

Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 1, NO. 3 “EXALTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION” —EDWARD R. MURROW DECEMBER 2021

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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.

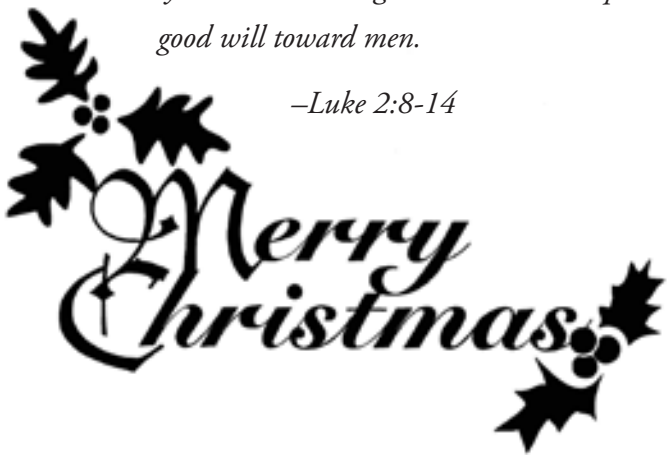
For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

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 Woodsboro-Walkersville News-Journal: Shannon, Katie, Sharon, Marianne, Boyce, Dorothea, Mark, Phil, Amanda, Jennifer, Tim, Jess, Carol, Wayne, Brian, and Mike.

Walkersville Volunteer Rescue acknowledges excellence

On the evening of November 20th, members of the Walkersville Volunteer Rescue Company and the surrounding community came together for an awards banquet to recognize individuals with outstanding commitment. The top acknowledgements included the Lifetime Achievement Award, Life Member Award, and Lifetime Benefactor Award.

Cindy Cramer, the President of the Rescue Company and wife of Chief Topper Cramer, began the evening with special recognition of a member of the company who had passed away in December 2020. Stan Mount became a member of the Junior Company in 1983 and served as LOSAT Chair from 1999-2003, Assistant Treasurer from 2004-2007, and Capital Projects Chairman from 2012-2016. As Assistant Treasurer he directed the Board of Directors attention to the lack of an investment fund for long-term stability of the company, which they quickly establish.

Chief Cramer told the assembled audience how vital this fund would be to the company. “Due to his financial knowledge and wise decision making, we are to this day in excellent financial position,” Cramer said. The company, Cramer said, is now in a position to refinance their mortgage for smaller monthly payments, all the equipment in their fleet is paid for, including a new

utility truck they will be receiving in early 2022, and they will be replacing the current rescue squad before the end of the year, which may total \$1.5 million – all thanks to the hard work of Stan Mount.

The Lifetime Achievement Award plaque was presented to the family of Stan Mount in recognition of his generous contributions, dedication, and financial guidance to the company during his 41 years as an EMT, Board Director, and Treasurer. The plaque was accepted by Stan’s wife Karen, while a second will be hung in the Rescue Company building for all to see.

The Life Member Award, described as the most prestigious award the department gives, was awarded to Michael McDonald. The award is presented to an individual for their years of active service and contributions and commitment to the company. McDonald joined the company in 2003 and has been an active member in EMS training and recently assumed position on the new Rescue Squad Committee.

The Lifetime Benefactor Award was given to Melvin & Esther Filler, posthumously, for their life-long and generous financial support to the company.

Frederick County District 5 Councilman Michael Blue re-enforced the importance of volunteer service organizations like the Rescue Company,



Stan Mount was recognized posthumously with the 2021 Walkersville Volunteer Rescue Company's Lifetime Achievement award for his many years of volunteer service. His son David and wife Karen accepted the award from President Cindy Cramer.

“Our quality of life is completely related to how our law enforcement and emergency services take care of this community. We could not provide a quality of life without fire rescue and EMS services.”

At the conclusion of the ban-

quet, the Board of Directors and officers for 2022 where sworn in. See page 29 for photos of the award banquet.

See page 29 for photos of the award banquet.

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WOODSBORO NEWS

Council mulls COVID loss grants

Burgess Barnes proposed to the town council that, of the \$473,908 that the town has received from the American Rescue Plan Act, \$50,000 be used to provide grants for small businesses in town that where negatively affected by the pandemic, which Barnes stated was an allowable use for the money.

Each business, Barnes suggest, can apply for a maximum of \$5,000 using an application provided by the Town that will allow them to highlight the ways in which they were affected.

Barnes noted that the proposed \$50,000 was dependent upon the number of businesses that apply and that this number could possibly be subject to change. He added, "it's not much, but it could help..." \$5,000 is a lot for some small businesses that took a big hit during COVID-19."

The Council, while generally in favor of the proposal, was unsure as to whether the grants should be

limited to 'brick and mortar' type business, or be open to home based business as well.

Commissioner Cutshall questioned what criteria would be used to determine who would get money and who would be involved in the application review process to determine which businesses meet the criteria and how much money they should be awarded. Barnes responded: "that's the next step. We'll need to get a committee together for this. I do not want to be on the committee, being the Mayor." He added, "I think we should have a three-person committee that is not elected officials, but maybe one council member who oversees the committee."

Town Manager Rice and commissioner Cutshall agreed that one member should be from the Town Council, and the others should not be business owners for the sake of fairness. Barnes noted that he has spoken with other Mayors in Fred-

erick County who are providing similar grants, and said that the requirements would not be so substantial that it would hinder businesses from applying, adding "most businesses can show us how they were affected."

Businesses that are approved for the grants will be required to retain receipts to verifying business purchases relating to the grants.

"I personally think it's a good thing to do for the small businesses in our community... that's what part of this [grant] is for, and \$5,000 a business is not too much." Barnes stressed. "If we get 20 businesses that apply and get approved, it would only be \$2,500 a business" to which Cutshall agreed, stating that the grant should be divided equally.

The Town Council will take up the matter formally at their December meeting. If approved, the town hopes to advertise the grant program and the application process in January.

Woodsboro-Walkersville
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News Briefs . . .

Preliminary Town Hall
Site Plan Expected

Barnes informed the Town Council that the town expects to receive the preliminary Town Hall site plans in mid to late November. Once the plans have been received, they will be sent to the County's division of Planning and Permitting to start the necessary round of permits.

The County's Planning and Permitting Division is responsible for the management and administration of the development review function of the Frederick County Planning Commission, including the review of site development plans and Adequate Public Facilities applications.

Barnes also told the council that the town had not yet submitted an

application to obtain a grant from the state to help cover the expected \$400,000 cost for the new town office. The town has until June 1st to submit the grant application if the application is to be considered in the state's FY-23 budget. Barnes told the Council that he intends to proceed with the construction of the new town hall and fund its cost using a loan that is currently in place for the project.

Rental Costs for Park
Pavilions to Increase

The Town Council approved raising the cost to rent pavilions in the park to a fat fee of \$75. Currently to cost to rent a pavilion in Woodsboro Park is \$50 per day with a refundable \$25 deposit for damages or excessive litter. Rice raised concern over charging renters for litter that may have been left by others, asking, "how do we know if the renter left the mess or someone did it after they left?" Town staff

holds the security check and mails it back to the renter if the park is picked up, she said. "We're collecting a security deposit... and sending it back almost all the time." Rice noted that the cost in staff time to handle the security deposits and then having to go to the post office to mail them back just didn't add up, and was subtracting from the profit the town did make from the rentals.

Commissioner Cutshall questioned how often the Town has kept security deposit to which Rice replied: "in 17 years, probably twice." Commissioner Crum was "on the fence about [the cost being raised to] \$75," noting that she understands getting rid of the security deposit but was unsure of impact the cost increase. Rice noted that the price per day has not been changed since 2004. "Everything is going up," Barnes

said, "and you're not going to get a rental in Frederick County at the other parks for less than \$100-150." Taneytown charges \$75 to reserving a pavilion in one of its parks from April through October, but drops the rate to \$35 during November through March.

Council To Consider
COVID-19 Staff Bonuses

Barnes has recommend to the Town Council that they use \$12,000 of the \$473,908 American Rescue Plan Act funding provided to the town by the Federal Government to help recover from the impact of the COVID pandemic to provide a bonus to the town staff who physically continued to come into worked during the pandemic. As the town has only three fulltime staff, that would equate to a \$4,000 bonus per employee.

Barnes noted that other towns are also giving staff bonus for working through the pandemic. Taneytown approved a \$1,200 bonus for essential employees who were compelled to report to work when the town offices were shut down as a result of the pandemic.

Town Seeks Candidates
for Committees

The Planning & Zoning committee and the Board of Appeals are looking to fill open seats. According to Barnes, the Town has some "potential annexation requests coming up, so it is very important that we fill these seats as soon as possible." If you live within Woodsboro's town limits and are interested in volunteering please contact the Town Office. Interested parties can also attend the public Planning & Zoning meetings that are held on the first Monday of each month in the meeting room behind St. Johns Church.

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WALKERSVILLE NEWS

Stormwater culvert repairs to cost \$58,000

At the November 9th town Council meeting, the Director of Public Works, Joe Birch, told the Town Council that they had received a report from the County Roads Department listing a range of issues related to the condition on the storm water culverts on Biggs Ford and Devilbiss Bridge Roads that will cost an estimated \$58,000 in mandatory repairs.

The culverts are cement structures that provide a thoroughway for rainwater to travel under the road without flooding the road surface. Town Manager Sean Williams said that their last inspection was back in 2019. While

guardrail damage listed in the report on the Devilbiss Bridge Road culvert was apparent, town staffs were not aware of any other concerns with the culverts prior to receiving the report.

Williams noted that the Town had not budgeted for this money, and as Birch put it, they were “blindsided by the report.” Birch acknowledged that Public Works had received an email about one and a half months ago regarding the culvert inspections, though nothing could have made them anticipate the lengthy report.

The \$18,000 in estimated repairs on the Biggs Ford culvert includes repair-

ing one of the cracked four cements pipes that make up the culvert. While this pipe failure needs to be addressed as soon as possible, it does not pose an imminent threat of the pipe collapsing resulting in a collapse of the road surface above the pipe.

The \$40,000 in repairs to Devilbiss Bridge Road culvert including fixing cracks in the ‘headwall’ – or the face of the culvert that directs water into the pipes under the road surface, and repaving the road surface afterward. This culvert will also need a new guardrail as the current one is noticeably damaged. Williams

said this damage was likely due to a vehicle, leaving the vertical posts intact while warping the horizontal part of the guardrail. This may allow the Town to save money by replacing only the horizontal piece.

Birch added that while some of the work identified in the report like vegetation removal, cleanup, and painting can be done by Public Works staff, much will need to go off to bid.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis recommended that the Town target critical items first, to which Birch replied that the entire repair order

needed to be considered critical, and it was important to fit in these repairs as soon as possible. He added that if the inspectors see fit, the County could shut down the road until it is taken care of. For time’s sake, Burgess Weddle recommended putting the two items out to bid while they check to see if the cost could be covered by the infrastructure bill they were granted.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert motioned to approve Burgess Weddle’s proposal of sending the two items to bid, to which it was seconded by Commissioner Bailey and received unanimous support by the rest of the council.

News Briefs . . .

Town Considers Sun Meadows HOA Request

At the November Town Council meeting, Commissioner Bailey noted that a representative of the Sun Meadows HOA had requested that the Town run electricity to three potential streetlights in the HOA-managed park. This request includes connecting to Town electricity and incurring what Bailey said are nominal costs.

During the discussion, Joe Birch, the Director of Public Works, shared that the HOA “could absolutely install solar lights,” as recommended by Commissioner Brodie-Ennis. Commissioner Baker questioned why the HOA needed lights at all, as many local parks close at dusk. Bailey stated that there is a walking path that community members use at night to walk pets. This raised concerns over the viability of lighting the park at night, with Brodie-Ennis noting that this may invite kids to the park afterhours and cause issue. Commissioner

McNeish countered that view with the fact that Gilmore, Trout, and Creamery Parks all have lights installed.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis said that she felt “this could open a can of worms” and that it would be beneficial to present the HOA with alternative options before saying yes to the request. The Town Council decided to move forward in having Mr. Birch present the HOA with cost estimates for solar-powered lights as an alternative to their request.

Memorial Park Upgrades Considered

Joe Birch of Public Works met with Don Shildt of the Walkersville Veterans Committee to review the current brick wall at Memorial Park and assess how to expand the wall. Birch advised to meet with the bricklayer himself to discuss a portion of the project that will be worked on by Public Works staff. This includes laying footers and any general prep. A sketch of the proj-

ect was also given to Town staff to review and ask questions, of which none were asked until the brick layer comes. The brick wall serves as a memorial monument to those who have given the ultimate sacrifice and should be remembered for what they have given. Shildt previously asked the Town for approval to expand the wall after an influx in brick purchases from their Veteran’s Day service.

Town Receives Street Sweeping Quotes

Joe Birch of Public Works shared a quote with the Town for a street sweeping company to come in and sweep all the roads within town limits. This project is expected to utilize four trucks over the course of two days to cover all grounds. The estimate Birch received comes to a total of \$4,760, including dump fees for the trucks to load off at Barrick Garden Center, rather than going to the landfill. If there is any issue with Barrick, it was advised that the Town rents two roll-off dumpsters that will go to the landfill, adding another \$2,000 to the total cost.

Christmas festivities

On Sunday, December 19th, the Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company (WVFC) will host Santa in

their parade through Waterside and Dearbought communities. This annual event is for all ages and families are encouraged to get little ones involved. President Jim Graham and Treasurer Betsy Graham of the WVFC shared that they hope this parade “brings a little joy to you holiday season during these continuously unique and trying times.”

The parade lineup will depart at the WVFC at approximately 1:30 and it is estimated to be a two-hour route. While Santa can visit each neighborhood, it is not possible to drive down every street. It has been requested that families remain in their own yard or driveway, and it is recommended not to congregate outside of your immediate family.

In the case that the route changes without notice, there will be a live GPS feed on the day of the parade to update on their whereabouts. This feature will be posted to the WVFC event page the weekend of the event.


The parade will begin and conclude at the Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company after a through tour of the neighborhoods. There is no guarantee that Santa will be in a specific neighborhood at a certain time due to the length of the route.

Community Garden Plots Prepped For Winter

At the November 10th Town Council meeting, Public Works Director Joe Birch shared that community garden plot work at Heritage Farm Park would be completed within a week. There are about 26 plots that must be cleaned up at the end of the growing season. This entails cutting down any vegetation that is left and putting it in a central location for pickup by a company that the Town contracts for yard waste. Once the garden plots are cleaned by the renter, Public Works employees come in and plow all the plots to be used again for the next growing season.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis shared that the community garden is “an opportunity for people to work, plant vegetables and flowers in a garden that may not have the ground space in their yard.”

According to Brodie-Ennis, 24 of the plots are a standard size of 25’x50’ with two larger plots available at 25’x100’. Renters also have access to two faucets for tending to their plots. The rental fee for the standard plots is \$30 while a larger plot is \$40, and both options come with a \$25 down deposit.



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FROM THE DESK OF...

County Councilman Michael Blue

This past spring during the FY-2022 budget meetings, there were discussions to reduce the County real property tax rate to the Constant Yield Rate. This was a decrease of approximately \$0.023 to \$0.0267 and was due to a substantial fund balance being projected from FY 2021. This approximately \$74M surplus fund balance was projected to result from higher than budgeted income tax revenue.

Over the summer, I thought about this surplus and how we could help the people of Frederick get back some of their hard earned money. With the support of the administration, I proposed a poten-

tial one-time tax rebate to homeowners on their owner-occupied property which would align with the one-time fund balance available. I thought this rebate could take the form of a check payment.

On October 5th, I introduced Bill 21-11, an act to grant a \$175 County real property tax credit to homeowners on their owner-occupied property with an assessed value of \$328,512 or less. The real property tax credit would be issued to 43,503 owners of record as of July 1, 2021, with approximately 9,768 owners residing in my district. I am very happy to report that on Tuesday, November 16th, the Frederick

County Council passed Bill 21-11 with a 6-1 vote. The total for this refund is \$7.6M. Therefore, beginning in mid-January, some Frederick County residents will receive a cash refund of \$175 on the property tax they paid earlier this year.

As I wrote in my November submission to this journal, a great opportunity came our way in the form of a building located at 800 Oak Street in Frederick City. This building, that was used years ago by State Farm, will consolidate many County government departments that are currently scattered around Frederick County. The amount of \$32M of the fund balance is being used for the pur-

chase and renovation of this building that has so much potential. Approximately \$34M remains.

So what else is proposed to happen with the remaining \$34M? According to a message that the Council received recently from County Executive Jan Gardner, many wonderful things! The County Executive plans to advance initiatives relating to energy and the environment as well as accelerate school construction to alleviate overcrowding.

Through the Built to Learn Act, the County will be able to take advantage of new State funds that are the result of the advocacy of our County Executive. This legislation allocated \$95M to Frederick County and we are required to

provide a match. The County will add one-time money to support needed school construction. This is an outstanding opportunity! Some of the school projects that are in the queue for my district include a new or renovated Walkersville High School and a continuation of a limited renovation of Thurmont Elementary School.

As 2021 comes to a close, great things are on the horizon! I want to take this opportunity to wish you a warm and wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy new year!

If anyone has any questions or comments please contact me at MBlue@FrederickCountyMD.gov or 301-600-1034.

County Councilman Phil Dacey

I hope everyone is having a wonderful Holiday Season. I bring you Christmas greetings from the Frederick County Council. We have been discussing important issues on the Council over the past month including tax cuts, mask mandates, and redistricting.

On the first issue of tax cuts, the County Council took up the issue of what to do with the \$74 million surplus the county has this year due to larger than anticipated income tax and property tax receipts. I proposed returning \$15 million of that to taxpayers in the form of a \$175 tax rebate to all homeowners in Frederick County. Unfortunately,

only Council Member Blue voted in support of that effort. Instead, the County Council voted to provide \$175 to people who owned a home that was assessed at less than \$328,000 (about half of homes in the county). This means that most homeowners in the county will not receive any tax refund as a result of the surplus. Checks to those who are eligible should start going out within the next month or two. Additionally, we began discussions on expanding the eligibility for the veteran tax credit for those that have served in our military. Given the proximity of Frederick County to a number of military facilities, it is my

hope that providing a tax credit to spouses and other retired members of the community will help make Frederick County a destination for these heroes to retire.

On redistricting, we had a presentation from our non-partisan redistricting committee that was appointed to redraw the council districts based on the census count. All council districts experienced growth over the past decade, however the southern and eastern portion of the county grew much faster than the rest of the county. The redistricting committee looked to balance the districts by population and put forward a proposal to make each district hold between 52,000 and 56,000 people. This only required

moving two precincts near Libertown from District 2 (currently represented by Council Member McKay) to District 5 (currently represented by Council Member Blue). This is a good solution that would provide continuity for constituents and balanced representation. It is my hope and anticipation that the County Council will shortly approve this map.

Finally, the County Council met in November as the Board of Health for the County to consider re-instituting a mask mandate. Mask mandates have become polarizing, confusing, and difficult to enforce. It is my belief that the time for mask mandates has passed. We are in a very different place than in Spring of 2020. We now have a host of vaccines to protect those that seek

them and provide strong immunity against hospitalization and death. We also are starting to bring effective treatments on board including monoclonal antibodies which are now offered at both Frederick Health Hospital and in Hagerstown. More antiviral prescriptions are being approved and in the pipeline that look very promising and effective in keeping patients out of the hospital. The Board of Health did not support a mask mandate at our meeting in November.

With the vaccine available to everyone over 5 years old, it is time to allow people to make their own personal choices with regard to their own health with regard to this virus.

I hope that everyone can stay safe and healthy through the Holiday season.

WALKERSVILLE INFO

Wed., Dec. 1 - 7 p.m. - Tree Lighting at Creamery Park

Tues., Dec. 7 - 7:30 p.m. - Board of Appeals

Wed., Dec. 8 - 7:30 p.m. - Town Meeting

Tues., Dec. 14 - 7:30 p.m. - Planning Meeting

Fri., Dec. 24 - Christmas Holiday - Office Closed

Fri., Dec. 31 - New Year Holiday - Office Closed

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Walkersville:Our Town

County Notes...

County Facilities To Remain Open By Appointment Only Until Jan. 1

Community transmission of COVID-19 remains high in Frederick County, leading to 11 deaths in October and stressing local healthcare systems. There have been more than 250 new cases diagnosed every week in Frederick County for each of the past 11 weeks. Frederick County Execu-

tive Jan Gardner encourages eligible residents to get their vaccine booster shots and wear masks in indoor public places, following CDC guidelines.

“Our healthcare workers are exhausted,” Executive Gardner said. “We need to stay vigilant to protect our entire community. Please get your vaccine or booster shot, and continue to wear a mask in indoor public spaces.”

Frederick County’s positivity rate has been higher than the state as a whole since Sept. 8. As of this November 25, the local positivity rate stands at 6.22%, 1% higher than at the start of the month, while the statewide rate is 3.9%.

Because Frederick County is experiencing high rates of community transmission, County facilities will remain open by appointment only until Jan. 1, 2022. Masks must continue to be worn in all County buildings, including Frederick County Public Libraries.

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GOVERNMENT

Walkersville Burgess Chad Weddle

Happy December Walkersville! There are many Holiday activities throughout the Town this month.

The Town's annual Tree Lighting will occur at 7 p.m. on Wednesday December 1st at Creamery Park (Glade Road and Pennsylvania Avenue) Come out to hear local Church choirs, the WHS band, handbells, WHS Choral Group, Bob Sussman will present the Menorah, Santa will come with Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company and Walkersville Rescue Company. Due to

COVID restrictions there will be no cookie or hot chocolate, but come out to welcome in the Holiday Season.

On Saturday December 4th from 10 to 3 p.m. the Town will be bustling with the annual Christkindlmarket. Sponsored by the Walkersville Historical Society the event kicks off with a parade up Main Street to Frederick Street then down Fulton Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue and ending back at Main Street. Activities will occur at the Walkersville Library, Glade UCC, St

Paul's Lutheran Church, and the Walkersville Feed Company.

Santa will get a huge Fire and Rescue escort on Sunday December 19th beginning at 1:30 pm. Please check out the Rescue Company and Fire Company's Facebook page for the parade route and on the day of the parade you can check out the live GPS feed for Santa's location

For December the Town meeting will be on Wednesday Dec 8 at 7:30. Effective January 12th all Burgess and Commissioner Meetings will begin at 7 p.m. not 7:30.

Town hall received some questions about the special assessment on the 6-month water bills mailed out in October. This assessment is the result of the new water treatment plant which replaced the 1971 water treatment plant. Our new plant is state of the art one of a kind in Maryland and uses a reverse osmosis system.

The Town decided to use this new type of water treatment system to prevent the terrible situation we experienced in 1999 when a sewer line spill and in 2008 when a manure incident contam-

inated the town's underground aquifer which provides all the water to the system. So to provide safe clean water to the residents, the Town upgraded the plant and thus the new assessment.

A big Thanks to the Veteran's Committee, participants and all those that came out for the Town's Veteran's Day program. We heard from Ron Layman about the heroism of our military and remembered those that allow us today to have the freedoms and liberties we all enjoy. Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday Season and look forward to Walkersville being a great community to live, work and play in 2022!

Librarians bring smiles to children's vaccine clinics

Frederick County Public Libraries (FCPL) has partnered with Frederick County Health Department (FCHD) to help take the "ouch" out of the children's COVID vaccine clinics. Children's librarians are bringing costumes, stories, and their diversional expertise to help entertain and distract children as they receive their shot.

"We wanted to make the clinic environment a kinder, gentler place," said Heather Hart, Children's Services Supervisor at Walk-

ersville Branch Library. "Shots are never fun for kids, but we thought we could help ease the stress of the experience with jokes and stories."

When library staff first heard that the children's clinics would be opening, they contacted FCHD to see if they could be of assistance and a very unique partnership was born. FCPL children's librarians will be at upcoming Saturday clinics, armed with storytimes, puppets, costumes, and jokes.

"The library has been a great part-

ner for us throughout the pandemic," said Frederick County Health Officer Dr. Barbara Brookmyer. "They were some of the first volunteers at our mass vaccination clinics and when they reached out about helping again, we were thrilled. It's this type of partnership that makes Frederick County such a great community."

For more information about COVID-19 vaccinations for children, parents can visit COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens for general vaccine information and

to learn what to expect, including links to specific tips on how to support your children before, during, and after their vaccination.

Appointments can be found in a variety of places. Health department clinics are posted here. Check with your pediatrician, or online at covidvax.maryland.gov or vaccines.gov for pharmacies and other

clinics. Frederick County Public Schools is also holding vaccination clinics in schools, and is sending out details through Find Out First. For help scheduling an appointment, call 855-MDGoVax or 855-634-6829 between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week. Local help is also available at 301-600-7900 or 301-600-7505 for local help in Spanish.

continued from previous page

is another way we are working to make life better for the people who call Frederick County home."

Using the app, people can take photos, note specific locations on a map, and provide other details of their requests. Once a request is submitted, staff is immediately notified and can view the uploaded photos and maps. FCG FixIt can be downloaded to smart phones from app stores for Android and iPhone users. The service also can be accessed on the County's website at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/FCG-FixIt. People who choose can continue to call County divisions directly during business hours.

FCG FixIt should not be used to request emergency services. The public should continue to call 9-1-1 for emergencies.

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COMMENTARY

Words From Winterbilt

The more things change...

Shannon Bohrer

... the more they stay the same.

As a former police officer, I am sometimes questioned about the news regarding policing in today's environment. I retired in 2010 after 42 years of service. After the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, people started thanking me for my service. The thanking process seemed to wane with time and then picked up again in 2020, with the pandemic. Our emergency services were being stretched, and citizens started thanking doctors, nurses, and first responders, including the police.

Thanking our emergency service workers, including the police, seems well-intentioned, but I sometimes wonder about other motives or perspectives. When I am thanked for my service, there is often a follow-up comment, where the person says something like, I bet you are glad that you are not in uniform today. The follow-up comment puzzles me, and I usually respond that if I were younger, I would still be in uniform. My response - seems unexpected to many people.

I do not see the significant differences between 1968, when I began my law enforcement career, and today's environment. I understand there are some differences, but the job is the same. The police are sworn to

protect the public, and they take an oath to support and defend the constitution, and that has not changed—apparently, many view today's world as different from our past and not for the better. I do not see the changes; in fact, from my perspective, the world has gotten older, but history just keeps repeating itself.

In 1968, the year I began my career, there was civil unrest, most of it dealing with the Vietnam war and civil rights. One large protesting group, the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), was constantly in the news. The group was organized in the sixties and eventually grew into a nationwide movement. Splinter groups within the movement worked toward policies that included struggles for equality, women's rights, standing against racism, and police brutality. Do these issues sound familiar?

A minor faction that splintered from the SDS encouraged a revolution, believing it would force "the establishment" to change. That group was the "Weather Underground." They were labeled as terrorists and for a good reason. They took credit for twenty-five bombings around the country, which included the U. S. Capitol and the Pentagon. Yes, in 1971, the capital was attacked with a bomb from domestic terrorists.

The "Weathermen," as they were called, were responsible for killing two police officers and a Brinks truck

driver during a failed robbery attempt. They also bombed a New York City police station. Yes, we had individuals and groups that hated the police and plotted to kill them. And the "Weathermen" was just one of several. The hatred of police is not new.

A considerable number of protests in the late '60s and early '70s was over the Vietnam war. After the war ended, we learned that propping up an unpopular government with military force does not work. The U. S. Military is exceptionally good at what they do, but there are problems that cannot be solved with military force.

In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was enacted. The act ensured voting rights for minorities because of a history of voter discrimination. There were demonstrations and riots in the late '60s over widespread discrimination practices. While the voting discrimination was addressed, it was not eliminated, and other discriminatory practices continued. Does that sound familiar?

The white supremacists that marched in Charlottesville, Virginia, is another example of a right-wing extremist group that existed when I began my career. While many of today's groups have different names, they are not new; they have just evolved and transformed with different identities, with the same beliefs. In the 1960s and 70s, these groups wanted to start a holy war against black and other minorities. The holy war was called Rahowa, the acronym

for RACial HOly WAr. Some of these groups then and now are inspired by the "Turner Diaries," written in 1978, a book about a revolution and overthrowing the government of the United States.

Today, we have the same hate groups that existed in the '60s; while the names have changed, their intent is the same. Revolution and holy war against minorities and hatred of government still exists. Many of these groups participated in the January 6 insurrection. To them, a failed insurrection is called - practice.

We just ended a 20-year, controversial war. The controversy was because of 911; the war was justified; however, nation-building was not possible. Afghanistan, in not united and reflects tribalism, and military force will not change that. Not unlike Vietnam, a military solution cannot address every problem.

As to the civil rights issues, today, they exist because the issues addressed in the 1960s were never completed. Equity is a strong motivation, and until equity exists, civil rights will continue to be an issue. In numerous ways, we always understood that our government did not treat the citizens in an equitable manner. George Floyd's death punctuated the inequity that existed; thus, we have a long road ahead.

The more things change, the more they do not. Civil unrest over discrimination issues, including voting rights and equality, with protest and rioting. Dissatisfaction over a long war and how it ended. Hate groups

with goals of racial war, overthrowing our government, and in some cases, eliminating the government-including the police. Will these issues be repeated in the future?

The similarities between my time in law enforcement and today are not that different, but there are distinctions. During my first ten years, from 1969 to 1978, an average of 121 officers died each year from assaults and gunfire. The late sixties and seventies were high years for officers being killed from felonious assaults. Since the year 2000, about fifty-five officers have died each year from gunfire. So, being a police officer today is less dangerous, except for COVID. Since the pandemic started, officer deaths from COVID are five times greater than deaths from felonious assaults. (When this was written)

From my perspective, there is one significant difference today. We have the majority of one political party that appears to support the insurrectionists, the racists, and the separatists that attacked the capitol on January 6, 2021. While most are silent, and the silence is taken as tacit approval. The silence was recently displayed when fifty senators voted against having a hearing on voting rights. Just a hearing - on voting rights.

In 1968 I never feared losing our democracy, but the possibility exists today, and from my perspective, the probability continues to grow.

To read past editions of Words From Winterbilt, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

American Mind

United States vs Unified States

Mark Greathouse

An American conservative is a person who desires to preserve and conserve our founding ideals and way of life. Conservatives believe in a nation comprised of separate states united by the glue represented in its governing Constitution. That's "united," not "unified." The difference is huge; not unlike the difference between equality and equity.

"United States of America" versus "Unified States of America" offers a provocative thought. The difference is not the least bit nuanced. United is a joining of disparate parts into a single entity while maintaining the distinct identities of those parts, while unified is a uniting into a non-disparate whole with a single identity. The inference here is that our Constitution, based on federalism, created a republic that united disparate states into a nation while those several states retained certain self-governing rights. Notably, we're separate but not divided. There are folks among us who would have us unified under a massive central government that controls every aspect of our lives. Unification is a euphemism for and facilitates socialism. To be clear, socialism has never been implemented successfully yet its proponents insist that is because of mistakes made by implementers rather than recognizing that it is simply morally, factually, economically, and logically impossible for it to succeed.

I compared the difference between united and unified to equality versus equity, terms deemed interchangeable by the political left. Equality means that individuals or groups of people are given the same resources or opportunities to freely do with as they may. Equity, on the other hand, allocates to each person or group the precise resources and opportunities necessary for them to reach a fully equal outcome. Just as equality doesn't aim to achieve equity, so united doesn't aim to achieve unification. Under unified equity, a large central government ensures that everyone will share equally in misery with no opportunity to rise above their life condition. Exceptionalism is prohibited...except among the controlling elite.

Our Bill of Rights was created to ensure that each of the original 13 states retained their separate identities, to protect themselves from encroachments by the other states and by a metastasizing central government. Folks in South Carolina didn't want to have their way of life determined by folks in Massachusetts and vice versa.

I've always been struck by the separateness of our nation's people. Sioux were quite separate from Comanche, blacks from indigenous folks, Italians from Irish, slave from free, rich from poor, educated from uneducated, and so on. These separate and competing elements framed under the structure of a republic are what have made the United States so exceptional that

everyone seems to want to immigrate here. Each and every citizen is indeed endowed with the unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. No matter your race, ethnic background, or other circumstances, our nation was founded on that premise, and it has served us well.

Folks have given their lives to preserve our nation as our founders intended. A great war was fought nearly 160 years ago on our own soil and hundreds of thousands died to hold the nation together. Untold thousands more have given their lives in far-off lands in defense of our founding principles. For whatever reason, there are folks among us who would change us into a mere shell of the republic most of us envision and enjoy. Our founders purposely designed a government whereby no single ideology supported by more populous states could hold sway over others.

Why would anyone want a "Unified" States of America? Why would anyone want to so radically restructure a nation that has grown to become the envy of the world? I suggest that it's about power and control. Unification facilitates control by a single ideology, a single political party, a single power structure to the exclusion of dissent. When there's only one voice making the rules, all opposition is squashed. How do they achieve this? Recall the words of the ancient Chinese sage Lao Tzu who advised that government power over citizens can be easily sustained by keeping their minds empty and bellies full. Hmmm. The unifiers apply a perverse version of creative

destruction. Minds empty? Reduce education standards to the lowest common denominator, eliminate excellence, silence debate, cancel history, and more. Bellies full? Citizens quickly discover that it's ever-easier to belly up to the public money trough to seemingly have their every need met. They never ask where the money is coming from nor challenge whatever rules are attached with accepting it. Then, they're surprised when a loaf of bread costs \$3,000,000 (check out Venezuela). Soon private life, private property, and privacy are abolished in a wave of mutually-assured failure. The government money trough is like an addictive drug. Folks will do anything to get their fix, including silencing anyone who gets in the way.

Most academic elitists minds, wed as they are to a rationalized well-ordered socialist economy, comfortable in their protected cocoons of tenure, and feeding ravenously from the philosophies of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Karl Marx, are blown away by the entropy, the uncertainty, of free and open macro-economic dynamics embodied in catallactics, Adam Smith's "invisible hand" at work. The debate inherent in freedom is anathema to the elitists, so silencing of opposition through unification is their solution.

To build the unified nation, all vestiges of a republic must be destroyed. The unified nation is to be built from the resulting rubble. Ironically, the plan is to break down the existing culture by creating division while stifling dissent. We see inflammatory divisive

language constantly spewed forth by leftist "wokists." The latest divisive slogan is critical theory. (Recognize it's theory, not fact.) Critical gender theory...critical race theory...critical economic theory...critical education theory...critical environmental theory...critical justice theory... Good grief! Where does it all end? We need to unite to fight the stains on our nation but we dare not unify. We must recall Alexis de Tocqueville's observation that the United States was uniquely designed as a republic, enabling the several states to right any moral wrongs in its midst.

We are at war! It's an expensive war, as the legal tender is the hearts, minds, and futures of our citizens. Beware unity, beware equity, as these charlatans are the seeds that spawn failed nations. If we expect to sustain our dominant role in the world, we must stave off unification. We must hold to the original intent of our founders in creating a limited national government.

We are individuals, and it's our individualism, ownership of property, and adherence to family that unites us in delivering the fatal blow to the unifiers. What do we do? To begin, we must shrink the federal government and rein in its massive debt by electing patriots who will. Otherwise, if you're not close enough to the problem to care, you're not close enough to make a difference. As for me, I'm for the United States of America.

To read past editions of American Mind, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

COMMENTARY

The Bulwark

Lee was no hero

Mona Charen

Robert E. Lee Doesn't Deserve a Statue, But Thomas Jefferson Does.

In New York City, a statue of Thomas Jefferson has graced the City Council chamber for 100 years. In October, the Public Design Commission voted unanimously to remove it. “Jefferson embodies some of the most shameful parts of our country’s history,” explained Adrienne Adams, a councilwoman from Queens. Assemblyman

When iconoclasts topple Jefferson, they seem to validate the argument advanced by defenders of Confederate monuments that there is no escape from the slippery slope. “First they come for Nathan Bedford Forrest, and then for Robert E. Lee. Where does it end? Is Jefferson next? Is George Washington?”

No historical figure is without blemish, they protest. And it’s unfair to condemn our ancestors using today’s standards. If owning slaves is the discrediting fact about Lee, how then can we excuse George Washington?

There is an answer—a reason why it’s right to remove Robert E. Lee from his pedestal in Richmond, Virginia, yet wrong to exile Thomas Jefferson from a place of honor in American life. It requires grappling with the full complexity of human beings and the mixed legacy of history. We must, as Shakespeare said “Take them for all in all,” that is, judge them for their entire lives, not just a part.

No nation can endure without heroes. They are part of what creates our national story and links us through generations. They are the

inspiration for natives and immigrants alike. America in particular, as a creedal nation, needs unifying figures to provide the glue that other nations derive from ethnicity or religion. Fortunately for us, our founders can withstand scrutiny. But before turning to the defense of Jefferson and Washington, we need some clarity about the Confederacy.

People who defend monuments to Lee on the grounds that he played an important role in our history are confusing significance with honor. Lee surely played a huge role in our history, but as the leader of an army whose aim was to destroy the union. That made him a textbook traitor. As Ulysses Grant put it in his memoir, recalling his feelings upon accepting Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Courthouse:

“I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse.”

Is it fair to judge Lee by our modern standards? Perhaps not, but even by the standards of his own day, he is wanting. Much has been made of Lee’s supposedly agonizing decision to resign his U.S. Army commission because he could not “raise my hand against my birthplace, my home, my children. Save in defense of my native state, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword.” But others, including Gen. Winfield Scott, who offered Lee command of the Union army in 1861, also hailed from Virginia, yet remained loyal, as did Virginian

General George Henry Thomas, the “Rock of Chickamauga.”

Lee’s image has been sanitized and even beatified by purveyors of the “Lost Cause” narrative about the Confederacy. They’ve depicted Lee as an upright, chivalrous defender of tradition, a moral man, and a Christian. But, as Adam Serwer reminds us, this is a fable. Lee was a cruel slave master. In the words of Wesley Norris, one of his slaves who attempted to escape and was whipped, “not satisfied with simply lacerating our naked flesh, Gen. Lee then ordered the overseer to thoroughly wash our backs with brine, which was done.” As the leader of the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee enslaved all of the black Union soldiers he captured as well as free black Pennsylvanians his army encountered.

Lee strove to destroy the country and thus deserves to be remembered in infamy, not as a hero.

As the author of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson enshrined the ideals that made this nation. Those words gave courage to thousands of bondmen, indeed, they were quoted by the revolutionaries in Haiti (though Jefferson’s administration did not recognize the revolutionary government there). Jefferson’s words formed our national identity as free people and marked a departure in human affairs. As the British statesman Edmund Burke remarked at the time: “It has made as great a change in all the relations, and balances, and gravitation of power, as the appearance of a new planet would in the system of the solar world.” Historian David Armitage estimates that at least half of the world’s nations today boast a document that can be called a declaration of independence. A 19th-century Hungarian nationalist, Lajos Kossuth, called the American Declaration of Indepen-



dence “the noblest, happiest page in mankind’s history.”

Was Jefferson a hypocrite? Oh yes. One of history’s most flamboyant. He owned slaves and almost certainly fathered children with his dead wife’s half sister, Sally Hemmings, an enslaved woman. But he never defended the institution (as Lee did), quite the contrary. He wrote, “I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.”

Jefferson instructed that three things be mentioned on his tombstone: “Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom & Father of the University of Virginia.” Religious liberty is a cornerstone of American life and he was rightly proud of the legislation that paved the way for the First Amendment. Virginia’s law disestablished the Church of England and provided freedom of worship for all Christian denominations as well as for Muslims, Hindus, and Jews.

In other words, if God, who is omnipotent, chose not to coerce humans into any particular belief, we humans should likewise refrain.

Do we overlook Jefferson’s shameful private behavior? No, but we take him in full. His contribution to human liberty, despite his personal behavior, entitles him to a place of honor. There will always be an asterisk, but to say that statues honoring him “shouldn’t exist” as the New York City assemblyman did, is to dismiss the Declaration, the American anthem. As Abraham Lincoln wrote in 1859 to a gathering celebrating Jefferson’s birthday:

All honor to Jefferson—to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there, that to-day, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the very harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression.

Mona Charen is Policy Editor of The Bulwark.

To read past editions of The Bulwark, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

Good Day Neighbor

Electric cars are about to be everywhere

Dorothea Mordan

As most all of us devise ways to have a working relationship with our electronic devices, we might poke a little fun at modern day Luddites, those among us who are not tech savvy.

Luddites’ conflict with technology was their employers unwillingness to train them for the new job skills needed as modern techniques replaced old methods. In their case, technology to produce textiles, such as woven cloth. They were left without a steady way of making a living. They were left hungry after working to produce cloth and profit for mill owners.

There have been and always will be new methods of production, accepted by some, scorned or even violently rejected by others. But time and again, better methods are adopted because they make profit, and, as a byproduct, improve people’s lives. Innovators see it first.

Progress wins.

In the 1800s an idea was formed—the horseless carriage. An early innovator was Alexander Winton.

Winton claimed the milestone of selling the first automobile in Amer-

ica in 1897. He later wrote about the hurdles he encountered in being pointed out as “the fool who is fiddling with a buggy that will run without being hitched to a horse.” And told “You’re crazy if you think this fool contraption you’ve been wasting your time on will ever displace the horse.” Winton describes in the April 15, 1911, issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* how he responded to this criticism with a clipping of published interview with Thomas Edison, which Winton kept in his pocket:

“Talking of horseless carriage suggests to my mind that the horse is doomed. The bicycle, which, 10 years ago, was a curiosity, is now a necessity. It is found everywhere. Ten years from now you will be able to buy a horseless vehicle for what you would pay today for a wagon and a pair of horses. The money spent in the keep of the horses will be saved and the danger to life will be much reduced.”

“It is only a question of a short time when the carriages and trucks of every large city will be run by motors. The expense of keeping and feeding horses in a great city like New York is very heavy, and all this will be done away with. You must remember that

every invention of this kind which is made adds to the general wealth by introducing a new system of greater economy of force. A great invention which facilitates commerce, enriches a country just as much as the discovery of vast hoards of gold.”

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, Henry Ford, a contemporary of Alexander Winton, began to turn the horseless carriage idea into reality for everyone. Put a motor on a carriage and see where people could go. What a fiasco that would be! A horseless carriage! People thought he was crazy, who would give up their horse?

1910s—a decade later the motorcar was all the kids could talk about.

1920s—another decade passes and the national Highway system was underway.

1930s—a decade of depression, with massive job loss but increases in mobility. Workers and their families became mobile, able to move with job and even modest leisure opportunities.

Electric cars, an idea and innovation beginning in 1828 were overrun by Henry Ford’s cost cutting production methods, as well his willingness to pay employees a real living wage, turning them into consumers.

Decades later debates raged about electric vehicles. That’s crazy, who would give up their car (as if electric cars aren’t cars).

In the 1960s people started to notice pollution problems and got vocal about them.

In the 70s, 80s and 90s some people lobbied against producing more pollution, some lobbied for their right to live regulation free, some people invested time and treasure into innovations for more efficient energy production.

By the 2000s people (consumers) started attending to climate change, greenhouse gases. Hybrid cars reached the market. By late decade, fully electric cars are starting to sell. People are excited about no more trips to the gas station, charge ‘em at home. They require minimal maintenance, and have fewer breakdowns.

A decade later charging stations are popping up everywhere, I saw one in 2018 on Bruny Island in Tasmania.

A decade later, starting in 2021, all major car companies are advertising their new electric car models.

Car manufacturers didn’t start making electric vehicles overnight anymore than coronavirus vaccines came out of nowhere. Each were decades in development. That means the industry that promotes fossil fuel use knew decades ago, and knows now, that we won’t stay dependent on fossil fuels.

To paraphrase a saying that has been around since the 80s and is attributable to several people, mankind didn’t leave the stone age because

we ran out of stones. We won’t leave the fossil fuel age because we run out of fossils. We progress because necessity demands innovation.

The Infrastructure Bill H.R.3684 passed in November, 2021, pulling together policies and tools that effect everyone, and connect us. One item addresses charging stations for the electric vehicles rolling off assembly lines as you read these words. H.R.3684 earmarks \$7.5 billion for EV charging stations and related programs. The target is to have 500,000 public stations by 2030. The U.S.A has 20% of that now, roughly 100,700. These stations are expected to charge an EV to 80% capacity in 20 - 30 minutes.

The Infrastructure Bill gives you and me power to implement solutions for problems identified long ago. Having charging stations everywhere means driving electric vehicles is practical. The more electric power used for our daily needs, the more renewable energy becomes practical. Resources will be put into innovations in efficiency. Humankind can leave the fossil fuel age before we run out of fossil fuel.

The Luddites had a point. Progress wins, but it is devastating when selectively leaving some behind, and fantastic when elevating us all.

To learn more about Woodsboro’s own Dorothea, visit her site at chandlerdesignslimited.com.

PASTOR'S DESK

Season of Advent

Pastor Phil Beck
St. Paul's Lutheran Church,
Walkersville

As we come to the season of Advent, we reflect on the birth of our savior and the good things in our lives because of this gift from our Creator. While the times we are in may preclude our normal gatherings, singing in a full sanctuary, joining friends and family, or just witnessing the joy of the season, we are encouraged in our lives with all the blessings we have received this year. However for some people this is not always a season of joy, yet it is one of heartache, disappointment, and hurt. There are many in our communities who are struggling with homelessness, poverty, and illness who find it difficult to find comfort in the festive atmosphere we so often we associate with Christmas. We have all had darkness enter our lives and recently I also experienced darkness in my life. It was not the first time that darkness crept into my heart and into the very essence of my being. This darkness was something that I had dealt with before, but it was different, it was effecting my loved one in a way that could not be controlled. What many of us also have trouble with is looking to the Light for safety and security in these times.

I will admit that I did not look where I should have been looking for comfort and assurance, I was more focused on the problem going on and how I was going to be able to fix it. We all struggle with dealing with the darkness in our lives especially when everyone else is celebrating the season or other happy times. People don't know we are having difficulty making sense of what is going on in our lives because we are good at hiding our troubles. We often mask it very well and put on the game face for everyone, but this is not the healthy way to overcome the darkness. We have a variety of ways to defeat the darkness in our lives because we have the remedy in our hearts. The Light has come into the world to spare us from the darkness and give us the ability to live out our days in peace.

When things are difficult for us we often feel the burden or weight of a yoke around our necks. In the time of darkness we often need to be built up and given assurance that there is an answer to our troubles or the darkness. Jesus confirms what John the Baptist has known all along, that he is the Light come to defeat the darkness. Jesus is our light and the one who has come to take away all that burdens us. We are most likely to experience Our Creator's presence and power in

the company of the humble and vulnerable, the people who are usually found at the margins of our communities. They may be children or strangers, people who are not sure whether or how they fit. That is sometimes us, those of us who don't know how to make our voice known or can't seem to reach out to the Light or a form of support that will lead us to the Light.

Jesus explains to us that all he has been given has been by the Grace and the will of Our Creator; no one can be with or know Our Creator without first coming to believe in Jesus. Our Creator will only be revealed to the people through Jesus who has emphasized this in his coming ministry; unless you know and accept Jesus, there is no way for you to know and be with Our Creator. Jesus is the Light who has died on the cross to take away our burdens.

Jesus extends an invitation to us, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me." Being here in a community known for farming we should be familiar with the image of a yoke and that this tool is meant to bring together the beasts of burden to complete a common goal so that one does not stray from the other. The first ancient readers or hearers of Matthew also viewed a yoke as a symbol of obedience to God's law and wisdom. Generally, our instinct is to resist yokes and laws, or at least not immediately connect them with the idea of freedom. Through the image of the yoke, however, Jesus invites us to think of God's law and wisdom as a means to surrender, give way, and accept something graceful and positive—rest, ease, and lightness. Jesus reframes the idea of a yoke by telling us that accepting his yoke will help us grow as disciples.

We all have burdens and don't look to Jesus at first for help getting through our issues, but there are enough people shining their own lights on Jesus for us to be able to let him share the journey with us. Believing we have family, close friends, or support in our communities can help carry the yoke and be supportive of our walk with Jesus.

Where is your support group, your cast of characters who are there to share your burdens? We are right here, we are all around you. It is easy to find your Jesus yoke here and with



your family, but as I intend to do, it is imperative to reach out into our communities and find those who are struggling with their own burdens, those who don't have what we have here with our families, and friends. It is our job to share the yoke of Jesus with everyone who are in need of the rest offered by Jesus. We can all do this easily enough as we have the two biggest forms of support on our side, Jesus and the Cross. Join me in putting on his yoke and take the rest Jesus is offering. Join me in putting on his yoke and sharing the good news.

By walking with Jesus and hitching up to his yoke, he is giving us the vision, purpose, and energy to become his disciples. Jesus will show us the way, he is inviting us into his embrace, and we must allow him to take the lead, allow him to assist us in getting through difficult places, and allow him to show us the right path. Jesus has already done the hard part, he died on the cross for my sins and for yours. The work will be well worth the rest given to us as a result of the Resurrection. It is time to let go of our burdens and welcome Jesus; His yoke of love and comfort will give us rest in our souls. Join me in putting on his yoke and take the rest he is offering. Join me in allowing the Light of the world to overcome our burdens, to defeat the darkness.

In this Christmas season we can be reborn in fully giving ourselves over to Jesus. We can hear the Angels calling us to listen to Jesus, hear his words, and feel the comfort they are meant to bring. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry."

Jesus has come to us as the Light of the world, given to us as a gift to take away our burdens where he will bear them up on the cross for us. We know Jesus is our rest, Jesus is our Peace, and

Light. The words from Isaiah 40:31 remind us that, "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Our Creator has given us the gift of Christ in the world, a gift that continues to sustain and comfort us in our times of trial and a gift that brings us joy and peace in a world struggling to find its way. Knowing the peace of Christ, understanding He is always with us and His peace is ever present, guides us in our own journeys seeking a relationship with our Creator. When that journey is realized in the presence of our Creator, we will comprehend the faithfulness, dedication, and joy of our expedition and delight in life with our Creator. In the deep dark night over 2000 years ago the Star illuminated the way of the Magi and the shepherds to be guided to the true Light and true giver of Life. In that night, darkness was defeated, the Light has triumphed. Let the Light of Jesus illuminate your life and give you peace.

Through prayer there is always someone who can share God's love with you and we at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Walkersville want to come beside you to cultivate and nourish the mind, body, and spirit of all who are searching. I invite you to reach out to someone with whom you have not connected in some time. Reach out and let them know the Good News of the child who came to give us hope, the child who lives in our hearts, and the child who has let His Light so shine He overcomes the darkness in our lives. In those times when we are struggling, we can embrace the goodness of Jesus and do not have to be alone. Join us Christmas Eve at 7pm for our Candlelight Service of Holy Communion and experience the Light.

We can be found at www.saintpaulslutheranchurch.org.

To read past editions of the Pastor's Desk, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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Reverend Thomas Kenea presiding.



THE BOOK OF DAYS

Christmas Day

The festival of Christmas is regarded as the greatest celebration throughout the ecclesiastical year, and so important and joyous a solemnity is it deemed, that a special exception is made in its favour, whereby, in the event of the anniversary falling on a Friday, that day of the week, under all other circumstances a fast, is transformed to a festival.

That the birth of Jesus Christ, the deliverer of the human race, and the mysterious link connecting the transcendent and incomprehensible attributes of Deity with human sympathies and affections, should be considered as the most glorious event that ever happened, and the most worthy of being reverently and joyously commemorated, is a proposition which must commend itself to the heart and reason of every one of His followers, who aspires to walk in His footsteps, and share in the ineffable benefits which His death has secured to mankind. And so though at one period denounced by the Puritans as superstitious, and to the present day disregarded by Calvinistic Protestants, as unwarranted by Scripture, there are few who will seriously dispute the propriety of observing the anniversary of Christ's birth by a religious service.

A question, however, which has been long and eagerly agitated, is here brought forward. Is the 25th of December really the day on which our Saviour first shewed himself in human form in the manger at Bethlehem? The evidence which we possess regarding the date is not only traditional, but likewise conflicting and confused.

In the earliest periods at which we have any record of the observance of Christmas, we find that some commu-

nities of Christians celebrated the festival on the 1st or 6th of January; others on the 29th of March, the time of the Jewish Passover; while others, it is said, observed it on the 29th of September, or Feast of Tabernacles. There can be no doubt, however, that long before the reign of Constantine, in the fourth century, the season of the New Year had been adopted as the period for celebrating the Nativity, though a difference in this respect existed in the practice of the Eastern and Western Churches, the former observing the 6th of January, and the latter the 25th of December. The custom of the Western Church at last prevailed, and both of the ecclesiastical bodies agreed to hold the anniversary on the same day. The fixing of the date appears to have been the act of Julius I, who presided as pope or bishop of Rome, from 337 to 352 A.D.

Towards the close of the second century, we find a notice of the observance of Christmas in the reign of the Emperor Commodus; and about a hundred years afterwards, in the time of Dioclesiaun an atrocious act of cruelty is recorded of the last named emperor, who caused a church in Nicomedia, where the Christians were celebrating the Nativity, to be set on fire, and by barring every means of egress from the building, made all the worshippers perish in the flames. Since the end of the fourth century at least, the 25th of December has been uniformly observed as the anniversary of the Nativity by all the nations of Christendom.

Thus far for ancient usage, but it will be readily comprehended that insurmountable difficulties yet exist with respect to the real date of the momentous event under notice. Sir

Isaac Newton, indeed, remarks in his Commentary on the Prophecies of Daniel, that the feast of the Nativity, and most of the other ecclesiastical anniversaries, were originally fixed at cardinal points of the year, without any reference to the dates of the incidents which they commemorated, dates which, by the lapse of time, had become impossible to be ascertained.

But no such precision of date can be adduced as regards Christmas, respecting which the generally received view now is, that it does not correspond with the actual date of the nativity of our Saviour. One objection, in particular, has been made, that the incident recorded in Scripture, of shepherds keeping watch by night on the plains of Bethlehem, could not have taken place in the month of December, a period generally of great inclemency in the region of Judea.

Though Christian nations have thus, from an early period in the history of the church, celebrated Christmas about the period of the winter-solstice or the shortest day, it is well known that many, and, indeed, the greater number of the popular festive observances by which it is characterized, are referable to a much more ancient origin.

Amid all the pagan nations of antiquity, there seems to have been a universal tendency to worship the sun as the giver of life and light, and the visible manifestation of the Deity. Various as were the names bestowed by different peoples on this object of their worship, he was still the same divinity. Thus, at Rome, he appears to have been worshipped under one of the characters attributed to Saturn, the father of the gods; among the Scandinavians he was known under

the epithet of Odin or Woden, the father of Thor, and with the Phoenicians or Carthaginians it was Baal.

There was a no less remarkable uniformity in the period of the year at which these different nations celebrated a grand festival in his honour. The time chosen appears to have been universally the winter-solstice, from which the new year was frequently reckoned. This is to be ascribed to the general feeling of joy which all of us experience when the gradual shortening of the day reaches its utmost limit on the 21st of December, and the sun, recommending his upward course, announces that mid-winter is past, and spring and summer are approaching.

By the Romans, this anniversary was celebrated under the title of Saturnalia, or the festival of Saturn, and was marked by the prevalence of a universal license and merry-making. Every one feasted and rejoiced, work and business were for a season entirely suspended, the houses were decked with laurels and evergreens, presents were made by parents and friends, and all sorts of games and amusements were indulged in by the citizens.

In the bleak north, the same rejoicings had place, but in a ruder and more barbarous form. Fires were extensively kindled, both in and out of doors, blocks of wood blazed in honour of Odin and Thor, the sacred mistletoe was gathered by the Druids, and sacrifices, both of men and cattle, were made to the savage divinities.

In the early ages of Christianity, its ministers frequently experienced the utmost difficulty in inducing the converts to refrain from indulging in the popular amusements which were so largely participated in by their pagan

countrymen. Among others, the revelry and license which characterized the Saturnalia called for special animadversion. But at last, convinced partly of the inefficacy of such denunciations, and partly influenced by the idea that the spread of Christianity might thereby be advanced, the church endeavored to amalgamate, as it were, the old and new religious, and sought, by transferring the heathen ceremonies to the solemnities of the Christian festivals, to make them subservient to the cause of religion and piety.

Ingrafted thus on the Romani Saturnalia, the Christmas festivities received in Britain further changes and modifications, by having superadded to them, first, the Druidical rites and superstitions, and then, after the arrival of the Saxons, the various ceremonies practiced by the ancient Germans and Scandinavians. The result has been the strange medley of Christian and pagan rites which contribute to make up the festivities of the modern Christmas. Of these, the burning of the Yule log, and the superstitions connected with the mistletoe.

The name given by the ancient Goths and Saxons to the festival of the winter-solstice was Jul or Yule, the latter term forming, to the present day, the designation in the Scottish dialect of Christmas, and preserved also in the phrase of the 'Yule log.' The Yule festival received its name from its being the turning-point of the year, or the period at which the fiery orb of day made a revolution in his annual circuit, and entered on his northern journey.

To read other selections from Robert Chambers' *The Book of Days* visit www.thebookofdays.com.



And Mary said, "my soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

Luke 1:46 - 47

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ECOLOGY

Encounters with owls

Amanda Markle
Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve

Strawberry Hill is currently home to six different species that make up our Animal Ambassador program, and from toad to turtle (and even cockroach), each has its charms. The Animal Ambassador program supports our mission of inspiring stewardship of the natural world by allowing audiences to meet up-close animals that we share our community with.

Research shows that educational animal programs connect with audiences on an emotional level, and that educating people about these animals can create a lasting sense of connection with nature. That connection and understanding of the natural world, in turn, inspires attitudes and behaviors that support conservation and responsible use of natural spaces. All the animals in our program are an important part of the story of our local ecosystem, but the animal that most often inspires a true sense of awe

is our barred owl, Strix. It's not hard to understand why seeing an owl up close is a thrill for many people. Being mostly nocturnal, with very effective camouflage, seeing an owl in the wild is a rare occurrence. Physically, there are so many striking elements that make up an owl; the enormous eyes, the powerful talons, the dense coat of feathers. Strix came to Strawberry Hill after being found injured in Michaux State Forest, presumably after being hit by a car. Strix was cared for by a rehabber, but his injuries caused permanent feather damage to one of his wings. He can fly, but not far enough to hunt effectively and survive in the wild, and was deemed non-releasable. Strix is allowed to live at Strawberry Hill under an educational use permit, meaning that our staff is required to include him in a certain number of educational programs each year. Of all the animals that are a part of our ambassador program, Strix requires the most specialized care, the most training to han-

dle safely, and the most expensive food (almost 1,000 mice a year!), but the investment of time and resources is worthwhile. Owls are a fascinating and unique part of our ecosystem and tell us a great deal about the health of our environment. Holding a spot at the top of the food chain, they act as an indicator species; declining owl populations can indicate chemicals or other pollutants entering the system lower down.

Some owl species only thrive in specific habitats, the loss of which due to foresting or development can quickly decimate a population. Maintaining a robust local owl population is beneficial not only because they are a fascinating species to share our community with; they are great pest control as well. A single family of barn owls can eat over 3,000 mice a year. Having an owl as part of our Animal Ambassadors program leaves a lasting impression on our audiences, allowing us to educate people about these amazing creatures, and what we can do to protect them in the spaces we share.

Strix is a barred owl, one of the most common owl species seen in our area, but there are seven other species keen observers might have a chance to see locally. The smallest is the northern saw-whet owl; a shy and tiny species only standing around 6 inches tall. Another small owl, the eastern screech, can be found in our area in both reddish and gray color morphs. Their name is misleading; a screech owl call sounds much more like a whinny than a screech. Long and short-eared owls measure in around the size of a crow, and are also somewhat poorly named; the tufts of feathers on the tops of some owls' heads are not ears, but rather protrusions of feathers that they can move to help them blend in amongst tree branches.

Barred and barn owls can both be found in our area, though barn owls are seen far less frequently and, due to habitat loss, local pop-



Owls are a fascinating and unique part of our ecosystem and tell us a great deal about the health of our environment. Holding a spot at the top of the food chain, they act as an indicator species; declining owl populations can indicate whether chemicals or other pollutants are entering the system.

ulations are declining. Barred owls are seen and heard far more often, with their distinctive call sounding like an inquiry of "who cooks for who?" Barred owl populations are rapidly growing in more western areas of the country where they are considered an invasive species out-competing the northern spotted owl. Some areas have even enacted controversial culling programs to slow their spread. The largest owls one might find in our area are the great horned, whose call is closest to the classic "hoot" most expect from owls, and the snowy owl, who are generally found in the tundra areas of the north and around the Great Lakes, but can very occasionally be spotted further south.

For those seeking an owl encounter in the wild, learning owl calls can be the most effective way to locate them. Except for the snowy owl, owls in our area are most active during the dark of night when visual identification is challenging, and they camouflage and hide incredibly well during the day. There are ways to find an owl's favorite haunts during daylight hours. The first is to know what sort of habitat to look in. While each species has its specific preferences, many owls prefer to

live in areas with dense forests for nesting and open fields for hunting. Barn owls do indeed frequent old barns, as well as hollow trees; barred owls love forested areas near a water source where they can find amphibians to hunt. Once you've identified a potential habitat, look for signs of owls; feathers, pellets, and owl "whitewash" - thick, white owl dropping that collect on tree trunks like melted wax.

Once you've identified an area with owls present, you can return at dusk to start looking for active birds. Many species of owl breed in the winter and will be much more vocal during this time. Owling can be a rewarding and adventuresome hobby, but there are several ethical considerations to keep in mind. Always give owls space, and only visit nesting spots once every few weeks - any more frequently and the owl may feel threatened and abandon its nest. Use calls sparingly, especially during mating and nesting seasons, when owls need to focus their energy on finding a mate and protecting their young (and never use calls in national parks, where playing recorded calls is considered harassment of wildlife and can incur hefty fines).

Spotting an owl in the wild is a thrilling experience, and there are things we can do to help protect populations in our area. Build nesting boxes on your property, especially if you live near open areas where owls like to hunt. Whenever possible, use traps to deal with rodent problems instead of poison, which kills owls due to bioaccumulation. Never throw food out the window of your car, where it will attract rodents, and subsequently owls to roads where they all too often get hit by cars. If you don't have luck finding owls in your neighborhood, we invite you to join us at Strawberry Hill for one of our nighttime Owl Prowl Hikes, or an Animal Ambassador program. Owls are some of the most amazing creatures with which we share our environment, and the more we learn about and understand them, the better we can protect their populations.

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



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SCIENCE MATTERS

School science education

Michael Rosenthal

The Mother Seton School STEM Fair was held, and overcoming the problems of the pandemic, it was, as always, a wonderful presentation of student science work. The presentations, as in previous years, consisted of a hypothesis, the materials utilized in the experimental work, the procedures undertaken, the observations, the data obtained, and the conclusions derived from the study. A journal is kept which is also presented illustrating the results obtained. The projects are judged by community members with scientific background, including some Mother Seton graduates.

The winners and the titles of the projects are listed as follows:

6th Grade: First place was won by Ellie Rajaski who studied water resistance in fabrics. Second place was won by Grady Abruzzese who explored soil testing. Third place was won by Gwyneth Yanike and Jordan Wright who explored the watering of plants with different liquids. Honorable mention went to Noah Riling who studied guinea pigs in a maze, to determine whether treats help them learn. What an amazing start I find it to be for 6th graders to study experimental science in such a professional way. Each year I am amazed all over again at the professionalism of the presentations.

7th Grade: First place was won by Emma and Sarah Simmons for an Equine Nebulizer Invention. Second place was won by Abigail Field and Vivian Lewis for their Solar Oven Invention. Third place was awarded to Ruby Bodner for a newly designed six-pack holder which is eco-friendly, in contrast to the plastic holders commonly in use which remain a serious source of landfill pollution. Honorable Mention was awarded to Catherine Griffin and Vivienne Storch for a study of dog treats.

8th Grade: First place was won by Maryn Rajaski and Catarina Hatch for the development of water testing using daphnia. (daphnia is a genus of small planktonic crustaceans sometimes known as water fleas). Second place was won by Sophia Erdman for a study of chicken egg fertilization. Third place was won by Grace and Mason Hewitt for a study of the best substances for killing germs and by Maggie Rabaiotti for a study of worm composting.

Now for the big news: the Best in Show winners! The Best in Show-Experiment went to Maryn Rajaski and Catarina Hatc, while the Best in Show-Invention was awarded to Emma and Sarah Simmons.

As I've written in prior years, I've never see this level of scientific sophistication at these educational levels. I have no memory whatsoever of my science studies in grades 1-6, though I had kind and efficient teachers in 1950's Youngstown, Ohio (also known as Crimtown, USA!). Though my junior high and high school science teachers were generally friendly and competent, I was not really inspired to a career in science until I studied chemistry in my high school senior year under Mr. Robert Gillespie. He literally changed my life, leading me eventually to earn a chemistry PhD at the University of

Illinois, and to engage in a 50 year career teaching college chemistry. The science education at Mother Seton School will have a similar impact, I'm sure, on the scientific knowledge and the careers of its graduates.

Science education, particularly the ability and willingness to seek the best and most accurate information possible cannot be more strongly emphasized that we see daily in the COVID outbreak. It is one thing to make a decision not to be vaccinated, but it is critically important to understand the dangers that decision brings to you, your family, and the people around you. It has always amazed me to see how many people ignore scientific facts to pursue the path that they would hope would be safe and fruitful. The COVID outbreak and the anti-vaxers are the latest example of people ignoring scientific fact, endangering themselves, their families, and the people around them. No one (not even me!) is right all the time, but I have great faith in the honesty, wisdom, and suggestions of Dr. Anthony Fauci.

My stimulation for writing in Real Science comes from browsing a variety of sources, including newspapers as well as the Internet and elsewhere. Both the New York Times and the Washington Post have now stopped overnight home delivering to my mailbox here in Emmitsburg, making both stimulation for Real Science and plea-

sure browsing hard for me to do. Now, one of my favorite columnists, Gene Weingarten, is no longer writing his Sunday Washington Post articles, entitled Below the Beltway, in the Washington Post. Perhaps he'll write on online. We increasingly have to adjust to change in our world, but thank goodness, the Laws of Thermodynamics do not change.

I am a fan of producing energy by wind power. This is a fine example of renewable energy with virtually no negative impact on the surrounding environment. Of course one has to be in a windy area to use this form of energy generation. As I have written earlier, it is a natural to generate power by wind along the east coast, but many people who live along the coast find the sight of the windmills unpleasing. As I have said before in this column, I like the sight of windmills, but I don't live along the coast to support them locally.

The governor of Virginia and executives from Dominion Energy and Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy announced in late October a \$200 million plan to finish building turbine blades that would supply offshore wind activity on 80 acres of the Portsmouth Marine Terminal. This project would be the largest wind power production facility in the United States, putting Virginia at the forefront of development of wind energy. Unlike offshore drilling, the operation of offshore wind



Science education, particularly the ability and willingness to seek the best and most accurate information possible, is critical to our nation's future.

generation has no significant negative impact on the environment.

In addition to the energy generated, this project will create 310 new jobs, including 50 service positions to support Dominion Energy's Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Project, 27 miles off the coast. Dominion says the wind farm will generate enough electricity to power up to 660,000 (!) homes at peak performance, and it will avoid as much as five million tons of carbon dioxide from annually entering the atmosphere. As we have written before and is well known, carbon dioxide is one of the prime drivers of global temperature rise. This project has the strong support of United States Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, and she described it as symbolic of a new economy based on clean energy.

President Biden has pledged to cut the country's fossil fuel emissions 50 percent from 2005 levels by the year 2030.

Producing energy by wind and solar is a large part of fulfillment of this promise. It will also produce jobs, adding the economy. Virginia legislation commits the state to carbon-free energy production by 2045. The facility at the port of Virginia is very well suited to offshore wind generation. The port has deep water access, some 55 feet, which will allow the proposed 472 foot wind turbine installation to use it as a home port. Dominion Energy is building a ship, named Charlydis, to begin service in 2023. A blade factory now in operation in Hampton Roads, Virginia is a key step in supporting the supply chain for the installation. Will the change in governors in Virginia affect the plan for this project? I certainly hope that the Governor's Office support will vigorously continue.

To read past articles by Michael Rosenthal visit the Authors Section of Walkersville.net.



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**Maritta Perry Grau,
Frederick County
Master Gardener**

With all the festivities of November and December, you may be receiving or indeed, giving gifts of houseplants. And you may have some herbs, geraniums, coleus, tropical/subtropical plants that are masquerading as houseplants until more seasonable weather returns next spring. We advised in October and November that you isolate any new introductions for a few days while you watch those plants for disease or pests, and that you try to approximate indoors the light and temperatures that kept your plants healthy when they were outdoors.

Choosing a houseplant

You'll want to be aware of light/temperature conditions in your home or in the home to which you are bringing a new plant, rather than trying to alter the environment itself. In addition, before buying a plant, look it over to check for insects or disease. Do the leaves look healthy, well formed? Are there flower or leaf buds? Look at the undersides and the axils (the place where the leaf grows out from the main stem) of the leaves for signs of insects or disease. Make sure leaves are not yellowed or brown, foliage is not wilted, growth looks vigorous.

A lot of your best practices in caring for the plants outdoors easily transfer to houseplants: watering,

maintenance (cleaning leaves, pruning, pinching back, deadheading), fertilizing, dividing and repotting as they grow, and controlling pests and diseases (watch for our January column for suggestions about controlling pests and diseases).

Watering

You have so many choices of houseplants, from easy-care to more complicated. When and how much to water will depend on the type of plants you've chosen. Since nearly every expert points out that too much water is likely to kill the house plant, follow the "less is more" rule. Experts at the University of Maryland recommend watering the plant when the top one-half to one inch of soil feels dry. Water cacti and succulents less often and flowering plants more often. Some plants, such as African violets, are best watered from the bottom of the pot.

Maintenance

Outside, the rain or your garden hose rinses away dust. Indoors, wipe broad leaves with a damp cloth, get into crevices with a Q-tip, dunk the plant under a shower or drench it in the sink. On hairy leaves, such as African violets, simply use a soft pastry brush to remove the dust. Cleaning houseplant leaves can help in several ways—your plant has a better appearance; you may also be removing pests or diseases as you clean; and of course, removing the dust helps light get to the leaves so they can grow and bloom better.

Another task, indoors or out, is pruning to control size, shape, or direction of growth. You may snip back leggy branches or stems, cut off yellowed and dead leaves, and remove dead branches. With some plants, such as coleus, basil, or trailing plants and vines, you might be able to root the cuttings to make new plants. Make the cuts just above a bud or side shoots. Another technique is to pinch out the tips of stems, either with your fingernails or your pruners. This will encourage the plant to stay more compact and yet to grow fuller than it would otherwise.

With flowering plants, deadheading the flowers also encourages new growth and prevents stems from getting too leggy. Some dried flower heads, such as the tiny star-like ones from the hoya vine, can be used as package decorations. I like to dab glitter on them or paint them with a touch of gold or silver paint for a decorative touch.

Fertilizing

Like watering, fertilizing depends both on the plant itself and the time of year. Most plants won't need any food now, as they will put on a growth spurt in the spring, when days are longer. However, if you are using any fertilizer, follow the label directions carefully, to avoid too



Succulents have rooted and grown. Small leaves or rosettes can be taken from the mother plants pictured, laid on the soil surface, and misted every few days to grow new ones.

much fertilizing. For houseplants, it's often recommended to use half of the usual amount. Too much can burn roots, inhibit growth. Also, pay attention to the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium contained in the fertilizer; they should be present in approximately equal amounts. If you're getting a lot of leaves but few flowers, your plant might be getting too much nitrogen.

Some experts recommend adding calcium to the soil, if it's not already a part of the fertilizer you are applying. This can be easily done by "recycling" your eggshells: save up eggshells (I rinse them out as used,

and then just accumulate them in an open jar) until you have about a dozen. Rinse out the egg shells, let them dry completely for a couple of days, then grind them to a fine powder in a blender. Mix a few teaspoons with the soil of your house plant (also great to add to soil when planting tomatoes in the spring).

Dividing and repotting

As mentioned above, you can make new plants by rooting cuttings: root begonias, coleus, polka-dot plant, ivy, and philodendron stems, among others, in water. Depending on the type, succulents seem to root best if first dried on a paper towel for a few days, then simply laid on top of the soil and misted every two or three days. Woody-stemmed plants should be coated with a rooting enzyme and planted in the soil. When new spikes of growth emerge from bromeliads, you can cut the spikes away from the mother plant and transfer them to a new pot. With some vines, you can simply pin a bit of stem down to the soil and it will root there. Spider plants produce lots of small plantlets; you can snip those off, soak the plantlets in water overnight, then plant them in a new pot of soil.

Now and then, you need to check the plants to see if they need repotting. If roots are growing out of the bottom of the pot, prune the roots and put the plant back in the same pot with fresh soil, or transfer the plant to a slightly larger pot and more soil.

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Christmas Tree Trivia

Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850. In 1979, the National Christmas Tree was not lighted except for the top ornament. This was done in honor of the American hostages in Iran. Between 1887-1933 a fishing schooner called the Christmas Ship would tie up at the Clark Street bridge and sell spruce trees from Michigan to Chicagoans. The tallest living Christmas tree is believed to be the 122-foot, 91-year-old Douglas fir in the

town of Woodinville, Washington. The Rockefeller Center Christmas tree tradition began in 1933. Franklin Pierce, the 14th president, brought the Christmas tree tradition to the White House. In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony now held every year on the White House lawn. Since 1966, the National Christmas Tree Association has given a Christmas tree to the President and first family.

Small Town Gardener

On roots

Marianne Willburn

It's hard to gauge what the winter will bring, but it's safe to guess that in the early part of this month, many of my gardening friends will still be feverishly planting within the boundaries of our [somewhat] newly appointed Zone 7 climate – just as long as the ground is not frozen solid and the nights are less than fierce. It is not extraordinary to see the dedicated and delusional down on their knees digging holes and mulching with fury, even as snow flurries fly.

I am usually among them. Time seems to race from October through December and I am only coming to my senses again in January and looking around at what never made it into the ground and might benefit from the insulating effects of soil. Though it's not ideal, we rarely do 'ideal' around here, preferring to rely on 'Will it work?' instead. Barring your zone marginal plants such as magnolia and crepe myrtle, it usually does.

Consequently, it occurred to me that the topic of planting invites discussion on the topic of roots. And even if you're not a hard-core, gird-your-loins gardener, the spring will be here before we blink, and choices will need to be made when staring at the girdled mess of a pot-bound plant.

After gardening for a fair amount of time, one starts to realize that roots can be as distinctive as the plants they support. Most would never confuse the rhizome of an iris for that of a canna –but would they recognize the thin, fleshy fingers of clematis or the shallow, thread-like network of rhododendron roots? With time, this knowledge becomes instinctive, not to mention extremely useful. It stops the trowel mid-thrust during the desolate anonymity of the winter garden and prevents accidental death by stupidity. A dead looking plant is usually thriving down below.

But in order to thrive, its roots must be given a fighting chance, and whether it's through a misguided effort to be gentle or a hurried effort to get on with other chores in the garden, they rarely are. Heed my words – the mistakes made during the crucial time of planting will not go unpunished.

When we moved into our last house, there wasn't much in the way of landscape. Among the three plants that stood in the front yard was a golden euonymus planted near an old stump and about the size of a respectable three-gallon nursery specimen.

I had great plans for that area. Brick patios would eventually be constructed so that al fresco meals could be enjoyed as we watched the sun setting over the Virginia ridge-line. The euonymus – golden or otherwise – simply had to go. But I did not sign its death warrant. We were too strapped for cash to throw out a perfectly good shrub, and there were beds to be filled. I prepared a new site in the front border and dug it up.

To my surprise, the roots looked as if they had come out of a nursery pot that very week (though I was later informed that it had been planted four years before). They were bound and twisted upon each other, and judging from the soil around them, the merest sliver of a hole had been dug into the soil to wedge this poor specimen 'twixt rock and clay. Due to years in a plastic pot, then further years in an earthen one, its growth had stagnated. Had it not been one of the world's most obstinate plants, no doubt it would have died a quiet death, resigned to its fate. I pulled the roots apart, cut some of the larger, girdled specimens and gave it a new home.

One year later, with a large hole, a good mix of compost and subsoil, and a generous hose, it had doubled in size. Five years later, it was a perfect six-foot specimen. Before we left that house, its roots were not only happy, they were rapturous –not merely wrapped around each other for comfort.

For centuries, farmers and fishwives have been saying (with subtle variations in currency) "Don't dig a dollar hole for a five-dollar plant."

It's so tempting to disregard this advice when the soil you are hewing is made of concrete and the mercury is plunging. But you disregard it to your peril.

Dig a hole twice the width of your plant. I have also heard whispers of setting it on undisturbed earth to prevent sinking later, but I usually add at least a couple inches of something friable mixed with native soil. However, let's discuss that idea of "something friable."

Filling that hole with a straight mix of gorgeous, black crumbly compost is the equivalent of doing your child's laundry during his teen years then expecting him to find a Laundromat when he's eighteen. Trust me he won't bother and neither will the plant. Instead, give it a hefty amount of the soil with which it will be faced in a year's time mixed with some good compost and a bit of bone meal. Moving beyond that mix won't be as much of a shock for it.

And one last thing about the roots themselves. Most of the time they need a good rough hand at planting time, but it is hard to go wrong if you remember the following: if they are fleshy, be fastidious; if they are fibrous, be firm. Using a hose to tease roots away from soil and each other can often help the process, just make sure that they are well-watered after planting to remove any air pockets you might have inadvertently created. I like to half-fill the hole, water deeply, and when the water has disappeared, fill it up with soil and water again.

If you are particularly rough on the roots, don't expect them to then support the original size of the plant. Some judicious pruning on the top will limit the amount of foliage those newly tousled roots must try to support. Pay now or pay later - the choice is yours.

Marianne is a Master Gardener and the author of *Tropical Plants and How To Love Them* and *Big Dreams, Small Garden*. You can read more at www.smalltown-gardener.com.

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PETS

Dreaming of a Christmas home

Jennifer Vanderau
Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

The humans are putting stuff on the walls around here. Lights and greenery and I don't really know what it's about.

They keep talking about something called Christmas. No idea what that means.

There are stockings on our cages and they're super fun to play with. The group of kittens across the aisle from me have already destroyed three of them. The people at the shelter just laugh and hang another one up. I think they kind of expect the little ones to take them as play toys.

It's pretty nice here. When I was out on the streets I never knew what was going to happen. Never knew when I'd get food, never knew when another animal might want to fight.

At the shelter, I have my own place with my own blanket and toys and water and food and litterbox.

And the staff is really sweet. They talk to me and pet me and all things considered, I really like it here.

But I've heard about and seen cats in homes. They sleep on the backs of couches and look really content.

I wonder what that would be like? I wonder what having a whole

house and my own human to love
would be like?

For as great as the people at the shelter are, a home is my real dream.

If I'm honest, I've kind of always wanted one, even when I lived on the streets. I bet it would be fun. And warm. And loving.

That's what they do at the shelter. Try to find us homes. I'm lucky I was taken here. It's hard to say what could have happened to me if that nice human wouldn't have picked me up and brought me to the shelter.

They're planning something called a Christmas Open House at the shelter. It's on December 7 and 8 and it's going to help us have a happy holiday. Or so the humans say.

The best present I could get would be a home. I know there are people out there who would like to help me, but can't adopt me. Those are the folks who give to the open house. Even if they can't take us home, they make sure the shelter can still provide for us, like warm rooms and food and medicine.

The humans say a lot of people keep the shelter going and they're really generous around the holidays.

I think they're getting ready to say goodnight to us. Only one of the kittens is batting at the stocking across from me. The others are

already sleeping.

I think it's time for me to curl up, too. Tomorrow's another day. Maybe my new mom and dad will be here when we open. Or maybe it'll be someone who donates to help us.

Either way, I think I'll have a pretty good Christmas at CVAS.

The Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter's annual Christmas Open House will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8. Santa will be here for photos with pets and we'll have lots of yummy human treats, too. If you would like to help, but can't adopt right now, please log onto cvas-pets.org and make a donation so the babies looking for homes can have a happy holiday. Thanks so much to all of our supporters who keep us going and keep us saving more animals.

The Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter in Chambersburg, Pa., and can be reached at 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.

To read other articles by Jennifer Vanderau visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



Honey is the total package! She is confident and social, running to greet any visitor who enters her free roam cat room. Honey can't get enough time cuddled up on a lap and she even loves to play. Her toy of choice is the laser pointer. Unfortunately prior to her arrival at FCAC, Honey was overfed. She has no issues moving around but it is recommended that she loses approximately three pounds to maintain her good health.



Mack is a big (80lbs), handsome fella. He was found as stray on October 1 and no owner has come looking for him. Mack is confident and friendly but does need to work on loose leash walking and a few other manners. Due to his size and strength, the shelter recommends he lives with a family that has children eight years old or older and has the time to provide him with daily activity.

For more information about Honey and Mack call the Frederick County Animal Control and Pet Adoption Center at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter.

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A black and white illustration of a cat and a dog dressed for Christmas. The cat on the left is wearing a Santa suit with a hat and a striped tail, holding a cane. The dog on the right is wearing a Santa hat, a backpack, and boots, also holding a cane. They are walking towards the right.

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.

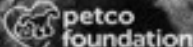

I'd Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

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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Lemmy tell you about . . .



Bethany Davidson

Zooming this way and that, 1-year-old Lemmy is the designated bug catcher in her home. She stalks any crawling or flying insect that dares enter her territory until that perfect moment ... the pounce! While this behavior is instinctual for felines, for Lemmy it is something to celebrate because when her owner, Sergeant Maggie Hill, first met the young cat in August 2020, the question wasn't, will she rid the home of all those pesky stinkbugs?

It was, will she live?

On August 18, 2020, Frederick County Animal Control received a call for service regarding an injured kitten. Sergeant Hill, an animal control officer with FCAC, responded. "An elderly couple reported that they had recently returned home and found the injured kitten in the driveway near their vehicle shortly afterwards," says Hill. The animal

was suffering from extensive burns to multiple areas of her body. "The probable cause of the injury," says Hill, "was being trapped in their car engine while it was driving." At first glance, the injuries seemed insurmountable, but FCAC's kennel supervisor agreed to try veterinary intervention, and the injured kitten was immediately taken to a local animal hospital for treatment.

Fortunately, FCAC only takes in 5 to 10 animals per year like Lemmy who have sustained and survived extensive trauma. Several criteria are used to determine whether to treat such animals. "We don't want animals to suffer ... ever," says Linda Shea, FCAC's director. If the animal can be sustained without suffering, shelter staff then consider the animal's temperament and its prognosis.

By the 21st, hospital staff reported that Lemmy was very active and vocal with a great appetite, so the

tiny patient was transferred to foster care with a veterinarian for continued treatment. Things were looking up for the lucky kitten, but after a few weeks it became apparent that the injuries to her front leg were not healing. The decision was made to amputate, and the surgery was scheduled.

"Knowing they could not adopt the kitten, the veterinarian asked for a different foster home to care for the kitten after surgery, and that's when Lemmy entered my life for the second time," recalls Hill. The ACO was asked to care for the recovering kitten since she had previous experience with three-legged cats. "I was hesitant," says Hill, "knowing that a front leg amputation can be much more difficult for an animal to adjust to, and I wanted to make sure that the kitten could move around the house with comfort and ease."

On day one, however, Lemmy proved that her new foster mom's fears were unfounded. With a long row of staples where her leg once was and wearing the dreaded cone of shame, the resilient youngster quickly settled in. She confidently learned the layout of the house, made new friends, and snuggled with people and animals alike. Her recovery was swift and complete and by the end of October, Sergeant Hill and her family had adopted the kitten.

Now 1 year old, Lemmy has no idea she is disabled. "Lemmy can run, jump, crawl, and climb just like any four-legged counterpart," says Hill. The family has made some accommodations for their special needs kitty, such as moving furniture around to make it easier for Lemmy to climb. According to Hill, though, all of these adjustments have been well worth the minimal effort.

It can take more time to find adoptive families for pets with special needs. "Caring for a special needs animal is very rewarding, but it can be financially and emotionally exhausting," says Director Shea. She advises all those considering adopting such a pet to give thoughtful consideration to the level of commitment and resources that may be needed. "My best advice," adds Hill,

'Twas the night before Christmas
and all through the barn

T'was the night before Christmas, and all through the barn,
All the creatures were sleeping, all safe, snug and warm.
The feed pails were hung by the stall doors with care,
In the hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.

The ponies were nestled all warm in their beds,
While visions of carrot cakes danced through their heads.
The Arabs, the Thoroughbreds and even the Apps,
The jumpers and hunters were all taking naps.

When out in the paddock there arose such a clatter
I awoke in my stall to see what was the matter.
I moved to the window quick as I could
To see where the noise came from, if I could.

The sight I beheld as I gazed out that night
Was a beautiful horse all whiter than white.
He wore a red blanket so nice to behold,
His hooves how they sparkled all glittery-gold.

With swift certain motions to our barn he came,
and silvery moonlight danced from his mane.
More rapid than racers his hoof beats they came,
And he neighed and he snorted and called us by name.

He was our Christmas, a ghost-horse of white,
Who has come to all horses, since that one special night.
A gallant example who served man so well,
Especially those with whom A baby did dwell.

For those special horses who shared stable and stall,
To give comfort and warmth to the Savior of us all.
Now thinking of them, he entered the door,
To distribute among us his gifts and more.

Down the aisle he came, his hoof beats so light,
And he stopped by each stall in our stable that night.
Gifts he did give to all in our barn,
More heart or more courage, or to be free from harm.

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work,
And he filled all the feed pails then turned with a jerk.
And nickering softly on gold hooves so bright,
And giving a nod he went into the night.

and I heard him neigh as he went out of sight,
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a Good Ni-i-i-ight!

"is to manage realistic expectations and be open to change to provide the best environment for your animal. After all, they have no idea that they have special needs and are just looking for love."

Bethany Davidson is the humane educator at Frederick County Animal Control.

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HEALTH NOTES

Frederick Health to adjust COVID-19 testing requirements

Josh Faust
Frederick Health

Frederick Health, the largest healthcare provider in Frederick County, has recently adjusted the requirements at their large scale, drive-through COVID-19 testing site located at the Frederick Health Village. These new changes went into effect on November 8.

As part of the new COVID-19 testing protocols, Frederick Health will now require a COVID-19 test order from a provider for all

COVID-19 testing at the Frederick Health Village location. Testing at this location will be available from 8 a.m. noon, seven days a week. This change in protocol was necessitated by the State of Maryland declaring an end to the state of emergency in September that had been in place since early 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the emergency statutes, the federal and state governments had been assisting healthcare systems with the cost of COVID-19 testing.

Across the nation, nearly 725

million COVID-19 tests had been administered since the start of the pandemic. Over 14.6 million tests have been administered in Maryland alone. Frederick Health is not the only entity making adjustments to their established practices and protocols. Healthcare systems across the state are making similar changes due to changes in regulations and, in some part, to successful vaccination campaigns.

As vaccination efforts show dividends and the amount of Americans needing a COVID-19 test have begun to decline, numerous states have made adjustments to their testing policy. However, the healthcare system will still continue to offer testing at the Frederick Health Village location said Sara Littleton, Director of Community Health with Frederick Health.

“While this is a change in process, Frederick Health will continue to offer COVID-19 testing to our community and do our part to help end

this pandemic,” stated Littleton.

Frederick Health began to offer COVID-19 testing at various locations across the county as soon as the pandemic began. However, the large scale, drive-through testing site at the Frederick Health Village opened in June of 2020 as experts within the organization were quick to realize the need for a larger, more streamlined site. The Frederick Health Village testing facility has remained the single largest COVID-19 testing location in Frederick County throughout much of the pandemic.

Since opening, the site has performed nearly 150,000 tests for Frederick County residents and people from other jurisdictions; the site continues to attract individuals from neighboring counties and states wishing to obtain a COVID-19 test. On any given day, the site administers hundreds of COVID-19 tests.

While Frederick Health is confident that this new procedure will help to assist individuals wishing to

obtain a COVID-19 test, Littleton said that she understand that this change in protocol may come as a shock for some residents.

“We understand the residents concern. They’ve grown accustom to having this facility readily available to them throughout the pandemic. However, this testing facility has been and will continue to be a critical asset in our fight against COVID-19. I’m proud of what our team has accomplished,” Littleton added.

Individuals without a Primary Care provider or individuals wishing to obtain a COVID-19 test for work, travel, or other non-emergency reasons may contact 240-316-4970 between 8 AM and 5 PM, seven days a week and in advance of their test. Individuals who arrive at the testing site without a test order will be directed to a designated area where they can call and request a COVID-19 test order. This phone number will route individuals directly to a live representative that will talk them through the process. At the end of the phone call, they are provided with a testing order.

In addition to the drive-through testing location at the Frederick Health Village, residents experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms can still access testing through their Primary Care providers or Frederick Health Urgent Care locations. There are two Urgent Care facilities run by Frederick Health – one in Urbana and one in the City of Frederick. A third Urgent Care facility will be opening in the middle of 2022 as part of the ongoing partnership between Frederick Health and Mount St. Mary’s University. The two organizations are jointly constructing a new, cutting-edge medical facility at the Emmitsburg university.

In addition to the drive-through testing sites, Frederick Health also offers a unique option for businesses requiring their employees or staff obtain a COVID-19 test. Employers may contact Frederick Health Employer Solutions at 240-566-3001 from 7 AM – 5 PM Monday through Friday to inquire about testing for their staff. This service has helped keep employers and employees remain healthy during the pandemic.

“Employer Solutions has remained consistently available as a critical asset throughout the pandemic. Making sure that people can work safely and healthily during the last two years has been paramount,” Lisa Degitz, Operations Manager with Frederick Health Employer Solutions.

Employer Solutions, which handles testing, drug screens, and other occupational health needs is located 490 Prospect Drive in the City of Frederick.

“Employers from across the area have used Employer Solutions for COVID-19 testing and we will continue to offer those services as needed. Your employees are our only business,” added Degitz.



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For more information on Frederick Health’s COVID-19 response, please visit www.frederickhealth.org/vaccine.

Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

SECTION 2

Communities show support for their local veterans

The Town of Walkersville honored their local veterans early this year, coming together for a service planned by the Walkersville Veterans Committee at Memorial Park. By 1 pm, nearly 200 locals joined at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street, filling all the chairs set out by staff and forming a crowd around the intersection. Don Schildt, the President of the WVC, began the event with a warm welcome and the Shangi-La Detachment Marine Corps League retired the flag that has flown over the memorial for the past year.

The Veterans Committee conducted a wreath laying, followed by an honorable acknowledgement of Kiwanis Club members by Commissioner Tom Gilbert. The Kiwanis Club of Walkersville constructed the War Memorial Monument on May 31, 1981. The project cost about \$6000 then, equivalent to just under \$20,000 today. The cost was paid in part by local businesses sharing their support and contributing donations, as well as individuals from around the community. Sometime later, Walkersville government officials formally named the park "Memorial Park". The Glen W. Eyer Post 282 donated the flagpole which was installed by Walkersville Kiwanians. It now plays an instrumental role in the memorial display, and it has become tradition to retire and replace the flag at every Veteran's Day service and any time they are damaged.

Ron Layman, a retired US Marine between 1966 and 1969, spoke about what it means to be a wartime veteran, touching the hearts of many in the crowd. Kathy Sixx of the Veterans Committee noted that community members had requested for Mr. Layman to speak for several years now,

but that he was only ready to share this year. Layman reflected on the request, stating that it took over a month of consideration after Don Schildt made the offer for him to speak at the service. "There's some things even your own family doesn't get to know," Layman said. In his speech, he shared memories of three close friends he knew during his service, of which two had given the 'ultimate sacrifice'.

Layman spoke to the veterans in the crowd like an old friend, noting that they shared a bond that was difficult to explain. "They could be wearing the same uniform as me, been deployed in the same place at the same time as me, and still have a different experience. But it comes down to one thing—we've all been shot at" he added.

Burgess Chad Weddle and the commissioners also distributed flags to each veteran by branch of military. The crowd passed around more flags to be raised while the crowd sang "God Bless the USA" in unison. Flowers were distributed to veterans by Rhonda Ramsburg and Debbie Wallace of the Veterans Committee.

At 101, Walkersville's oldest veteran, Raymond Pettingall was presented with the flag that had flown for the prior year over the Walkersville veteran's memorial. Pettingall served on the command staff of the 85th Infantry Division during World War Two. He left the United States on Christmas Eve, 1943 for Casablanca, French Morocco. From there, his unit was moved to Italy. The 85th Division, part of the U.S. Fifth Army under Mark Clark, was committed to action as a unit, April 10, 1944, and two months later, Pettingall was greeted by cheering Italians upon the liberation of Rome. Pettingall saw action all the way up

until the end of the war, and returned home as a Master Sergeant.

A second flag was presented to Ed Gizinski, who was involved in a Black Hawk Down incident in 1993. Mr. Gizinski was one of very few survivors.

Pastor Ken Mitchell of the Immanuel Temple of Praise Church in Walkersville concluded the service with a group prayer. "The highlight of this here is that when we get to go up here and have a meal together and come together once again" he said, in reference to the meal the Veterans Committee hosted at the Walkersville United Methodist Church. The sit-down meal allowed veterans and their families to share support and understanding while enjoying the company of a community coming together. "We've got a character that sticks with us until we leave this Earth—and long live our character," Mitchell added.

Just as Walkersville supported local veterans two days early this year, Woodsboro community members gathered two days after the holiday for a service by the Glen W. Eyer Post 282 American Legion.

The American Legion held a Veterans Day buffet free to all veterans and with proceeds from the meals going toward a scholarship fund for Walkersville High School students and the other services the Legion holds. Just about everyone there had been personally invited by Dwight Reynolds, including Buck Musser and Robert Dozier, who frequent the Brunswick Legion but travel out multiple times a year for these special events. "This is our family," said Buck, before Robert added, "we put up with each other."

When asked why these events are so important to be open to the community, Reynolds explained, "we have respect for all veterans. I want them to know this is for them, there is no better benefit for us than to see them enjoying themselves. It's what we're here for."

The Legion staff focuses on creating a welcoming environment and



At 101, Walkersville's oldest veteran, Raymond Pettingall, was presented with the flag that had flown for the prior year over the Walkersville veteran's memorial.



Woodsboro American Legion Service Officer Dwight Reynolds and Finance Officer Steve Blank present a wooden American flag to door prize winners Commander Don Beyer and his wife, Maria Beyer.

a fellowship of support. During the event, Reynolds initiated a circle of handholding as the crowd began to sing "God Bless America." The dinner also included a meat raffle with spiral ham, a hand-crafted wooden American flag raffle, and a door prize gift for veterans. The Jim Stevens Room filled quickly, with many veterans and their families settling in the dining hall. Reynolds noted that the Legion may need to host the event on both floors next year, utilizing the second kitchen and dining spaces, as they expect turnout to continue growing.

"After so many years of hosting these events, you get to know what people want and what they like," said Reynolds. The Legion does just that, as they have not only grown

in membership in the past several years, but they have also seen an increase in eventgoers. Dwight estimated about 20% growth since last year, recognizing members from Westminster, Brunswick, Reisterstown, and elsewhere.

Glenn W. Eyer Post 282 was chartered in 1962 by local World War II and Korean War veterans who wanted a voice in securing the benefits and services earned through their military service. It is memorial post, named for Glenn W. Eyer, a Woodsboro native killed in combat in Europe during World War II. The Post 282 Legion Family consists of the American Legion for eligible veterans, the American Legion Auxiliary for spouses and female descendants of those veterans, and the Sons of the American Legion for male descendants.



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HISTORY

Walkersville—A Rale Of Two Villages

Charles & Kathryn
icodemus. et. al.

Published in 1977
Part 3

The Town of Walkersville derives its name from John Walker, who was born in 1768. As has been seen, Walker purchased 269 acres of land from Nicholas Randall, by deed dated April 7, 1814, and recorded May 2, 1814. The deed describes this property as being 269 acres, of which it appears that 146 acres was from the original tract called 'Federal', and, 120 acres from a part of Dulaney's Lott, Spring Garden, and another tract called Addition. You will see two discrepancies here - one arithmetical and one grammatical. This deed begins by reciting the 317 acres of 'Federal', as patented to Beatty. It then cites exception of 19 acres, previously sold by Beatty, and an exception of 151 acres, previously sold by Randall, which would seem to leave only 146 acres, but the deed then describes the second parcel of 120 acres, and concludes with the total of 269 acres for both parcels. You will also notice the spell-

ing of Dulaney's Lot. This tract is referred to both as Dulaney's Lott and as Dulaney's Lot in the deeds deriving from it. The distinction, as with many names and descriptions in older deeds, probably is due to nothing other than the preference of the writer of the deed, or the Clerk of the Court who was copying the deed for formal recording. Although Randall had sold a portion of 'Federal' before selling the remainder to Waiker, Walker separately purchased at least part of this additional section from the earlier purchaser, Benjamin Souder in July 1814. John Walker appeared to have been the first holder of the land to seriously settle on it. It was patented to Thomas Beatty in 1790. He sold it (all but either 16 acres or 19 acres, depending on how seriously you take your arithmetic) to Nicholas Randall in 1792, and Randall sold it to Walker in 1814. Walker farmed the land, acquiring additional land and selling perhaps a few small parcels at different times, but retaining a sizable farm until his death in 1841. The residence of Walker, and the farm "home place", is thought to be the farm home on the knoll behind the former high school

and now former grade school building just to the right of Rt. 194 as you enter town from the south. The farm is presently owned by the J. D. Nicodemus Heirs. Before Walker's death, the town had already begun to form, particularly at the intersection of the road to Frederick (now Rt. 194), and the road leading to Georgetown (now Main Street). Although the town many never have been platted, it would seem that a plan of some sort, perhaps never recorded, may have existed at one time. A deed record in 1839 conveys property described as "Lots #18, #19, and #20, lying on the south side of the Street in the village of Walkersville" (this would probably be the corner property, southwest of the intersection of Crum Road and Rt. 194. More specifically, a deed dated 1832 but not recorded until 1839 conveys property described as "the following lots of grounds it situated in the village of Walkersville ... designated in the plan of said village as Lots #1 and 2". As has been described by Mr. Rice, Walkersville grew from two separate villages - Walkersville, which began



at the present intersection of Frederick Street (Rt. 194), Main Street' and Crum Road, and Georgetown, which grew from a settlement centered around "Five Points", the intersection of present Pennsylvania Avenue, Main Street, and Liberty Street. Georgetown drew its name from George Cramer, one of the early settlers in the area; just as John Walker owned the majority of that property to the south and the west, George Cramer owned much of the property north and east of town. Before the creation of the Walkersville Election District, in 1904, the dividing line between Mt. Pleasant District and Woodsboro district ran along Biggs Ford Road (now Penn-

sylvania Avenue, in town) to Five Points, then east on Liberty Street. It appears that the majority of Cramer's property was north of this line, in Woodsboro District, although he did own some land south of the line, and "Georgetown", as it first began to develop, was likely all on property at one time owned by him. Three of the present streets in this section of town: George Street, William Street, and Charles Streets, are named for sons of George Cramer. By the 1870's, the two villages were meeting as they grew toward each other along present Main Street. The name of Walkersville was chosen for the combined villages, apparently solely because Walkers-

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The beginning of formal development goes back only to 1957, when

In 1877 the first public school in town was constructed on the east side of Crum Road. Part of the remaining foundation can be seen today between the E. J. Fennel Company sewing factory and the home of Miss Beattie

In 1912 the High School was discontinued. Mr. Harshman was appointed Truant Officer for the schools of Frederick County. Students desiring High School mostly

From 1925 to 1934 under the principalship of William B. Gross, changes began occurring. Grades 9, 10, 11 were added, and for that era, Walkersville had a completely accredited High School with enrollment of 100 pupils. Some of these, beginning in 1927, were bused in from Woodsboro and New Midway. In June of 1929 the first High School class of thirteen students was graduated from the auditorium, which had been newly added to the facility that year.

continued next month

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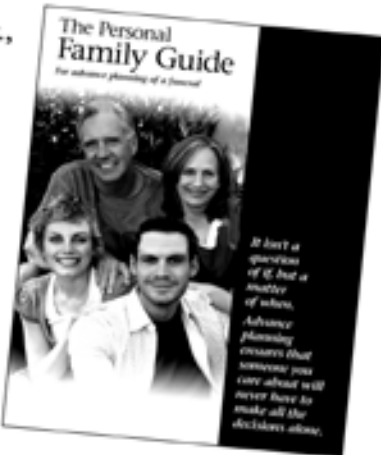
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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 2

Christmas Seals

The sale of Tuberculosis Christmas Seals, conducted each year by the Maryland Tuberculosis Association commenced on December 1. It is hope to collect the \$85,000 necessary to carry on the tuberculosis work for another 12 months. This is the 14th year that the association has presented its bright seals to the public as a means to secure holiday packages and letters, and, at the same time, to help fight one of the most devastating scourges that afflict mankind. Statistics shows a decided decrease in the number of cases of tuberculosis in the state. In 1918 they were 2,934 deaths from consumption, while in 1920 there was a decrease of 786. If this percentage of decreases is maintained the disease will probably be entirely eliminated. At any rate, it is now on the run and is perhaps needs only a persistent and conscious effort to put it to rout as a health problem.

November Hot and Dry

November was the warmest November on record, according to the local weatherman. The general temperature which prevailed during the past month hasd been above that of the other Novembers since the local shark has been keeping tabs on the atmospheric conditions. The highest temperature registered was 77° on the 18th. Only once since the sharp has been keeping records has this been equaled, that being November 4, 1914. The warmest night was on the 19th, when the mercury in the official tube rose as high as 62°.

November's lowest temperature was 26, and that was on the 16th. The precipitation this November was equal to last November, with the area receiving a total of 3.69 inches of rain. Rain fell on 19 days, while last November it rained on only 10 days. Heavy frost fell on the 6th, 8th, 11th, 16th and 22nd. Snow flurries visited the area on the 12th, 13th and 26th, and high winds swept through the county on the 3rd, 18th, 22nd and 24th. Ice formed on five mornings during the month. The thickness of ice varied from 1/3rd to 2/5ths of an inch.

Women's Club Meet

The Women's Club of Walkersville met at the home of Mrs. J Pallister, Wednesday afternoon. After required gossiping was completed, the following programs were rendered: The American creed, Mrs. Walter Kiefer; The True Meaning Of Citizenship To America Women, Helen Stafford; Who Are Citizens Of The United States, Mrs. McHenry; Why Should I Consider It

My Patriotic Duty To Vote? Mrs. Anna Corey; When I Learned Of Interest To Women During My Campaign, Mrs. Felesea Stauffert. Can the women of Walkersville vote in the next town election? If not, what can be done to give them that privilege?

December 9

Men's Club Formed

In response to last week's Women's Club meeting, the hard working men of Walkersville have decided to form Men's Club to members to escape the senseless talk about women's feeble minds being able to handle such complex topics as voting, driving Autocars, not to mention the non-stop sound of their chicken-chattering gossip on the party line. The site of the first meeting has not been determined as we go to press, but we are to understand the determining factor will be the ability of the property's 'john Barleycorn's' still to handle all the manly needs of those in attendance.

Bank Robbers

Foiled at Taneytown

An attempt was made Monday night by crackmen to rob the Taneytown Savings Bank. First the iron bars of the rear window were attacked for entrance, a pipe cutter being used to clip the stout bars, but this was given up as too hard a job, the cutter being left on the ground. Entry into the building was eventually made throughout the window into the furnace cellar. The wall of the vault was then attacked and a large amount of plaster and brick removed by a pick and crow bar, until the double frame work of railroad rails was reached, when the job was given up.

For some reason the telephone wires were cut, possibly with the idea that they might be alarm wires. No attempt was made on the vault doors. Evidently, the vault is such that a great deal of time and use of powerful explosives would be required to crack it. No one heard the crackmen, or saw them, even thought both the building and the street were brilliantly lit all night. A yellow and red striped horse blanket with two holes in it, and black and a dark green lab robe, where left with the tools.

Mail For Santa To Be Delivered

Children if you don't know the address of Santa Claus, then let Uncle Sam deliver your letters. The Postal Service has arranged to take care of messages intended for the white bearded chap who spends Christmas Eve traveling up and down chimneys. Postmasters have been directed letters addressed plainly

and unmistakably to Santa Claus, without other terms or expressions identifying the person for whom such letters are intended, to responsible charitable institutions or reputable individuals in the town who may desire to use them exclusively for philanthropic purposes.

Hit By Train And Killed

Miss Sarah Appold, 68, of Detour, was struck by a Western Maryland passenger train shortly before 6 o'clock last Friday evening. She died 15 minutes after. Her body was dragged for some distance and badly mangled. Her skull was fractured, both arms broken, one leg broken, and one cut off.

Mrs. Appold made her home with her sister and brother-in-law, residing a short distance below the railroad station. The sister went to Baltimore and was returning on the evening train. Miss Appold had started to walk to the station to meet her upon return, and had cross the siding, stepping from behind a freight car. The engineer saw her first, and a little later she was on the fireman side of the track. It is supposed she thought she was on the siding and when she realized her mistake tried to get back to the station side of the track. Immediately after the train stopped members of the crew hurried to the spot and found her unconscious. She was laid upon a car door and carried to her home. But she died without regaining consciousness. Mrs. Appol was well known and held in high esteem by all in the community.

December 16

Some Hooch

Last Friday evening one of Uncle Sam's boys, while passing the home Mr. Trago, E. Main St., so large eagle perched on the chimney. Greatly excited, he rushed to the house and rang the bell. His summons was answered by Master Myron Trago.

"Got a gun" was suddenly shot at the little fellow by Uncle Sam's boy.

"No, but my father has", was the quick reply.

"Father home?" This query was answered by Mrs. Trego.

Later, in talking to Mr. T about the eagle he remark that he would not lend anybody his gun to shoot the revolving weathervane from his chimney, "but I would like to know where he got such a dandy grade of hooch!"

Deaths

Samuel Grover, 62, of Walkersville was struck by automobile driven by Marshall Green, and fatally injured. He



PEOPLE who are in quarantine are not isolated if they have a Bell Telephone. The Bell Service brings cheer and encouragement to the sick, and is of value in countless other ways. Friends, whether close at hand or far away, can be easily reached, because Bell Service is universal service.

attempted across the street in front of his home when two cars, going in opposite directions came along. In avoiding one machine he was struck and dragged some distance by the other. He was picked up unconscious and died without regaining consciousness.

Following an operation of appendicitis, Clarence Dorsey son of Mr. and Mrs. Owen Dorsey of Woodsboro, died without coming out from under the influence of the ether. He was 12 years old and had been ill health for sometime.

December 23

Wind Does Damage

A windstorm of unusual violence swept through the County Sunday. The wind, which came from the south, was strong from the time it set in and continued through most of the day. It blew down trees and branches were broken off everywhere and fell across the highways, temporarily blocking traffic on many thoroughfares.

Four telephone poles were blown over and in Thurmont electric wires were blown down everywhere and 1/3 of the town was without power from about 2 o'clock in the morning until daybreak. Officials of the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. said that 12 lines in the county have been reported out of commission. It is probable, however, that this is not the full extent of the damage to the service and outlying sections of the county.

When You Are Constipated

To ensure a healthy action of the bowels and correct disorders of the liver, take two of Chamberlains Tablets immediately after supper. They will not only ensure a gentle move-

ment of the bowels, without unpleasant effects, but manage that stupid feeling that often accomplishes constipation brought about by being henpecked by your wife.

December 30

Autos Collide

The Ford machines belong to Harry Nicholas and Frank Eiker, both of Woodsboro, met in a head-on collision on Saturday. Neither machine was badly damaged and no one was hurt since both men where "well loosened" at the time of the accident. Both men where brought before the Justice of the Peace, who dismissed the case as all the 'evidence' had been drunken by bystanders.

A Women's Party

A woman's political party would be a tremendous mistake and go along way towards proving the hindsight that a good many men already feel, that giving women the right to vote was a mistake. There would be no more reason for a women's party then for an old man's party, or a young man's party. If women do not feel comfortable as part of the voting masses, they should have let it be known before asking for equal rights. The fact likely is, that those who are agitating for a separate party are doing so largely for the purpose of making jobs for themselves and for getting notoriety. Womenfolk will soon realize they were better off stick to what God intended of them: raising youngins, washing, cleaning, and cooking vittles for their menfolk – and leave important things like 'thinking' to the more developed minds of men.

To read past editions of 100 Years Ago visit the History section of Walkersville.net.



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FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORY

December 2

Robert Rothenhoefer was appointed State's Attorney

Robert Rothenhoefer had only been practicing law for seven years when he was appointed to the position of State's Attorney for Frederick County on December 2, 1959 to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Edwin Nikirk. Chief Judge Patrick M. Schnauffer, of the Sixth Judicial Circuit, made the appointment after receiving the recommendation of the Democratic State Central Committee.

Rothenhoefer was a graduate of Frederick High School, Class of 1939, and, since January 1955, had been a special attorney in the legal department of the State Roads Commission. He resigned that position when named State's Attorney.

Between graduating from high school and receiving his law degree from the University of Maryland Law School in Baltimore in 1952, Rothenhoefer served in the U. S. Army for 45 months during World War II. When he was discharged he was a first lieutenant in the infantry. He would serve as State's Attorney until 1982 when he retired.

Nikirk, who had been elected three times as State's Attorney, had been convicted of income tax evasion and was sentenced in U. S. District Court in Baltimore to one year in federal prison plus a fine of \$7,500. Initially he pled innocent to the charges, but on November 20, 1959, he changed his plea to no contest.

Prior to his conviction, Nikirk had paid the taxes claimed in the indictment and additional interest and penalties. Following his prison term, Nikirk was disbarred, but was later reinstated. Throughout the many years that followed he was considered perhaps the best criminal defense attorney in Frederick County until his retirement.

lic Church. She was canonized on September 14, 1975.

On December 9, 1974, Pope Paul VI completed a 92-year-effort to make her a saint of his church. After her conversion to Catholicism in 1805, she was ostracized by her family and friends. She struggled as a new widow to feed her five children and always placed her faith in her Lord to provide what she and her family needed.

When Mother Seton died in Emmitsburg in 1821, Father Simon Brute her spiritual advisor, told her followers: "Save everything. This is an extraordinary soul."

Eighty-six years later, in 1907, James Cardinal Gibbons began the official process which led to her canonization. He had, as early as 1882, expressed a desire to initiate the Process of Cause.

A primary part of any canonization is proof that at least three miracles can be attributed to the intercession of the candidate.

The first miracle involved Sister Gertrude Korzendorfer, of New Orleans, who was cured of pancreatic cancer in 1935. A tribunal in 1945 gave credit to Mother Seton for the sister's cure.

The second miracle involved Ann O'Neill of Baltimore who was cured of acute leukemia at the age of 4 in 1952. Mother Seton's intervention in the O'Neill case was declared in 1961.

The third and last miracle came when Carl Kalin, of New York City, was cured of brain cancer in 1963.

On December 9, 1974, Pope Paul VI approved at the Vatican a decree of canonization for Mother Seton.

On September 15, 1975 services bestowing sainthood on this humble woman were conducted in Rome and in Emmitsburg.

December 9

On December 9, 1974, Pope Paul VI completed the formal process for naming Mother Elizabeth Seton as the United States' first native-born saint of the Catho-

December 16

Trinity United Methodist Church founded by 14 people

The issue of slavery divided a nation and led to a Civil War. But in Frederick it also led to the formation of a church which today

boasts a thriving congregation.

After the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church meeting in 1860 denounced slavery, several Fredericktonians split from the established church and formed their own. Their efforts were delayed by The Civil War, but their determination to establish their own church remained high.

The first meetings of this new congregation were held in private homes. In 1862 they began holding their services in a three-story bakery building on East Patrick St.

On December 16, 1866, the Rev. Samuel Register organized what is today Trinity United Methodist Church with only 14 members. Initially this church was called Trinity Chapel and survived under that name for many years. In 1871 the trustees purchased a site on East Second St. for \$990, and during that year a church was built.

In 1966, this structure was sold to the First Church of Christ Scientists and a new Trinity Church was built on West Patrick St. at the U.S. 15 cloverleaf.

December 23

The Tivoli Theater opened

Today we know it as the Weinberg Center for The Arts, a palatial theater where concerts, plays and even silent movies can be seen.

But in 1926 when it opened, it was the "ultimate movie palace." On Thursday night, December 23, 1926, more than 1,500 people gathered on West Patrick Street to watch Harry Langdon star as "The Strong Man" on the silver screen of Frederick's newest theater - The Tivoli.

The facility, which had been built at a cost of \$350,000, featured the mighty Wurlitzer organ (which remains intact), four chandeliers, carved wood arches and marble slabs along the walls.

The Stanley Crandall Company was the original owner and operator, but they were bought out by Warner Bros. in the 1930s.

That purchase was fortuitous, for it was during Warner's ownership that the Tivoli became the

first air-conditioned commercial building in Frederick.

For years after opening night, the manager, or assistant manager, would greet patrons at the entrance, dressed in their finest. Uniformed ushers would direct movie goers to their seats.

In 1959 Dan and Alice Weinberg purchased the theater, becoming its first local owners. It was closed briefly for renovations, but reopened on its 33rd anniversary.

In the early 1970s, the Weinbergs leased the theater to Irwin Cohen, of R. C. Theaters of Baltimore. Soon thereafter, Hurricane Agnes devastated the theater by flooding the Carroll Creek.

Four years later, on October 9, 1976, the Great Flood of the Carroll Creek nearly destroyed the Tivoli and Cohen was released from his contract.

Thousands of volunteers donated their time to restore this grand dame of Frederick. And on February 10, 1978, the Tivoli re-opened, this time as the Weinberg Center for The Arts.

December 30

There are those times in our lives when we find ourselves at a complete loss. Such was the case when Bernard Adams, who touched every citizen of Frederick County with his magnificent baritone voice while a local radio newsmen, passed away suddenly at just 37 years old.

Bernie was unique. He brought sunshine to the darkest day. His smile lit every room he entered. His counsel was sought, his insight often profound. He threw himself into his work with a fervor unmatched. He brought a sense of

marvel to observers. He rose to the occasion no matter how insignificant it may have seemed. The important and seemingly meaningless tasks got the same effort from Bernie.

He came to Frederick in the late 1970s to work as a radio news reporter. He rose quickly to a position of respect within the news-making community. And after several years as a working stiff, he was named news director at WFMD.

Bernie was one of those uncommon individuals who could ask the hard questions and never infuriate his sources. Emotional involvement never entered the picture.

When he accepted a position as assistant to the president of Frederick Community College for public relations, shock waves reverberated among his friends and associates. But Bernie saw a world different than the rest of us. He had accomplished all he could - or wanted to - in his chosen professional world, and it was time to accept new challenges, to face new horizons, to contribute in a different way to the place he had come to call home.

He was black. But no one ever mentioned that. Bernie was a man, a respected member of this society. The example he set, not only for young black men struggling to simply earn a living wage, but for all caught in the trap of discrimination, was a true inspiration.

Bernie was a prototype citizen. From his very example can be taught many lessons. He gave of himself and never asked for anything more than simple recognition that the job had been done well.

From John Ashbury's "... and all our yesterdays"

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IN THE COUNTRY

Dreaming of a green Christmas

Tim Iverson, Naturalist

Despite being nestled within the coldest months of the year, Christmas brings with it a sense of warmth and vitality. Pay no mind to the blustery marshmallow world outside. Nevermind that we're months away from verdant green grasses and the sultry summer sun. Christmas provides an internal jingle that rings with silver bells and is wrapped in wreaths and garlands of evergreens.

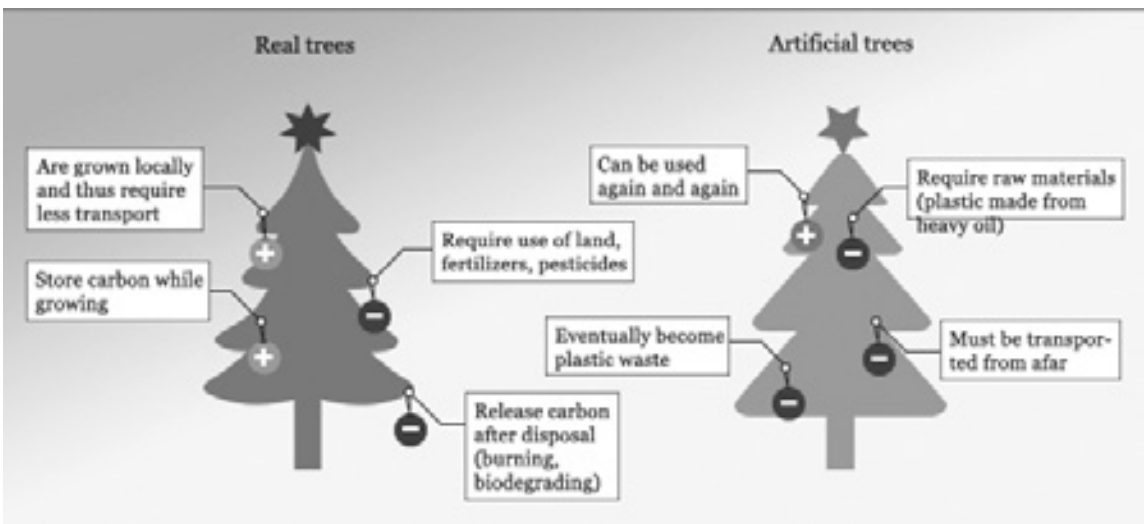
Evergreens, as the name implies, are trees that remain green year round. They will keep their "leaves" or needles in almost all cases, all year, while deciduous trees will shed their leaves in the colder winter months. Evergreens are usually conifer trees, plants, or shrubs, and in some rare cases leafy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

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 21st and 22nd 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 16th 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 19th century there had been a huge



If you are worried about killing a fresh tree for Christmas, consider this - artificial trees are only better for the environment if used for at least four years, but possibly not until having been used for 20 years.

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 American home and town square.

The modern Christmas tree has its roots planted squarely in these traditions. However, contemporary cultural concerns have roiled a debate among more environmentally conscious consumers. This has left some discrepancy

between what is the most ethical choice between tree purchasers - natural or artificial? There are certainly merits to both choices, but environmental agencies and universities have come down squarely on the side of natural or real trees as being the most environmentally sound choice.

Most Christmas trees are commercially farmed, harvested, and shipped regionally to surrounding areas and states. While a real tree is essentially carbon neutral, it is estimated that it is responsible for approximately 7lbs of carbon dioxide per tree via transit activities. It also worth considering that a tree takes about 7 to 10 years or more from planting to harvesting. During that time it stores carbon, provides oxygen, habitat and food sources to wildlife, and maintains soil and water quality.

Whereas, 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. Most manufacturers recommended a shelf life of 10 years. After which these trees should be replaced. Once trashed they either end up in a landfill taking centuries to decompose or being burned in an incinerator releasing carbon and other carcinogenic chemicals into the atmosphere.

Better ways to reduce impact while celebrating the Christmas season is to ensure that you properly recycle your tree. Many localities provide tree recycling services which will turn trees into mulch for parks, gardens, public space, and trails. Living Christmas trees are increasingly becoming an alternative for an even greener Christmas option. These trees are harvested by balling the roots and transplanted into a pot or mesh container. After the Christmas holiday is over you can plant your tree in your yard or another location and it can continue to provide habitat and other positive environmental contributions to the ecosystem.

By considering how to reduce our Christmas carbon footprints we can help ensure that future Christmases will be white enough to leave actual footprints in the snow. Using LED lighting for trees and home decorations significantly cuts down on energy, and by using the lighting less in general will affect the amount of impact we have. Upcycle old newspaper into wrapping paper, ensure batteries for new and old toys alike get properly recycled and not just trashed, and employing similar solutions helps to turn a white Christmas into a green holiday.

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Frederick County Schools

Karen Yoho
Frederick County Board
of Education

November saw a number of ceremonies in the school system celebrating Veterans Day. We appreciate all Veterans, especially those that work for FCPS. The Board of Education also wishes best of luck to all of the high school fall sports teams as they head into the playoffs and hopes that everyone was able to enjoy Thanksgiving with loved ones.

At our September 8 meeting, the Board followed Dr. Alban's recommendation and gave conditional approval to the proposed charter school from the Sabillasville community. Additionally, we needed to gather more information on which entity had the power to grant conversion charter status, at the request of the new charter school committee. In the past, a conversion charter had only been used to convert a poor performing regular public school into a public charter school.

These schools often become what is called operator run, which put the administration in the hands of formal business groups, as opposed to community or parent groups as is the case with the Sabillasville school. Once we learned that low performance was no longer a necessary criterion and that our Board had the authority to confer conversion status, it paved the way for us to put it on our agenda. The process would allow the new charter school to simply occupy its current building. Otherwise, they would have to find a new location since having a facility was one of the conditions of its approval.

At our meeting on November 22, we did approve the Sabillasville Environmental School as a conversion charter. In December they will appear before the Board to go through their charter plan and negotiate the details. The other major condition for approval was reaching an enrollment of 161 students its first year to make the school financially viable. Currently, they have 191 interested.

This may require a lottery to determine which students will attend. Current students will automatically be a part of the new charter

school if they wish. Going forth, founders' children and siblings of current attendees will be a part of the school community if they elect this option. As we do for all the schools in our system, the Board looks forward to the success of this new and unique charter.

Also at our November 22 meeting, our Board spent several hours problem solving and making motions to address workload and staffing issues. Previously, we had become acutely aware of major issues affecting school systems and businesses everywhere, and at our November 10 meeting we voted to hold an emergency meeting on November 15 to try to find some solutions. On the day after our regular meeting, staff put out surveys to eleven different job titles in our system. They then compiled the results from thousands of responses over the weekend so we would have data and information directly from some of the affected employees. The issues were sorted into three main categories: time, resources, and money. Staff prepared a PowerPoint for the meeting with suggestions and dollar amounts based on the surveys.

Some of the highlights of the motions passed by the Board are listed below. Under time we voted to close offices to the public over winter and spring breaks to help clerical and other 12-month staff work without interruptions. We added in three 2-hour early or late student arrivals for school staff on January 13, February 22, and March 25 to give teachers extra time for planning and grading. The system had sent out a message to all teachers dialing back much of the current professional development for teachers as well as system initiatives. The Board reaffirmed these steps by assuring all professional development (PD) and extra meetings will be limited, with the exceptions of teacher requested PD or those necessary to meet state requirements such as the Accelerated Learning Process (ALP), which will be capped at twice a month.

In the area of resources, we voted to create a centralized volunteer coordinator so the system can tap into the benevolence

of our Frederick County citizens without adding work to already stressed school staff. The plan is to recruit a retired administrator. The cost for this was minimal.

Finally, items that required spending was, not surprisingly, the area with the most motions passed. While we did rack up quite a total of dollars committed, the system has realized a large sum of money due to salary savings. Normally, positions of employees that retire at a higher rate are filled by new employees at beginning rates. This year there are so many unfilled positions, those funds are just sitting there. We voted for the following allocations: retention incentives for bus drivers and food nutrition service workers; cease charging applicants for fingerprinting; \$15 minimum wage (up

from \$13.47); teachers and administrators who substitute during the school day will be paid at per diem rate; all substitutes (regular, long-term, and resident) will increase \$3 per hour. Regular subs were at \$17 and will now be at \$20.

Overall, we tried to create time and recruit personnel. Staff is being pulled to substitute, which doesn't allow them the time to do their regular job. Many areas are short-staffed, which puts an additional burden on current employees. Everyone needs the chance to be able to do their job and catch their breath once in a while. It was a hopeful beginning, but we are not finished.

We still have many parents attending our meetings to give public comment on masks, vaccinations, and COVID testing. The State Board of Education held a special meeting on Tuesday,

November 16 to hear testimony from a variety of stakeholders on their mask mandate. That mandate runs out on February 25, but they had promised to revisit the matter before then. During the four plus hour meeting, the State Board heard from parents, school board members, state health officials, the president of MSEA, the president of Free State PTA, and other interested parties on the topic. They declared up front that no decision would be made that day. The next time they meet is Wednesday, December 1. Their website is Marylandpublicschools.org and click on the State Board tab. You will see their 2021 Meeting Schedule. We will all be standing by for what the State Board decides.

The Board of Education wishes happy holidays to all as we look forward to an improved 2022.

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HOME DECOR

Why on Earth should you buy used furniture?

Jessica Crawford
Owner, Cotton & Co

We are in the full Christmas spirit over at the shop right now. Sleigh bells are ringing, holiday music is playing over the speakers, there are trees of every shape and size in every nook and cranny. And glitter. So much glitter. The store looks like a winter wonderland. And I would be lying if I didn't say that retail Christmas is my favorite time of the year at Cotton & Co. It's just all around lovely.

And while this season in retail is generally the season of smalls; small items, décor, gifts, etc... it's also a great time of year to make an excuse to spruce up your home in general. During the holiday season, we tend to host guests and company more. And if you're like me, you like to make sure your home is a representation of you and your style, for not just you but also your guests. Sometimes you just need a fresh piece of fur-

niture to change up or update a space in your home.

We are also approaching the winter season, where we are inside much more than other times of the year. And your indoor environment affects your mindset greatly. Especially when the days are darker and longer. So you want to make sure that your home is in good spirits, so that you are also, during the long winter months.

Which leads me to the topic of this month's article. We hear it occasionally from customers or friends and family. "Why would you buy 'used furniture' when you can buy it new?!" Well, let's talk about that. First, given the way that the world turns right now. Or more so, is grinding gears or at a screeching halt altogether, in terms of production. What you see on our sales floor and our social media posts, is actually in stock. It's ready to take home that day and grace your home. You may have heard that it is taking upwards of a year,

a whole year, to receive furniture ordered from the big box shops and furniture stores. Production and freight are so inconsistent at the moment and still recovering worldwide from the pandemic. So production and shipping times are drastically delayed. But when you shop furniture from small shops, what you see, is ready to take home immediately.

Vintage and antique furniture was also craftsman designed and built. It was built to last and stand the test of time. I always say, you'll likely never have to replace a piece of vintage furniture, unless you want to. Unlike the mass produced furniture, that's made of laminate veneers, composite wood and glue, vintage furniture was built with art and skill. Vintage pieces took time to build, with their dovetailing, solid wood and attention to detail, as well as years of trade skill and training. New and contemporary furniture is designed to fail within a few years, so that it requires replacing regularly. It also tends to show wear and tear and age rapidly, especially if you have cute little kids running around like I do. They can wreak havoc on a poorly or cheaply constructed piece.

Vintage pieces are also one of a kind! As they were hand-built versus factory-made, each piece is an individual work of art and craftsmanship. Each piece has its own personality and design. And if you were to purchase a piece of vintage or antique furniture that's been refinished, no one else is going to have that same piece.



A few of my favorite vintage pieces in my personal collection.

You now own a completely one-of-a-kind piece as no one else is going to have that piece of furniture in that same color with that same technique. You are preserving and saving a little chunk of history, while also owning something completely individual and unique.

We also are living in a world right now where we are really embracing and appreciating our impact and influence, both positive and negative on our Earth. We recognize the things that we can do to help our planet and also the things that we are doing that are leaving it worse for future generations. We are living within a Green Revolution. And one of my personal favorite aspects of buying vintage pieces, is that it is one of the greatest forms of recycling. Reduce, reuse, recycle. By

purchasing or refinishing your own vintage pieces, you are lessening the waste in landfills. At the same time, you are also lessening factory production of new furniture, which is in effect lessening worldwide pollution. And did you also know, that a lot of the glues and solvents used in the laminate veneer and composite style furniture, slowly and consistently emit harmful toxins into your home? So yeah, there's also that.

By purchasing from small mom and pop shops, you are stimulating and growing your local community and economy. You are keeping your hard earned salaries in your neighborhood, rather than submitting them to a large corporation that doesn't need, care about or appreciate your purchase. Every small business owner does a small little happy dance with every purchase. Your support and business mean the world. You're helping buy karate and ballet lesson for little ones in your community. You're helping support and house and feed your local families. It's just a beautiful, symbiotic relationship to shop small and local. And it never goes unappreciated or unseen.

So, have I convinced you that there's a lot of value in buying 'used furniture?' As I see it, it's a way to support and grow your local community, while helping our our Mother Earth. And not only that, you're purchasing and appreciating pieces of history. Probably hand-built by someone who is long gone, preserving their legacies and life's work. You're keeping waste and pollutants at a lower capacity too.

While the shop is filled to the gills with holiday décor, gifts and inspiration, the vendors also keep it stocked with an abundance of original and refinished vintage pieces. Stop by and see what's going on, there's always something new weekly. Cotton & Co Vintage Boutique 900 FSK Hwy Keymar, MD, Open weekly Friday- Sunday. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates!

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COOKING

Christmas cookies!

Carol Cogliano

My daughter's favorite part of Christmas is spending time baking cookies together, and she has made me VOW that we will take time for that in the weeks to come. I hope that you enjoy the following recipes with your families and have a healthy, happy holiday celebration! Merry Christmas!

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:

1½ cups sugar
½ cup butter softened
½ cup shortening
2 eggs
2¾ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt

Topping

1/4 cup crushed candy cane
crumbs
1/4 cup melted white chocolate

Preparation Instructions: Heat oven to 400°F. Line baking trays with parchment paper, set aside. Place crushed candy canes in a small bowl & set aside. Cream together 1½ cups sugar, the butter, shortening and eggs in large bowl. Mix together dry ingredients. Stir into wet ingredients. Shape dough into 1¼-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)
1½ cups Granulated Sugar
2 Eggs
1 teaspoon Vanilla
1 teaspoon Peppermint Extract
(or Almond, Lemon or
Mint)
½ teaspoons Baking Soda
3 cups Flour (all-purpose)
Powdered Sugar

Preparation 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 pow-

dered sugar. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 9-10 minutes.

Oatmeal Lace Cookies Recipe

Oatmeal Lace Cookies are thin, crisp, delicate and buttery cookies. This lace cookies recipe is a family favorite. Makes 5-6 dozen cookies!

Ingredients

1 cup (2 sticks) butter
2¼ cups light brown sugar,
packed
2¼ cups rolled oats
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375° F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper or silicon baking mats. Set aside. Heat butter and brown sugar in a 2-quart saucepan over medium heat, stirring frequently with a wooden or silicon spoon, until butter has melted and mixture is smooth. Stir in oats, flour, salt, egg, and vanilla. Drop cookie batter by the teaspoon onto prepared baking sheets, leaving about 2 inches between each cookie to allow them to spread. Bake for 5 -7 minutes, watching closely to prevent them from over-baking. The lace cookies should be golden brown. Allow to cool on the cookie sheet for 30 seconds and remove onto racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

No Bake Coffee Cookies

Ingredients

2 cups crushed vanilla wafers
1 1/4 cups powdered sugar
1 cup finely chopped pecans
2 tablespoons unsweetened
cocoa powder
1 1/2 teaspoons instant coffee
crystals
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
4-5 tablespoons brewed
espresso or strong coffee
1/2 cup powdered sugar

Preparation Instructions: Combine crushed cookies, the 1 1/4 cups powdered sugar, nuts, cocoa, coffee crystals, and cinnamon. Add brewed coffee using just enough to moisten. Form mixture into 1 1/4" balls. Roll balls generously in the 1/2 cup powdered sugar. Place balls on sheet of waxed paper and let stand until dry (about an hour). Before serving, roll balls again in powdered sugar if desired.

Cinnamon Cream Cheese Cookies

Ingredients

1/2 cup unsalted butter (1 stick) softened
4 ounces cream cheese softened
1 & 1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or extract
pinch kosher salt
1 & 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

Preparation Instructions: In a large bowl, cream together the butter and cream cheese with a hand mixer until smooth. Slowly add the powdered sugar until combined. Add egg, baking powder, vanilla, and salt. Mix to combine. Add flour in slowly until fully incorporated, scraping the sides as needed. Place in fridge for one hour to rest. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a small bowl, mix together the cinnamon and sugar. Set aside. Roll dough into 1 inch sized balls, about 2 teaspoons worth of dough. Roll until coated in the cinnamon sugar mixture. Place on a parchment lined cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake for 8-9 minutes, until just set. Do not overbake, it is hard to tell when these cookies are ready, they will puff up but won't get golden brown. Let cool on baking sheet for 10 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and let cool completely.

Pecan Delights

I'll start this recipe with a disclaimer. It works best if you have a 2nd set of hands to help as you have to move very fast when mixture comes to temperature!

Ingredients

2 ¼ C. Brown Sugar
1 C. Butter
1 C. Corn Syrup
1/8 Tsp. Salt
1 14 Oz. Can Sweetened Con-
densed Milk
1 Tsp. Vanilla
1.5 Lb. pecans (24 ounces)
1 C. Semi-Sweet Chocolate
Morsels
1 C. Milk Chocolate Morsels
2 T. Shortening



Cooking Directions: Combine 1st four ingredients. Cook over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Add milk and mix well. Continue cooking until candy thermometer reads 245 degrees (firm ball stage). This takes anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. Although your candy thermometer says firm ball stage is 248 - it works best if you take off the heat at 245. Remove from the heat and stir in vanilla. Pour over pecans. This mixture is very thick. Drop by tsp. on 3 cookie sheets, covered with parchment paper. Don't make the balls too large - bite-size is best! This is the period of time you need to move very quickly as the mixture just continues to thicken - making it impossible to form into balls! Chill till firm. Melt chocolate chips and shortening. Drizzle over clusters and cool. Enjoy!

Apple Peanut Butter Fudge

1 six-ounce package of Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
 ½ of a 9 or 10 oz. jar of Marshmallow Crème
 ½ C. Peanut Butter
 1 Tsp. Vanilla
 2 C. Sugar
 2/3 C. Apple Juice

Cooking Directions: Combine chocolate, marshmallow, peanut butter and vanilla in a mixing bowl. Set aside. In a Pam-sprayed 2 qt. saucepan, add sugar and apple juice. Cook over medium heat until sugar dissolves and mixture boils. Continue cooking and stirring to softball stage - 240 degrees. Remove from heat and quickly add mixture in bowl. Mix well. Pour into buttered 9" square pan. Cool. Cut into squares and store in a tight container.

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

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Christmas Eve - Fri., Dec. 24 - 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Christmas Day - Closed

Sun., Dec. 26 - 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

New Year's Eve - Fri., Dec. 31 - 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

New Year's Day - Closed

Sun., Jan. 2 - 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

ARTS

Irish Christmas in America comes to Frederick

Laura Hawk

Beloved holiday show and tradition Irish Christmas in America is coming to New Spire Arts in Frederick on December 16th at 7:30p! This hugely popular show brings a fascinating performance of music, song, dance and stories of seasonal Irish traditions. Produced by Sligo fiddler Oisín Mac Diarmada, the hugely popular Irish Christmas in America show features top Irish music, song and dance in an engaging performance rich in humor and boundless energy.

The holiday show was first conceived in 2005 with past tours featuring such stellar guest vocalists as Séamus & Méabh Begley, Teresa Horgan, Lumiere (Pauline Scanlon & Eilis Kennedy), Karan Casey, Cara Dillon, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Cathie Ryan and Michael Londra. Mac Diarmada

enthuses about the program as a way to bring traditional and often unknown Irish customs to the States. “One of the most heart-felt themes of Irish Christmas is emigration,” says Mac Diarmada. “Music was a way that people stayed close to home.”

In the following 17 years of performing, Irish Christmas in America has traveled all over the United States including Arizona, California, Utah, and now here in Frederick. Their performances have been described as “Full of exceptional music and dance, relaxed good humor, and interesting historical commentary, “Irish Christmas in America is one of the few standouts. It was as relaxed and enjoyable as any Irish Christmas-themed concerts I’ve ever attended.” by Irish Echo and “Lively and reflective...a powerful evocation of the season” by Folk Wax.

The 2021 tour, features special guest singer Niamh Farrell, a Sligo vocalist who has toured with UK singer/songwriting star David Gray. Niamh teams up with legendary West Kerry singer Séamus Begley, famous for his charming wit and stunning voice.

This family-friendly performance features lively instrumental tunes on fiddle, flute, uilleann pipes and harp, along with thrilling Irish old-style dancing from Samantha Harvey. In addition, evocative photographic images provide a backdrop to some of the rich historical traditions of Ireland. Take a memorable glimpse into the enchanting spirit of Christmas, as the finest traditional artists from Ireland, bring you on a fun-filled start to the holiday season.

Please be advised, New Spire Arts is requiring all patrons to show proof of vaccination or a



negative covid test within the 72 hours prior to the event. The wearing of masks is required for all patrons. Children under 12 are not required to be vaccinated but must wear a mask. Tickets are available at newspirearts.org.

Way Off Broadway’s -’Twas The Night Before Christmas

The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre, once again, has a full line-up of entertainment for the holiday season. Along with its Mainstage production of That Christmas Spirit, Way Off Broadway’s Family Theatre will be presenting its stage adaptation ‘Twas the Night Before for a limited holiday run beginning with a special evening performance on Friday, December 3rd.

“’Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house . . .” is one of the most memorable opening lines in literary history. It is the opening to a poem that has become a staple of the holiday season. For Christmas, Way Off Broadway’s original stage adaptation of ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas returns. In this telling, a little boy named Tyler learns all about the magic

of Christmas from none other than Santa Claus himself.

The original poem, first titled A Visit from St. Nicholas, was first published in 1823 and is today, synonymous with Christmas. For the 2010 Season, Way Off Broadway adapted the poem into an original Children’s Theatre musical. This year’s production will be the second revival the show as seen at the theatre.

Playing the role of precocious Tyler in this year’s production will be Patrick Ford, who will be joined on stage by Jessica Biliones, Randy Stull, and Megan E. West, with a special appearance by Kris Kringle as Santa Claus.

Way Off Broadway’s ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas was originally adapted for the stage by the theatre’s Executive Pro-



ducer, Bill Kiska, who is also directing the production. The

2021 revival script has additional material and revisions by Justin M. Kiska. Megan West is music directing.

‘Twas the Night Before Christmas runs December 3rd through December 22nd of this year. Performances are every Saturday afternoon, as well as on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. Special evening performance are scheduled for Friday, December 3rd and Wednesday, December 22nd. Tickets are \$21 per person.

To learn more about the show, or any of Way Off Broadway’s performances, visit www.wayoffbroadway.com. To purchase tickets, simply call the Box Office at 301-662-6600.

The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre, under the direction of the Kiska family since 2002, is now in its 27th Season of producing live theatre. Since it first opened in 1995, the theatre has been a leader in the area’s theatre community, proudly bringing both classic musicals, as well as regional and area premieres to the Frederick stage.

MESSENGER NEWS! HELLO, DOLLY! THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES The Musical COUNTDOWN CHRISTMAS

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HEALTH AND FITNESS

Christmas dinner

Linda Stultz
Certified Fitness Trainer

Turkey or ham is still the main part of the meal but you can add so many vegetables and fruits to spice things up for Christmas Dinner.

Dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, warm bread and dessert are also part of the traditional meal. I'm not saying don't have these favorites; just alter the way they are prepared. Try mashed sweet potatoes or mashed cauliflower this year. The cauliflower trend has really taken off. There are so many recipes out there for traditional dishes that use cauliflower instead of pasta or potatoes. Try whole grain bread for the dressing. Whole grains are much healthier than processed white bread and supply added fiber. You can also sprinkle flaxseed meal or wheat germ to add a bit of nutty flavor and nobody will be the wiser. Gravy is one of the most important parts of this meal. Let your broth set for a while till it forms a solid skim on top. Remove this and you will have broth with much less fat. The gravy still tastes the same, without the fat. Gravy can even be made a day or two early to save you time on the big day. The warm bread can be a variety of different whole grain buns. This way, everybody gets their favorite kind such as wheat, rye, pumpernickel and now even whole grain white. Add a veggie tray with low fat dip. Cooked seasoned veggies such as squash, carrots and cauliflower are also a great combina-

tion if you prefer hot vegetables. One half of your plate should be filled with veggies. Raw vegetables give you the most nutritional value. Have them on the table or the kitchen counter for your family and guests to nibble while the main meal is being prepared. They will fill up on these and maybe not eat as much later. Supply a variety of vegetables to pick from. Hopefully, you will have at least one kind that the kids like.

Gluten is something that will give people a problem. There are many new gluten free products on the market today. Check the frozen section of the grocery store and you may be pleasantly surprised at what you find. I now use vegetable pasta instead of the traditional pasta and I can't tell the difference. I also use zucchini noodles and spaghetti squash and my whole family likes it. We avoid some of the carbs and still have the great flavor.

Dessert! Some people live for the dessert table. That's OK. Give yourself a treat. Just look over everything carefully, and decide what you really want. Maybe even sample a few different kinds. Try cutting the slices in half. That way you can try a bigger variety. Watch out for the pumpkin pie, you know who you are! Preparing a small plate of dessert for your guests to take home is also a thoughtful way to let them sample everything, just not all at one time. They can take a little piece of Christmas home to remember for the rest of the holiday. This way you do not have all of that

dessert leftover and tempting you. Your waistline will thank you later. Check into some small changes in the recipe that will make a big difference in the fat and sugar content of the dessert. Pumpkin is a great way to add that creamy texture to your cakes and cookies and even a good thickener for other recipes, while lowering the fat and raising the protein. Flaxseed meal can also be added to pies and cakes to give your family that added health benefit without them even knowing it is there. Applesauce in place of oil is another helpful, healthy hint. Sugar is a big ingredient that packs on the pounds. Add a little less sugar to your recipes and you may just discover you didn't need all that the recipe called for anyway. Check out your grocery store's healthy cooking aisle for alternatives to sugar. Coconut sugar is lower in glycemic index and still tastes great. Artificial sweeteners can leave an after taste. I wish someone could come up with a way to sweeten food without the calories, bad taste and harmful effects of sugar. Maybe someday someone will. Remember, fresh seasonal fruit also makes a great dessert. Fruit has natural sugar but has much less calories than desserts made with sugar.



Start a new tradition this year that will continue for years and hopefully make you feel better because you are doing something healthy for yourself and your family. Taking a walk after your meal is a great idea. I know how everybody feels after eating a big meal, all the more reason to get moving. Take the whole family for a walk in the brisk air. Share this time and walk off some of those extra pounds you just consumed. If you can't get the whole family involved, pick a friend or family member that you would like to spend a little extra time with. Share conversation, ideas and just time with them. Maybe after all day together preparing the big Christmas feast you may want to escape by yourself for a nice, quiet, peaceful walk of your own. If you can't get outside for a walk use the treadmill or an exercise tape. Don't have a machine or tape, turn on the music and just dance. You will have fun and bring the family together. These tips work for any holiday gatherings. Merry Christmas to everyone!



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ASTRONOMY

The night sky of December

Professor Wayne Wooten

The waning crescent moon is just above Mars in the dawn on December 2nd, and is new on December 4th. The waxing crescent moon is just below Venus in the dusk on December 6th. Compare their phases that evening in low power telescopes. The moon passes beneath Saturn on December 7th, and below Jupiter on December 8th. It is first quarter on December 10th.

The best meteor shower of the year, the Geminid meteor shower, peaks on the morning of December 14, with best observing after moonset about 3 AM. Look for a meteor a minute coming out of the NE. The full moon, the Yule or Long Night Moon, occurs on December 18th. The winter solstice, our shortest day, begins at 10:59 a.m.. The last quarter moon is on December 26th, and on News Eve, the waning crescent moon again returns to the right of Mars.

Prime time of planetary observing is fast ending. All three bright planets now in the west will soon vanish behind the Sun. This is most true of Venus, which overtakes earth this month and gets much larger in the telescope and even binoculars. The phase is 30% lit on December 1st, down to 15% by midmonth, down to 10% at Winter Solstice, and down to a mere 5% sliver by New Years. But she has grown to over an arc minute in size, the biggest any planet can appear from Earth. She will be low in the twilight then, and beside Mercury in dusk on December 30th about 40 minutes after sunset, a fitting ending to the year!

Saturn will be the next to vanish in the Sun's glare, in January, and Jupiter by Valentine's Day. As they are low in the SW, stay to low powers to see the 4 moons around Jupi-



The best meteor shower of the year, the Geminid meteor shower, peaks on the morning of December 14, with best observing after moonset about 3 a.m. Look for a meteor a minute coming out of the north-east.

ter and Saturn's rings while you can in the telescope.

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), and Cetus (the Whale). Below Aquarius is Fomalhaut, the only first magnitude star of the southern fall sky. It is the mouth of Pisces Australis, the Southern Fish.

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.

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.

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. History buffs 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, dom-

inating 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.

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 PM, 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. Below Sirius in binoculars is another fine open cluster, M-41, a fitting dessert for New Year's sky feast.

Farmers' Almanac

"But I heard him exclaim 'ere he drove out of sight, 'Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!'"
—Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Fair, turning milder (1, 2, 3); snow, rain east (3, 4, 5); windy at first, then dry but cold (6, 7); rain, light snow central and west (8, 9, 10, 11); fair, cool (12, 13, 14, 15, 16); 17-19 rain, snow central and west (17, 18, 19); fair, breezy, colder (20, 21); fair, milder (22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29); rain, breezy (30, 31). Severe Weather Watch: Possible heavy snow (4, 5); high winds (6, 7, 8); more heavy snow possible (17, 18, 19).

Full Moon: December 's full moon falls on the 18th and because

of the lower temperatures during the month, has been called Cold Moon by many Native American tribes. Other tribes noticed the Beavers scurrying to finish building their dams and lodges before the lakes and ponds begin to ice over, called it Ice-Forming Moon and Beaver Moon.

Special Notes: Winter Solstice will occur on Tuesday, December 21st.

Holidays: Christmas is celebrated on Saturday, December 25th, and Kwanzaa begins on Sunday, December 26th. Enjoy family and friends during these festive times and keep that joyful and giving spirit alive throughout the coming year. Everyone at The Hagerstown 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 226 years! New Year's Eve falls on Friday, December 31st. Plan and enjoy a safe, family-oriented evening of fun, food, and entertainment on the very first night of the year. Look online at www.first-night.com/cities to find a First Night Celebration nearest you.

The Garden: Live Christmas trees are 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. And 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!

The Farm: Best for planting root crops (27, 28); weeding and stirring the soil (22, 23); planting above-ground crops (10, 11, 19, 20); harvesting all crops (12, 13); the best days for setting hens and incubators (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27); the slaughtering and butchering of meat (4, 5); transplanting (4, 5, 16, 7, 8, 9); the weaning of all small animals and livestock (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); harvesting and storing grains (31).

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living
"To give the gift of yourself is perhaps the most precious gift of all"



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WALKERSVILLE VOLUNTEER RESCUE AWARD BANQUET



Frederick County County Councilman Michael Blue thanked the members of the Ambulance Company for their service and dedication.



Deputy Chief Jeff Huggins was recognized with the Chief's award from Chief Topper Cramer.



Rodney Davis - recipient of the Francis Sappington Award for being a handyman around the Station.



Jen Hoffman receives her 30 year membership certificate from Vice President Lisa Marchesani.



Lisa Marchesani was the 2021 winner of the Vaughn Zimmerman Scholarship. Pictured with her is program sponsor Vaughn Zimmerman.



Walkersville Mayor Chad Weddle was recognized by Company Secretary Bev Barnes for 30 years of service to the company.



Michael McDonald was the recipient of this year's Life Member award. The award was presented by Topper Cramer.



Tom and Elle Gilbert were presented a plaque from Chief Topper recognizing the Fillers for their financial endowment to the company.



Walkersville Ambulance Company's 2022 Board of Directors: Michael Marchesani, Michael McDonald, Rodney Davis, Jeremy Heflin. (Note: Paul Davis was absent.)



Administrative Officers for 2022: Bev Barnes - Secretary, Cindy Cramer - President, Lisa Marchesani - Vice President, Jeff Gere - Treasurer, Joe Ogershok - Asst. Treasurer. (Not Pictured: Shari Jenkins - Asst. Secretary.)



Line officers for 2022: Front row: Michael McDonald - Sergeant, Topper Cramer - Chief, Joe Ogershok - Sergeant. Back row: Brian Barnes - Asst. Chief, Michael Marchesani - Captain, Rodney Davis - Sergeant, Jeff Huggins - Deputy Chief.

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HUMOR

Who started Christmas?

A woman who was out Christmas shopping with her two children. After many hours of looking at row after row of toys and everything else imaginable, and after hours of hearing both her children asking for everything they saw on those many shelves, she finally made it to the elevator with her two kids.

She was feeling what so many of us feel during the holiday season time of the year. Overwhelming pressure to go to every party, every housewarming, taste all the holiday food and treats, getting that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, making sure we don't forget anyone on our card list, and the pressure of making sure we respond to everyone who sent us a card.

Finally the elevator doors opened and there was already a crowd in the car. She pushed her way into the car and dragged her two kids in with her and all the bags of stuff. When the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore and stated, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up and shot."

From the back of the car every-

one heard a quiet calm voice respond, "Don't worry, we already crucified him."

For the rest of the trip down the elevator it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

Don't forget this year to keep the One who started this whole Christmas thing in your every thought, deed, purchase, and word. If we all did it, just think of how different this whole world would be.

The History of the Christmas Carol

What in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially that partridge who won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas?

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning, plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality,

which the children could remember.

1. The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
2. Two turtledoves were the Old and New Testaments.
3. Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
4. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
5. The Five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
6. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
7. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
8. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
9. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.

10. The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
11. Eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
12. Twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

So there is your history lesson for today and now you know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol!

It was the day after Christmas.

The pastor of the church was looking over the cradle when he noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from among the figures. Immediately he turned and went outside and saw a little boy with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant, Jesus.

So he walked up to the boy and said, "Well, where did you get Him, my fine friend?"

The little boy replied, "I got him from the church."

"And why did you take him?"

The boy said, "Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to the little Lord Jesus and I told him if he would bring me a red wagon for Christmas I would give him a ride around the block in it."

One particular Christmas season, a long, long time ago, Santa was getting ready for his annual trip. . . . But there were problems everywhere.

Four of the elves were sick, and the trainee elves did not produce toys nearly as quickly as the regular elves, so Santa was beginning to feel the pressure of falling behind schedule.

Next, Mrs. Claus told Santa that her mother was coming to visit. This stressed Santa out even more.

When he went to harness the reindeer for the big flight, he found that three of them were about to give birth, and two had jumped the fence and were out, Heaven knows where. More STRESS.

Then, Santa began to load the sleigh, but one of the boards cracked! The toy bag fell through to the ground, scattering toys everywhere.

So, frustrated, Santa went into the house to have a cup of coffee and a shot of whiskey. When he got to the cupboard, Santa realized that the elves had hidden all of the liquor, and there was nothing to drink. In his frustration, Santa accidentally dropped the coffee pot and sent it shattering to the floor. It broke into hundreds of tiny pieces.

Santa went to the closet to get the broom, but discovered that mice

had eaten all of the straw, leaving only the handle.

Just at that very moment, the doorbell rang. Santa cursed all the way to the door. He opened the door, and standing there in front of him was a little angel with a big Christmas tree.

Very Cheerfully, the angel said, "Merry Christmas Santa! Isn't it just a wonderful day? I have a beautiful Christmas tree here, just for you. Don't you think it's just a lovely tree? Where would you like me to stick it?"

. And, thus began our tradition of the little angel atop the Christmas tree.

Santa Claus, like all pilots, gets regular visits from the Federal Aviation Administration . . .

. . . and the FAA examiner arrived last week for the pre-Christmas flight check.

In preparation, Santa had the elves wash the sled and bathe all the reindeer. Santa got his logbook out and made sure all his paperwork was in order. He knew they would examine all his equipment and truly put his flying skills to the test.

The examiner walked slowly around the sled. He checked the reindeer harnesses, the landing gear, and even Rudolph's nose. He painstakingly reviewed Santa's weight and balance calculations for sled's enormous payload.

Finally, they were ready for the check ride. Santa got in and fastened his seat belt and shoulder harness and checked the compass. Then the examiner hopped in carrying, to Santa's surprise, a shotgun.

"What's that for?!" asked Santa incredulously.

The examiner winked and said, "I'm not supposed to tell you this ahead of time," as he leaned over to whisper in Santa's ear, "but you're going to lose an engine on takeoff."

Gift Wrapping Tips for Men

This is the time of year when we think back to the very first Christmas, when the Three Wise Men – Gaspar, Balthazar, & Herb – went to see the baby Jesus &, according to the Book of Matthew, "presented unto Him gifts; gold, frankincense, & myrrh."

These are simple words, but if we analyze them carefully, we discover an important, yet often overlooked, theological fact: there is no mention of wrapping paper.

If there had been wrapping paper, Matthew would have said so: "And lo, the gifts were inside 600 square cubits of paper. And the paper was festooned with pictures of Frosty the Snowman.

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HUMOR

And Joseph was going to throweth it away, but Mary saideth unto him, she saideth, 'Holdeth it! That is nice paper! Saveth it for next year!' And Joseph did rolleth his eyeballs. And the baby Jesus was more interested in the paper than the frankincense."

But these words do not appear in the Bible, which means that the very first Christmas gifts were not wrapped. This is because the people giving those gifts had two important characteristics: 1 - they were wise and 2 - they were men.

Men are not big gift wrappers. Men do not understand the point of putting paper on a gift just so somebody else can tear it off. This is not just my opinion, this is a scientific fact based on a statistical survey of two guys I know. One is Rob, who said the only time he ever wraps a gift is "if it's such a poor gift that I don't want to be there when the person opens it." The other is Gene, who told me he does wrap gifts, but as a matter of principle never takes more than 15 seconds per gift. "No one ever had to wonder which presents daddy wrapped at Christmas," Gene said. "They were the ones that looked like enormous spitballs."

I also wrap gifts, but because of some defect in my motor skills, I can never completely wrap them. I can take a

gift the size of a deck of cards & put it the exact center of a piece of wrapping paper the size of a regulation volleyball court, but when I am done folding & taping, you can still see a sector of the gift peeking out. (Sometimes I camouflage this sector with a marking pen.) If I had been an ancient Egyptian in the field of mummies, the lower half of the Pharaoh's body would be covered only by Scotch tape.

On the other hand, if you give my wife a 12-inch square of wrapping paper, she can wrap a C-130 cargo plane. My wife, like many women, actually likes wrapping things. If she gives you a gift that requires batteries, she wraps the batteries separately, which to me is very

close to being a symptom of mental illness. If it were possible, my wife would wrap each individual volt.

My point is that gift-wrapping is one of those skills like having babies that come more naturally to women than to men. That is why today I am presenting Gift Wrapping Tips for Men:

Whenever possible, buy gifts that are already wrapped. If, when the recipient opens the gift, neither one of you recognizes it, you can claim that it's myrrh.

The editors of Woman's Day magazine recently ran an item on how to make your own wrapping paper by printing a design on it with an apple sliced in half horizontally & dipped in a mixture of food coloring & liquid

starch. They must be smoking crack. If you're giving a hard-to-wrap gift, skip the wrapping paper! Just put it inside a bag & stick one of those little adhesive bows on it. This creates a festive visual effect that is sure to delight the lucky

recipient on Christmas morning.

In conclusion, remember that the important thing is not what you give, or how you wrap it. The important thing, during this very special time of year, is that you save the receipt.

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