants to send these children some Christmas cheer, to make their faces shine, their eyes dance, and bring shouts of happiness from them - to give them the joy that belongs to childhood.

To do this, the Society asks everyone in Frederick County to hang an extra stocking along with the others on Christmas Eve, so that Santa may fill it with hard candies, marbles, balls, dolls, non-breakable toys, &c. Then, the day following Christmas, the Society asked you to bring the stockings to the Society's headquarters in Frederick.

"An orphan stocking and every home on Christmas morning for these waifs overseas", is the slogan that the society hopes everyone will adopt this Yuletide.

### Youngsters Began Writing Annual Letters To Santa Claus

Santa has come from the far regions of the North Pole to collect the Christmas letters of little girls and boys. Perhaps some little children have heard the jingling of the bells of the eight tiny reindeer's as it flies through the air like the wind, carrying jolly old Santa along under the twinkling stars.

Some messages have already been received by Santa at his headquarters. One little girl, Helen Wantz, called him up on the telephone to tell him the many things she wanted for Christmas. Old Santa has received letters from one little girl and four little boys.

Dear Santa: I am a little girl seven years old and go to school every day. Please bring me a raincoat and hat, a pair of rubbers, a tricycle, a bookshelf and a fountain pen, with love to you and Mrs. Santa. - Helen Coblentz.

Dear Santa: I want a cowboy suit, a whip, a scooter car, a boat that winds with a key, a tool chest and tools and a game of baseball played with marbles. - Buddy Price

Dear Santa: I want a scooter car, a

blackboard, a raincoat, a tool chest full of tools, a game of marbles. I am five years old and have been a good boy. I go to school. - Joseph Delphey

Dear Santa: I am a little boy five years old. Will you please bring me an electric train, an indian suit, some candy and oranges and anything else you like. I will try to be a good boy, your little friend. - Tango Brust

Dear Santa: I am a little boy just three years old. I go to Sunday school every Sunday. Would you please bring me a pony, a pair of shoes, a real police dog and some candy, oranges and ginger snaps. And please do not forget my brothers and sisters. Your little friend. - Casper Letson

### May Have To Pay License To Go Fishing

A proposition is a foot to require fishermen to pay a license, the funds to be used for propagating of game and freshwater fish.

In brief, the plan, as submitted, is to amend certain sections of, and broaden the scope of, the present game laws so as to include fishing. This will necessitate procuring a license to fish, and also calls for an increase of \$.50 in the price of the hunting license now required. This license will then permit one to either hunt or fish.

In connection with the preservation of game and fish the plan also calls for the payment of a certain sum of money to each person who is instrumental in the destruction of vermin, this money to come from a fund to be created and which is to be known as the State Game Protection Fund.

Failure to comply with the law concerning either hunting or fishing regulations would be dealt with as prescribed on the statute books. This means a fine of \$15 must be paid or a jail sentence of not more than 15 days being imposed. The plan was proposed and approved at a meeting last spring of the Frederick County Fish and Game Association, and approved.

## December 14

### Seeks Home For Five Year Old Light Haired Girl

"It never rains here but it pours", is an old adage that would seem to include homeless children of Frederick County

around Christmas time in its category.

Going under assumption however that it is possible for even sunshine to be hidden behind clouds at times, we come to the third case of an artificially orphaned child to be brought to the attention of the Children's Aid Society.

Fate seems to be partial towards fair haired youngsters in its meeting out of ironies to the local children of destiny, for the other two cases included a bright blue eyed blonde boy and his equally charming and fair-haired little sister.

This little five-year-old happens to be a girl. Just because the little girl is but five years of age and perhaps too young to be sent to school is no reason for thinking that her Christmas pleas to Santa Claus, are not any different from any other child. All interested in taking charge of the child should contact the Children's Aid Society.

### Lose His Teeth And Big Buck He Shot

To lose both the deer he claims to have shot and also two teeth was the misfortune of one hunter in this section of the county on the opening day of deer hunting season.

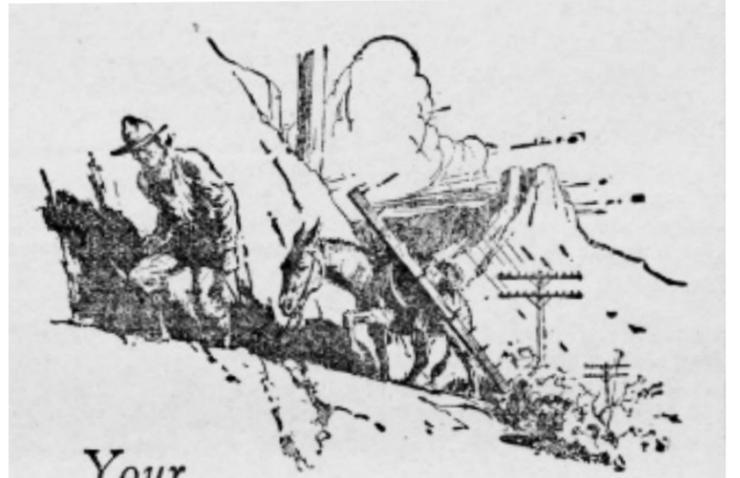
According to reports from the camp of the mighty huntsmen, Paul Thomas, shot four times at a buck, but had the misfortune of losing his prize in the thicket; the members of the camp hunted for hours, but could not locate the deer or any trace of blood. While shooting at the deer, Thomas fell off his stand and had two teeth knocked out and had to be taken to a doctor to have a cut on his lip dressed.

According to rumors, he, and most of the members of his hunting camp, had been heavily indulging in 'warming spirits' most of the night and well into the morning, and was cross-eyed with double vision when he took his shots - at whatever he shot at, if anything.

### Christmas Tree Thefts Mark The Season

With Christmas only a little over a week away, and with every indication pointing to a scarcity of evergreen trees this year, owners of land throughout the county are patrolling land on which they have planet trees suitable for Christmas trees.

Reports received by the State Department of Forest and Waters show a large number of Christmas trees are stolen each year from timberland owners. Last



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year more than 1,000 trees were stolen from a five-mile stretch along a public road west of here during the two weeks before Christmas.

This was done, it was stated in spite of the fact that the owners of the property patrolled the area continuously. It was also said that many persons cut as

many as three or four trees before finding one which suited their fancy, leaving the others useless.

The Department is calling attention to the fact that the law makes it a misdemeanor for any person to cut and remove a tree without first obtaining



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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

permission from the owner of the land, and upon conviction of the offense, provide a fine of not more than \$500 and imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

It should be remembered that every tree growing on the hillside belongs to someone, and persons who desire to cut Christmas trees for home use should first obtain permission from the owner. Landowners should keep a careful watch of their evergreen trees during the month of December to prevent the theft of their valuable trees, and, if so fortunate to catch the guilty persons, they should be prosecuted so as to put it in to this malicious practice.

### Hurt By Cross Hog

The son of Mr. Trussell, was badly injured on Thanksgiving Day by a cross hog, was taken to Frederick Hospital for treatment. Apparently, the hog, named 'Bacon', took exception to the fact that he was going to be used for thanksgiving dinner and would have nothing to do with the plans.

And while we are on the subject, while we don't usually publish hog weights, but occasionally such information is decidedly out of the ordinary, and justifies an exception. Such a case is reported by Walter Hape, who butchered six hogs that weighed a total of 2,414 pounds, the two largest weighed 616 and 597.

### Moravian Church Work Completed

During the past two months, the Moravian Church in Graceham, Reverend Samuel Boardman, Pastor, has undergone extensive repairs and improvements. These have been completed and the church was re-open for services Sunday, December 9.

### A Specimen Road Hog

State Policeman Miller, met with a remarkable experience, as well as with the limit of arrogance on the part of a speeding autoist, last Sunday evening, when he attempted to make an arrest on the Taneytown to Woodsboro State Road near New Midway. He was pursuing a big Packard car that was running over 60 miles an hour, and was gaining, when one of the occupants of the car threw an old tire out in front of the pursuer's motorcycle, with a result that he was thrown a considerable distance and injured. The officer fired several shots after the car, but did not succeed in stopping it, he also failed to secure the license number. Here is the case, the likes of which is common - not in detail, but

in effect. Confidence in speeding power breeds contempt of pursuit, and the speed laws - produce the breed properly termed "road hogs."

Unfortunately exceeding the speed limit is not uncommon in most towns, and can be seen every day. Last Sunday morning, as an example, we saw two cars race across the Square at the same time people were going to church, both cars running close to 30 miles an hour. Speeding on the street is so common as to be almost a practice - and some days, there will perhaps be a child or older person "unavoidably" killed.

### Union Bridge To Employ Night Watchman

At a joint meeting of the Town Council and businessmen of Union Bridge, last week, it was decided to employ a night watchman to patrol the business section of town. Recent robberies of business houses are responsible for the action.

### Young Robbers In Daring Theft To Be Paroled

Walter Weinhart and Norman Ogle, who in a sensational manner robbed the Walkersville Bank one afternoon in 1919, at the point of a revolver, of a large sum of money, and were afterwards captured, convicted and sentenced to seven years in the Maryland penitentiary, have been recommended for parole.

Good behavior would have reduced their terms to 70 months of which 51 have been served. Several prominent citizens of this County had appealed in behalf of the prisoners for parole. Weinhart at the time of the crime was 22 years old and Ogle 23. The youth of the pair and the fact that they had good prison records was a factor in their parole recommendation.

The robbery was committed in a bold matter and for a while it was thought that the crime have been perpetrated by professional holdup men. After securing the money they work their way towards the Monocacy River and hid the money. A large posse joined in the search for them and it was stated they both mingled with the posse and joined them in the search. Ogle was finally captured in a store where he engaged in conversation with an officer looking for him.

### December 21

#### December Sets Mild Weather Record

Indian Summer reigns supreme in Frederick County. Daily temperatures

have been above freezing since Tuesday, when the minimum was 31°. From the mountain come reports that ants are crawling about in great hordes outside their winter home; that the honeybee is showing restlessness and that swarms of insects are to be seen flying about.

Then from other sections reports have been received that snakes are crawling about outside the dens into which they were believed to have gone for the winter. One snake was discovered in a field and another was seen in the mountains near Deerfield, north of Thurmont.

Temperature is suggestive of spring prevailed all day Sunday. The maximum was just nine points below summer heat, or 61°. And the lowest for the entire day was 43, or 11° above freezing. Even though Christmas is just around the corner, there has been only one flurry of snow this winter so far.

### County Ready To Remove Snow

The County Road Commission is busy with preparations for removing snow from the State highways of Frederick, during the coming winter. Frederick itself has 13 snowplows attached to trucks.

The main highways will be given the right of way and then the branch roads will be cleared in the order of their importance. The latter being determined by the size of the population supplied by the roads.

In the case of isolated roads where it would be impractical to use the plows, arrangements have been made to take care of the removal of the snow by the use of heavy road machines drawn by horses.

The Road Commission has decided to keep the roads clear of snow, not only for the purpose of giving the people the use of the highways the year around, but as a step towards caring for the highways themselves.

### Leaned On Gun & Shot

Earl Weddle, of near Mountindale, is in the Frederick City Hospital with a gunshot wound received while hunting in the mountains near Thurmont. Details of the accident are incomplete, but it is understood that Weddle, accompanied by a number of young men went on an early morning excursion into the mountains. Weddle uncovered a pheasant and followed it up the mountain. He was standing on a log leaning against his shotgun and slipped. The gun went off and the discharged lodged into Weddle's arm below the elbow.



### December 28

#### Mule Has Christmas Jack

The County Sheriff is searching for the owner of a drunken mule that strayed into their keeping on Christmas Day. The mule not only threatens to eat up their appropriations, but he 'hee-haws' at all hours of the day and night demanding attention. He was found wandering on the State Road between Walkersville and Woodsboro, apparently suffering from alcohol overindulgence. It is believed he found a deposit of corn mash dump from a hidden still.

#### Drunken Drivers

Most of us can look back to other days when it was possible for a man with a few drinks of liquor under his belt to steer the faithful old family horse to and from town without endangering, to any great extent, his own life, or the lives of others. But it is different now, thought we regret to say there are still a few appear not to have realized it.

We may differ on the merits of the 18th amendment; we may favorite or oppose it. But there is one point we are all in agreement - and that is that the tightening up on liquor drinking came at an opportune time, so far as human life is concerned. If there had been as many autos back in the days when whiskey drinking was at its height in this country, there wouldn't have been cemeteries enough to hold the dead. For if there are two things that won't mix, those two things are booze and gasoline.

Driving a horse, while intoxicated, is no great feat, because a

horse has a measure of intelligence, but there is not a man living who can operate an automobile as carefully when drunk as when sober.

Our courts are making it plain that the public demands protection from drunken auto drivers and they are showing no mercy to the drivers who display signs of intoxication when arrested - usually after they have damaged other machines or injured innocent people on the streets or highways. And it's a good thing.

We have no desire to argue the prohibition question here, but we do join with every good citizen and demand that if a man must drink then he stay away from a steering wheel while he is doing it.

#### Auto Accidents More Christmas Day Observations.

Two automobile accidents occurred sometime Christmas morning. The extent of the damage done in either case was not learned.

On the Georgetown Pike a buggy was found considerably damaged and a quantity of glass was found scattered over the road near the buggy. How or when the accident occurred, or who was involved could not be learned. It was supposed the buggy was struck by an automobile.

An automobile accident also occurred near Lewistown, Tuesday morning. It was said that a man name Ritz, who lives at Fountain Rock, was in this accident. In his car were several persons, all of whom were said to be cut and bruise. The injuries however were not serious.

To read other articles related to 100 Years Ago this Month, visit the History section of Walkerville.net.

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# LIBRARY NEWS

## December at the library

Robin Bowers

Happy Ho-Ho-Holidays! Whether you're staying in town and hosting for the holidays or heading out of town, the Walkersville Branch Library has something for everyone this season! Bring your relatives out for one of the many events in and around the library, check out a new novel, or simply enjoy reading quietly next to the cozy fireplace inside the branch.

The annual Christkindlmarket will be held on Saturday, December 2. Artisans, food, and street events will be set up around town from 10am to 3pm. Pop into the Walkersville Branch Library at 11 a.m. to meet some of Santa's special friends; Winnifred the Mini from Days End

Horse Rescue and miniature cows from Triple H Highlands will be here to help us get into the holiday spirit! Santa and his merry elf will make an appearance at the library from 11:30 to noon as well.

If you're a tea lover or gardener, join Alecks Moss of Foxhaven Farm on Sunday, December 3 at 1pm to learn all about growing, blending, and tasting herbal tea.

Planning to attend the annual Walkersville Town Tree Lighting on Wednesday December 6th? Before heading to Creamery Park at 7 p.m., come into the Walkersville Branch Library for fun holiday activities, music, and a visit with Santa! Special guests, including the Walkersville Spanish Club, will showcase holiday celebrations and traditions

from around the world! Festivities at the library begin at 5:30pm on December 6th.

Celebrate Frederick County's 275th anniversary and take part in Museums by Candlelight the second Saturday in December. The Walkersville Branch Library will feature a special, festive holiday foyer display created by the Pleasant Walk Homemakers Club.

Discover the fascinating life of Dr. Ray Ediger, a local country veterinarian, as he shares his memoir, "Living, Loving, and Laughing with Animals" on Sunday, December 10 at 1pm. Not only is Dr. Ediger an accomplished vet analogous to the beloved James Herriot, but he is well known statewide within the FFA and 4H communities and raises a variety of his own animals on a 500-acre farm in Frederick County.

Join us at the Walkersville Branch to mark the upcoming year with a Noon Year's Eve celebration on Saturday, December 30 from 11:30 to noon. Enjoy a story, songs, and special balloon drop to ring in 2024 with the whole family!

Ready to shake off the winter blues? Bundle up and head over to the library on Saturdays at 10 a.m. (except December 23rd) when Freedom BANG is happening. You won't need the extra warm parka for long though; freedom BANG is a pre-choreographed fusion of boxing, HIIT, hip hop, world dance, optional weighted gloves, and a touch of attitude, offering a wide range of options to customize your workout. Whether you work at home or commute, a yoga class is a gentle way to get some movement and exercise after the work-

day. Stop by Walkersville Branch Library on Monday, December 4th, and 11th at 6 p.m. for a free drop-in yoga class lead by instructors from Sol Yoga.

Come together with friends new and old to Senior Café: the place to come for coffee, conversation, friendship, and fun events! There will be two Senior Café programs in December; Thursday 12/7 at 10 a.m. will include a speaker from Frederick County Senior Services Division to discuss their Meals on Wheels program. Thursday, December 14 at 10 a.m. is the perfect time to make your own holiday cards with Naomi Ruth with Stampin' Up while socializing and enjoying a cozy morning at the library.

December's program for adults with intellectual disabilities are on the 6th and 20th. Get ready for some karaoke, dancing, and lots of singing on December 20 from 10 to 11!

Improve your reading confidence and make a new friend when you read aloud to a Go Team Therapy Dog on Thursday December 7 from 6:30 to 7:30.

Curious kids aged 10-13 are invited to join the Tween Tech program on Monday, December 18 from 6 to 6:45. We'll be exploring the world of 3D printing and CAD with a variety of printing techniques.

Teen Innovation Hour is your place to explore, create and have fun with friends after school. December is all about creativity! On 12/5, innovate with paper circuits; chocolate lovers unite on 12/12 to make chocolate spoons, and on 12/19, prepare to build the most epic gingerbread house as part of the STEM

Challenge! All Teen Innovation Hour programs will run from 3:30 to 4:30 at the Walkersville Branch Library.

Does your teen have an early dismissal on December 1st? The Maryland Highway Safety Office will be at the Walkersville Branch Library from 1 to 2. Teens can try on a pair of Impairment Goggles and play some games, including a tricycle obstacle course to experience the simulated effects of alcohol intoxication and see how it impairs our senses!

Teen Connect is a time to engage with friends, peer mentors, and teen-oriented community resources, on the following Fridays at 3:30 p.m.. Bring a friend or two and join us on December 8 for a fun time! December 15 will feature demonstrations presented by the Robo Rangers Frederick County 4H Club. Robo Rangers "focuses on engineering related activities, primarily building with LEGO EV3 and VEX". Celebrate winter break on December 22 at the Walkersville Branch with your friends and enjoy games, snacks, karaoke and more!

"Let's Get Ready for Kindergarten" is a program on Wednesdays from 11 to 11:45 where preschoolers and their caregivers can build school ready skills like counting, literacy and exploring their social-emotional selves with peers. Our weekly Fri-YAY Program will continue into the winter from 11 to 11:45. An informal educational program to round out the week, this Friday program will be all about holiday fun and using your imagination this December! 12/1 is Carnival Day, so come out for some fun and try your hand at a variety of games and activities! 12/8 is all about building your Dreamy Home for the Holidays, 12/15 will feature a variety of Candy Land-themed activities to help transport you to a sweet world of wonder! Bring your out-of-town cousins to Fri-Yay on 12/22 for "Tech the Halls" and experiment with fun gadgets and other exciting tech! Round out the month with some furry alpaca friends on Friday, December 29. They might not be Santa's reindeer but they're just as cute!

*It's time for holiday shopping!*

Whether you're looking for a vintage piece or looking to get in on the hottest trends, we have what you need - and we gift wrap! Our Christmas Wishlist is one great way to pick out your favorites. You can also browse through our catalogs to get even more inspiration! Have a wonder filled holiday season!

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# Student membership on the Board of Education

Karen Yohoo  
Frederick County Board of Education

At the November 8 meeting, our Board discussed the topic of Student Member of the Board voting rights and the possible legislation it would take to make this happen. School boards do not have the ability to alter legal aspects on their own, such as the amount of compensation members receive (if any), how a member who resigns will be replaced, or the position of Student Member and the level of voting rights they have. That must be done at the state level through legislation, even when the effects are specific to an individual county.

After a lengthy discussion, our board was still not able to come to a consensus on exactly which specific subjects our SMOB would be able to vote on and decided to form a subcommittee of three members and the current SMOB to bring a report back to the full Board. We then became aware of a statewide bill sponsored by Sen. Karen Lewis Young and Del. Kris Fair. At our November 20 meeting, we tabled our discussion in order to follow the bill as it makes its way through the legislature.

For those unfamiliar with Student Member of the Board (SMOB), this position varies from county to county in Maryland, including Baltimore City and the State Board of Education Student Member. It ranges from the Anne Arundel SMOB having the same full voting rights as any other member of their Board to Somerset and Wicomico counties having no official student member, but rather student representatives. Five of the counties on the Eastern Shore have a student member from each of their two or three high schools. The remaining sixteen counties and Baltimore City each have one student member.

Most of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have SMOBs with non-voting status, eight have limited voting rights, and as mentioned above, Anne Arundel's has full voting rights. Most SMOBs may not vote on issues such as capital and operating budgets, school

openings, closings, and boundary changes (redistricting), collective bargaining, or appeals dealing with personnel or student discipline. The State Board SMOB has full voting rights except for appeals, however, the State Board itself does not vote on capital or operating budgets and since they do not build any schools there are no votes on openings, closings, and boundary changes other than appeals that are submitted from decisions made around the state.

The majority of Maryland LEAs conduct their Student Member elections through their Student Government Association (SGA). The process takes time, and the students must follow a rigorous procedure. FCPS's nominations opened on October 3 and continued through the month. A selection panel including members of the Frederick County Association of Student Councils' (FCASC) Board, SGA advisors, and other district personnel reviewed the applications, conducted in-person interviews on November 7, and narrowed the field to five candidates. An orientation was held on November 15 and those selected will present speeches at the December 11 FCASC General Assembly, followed by a Candidate Town Hall on January 4, 4:30 to 7 at the FCPS Central Office. Online voting takes place throughout the month of January for all students in middle and high school in the county. And, much like the electoral college, voting will determine who each school's SGA representatives support at the February 6 General Assembly. Student enrollment determines how many representative delegates a school receives. The candidate receiving the majority of votes will become the new Student Member of the Board in July.

In 2022, House Bill 797 was submitted that would have required each county board of education to have a student member who would have "certain voting rights". This bill did not pass out of committee. While the bill being submitted this year is yet to have a number assigned, the basic premise is to bring all student members to the level of the State Board SMOB.

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# FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

*This holiday season, we asked our writers to discuss the significance of writing letters to Santa Claus.*

## Freshman

### Letters to Santa

Gracie Smith  
MSMU Class of 2027

The tradition of writing letters to Santa has been around for generations; however, it wasn't always children doing the writing. The practice began quite contrary to what we are accustomed to today. It first began with Santa writing letters to children to encourage them to behave throughout the year. In return for the good behavior, Santa would reward them with gifts on Christmas day. Not only did this establish the idea of the infamous naughty and nice list, but it began a tradition that would be carried out for centuries. Over time, children began writing letters back to Santa describing what they wanted for Christmas as a reward for their good behavior, being the little negotiators they are. With this lovely letter conversing, the tradition was born—Letters to Santa.

Children throughout the years have written, asking for many things. From the latest Barbie

doll to the coolest Lego set, children have never failed to demand their rewards for good behavior. Nevertheless, children are not the only ones to write to Santa. Teenagers, young adults, adults, and seniors also write to Kris Kringle. While this may come off as immature, the idea of expressing what it is you most desire creates the sweetest and most delicate sense of hope. The opportunity to ask for something that can be either realistic or bazaar excites us, and further allows us to feel an innocent sort of greed. Besides, they say there is a childish part in all of us, right?

I believe it's essential that every child has the experience of writing to Santa and receiving the gift they wished for, at least once. While there are thousands of children who are less fortunate than me, I yearn that each one of those children still writes to Santa. Every child has something they want deep down. Whether it be an action figure, a puppy, a bike, or something a little deeper such as to maintain good health, a roof over their head, or simply someone to listen to them. Every child deserves to be heard and every child deserves to experience the same sweet and delicate hope that

we feel when we write to Santa.

One thing that I loved seeing as a kid was all the mailboxes dedicated specifically to Santa. As strange as this is, it's socially acceptable because it's Santa. My favorite mailbox to Santa is the one in Macy's in New York City. The way it is displayed like it's the Holy Grail of the store made it more magical, dropping my letter into the box. Though, I was always nervous to put my letter in because part of me felt like I was being too greedy asking for all those things. Every year I told myself the same lie to justify my asking for so much stuff: It's so Santa has options. To this day I am guilty of using this weak line of justification to defend my long list of demands. However, at least I know that Santa does indeed have options.

I remember my little brother and I spending an entire evening writing our letters to Santa. We would only use the colors red and green to try to appeal to him, and we would always send our regards to his reindeer for good measure. My brother, being the biggest Mickey Mouse fan to exist, asked for Mickey Mouse sheets for his bed when he was in preschool. I remember that being a very odd

thing for him to ask for, given he was 4 years old at the time asking for a semi-adult-ish gift. Nevertheless, he received them and was as happy as could be since he could "sleep with Mickey" every night.

Unlike my brother, I guess I never really "matured" in what I would ask for from Santa. Every year I'd still write down the most random items like I was a 5-year-old. My brother, while still asking for Legos and Funko Pops, has always been a bit more rational than I. If I were to write a letter to Santa right now, I would ask for new shoes, books, and a new ring to go with my cross necklace. While the shoes are truly something that I need and should probably invest in myself, the books and the ring just display the childish side of me. In years prior, I have asked for things like American Girl dolls, a typewriter, a Nintendo 3DS (specifically the pink one), and have even been so bold as to ask for a Fender Stratocaster guitar in the luscious light blue. However, as I am growing older, I am finding that I need to ask for necessities, or in other words, things I need but don't want to pay for. For instance, makeup, hair products, jeans, and SHOES.

I do believe this comes with age though; by this I mean, as we grow older, we start to appreciate the little things that we don't have to pay for, and the real gift is the gift of saving money.

Way back in the early 2010s, Sears would do Christmas photo shoots, and my mom was all over it. Each year we would go for our Christmas portraits, and when we were done, we got to visit Santa in the mall to give him our letters. It's upsetting that little traditions like that don't exist anymore since Amazon has put so many companies, like Sears, out of business. Even still, it was how my little brother and I would give our letters to Santa until Sears closed down.

Each year, children all over the world write letters to Santa expressing what it is they want most for Christmas. Not only children, but adults share this tradition too. Christmas is a time to not only be with our family and friends to celebrate the birth of our Lord, but to also be a little selfish and write to Santa sharing our desires.

*To read other articles by Gracie Smith, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

## Sophomore

### Let's talk to Santa!

Devin Owen  
MSMU Class of 2026

As the holiday season approaches, we are subconsciously forced to slip into the mindset pertaining to our holiday traditions. Personally, I revert back to the small child excited to wake up early Christmas morning and bug her parents until they get out of bed, to have her whole family come over to indulge in the Christmas morning breakfast while we open gifts together. Granted, these traditions have changed significantly over the years; no longer am I waking up both parents, but rather waking up one and then driving to the home of the other. No longer are my parents holding the Christmas morning breakfast festivities, and I am no longer a child. However, I will always be a child at heart, which is why my love for Christmas is so strong. No longer am I the small, impressionable 5-year-old, but instead I am the small, impressionable 19-year-old with nieces and nephews to spoil and introduce to the holiday traditions I have always loved.

My niece is finally at the age where she can understand and enjoy the traditions that we have and the new ones we've implemented in recent years: making and decorating Christmas cookies, giving gifts to family members, drinking hot cocoa and watching The Santa Claus, baking homemade cinnamon rolls in addition to Mama Cindie's 'Christmas Morning Breakfast' casserole, spreading reindeer food for Santa's

famous helpers, and writing letters to the big man himself.

That was another huge tradition in my family: writing letters to Santa and then mailing them off. I have always found this activity to be extremely beneficial in life. The world we live in is difficult enough, so we should let kids be kids and embrace every depth of their imagination. By that I am tempted to ask: if you wrote letters to Santa as a kid, what did you write in those letters? What did you ask Santa for when you wrote to him? My letters to Santa growing up usually consisted of the usual: 'toys, toys, toys... oh! And a puppy!' There were also some letters that asked for blessings of sorts: "Dear Santa, this year for Christmas I want my parents to get a divorce. A weird ask, really, but I can tell they're not happy anymore." In all honesty, the letters I wrote to Santa each year varied dramatically.

For those who have the tradition of Santa in their lives, writing him letters could implement a stronger belief as it provides a physical representation of their belief—the presents help with that as well. Every kid who writes to Santa gets to prove to themselves that their belief is strong, it exists, and they are fully aware. However, writing these letters is not the only part of the process that helps to strengthen the belief in the physical embodiment of the holiday spirit. Many places have holiday workshops set up for kids to write their letters and decorate them, then they get to mail them off to the North Pole through the fancily decorated Santa mailboxes. Giving the kids the opportunity to interact with their belief only adds strength and health to their own imagination, a

beautiful form of positive creativity.

Not only does this activity provide benefits to the children in forms of imagination, but it also offers benefits to intelligence. If you start having children write their letters to Santa at a young age, their writing skills begin to improve or develop. The act of writing letters requires many various language skills such as spelling, grammar, organization, list making, etc. Having the ability to write letters in a fun, exciting, and magical way adds fun and enjoyment to a learning process; it provides an opportunity for children to practice and enhance their writing and organizational skills while still having fun and embracing their imagination. Intelligence though isn't just directed towards cognitive functions in an educational way, but rather it targets multiple concepts such as emotional/mental activity as well. Writing letters allows for the kids participating to build emotional responses and empathy, as they can ask to help others rather than just themselves; such asks reinforce the spirit behind what is known as 'the season of giving.' Kids are much more thoughtful than we give them credit for; it is one of the many beauties of childhood.

Writing letters to Santa was always one of my favorite traditions growing up—a tradition which I hope to pass on to my own children when that time does come. I never enjoyed it because I got to ask for things for myself though, I think that the joy and love I felt from it came from getting to spend time with my family in an exciting manner. Each year my mom, dad, grandmother, and siblings would trade off who we wrote our letters with; it was

a super fun and inclusive way to start off our holiday season because we all got to write our letters together. I feel as though since entering my teenage and adult years we haven't given a second thought to the traditions we once had, writing these letters being the main focal point with that. Maybe it's a part of growing up; maybe we just forget the childlike joys we once had. Either way, I often find myself wishing I could go back and embrace these joys and traditions without the hinderance of doubt that has now been placed; adulthood is hard and I miss being a kid.

Traditions are the building blocks of our life; our daily lives are built around them and they have shaped us into who we are. I think that the best

part of them though, is when they begin to change as we grow up. No longer am I writing letters to Santa myself, but instead I am encouraging my niece and nephew—who are the brightest lights in my life—to write their letters each December and mail them off to the North Pole. I get to see their faces light up as they decorate their letters and then tell me what they want to write; the kitchen table covered in glitter and stickers, the kids shrieking in excitement, the pure joy written all over their face. Who wouldn't want to write a letter to Santa after seeing that?

*To read other articles by Devin Owen, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

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## LETTERS TO SANTA CLAUS

## Junior

## My wish

Dolores Hans  
MSMU Class of 2025

When we were kids, everything we needed was provided to us by our parents. All our needs for basic survival, but also for happiness and enjoyment of life. If we needed something more, like sports shoes or money for a field trip, they provided that too. But if we saw something on TV that we wanted, or there was a trending video game, or we suddenly wanted to pick up the hobby of crocheting, more often than not our parents said to put it on our letters to Santa. There was a special time during the year, Christmas time, when we had a chance to ask for the unreasonable wants on our hearts, the things we wouldn't normally ask our parents for because they were already providing us with the necessities of life. But with the prospect of Santa and magic, we believed we could ask for the things we wanted without it costing too much or being told we couldn't have it. My parents provided a lot

for me when I was young, even when it seemed like we had nothing. I still feel weird about splurging money on the things I want because I am used to only having the necessities. Christmas was the one time a year I could ask for something outrageously awesome and not worry about it coming from my parents. Then I got older, and once I knew the truth about Santa, I never again asked for my heart's desires because I didn't want to inconvenience my parents.

My wants and desires have changed though. I no longer want to possess material things. Well, I do, but my reliance on them has changed. Christmas now, as an adult, is a time full of playfulness and beauty, romance and tradition. I find myself daydreaming about spending the holidays with the love of my life, my beloved, and all that we could experience together. Dancing in the snowfall under the streetlights, getting cozy by the fireplace, baking cookies and listening to jazz, laughing while watching Christmas movies, decorating our tree, building snowmen, getting together with our families, and starting our own traditions.

When I am asked what I want for Christmas, my first thought is to say that I want an engagement ring. But I don't want a ring, I want a proposal. I want him to ask me to spend my life with him. Then I think to say that I want a wedding. But I don't want a wedding, I want a marriage. All the things I desire can be had without physical material possessions. Santa provided us with the idea that anything is possible, and that magic can create the things we wish for, if we simply ask. How I wish that were as true for me now as it was for me then, back when I was young.

If I still had the opportunity to make a secret letter, listed with my biggest hopes and dreams, and hand it to my mother to be sent to the North Pole, and in a couple weeks I would wake up with those hopes fulfilled, what would I ask for? If I were to write to Santa today, assuming he can fulfill my wishes with ease and magic, as we all assumed when we were kids, I know I would ask for gifts that are more like assurances than physical presents.

Dear Santa. Merry Christmas! I am excited to write to you again.

It's been a while. This year, I am asking for things that I have never asked for. I am not asking for the typical things that I ask for every year. I am not asking for jewelry or clothes, nor am I asking for cookbooks and painting supplies. I have no need for rings or sweaters, or canvases or vintage recipes. Not when I have my beloved. His arms provide more warmth than a million sweaters. His body, a canvas I paint with my kisses. Our love is more timeless than old-fashioned sweets, and I don't need a ring on my finger to symbolize the love we share. I do ask, however, that you gift me a sign. A sign that the future I dream of is coming my way. A simple house that I can make a home for us, a secure job for him that aligns with his passions, healthy and happy children that I can nurture and provide for. I ask that you gift me the ability to keep Christmas joy in my heart year-round, so I can joyously and ceaselessly grant my family's every wish. So that I can show my children how to care for others and share their laughter generously and have pride in their goofy qualities. I ask that you gift me a stronger

heart, to bear more suffering and sacrifice so that I can still be grateful and present in the tough times. I ask that the one whom I hold in my heart be the one I spend my life with. In partnership, in love, and in happiness. I ask that you gift me as many opportunities as possible in this life to be by his side through every up and down, every adventure, every new experience, every laughter, smile, tear, hug, morning, evening, night, thunderstorm, first snowfall, summer vacation, and everything in between. This year, the only thing I want, the only thing I truly long for, is a life with him. So, Santa, just a recap in case you didn't get it: I want the picket fence and a house I can make a home. I want constant joy so I can spread joy to others. I want a sign that the future I want is coming to me. I want endless opportunities to share this life with the man I love, and for him to be the one that builds a future with me. Thanks! Merry Christmas! P.S. Don't fall off the roof.

To read other articles by Dolores Hans, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

## Senior

## Thank you notes

Claire Doll  
MSMU Class of 2024

*Hi Santa! I've been wondering if I have been a good girl. I want a lot of things for Christmas. First, I want Cecile the American Girl Doll. I also want a dress for my doll. Also, I want some good books. I would really like them to be mysteries, like Nancy Drew. Also, I want pretty clothes and jewelry. I hope I'm on your nice list! Write back!*

I hope I never forget how writing these letters felt. Picking your best pen and adorning a blank page with the words, "Dear Santa." Flipping through magazines, or window-shopping at your favorite store, and listing everything you ever wanted. Oh, and the latest American Girl Doll. I just had to have her, whoever she was.

Christmas is a feeling. I can't describe it well, because I only felt the true weight of its magic as a child. The red velvet dress, the cookies.

The letters to Santa, and thinking they'll reach the North Pole.

I would write them religiously, every year. To me, the letters to Santa held power. I could slip it into the mailbox, and magically, it would make Christmases perfect. Like a transaction, almost.

(Hopefully, you're by yourself reading this, and there's no kids around. If there are, read this next part to yourself—don't show them the page).

My first heartbreak was learning the truth about Santa. I still

remember that Christmas Eve. We spent it at my Mommom and Poppop's house with all my mom's family. In the kitchen, there would be plenty food set out: cheese and crackers, pepperoni, vegetables and ranch, all kinds of cookies, and the beloved eggnog that still sends me back to these kinds of nights. In the living room, wrapping paper. Twinkling lights from the tree. Music swirling in the background. Crisp, frozen air seeping in from the windows, unmatched to the warmth of inside, of the crackling fire. My aunt Colleen's laughter, a sound I only heard every so often, and my cousin Colton's high-pitched, precious voice.

But because I had found out about Santa just days before, I spent that Christmas Eve crying. I had younger cousins, so I watched them open gifts from Mommom and Poppop and go on about their letters to Santa. My older sister Margaret had already known years before, and it was just plain fact to the rest of my family. I was so heartbroken, so hurt and withered, that I ran upstairs to the bathroom. Locking the door, I cried, hot tears streaming down my face. Me, in my red velvet dress, hair curled, ten-year-old makeup (yes, I was ten when I found out). Me, shattered at what felt like the worst feeling there was.

Some view it as another layer of innocence being peeled off. Some think of Santa as pointless (why would you want your child to feel this way after it all, anyways?). I simply felt angry, almost as if I were grieving. But, grieving what? Santa Claus, someone who I had never met? Or the idea behind it all?

I'll tell you how the following Christmas morning went.

I still woke up, flutters in my stomach. Golden light still seeping through the windows. Mom's makeup-less face, Dad's trash bag. The gifts were still there. Cecelia, and all her dresses (because I had an obsession over American Girl Dolls), and Nancy Drew books, and so much more. It was all the same, with the giant glaring difference, but it was all there. And for all the years after that, it was still there. The magical Christmas Eves, that morning feeling.

There's only two people I can thank for this, really. My parents. My mom and dad have spent years making Christmas the most perfect holiday.

My father is a paramedic for Baltimore City and could have spent so many Christmases at work, but in my twenty-one years of life, he has never missed a single December 25th with me (and he won't be missing my twenty-second Christmas, either). He works tirelessly and effortlessly to afford such amazing gifts and time with us. He is the hardest worker I know, and I never appreciated this as a child. I wrote to Santa; I thanked Santa.

And my mother. She works tirelessly, too—making Christmas cookies, decorating our entire house, moving the coffee table in the living room so we have more space for presents. For twelve years she has still been playing Santa; she crafts each Christmas so it is perfect, like I am seven again, even though I am well over that age, even though that's not how life is anymore. But it's beautiful, the way she created a childhood that I am eternally thankful for. The way she replicates it every year. She is the reason I have my American Girl Dolls. She is the

reason I think of magic when I drink eggnog or smell the Christmas tree. But as a child, I wrote to Santa, and thanked Santa, too.

I don't think the idea of Santa is bad. In fact, I think it is important that children have this very first heartbreak, so they feel an even greater love and thankfulness for their parents. To make Christmas magical is difficult. There are so many challenges and hardships in the world, that creating magic seems pointless.

I know that when I'm old, I would give anything to be where I am, right now. To still have Christmases with my parents and sister, to still spend it with my family. To write thank-you notes to Mom and Dad, rather than

Santa—because even though I'll never get back those years where I believed in a flying sleigh and reindeer and presents through the chimney, I'll also never get back the years of consciousness and gratefulness and having everyone right here, right now. That is the beauty of Christmas.

So thank you, Mom and Dad, for all the Christmases of the past and present. I hope to make the ones of the future just as special. Thank you for moving the living room coffee table, for baking extra cookies, for Cecile the American Girl Doll.

To read other articles by Claire Doll, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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# ARTS

## A Christmas Carol returns to the Majestic Theater

The beloved Totem Pole Playhouse production continues its holiday family tradition! The Caledonia Theatre Company, in association with Gettysburg Community Theatre, will present the Totem pole playhouse original adaptation of A Christmas Carol by Carl Schurr & Wil Love opening December 8, at 7:30 pm at Gettysburg's Majestic Theater.

First produced at Chambersburg Central School in 1987, this beautiful adaptation is celebrating its 35th Anniversary. The production will run with limited performances through Dec. 17th. Over 30 performers, young and old, will grace the stage as a myriad of characters. The production will be directed by Producing Artistic Director, David Hemsley Caldwell.

Returning in the coveted role of Ebenezer Scrooge is William Eissler. Richard Sautter of Get-

tysburg will portray Jacob Marley, Scrooge's deceased business partner and the three spirits taking Scrooge on his journey of redemption will be portrayed by Ariabella Dimino (The Ghost of Christmas Past), Sam Little (The Ghost of Christmas Present) and Lute Lyman (The Ghost of Christmas Future).

Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's kind, underpaid and under-appreciated employee, is porkayed by Gebyburg University professor Christopher Kauffman. His real-life daughters, Mia and Phoebe Kauffman will join each other on stage as Belinda and Martha Cratchit. Also taking their places around Cratchit's sparsely laid but abundantly loving Christmas table are Donovan Ohler (Matthew), Jasper Wakefield (Peter) and their beloved Tiny Tim shared by Larkin Bucher and Liam Spang. Taylor Whidden once again serves as

Bob's loving & protective wife, Mrs. Cratchit. Adam Wennick will take on the role of Fred, Scrooge's faithful and patient nephew, Catherine Blaine of Gettysburg will play Mrs. Fezziwig and Belle will be portrayed by Bailey Hovermale.

Once again the show will be a family affair with siblings and multiple generations joining each other on the stage. McConnellsburg brothers, Elliott and Jasper Wakefield, both appear in this year's production. This will mark Elliott's 8th annual performance in A Christmas Carol as a Caroler and Dick Wilkins. Jasper will once again play Peter Cratchit. Emily Windover joins husband Chris Kauffman and daughters Phoebe and Mia onstage as the Charity Woman and the Laundress.

Chambersburg natives, brother and sister Liam and Alice Spang, mother and daugh-



Totem Pole Playhouse continues its holiday family tradition with its original adaptation of A Christmas Carol at Gettysburg's Majestic Theater. First produced in 1987, this beautiful adaptation is celebrating its 35th Anniversary.

ter Laura and Emmeline Spon-seller and brothers Thomas and Michael Barra will also grace the stage this year.

The show will be performed December 8, 9, 15, 16 & 17 at 7:30 p.m. December 10 & 16th at 2 p.m. Student Matinees also available by calling the Totem Pole

Box Office at 717 -352-2164.

To purchase tickets call the Majestic Theater Box Office at 717 -337 -8200 or purchase online at the Majestic Theater website [www.gettysburgmajestic.org](http://www.gettysburgmajestic.org).

Student Matinees also available by calling the Totem Pole Box Office @ 717-352-2164.

## Bundle Dyeing at the FAC Art Center

Bundle Dyeing with Kristin Arzt at the FAC Art Center will be taking place Thursday, Dec 7th, at 5:30 p.m. at the FAC Art Center at 5 2nd St, Frederick. The workshop is \$65 to register with a \$15 materials fee.

Learn the beautiful art of bundle dyeing and eco-printing with plants! In this class, you will gain an understanding of how to work with natural dyes as you work with whole plants to create colors and patterns on fiber. Kristen Arzt will cover an introduction to natural dye plants and differ-

ent types of fabric. Participants will work with natural dyestuffs including food scraps, fresh and dried flowers, locally foraged leaves, and more.

Participants will also learn how to bundle dye on silk and cotton, including how to prepare the fabric, place the dyestuffs, create organic patterns, both improvisational and intentional printmaking on cloth, wrap the fabric, and steam the fabric on a stovetop. At the end of the class attendees will leave with three dyed projects, including a cotton bandana and silk scarf.

Kristin Arzt is a natural dyer, educator, gardener, and designer based in Maryland. She has served on the board of Local Cloth and been involved in Fibersheds across the country, from Northern California, to the Mid-Atlantic, to the Blue Ridge Mountains. By exploring the collision of textiles, plants, and sustainability, her goal is to help make the study of natural dyes accessible to everyone through education and enthusiasm.

When not teaching in-person and online courses, Kristin grows

her own seasonal dye plants at home for closer experimentation; often sharing seeds and sprouts with students. After becoming enamored with the world of natural color, she has taken years to expand her toolkit, traveling far and wide to learn directly with specialized teachers in the dye community. She has studied with Catharine Ellis, Joy Boutrup, Kathy Hattori, and many more amazing instructors, and assisted Yoshiko Wada and Tomoko Torimaru.

Register at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) and search "Frederick Arts Council."

The Frederick Arts Council invests in a vibrant and cohesive arts community for the people of Frederick County. The organization fosters an environment where the arts flourish in the community through grants and scholarships, arts advocacy, and links to essential resources. FAC is responsible for large-scale programming such as the Frederick Festival of the Arts, Sky Stage, Frederick Public Art Initiative, Artist Studios, Art in the Park, and Arts in Education grants. For more information about the Frederick Arts Council, visit [www.frederickartscouncil.org](http://www.frederickartscouncil.org).

## Celebrates the holiday season with Way Off Broadway

Every year Way Off Broadway brings a brand new Christmas production to the

stage, making it the perfect place to celebrate the holidays with family and friends. The

most joyous time of the year, the magic of the season makes anything possible. Always

the most popular of the year, blending songs and music from Christmases past and present,

the show is perfect for the entire family.

Taking to the stage in this season's holiday offering are Lizzie Bartlett, Betsey Whitmore Brannen, Paul M. Cabell, Jarod Glou, Bob Gudauskas, Becca Mills, Wil Spaeth, and Megan Elizabeth West.

Jingle Jingle All the Way runs November 25th through December 23rd, with performances are every Friday and Saturday evening, and matinees on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of each month. Tickets on a Friday evening or Sunday afternoon are \$55 per person; on Saturday evening, tickets are \$59. Tickets may be purchased by calling the theatre's Box Office at 301-662-6600.

To learn more about Jingle Jingle All the Way, or any of the shows in Way Off Broadway's upcoming 30th Anniversary Season including Agatha Christie's A Murder is Announced, Diana - The Musical, Tootsie, Anastasia, or Christmas Chronicles, visit [www.wayoffbroadway.com](http://www.wayoffbroadway.com).

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## Taking smaller bites

Sonya Verlaque

Now that we have 3 small kids we are not “New Years Eve” people. We were also shift workers for a long time (he a firefighter and I worked in healthcare), so often our holidays were not celebrated on the actual day. I do love getting dressed up once in awhile for a party, and I love appetizers. They are my favorite part of a wedding or party, or at a restaurant - I would always choose tapas. One bite or a small plate of everything on the menu. So, in honor of the kick off of winter party season, here are some appetizers you can serve or bring to holiday parties, before or after new years.

### Caprese Bites

I feel like all I eat over the holidays is carbs, at least this has a vegetable in it, where you can feel like you ate some sort of nutrition. If you arrange them on a round platter, you can make a wreath and it's easy to bring to any party. All of these elements can be made ahead of time also and refrigerated until you pull them out.

#### Ingredients:

Balsamic Glaze (you can also buy this in the store, it is also very good)

- 1 1/2 cups balsamic vinegar
- 3 tbs brown sugar
- 1 tsp of vanilla

#### Salad:

12 ounces grape tomatoes (or cherry tomatoes)

- 10 ounces fresh cherry-sized bocconcini (mozzarella) balls
- 2 tbs olive oil
- Handful fresh basil leaves
- flaked sea salt and ground pepper, to season

Preparation Directions: To make the glaze: Combine the vinegar and sugar in a small saucepan. Cook while stirring over low heat for 4-5 minutes, or until sugar has dissolved. Increase heat to medium setting and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and allow to simmer for 8-10 minutes, or until reduced by one-third and thickened like syrup.

For the salad: Wash and dry the tomatoes. Pull basil leaves from stems and wash and dry. Drain the mozzarella balls. Skewer the tomato, then a basil leaf, followed by a mozzarella ball. If the basil leaf is large you may wrap it around a tomato to skewer it, or fold it. Arrange them all on a platter, and you can make a wreath shape with space to put the bowl of balsamic. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with any additional basil left over.

To serve, place the bowl of balsamic glaze in the centre of the wreath, or you can drizzle it on top, if you don't make a circular shape.

### Mongolian Glazed Meatballs

These are easy to place in a large warmer or crockpot and perfect for toothpicks. They are also not spicy, so child friendly. This is from cafe delites, but I use apple cider vinegar because Shaoxing wine is not always easy to find.

#### Ingredients:

##### Meatballs

- 2 pounds ground beef

- 3/4 cup Panko or breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbs low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tbs Shaoxing (Chinese) wine or apple cider vinegar or rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbs minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger
- 1 cup thinly-sliced or chopped green onions (4 green onions)
- Kosher salt and pepper, to taste

### Mongolian glaze

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 4 cloves (or 1 tbs) garlic, minced
- 1/2 tbs minced ginger
- 1/2 cup low sodium soy sauce
- 2/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbs hoisin sauce
- 1 tbs oyster sauce
- 1 tbs ground white pepper (or 1/2-1 tbs red chilli / powder)

Preparation: Preheat oven to 200°C | 400°F. Make the meatballs: Mix together all of the meatball ingredients in a large bowl until well-combined. Spoon out 1-inch of meat mixture with a cookie scoop (or tbs), shape into balls and place onto 2 large baking sheets or trays lined with baking or parchment paper or foil. It should make about 60 mini meatballs. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden browned and cooked through.

While the meatballs are baking, make your sauce. Heat a non-stick pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Whisk ALL of the sauce ingredients together in the pan until well blended. Bring to a simmer and continue cooking until sauce thickens, while stirring occasionally to prevent burning or sticking on the bottom of the pan (about 8 minutes).

When meatballs have finished cooking, add half of the meatballs into the pan and gently coat each meatball generously and evenly in the sauce. Transfer the glazed meatballs to a serving dish or tray (or keep warm in a small crockpot) with a slotted spoon and add in the remaining non-coated meatballs to the sauce. Coat and transfer to serving dish. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and sliced green onions (if desired), and serve warm with toothpicks or mini forks.

During my time in pastry school, I learned a very important secret. I always wanted to do everything the hard and labor intensive way. And there is a great benefit to learning the process, croissants definitely made me question my life choices, a semester of artisan breads was so interesting and I can make some great bagels now. But here is the secret: the frozen pastries at the grocery store are fine. Are they amazing? No, but they are fine. It is ok to buy a piecrust when

you are short on time. Puff pastry? Please, don't spend days folding and chilling butter.

### Puff Pastry Cheese Twists

This uses the frozen puff pastry and the only prep is defrosting it. Kids will also be happy to help you twist and bake and then eat this cheesy bread. The main way these wont work, is if your oven isn't fully preheated the pastry wont puff.

To read other cooking articles, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 sheet of puff pastry
- 1/3 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup parmesan, shaved
- 2 tsp garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/2 tsp salt

Preparation: Preheat an oven to 220°C (430°F). In a bowl, mix the shredded cheese, grated parmesan, garlic, salt, and oregano. Using a pastry brush, brush the beaten egg across the puff pastry. Place the cheese mix over half of the puff pastry sheet. Fold the pastry in half and brush with some beaten egg. Place the rest of the cheese mix over the half. Cut the pastry into 1 cm (1/2 inch) wide strips, use a sharp knife or a pizza cutter. Twist the strips slightly and place onto an oven tray lined with baking paper. Repeat until you have done all the strips. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush the twists with the egg. Place into the preheated oven and cook for about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Once golden browned, remove and allow to cool. Serve & Enjoy.

### Christmas Cookies to Put You in the Holiday Mood!

#### Candy Cane Cookies

Soft buttery cookies coated in crushed candy canes & drizzled in white chocolate. Candy Cane Cookies are the perfect complement to hot chocolate, by a warm fire. Also, a colorful addition to Santa's plate!

#### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup butter softened
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 2 eggs
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsps cream of tartar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt

#### Topping

- 1/4 cup crushed candy cane crumbs
- 1/4 cup melted white chocolate

#### Instructions

Heat oven to 400°F. Line bak-



Caprese Bites

ing trays with parchment paper, set aside.

Place crushed candy canes in a small bowl & set aside.

Cream together 1 1/2 cups sugar, the butter, shortening and eggs in large bowl.

Mix together dry ingredients. Stir into wet ingredients.

Shape dough into 1 1/4-inch balls. Dip 1/2 of each ball in the crushed candy canes.

Place 2 inches apart on baking sheets.

Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until set. Cool 2-3 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack.

Drizzle each cooled cookie with the melted white chocolate & then sprinkle with additional candy cane crumbs

#### Kris Kringle Crinkles

Festively-colored sugar cookies, with a touch of mint. Rolled in powdered sugar, these cookies will remind you of the snowflakes that are blowing outside as you enjoy these delicious treats, warm and cozy inside!

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup Butter (softened)
- 1 1/2 cups Granulated Sugar
- 2 Eggs
- 1 tsp Vanilla
- 1 tsp Peppermint Extract (or Almond, Lemon or Mint)
- 1/2 tsps Baking Soda
- 3 cups Flour (all-purpose)
- Powdered Sugar

#### Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar until completely combined. Add in eggs, vanilla and peppermint extract and mix until the dough is fluffy.

Add in the Baking Soda. Mix in the flour, a third at a time. Split into two portions and color one red and one green.

Refrigerate the dough for 2 hours. Roll dough into balls then roll in powdered sugar.

Bake in a 350-degree oven for 9-10 minutes.

To read other cooking articles, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

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# ASTRONOMY

## The night sky of December

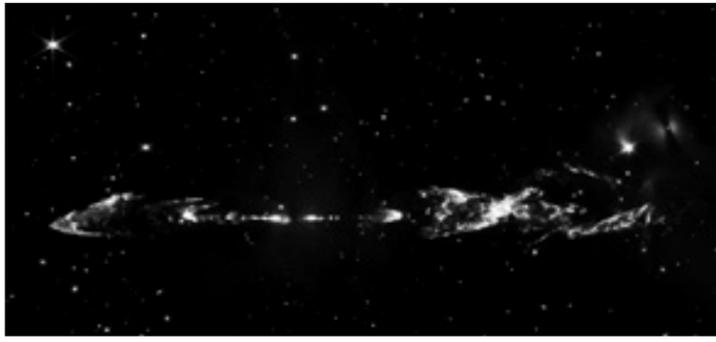
Professor Wayne Wooten

The last quarter moon is on December 6th. The waning crescent moon passes just south of Venus (watch both in broad daylight after sunrise!) on December 9th. The new moon is on December 12th; four months until totality on April 8th! The waxing crescent will set well before midnight on December 13th, the peak for perhaps the best annual meteor shower, the Geminids. The meteors come out of Gemini in the NE, and while there may be more after midnight, there tend to be quite a few in the evening as well, and the faint crescent will not interfere even then.

The crescent passes below Saturn on December 17th, and the first quarter moon is December 19th. The winter solstice occurs on December 21st at 10:27 to begin winter, and this is our shortest day. The waxing gibbous moon passes just left of Jupiter on December 22nd; with clear afternoon skies, can you spot Jupiter naked eye before sunset, using the moon as a guide? The Full, or Yule Moon, is the day after Christmas this year.

Mercury and Venus both are morning stars, with Mercury climbing higher in the SE dawn as the year ends, to reach greatest western elongation in January. The pair will be closest on the morning of January 12th, when they make a striking alignment with Mars below them, now emerging from behind the Sun.

Jupiter is well placed for evening viewing in Aries, dominating the eastern sky at dusk, and Saturn is getting lower in the SW in Aquarius. Observe all four giants now, as Uranus (Aries) and Neptune (Aquarius) are also visible



Imagine you could go back in time 4.6 billion years and take a picture of our Sun just as it was being born. What would it look like? Well, you can get a clue from this glorious new image acquired by the James Webb Space Telescope. Towards the centre of this object, called HH212, is a star coming into existence that is probably no more than 50,000 years old. The scene would have looked much the same when our Sun was a similar age. Physics suggests those dramatic outflows of gas are the means by which the nascent star regulates its birthing.

in binoculars. Nor seen is Comet Halley. This month it is at aphelion, outside the orbit of Neptune; by January, it heads sunward again, to arrive with the naked eyes in the dawn skies of June 2061. At its best that August, it will be ten times brighter than it appeared back in 1986. Something to live for! Here is the striking conjunction of it, Venus, and the crescent moon on the evening of August 18, 2061.

The square of Pegasus dominates the western sky. South of it are the watery constellations of Pisces (the fish), Capricorn (Sea Goat), Aquarius (the Water Bearer) with Saturn now, and Cetus (the Whale). Below Aquarius is Fomalhaut, the only first magnitude star of the southern fall sky. It marks the mouth of Pisces Australis, the Southern Fish. If you want an ideal ap for learning the constellations, download "Nocturne" for Apple phones, and mount it on a tripod for 2' exposures of the sky, which you can then annotate with star names, constel-

lation lines, and even the mythological figures. Makes the sky come alive.

The constellation Cassiopeia makes a striking W in the NW. She contains many nice star clusters for binocular users in her outer arm of our Milky Way, extending to the NE now. Her daughter, Andromeda, starts with the NE corner star of Pegasus' Square, and goes NE with two more bright stars in a row. It is from the middle star, beta Andromeda, that we proceed about a quarter the way to the top star in the W of Cassiopeia, and look for a faint blur with the naked eye. M-31, the Andromeda Galaxy, is the most distant object visible with the naked eye, lying about 2.5 million light years distant.

Overhead is Andromeda's hero, Perseus, rises. Perseus contains the famed eclipsing binary star Algol, where the Arabs imagined the eye of the gorgon Medusa would lie. It fades to a third its normal brightness for six out of every

70 hours, as a larger but cooler orange giant covers about 80% of the smaller but hotter and thus brighter companion as seen from Earth. This method of observing changes in a star's brightness when another body (even a planet!) eclipses it is a very powerful tool in finding stars sizes, shapes (tidal distortion of Algol was confirmed by my master's thesis at Gainesville), and exoplanets.

Look at Perseus' feet for the famed Pleiades cluster; they lie about 400 light years distant, and over 250 stars are members of this fine group. East of the seven sisters is the V of stars marking the face of Taurus the Bull, with bright orange Aldebaran as his eye. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance. Their appearance in November in classical times was associated with the stormy season, when frail sailing ships stayed in port. Aldebaran is not a member of the Hyades, but about twice as close as the Hyades; distances in astronomy can be deceiving. Usually the brighter objects are closer, but exceptionally luminous objects, like Rigel in Orion, may be over 2,000 light years distant yet still first magnitude.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the overhead sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer. Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pollux highlight the Gemini. UWF alumni can associate the pair with Jason and the Golden Fleece legend, for they were the first two Argonauts to sign up on his crew of adventurers.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern sky at dusk. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. It is part of a huge spiral arm gas cloud, with active starbirth all over the place.

Something very special will happen to Betelgeuse on the evening of December 11th. At 8:17 p.m., observers in Key West should see this bright star fade greatly for a few seconds. The small main belt asteroid Leona will cover (some!) of the huge surface of this red supergiant, one of the biggest in the galaxy. So this will, like last October 14th, be an annular eclipse, where the dark body does go through the center of the star, but is NOT big enough to cover it completely. You will probably hear a lot more about this unique event in days ahead. For us, too far north, just a close miss, alas.

Last but certainly not least, in the east rise the hunter's two faithful companions, Canis major and minor. Procyon is the bright star in the little dog, and rises minutes before Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. Sirius dominates the SE sky by 7 p.m. and as it rises, the turbulent winter air causes it to sparkle with shafts of spectral fire. Beautiful as the twinkling appears to the naked eye, for astronomers this means the image is blurry; only in space can we truly see "clearly now". At 8 light years distance, Sirius is the closest star we can easily see with the naked eye

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## Farmers' Almanac

*"Christmas is a season for kindling the fire for hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart."*

—Washington Irving (1802-1882)

**Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch:** Dry and milder at first, then turning breezy and colder with rain east and snow west (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); seasonably cold and dry, then breezy with light snow (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); dry, turning milder, then rain, possibly mixed with wet snow west (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); dry and mild at first, then showers, turning breezy and cooler (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); 21-26 seasonably mild with periods of rain (21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26); dry, turning cooler but more seasonable; flurries possible west (27, 28, 29, 30, 31).

**Severe Weather Watch:** The Town and Country Almanack sees no severe weather in December's forecast.

**Full Moon:** December's full moon falls on the 26th. It has been appropriately called Cold Moon by many Native American tribe (because of the lower temperatures during the month!). Many other tribes noticed beavers scurrying to finish their dams and lodges before the lakes and ponds begin to ice over, so they called it Ice-Forming Moon And Beaver Moon.

**Special Notes:** The Winter Solstice of 2023 will occur on Thursday, Decem-

ber 21st. Remember that The Almanack makes a great gift, one that keeps giving throughout the entire year! Go to [www.almanack.com/order](http://www.almanack.com/order), order a holiday copy or two (or three or four!), and check out the new digital version available on-line at a price that will surely entice! And don't forget to include a nifty the Almanack knows which way the wind blows! sweatshirt or tee under the tree. Go to [www.bonfire.com/the-almanack-knows](http://www.bonfire.com/the-almanack-knows), check out the styles and colors, and order one today.

**Holidays:** Advent Sunday falls on the 3rd in 2023. Hanukkah begins at sunset on Thursday, December 7th, celebrate Christmas on Monday, December 25th, and Kwanzaa, on Tuesday, December 26th. Celebrate and share the holiday spirit with family and friends and try to keep that joyful and giving spirit alive throughout the coming year! Everyone here at The Town & Country Almanack wishes everyone the happiest of holidays and again, pledges to its loyal readers (and followers on social media!) to continue to inform, inspire, and entertain as it has done for the past 228 years! New Year's Eve falls on Sunday, December 31st. For a safe, family-oriented evening of fun, food, and entertainment on the very first night of the year, go to [www.first-night.com/cities](http://www.first-night.com/cities) to find a First Night Celebration nearest you.

**The Garden:** If you need holiday greenery, grab your shears and head for the back yard. If you are lucky, you will have a variety of boxwoods, yew, fir, or a variety of pine trees to choose from. If you are really lucky, you may even have a holly tree! A live Christmas tree is still a tradition in some homes. Check its freshness by tapping the branches. Very few needles should fall. Stroke the branches to make sure the needles are resilient and not brittle, have an aromatic fragrance, and good green color for the species. Before bringing the tree indoors, cut 1-inch off the bottom before placing in the water receptacle, and fill it with ½ cup regular 7-up plus 1 quart water or tree.

**The Farm:** Best for planting root crops (7, 8); weeding and stirring the soil (2, 3); planting above-ground crops (1, 18, 19); harvesting all crops (20, 21); the best days for setting hens and incubators (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31); the slaughtering and butchering of meat (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18); transplanting (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18); the weaning of all small animals and livestock (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19); 1, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28); harvesting and storing grains (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

### J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living

*"The thought that goes into the giving of a gift to a friend or loved one, is so much more important than the value of the gift itself"*

# FITNESS & HEALTH

## A special Christmas list!

Linda Stultz  
Certified Fitness Trainer

Each year people ask you for a Christmas list so they have an idea what you would like for Christmas. This year how about surprising them with a list of time they could spend with you and things you could do together. People say it's not the gift that counts, it's the thought. That can be so true with family and friends. Most people have the things they need and sometimes gifts end up being something that gets put in the closet and never used. The gift of time is something that will be greatly appreciated now and always remembered in the future.

I remember when my sons were in school some years the teachers would have them assemble a coupon book for Mother's Day or Father's Day or some other holiday. They would write down on a coupon what they would do for us. Sometimes it was wash the dishes or rake leaves or give us a hug each day for a month. I always extended that coupon with a no expiration date.

This may be the year that you would like to show family and friends how much they mean to you by setting aside time to visit or spend helping them with something. Of course, buying gifts are the tradition at Christmas time but time and help may be a gift they will treasure even more.

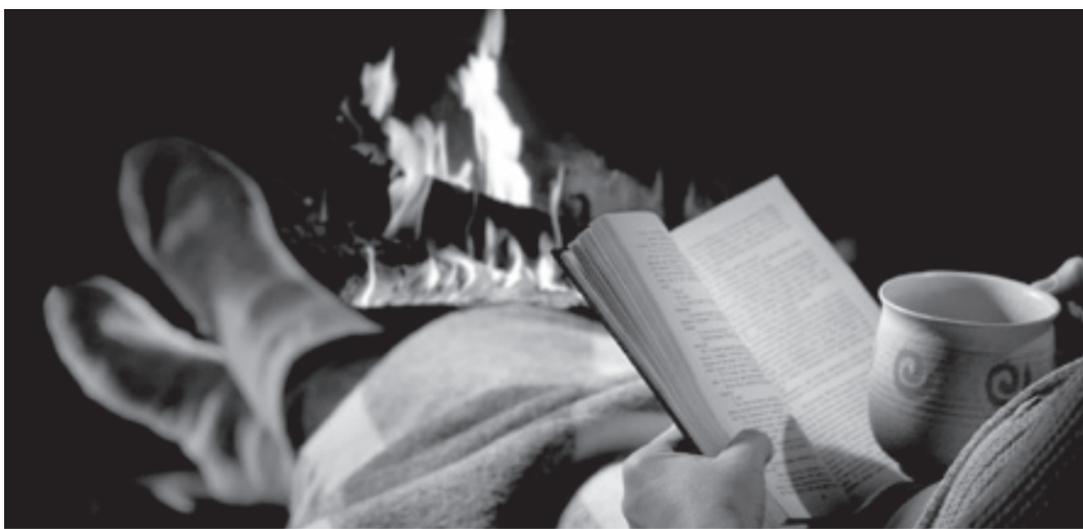
I know being with family can sometimes be challenging. Maybe this can be a way to get closer and get to know people better. Giving the gift of time is not only for our family but can also be extended to neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. Just a visit to your neighbor that doesn't get out much can mean a big difference to them. They may not have the chance to talk with people and

it could make their day much better. Loneliness is big problem for older people or those who just don't have family to look in on them.

I have told you many ways the gift of time and visits can help others but it can also make a big difference in your own life. Sharing time, talk, experiences and yourself with others also improves your health. People are social beings and in today's world contact with other people is becoming less and less. Exercise, healthy eating, meditation are all important to keep us in the best health we can be but sharing help and time with other people is right up there with these things. Maybe committing to visit someone a day each week will get you and them out of the house for a walk. Maybe you can share a healthy meal with them and try new food. Finding a way to share time with someone else could not only be the answer for them, but for you too.

This year Christmas could be the beginning of a special experience for you, your family and friends to discover a way to be healthy in body and soul. I always tell you to keep moving and that not only means physically but mentally and socially too. Getting and staying healthy means taking care of all parts of our being. When one part is not up to it's best the other areas are affected too.

I hope this gives you something to think about this holiday season when trying to figure out what to get someone for Christmas or what to tell someone you would like for Christmas. You could share this idea with your children or grandchildren. It would make you happy and give you time to be with them more. If you have any ideas to share, I would like to hear them. You can contact me at 717-334-6009. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!



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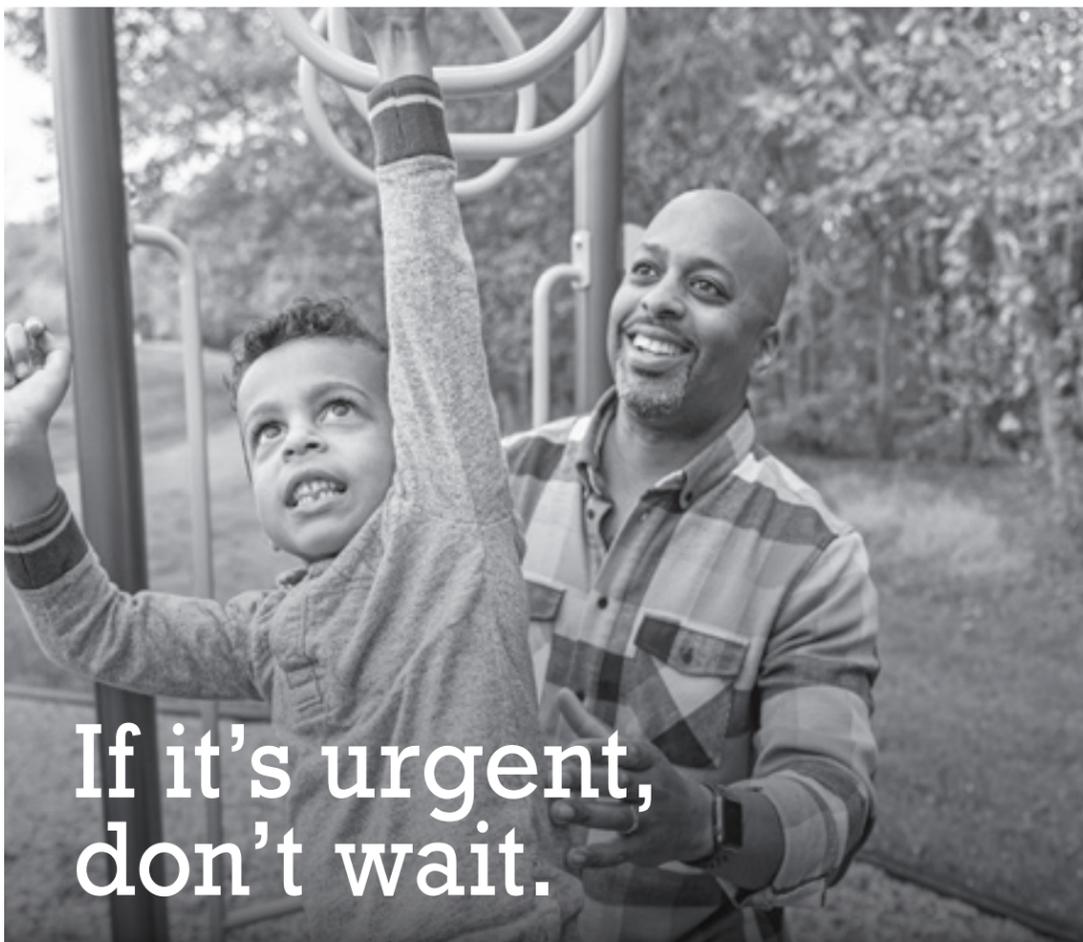
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YOUR COMMUNITY OF CARE

# COMMUNITY NOTES

## Community comes out to pay tribute to local veterans

The Town of Walkersville honored their local veterans on the Sunday before Veterans' Day this year, coming together for a service planned by the Walkersville Veterans' Committee at Memorial Park. In spite of the cold, nearly 200 residents gathered at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street, filling all the chairs set out by staff and forming a crowd around the memorial.

Kathy Sixx of the Walkersville Veterans Committee began the event with a warm welcome. She acknowledged all the veterans in the audience.

Following the wreath laying, Bill Butler introduced the guest speaker, Col. Fred Schumkaer of Frederick.

Schumkaer dedicated his time to recounting the abundant history behind Veterans' Day. While it was President Eisenhower who proclaimed November 11th as Veterans' Day, its origins lay in the armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Ger-

many that went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918. For that reason, November 11th, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."

On November 11th, 1919, President Wilson proclaimed the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11 a.m.

Congress officially recognized the



Commissioners Gilbert & Baker shake hands with veteran Dick Brady.

symbolism of day when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926, with these words:

"Whereas the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the

most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations,

which we hope may never again be severed, and "Whereas it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations; and "Whereas the legislatures of twenty-seven of our States have already declared November 11 to be a legal holiday; Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples."

In 1938 it approved an act that made November 11th, Armistice Day, a legal holiday to honor Veterans of World War I.

In 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and Airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the Veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation on June 1st, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American Veterans of all wars.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11th, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11th not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but also helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Burgess Chad Weddle and the Town Commissioners distributed tote bags with the Walkersville Town seal on it to each veteran by branch of military, following which the crowd sang "God Bless the USA" in unison.

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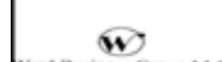

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FIRST CLASS | \$500 in Gift Cards (Stamps from all 10 Participating Businesses)  
 BUSINESS CLASS | \$250 in Gift Cards (Stamps from 6 Participating Businesses)  
 PREMIUM ECONOMY CLASS | \$150 in Gift Cards (Stamps from 4 Participating Businesses)  
 ECONOMY CLASS | \$100 in Gift Cards (Stamps from 2 Participating Businesses)

(2 randomly picked winners from each category)

**8 CHANCES TO WIN!**

Drawing to be held 12/31/23 @ 11:00 p.m.

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 UPDATES & MORE INFORMATION**





# 1 DAY SPECIALS!

## Saturday, December 16

While Supplies Last!

Shop around  
for many more  
in-store  
specials!

### T-Bone Steaks

**\$6<sup>99</sup>** lb.  
Limit 5

### 93% Lean Ground Beef

**\$4<sup>79</sup>** lb.  
Limit 5

### Boneless Chicken Breasts

**\$1<sup>79</sup>** lb.  
Limit 5

### Baby Back Ribs

**\$2<sup>79</sup>** lb.  
Limit 5

### Whole Boneless Pork Loin

**\$1<sup>89</sup>** lb.  
Limit 5

### Land O Lakes Butter

**2 for \$6**

1 lb. Pkg.  
Limit 5

### Pillsbury Grands Biscuits

**\$2<sup>99</sup>** Ea.

### Pillsbury Pie Crusts

**\$3<sup>99</sup>** Ea.

### Pillsbury Crescents

**\$3<sup>49</sup>** Ea.

### Wild Oysters

**\$18<sup>99</sup>** Pint

### Venezuelan Jumbo Lump Crabmeat

**\$30<sup>00</sup>** lb.

### 26/30 EZ Peel Shrimp

**\$10<sup>99</sup>** 2 lb. Bags

### Fresh Catfish Fillets

**\$8<sup>99</sup>** lb.

3 N. Main Street, Woodsboro  
301-845-8674  
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5% Senior Citizen Discount Every Tuesday



Christmas Week Hours: Mon. - Sat. 7 a.m.-8 p.m. • Christmas Eve - Sun., Dec. 24 - 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Christmas Day - Mon., Dec. 25 - 8 a.m.-2 p.m. • New Year's Eve - Sun., Dec. 31 - 8 a.m.-7 p.m.  
New Year's Day - 8 a.m.-2 p.m. • Tues., Jan. 2 - 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

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Real Estate, Inc.

## J & B Real Estate, Inc.

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142 Walkers Village Way, Walkersville



**NEW LISTING**

  
15 Sloc Gin Trail, Fairfield  
3 Bdrms/ 3 Baths/ 1300+ SqFt/ 1/2 Acre/  
Raised Rancher/ Sunroom/ TLC Needed  
**\$239,900**  
Call Beth Ohler

**NEW PRICE**

  
116 Sunny Way, Thurmont  
Rancher w/Attached Garage/ Deck/  
Covered Porch/ Prim Bdrm w/Private Bath  
**\$339,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**COMING SOON**

  
14720 Claude Ln., Cascade  
3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 1300+ SqFt/  
Cape Cod/ Fenced Rear Yard  
**\$265,000**  
Call Deb Gartner

**NEW LISTING**

  
12133 Pleasant Walk Rd., Myersville  
3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 2400+ SqFt/ 3+ Acres/  
Pole Barn/ 3 Car Detached Garage  
**\$649,000**  
Call Beth Ohler

**NEW LISTING**

  
7101 Friends Creek Rd., Emmitsburg  
3 Bdrms/ 1 Bath/ 2.5 Acres/  
Enclosed Car Port/ Shed  
**\$275,000**  
Call Beth Ohler

**NEW LISTING**

  
17 N. Altamont Ave., Thurmont  
4 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 3600+ SqFt/ Historic  
Victorian Colonial/ Corner Lot/ Original  
**\$397,000**  
Call Cathi Miller

**ACTIVE**

  
15519 Kelbaugh Rd., Thurmont  
2+ Acres/ Perc'd/ Scenic View  
**\$125,000**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**TO BE BUILT**

  
16017 Foxville Deerfield, Rd.  
3 Bdrms/ 2.5 Baths/ Up to 6000+ SqFt/  
Customizable Rancher/ 5+ Ac./ Wooded Lot  
**\$834,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**NEW PRICE**

  
13115 Catoctin Furnace Rd.  
3 Bdrms/ 3 Baths/ 1+ Acre  
Hdwd Flrs/ Exposed Beams  
**\$335,000**  
Call Elle Smith

**COMING SOON**

  
13648 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont  
3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ Brick Rancher  
on a corner lot.  
**\$349,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**COMING SOON**

  
461 Waynesboro Rd., Fairfield  
4 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 1800+ SqFt/ 3 Bay  
Garage w/Lift/ 2 Bay Boat House  
**\$439,000**  
Call Beth Ohler

**Owens Creek Overlook, Sabillasville**  
5 Custom Home Packages w/Land  
starting at **\$599,900**  
Lots available  
for **\$135,000** each  
16011 Foxville Deerfield Road  
5.43 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 10 GPM  
16013 Foxville Deerfield Road  
5 Acres/ 3 Bdrms, Perc 5 GPM  
16015 Foxville Deerfield Road  
5.24 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 12 GPM  
16017 Foxville Deerfield Road  
5.12 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 10 GPM  
16019 Foxville Deerfield Road  
5 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 10 GPM  
Call Cindy Grimes

**ACTIVE**

  
6842 Browns Quarry Rd., Sabillasville  
6+ Acres/ Wooded/  
Conventional Perc  
**\$149,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**TO BE BUILT**

  
16013 Foxville Deerfield Rd.  
3 Bdrms/ 2.5 Baths/ Up to 4500+ SqFt/  
Customizable Rancher/ 5+ Ac./ Wooded Lot  
**\$669,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**NEW PRICE**

  
14280 Upper Edgemont Rd. #9,  
Waynesboro, PA  
4 Bdrms/ 3 Full Baths/ 5000+ SqFt  
In-Ground Pool/ Remodeled Kitchen  
Finished LL  
**\$509,900**  
Call Rachel Hogg

**NEW LISTING**

  
5101 Wigville Rd., Thurmont  
4 Bdrms/ 3 Baths/ 3900+ SqFt/  
Raised Rancher/ 4+ Acres Wooded  
Finished LL  
**\$474,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

  
Cindy Grimes  
Broker - 301-271-3487 x203  
301-788-5354  
Cindy\_Grimes@msn.com

**ACTIVE**

  
158 N. Carroll St., Thurmont  
1672 SqFt House w/ Bank Barn  
2.6 Acres/ Zoned Office/ Industrial  
**\$450,000**  
Call Cindy Grimes

**TO BE BUILT**

  
16019 Foxville Deerfield Rd.,  
Sabillasville  
3 Bdrms/ 2.5 Baths/ 2200+ SqFt/  
To Be Built/ Wooded Lot/ 5+ Acres  
**\$599,900**  
Call Cindy Grimes

  
Kelly Weddle  
Salesperson, MD & PA  
301-693-7232  
kellyweddlesells@outlook.com

  
Elle Smith  
Salesperson, MD & PA  
301-401-8620  
smith21788@comcast.net

  
Valentine Benning  
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