

# Emmitsburg NEWS-JOURNAL

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## An Evening of Christmas Spirit

Emmitsburg's annual "Evening of Christmas Spirit" will be on Dec. 6 beginning at 6 p.m. The event has become the Christmas tradition in Emmitsburg, hosting hundreds of people for an evening of entertainment and fellowship.

Bob Hance, owner of the Carriage House Inn on South Seton Ave., sponsors the event each year. It was started by Hance's parents as a way to invite the town into the Carriage House Inn and enjoy the décor. It's always been a free event, but now it has grown from a Carriage House Inn event to a town event.

Hance said that "It's what Christmas in a small town should be."

The "Evening of Christmas Spirit" begins with the lighting of the town Christmas tree at 6 p.m. at the Community Center. The United Church of Christ's choir will also be singing Christmas carols.

Following the tree lighting, enjoy singing carols, riding in a horse-drawn surrey or hayride at the Carriage House Inn. You can



Carriage rides and good cheer will be the order of the night at Emmitsburg's annual "Evening of Christmas Spirit"

enjoy free hot dogs, cookies and live entertainment provided by local groups and choirs until 9 p.m. Santa will also be on hand to meet with children and hear their Christmas lists. The live Nativity scene with real animals will also be set up.

Hance said he orders 800 hot

dogs and 20 gallons of hot chocolate each year for the event and that is sometimes not enough.

Donations and canned food items will also be accepted for the Emmitsburg Lions Club Christmas Food Drive.

Though the event has grown over

the years, much of it remains as it was 22 years ago. Carols are still sung. Residents still participate in the live Nativity complete with animals. Santa Clause still visits to hear children's Christmas wishes. And the same people continue to volunteer year after year to help out.

## Studio tour showcases local artists

Fairfield-area artists got a boost to their annual Foothills Studio Tour on Nov. 20 and 21 due to it happening the same weekend as Remembrance Day events in Gettysburg.

"We had a good turnout and Remembrance Day helped. We even had a Confederate General shopping in our store," said Madeline Wajda, who owns Willow Pond Farm with her husband.

Wajda and her husband have been organizing the studio tour and open house at Willow Pond for the past four years. She said she didn't know how many people had come to the farm, which is the start of the tour, but "at one point we were short on parking," she said.

Visitors picked up a map to the artist studios at the farm. They could tour the open house at Willow Pond and then drive to the studios to see the artists at work and talk to them about their work. All of the artists were within 10 minutes of the farm.

At the open house, visitors could sample homemade herbal cookies, mulled cider, herbal teas and other products. They could also purchase the products at the farm's gift shop.

"One of the reasons we do the open house is that the shop is small and at the holidays we have

more things we want to show visitors," Wajda said.

The artists on this year's studio tour included:

**Dorothea Barrick** - Barrick founded the Art Department at Mount St. Mary's College in 1973 and has since been teaching art. She displayed her oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings as well as etchings, monotypes and chine colle prints. New this year was a series of small sunflower paintings.

**Jack Handshaw** - Handshaw worked on his potter's wheel to show how he creates his porcelains. On Nov. 4, he conducted a free workshop on Christmas-ornament making for members of the Strawberry Hill Nature Center.

**Ann Ruppert** - Ruppert designs custom flower arrangements and bouquets which she sells directly from the farm and wholesales to local florists and markets. She currently works in watercolor creating botanical paintings and landscapes. Recently, she has begun producing fine silver jewelry with a botanical theme using metal and polymer clays.

**Betsy Tresselt** - Tresselt creates unique handcrafted jewelry using semi-precious gemstones and sterling silver, as well as 24 karat gold-filled findings.

**Shiela Waters** - Water earned her Masters Degree from the



Tom and Madeline Wajda of Willow Pond Farm, organizers of the annual Foothills Studio Tour

Royal College of Art. Her works are featured in many books about calligraphy. She founded the Washington Calligraphers Guild in 1976 and teaches and lectures

nationwide and abroad.

"We like to support the local arts and people like visiting the artists in their studios and visiting our home, too," Wajda said.

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## NEWS

## Fairfield Notes

After holding the borough tax rate level for the past eight years, the Fairfield Borough Council plans to increase it by 5 percent for 2011.

Under the new method of full value property assessments, a millage rate of 1.1011 would be equivalent to the current tax rate. However, the council has decided to raise the rate to 1.11561.

Councilor Carroll Smith said, "On average, you're talking about (an increase of) \$12 a house or \$12 a unit."

Council believes the increase is necessary because the current budget barely covers the borough's expenses and has no way to save for emergencies or cover unforeseen increases in expenses or decreases in revenue. In addition, they are expecting electric rates from MedEd to increase 15 to 30 percent and an increase in rates for Columbia Gas, too.

#### Borough receives preliminary budget for 2011

The Fairfield Borough Council

received its preliminary budget for 2011, the amount totaling \$158,610.

Police protection is the single largest item in the budget, accounting for 28 percent of it. Other large items in the budget include general town services and the borough secretary/treasurer. Donations and memberships to other organizations – fire, EMS, library, FREMA, HARB and the SPCA – account for \$12,760 of the budget. The budget also includes a 3 percent raise for the secretary/treasurer and a 2 percent increase for other workers.

Council expects to approve a final budget at its next meeting on Dec. 28 at 7 p.m. in the borough office.

#### Borough may tear down Indian schoolhouse

The Fairfield Borough Council may seek to have the old Indian schoolhouse torn down as a public nuisance if the property owner doesn't repair it.

"It has deteriorated rapidly in the

past year," Fairfield Council Dean Thomas said during the Nov. 23 meeting.

The roof is now leaking and most, if not all, of the windows have been broken. It is a gathering point for feral cats, which has also been causing a problem in the borough.

"It is soon going to become a nuisance, too," said Council President Patricia Smith. "It may already be."

If the council continues to have no luck getting a hold of the owner, it may pursue demolishing the building as a neglected property.

#### Plans form for 150th Civil War anniversary

The Fairfield Borough Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee has begun planning activities to be held next April as part of the state's recognition of the anniversary. Among the ideas being worked on are a cavalry battle reenactment, a reenactment of Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's troops entering the borough and kidnapping the postmaster, a Civil War church service, a luminary along Main Street and the dedication of the Civil War trails marker in the borough.

## News Briefs

#### Sons of American Legion helps with Thanksgiving

The Sons of the American Legion Post 121 in Emmitsburg gave five families a reason to be thankful this year. Each family received a \$100 gift certificate to pay for a Thanksgiving meal with all the

trimmings. In each family there are at least four children and the parents are unable to work because of sickness or lost jobs.

**Fire Academy instructor injured**  
A National Fire Academy instructor was injured on Nov. 17 when a

nitrogen tank malfunctioned. The tank discharged its contents puncturing the instructor's arm. The tank is used in a simulation lab to show the effectiveness of sprinkler systems. Vigilant Hose Company and the Emmitsburg Ambulance responded to the call. The instructor was taken to Washington County Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

## Around the Borough

Still concerned about the large jumps in value with reassessments, Carroll Valley residents continue to voice their concerns about the future of their properties. The council and mayor urged citizens to appeal their assessments, though those who did appeal saw little improvement.

The borough has no say over the reassessment values or the appeals process. In fact, they had to appeal

the value of nearly 100 taxable properties owned by the borough to make them tax exempt or face about \$70,000 more in taxes. The Adams County Commissioners conditionally approved the properties as tax-exempt at the beginning of November.


Councilman Neal Abrams went through the process of appealing his property reassessment and found it unfavorable. "We now

have to prove ourselves innocent," he said.

Freedom Township has sued the county over the reassessments, but Councilman Frank Buhrman said, "It doesn't have a prayer" for being successful.

#### Tax rate remains the same

Despite the increasing concern of reassessments increasing taxes, Carroll Valley Borough Council



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#### Emmitsburg Community Chorus concert on Dec. 12

The Emmitsburg Community Chorus will hold its annual Christmas concert on Sunday, Dec. 5 at 3 p.m. The concert will be held in the Basilica at the St. Joseph Provincial House.

A free will offering will be

collected to support the chorus, at which time there will be music by a brass quintet.

The chorus is under the direction of Peggy Burrier of Libertytown and pianist Lisa Mattia of Leesburg, VA. The chorus meets Tuesday evenings 7 – 8:45 p.m. to practice.

## Around the Town

As the Emmitsburg Town Council considers ways to maintain a balanced budget in tight economic times, the community deputy program has come under scrutiny.

The cost for the three Frederick County Sheriff's deputies is nearly \$333,000 or about 21 percent of the town's budget. Next year the cost of the deputies will increase more than \$25,000 to pay for additional retirement benefits for the deputies, according to Frederick County Sheriff Chuck Jenkins. He spoke to the town commissioners during the Nov. 15 meeting.

The town's contract with the Frederick County Sheriff's Office ends on June 30, 2011. If the commissioners want to make changes to the contract, they need to notify

the sheriff's office by the end of this year.

The town currently contracts for three deputies who provide coverage specifically for Emmitsburg. Jenkins told the commissioners that, because county taxes fund the sheriff's office and not residents, even if the contract was allowed to expire the town would still get a basic level of police presence just like other municipalities without their own police force.

Commissioner Patrick Joy favors reducing the program to two deputies because of how expensive it is. Other commissioners and residents said that the savings in money weren't worth the risk to public safety.

No decision was made, but the topic has also not been placed on the agenda for December so far.

#### Water ban helped

Town Manager Dave Haller told the commissioners that the recent outdoor water ban the town put in place to conserve water and allow the town wells to recover from a dry summer was successful.

"That has allowed the wells to rise six feet," Haller said. "We were down nine feet. Now we're down three. We were taxing it pretty hard."

#### Town parking free during holiday season

The town commissioners unanimously approved the free holiday parking schedule. From Dec. 20 to Jan. 3, visitors may park in town without feeding the parking meters.

#### Volunteers needed for planning commission

Emmitsburg needs residents to volunteer to serve on the town's

approved to keep the borough tax rate at 8 mills on Nov. 9. If the value of a property is shown to have increased, however, residents may still see a tax increase.

#### New police officer approved

The Carroll Valley Borough Council voted to offer Dustin Miller a position as a Carroll Valley police officer upon the recommendation of Police Chief Richard Hileman, III. The position's starting pay is \$40,500 and Miller will need to relocate to

Carroll Valley within six months.

The council also voted to promote Det. Cliff Weikert to corporal. Borough Manager Dave Hazlett voiced some concern with this action because he has been advising non-uniformed employees to make sacrifices to get through the tough economic times. As a result of the council's action, he said he would be referring the name of an employee who deserves a promotion into an unfilled position within the borough.

planning commission. The commission currently has openings for planning and zoning decisions for the town. The commission meets monthly on the fourth Monday of each month if there are items to be considered on the agenda.

The Emmitsburg Board of Appeals, which hears appeals to zoning decisions, is also seeking an alternate member.

If you are interested in serving, contact the Emmitsburg Town Office at 301-600-6300.

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# Delauter is ready to take on role as County Commissioner

Emmitsburg businessman Kirby Delauter became a Frederick County Commissioner on Dec. 1 as part of an all-Republican board of commissioners. Delauter ran with fellow commissioners Blaine Young, Billy Shreve and Paul Smith as a slate and all four were elected on their fiscal responsibility platform.

Now with their mandate from the county, the new commissioners are moving from campaigners into leaders.

"The first thing we want to do is pass an ordinance that we'll have no new ordinances for a year," Delauter said.

The idea is to begin trying to lighten the burden on businesses in the county so that they can once again become the economic engines of the county rather than government.

"I would say things have gotten out of control when public-sector employees are earning twice as much as those in the private sector," Delauter said. He also pointed out that Frederick County has around 3,000 employees while neighboring Washington and Carroll counties both employ around 1,800 people.

According to Delauter, the key to getting the county back on track is limiting government. He points out

that while private businesses have to make do with less and to make what they have last longer, Frederick County government is willing to continue buying more than what they need. By controlling spending in the county and eliminating waste, the commissioners will be able to lower taxes and encourage businesses to locate here.

"I don't want to increase taxes," Delauter said. "I think the problem is that the county spends too much."

His goal is to see the county grow at 3-4 percent a year, which is a sustainable rate. If the county grows faster than that, it's hard for infrastructure to keep up. If it grows slower than that, you will drive even more business from the county.

Born and raised in Thurmont, Delauter is a life-long resident of Frederick County. He is a U.S. Army veteran who heads up his family business, W.F. Delauter and Son, in Emmitsburg.

As a businessman, Delauter said he has seen how unfriendly the county has become toward business, which is what led him to campaign as a commissioner.

However, it is his business experience that has led to criticism before he ever became commissioner because his company sometimes does work on county capital improvement projects.

Delauter said he has already met with the ethics commission about how he should handle capital projects

to avoid a conflict of interest and he is awaiting their decision. He doesn't think there will be a problem since his company hasn't worked on a county-funded capital project in three years.

"Those are award-based on sealed bids that are opened publicly," Delauter said. "The low bid is the low bid. I have no influence over that, but if I need to excuse myself from voting to accept the low bid, I'll do it."

The other types of projects are funded with private funds, though they are administered by the county. In this case, the county acts primarily as a flow-through point for the funds and doesn't have input on who is hired to do the work, according to Delauter.

# Holiday homes tour to support Rocky Ridge fire company

Get into the holiday spirit by touring some of the decorated homes in Rocky Ridge on Dec. 5. Six families are inviting guests into their homes on that Sunday to help the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Department raise funds to restore its first ever fire engine that the company used in 1949.

"It's sitting in our hall now, but we want to refurbish it back to

its natural beauty," said Paulette Mathias who is spearheading the event.

While much of the work is being done by members of the fire company, materials still need to be purchased to replace the worn out parts of the model A Ford fire engine, including wood, rims, tires and paint, to name a few things.

"The old engine had a wooden hose bed," Mathias said. "We need to replace that so that it looks just the way it did when we got the engine."

Of course, when the Rocky Ridge fire company got the engine in 1949, it was far from new. Rocky Ridge purchased the engine from the Vigilant Hose Company. Emmitsburg had purchased the

vehicle new in for \$3,200 in 1929.

The home tour includes six homes in Rocky Ridge that are decorated for the holidays. The homes range in style from newer homes to a log cabin to the former Rocky Ridge school.

"We started with a list of 10 to 12 homes that we thought would be nice to include," Mathias said. "After talking to the owners, we wound up with these six."

The fire hall will have refreshments

available for after the tours.

Tickets cost \$20 and proceeds go towards Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Department. You can get a ticket from any member of the fire company or by calling Mathias at 301-271-4252.

Once the engine is restored, it will be on display at the fire company and used in parades throughout the year. It will also give members of the fire company a sense of connection to their past as firefighters in Rocky Ridge.

# Poacher kills wildlife conservation officer

Wildlife Conservation Officer David L. Grove was shot and killed on Nov. 11 while attempting to apprehend a deer poacher. Christopher Lynn Johnson, 27, of Carroll Valley has been charged with first-degree murder-criminal homicide in the incident.

Johnson is alleged to have shot

Grove, a resident of Fairfield, with a .45-caliber pistol around 10:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 11 when stopped on Schriver Road in Freedom Township. Grove had stopped Johnson's pickup truck on a suspicion that he had been spotlighting deer.

According to a witness in the truck with Johnson, Grove asked Johnson to step out of his vehicle. The two men briefly struggled, which ended in gunfire. Johnson then fled in his truck which he later abandoned, according to police. Cumberland Township Police were the first on the scene within a few minutes of the shooting. They found Grove on the ground with a gunshot wound in his head.

Officials pronounced Grove dead at the scene. He had been shot

four times. A shot to his neck had been the lethal shot, according to the Adams County coroner.

Johnson was arrested at a cabin on Orrtanna Road the next morning. He had been in the company of a friend named Ryan Laumann. He is being held in the Adams County Correctional Complex on charges of homicide, felon in possession of a weapon, carrying a firearm without a license, possessing an instrument of crime, flight to avoid apprehension, resisting arrest and violations of wildlife regulations, according to

Adams County District Attorney Shawn Wagner.

According to the Gettysburg Times, five Pennsylvania Game Commission Officers have died in the line of duty. The first was in 1915. Grove is one of three who died from gunshot wounds.

Flags at state buildings were flown at half-staff in Grove's honor, following a request by Gov. Ed Rendell.

Read Kip Hamilton's tribute to David Grove on Page 7.

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NEWS

# Rebecca Pearl gallery to hold open house

Local artist Rebecca Pearl has created a unique gift for the art lover in your family whether young or old.

Pearl's second book, *Gilbert and the Great Horse Spirit*, has been released just in time for Christmas. The middle-reader book features 15 paintings by Pearl as it tells the story of the life of her horse Gilbert and the different jobs and owners he has had over the years.

"Every time he changes hands, he keeps hoping that the person will keep him forever and that he'll be successful at his new job," Pearl said.

Though the story is fictional, Gilbert is Pearl's 18-year-old horse that she adopted from the National Park Police.

Pearl also has a new print available of the Albert Zentz Farm in Thurmont. Not only does the painting show the farm buildings, but it shows Zentz at work with a plow.

Both the book and the new print will be available at the annual open house at The Rebecca Pearl Gallery on 24 West Main Street in Emmitsburg. The open house will be on Saturday, Dec. 18 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Stop by to enjoy wine and cheese and gets a signed copy of *Gilbert and Great Horse Spirit* and the Albert Zentz Farm print. The prints are being sold for \$75, though artist's proofs will be higher, and the book is selling for \$12.95.

While in the gallery, you can also get Christmas cards featuring

some of local scenes that Pearl has painted over the years as well as other paintings by Pearl and other local artists. Custom framing is available on site.

Pearl started on her career as a portrait painter when she was 25 after receiving training at Schuler School of Fine Art and the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Her paintings feature landscapes, architecture, historical scenes, animals, people and florals.

The hours for the The Rebecca Pearl Gallery are Thursday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment at other times. For more information on the new gallery, call Pearl at (301) 447-1911 or visit her web site at [www.rebeccapearl.com](http://www.rebeccapearl.com).



# Joy settling in as commissioner

Patrick Joy has been the newest member of the Emmitsburg Town Council for two months and is getting adjusted to being a town leader.

"It's been about what I expected it would be," Joy said. "I wasn't thinking I would get elected and doors would magically open for me."

Joy was elected in September's town election getting 136 votes of the 266 cast. He was the

second-highest vote getter behind incumbent commissioner Glenn Blanchard, who won re-election.

Since being sworn in on Oct. 4, Joy said one change he has noticed in himself is that he finds himself nervous about what he should say. "I'm afraid people might misperceive something I say and I don't want that to happen," he said.

He also said that now he feels more obligated to attend town

events, though he enjoys doing so because he loves Emmitsburg.

Joy ran on a campaign of fiscal responsibility and cutting the budget. However, campaigning ran into the realities of being one of five commissioners overseeing the town in November. He wanted to reduced the town's community deputies from three to two. The move would have save the town over \$100,000 a year, but he found not support for it.

"I was disappointed, but it's always going to be hard to reduce something like that because people worry about what will happen," Joy said.

He is continuing to study the budget and look for ways to reduce it, but that the community deputies are the single biggest expense in the budget, representing about 21 percent of it.

"Our taxes are too high and we spend too much," Joy said. "I don't see anything that has shaken

my belief in that."

In the seven years, Joy has lived in Emmitsburg, he served as a member of the planning commission and the parks and recreation committee before deciding on running for commissioner. He said that so far he has found serving on the town council not as demanding as serving on the planning commission.

Joy lives with his wife Jennifer and daughters, Reagan and Rianna, in town.

# Apartment fire starter sentenced

The man who started the fire that destroyed the historic apartment building on the Emmitsburg Square was sentenced on Nov. 16. John Bushman was sentenced to eight years in prison not only for destroying the building but for endangering the lives of the 28 residents.

The fire was reported just before 6 a.m. on Saturday, April 3. It was initially reported as being

caused by a resident falling asleep while smoking a cigarette. However, Bushman, a resident of the building, was charged with first- and second-degree arson and malicious burning after an investigation of the fire. Officials said he allegedly started the fire in a suicide attempt.

Fire companies from Frederick, Carroll, and Washington counties and Adams and Franklin counties

in Pennsylvania battled the fire for roughly three hours. Thirty-five pieces of equipment and 125 firefighters helped put the fire out.

Bushman pleaded guilty to six counts of reckless endangerment on Sept. 30. This avoided a criminal trial on the more-serious charges of first-degree arson and malicious burning. However, Circuit Court Judge Theresa Adams did sentence Bushman to jail time

greater than the state sentencing guidelines.

While Bushman did apologize in court for what he had done, it was pointed out that the other residents had lost precious mementos, pets and most of the things they owned.

Since the fire, civic groups have worked to find the residents new homes and to help them replace furnishing and clothing lost in the fire.

The owner of the building, David

George, has also been working to re-open the building. The Town of Emmitsburg signed off on all the necessary permits for construction, according to the Emmitsburg Town Planner Sue Cippelery. However, Frederick County deemed Stavros a reconstruction rather than a refurbishing and has required more information from the building owner before it will allow more work on the business.



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Happy New Year!

# One hundred years ago this month

## December 2

### Class of 1913 entertained

In the evening on Thursday, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, Professor and Mrs. Strauss entertained the Emmitsburg High School Class of 1913. The young folks spent a most pleasant evening together and amused themselves in various games. All 17 class members participated: Emma Long, Ruth Linn, Ruth Stull, Rosanna Ohler, Mae Seiss, Mary Weant, Flora Welty, Eva Gusnell, Ned Annan, Frank Topper, Arthur Stokes, Lester Topper, Wade Stonesifer, Charles Fuss, Eston White, Allen Longenecker and Fred Wivell.

### Death of Mr. Miller Patterson

Another venerable and familiar figure has passed from the scenes of earth. Mr. G. Miller Patterson, of Freedom Township, Adams County died on Wednesday night having almost reached the age of 85. He was born in Adams County, March 12, 1826 and lived the entire period of his long life within 5 miles of his birthplace.

He belonged to a family of strong and sturdy principles and was a gentleman of the old school. He is survived by his wife, two sons – Albert and Mead Paterson of Emmitsburg – and two daughters – Mrs. Albert Smith, of Freedom Township and Mrs. George Byers of Fairfield. Mr. Patterson loved his home and the rural life. He was an interesting conversationalist and fond of rehearsing the happenings of his earlier life and more primitive times. His farm was a camping ground for the soldiers who took part in the battle of Gettysburg, at one time Union men, and later Confederates. His crops got trampled, but like a true patriot, he did not begrudge the men and their horses for food they so much needed.

In his youth Mr. Paterson at-

tended “preaching” at the old Presbyterian Church that stood on the part of the present day Presbyterian cemetery. He attended the Wood’s School with the Rowes, Martins and Zimmermans. In his younger day he was a miller, but left that trade early in life to become a farmer.

## December 9

### Ten Inches of Snow

Snow began falling here on Monday morning and continued until Tuesday night when the ground was covered in 10 inches. The drifting did not seriously inconvenience businesses here. The trains were able to make regular runs and rural carriers could cover the routes, except route two. In other parts of the county the storm seemed to have caused a great deal of trouble. All mountain roads are practically closed. Most side roads are drifted to the fence top. Sleighing began on Monday and the streets were lively, especially in the evening. Local dealers are telegraphing for more sleighs as their stock is sold-out.

### Toting Booze Cost him Fifty Plunks

Clifford Hahn, of Detour, was judged guilty by the Carroll County Court of selling liquor without a license and was fined \$50. The case was a particular one, Hahn having obtained the liquor for several persons from a liquor house in Baltimore. It was shipped in a case, but the bottles were labeled for specific people. Hahn testified that he had received no compensation, but the court held his action to have been a violation of the Liquor License Law and fined him.

## December 16

### Arrest for Stealing Turkeys

Deputy Sheriffs Stull and Weddle arrest Peter White on a

charge of stealing turkeys from Bessie Pryor on the night of Dec. 8. White, unable to secure bond, was brought to Thurmont and then taken to the county jail to await a hearing.

### Ice Packers at Work

The creeks are frozen fast and during this week many ice-houses have been filled. The ice is about 8 inches thick on Toms Creek.

## December 23

### Runaways

On Monday evening Mr. Shuff’s horse, hitched to a delivery sleigh, ran off. Mr. Shuff was delivering furniture at the home of Mr. Charles Gillelan when the horse startled. It stopped at its stable in the rear of Mr. Shuff’s home.

On Thursday, a little girl was accidentally run down by a team in the square. The tot was knocked down in the snow and the horses with the sleigh stepped across her. Fortunately she was not injured.

### Christmas Program at St. Euphemia

The Christmas spirit was very much alive at St. Euphemia’s on Thursday morning when the pupils gave their usual Christmas entertainment to the parents and the patrons of the institution. At the close of the entertainment a jovial “Santa Claus” warmed the crowd before beginning entering the happy holiday that morning.

### Death of James Slagle

On Monday evening, James Slagle, proprietor of the Hotel Slagle, died at the early age of 34. He was under a physician’s charge only a few days. His illness became very serious on Monday morning when an operation was thought advisable, but his rapid decline made it impossible and he died early in the evening.

Mr. Slagle was born in Adams County and for nine years he conducted the Acme Bakery in Emmitsburg before going into the hotel business. He was proprietor of Hotel Slagle for seven years. Mr. Slagle is survived by his wife, Mrs. Annie Mondorff Slagle and three stepchildren, Mary, Luella and Lawrence Mondorff.

### Death of David Bentzel

On Friday, Mr. David Bentzel, age 68, died at his home on W. Main St. His death came suddenly as he was healthy during the day and even ate a hearty meal in the evening. While sitting on the couch, however, he suffered an apoplectic stroke. Prior to his four-year residency in Emmitsburg, Mr. Bentzel was engaged in farming on the mountain beyond the reservoir. Mr. Bentzel served in the Union Army and received an honorable discharge at the close of the Civil War. He was buried with military honors in the Mountain View Cemetery.

### Attacked by Bull

Mr. Harry Dern, of Stony Branch was slightly injured by a bull he was showing to a dealer. The animal attacked him as it was turned out of the stable and tossed him about 10 feet in the air. He fell directly in front of the bull, but fortunately he could escape harm’s way while the animal was attracted to Mr. Durr’s hat. On the same day Miss Susan Cool sustained a se-

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rious accident while milking her cow. The cow kicked her in the side, breaking two of her ribs.

## December 30

### Holiday Dance

One of the largest and most enjoyable affairs of its kind ever given in Emmitsburg was the Holiday Dance on Tuesday night, held in the Zimmerman Ballroom Center Square. The dance room and adjoining apartments were profusely decorated for the occasion. Brilliant lights set off the beautiful color effects of the festoons, which formed a particularly appropriate setting for the pretty, splendidly gowned and graceful young women of Emmitsburg. The first part of the program lasted until nearly midnight when delicious refreshments were served, after which the dancing to the Union Bridge Orchestra lasted until two in the morning.

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## GOVERNMENT—SOUTH OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE

# From the Desk of County Commissioner Elect Delauter

Now that the election is over, I would like to thank everyone that helped elect me to the office of County Commissioner. It appears we have had a clear mandate in this county that the people want a smaller, more fiscally responsible government. It's clear with all winners in the County Commissioner race being Republican, that conservatism is on the minds of Frederick County voters. A clear and decisive victory ranging from a 36% margin for Blaine Young, to a 19% margin of victory for myself over the closest Democrat challenger, Kai Hagen.

Moving forward, our next board of commissioners is taking a clear message from the voters and we will implement

the plans that were instrumental in giving us such a clear and decisive victory over the party of spend and tax. We will start by having our first ordinance be one that states there will be no new ordinances for one year. This will give us time to evaluate items that have been put into place and see if they are required, or if they can be repealed. We are paying the cost (Young, Delauter, Smith and Shreve) of our swearing in ceremony ourselves. There will be no taxpayer funds used for this.

The last board spent almost \$3000 of taxpayer funds for their ceremony. We are removing the assigned parking for the Commissioners at Winchester

Hall. Items such as this leads to the arrogance of elected leaders that soon feel they are above those that elected them. We will erase that image. We will lead by example.

We will allow property owners that feel the recent down zoning of their properties was unfair by the current board, and allow these property owners to be heard by the new board and give them a voice in the decisions involving their land. We will be contacting the Municipalities to hear their concerns and continue to work with the Municipal leaders to make sure their voice is heard in Winchester Hall.

We will evaluate every department and make necessary changes to conserve tax dollars while keeping essential services in tact. I am currently getting

very good feedback from many departments already that are ready to trim the budget and live within our means. We will make Frederick County business friendly, removing the arrogance of staff that feels they are untouchable and accountable to no one. We will streamline many processes by using outside vendors and third party entities. The County will be run like a business, it's that simple.

We want to review the northern annexations of the Crum and Thatcher Farms on the north side of Frederick. Homewood residents met with us during the campaign and stated they have almost 500 people on a waiting list to come to Homewood. The Crum parcel will allow new units to be built so the residents of Homewood, who have been waiting to have

their friends join them, can finally see progress on the building of new units to accommodate the expansion of Homewood. The Thatcher property will incorporate commercial uses that will allow business to move to this County and provide much needed jobs and increase the tax base as well.

We will move fast and as we said, we will redefine the role of government here in Frederick County, and hopefully our methods will catch on in other jurisdictions that can follow our lead on how to create and implement a fiscally sound government. I will follow up with future articles to keep you informed of our progress. Please contact the County offices if you have any questions or need my services to help you in any way in dealing with local government.

# From the Desk of Town Council President Chris Staiger

I hope everyone has had a happy Thanksgiving Holiday! Christmas will be here soon and I hope everyone will have a safe and happy holiday season – regardless of which you and your family may choose to celebrate. I look forward to spending time with my family while enjoying the last of my vacation days! Please remember those in our community who could use a helping hand and consider a donation of your time or treasure to one of the many wonderful organizations in town who make it their duty to provide that extra assistance at a time that has become one of such extravagance.

I'd like to take this opportunity to review some important de-

terminations in town government in November regarding the Frederick County Deputies' contract and our progress in rehabilitating the sewer treatment plant off Creamery Road on the east side of US15. Our expectation is that with no increase in the property tax rate, next year's revenues will be less than the previous year – for the third straight year. I don't know that any of us find this surprising but it does raise the question of how we maintain services in an era of declining income.

One possible area for substantial savings involved our participation in the Community Deputy program with the Frederick County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Jenkins attended our

mid-November meeting as the Town Council discussed options the 2011-2012 budget year. The current cost of the program – for three resident deputies – is approximately \$300,000 or 20% of the town's general fund budget. Next year's cost will be approximately 10% higher due to increased pension obligations. It should be noted that the deputies are not receiving any cost of living or merit/step increases in pay for at least the second straight year.

Although various commissioners, including myself, have discussed the opportunity to save \$100,000 per year by returning to a two resident deputy contract as we had in place prior to 2007, there was concern about reducing coverage in today's environment. As the Mayor stated, you

can't really be sure if our relatively low rate of serious and even petty crime is the result of the current level of police protection or the generally low population and rural environment in which we live. As with most government programs, it's difficult to trim them once they are approved...

In the end, we all appreciated that we are contracting for a level of service that provides for deputies based in our town, patrolling our neighborhoods, walking or biking through our streets, and conducting investigations into criminal activity that is quite different from the standard service provided through our Frederick County property taxes. The standard Frederick County service would only put deputies on patrol in the north county area – not base them in our community

where they can familiarize themselves with our conditions and requirements while spending their shifts embedded in our community. As residents of our small community, I think all of the commissioners appreciated this.

The Board of Commissioners also approved funding for major improvements to the sewer treatment plant which will bring us into compliance with the requirements of the Maryland Department of the Environment. This project will cost approximately twenty million dollars. The town staff should be commended for securing 72% grant funding for the overall project – with a remaining cost to the town of approximately 5.5 million dollars. An initial loan through Suntrust Bank will fund the town's portion of the costs at a 2.08 interest rate. Following completion of the project in 2014, the debt will be converted to a bond obligation repayable over forty years at a rate of approximately 2.6%.

Provision of water and sewer services is the primary responsibility of our 'municipal corporation' from a financial standpoint. Expenditures in these areas dwarf every other areas of expenditure – including the next highest single area, our employees, as well as the police protection discussed above, or miscellaneous services such as road paving or other 'capital improvements.' Our annual 'general fund' budget is a mere \$1.5 million compared to the millions or even tens of millions spent providing water to our homes or making the flush truly disappear...

I wish all of you a safe and happy Christmas season. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts and concerns at 447-3757 or [cstaiger@emmitsburg-md.gov](mailto:cstaiger@emmitsburg-md.gov). Thanks, Chris Staiger

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**Public Announcement**

The town of Emmitsburg needs 2 Planning Commission members and an alternate for the Board of Appeals.

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at  
[MayorHoover@emmitsburgmd.gov](mailto:MayorHoover@emmitsburgmd.gov)

## GOVERNMENT—NORTH OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE

# A tribute to David L. Grove

Kip Hamilton

I wish I had known Wildlife Conservation Officer (WCO) David L. Grove, but I didn't. I met him on a remote section of road one dark, cold night in November, but by then, it was too late.

A 31-year-old, enthusiastic, dedicated enforcer of the law and protector of animals, David was senselessly killed during the traffic stop of a suspected poacher the night of November 11th out on Schriver Rd in Highland Township, PA, just north of the Maryland border. A passenger in the suspect's vehicle reported to police that as the shooter, a convicted felon, was getting out of his vehicle at the direction of WCO Grove, he said that he wasn't going back to prison. It seems that his twisted solution to keep from going to prison was to shoot a police officer.

On the afternoon of November 21st, the life and work of David Grove was celebrated at his funeral service at Waynesboro High School. Here we were, the crew of the Fairfield ambulance which gave Dave his final, frantic ride that tragic night, together again, along with a thousand others from all over the country to express our honor and respect for David and his grieving family. Having parked the ambulance in the seemingly endless line of law enforcement vehicles and placed the black funeral drape on the front of the unit, we, along with our Chief and crew of the fire engine that came from our station as well, walked slowly to the high

school building, passing officers and game wardens from Maine, New York, Vermont, Idaho and so many other places who had come in David's honor.

Approaching the building, we passed masses in the hundreds of Officer Grove's fellow law enforcement officers in solemn, silent formation and numerous color guards from various organizations. We entered the auditorium where the service was to be held, took our seats in the back of the room and reflected on the significance of the moment as we listened to inspirational Christian music being softly played over the PA system. About 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony, David's fellow Wildlife Conservation Officers began filing into the auditorium and quietly taking their positions standing at attention at their seats as their comrades filled the appointed section. By rough count there were 300-400 WCO's present; surely the entire state of PA was represented. Following the Game Wardens, a large, 100-200 member contingent of the PA State Police quietly entered the room and took their positions across the main isle from Officer Grove's brother and sister Game Wardens. There were so many there, it took almost the entire 30 minutes to get them all to their seats. The stillness of the room was broken by the Detail Commander's verbal command for the officers to take their seats.

We waited as other guests and dignitaries filed into the room and took their seats. Finally, the family

entered and took their place in the front row. Our State Governor was the last person to be seated and we became aware of bagpipes playing in the distance, the traditional music of the pipes sounded haunting as it got louder, approaching from outside the main entrance. As the lone piper entered the hall, the Detail Commander brought the officers to Attention and Present Arms. The traditionally-dressed bagpiper slowly moved from the rear entrance and down the center isle towards the front, followed by the 6-man honor guard of WCO's who were actually carrying the casket down to the front of the auditorium where it was placed on a stand and lovingly covered by an American flag. The program began.

The service was conducted by two pastors who were family friends. David had a very real and joyful relationship with his Lord and both of his ministers described this relationship and how David loved to share it with those around him. We then heard memories of Dave from five of his closest friends. We laughed with the stories from his oldest friend and our hearts went out to his brother, Chad, as he struggled courageously to make it through his remarks. We heard from his WCO colleague that David, in spite of his younger age, was a consummate Wildlife Officer; a passionate lover of the outdoors and truly a Game Warden's Game Warden. The Bible commands that man have dominion over the animals. WCO Grove heard this calling and his personal ministry

was to Protect and Serve not only his fellow man, but his beloved animals as well.

His was a heartbreaking loss and one of his pastors made a point to try to answer the question of how could this have happened to someone who had such a deep faith and such a talent and passion for his work. His bottom line was that sometimes there just isn't a "why" and we must have faith. At the conclusion of the service the family shared a number of slides that followed Dave's journey through his life as an outdoorsman which started at a very early age. He loved to hunt and fish and his life's dream was to become a Game Warden and, tragically, he lost his life doing what he loved.

At the conclusion of the service, we returned to the ambulance and waited for the solemn procession through the borough of Waynesboro to the cemetery... and waited...and waited. There were hundreds and hundreds of law enforcement vehicles with their blue and red lights flashing in Dave's honor and we had to wait for more than a half an hour just to pull away from the curb. We slowly made our way out to Waynesboro Pike to find the citizens of the area lining both sides of the road; some waving little American flags; some with their hand over their heart, but most just standing in quiet respect of the sacrifice that had been made for all of them. Being in the only ambulance in the procession, we had a good

view of the route from our elevated position. Looking to the front, it was flashing lights as far as we could see. Looking in the mirrors, it was flashing lights behind us as far as we could see. It was such a moving tribute to this courageous, young officer.

As we arrived at the cemetery we found the entrance framed by two ladder trucks majestically displaying a huge American flag between their raised ladders. By the time we had parked and made our way over to the site, the sun had set and the site was lit by fire department scene lights and the only sounds were the quiet hum of the electrical generators. Once again lead by the lone bagpiper, the WCO honor guard carefully carried the casket from the hearse through the darkness to the gravesite where his family was waiting. There was a good quality PA system there and we all could clearly hear the words of strength and inspiration offered by the clergy.

Towards the end of the service, WCO Grove received a 21-gun salute from the seven-member rifle squad, followed by an eerie rendition of Taps played by two buglers, one echoing the other in the still darkness. At the end of Taps, a lone helicopter made a low-level fly-by of the cemetery sweeping the grounds with its searchlight as if looking for someone. Then we heard a simulated radio transmission come over the loudspeakers; headquarters was calling Unit 416, Officer Grove's dispatch number. They tried to reach him three times on the radio with no response and then the announcement was made that Unit 416 was no longer available.

## From the Desk of Mayor Ron

On Sunday, November 21st I attended the funeral for Pennsylvania Wildlife Conservation Officer David Grove. He was killed in the line of duty while investigating a poaching incident in Freedom Township. It was one of the most emotional experiences of my life. It reminded me of all those who serve us in uniform do so at the risk of their own life. They belong to a brotherhood that share the ideals of professionalism, honor and pride. There were over 650 officers who attended. It seem to me that every state sent an officer(s) to honor their fallen comrade. Among the dignities in attendance were Governor Edward Rendell, Pennsylvania State Senator Richard Alloway, and Fairfield Mayor Robert Stanley. There were approximately 2,000 people honoring WCO Grove and showing their support to the family. The most stirring moment came when taps was played and echoed off the headstones throughout the cemetery. Thereafter there was the sound of the helicopter with its light beam shining down as it flew over the grave site surrounded by family and friends. And, then the

last radio call to WCO Grove with no response – retiring his badge number forever. The uniformed men standing at attention gave this officer their respect by saluting him for his service. WCO David Grove will be remembered.

Troop 76 presented the Eagle Scout rank award to Matthew S. Greathouse, son of Mark and Carolyn Greathouse of Carroll Valley. The Eagle Scout award is the highest honor a Boy Scout can achieve in Scouting. The Court of Honor ceremony was held in the sanctuary of Lower Marsh Creek Presbyterian Church in Gettysburg. Matthew has been a member of Troop 76 since 2006. He served as Order of the Arrow Representative, Chaplain's Aid, an Assistant Patrol Leader, and is Chapter Secretary for the Blue-Grey Chapter of the Order of Arrow Scouting honorary. To earn the Eagle Scout, Matthew had to progress through each of the Scouting ranks and complete a minimum of 21 merit badges, of which 12 were required. In addition, he had to be active in his troop and patrol, demonstrate spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his everyday life, serve

in a leadership position for at least 6 months as a Life Scout, complete a community service project, and pass an Eagle. Congratulations to Eagle Scout Matthew Greathouse.

At the November meeting, the Council expressed their concern that the police, fire department or EMS personnel would not be able to locate a resident in an emergency when seconds count because residents are not following the ordinance regarding mailbox address signs. Is your mailbox number in compliance with ordinance §27-706 *Official Street Address Signs*. The property building number must be permanently affixed to *both sides of the mailbox*, a *minimum height of 3 inches each character*, a *contrasting color* to the mailbox and be *luminous*. The numbers must be easily *read from a distance of 20 feet*, day or night and *free from obstructions*. Take a moment and evaluate whether your mailbox number meets these requirements. This ordinance is planned to be enforced.

The reassessment has been completed. The new 2010 tax base has been certified and all taxing districts are now required

by law to lower the millage rate by the same proportion that the tax base increased. Based on the information received from Adams County, the Borough of Carroll Valley has lower the millage rate from 8 to 1.6983 mills. No taxing district may collect any more revenues as a result of the reassessment than it did the previous year. The exception is that after the new tax based and equalized millages are certified, Pennsylvania law permits the county, townships, and boroughs to increase overall revenues by not more than 5% and school districts by not more than 10%, not considering new construction growth. The bottom-line is that individual changes in taxes will depend upon a specific property's change as compared to the overall change for the taxing district. As of this writing, the Carroll Valley Borough does not intend to raise taxes. Based on what has been reported in the newspaper, Adams County does not intend to raise taxes. It is now up to the school district to decide. Final adoption of the 2011 proposed budget and tax ordinance is scheduled for the Borough Council meeting on December 14. If you would like to

examine the budget, it is available for your review at the Borough office. Call Gayle Marthers at 642-8269.

As part of the "Invasion of Pennsylvania", a series of four Sesquicentennial kick-off events scheduled in Adams and Franklin Counties, the Fairfield Area is hosting a celebration on the evening of April 22nd and the day of April 23rd 2011. Planned events will focus on the Battle of Fairfield. A Fairfield Sesquicentennial of the Civil War Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Jack Inskip to come up with the plan. You will be hearing more about this event in coming months.

For those who attended the veterans breakfast held at the Fairfield School District and the luncheon held at the Eisenhower Hotel, you should checkout the pictures by going to [www.ronspictures.net](http://www.ronspictures.net). The Carroll Valley Citizens Association is inviting everyone to come to the "Tree Lighting" on December 3rd at 6:00 pm at the Carroll Valley Commons. Be sure to bring the kids to the Fairfield Fire House to have breakfast with Santa on December 11th from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. I believe Santa is scheduled to arrive at 9:00 am. Folks, I hope you enjoy the holidays with family and friends. Be careful on the road. Happy New Year!

## COMMENTARY

# Words from Winterbilt

## Happy Holidays—It is time for a new party, I think... Part 2

Shannon Bohrer

The holiday season is upon us, the time we also hear of peace on earth and good will to man. It is the time of year we reflect back, celebrate the present and look forward to the future. A time to be reflective and thankful. My gift to you this holiday season is the creation of a new political party; the PEA party. The idea came to me during this last election cycle, the idea being that we should be able to disagree without being disagreeable.

If you believe what you hear, and we have heard a lot lately, the traditional Republican believes government should only exist for bare necessities, primarily defending against foreign armies. Conversely, the traditional Democrat believes everyone should have a job, a home, a good income and anything else they need. I believe strongly both ways; I like a minimal government, but I also appreciate the services I receive from a not so minimal gov-

ernment. I believe my conflict is a logical position.

Since both parties seem to fall at the extreme ends of the spectrum, I conclude that a party is needed for the middle of the road. I also believe this middle-party could represent the majority of Americans. Instead of the two parties which constantly find fault with the other, I propose a middle-road party that merges the best of both ends. To express both sides and the best sides of both parties, I have created the People for Ethical America, or the PEA party. The PEA party motto states, "We believe strongly — both ways, sometimes."

I fear the extreme divisiveness between the parties could affect our national well being. Under normal times it would compare to two different groups being in one large row boat. While both groups generally agree on a direction and members of both groups row in that direction, a few members of both parties inevitably row in different directions. I think they call this a democracy; we eventually get there but it sometimes takes a while.

*"We believe strongly — both ways, sometimes."*

In the current political climate it seems that the majority of both sides row in opposite directions. If that isn't bad enough, we now have multiple leaks in the boat just in time for the rapids. Just when we need teamwork on multiple problems, our elected representatives have trouble focusing and agreeing on one. Our boat is in the rapids, our elected representatives are rowing in different directions, a few are not rowing at all and a few more are punching holes in the bottom. Currently our national debt along with our private debt is 98 percent of our gross domestic product, if it gets to 100 — do we sell?

With this confusion in mind, the PEA party could represent the middle where individuals can work together and everyone can have their oars in the water. When you think about it, the PEA party would be a logical position if for nothing else than problem resolution. Recent re-

ports indicated foreign monies were being used in our elections. The political pundits and talking heads, the experts, were upset — and, why? The idea that foreign entities would attempt to influence our elections — it is just wrong. Or is it? America spends monies in foreign elections all the time. The PEA party hopes foreign entities spend monies in our elections; the more income, the better for our trade deficit. Besides, even if a foreign entity was successful and got someone elected, could they do any more harm? Maybe, just maybe, we should ask why we spend monies in foreign elections. Why is it right for us to spend monies on foreign elections, and not the reverse?

Another controversial issue is the protection and closures of our borders. This has been an issue for some time and for many reasons. However, similar to other issues where the major parties seem to do more fighting than talking, the PEA party has another perspective that the others have ignored. If we close the borders, what will happen when

Americans try to cross the borders to obtain work? If we want jobs in the future, maybe we should think about keeping borders open.

*"We care, but not that much."*

The PEA party may not have all of the answers, but neither do the other parties, nor the EXPERTS. The PEA party believes that the middle perspective is where compromises are possible, where both sides can have their oars in the water and we can at least row in the same direction. The differentiation between the parties often divides us and what we need is a party that can unite us. The left accuses the far right for not caring, and the right accuses the far left for caring too much. The PEA party slogan could be, "We care, but not that much."

If you think or believe that my ideas are just crazy, think about this — doing something over and over again and expecting different results is supposed to be a sign of insanity. How long have we been voting for the same parties and expecting different results?

Happy Holidays

To read past editions of Words from Winterbilt visit the Authors' section of [Emmitsburg.net](http://Emmitsburg.net)

# The Village Idiot

Jack Deatherage, Jr.

Some days the future appears so clear. Sure, this mud husk I drag about, this collection of a trillion or so atoms will stop housing me, scatter its most basic parts and I'll go on to whatever is next. That's everyone's future. A future I seldom consider, as there isn't much the physical *me* can do about it. As I'm mostly in the physical world however, it is that world's future I often fantasize about. Today I caught a glimpse of a possibility that has me howling with laughter.

Public libraries are struggling to stay relevant in a Google.com era where nearly everything can be found on-line, or so an on-line news article informed me. Not that I needed to read the article. Just considering what the Emmitsburg library was 20 or so years ago and what it is today has me convinced the institution is in trouble. Add a few elected officials and much of the tax paying public thinking it isn't the County's obligation to fund the library system and the writing is on the wall.

During the times I visit the library I usually have the stacks to myself. The library may be busy, but the majority of users are at the library's computers or using the public wireless Internet access via the laptop computers they brought along (usually plugged into the building's electrical system rather than using their own battery power supply), or they may be in attendance of some gathering in the community room. Seldom do I have to make way for another book

addict.

I foresee a day when I don't need to go to the library at all. Currently, when I log on to the library's website at home to search for a book I often find e-books that can be downloaded into my computer to be read as I please. When the borrowing time has passed, the e-book vanishes from my computer so I don't have to pay late fees. Pretty cool. Being a fan of audio books, I appreciate the library system stocking these conveniences; I can listen to several novels a month that I'll never have time to read. I figure the day is near when I'll be able to download the audio books, newspapers and magazines too! The system doesn't need to shelve paper versions for me! One can argue the e-books save space, time, money and trees. We all want to save the trees, don't we? We all want to save money where we can, don't we?

Why don't we insist the entire written collection be put on-line, or CD, or DVD? Look at the money, the trees and the energy (books are moved by fuel consuming vehicles every week from library to library throughout the county and across the state) that could be saved if everything were digitized! Ah, what a happy future the Google.com users have before them!

Yep, electronic books, digitization and computers are the obvious solutions to so many of the challenges facing the libraries of today. Heck, they are obviously the answers to our need to handle the massive accumulation of worldwide knowledge that continues to grow

(exponentially?) each year! And access to all of it would depend on what? An affordable source of electricity to run the machines needed to retrieve and make understandable the information stored under the paperless systems.

Riiiiiiight. With our current government attempting to jam our highways and power plants with electric cars, while levying new taxes on the energy producing industries, I can just about see the day when I'll have to choose between heating our house and driving to work, because we won't be able to afford to do both. Not with the ever increasing cost of electricity eating away at our meager incomes. Forget having enough cash for nonessentials like CD/DVD players, e-books and computers let alone Internet access other than what is left of the library, which is likely to be considerably smaller and more crowded than it is now. Having all of human knowledge available at the push of a button doesn't mean much if you can't afford to push the button! Limiting access to information through controlling the power to access it is censorship.

The Chinese government and Google Inc have already made a deal to censor the Internet as it is experienced by the Peoples Republic. Our own government is working at establishing similar censorship and I don't doubt that other current, and soon to be, totalitarian dictatorships will be following suit. Information is power. Controlling power is what government is all about.

As electronic centralization of

knowledge becomes commonplace the paper books become a threat to those seeking to control access. Book burning has a long history. The barbarians destroyed much of the accumulated knowledge of the Roman Empire. The Nazis and Communist book burners of the early/mid 20th century were more organized and selective of the books they burnt, as are those who seek to deny access to certain books today.

In 1953, Ray Bradbury wrote *Fahrenheit 451* (a book about a future Utopia where reading was a crime and firemen set fire to houses that contained illegal books.) He stated in an interview, decades later, that he hadn't tried to predict the future, but to alert us to its possibility so we could avoid it. Couple such a future with George Orwell's *1984* (an occurring attempt at Utopia, only a few decades later than the title) and it isn't so odd that I can see a bookless, ignorant, easily controlled population of government dependant sheep on the horizon.

In *1984*, history was rewritten at the Ministry of Truth's whim to move the population in whatever direction the world's leaders desired. Not unlike the current rewriting of various histories. Collect all of knowledge into a controllable system where it can be modified to

suit the needs of government and you almost have Orwell's Utopia. Collecting and destroying paper books would be necessary (can't have a hardcopy contradicting the e-version of anything) so Bradbury's Utopia would fit right in with Orwell's.

What has me howling with laughter are those who say, "It can't happen here. Or now!"

Riiiiiiight. Just like 200,000 Catholic Poles, 6,000,000 Jews, a few million Cambodians, 30 to 40 million Russians and the gods alone know how many Chinese dying during the establishment of various attempts at Utopias during my mother's lifetime said, "It can't happen."

I recently accessed a still available college lecture series on human history that has yet to be rewritten. It seems nothing much has changed in the sphere of human interactions from what was first written on mud tablets nearly 5,000 years ago between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. What would the ancient Mesopotamian rulers have given for our ruler's potential control of access to knowledge? Now there's another joke I'm laughing at. Those 5,000 years old mud tablets are likely to survive our e-knowledge! Perhaps I should learn to read and write in cuneiform?

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# Pure Onsense

## A deliberative approach

Scott Zuke

Belts loosened from Thanksgiving, thoughts turned toward the holiday season, and the ducks in Congress made thoroughly lame, this is a time better suited to warmer and more philosophical discussions than hard politics. Whether hopeful or nervous about the change of direction that is on its way, too often the discussion devolves to seeing the world through dichotomies like Republican versus Democrat, conservative versus liberal, or the tea party versus the establishment. Lately my attention has been drawn to alternative means of evaluating the health of social and political systems, both our own and those abroad. In November the World Bank hosted a conference to discuss the implementation and progress of “deliberative democracy” in developing countries. Deliberation, in this context, means the process of discussing, debating, and deciding on collective political action. The World Bank has invested billions of dollars to promoting and developing such practices around the world, particularly in regions like South America, Africa, and South-East Asia.

One of the most popular examples

of a deliberative institution is called participatory budgeting, which arose in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, in the late 80's and has spread to many other cities within and outside of the country. Each year citizens in these cities are given the opportunity to deliberate and direct the allocation of a portion of the city budget set aside for infrastructural investment within the city's various districts. The original intent of the program was for the poorest citizens to have a more direct avenue of participation in deciding how the budget is distributed, and the program proved to be fairly successful in achieving that end; such public goods as roads and utilities, medical facilities, and access to education were improved in formerly neglected regions, and participation by the poorest citizens has risen over time.

The theory supporting this and other deliberative democratic institutions is that there is instrumental as well as intrinsic value in promoting effective political participation. That is, there are both visibly positive outcomes and “normative” or moral reasons to support active civic involvement. In Brazil participatory budgeting and other related programs have allowed for improvements in the political

power, socioeconomic equality, and general quality of life for many of its citizens, and we have further reason to value the programs for their ability to elevate the people in other important respects: their practical understanding of budget allocation, their broader knowledge of the conditions faced by the disadvantaged residents of the cities, and their ability to deliberate with others respectfully and come to well-informed collective decisions.

In last month's column, released just before the mid-term election, I expressed dissatisfaction with voting being the usual extent of most American citizens' political participation, and when compared to such innovative democratic processes as participatory budgeting, perhaps the reason is more clear now. I argued that incumbents are too often entrenched and unbeatable, that rival platforms tend to overlap and limit the variety of choices available to voters, and that even when the balance of power changes, the ultimate effect is minor and temporary. As a result, change is hard to come by, and even when it comes, it rarely lives up to expectations.

One way of looking at the root of the problem is that public deliberation is weak within a system of majority-rules voting. Our system of limited democracy excels in acting quickly and decisively, but many seek total victory on the part of their party rather than a balance of competing interests that could best

represent the manifold interests of their community.

In Frederick County there was clearly a powerful coalition this year backing the Republicans, who ran as a unified ticket for the county commissioner seats and won full control. Those who are more concerned with the overall political health of the county than just their personal views of what actions should be taken should find this disconcerting. After all, we have all been, at some point or another, on the losing side of an election in which the victors claimed a “mandate” despite winning by only the narrowest of margins. Full control of the Board of County Commissioners means deliberation amongst its members is all too likely to be brief and one-sided, and serves to further polarize county residents along party lines rather than encourage them to work cooperatively.

At first glance, the Congressional elections appeared to be more encouraging since the Republicans won back the House, ensuring divided powers in Congress. However, as I said, we should avoid being pulled into the Republicans versus Democrats dichotomy. If we consider the election in terms of what it means for healthy deliberation between our representatives, the results quickly lose their luster. Many of the incoming victors, after all, were not running on a platform of “ensuring fair representation of competing interests for the sake of bringing unheard voices to the table,” but rather one of, “Resist or

roll back everything the other guys did, no compromising.”

As a result, many important issues appear likely to go unaddressed in the next couple of years. For example, in 2009 Democrats in Congress introduced legislation to address the growing problem of antibiotic resistant infections in humans resulting from industry overuse of antibiotics in food-producing livestock. Although this is a well-known and costly health hazard, once it became a partisan issue the level of discourse dropped. Rather than discussing constructive solutions, it was simplified into terms of “government over-regulation” and an “attack on farmers.” With Republicans now controlling the House, and the bill only in its early stages of committee consideration, the issue is likely dead for the foreseeable future.

If we want to look for ways to improve politics, not just complain about them, we have to get beyond merely seeking forceful victory through partisan oversimplification and majority-rules voting, and instead turn our attention to the vigor of public and political deliberation present throughout each level of our political system. We have to find ways of framing issues that allow us to proceed cooperatively, rather than competitively.

To read past editions of *Pure Onsense*, visit the Authors' section of *Emmitsburg.net*.

# Down Under

## Immortality, anyone?

Lindsay, Melbourne, Australia!

Millions long for immortality who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday.

Susan Ertz (*Anger in the Sky, 1943*)

Seeing we are approaching a season of Christian rejoicing, I thought it appropriate to broach what is, perhaps, the actual cornerstone of all beliefs – the quest for immortality.

Without that goal, religion has practically nothing to offer. All the suffering, sacrifice, rituals and adherence to rules need to have a reward so wonderful that the above are worth bearing. Christianity promises eternal life with God Jesus to everyone who embraces one of the many versions of Christianity. Islam, Buddhists and indeed every religion offers, promises, and guarantees eternal life in various guises. The ultimate reward is immortality, and there are numerous examples in the respective holy books of this being achieved by mere mortals.

Well, to steal a catch cry, there is good news.

A French research biologist, writing in *The Scientist* in October, has shown that the life of certain cells (and by extension, the things cells make up), can be extended ad infinitum, and in fact are already doing so. Yes, some yeast

cells have immortality. But, I hear you say, that's not a human being. Ah, but discovering how and why they had achieved this ultimate state here on earth has led this professor to the conclusion that human cells could also be made to achieve the same state. The reasoning, like much modern research, is rather esoteric, but does not invalidate it. When these yeast cells divide they manage to exclude the genetic material that has, over the life of the mother cell, been degraded. Such changes are due to a number of things, including radiation, toxins, and some environmental factors, and are passed on to the reproduced cells. These yeast cells prevent that happening. They are inviolable.

Now, recent research from Melbourne and London has shown why these genetic malfunctions get passed on in humans. Part of the panoply of safeguards against disease and death that the body has developed involve a protein called perforin. This material has the ability to detect cells that have been invaded by viruses or turned into cancer cells: they find them, punch a hole in the cell wall, and inject enzymes that are lethal to that cell. This ensures the damaged cell is removed from circulation, allowing healthy life to continue.

Unfortunately, perforin is not always able to do its duty. There are

a number of things that can block it, damage it, or otherwise render it harmless to the infected cell, so the work from Melbourne is vital to the proper reversal, eradication or cure of a number of at present barely treatable conditions, including leukaemia. Discovered 110 years ago by Nobel Laureate Jules Bordet, it has taken until now to determine its structure, and to show that a group of these molecules will work together to do what the individual molecule could not do.

This, together with the way certain yeast cells exclude damaged material from its progeny, looks to be a promising advance in the quest for immortality.

Oops! Did I say immortality? What's wrong with that?

Well, one of the consequences of immortality is immutability. In other words, there can be no change in the evolution of the organism, ever. Well, that is what immortality implies – no change; status quo, today, yesterday, and forever – which is OK for rocks, planets and stars, but is not a part of life.

Change is fundamental to all life. It is not possible to find a living organism that does not change, except for those yeast cells, and even these change size, produce offspring and go on existing – but that's not the kind of existence we call life.

One of the common questions asked by children who have had a religious upbringing is, “but what's heaven like?” No one knows, although there are some fantastical stories, but any heaven is inert. To be everlasting, it has to be unchangeable and thus without

life as we know it. So – is your idea of heaven one where we will go on living, enjoying things much as we have on earth? Think again. You may say that it makes no difference, whatever heaven is like, it is good enough for you.

And there's the real rub. ‘You’ won't exist, because ‘you’ is the result of change. From birth to death we all change irreversibly. Beyond death there is either immortality and non-existence, or mortality. But that's what we had while we were alive on earth. I'll settle for the latter. So, in a message of good

Christmas cheer from down under, enjoy life here while you have it. Remember the festivals, do good to all men, and rejoice that we are vibrant, organic humans who survive through change. How about we resurrect our regard for life, our love of humanity, and our respect for everyone different to us. That is, everyone in the world.

Peace be unto you

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

# The Season of Advent

**Pastor Jon Greenstone**  
Elias Lutheran Church

Today as we enter into the advent season. Keep in mind, this is not the end of the year for the church . . . , this is just the beginning of the beginning!

This is the time of the church year designed to awaken us--once again--for spiritual and physical renewal in our faith walk.

It's not a time to sit back and sleep off the Thanksgiving turkey . . . it's time to purge ourselves of complacency and luxury!

Isaiah remind it is a time for apocalyptic happenings: Like when the heavens will be ripped apart so that God can come down and join us in our human scene. In fact, this is Isaiah's prayer, "Come down Almighty God and break into our world! Like when fire is ignited under dry kindling and the fire flares up causing a pot to boil violently! This is the prayer of the prophet--that God would shake up the world and spread his Spirit like the quickly blazing fire and the furiously boiling pot. Advent is God's time and God's presence -- come upon us.

But will we be ready for his coming?

How will you or I respond when the angels' trumpet blasts. When Christ our Lord returns as righteous Judge and Lord of all? Will we even understand what's happening? Will we cower, because he catches us at a moment when we're not ready? Or will we be able to stand firmly on our feet with humility and dignity, and profess that we are only living and doing what he has taught us.

Being Ready and found Faithful is a challenging task Jesus puts to us. It is the call to be faithful even though he tarry for a millenia or more. Why hope Jesus will come when he's not come in over 2000



years? Let me ask the question in a different way. Why live the Christian life, in obedience to God, with chastity in our relationships or with hope in a world of despair and heartbreak? Why struggle against sin? Why not just go blow it all..... and live riotously?

I say that we want to live for God because he came for us the first time. Life without God is life without hope--it will only lead to complete despair. Advent is a time to re-envigor our faith, renew our patience and know the God's coming is sure and near. To practice faithful waiting is to practice (or engage) our relationship with God.

In Jesus our Lord, God has shown that he loves us and that he desires to be in communion and conversation with us. When Jesus says we should wait expectantly for his return -- he is offering us an opportunity to ponder our response to his first love for us. "Won't you wait expectantly for me?" An attitude of expectancy is characteristic of active waiting. Because it requires the one who waits to be alert and occupied.

Imagine Jesus appearing and finding us busy doing ministry here at Elias or finding you actively being faithful, doing the

work of Christ wherever you are or wherever you go. Perhaps if the Lord had physically come last Tuesday when people were at our church to pick up the Thanksgiving baskets we put together for low income families--he might have congratulated us on our good deeds. It sure would be nice for Jesus to come when we're at our best or when we're being generous! Maybe if he came this morning while we were ministering with the children in our Sunday school--that would have been a good time! Or when we were saying Amen, thanks be to God when receiving the Holy Sacrament.

What will Jesus find if he comes as a guest to our church Supper next Saturday? Will he be as comfortable in the kitchen as in the dining hall? Will he enjoy the fellowship upstairs? If Jesus calls us on the phone will he be encouraged as he speaks with you or me? If Jesus receives an email . . . from any of us, will it be pleasing to read? Just imagine Jesus standing anywhere in this church or in your living room observing the activity . . .

Would he interrupt our conversation to correct our language or the intent of our words? Would he clear his throat in the middle of your conversation or an argument?

What do you think? I have a feeling, that he would just blend into the crowd . . . so long as we were all focused on serving him as we serve our guests and one another. However, if we are not serving with pure hearts, maybe his appearance would be as that boiling pot in Isaiah's words. He might be wrathful to us if we did

not welcome him, as we welcome and treat one another . . .

Advent is about getting our hearts right before God comes. As many have said, the Lord's not going to come where hearts are not ready.

Christ comes to meet with us as we are gladly serving and patiently waiting for him. As we are faithfully giving ourselves, & our prayers for his service and for his people. These are deeds that demonstrate faith and hope.

This is the spirit of Advent.

## It's Advent, not Christmas!

**Father John J. Lombardi**

A married couple, who had a party last week to welcome people into their new home, were chided for calling this event an "Advent Party." Why not call it a Christmas Party? The thinking went, after all, it's Christmas, isn't it?

No! At the risk of being labeled "spiritual dinosaurs," holy Mother Church wisely gives us this time of to prepare for Christmas--not celebrate it--just as the Virgin Mary needed nine-months to prepare for Jesus' birth For centuries Catholic Christians have been using the Advent Season to fast, pray, make "crooked paths straight" by confessing sins, serving others, and living a simpler and quieter life, so as to fully welcome the Baby Jesus, and thereby authentically celebrate His birth!

Think: If we're concentrating on celebrating Christmas already, before it comes, then this avails less time to prepare as the Church counsels. If we're excessively giving "Christmas parties," gifts and decorating trees and homes way in advance -especially without spiritual preparation, then, are we really celebrating Advent?

Think again: would you give an engaged couple a wedding party before they were married? Would a football team enter into regular season without a rugged training camp first?

Whatever happened to gentle progressions, preparations and spiritual anticipations of events

before they occur--so as to deeply celebrate when the foreshadowed event takes place? It seems with some premature celebrating we have lost wise practices of the Church--and this wisdom is counter-cultural!

Instead of a "Bah-Humbug" attitude--think like some holy people have done by providing holy Advent and Christmas activities:

- A homeschooling mother patiently "held off" her children by waiting to go out, to explore and "forest" a "Christmas tree" until later in Advent. Think: it will then last later into the actual Christmas season!
- Make a "spiritual bouquet" gift for loved ones: offer up some prayers, a fast or sacrifice, or a "holy hour"- time in prayer before Jesus in the Tabernacle--and make a card for them relating your gift.
- Time, talent, or treasure: give one of these to a poor, sick or dying person--someone "who cannot pay you back". Think: this would be like the Gift of the Incarnation!
- Wait to decorate and prepare your house and tree, more closely to Christmas itself. Think: a loving family would make "last-minute", detailed preparations for an expectant mother, near the actual birth of the child, to be fully ready, and thereby not expend needless energy beforehand.
- St. Nicholas--he was actually a real man, a bishop who lived in fourth-century Turkey. He lived an austere, Christ-centered life, giving generous gifts to the poor, often costing himself comforts. He followed Jesus even when it was not popular. Learn about this saint and the reason why we have gift-giving.
- Consider having a "St. Nicholas party" instead of another kind. Plan festivity and joy and spiritual gift-giving, and tell friends and children about the origin of all this - "Jesus is the reason for the season".

Being a Christian in today's material world will bring disruption and difficulty. At times we yearn for a "John the Baptist-type," a spiritually bold leader to change and inspire us-- why not you? Especially at this time of year: be bold, put Christmas on hold - take advantage of Advent, and then really celebrate Christmas!

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# Christmas Eve traditions of old



With Christmas Eve, the Christmas holidays may practically be said to commence, though, according to ecclesiastical computation, the festival really begins on the 16th of December, or the day which is distinguished in the calendar as O. Sapientia, from the name of an anthem, sung during Advent. It is proper, however, to state that there seems to be a discrepancy of opinion on this point, and that, in the judgment of some, the true Christmas festival does not commence till the evening before Christmas Day.

The season is held to terminate on 1st of February, or the evening before the Purification of the Virgin (Candlemas Day), by which date, according to the ecclesiastical canons, all the Christmas decorations must be removed from the churches. In common parlance, certainly, the Christmas holidays comprehend a period of nearly a fortnight, commencing on Christmas Eve, and ending on Twelfth Day. The whole of this season is still a jovial one, abounding in entertainments and merry-makings of all sorts, but is very much changed from what it used to be with our ancestors in feudal times, when it was an almost unintermitted round of feasting and jollity.

To investigate the origin of many of our Christmas customs, it becomes necessary to wander far back into the regions of past time, long ere Julius Caesar had set his foot on our shores, or St. Augustine preached the doctrines of Christianity to the men of Kent.

We have frequently, in the course of this work, had occasion to remark on the numerous traces still visible in popular customs of the old pagan rites and ceremonies. These were extensively retained after the conversion of Britain to Christianity, partly because the Christian teachers found it impossible to wean their converts from their cherished superstitions and observances, and partly because they themselves, as a matter of expediency, ingrafted the rites of the Christian religion on the old heathen ceremonies, believing that thereby the cause of the Cross would be rendered more acceptable to the generality of the populace, and thus be more effectually promoted.

By such an amalgamation, no festival of the Christian year was more thoroughly characterized than Christmas; the festivities of which, originally derived from the Roman Saturnalia, had afterwards been intermingled with the ceremonies observed by the British Druids at the period of the win-

ter-solstice, and at a subsequent period became incorporated with the grim mythology of the ancient Saxons.

Two popular observances belonging to Christmas are more especially derived from the worship of our pagan ancestors—the hanging up of the mistletoe, and the burning of the Yule log.

As regards the former of these practices, it is well known that, in the religion of the Druids, the mistletoe was regarded with the utmost veneration, though the reverence which they paid to it seems to have been restricted to the plant when found growing on the oak—the favorite tree of their divinity Tutanus.

At the period of the winter-solstice, a great festival was celebrated in his honour. When the sacred anniversary arrived, the ancient Britons, accompanied by their priests, the Druids, sallied forth with great pomp and rejoicings to gather the mystic parasite, which, in addition to the religious reverence with which it was regarded, was believed to possess wondrous curative powers. When the oak was reached on which the mistletoe grew, the chief Druid, clothed in white (the emblem of purity), ascended, and, with a golden knife, cut the sacred plant, which was caught by another priest in the folds of his robe and various festivities followed.

The mistletoe thus gathered, was divided into small portions, and distributed among the people, who hung up the sprays over the entrances to their dwellings, as a propitiation and shelter to the sylvan deities during the season of frost and cold. These rites in connection with the mistletoe, were retained throughout the Roman dominion in Britain, and also for a long period under the sovereignty of the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles.

The special custom connected with the mistletoe on Christmas Eve, and an indubitable relic of the days of Druidism, handed down through a long course of centuries, must be familiar to all our readers. A branch of the mystic plant is suspended from the wall or ceiling, and any one of the fair sex, who, either from inadvertence, or, as possibly may be insinuated, on purpose, passes beneath the sacred spray, incurs the penalty of being then and there kissed by any lord of the creation who chooses to avail himself of the privilege.

The burning of the Yule log is an ancient Christmas ceremony, transmitted to us from our Scandinavian ancestors, who, at their feast of Juul, at the winter-solstice, used to kindle huge bonfires in

honour of their god Thor. The custom, though sadly shorn of the 'pomp and circumstance' which formerly attended it, is still maintained in various parts of the country.

The bringing in and placing of the ponderous block on the hearth of the wide chimney in the baronial hall was the most joyous of the ceremonies observed on Christmas Eve in feudal times. The venerable log, destined to crackle a welcome to all-comers, was drawn in triumph from its resting-place at the feet of its living brethren of the woods. Each wayfarer raised his hat as it passed, for he well knew that its flame would burn out old wrongs and hearthurnings, and cause the liquor to bubble in the wassail-bowl, that was quaffed to the drowning of ancient feuds and animosities.

Tradition has it that one should lay aside the half-consumed block after having served its purpose on Christmas Eve, preserving it carefully in a cellar or other secure place till the next anniversary of Christmas, and then lighting the new log with the charred remains of its predecessor. The due observance of this custom was considered of the highest importance, and it was believed that the preservation of last year's Christmas log was a most effectual security to the house against fire.

We are further informed, that it was regarded as a sign of very bad-luck if a squinting person entered the hall when the log was burning, and a similarly evil omen was exhibited in the arrival of a bare-footed person, and, above all, of a flat-footed woman!

A belief was long current in Devon and Cornwall, and perhaps still lingers both there and in other remote parts of the country, that at mid-night, on Christmas Eve, the cattle in their stalls fall down on their knees in adoration of the infant Saviour, in the same manner as the legend reports them to have done in the stable at Bethlehem. Bees were also said to sing in their hives at the same time, and bread baked on Christmas Eve, it was averred, never became mouldy.

### The Christmas-Tree

In Germany, Christmas Eve is for children the most joyous night in the year, as they then feast their eyes on the magnificence of the Christmas-tree, and rejoice in the presents which have been provided for them on its branches by their parents and friends. The tree is arranged by the senior members of the family, in the principal room of the house, and with the arrival of evening the children are assembled in an adjoining apartment. At a given signal, the door of the great room is thrown open, and in rush the juveniles eager and happy.

There, on a long table in the center of the room, stands the Christmas-tree, every branch glittering with little lighted tapers, while all sorts of gifts and ornaments are suspended from the branches, and possibly also numerous other presents are deposited separately on the table, all properly labeled with the names of the respective recipients.

The Christmas-tree seems to be a very ancient custom in Germany, and

is probably a remnant of the splendid and fanciful pageants of the middle ages. Within the last twenty years, and apparently since the marriage of Queen Victoria with Prince Albert, previous to which time it was almost unknown in this country.

In Germany the children make little presents to their parents, and to each other, and the parents to their children. For three or four months before Christmas, the girls are all busy, and the boys save up their pocket-money to buy these presents.

On the evening before Christmas-day, one of the parlors is lighted up by the children, into which the parents must not go. In this room, the children lay out the presents they mean for their parents, still concealing in their pockets what they intend for each other. Then the parents are introduced, and each presents his little gift; they then bring out the remainder, one by one, from their pockets, and present them with kisses and embraces.

On the next day (Christmas-day), in the great parlor, the parents lay out on the table the presents for the children; a scene of more sober joy succeeds; as on this day, after an old custom, the mother says privately to each of her daughters, and the father to his sons, that which he has observed most praiseworthy, and that which was most faulty, in their conduct.

In all the smaller towns and villages throughout North Germany, these

presents were sent by all the parents to some one fellow, who, in high-buskings, a white robe, a mask, and an enormous flax-wig. On Christmas-night, he goes round to every house. The parents and elder children receive him with great pomp and reverence, while the little ones are most terribly frightened. He then inquires for the children, and, according to the character which he hears from the parents, he gives them the intended presents. Or, if they should have been bad children, he gives the parents a rod, and recommends them to use it frequently.

In the state of Pennsylvania, in North America, where many of the settlers are of German descent, Christmas Eve is observed with many of the ceremonies practiced in the Old World. The Christmas-tree branches forth in all its splendor, and before going to sleep, the children hang up their stockings at the foot of the bed, to be filled by a personage bearing the name of Krishkinkle (a corruption of Christ-kindlein, or the Infant Christ), who is supposed to descend the chimney with gifts for all good children. If, however, any one has been naughty, he finds a birch-rod instead of sweetmeats in the stocking. This implement of correction is believed to have been placed there by another personage, called Pelsnichol, or Nicholas with the fur, in allusion to the dress of skins which he is supposed to wear.

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## THE (retired) ECOLOGIST

# Conversation with a log

Bill Meredith

"Nature's silence is its one remark, and every flake of world is a chip off that old mute and immutable block." ...Annie Dillard, 1983. *Teaching a Stone to Talk.*

I get the impression sometimes that my wife thinks I'm weird. The reason I suspect this is that she says "You're weird!" fairly often. Of course everyone has said that as a joke to someone, some time or other, but she sounds like she really means it. For example, the other day when I came in for lunch she asked what I had been doing, and I replied that I had been talking to the log down by the basement door. She didn't even ask what we were talking about; she just said I was weird. I assume she thought the log was weird too, though she wasn't specific on that point.

The log in question is a piece of black walnut from a tree that was being cut down one day last year when I was walking home from the post office. I asked the men cutting it what they planned to do with it, and they said it would be split for firewood. I nearly cried on the spot; a black walnut tree of that size would have produced several hundred board feet of beautiful lumber (\$

5.00 per board foot from internet sources), or many sheets of veneer for cabinet work. I asked if I could have a piece of it, and they kindly agreed. The log is 33 inches long and 18 inches thick; I don't know how much it weighed, but it took all four of them to lift it onto my truck. It doesn't speak in English to me, of course... it follows Annie Dillard's observation about the silence of nature... but it does tell me a lot about itself and its place in the ecological scheme of things.

The first thing it told me was that it was 55 years old and in good health. Its growth rings were clearly defined, and showed that it had grown rapidly in its first few years and then slowed down, as trees normally do. The rings varied in width, showing when there were droughts or wet years. It had escaped damage from storms, lawnmowers and car bumpers. I got a crowbar and rolled it off the truck and onto the concrete entryway of the basement, and left it there to dry.

I wanted the log to dry slowly to minimize cracking, so I left the bark on it for the first year. Last week I noticed that it was coming loose, so I got an axe and started peeling it off. It was over an inch thick and came off easily. Under the surface where the live bark had

been was a layer of soft, crumbly black material with the texture of fine forest soil; it proved to be a miniature ecosystem, crawling with life. There were beetle larvae, centipedes, infant earthworms, fungi, and countless other things too small to see. They reminded me of an Irish proverb that says we should appreciate the little things in life because there are so many of them, so I started counting the larger ones, but gave up when I got to 200. It was a busy place; some of them had already started chewing holes into the wood. They would have converted the entire log into soil in a couple of decades

"Wormholes" are different things to different people. To the younger generation, raised on science fiction and computer games, they bring to mind Einstein's theory that wormholes are thin tubes in the space-time continuum which might enable space-men to travel to distant galaxies. Ecologists of my generation are limited to a more prosaic world, where wormholes are tunnels made by beetle larvae in logs; but when you look closely, these holes are every bit as fantastic as the ones in space. It is one of nature's oddities that wood-boring insects cannot digest wood. They chew their way into the log, creating winding tunnels as they go and grinding the wood into sawdust, which they swallow. The sawdust passes through their gut and is deposited behind them, filling up the tunnels. It is then attacked by fungi, which digest it; and the beetle larvae then turn around and eat it for the second time. This process had started in my log; a few tunnels were a quarter of an inch deep. I had got there just in time.

My memory is declining at a worrisome rate, but the log was able to rejuvenate it for a while. Under the decaying remnants of the bark were places where the wood had changed color from deep chocolate brown to a bright carrot-orange. I knew instantly



what had caused it: *Phycomyces blakesleeanus*. I hadn't seen it for 55 years, but by some neural magic its name came to me, along with a vivid memory, like watching an old movie. In my first semester in graduate school I heard a talk by Dr. Virgil Lilly, who was a specialist in wood-decay by fungi. He had discovered that this fungus was capable of synthesizing carotene, which is the source of vitamin A. He was a striking figure of a man, tall and stooped by arthritis, wearing round horn-rimmed glasses and a goatee and mustache in a time when men were all clean-shaven. He began by writing the chemical formula for carotene on the blackboard; it stretched clear across the room. Then he proceeded to tell how the fungus made it. Standing there by my log, I could see Dr. Lilly holding a piece of rotting orange wood in his hand and pronouncing every syllable of that amazing name as he lectured.

Science is a process of the mind, and the best scientists use imagination as much as logic. A friend recently told me he had read that within the next century all of the questions about nature will be answered, and he asked me what scientists will do then. Personally, I doubt if all of the questions will ever be answered; the record shows that new discoveries always lead to new questions. But even if we solve them all, I think our imaginations

will stay busy; there are things to be learned from talking to logs. Annie Dillard knew a man who had a stone which he was trying to teach to talk. He had been working at it for several years without success, and some of the neighbors thought he was weird, but Annie was rooting for him; she had no idea how, but she believed he could succeed.

I have had better luck with my walnut log. Of course, it may not be fair to compare it to a stone, because the log at least was once alive; also, it might have help. 1,000 years ago my Welsh and Irish ancestors believed that woodland spirits lived in trees, and their attitudes toward the people who cut the trees determined whether the wood remained sturdy or rotted. It was said that a man should have a blank mind when he began to carve a piece of wood; the spirit would determine what the carving would turn out to be. Of course I don't believe such myths, but I cannot prove that they were wrong. After all, my log did make my mind dredge up ideas I could not have thought of otherwise. Perhaps that qualifies as communication. And perhaps when I bring it into the shop this winter and begin to work on it, something beautiful will come out of the wood. If it does, my wife may decide that a bit of weirdness can be a good thing.

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

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IN THE COUNTRY

# Everything has its time and place

Michael Hillman

Winter approaches quickly, and with it, a sense of urgency descends upon all living things in the country. The first frost of the season breaks the bonds that held leaves fast since they sprouted to life in the first warm days of the now-distant spring.

As the sun rises, the frost recedes, and leaves that normally fall without notice or sound fall at a rate that sounds like a gentle shower on a mid-summer's day. Trees that were full of life the evening before soon stand denuded, mere skeletons of their former selves. The bird nests that were once invisible in the leaves now dot every tree. In the spring, when the year was young, these nests were the center of life; now they rest empty. The lucky ones that were built more sturdily will house another brood next year, but most will soon come crashing to the ground, where they will only be marveled at by those who stumble upon them.

In the gardens, the last of the late-blooming plants open their bounty to nourish the birds, bees and butterflies migrating south. A solitary hummingbird seeks out the red flowers of the Ivy Leaf Geranium, and once satisfied, continues on its way; so too do the monarchs, many of which only recently hatched. Sadly, the frost takes its toll on those monarch caterpillars who have yet to burst from their chrysalis, prematurely ending the transformation that entrances all with a youthful nature. The once busy bee now moves slowly as it makes its way between the flowers that remain, paying little heed to anything around it. Soon bees will be as rare in the garden as the leaves on the trees.

The migratory songbirds have all departed, leaving behind only those that have adapted to our harsh winter. The first frost alerts gardeners that it is time to place the bird feeders and water pools in sheltered areas for their feathered companions to safely find nourishment, during even the harshest of winter's gales.

The small potted-plants are lucky to have found favor with the gardener, as their placement in the house is a "production of the highest magnitude." Every plant has its proper place; the door to the house is no sooner closed than it is opened again as another round of plants enters their indoor winter sanctuary. Dogs who faithfully followed their owners all summer soon tire of drill and seek out a warm spot in the sun, but still keep a watchful eye on events lest their presence be called upon.

In the garden, deadheading of plants begins in earnest. The knowledgeable gardener does not surrender to the pressure of creating a picture perfect garden by



cutting off flowers, but rather allows the seed heads to remain, knowing the vital role they play in feeding the feathered residents of the garden. But with seed heads now empty, the garden must be cleaned and made ready for the next year – the last act of this year's garden play and the first act of the year to come.

While diligent in the deadheading, the gardener takes only what is necessary, leaving as much cover as he can. The experienced gardener knows full well that the stalks of dead plants still serve a purpose, offering shelter for those who make a living off the ground. With each clip of the gardener's shears, the sparrows voice their objections as the brambles and stalks have been their home since birth, and they fear losing it in the winter. Eventually the sparrows claim victory and the gardener retreats, wishing to have cut more, but knowing full well that the needs of his feathered companions must come first.

The "trimmed" garden once again attracts the attention of the house cats. Shorn of the camouflage that tall plants gave them, the plethora of moles that have made their home

amongst the roots fall easy prey to cats that are eager to hunt, but unwilling to stray far lest they miss an opportunity to rush through an open door to the warmth that awaits them on the other side.

With the first bitter cold comes the demand for outdoor animals to seek and stockpile food for the winter. Feeding the horses in the stable provides sufficient bounty for all. Grabbing mouthfuls of feed, the horses glance about, casting a weary eye for predators as nature has programmed them to do. In doing so, the horses shower the ground with grain.

The sparrows and finches are the primary beneficiaries of the horses' morning feedings. In the early days of winter, spilled grain remains on the floor after the birds have had their fill. But as winter grows in age and anger, larger numbers of birds will come swooping in on this bounty, and eventually, crowd the entire floor so that no kernel goes unclaimed.

The evening feeding comes too late for the birds who have settled into their shelter of choice. The horses' spilled grain now feeds the field mice that find safety in the

night and eagerly await the sound of the horses' hooves and the falling grain that will undoubtedly follow. As soon as the first bits of grain hit the ground, little brown heads pop out between the boards that make up the dividers between the stalls. The mice glance cautiously about to make sure all is clear, then dart out for the nearest piece of grain before dashing back to their refuge.

The smarter mice vie for positions at the feet of the younger horses who spill their grain more readily. Older horses, more settled in their ways, savor each kernel and rarely let any grain slip through their age-old lips.

Like the birds in the deepest part of winter, the mice make quick work of the spilled grain. The horses pay no attention to the scurrying mice around their feet. Horses that feel shortchanged by their evening servings join the mice in scavenging the spilled grain. The mice pay no heed to the giant heads that vacuum the floor around them; since they have never been hunted by horses, the mice have no fear of them. Instead, they boldly race the horse for the last bits of fallen grain.

While no mercy is shown to mice that try to take up residence in the house, those who reside in

the barn are often the beneficiaries of the "Under Dog" label. A mouse found cornered by a dog is given the opportunity to escape, much to the disgust of its canine pursuer. Setting the mouse free allows the hunt to start all over again.

While this may sound cruel to some, one soon learns that it is the mouse that has the upper hand. Day after day, week after week, the mouse skillfully eludes the dog, disappearing into cracks and crevasses often invisible to the human eye. The mouse skillfully climbs a sheer wall and disappears into a tiny hole just as easily as a person walks across a floor and opens a door.

Oh, the lucky barn mouse that calls a cat-free barn home. When the lights go out for the final time, the barn floor becomes its domain, and is picked clean by the following morning. At the dawn of the new day the mouse retreats to the safety and warmth of its nest where it awaits the descent of the sun and the battle for life to begin once again.

Such is the way of life in the country.

To read other articles by Michael Hillman visit the Authors' section of Emmitsburg.net.

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## THE MASTER GARDENER

# Christmas tree selection

Mary Ann Ryan  
Adams County Master Gardener

It's time to buy a Christmas tree! What kind of tree will you buy? What is best for your home and family schedule?

Selection of a Christmas tree is an annual tradition for some families. Many families, like mine, like the experience of going to a tree farm, tromping around in the cold – and if it's snowy, that's even better. We usually bring some kind of ribbon with us so we can go back to a tree and re-evaluate the shape and size before making the final decision. Before you know it, an hour or so has passed, we've jumped through snow, or trampled through water puddles (you can never pick out a tree on a warm, dry afternoon) and agreed on the perfect tree to cut and drag home. These cut your own trees will be the freshest you can get!

However, this is not always the best way for you to choose a Christmas tree. The length of time you wish your tree to be in the house will determine what kind of tree you will buy. If, for instance, you keep your tree up for more than three weeks, an artificial tree is for you! Many sizes, shapes and varieties are available at your local retail stores or garden centers.

If you keep your tree in your house for less than three weeks, a fresh cut tree may be your choice. Many times, especially during the holiday season, time is limited. Taking a day to cut your own tree may not be the way you wish to spend valuable time. However a cut, fresh tree purchased from a tree lot may be the way to go. Many garden and retail centers sell cut trees. Boy Scouts, civic clubs or school/church groups often sell trees as fundraisers for their organizations. This is a great way to support these groups.

Remember when choosing from a retail lot to check the tree for fresh-

ness. Smell the tree for its fragrance, as the fresher the tree, the more fragrant it is. Also shake the tree to determine how many needles have dropped. If the weather is warm, and the tree has been cut for some time, many, many needles will drop – a good indication of a not-so-fresh tree.

Tree selection becomes a bit easier if you know the difference between the tree types. Christmas trees can be broken down into three basic groupings: firs, spruce and pines. Firs and spruce needles are attached to twigs individually, while the pines have clusters of needles attached to the twigs. The following are some of the most commonly grown Christmas trees in our area.

The **Frasier Fir** is native to the high elevations of the southern Appalachian Mountains. It has easily adapted to our climate, if you're considering a living tree. It has excellent needle retention with wonderful fragrance. It has dark green foliage with silver on the underside of the needles, and the twigs are relatively firm for an easy to decorate tree.

**Douglas Fir** is a very popular Christmas tree. This tree is native to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and has also adapted well to our weather conditions. It has a natural pyramidal shape, fragrant, with somewhat drooping branches. The needles are a medium green color about 1 – 1 1/2" long. This tree has good needle retention and relatively easy to decorate. In the landscape, it serves as a great screen planting when mixed with other evergreen trees.

**Balsam Fir** is a long lasting, fragrant fir. This evergreen is native to northeastern US and Canada. It likes cold winter temperatures and cool summer temperatures. It has nice, dark green foliage and one of the common Christmas trees in the US. It has good needle retention and strong twigs for an easy to decorate tree. This tree resembles the Frasier

fir in looks and endurance, but may not be the best choice for a live tree as our summers are too hot.

**Concolor Fir** has longer needles than the other common fir trees, getting up to 1 1/2" in length. It has a good fragrance and needle retention. The blue-green foliage makes it an interesting and attractive color for a Christmas tree. It is native to the west coast, but has adapted to our environment quite well.

**Colorado Blue Spruce** is a nicely shaped tree with silvery-blue color. The needles are pointy, making it rather prickly to decorate, but it does have good needle retention if kept watered. These trees are symmetrical by nature, and have strong limbs for heavy ornaments. The blue spruce works well in the landscape as a screen planting.

**White Spruce** has short, stiff needles with a blunt tip, making them less prickly than the blue spruce. The branches are stiff as well, making it a good choice for heavy ornaments. Needle retention is good, probably better than other spruce trees. However, when the needles are crushed, they have an unpleasant odor.

**Norway Spruce** has a nice dark green color but poor needle retention. It is conical by nature, and open in appearance if not sheared heavily. It has good stiff branches, making it easy to decorate. If choosing this variety, be sure to keep it well watered in a cool room and do not keep it in the house for more than two weeks.

**Scotch Pine** is a common Christmas tree in the US. It was imported from Europe by the early European settlers. It has longer needles, about 1"-3" in length. The needles are in clusters and a medium green color. It has fairly good needle retention when it is kept watered. It also is a very easy tree to transplant if you are considering a living tree.

**White Pine** is a native evergreen. It has long, clustered needles and good needle retention. It is very soft to the touch and has flexible branches, making it a tree that cannot handle heavy ornaments. It has little fragrance, but nice blue green color.

After getting your cut tree home, proper care should be taken for a safe holiday. Make a fresh cut about one inch above the already cut base. Put your tree in water right away, even if you will not be bringing it into the house immediately. Don't let the tree dry out. You don't want it to turn into a fire hazard. Treat it as you would a fresh bouquet of flowers.

Locate the tree by a wall or corner where it's not going to be knocked over. Keep the tree away from heat sources, such as fireplaces, wood stoves and heat ducts.

Another option is a live tree. A living Christmas tree should be in the house for no more than 10 days. Before entering the house, it should be conditioned first. Keep the tree in an unheated, protected location for a few days before bringing it inside. During this conditioning period, be sure the root ball is watered. If the ball dries out, roots will die, lessening the survival rate of that tree.

When bringing your tree inside, place it in a large bucket or pan to prevent the soil and water from staining the floor. Again, keep the root ball moistened at all times. Locate the tree

in the coolest room of your home, away from any heat sources, just as you would a cut tree. You don't want the tree to break its dormancy, which will cause tips to grow, and then die when exposed to the cold weather again.

After you are finished with the tree indoors – and remember, no more than 10 days so it does not break dormancy – you'll need to re-condition it to the outdoors. Place the tree in an unheated, protected location for a few days, and then it should be ready to plant.

Hopefully, the ground won't be frozen when you're ready to plant the tree. You can prepare for this possibility ahead of time by digging the hole before the holidays and storing the soil in an unheated garage or storage shed. That way, when you're ready to plant, the hole is already there, and you won't have frozen ground to use as backfill. If, however, the hole is not dug, and the ground is frozen, place your tree in a sheltered area and mulch the root ball heavily. Keep the soil ball moist until the ground is workable.

After planting the tree, water it well and mulch it. This will protect the root ball through the rest of the winter months. The tree should remain dormant until the spring when it will start growing with all other vegetation.

Just purchasing a Christmas tree is full of decisions! Kids and adults can share in the fun of tree shopping! Don't stress, make educated decisions, and enjoy the holidays!

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

## The Backyard Gardener Mother knows best

MB Willburn

It is inevitable that all things must end. When applied to such natural disasters as extended mother-in-law visits or influenza, the adage is a cherished one. When applied to the sights and scents of a long season in the garden, it is a bittersweet saying at best, and a cruel suggestion at worst. Yet it is sadly and inexorably true. All around us the natural world is slowly slipping into hibernation; and Nature, in her maternal wisdom, is providing a gentle example for those of us who need to be physically removed from the flower beds before our rubber boots freeze into the topsoil. If only we would listen.

"Time to rest" she whispers with each falling leaf...but there is always one more flower pot to empty. "Days are short," she mutters a little louder when the sun sets just after lunchtime... still, one more vegetable bed to tidy before the bats come out. "The season is over," she exclaims in a restrained, ladylike yell...yet we dilly over the pruning and dally over the raking. Predictably, we leave her no choice but to send a message embedded firmly in the depths of a freezing ice storm: "HEY! Yes, you in the waterproof down filled parka and full face balaclava! It's time to COME INSIDE...NOW!!!"

I admit that I can be a bit deaf to her cries. I never was very good at listening to my mother, biological or otherwise. Without a brigade of under gardeners at my disposal, I must wearily accept that the duties left undone shall remain undone until the winds of March have ceased to blow. A wisteria left untrellised, pots filled with last year's soil, an underperforming photinia bound tightly by the stifling embrace of morning glory tendrils – all little jobs, all slated now for next year and a new start.

Like most mothers, Nature is doing this for our own good. At least there's no spanking involved (unless you count the ice storm). I may be unwilling to bid goodbye for a season, but my plants, trees, shrubs, bulbs and weeds are in desperate need of a well-earned hiatus after months of performances every day of the week. Furthermore, they are exceedingly grateful for a respite from the incessant pruning, moving and nit picking of a strung-out gardener, desperate for one more hour of light before the sun goes down behind bare hilltops. And, Mother reasons, if I will only wipe that look off my face and listen to

her for a moment, I may just realize she has the bigger picture in mind.

I need a break too – a complete break. For what pleasure can any activity afford without the contrast of doing without it for a short while? Even world travel would lose its charm if one was forced to ride a poultry-filled bus from Calcutta to New Delhi every day of the year. My weeding duties are perhaps not as grueling, and certainly not as pungent, but you get the picture. It's time to rest.

Even the professionals are putting down their trowels and hoses and setting themselves to bookwork and planning in the month of December. It is a time to take stock and enjoy the fact that a month's absence in the garden will not guarantee the loss of one's sanity in a forest of seven foot teasel stems. Who knows, we may start to get comfortable with early morning cups of coffee sipped in duvet-draped chairs during the very hours we would have been up to our hocks in the compost pile – dangerously comfortable.

Too soon January will bring the rustle of thousands of seed catalogs, February will usher in trays and soil bags for early seedlings, washing machine tops will be cleared, grow-lights will go up, seeds will be sown, spouses will grumble.

Too soon we will forgo the easy chairs for knee-pads and a lifting belt. Our days will be mapped by frost warnings and seed charts. We'll stop feeding our children and our pets will travel the neighborhoods in search of companionship.

Too soon garden tours will begin, panicking will begin in earnest, vacations will be scheduled according to what's growing, what's sprouting, what needs to be harvested – come to think of it, why bother with that nonsense, who needs a vacation anyway?

You do. I do. The plants do. Access your rational mind for a moment and consider: can you conceive of starting this cycle once again without a thorough break? Such is the beauty and wisdom of a four-season year. When Spring eventually arrives, heralded by that first snowdrop or early daffodil, we will welcome her with open arms and receive her honey-do list like a newlywed in the first blissful weeks of matrimony. With that first waft of lilac, we will cast off the eiderdown and don heavy coats, desperate for a peak of the new season, thrilled to plunge our hands back into that sun-warmed soil. The scales of luxury will fall from our eyes and we will forget about being ladies and gentleman of leisure – just like that. And Mother Nature will pat us on the head, smile that shrewd little smile and remind us gently, "I told you so."

I'll try to take the reproach with grace. My mother is always right in the end too.

## 2011 Master Gardener Training Classes

Frederick County Master Gardener 2011 Training Class Applications Accepted Now!

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An important part of being a Master Gardener is contributing to the community. In their first year, Master Gardeners volunteer 40 hours to educate the people of Frederick County about effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities. Volunteer opportunities are extensive. Master Gardeners host Plant Clinics at farmer's markets locations --identifying plants, plant diseases, and insects found in and around homes. They share environmentally beneficial landscaping methods through the Bay-Wise program, by hosting a booth at the Great Frederick Fair, and by speaking to community groups. They offer gardening seminars to the public in the Spring and Fall. The Junior Master Gardener Program helps teach children about gardening and greening their schools and

community. Master Gardeners test and share gardening ideas in the Demonstration Gardens on the Cooperative Extension grounds and have initiated the Grow It Eat It program for county residents. Master Gardeners write articles for local newspapers, and support greening efforts throughout the region.

Frederick County Master Gardeners base their knowledge on their own experience as gardeners, as well as both classroom and hands-on training provided by the Maryland Extension and University of Maryland horticultural educators. Master Gardeners continue to receive training at monthly meetings, statewide training programs organized by the Home and Garden Information Center, and on field trips.

Training in 2011 begins February 1, 2011 and runs through late-April. Classes are Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 a.m. until noon, with a few longer meetings. Instructors are University of Maryland professionals, Master Gardeners, and other experts in their fields. If all this sounds appealing, visit the Master Gardeners website at [www.frederick.umd.edu/MG](http://www.frederick.umd.edu/MG) for more information. Applications are being mailed now, so contact the Master Gardener office at 301-600-1596 or [strice@umd.edu](mailto:strice@umd.edu) as soon as possible to receive an application.

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## PETS LARGE AND SMALL

# Keeping Track of the Mason-Dixon Birds

Rusty Ryan

If you enjoy bird watching like I and millions of others, why not take the hobby to the next level a few days during the year and conduct one or more bird counts. Not only can these counts be a challenge but also the results are so crucial for the conservation of bird species and a barometer of the health of the environment for all species including humans. This article will touch on a few of the most well known counts.

### The Audubon Christmas Bird Count

At the turn of the 20th century, people took part in a tradition where the object of the game was to see who could kill the most animals in one day. In 1900, 27 conservation minded folks decided to count birds instead of the Christmas tradition of killing birds. Since then, the annual count has grown to 60,000 volunteer citizen scientists and over 2100 count circles. The Christmas count is held throughout the U.S., Canada, portions of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies and Pacific Islands. This count has become the longest

continuous wildlife survey in North America and worldwide in terms of just birds. The intent of this census is to determine the long term health, status and distribution of bird populations. Are factors such as climatic changes, habitat loss and viruses such as West Nile having impacts on the populations of our feathered friends? Not only do the results provide valuable data as to the status of the birds but to the overall health of the environment and for people as well (remember the story about the canary in the mines).

The count area consists of a circle with a 15 mile diameter. Each count chooses one day within a set few weeks of each December to conduct the count. The count is open to birders of all skill levels. Birds can be counted by either sight or sound. Volunteers are assigned an area by the local compiler. The volunteer surveys his/her area and provides the findings to the compiler. Many count day's end by having a post count social event with other participants to share the findings with food and drink.

Some volunteers can conduct the count without leaving the comfort of their homes. These volunteers choose to observe their bird feeders.



Bird watching is a family affair for Rusty Ryan and his daughter Lizzy

The censusing of feeders is a great means of censusing the nomadic birds such as Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak. Some volunteers prefer to bird mostly by vehicle. It is my opinion that those who walk the most varied habitat will produce a good diversity.

I treat the Christmas Bird Count as a stimulating challenge and I get psyched just as others may treat the first day of trout or deer. I prefer to conduct the census by foot versus car. My personal goal for each count is to locate the less common birds such as the Robin, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Fox Sparrow and Rufous-sided Towhee. These birds are but in small numbers and they are generally confined to thick and nasty cover. I usually start the count with an early morning listening for owls from the bedroom balcony. I generally don't start too early in the morning due to lack of available light. Once the lighting is sufficient, I start by censusing my own property that happens to lie within the count area. From there I spend the rest of the day (I usually end around 4pm) walking the neighboring properties. I'm lucky to have such large properties to census with such varied habitat. The more variety of habitat the better my chances are. Since I bird by ear (I rely on hearing the birds versus seeing them), the prime weather for the count would be sunny with light winds. During my all day walking, I rely heavily on coming across a few feeding flocks. It is within these feeding flocks where the good birds are normally found. I'm a strong believer in the phrase birds of a feather flock together. One of the tricks of the census is to play a tape recording of a screech owl or saw-whet owl. This results in getting the birds attention and causes them to abandon cover and come out to be viewed.

So what information or trends has the count results produced? Years of data have confirmed that 50% of the total species found in

North America are indeed moving northward or not traveling as far south as years ago. Is this due to global warming? For example, the American Robin, Mockingbird and Carolina Wren are just a few of the local birds which 50 years ago may have not even been tallied during the various bird counts. The count has also confirmed the decline of many species as well.

Did you know that the greatest number of Red-winged blackbirds ever tallied during a Christmas count was 53,148,120.00 individuals and the high count for the European Starling was over 20,000,000.00 Imagine trying to estimate those flocks!

Christmas Counts along the Mason-Dixon include the Gettysburg Chapter of Audubon; York Chapter of Audubon, Chambersburg Chapter and a count called Catocin, MD.

The Gettysburg Count (conducted by: South Mountain Chapter of Audubon)

This year's count is scheduled for Saturday, December 18, 2010. The count circle includes properties such as Gettysburg Military National Park, Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve, The Freedom Township Grasslands and Lake Heritage. The count coordinator is Mike O'Brien of Fairfield (maddogobrien@gmail.com). The past five years of this count have yielded an average of 75 species observed. The top three most abundant species found are the Canada Goose, E. Starling and the Junco. Believe it or not, volunteers normally tally an average of 100 E. Bluebirds, several hundred Vultures (both species), 2 dozen Robins and decent numbers of Red-headed woodpeckers for counts north of the Mason-Dixon.

The Great Backyard Bird Count - <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>; [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

A recent spin off of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the Great Backyard Bird Count. This count is conducted by the renowned Cornell

Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. This yearly four day event is held the second weekend of February and covers this continent. The upcoming count will be held February 18-21, 2011. The intent of this census is much like that of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

This event is free and open to the public. This event can be done by all skill levels and participants may census anywhere and for as many hours as you wish (within the set four day period). Volunteers can submit their results electronically. During the 2010 count, over 90,000 checklists were conducted on-line which provides the continents' largest instant snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

International Migratory Bird Day - <http://www.birdday.org/>

This census is usually conducted on the second Saturday in May in this region which coincides with peak of migration. This census again allows everyday citizens to participate and provide their findings in hopes of getting a snap shot of those birds migrating from south to north. If you want a real challenge, aim for a goal of locating 100 species in one day. It can be done but certainly not an easy task. I've only done it once.

If you enjoy birds and wish to further the enjoyment, try giving a count a try. It is a challenging hobby, great way to get out and enjoy nature plus a great means of making new friends who enjoy the same hobby. Most importantly, the results from these various counts help not only the birds but we as well.

Other useful sites:  
<http://www.birding.com/>  
<http://www.birdingguide.com/clubs/maryland.html>  
<http://home.comcast.net/~audubon/>  
<http://www.centralmdaudubon.org/>  
<http://www.mdbirds.org/counts/xmas/XmasCount2009.pdf>  
<http://pa.audubon.org/CBC.html>  
*Rusty is the Conservation Chairperson of the South Mountain Chapter of the National Audubon Society.*



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# PETS LARGE AND SMALL

## Anaphylaxis

Kimberly J Brokaw DVM

Most of us think of allergies as a trivial annoyance. Much of the time, we decide that even though we are allergic to something, it is just too inconvenient or annoying to avoid it. For example, I am allergic to certain yellow dyes found in cheap candy. Most of the time I can enjoy cheap candy. Sometimes, I break out in a few itchy hives. I then resolve to avoid the cheap candy, and my resolution usually lasts at least a few weeks. On

the momentary sensation that it was time to panic. I quickly told the owner the horse was having a bad reaction to the sedative. I keep a bag of anaphylaxis drugs specially put together for allergic emergencies. I grabbed the bag and rapidly started giving the meds to the horse. Much to my relief and the relief of the owner, the lovely mare recovered uneventfully. I admit I was still a little shaken up and uneasy until the end of the day.

A few days later I came back to the farm to finish injecting the mare's hocks. This time I was

a hole into the horse's trachea for an emergency tracheostomy had her breathing gotten so bad that she collapsed. Luckily medical management alone was enough to pull the mare through the reaction and no emergency surgery had to be performed.

Another recent incident of anaphylaxis was after a routine vaccination of a dog. The dog was a well-loved mini poodle. A few minutes after administering the vaccines the dog had an increased respiratory rate and went limp in the owner's arms. I told the owner that she was having a bad reaction and then I took her out of the room. I injected her with multiple drugs and gave her oxygen. Within a few minutes she stopped breathing so I placed an endotracheal tube in her airway and had my veterinary assistant ventilate/breathe for her while I administered additional medications. The dog's heart stopped briefly and her tongue turned blue. After more epinephrine, antihistamine, and steroid drugs, as well as CPR the dog regained consciousness and began wagging his little tail. Luckily the dog was back to normal within half an hour. He was able to go home with the owner later that day. Once again, a good animal barely escaped the grim reaper.

While anaphylactic reactions are very rare, rapid administration of veterinary care is essential for a favorable outcome. Owners frequently give sedatives, vaccines, and other medications to their pets at home rather than having a veterinarian administer them with the argument that it is less expensive that way. While the chances of reaction are low, should a reaction occur, without the proper medications the pet can die in a matter of minutes. Even with excellent veterinary care, severe allergic reactions are often fatal. However, when an owner gives meds himself or herself, the possibility of being faced with an allergic reaction is always present.



rare occasions, the hives get bad enough for me to take a Benadryl. I know I should never eat candy with yellow dye. Still, I get careless because cheap candy is plentiful, particularly during holidays.

Allergies are not always so easy to manage. One of the scariest moments in veterinary medicine is when an animal has an anaphylactic reaction. Anaphylaxis is the big man of the allergy world. Anaphylactic reactions can occur as a result of vaccinations, bee stings, or administration of antibiotics or other medication. Anaphylaxis is an acute multiorgan system reaction, caused by the release of chemical mediators from mast cells and basophils in the blood and organs. It can kill an animal or a human almost instantly. After an initial exposure or sensitizing dose to a substance like bee sting toxin or vaccine, the animal's immune system becomes sensitized to that allergen. On a subsequent exposure, an allergic reaction occurs. This reaction can be sudden, severe, and can involve the whole body.

Luckily anaphylactic reactions are rare. I usually only treat about one to two a year. However, it always seems like those reactions happen to the owner's most cherished animal. Recently, I was at one of my favorite client's barns. One of her much-loved, impeccably cared-for, horses needed sedation for routine hock injections. I administered a sedative, then proceeded to clip the hair on the hocks and start the first scrub. As I was scrubbing, I noticed the horse was starting to have difficulty breathing. The gums were rapidly turning purple and the tongue was swelling. I felt

not going to give the mare any sedatives. Fortunately, this mare is extremely cooperative and always well-behaved. The injections went smoothly considering the lack of sedation. Afterwards I talked with the owner about the drama of the previous attempt and the injections. She said that when I first said her horse was having a bad reaction she thought the horse was going to die but that as I seemed so calm she stopped worrying. While I was pleased that I had been able to maintain an air of confidence and collection, I told her that I had been worried too that her horse would die. I had even started to anticipate cutting



Dr. Brokaw and her horse Bart

I wish I had a good lesson about how to prevent allergic reactions, but I certainly haven't figured out how to prevent allergic reactions. My two recent experiences reminded me that allergic reactions are rare, unpredictable,

often severe, and likely to briefly scare the daylights out of even the calmest vet.

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## VETERAN'S PROFILE

# E-6 Michael Humerick U.S. Air Force

James Houck

Mike Humerick was born Sept. 13, 1941 at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md., where he lived for 11 months until his family moved to Emmitsburg, Md.

The Humericks resided on West Main Street where Mike grew up playing with his neighborhood friends, whom Mike refers to as the "West Main Street gang." Mike attended St. Euphemia's School from 1947-1955 before he transferred to Emmitsburg High School where he graduated in 1959.

After graduation Mike worked at Moore's Business Forms in Thurmont, Md. for a couple years before joining the U.S. Air Force in March of 1961. He completed basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas before going to Illinois for tech training. His first assignment was a two-year TDY (Temporary Duty in the Yonder) in Japan. While stationed in Japan on TDY Mike did his first tour of duty of Vietnam.

Mike returned to the states in 1964 to his new station at Wright Patterson in Dayton, Ohio, where he met and married



his first wife. During his military career, Mike was stationed at various bases, including Clark Air Base in the Philippines for two years, McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kan., Ben Wa Air Base in Vietnam, George Air Base in California and Osan Air Base in Korea for a year. He had a stiff tour of duty spending time in Ben Wa, Camron Bay, Sactran, Noctran, Tonsanute and four bases in Thailand.

In Vietnam Mike loaded missiles and rockets from dawn to dusk. During his last tour of duty in Vietnam at Fen Rae, his brother Tom, Chief Gunnery Sergeant USN, was also in Vietnam doing river patrols. As his brother was wounded, Mike made arrangements for the Navy to release Tom once Mike arrived to the country. The Navy followed through and gave Tom ten days to process

out. Once released, Tom visited Mike at Fen Rae and enjoyed his first hot meal and hot shower in a while. The two brothers really enjoyed their visit together.

Mike retired in 1981 and moved to Alaska where he worked at a small base called King Salmon, a forward operating base for Eldondorff that was an hour and 15 minutes closer to Russia. Being a fisherman, Mike enjoyed working the marina at the base. In the winter months Mike operated heavy equipment to remove snow and keep the runways clear. He also ran the transportation squadron and took care of all motor vehicles. The base closed during the Clinton administration but remained available for the military's use at any time in the event of war.

Mike continues to fish and

enjoys guiding sport fishermen and hunters. He shares a love for Alaska and for his hometown of Emmitsburg. He visits the "West Main Street gang" twice a year and spends time hunting turkey in the spring and whitetail deer in the fall. Twenty-two of his hometown friends have visited Mike in Alaska and thoroughly enjoyed the time they spent fishing and hunting.

Readers of the column know that I wrote about Mike's brother Tom a few months ago. Since then Tom was in an automobile accident and did not survive, leaving Mike as the only survivor of his immediate family. Tom's passing has been especially hard on Mike as they were not only brothers, but best friends.

*Thank you, Mike - I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you.*

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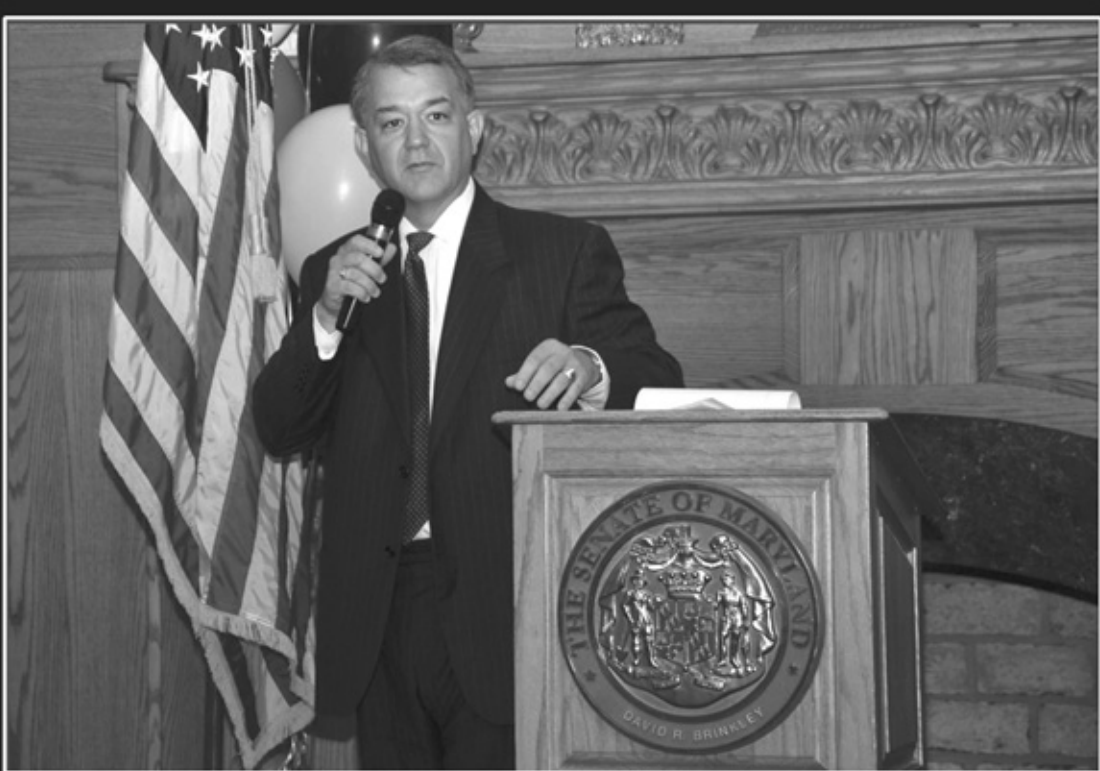


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*Thank you all for your vote on November 2nd. I will continue to serve honestly and diligently as your Clerk of the Circuit Court!*

*I would like to extend an open invitation to the public to attend the Swearing-In Ceremony for myself, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Judges of the Orphans' Court and the Register of Wills.*

*It will be held December 13th at 4:30 pm in the Circuit Court of Frederick County.*

**Sandra K. Dalton**  
Clerk Of the Circuit Court

CIVIL WAR DIARY

# Diary of Joseph E. Wible, 1861-1862

## Part Two

**John Miller**  
**Emmitsburg Historical Society Civil War Historian**

Wednesday, Sept 18 - Today ten of the caged Secessionists were moved to Fort McHenry. They were placed between four files of soldiers and sent to the depot and from thence to Fort McHenry. The remainder were discharged on taking the oath of allegiance. It looked very comic to see them trudging along between, files of soldiers with their carpet sacks in one hand and their cane in the other and their mouths a little awry. It was a comic adjournment of a legislature.

Thursday, Sept 19 - The picket guards with which the town was surrounded were withdrawn today. Nothing unusual happened today.

Friday, Sept 20 - There was nine more Secessionists brought to the guard-house today. Such scenes are causes of great excitement in I saw several of our friends from Gettysburg today. I have been standing guard this afternoon and will be on guard till tomorrow at ten o'clock.

Saturday, Sept 21 - This day turned out to be a very rainy day. Our tent is as snug and dry as we could wish and we all feel as content as if we were in a parlor, while the rain makes music on our tent.

Sunday, Sept 22 - Today has been unusually cool. It remained quite cool all day. I went to preaching this morning with a squad under Sergeant Maxwell, went again this evening. Were at the Methodist both morning and evening.

Monday, Sept 23 - The weather has moderated considerably today. Our Captain returned home from a furlough this morning. I was out in the country today with, friends, Wills and Buckingham, for fruit found it very scarce, and the people rather reluctant to give, but got as many as we could eat.

Monday, Sept 23 (cont'd) - Today has been very quiet and very especially. There was a negro cowhided in Camp today for brining whiskey to the soldiers. After being whipped he was sent from Camp.

Tuesday, Sept 24 - Our men returned from Washington today with the horses. They brought two hundred and eighty horses for the saddle and thirty six for wagons. Both men and horses were very fatigued.

Thursday, Sept 26 - The horses were divided among the companies today. We got 76 horses.

Friday, Sept 27 - Today has been a very wet and stormy day. It commenced, raining last night and rained all day, and about noon it became very windy, upsetting tents, and unroofing many of the stalls in which we have our horses. It is rather cool this evening and has the appearance of clearing. This is the day we were to be presented with a flag by the ladies of Emmitsburg and vicinity but as the day was very bad they did not make their appearance but have promised to be here on



Saturday, Sept 28 - This morning we received from the ladies Union Association of Emmitsburg and vicinity a wagon load of provisions consisting in part of butter, peach butter, pickles and a variety of other things. I was at prayer meeting tonight at the barracks. The meeting was carried on exclusively by the soldiers, one of which delivered quite an interesting lecture.

Monday, Oct 1 (Note; Monday was September 30) - Today has been a very busy day in our Company. The ladies of Emmitsburg brought the flag today. There was quite a number of ladies that came with the flag. Some very pretty ladies and others not so pretty but all passable.

Tuesday, Oct 2 (Should be Oct 1) - Today the balance of our horses were

selected and all distributed among the Company. The horses were divided by lot, and everybody seems very well pleased with their luck in drawing. My luck was to get a small sorrel.

Wednesday, Oct 3 (Should be Oct 2) - Today we drilled for the first time on horse back. In my opinion we were very successful for the first time.

Sunday, Oct 7 (Should be Oct 6) - Was on guard yesterday as well as all last night and at this hour, six o'clock, am not yet relieved. This is a beautiful morning and it has also been a pleasant night unusually warm for this time of year. It is so pleasant that a person can sleep out all night on the ground without cover.

Monday, Oct 7 - Tried hard all forenoon to get my horse shod but did not succeed. This afternoon at

one O'clock we started for home to be there for the election tomorrow. We reached Emmitsburg about five O'clock in the evening and fed there. About seven O'clock we started for home again rain pouring down all the while) and reached Gettysburg about 9 O'clock and marched up town (to the music of a bugle) single file. We marched to the diamond and retired to our respective abodes.

Tuesday, Oct 8 - Cloudy, damp morning indicating rain. Remained about home all morning. After dinner went up and deposited my vote after which I took a short ride to the country. Partook of a few apples, drank a little cider, played with the children, bid goodbye and returned home.

Wednesday, Oct 9 - Exercised my "family horse" a little this morning and then prepared to leave. Left home at 11 O'clock for Emmitsburg where we met the balance of our men, remained there about half an hour, then marched through the principal streets when we left for Frederick. About five miles from Emmitsburg while passing a house some persons standing nearby hurrahed for Jeff Davis. A drove of turkies being in a field nearby, our men made a charge on them capturing six of them (the turkies), Arrived safely in Camp at 8 o'clock P.M., tired and hungry.

Thursday, Oct 10 - Cloudy but pleasant. The Connecticut

5th Regiment arrived in town in the morning and went on the Williamsport Turnpike. About an hour after marching thru town, they came back and encamped three miles south of town. A light battery attached to the Regiment also returned and put up at the Wisconsin camp where they are now. Several Secessionists were arrested during the day some were discharged. One of our men brought a captured gun into Camp. He having captured it from a Secesh in Middleburg, Carrol Co. Md. The evening was damp and disagreeable, very unpleasant.

October 11, 1861 - Camp Thomas - Another pleasant day has ended and our many tents have been pitched "one day's march nearer home". The 13th Massachusetts Regiment and Indiana 12th arrived about 5 o'clock this evening. The former encamped on the Fair-Ground around the barracks. The latter along the Hagerstown turnpike, a short distance from the city. Everything is tranquil and quiet in our Camp tonight. Some are singing good old Methodist hymns and others are amusing themselves in different ways. The 13th Massachusetts Reg. were on dress parade this evening an excellent band in attendance.

To learn more about the Emmitsburg area in the Civil War visit the Historical Society section of Emmitsburg.net.

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## HISTORY

# Very special Christmas memories

William F. Hays ~ 1920

For me and for our family, Christmas was the big day of the year, with the highlight being the program at Church, and those real red oranges and boxes of chocolates that Matthews store used to supply for the occasion. Even the color of the boxes had the look of Christmas. And there was so much excitement about the recitations we were expected to give at the church service. It seemed as if we practiced every day after school, for weeks before the big event.

There were so many things that were special, but high on the list should be sugar cakes, coconut cookies and ginger snaps that Mother produced. I don't know how many times she had to fill those lard cans that held the goodies, but I am sure it was more than once. And then, of course, she tried to hide them. It might be up in the stove room on that elevated platform that held the flour, or down in the cellar in those dark places where potatoes and apples were kept, perhaps in that little closet between the living room and the dining room, and maybe in the closet just off Mother's bedroom. These, I am sure, were not the only places. But sooner or later the smell of them would give the hiding place away, and of course they tasted all the better for the search.

As good as were the cookies, it was the big fruit cake that represented all the spirit of Christmas in one package. I recall that Mother started the process several weeks ahead. She mixed the ingredients: in a large pan, certainly 18 inches in diameter. After it had been in the oven for a while, the smell found its way all through the house. There were strange spices in it, spices used just this one time in the year. The baking seemed to take a long time. Every so often, Mother would take the cake out and push a straw into the middle, to see how things were doing. When the straw came out perfectly clean, it meant that the cake was done. I will settle for that smell, it was so wonderful.

This was one cake we never touched ahead of time, perhaps because it was too dignified looking or that we felt it would be too great a sin. At any rate, I am sure we kept hands off. Mother was always especially proud of her fruit cake. So whenever her friends came for a visit, from Thurmont or Fred-



"Christmas Eve was always a great time for a child in the '20s. Everyone gathered at old hotel where we got an orange and a box of candy from Santa, then we all headed off to the fire house for hot dogs, ice cream and a soft drink, followed by a free movie at the Gem." Eugene Zacharias

erick or Fairfield, out would come a plate full of her handiwork. And all would agree that this was the very best that "Miss Minnie" had ever baked. As of course it was.

Many times I have surprised New Englanders by telling them that at the Hays household, in Emmitsburg, the big feature for Christmas, as well as for Thanksgiving or New Year's Day, was not turkey, but fried oysters. Why not?. They were great the way Mother fried them. Sometimes we had fried chicken, but that was usually in the summer. So it was either chicken or oysters often papa would go by train to Baltimore on business, and on his return would bring home a gallon can of the best, fresh from the Chesapeake Bay.

To get back to Christmas. There was an event that went out of style long ago. It was known as Kriss Kringling, or Bell Snickling, as it was sometimes called. During the holiday season, it was common practice for all the youngsters to dress up in a costume, much like the kind worn at Halloween, and go from door to door, hoping for a hand-out of cookies. Masks could be bought at Hoke's store. The older boys, instead of going on foot, would go horseback, and I recall seeing large groups of them, riding through town on their way to a farmhouse out a mile or so, to the home of someone known for being especially hospitable. I never did it, but it always seemed very exciting, and something I hoped to when old enough.

But soon the custom disap-

peared, due to the arrival of automobiles, which prevented the use of the roads for any purpose, other than motor traffic. Our best coasting hill was now gone, the one out at Bishop Murray's place, adjacent to the Mountain View Cemetery. Bishop John Gardner Murray was the Episcopal Bishop of Maryland. I recall that one of his children, I think a daughter, used to drive to town in a smart looking pony cart, thus turning us green with envy. This summer home of the Bishop was once owned and occupied by my great uncle Joseph Hays, a brother of Grandfather Hays.

Christmas shopping was an experience, made memorable by the fact that we children had very little to spend. Papa had never heard of such a thing as a child's allowance, and he never saw the need to supply us with spending money. But we were not completely without cash, not at all. There was Mother. How she managed to save as much as she did, I will never know. I recall that for a few years she paid in to a Christmas Club at the local Savings Bank. One year it was 50 cents a week, then later that amount was doubled. When the check arrived, some three weeks before Christmas, it was manna from Heaven. All that money! The check itself was decorated like a Christmas card. Mother sold eggs and chickens and butter and cream and sweet corn, and these sales were the source of her generous outlays to the six of us.

So supplied with a small amount of cash, the great problem arose as to what to buy for presents. I recall that we made one trip to Frederick, to do our shopping, and I am sure we bought something that looked gaudy but low in price. For Papa, the thing he was sure to get was a handkerchief. He was so good about it, said it was just what he wanted. The toys for us were never the expensive kind, not as good as the ones the Biggs boys received. We did, however, get a most wonderful toy on one occasion, a monkey that climbed up and down a string.

How we liked that monk. From Frank Weant, across the street, one or the other of us was sure to get a Horatio Alger book, and of course we could all enjoy it. I still have one. As each one of us came along, a sled and ice skates appeared under the tree. But the skates were those horrible clamp affairs that would come loose and send you flat on your back. I would like to have the man who invented them, by the throat. I don't remember that we had any

toys that were at all elaborate, nor did it matter how much or how little they cost. They were beautiful, there under the tree on Christmas morning. No one was happier than the six of us.

Mention of the tree brings up the question as to where our trees came from. No one sold them. No one packaged them. You went out and cut your own. There was a place just outside of town, called Carrick's Knob; where some were available. I recall going down toward Thurmont, with Uncle Harry (Mother's brother) where we cut down several lovely ones. Another time, which my brother John will recall, we went with Clarence Eyer and his brother Floyd, to a place in the mountain, where we found trees that were just what we wanted.

I am reminded of the story Mother told us of the time that Santa arrived at the house, but found no tree. So what did he do but go to the stable, hitch up Old Dan, and go for one. It had snowed, so there were the marks in the snow on



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Christmas morning. He apparently had to cut it to size, and there were the very chips, right there for us to see. What a thrilling and moving story that was! To think that Santa would go to all that trouble, just for us. And there it was when we woke, all trimmed and beautiful.

I will close this little sketch of Christmas with some random thoughts, or rather with just the mention of some little things that stay in my memory. But first, let me say that for the Hays kids, Christmas was excitement supreme. The happiest time of the year. The time when delicious cookies and cakes were in great supply. The time when the few young people who had gone away to college, came home; the time when people did the unusual; the time when children had a part in the church service. It really was a festive occasion.

I remember Mother getting us out of bed, around midnight, and taking us into the room on the corner nearest the Shuff house, where we could see and hear the Christmas carolers. And if there was snow on the ground, that only added to the wonderment. There was a Minister at the Reformed Church, by the name of Rev. Higbee, who at one time worked in our shop. He had a great sense of humor, used to talk about singing the Adeste-Fiddle-dees. I remember that he had an office (should be called a den) with books of all kinds. I really owe him a big debt, for it was in his study that I learned of the treasures to be found in books.

I cannot close without mentioning the Christmas program at the Lutheran Church, which, for some reason, was held at night, rather than morning. The Lutherans were bigger and stronger than we poor Presbyterians, and so we liked to go to their service. The real reason was, that perhaps they would take pity on us and give us an orange or box of candy, or both.

Christmas day was one of the two or three holidays when Papa dressed in his Sunday best. And no work, which itself was notable. Just having him in the house, in his Sunday clothes, was something special.

#### Recollections of Christmas in Emmitsburg -70 years ago Don Rodgers

No new laptop, Xbox 360, Guitar Hero, iPhone G4 – just simple gifts such as board games like Monopo-

ly, Easy Money, Chinese Checkers, or a bicycle or a new cap gun and holster or a BB gun were the desired gifts of the late thirties and early forties. You always got clothes but they weren't on your wish list. Okay, so the thought was the same and the amount spent as a percent of parent income was similar but, remember, there was only one wage earner as the spouse rarely worked outside the home.

I was born in 1933 and from then into the mid-forties no one had much money due to the recession and the war but, of course, since I was really young, I didn't know what a recession was and it didn't matter anyhow because all my friends were pretty much in the same boat.

Emmitsburgians did much of their Christmas shopping through the Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward catalog but much of our gift clothing came from Houck's; since the store was local, items that didn't fit could easily be returned for the proper size. But the hi-light of the toy shopping experience in Emmitsburg was the trip or trips to Fraley's store on West Main Street. The second floor of Fraley's was completely laid out in Christmas items for kids. I don't think they had a live Santa Claus but just looking at all of the games and toys and stuff was pure excitement.

My father, Thornton (or Mike as many people called him), always put up a model "O" gauge train display in the dining room of our house on North Seton Ave. This wasn't just a table top layout – he built a special platform which consumed about a third of the dining room. We (brothers Bee, Bill, Joe and myself) each had an engine and we would swap cars to pull behind our engine – now that I think about it, my sister Rainey didn't have an engine but I guess it was a guy thing. During the Christmas season, many of the town's people would come to our house to look at the train layout – made you feel proud of your Dad for the hours he spent working on the layout.

Buy a Christmas tree !!! I don't think anyone in Emmitsburg sold Christmas trees because you could always go somewhere and cut your own for free. Usually we had a cedar tree probably because they were the most numerous. Tree decorations were pretty much like they are today except that the lights were much larger and you had tinsel. You stood back and threw the tinsel at the tree – that is, until Mother came in and

said, "Do it right".

People decorated the exterior of their homes but nothing like they do today. Most of the decorations that I remember were non-electric wreaths, ribbons, bunting, etc. I believe there was a creche in front of the Lutheran parsonage but it was so long ago I am not sure of that.

Stores also were decorated with mostly non-electric items such as big cardboard Santa's, "Merry Christmas & Happy New Year" signs, poinsettias and garlands draped over and around their store fronts.

Shortly before Christmas day some local organization (firemen, Lions or maybe a combination of clubs) held a party and gave out a box of hard candy and an orange – Santa did the giving out but, usually, I knew who Santa was; guess the disguise wasn't foolproof. After the party there was a free movie at the "Gem" theater – this was for the kids so it was, most likely, a cowboy movie and a Three Stooges short.

I know we went to Mass on Christmas Day but I don't remember if, pre WWII, they had a midnight Mass. If they had a midnight Mass our family didn't attend – Christmas Day was for going to Church and then, afterward, opening presents.

St. Euphemia's School, and also the public school, always had Christmas pageants. At that time you didn't have to worry about offending someone by publicly celebrating the birth of Christ. The one pageant that I remember most vividly is the one in which I played the part of a statue of Christ as a young boy. I was to stand still with my arms outstretched while a chorus sang behind me. I was wearing a blond wig that started to itch something terrible so I very quickly moved my arm and scratched my head. The audience laughed but I was sure they weren't laughing at me.

Everything I have described up to now is pre-WWII – even for kids eight years old things changed after Pearl Harbor. As far as I can remember, my whole family was together for Christmas of 1941 although brother Bee and sister Rainey were both out of high school and were working in Baltimore. Neither owned a car at that time so all travel to Emmitsburg was by bus. My father owned a car but, with just an "A" gasoline ration card, travel to Baltimore and back was next to impossible.

I am sure there was a lot of war discussion around our 1941 Christmas dinner table but, again, at eight years old Pearl Harbor and/or the Japanese didn't mean a whole lot to me. After 1941 the whole family wasn't together for Christmas again until 1945 but we thanked the Lord for that – some Emmitsburg families would never be able to get together again.

I don't remember whether or not the free candy/orange/movie continued during the war. I do know that my father went to work at the Sparrows Point shipyard and came home on the bus on weekends. I also remember that the bus drivers name was Murph and, since the bus would

lay over all day Sunday parked on DePaul St., Dad would invite Murph to eat dinner with us especially if it was a holiday such as Christmas.

During the War, many Emmitsburg families spent the Christmas season praying for the safe return of their loved ones. We still had Christmas trees, some decorations, parties and so on but it seemed a lot more somber.

These are the things I remember about Christmas in Emmitsburg but I am sure it was the same in Fairfield, Thurmont, Taneytown and Gettysburg. I wish I could remember more as they were good times. Without a doubt, George Bernard Shaw said it correctly with "Youth is wasted on the young".

#### Christmas in Emmitsburg of Old

Ed Houck  
Former Mayor of Emmitsburg

With Christmas only a few weeks from now, my wife Doris and I began to look at how it was as a child in the 1930's. She lived with her Grandparents just across from Fraileys Store and I lived with my parents on the square in Emmitsburg. We had very similar memories of the great times we had growing up in this town.

Living on the square was like living in the middle of the Joyous time of Christmas. A large Christmas Tree was placed in front of the Slagle Hotel next to the Farmers State Bank. It was decorated with lights by the Potomac Electric Power Company. The business leaders in Emmitsburg provided more trim for the town and presented a festive look for everyone to enjoy. The local homeowners did their part to add to the Norman Rockwell look of our town.

One memory we both had was one Saturday morning before Christmas the local Lions Club would hand out a box of candy and an orange by Santa Clause who ar-

rives with great fan-fair and a parade with the local band and the Vigilant Hose Company. Children and parents from far and near came to enjoy this treat. The local Theater would have a free showing in the morning for all the kids so the parents would have some free time to shop.

One of the first stops to be made was the second floor of Frailey's Store where a treasure trove of toys and gifts were on sale. It could take hours to pick just the right one. The parents would then scatter to the rest of the businesses in town to get the gift best suited to a wife, aunt, teenager and the others in the family.

We both remember the caroling we did as small groups on Christmas Eve and then the Religious Services that were held in each of the five churches in our community. I remember my dad and mom gathering up my two sisters and myself and heading to midnight mass at the Catholic Church and trying to stay awake. The entire Christmas experience was always made more special when we would have a snow fall within the two weeks before the event.

As we got older and married and began a family of our own we wanted to carry on this same feeling of Christmas in small town. We would dress our store windows in The Holiday Look and leave the lights on till midnight. We would keep them on until after Midnight Mass and then reopen so the church goers could pick up their gifts and toys that were on hold for that special day.

These wonderful memories have remained with us over the years even though we moved in the mid 60's. Even our 4 children bring up the great times they had in growing up in Emmitsburg. As I wrote earlier in this piece....We all remember living in a "Norman Rockwell Picture".

*To learn more about the rich history of the greater Emmitsburg area visit the Historical Society section of Emmitsburg.net*



Don Rodgers showing off his Christmas cowboy outfit.

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## MOUNT CREATIVE WRITERS

## A yawling good Christmas

Chelsea Baranoski  
MSM Class of 2010

Howls and meows bounced off the beige, stained concrete walls of Purr's Pound. Basset Hounds, Labradors, Chihuahuas, mutts, Siamese cats, tabbies, and Persians paced in their cages. It was Christmas Eve and the pound was open late in the hopes of giving as many animals as possible a chance to be adopted. All of the animals in the pound were starting to worry. Would anyone ever adopt them? Would they be able to spend Christmas by the fire-side in a house that smelled like freshly baked sugar cookies and peppermint sticks? Would they be able to cuddle against the feet of proud owners while yuletide carols played in the background? The animals were crossing their paws and praying for a miracle.

Two of the animals at the pound, Toby the Basset Hound and Tabitha the tabby cat, had been locked in the pound's cages for as long as they could remember. They were both brought there when they were young. Their owners did not have room in their houses for Toby and Tabitha, so they placed ads in the Pennysaver and let all of their friends, family, and co-workers know that they were looking for a caring home for their pets. Unfortunately, no one answered their ads. They brought Toby and Tabitha to the pound in the hopes that they would find owners with big hearts and warm, comfortable homes. One year later, Toby and Tabitha were still at the pound, waiting for someone to care for them. They were afraid of what awaited them if they were not adopted before Christmas.

Toby rubbed his wet brown nose against his wire cage. His sad big brown eyes stared at a frosted window in the corner of the room. He saw large, glittering white snowflakes falling from the midnight blue sky. Toby wished he could go outside and play in the snow, even though he knew he would probably freeze his tail off. He dreamt of chasing after sleighs and sleeping in snow forts. He longed to breathe in the fresh December air and the smell of Christmas firs.

Toby glanced over at Tabitha. She was curled up in a ball in the cage next to him. Her pale blue eyes met Toby's. She let out a faint meow. Toby knew Tabitha was also dreaming of a Christmas far away from the pound. After spending one year together, Toby could read Tabitha's every thought by a twitch of a whisker or a flick of her tail.

Indeed, Tabitha was praying that she would get a new home for her Christmas present. She

had heard stories about St. Nick from the Yorkshire Terrier twins, but the twins told her that he never visited the pound. She prayed that he would stop this year and bring some folks to adopt her and her pound-mates. She believed in miracles and told herself that she would never stop believing in a home for Christmas.

Tabitha's stomach grumbled under her striped amber fur. She never seemed to be full during her time at the pound. She longed for Fancy Feast meals, fresh milk, and albacore tuna. She licked her lips at the thought of such a tantalizing meal. The only food Tabitha had eaten lately seemed like it tasted like sour smelling milk and fishy smelling leftovers. Tabitha did not care if her new owners were not master chefs like Curtis Stone, but she figured that anything would be better than the unappetizing pound food.

\* \* \* \*

Tabitha and Toby paced back and forth in their cages. They had been pacing for two hours and if they continued much longer, they felt sure that they would be the faces of a new animal weight loss commercial. They looked at each other, cocked their furry little heads, and peered up at the clock. The clock struck 8:00 P.M. Toby and Tabitha were starting to give up hope. It looked as though Christmas morning would be spent laying on the cold floor of their cages instead of the plush carpet of a country cottage. Toby closed his large brown eyes. It was no use. He might as well get a good night's rest. Tabitha, on the other hand, started pacing around her cage again. She was in the middle of devising a masterful plan to escape the cramped confines of the pound when she heard a noise that sounded like a creaking door.

Sure enough, the door to the pound swung open and an elderly couple walked inside. Snow fell off of their wool pea coats and onto the floor. The elderly man and woman each shook the hand of the owner of the pound, Mr. Monroe. Tabitha felt the fur on her back stand on end. She purred loudly to wake up Toby. Toby yawned and pawed at his eyes. He couldn't believe it. Why was this couple spending their Christmas Eve at the pound? Toby watched the couple glance at the many wire cages. Most of the other animals were asleep. If they knew that the elderly man and woman were at the pound, there surely would have been a noisy ruckus that could have been heard two towns over.

Toby and Tabitha pressed their noses to their cages and listened to the elderly couple talk to Mr. Monroe.

"My name is Nick and this is my wife, Natalie," the elderly man told Mr. Monroe. We were



on our way back from Christmas Eve services and we figured we would stop by and take a look around. You see, we just lost our beloved cat, Calico three months ago and we have been lonely ever since." A single tear slid down Nick's flushed cheeks. He took out a crisp white handkerchief from his back pants pocket and blew his nose.

"Calico was a wonderful cat," Natalie piped in. "She was like the child we never had. I miss her curling up against my feet and meowing when she wanted another saucer of milk. When Nick was at work in the toy factory, Calico kept me company. When Nick went to Florida to visit his sick aunt Louisa, Calico kept me company. She was the friendliest cat and she was the best listener. When Nick didn't want to listen to my stories about Bingo and the Ladies' Club at church, I told them to Calico. And you know what? I think she understood every word I said."

"As you see mister..." Nick trailed off.

"Mister Monroe," the owner said, flashing a toothy smile.

"Yes, Mr. Monroe," Nick echoed. "We are looking for a new pet to make our family whole again."

"I see. Well, feel free to look around and let me know if any of the animals catch your eye."

"Will do, Mr. Monroe," Nick said, with a friendly twinkle in his eye.

A surge of panic rushed through Toby's furry body. Did he hear correctly? Was this couple only looking for one pet? What if the couple picked Tabitha and he was left without his best friend? He figured that Nick and Natalie must be cat lovers, since they obviously adored their cat, Calico. They would never find room in their hearts for a little Basset Hound with big brown eyes and droopy ears.

Nick and Natalie stopped at Tabitha's cage. Tabitha meowed softly. She thought Nick looked a lot like the Yorkshire twins' descrip-

tion of St. Nick. He had a white beard, twinkling eyes, and rosy cheeks. He looked like he belonged on the front of a Christmas card. Natalie poked her skinny fingers through the cage to pet Tabitha. Tabitha closed her eyes and purred in contentment. Natalie smiled and looked at Nick. "Isn't she beautiful?" Natalie asked Nick. Tabitha smiled. St. Nick might give her the Christmas present she wished for!

"She's definitely a sweetheart," Nick said, putting his arm around Natalie's shoulder. "But why don't we keep looking around? There are so many pets here that need good homes."

Natalie let out a loud sigh. "Ok, hon. Let's keep looking."

Nick stopped in front of Toby's cage. Toby wagged his tail wildly when he saw Nick and Natalie. Nick's eyes lit up. "You know what, Natalie? I've heard Basset Hounds are great ho-ho-ho-hunting companions and I could really use a good dog to help me out in the woods."

"You and your hunting," Natalie teased. "You never caught a thing in your life and never will! It's not in your nature!" Natalie grabbed Nick's hand and they continued walking through the pound. They saw the poodles, the retrievers, Himalayan cats, and American shorthair cats.

After what seemed like years of waiting, Nick and Natalie returned to Toby and Tabitha's cages. Toby heard a click. He looked up to see Mr. Monroe unlocking Tabitha's cage. Toby sunk down on the ground and covered his eyes with his floppy ears. He didn't want Tabitha to see him so upset. Then, Toby heard another click. He flopped his ears back. This lock was the lock to his cage! He and Tabitha were going to stay together after all! Toby skidded out of the cage and jumped up on Nick and Natalie, licking their hands in gratitude.

To Toby and Tabitha's surprise, they were not the only pets Nick and Natalie took home that day.

They also adopted Chico the Chihuahua and Callie the Calico cat. Nick and Natalie knew that the old animals could teach the younger animals the ways of the world. Toby and Tabitha had heard stories about Chico and Callie. They were sent to the pound after their owner died. Chico and Callie had given up hope of spending Christmas in a warm, loving home. Their gray fur-lined eyes widened in disbelief when they saw Nick and Natalie coming near them. When Nick and Natalie petted Chico and Callie's old, matted-down fur, relief filtered through their bodies. They knew they were going to be ok. They would never need to set foot in the pound again.

\* \* \* \*

When Toby, Tabitha, Chico, and Callie stepped into Nick and Natalie's house on 100 North Pole Lane, their eyes grew wide. The air smelled of Christmas firs mixed with sugar cookies and peppermint sticks. A bright green wreath hung above the red brick fireplace and a tall Douglas fir tree stood in front of the window, lit with tiny white lights. The soft sound of "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" bounced from wall to wall.

Nick and Natalie sat beside each other on the mint green couch. Toby, Tabitha, Chico, and Callie cuddled against their feet.

"I guess you better get going, Nick," Natalie said, nudging Nick's pudgy arm. "All of the kids are waiting."

"Ok, dear," Nick said, getting up from the sofa and trying not to step on any tails. He pulled on a red coat and grabbed a velvety red bag.

Toby, Tabitha, Chico, and Callie looked at each other. All of their Christmas wishes came true.

*Chelsea was the 2010 recipient of the Mount's William Heath Creative Writing Award.*

## FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

# Freshman Year

## Hungry for more

Carolyn Shields

Towards the end of November, I took a few steps back when I thought about all the new things I've done so far at the Mount. I've kept true to who I am, but I'm not as hesitant in trying new things as I was before. I went to my first R-rated film, *Paranormal Activity 2*, and since I'm someone who prefers historical dramas, I was a little more than nervous. I went to the French circus in Baltimore without understanding how weird it all was but ended up sitting in the crowd with my mouth agape at how amazing the human body can be. Then a few nights later I was standing in a cemetery by myself, dressed all in black beneath a giant oak. I never acted before in my life, but there I was beneath the full moon, ready to recite my "grave" monologue about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's life. A smile came naturally whenever I recited the lines, "I lived just on this mountain. This place is my home."

So in this first semester I've done

more than I expected I would. I did experience new things. Although I'm a commuter, I haven't missed out, but this term went by a lot faster than I thought it would. And that's just it. The first semester is coming to a close already. Wasn't it yesterday when I was at the Mountward Bound retreat, performing silly name games with a bunch of strangers-turned-classmates and friends? I cringe to say it, but my first year is halfway done, and there is still so much that I want to experience! Fall has already reached its peak and the bleakness of winter approaches. I am reminded of it every morning on my walk to school. I've had to pull out my scarves and gloves, and I always take deep breaths when I smell chimney smoke in the air.

I will say that in this first semester of school, the absolute best thing that I did was working on strengthening my relationship with the Big Ranger by going to Eucharistic adoration. After I went for the first time during the school day, I felt such peace and quiet that I was restless the following two days until we had adoration

again. For the first time in my life, I experienced what it feels like to be hungry for God—to yearn for Him so much that you feel antsy. Kutless, a Christian rock band, sings in "Hungry" about yearning for God's love. "Hungry I come to You for I know You satisfy. I am empty but I know Your love does not run dry."

There is something so humbling about seeing the God of all heaven and earth come in the form of a piece of bread. When I worship Jesus at adoration, I feel so rested that my vision of heaven always comes to mind. When I was little, I visualized heaven as a meadow with lush, green grass. My guardian angel reclined beneath a single tree, playing a flute. My two favorite childhood saints, St. Joan and St. Agnes were there, making garlands out of the wildflowers. They laughed in the distance and I was content to watch them from a little mound of earth where I sit a little ways off.

But over the past few years my idea of heaven has changed. Two images come readily to mind when I kneel during adoration. These two images are golden shadows and warm rain. I am bathed by God's warm rain and rest in shadows of gold. That is my heaven, and I can almost enter it when I'm kneeling before our Lord. In my heaven, I never have

to be hungry for God again. I can't describe it in any other way—hunger. I began my freshmen year inspired by upperclassmen to pray for a closer, more personal relationship with God—I'm just shocked how it came in a single moment during adoration.

I would love to tell my readers that if you aren't sure whether you really want to go to Mass this Sunday, or if you feel like you should say the rosary—do it. You never know in which day or in which prayerful moment God will come to you and make you realize just how much you want Him. You don't want to miss that moment.

And now, with Christmas approaching a lot faster than any of us anticipated, we are reminded that our minds should be on Jesus. There's the adorable Pampers commercial filled with sleeping babies, reminding us that what we need most on this earth is peace. There's the traditional dusty Advent wreaths being pulled out, and what about the Good Will ringing their bells outside of Wal-Mart? All reminders that Jesus was already in our world. He walked amongst us. Now, in this season of Advent, close your eyes and go after Him. Enter His world. Enter your heaven when you find yourself in His presence.

When I imagine Christ as a child, I become overwhelmed with emotion.

When I think of Him taking his first steps, I think of Him staggering to Golgotha. When I think about Mary swaddling Him against the cool Jerusalem night, I think about the garments that would be stripped from His body. When I think about Joseph helping Jesus nail his first nail, I think of the nails that held Him aloft for all the world to see.

I feel consumed with fire for the love of the Christ child who would offer his life up for someone who wouldn't be born for another two thousand years. This Christmas, I want to revel in that love. I want to fall into the time when it was just Mary, Joseph, and the newborn Christ in the stable. I think of the intimacy of that moment—of the breaths they took, of their loss of sleep. This Advent, it is time to go after Christ. Think of His pink skin and the soft, wispy black hair on His little head.

It's hard to fall in love sometimes when you're kneeling at the foot of your bed, so go find Him waiting for you as the Bread of Life. He will feed your hunger. He will help you love Him. Go adore Him and see what happens. It's been one of the best things I've done all semester.

To read other articles by Carolyn Shields visit the Authors' section of [Emmitsburg.net](http://Emmitsburg.net).

# Junior Year

## A weekend retreat

Julie Mulqueen

Recently, I had the extreme privilege of having an ultrasound of my liver. I was dropped off by my mother at the hospital, my hair braided into pigtails, and I journeyed cautiously inside. Walking slowly up to the main desk, I paused before I reached the large red line across the floor with the word "stop" written boldly and ferociously. Upon my turn to approach the desk, I moved forward gracefully and inquired as to where the ultrasound department was. I instantly heard one thousand necks crack as heads snapped up to look at me; I felt the heat of one million eyes starring me down. Although I myself knew I was at the hospital and not of a potential guest inside my womb, these curious hospital goers were not aware of this simple truth. Instead, they viewed me as a teen mom. Never before have I experienced something like that and I will probably never again be so blessed with an experience like it. I refer to it as a blessing, because it opened my eyes to the that struggle that many young, pregnant women must endure. To even just experience a sliver of that trial was a rare moment of insight and growth indeed.

Interestingly my day continued with a trip to the store with my mom to pick out baby clothes, blankets, and diapers. She wanted to bring a

donation to the Sisters of Life who work with vulnerable pregnant women and disadvantaged mothers. Again, although both my mother and I knew to whom the supplies were going, the cashier did not. She looked at us with curiosity and a furrowed brow, perhaps attempting to determine whether the things were for the offspring of my mother or for me. I saw in this just how far off our assumptions can be if we base them on little true information; we can never know the complete situation from simply looking at it from the outside.

Actually, this fact is the reason that I recently went to visit the Sisters of Life in their natural habitat; I could not possibly know the way the Sisters thought or interacted by just looking at them from afar. I had to go to them and see for myself. This meant journeying to Villa Maria Guadalupe, their retreat house in Stamford, Connecticut to spend many hours in prayer and contemplation, and experience some of the work they do in New York City. The retreat began on a Thursday, and my parents were gracious enough to make the trip down to Emmitsburg from northeastern Pennsylvania to fetch me and then back again to Connecticut to drop me off. It was the first time my mother was able to meet the Sisters. She was absolutely thrilled; and presented the baby clothes and diapers we had picked out earlier with a smile

on her face.

As I mentioned in a previous article, each Sister radiates joy and love in a way that I have encountered in few other people or places. This particularly comforted my parents; they knew that I was in a good place. Once they left, the retreat began. I was one of about 18 other young women from all over the country, who were doing the same thing that I was in visiting the Sisters so as to gather an accurate portrait of their lives as Sisters. We began by prayer and then had dinner together. Each table was lively with conversation as the Sisters and the women got to know one another. The night ended with prayer, and the silence began.

The next day was a day of silence and deep prayer meant to enable each woman to enter more deeply into contemplation of the Lord and forget about their worldly concerns—at least for a little while. It is from intense prayer that the work of the Sisters flows, so the day after prayer was a day to explore the work that they do for others, their apostolate. Their apostolate is focused mainly on vulnerable pregnant women and disadvantaged mothers. Thus, we began by praying in front of an abortion clinic deep in New York City. We simply prayed the rosary and then left; we did not speak otherwise. I had never experienced something like this before, and it was truly moving. My soul was shaken to its core.

Next, we went to Saint Patrick's Cathedral in the middle of the city in order to pay a visit to the order's deceased founder John Cardinal O'Connor in the church's crypt.

It was inexpressibly comforting to visit him. In fact, I exclaimed to one of the Sisters that I felt so calmed that it was as if I had been in his womb!...or rather, whatever the equivalent would be. After this, we strolled down a few city blocks to see some of the Sisters in one of their convents in the city. This particular convent takes in pregnant women for a few months before they have their child and then six months after they give birth. Two former residents spoke as their adorable children ran around the convent.

Finally, we drove back to Connecticut and had time for recreation which consisted of a very competitive ultimate Frisbee

game with the Sisters, habits and all. The day ended with prayer, and the next morning began with prayer. We then had one last meal together as a group. Unfortunately, after we ate it was time to leave. My parents arrived and walked into the dining room to collect me, my mother with more diapers in her hand, face beaming.

The entire retreat was such a blessing, and it was a wonderful treat to see the absolute joy in every one of the Sisters. They love with a mother's heart, and their love spills out into the world in the most extraordinary way. They simply take delight in every person they meet; may we always strive to do the same.

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## MOUNT WRITERS

# The teacher in all of us

**Carolyn Shields (MSM Class of 2014)**  
**Samantha Strub (MSM Class of 2013)**  
**Katelyn Phelan (MSM Class of 2011)**  
**Chelsea Baranoski (MSM Class of 2010)**  
**Jacqueline Quillen (MSM Class of 2010)**  
**Katherine R. Au (MSM Class of 1998)**

We, at the Emmitsburg News-Journal, would like to thank Dr. Peter Dorsey for dedicating his time and expertise to the many Mount writers of the paper. As a senior advisor Mount representative of the paper, Dr. Dorsey helps us pursue our deep desire to become the best writers we can be. He edits the submissions of Mount students who write for the paper and the time he has dedicated to that endeavor is countless. Recently, Michael Hillman, the paper's editor, sent out an e-mail to those of us who have had Dr. Dorsey as a professor during our time at the Mount and asked us if we'd like to contribute to an article on him. We unanimously agreed, yes, since, as Michael said, Dr. Dorsey is an unsung hero of the paper.

However, Dr. Dorsey does far more than edit submissions for the paper. He is the current Chair of the English Department at Mount St. Mary's. He is a loving husband and family man. He is a man of faith. He is a believer in the importance of educating the whole being and does that as a member of the faculty in the humanities curriculum at the Mount. He is a mentor to Mount students and a professor who shows his students his love of the written word.

In an interview with Samantha, Dr. Dorsey said that he decided to become an English teacher for a variety of reasons, but primarily from a love of reading, a passion for literature, and, from that, the opportunity to make a living doing what he loves. Teaching is a profession that has

meaning to him. It was through his own college experience that he learned how amazing the depth of knowledge could be and discovered he wanted to share that experience in his own classroom.

He read Mark Twain when he was young and enjoyed science fiction by Arthur C. Clarke and others like him and enjoyed non-fiction works about the Greek myths and astronomy. When asked to pick three favorite books, he said he couldn't possibly pick favorite books but the three that came immediately to mind were James Joyce's "The Dead," F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, which really made him fall in love, and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, which is about humanity's quest for ultimate knowledge.

He had entered college intending to be a pre-med student, but then later decided to major in English with a plan to study law. One semester of law school taught him he wanted to teach right away. He thus began the path that would bring him to Mount Saint Mary's.

It was Fr. Joe Feeney who most influenced him in making that choice to teach. Dr. Dorsey cited Fr. Feeney as the most amazing teacher he ever had at St. Joe's. Fr. Feeney showed him a love of literature and inspired him to pursue English; he made literature exciting and kept Dr. Dorsey's interest and taught him literature's gifts into the great insights of the human experience. These gifts gave Dr. Dorsey the philosophy he himself chooses for the classes he teaches.

When asked why he chose to teach at the Mount, Dr. Dorsey said he felt it would be better for his path in life and the path he sees for himself. The Mount is an institution centered on the importance of the liberal arts. Its focus on the humanities is

to educate the whole person. Further, it is a faith-based center for education. Finally, it is a community where he can raise a family and where he works with a group of colleagues he respects. What does Dr. Dorsey find most rewarding about teaching at the Mount? Its students! He views Mount students as bright, friendly, hardworking, and truly a part of a community. He finds that the entire community at the Mount enables an environment that is happy and wholesome and where everyone can thrive.

Dr. Dorsey has been sharing his knowledge of literature and his gifts as a teacher with many students at the Mount over the years. As Jacqueline, who is a Mount alum from the class of 2010, wrote: "Dr. Dorsey has unique ways of encouraging his students to do their very best. In his American Experience class I think everyone earned the full 15% for class participation, or close to it, simply because Dr. Dorsey forced them to talk in class. Getting a discussion going among college students at 9:30 a.m. is not the easiest task. When Dr. Dorsey asks a question in class, and no one volunteers to answer, he randomly chooses a student to pick another classmate to answer the question. It's like reversed psychology; the student is the teacher who uncomfortably calls on someone just to get a discussion going. It always worked and by the end of class every student learned more and earned a few more participation points.

My goal in Dr. Dorsey's American Experience course was to write flawless essays on the tests. As an English major, I looked at Dr. Dorsey not only as my history teacher but also, and more importantly, as the Chair of the English department. An A on an essay test from Dr. Dorsey meant a lot to me. I was always just a few points away from a flawless essay every time which always made me try harder. Dr. Dorsey never stopped critiquing my work and guiding me as I improved my writing even beyond college.

At the beginning of my senior year, I was rushing to get the necessary signatures for changes in my course schedule. After my faculty advisor refused to be my internship supervisor, I didn't know who else I could ask. I was new to all of the English professors because I had just joined the major a semester earlier, and my internship supervisor had to be an English professor who was willing to take on additional work without compensation. I went to Dr. Dorsey and asked if he was willing to fill the role, expecting him to say no because I was sure he already had enough on his plate. But I also knew that if he did say no he could guide

me to another English professor. When Dr. Dorsey agreed to be my supervisor, I was thrilled and excited.

When agreeing to assume the position, Dr. Dorsey laid out the ground rules--weekly journals, a final paper relating the internship to literary study and NO LATE SUBMISSIONS! I understood that I had to follow these rules strictly with no exceptions, and I did. When I sat down to write the final paper, I hesitated about how I could relate my career-focused newspaper articles to my understanding of literary study. What was my understanding of literary study? I thought it was reading novels and talking about the metaphors in class discussions. After deeper contemplation about everything Dr. Dorsey has taught me in and out of class, I came to an incredible understanding of literary study and how it fits into my life. This triggered a deeper passion for literary study. That final paper was one of my most successful moments in college, and I have Dr. Dorsey to thank for it. Dr. Dorsey has always challenged me to think in a higher realm as a writer."

When I read Jacqueline's words, they reminded me how Dr. Dorsey's syllabus brooked no exceptions. I remember also not only wanting to write better in his class but also learning to do so by his comments. When Chelsea was asked to write about Dr. Dorsey she wrote:

"I had Dr. Dorsey for American Experience I and American Experience II. These were two of the most difficult classes I took at the Mount because they were American history classes, and I am by no means a history buff. Dr. Dorsey was always willing to help me revise my papers. I met with him during his office hours and he gave me excellent feedback that helped me tremendously.

Dr. Dorsey has been revising my articles for the Emmitsburg News-Journal for over a year. Every time I write an article, I send it to Dr. Dorsey for editing and feedback. Even though I am sure Dr. Dorsey has a ton of papers to grade, he still manages to take the time and respond to my articles promptly. Dr. Dorsey is very supportive of my work, and I am truly grateful for his encouragement.

Dr. Dorsey hooded me at the Baccalaureate Mass for the Class of 2010. It was a special moment, for Dr. Dorsey really got to know me through my writing for the Emmitsburg News-Journal that year. I could tell that he was truly happy to be at the Baccalaureate Mass. His smile was contagious. The next day was the big "G" word,

graduation. The Class of 2010 was lined up in the field house and waiting to process into the Athletic Complex to the sound of "Pomp and Circumstance." I cut out of line to get a granola bar, and I saw Dr. Dorsey. He smiled that ear-to-ear smile, and I told him that graduation did not feel real. I saw Dr. Dorsey again when I walked off the stage in the Athletic Complex. He beamed and asked, "Does it feel real yet?" I said no. Indeed, my friends and caring, knowledgeable professors like Dr. Dorsey made it hard for me to detach from my mountain home.

After graduating from the Mount, I saw Dr. Dorsey at my sister's honors breakfast. Before I knew it, he was standing in front of me, smiling and talking to me about the Emmitsburg News-Journal and my work at the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections. It was nice to know that, even though I am no longer a student at the Mount, Dr. Dorsey still cares about my achievements. I am thankful that Dr. Dorsey is supportive of all of my writing endeavors."

Dr. Dorsey's love of teaching and the progress of his students is infectious. He's made a career of developing better students through the classes he teaches and has taught throughout the years. And, in addition to all else that he does, he agreed to help the students who write for the paper. Dr. Dorsey said he accepted gratefully and told Samantha how he enjoys the opportunity to help Mount students get some professional experience. He enjoys reading and editing the articles, and he knows that he is helping someone fulfill a dream of becoming published. He helps the paper for his students, past and present. As Samantha wrote:

"I met Dr. Dorsey my first semester freshman year. I had responded to an email he sent out requesting English majors to write for the Emmitsburg News-Journal. I have always wanted to write for a newspaper as a precursor for publishing a novel later in life. Dr. Dorsey was very kind and generous about helping me write my first article. With that achievement, I began writing a monthly column relating to the Mount that will follow my college journey.

I knew I was going to like him from the moment that I stepped into his office, asking questions about the newspaper. He seemed overjoyed that a freshman was so interested in writing and wanted to start right away. He took me under his guiding wing, helping me through the articles I wrote, giving me the feedback that I needed to improve my writing, continually making everything



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## MOUNT WRITERS



better. All the comments that he sends me about my articles make perfect sense; sometimes they are even so obvious that I'm constantly apologizing about how silly it is that I would have missed it. Dr. Dorsey being the kind man he is always tells me not to worry, saying that everyone is always improving their writing; improvement is a task that is never fully completed. He understands that you miss things in your own writing, and time and practice is the only sure thing for making it better. He is always there with comments that help you become a better writer.

This semester I see Dr. Dorsey as a teacher instead of just the editor of my newspaper articles, which is a whole new experience. I have him for American Experience I now and American Experience II next semester. He is a wonderful teacher not only for his teaching skills but because he is passionate about the subject he is teaching. He combines a history class with excerpts from American literature making students who are by no means history buffs able to gain a better grade by having the literary excerpts in the class. He makes any topic come to life, and if you are ever

confused about anything, he is more than willing to help you.

Dr. Dorsey is certainly an asset to the Mount, both as a professor and as the Mount Creative Writers editor for the Emmitsburg News-Journal."

Some of the people that Dr. Dorsey has helped on the newspaper have not been in his classroom. As Carolyn wrote: "I knew Dr. Dorsey through church (although he was only Mr. Dorsey to me at the time), so I was thrilled when I learned that I would be working with him on my articles for the newspaper. I met with Dr. Dorsey in his tiny office, decorated with sheets of computer paper with notes and essays filling the wall space. He was very kind and made me excited to start my future here at Mount St. Mary's. His insights are always so helpful. He can point one little thing out and a light bulb literally goes off in my head, followed by an "Ooooooh. That makes perfect sense." He is really helping me to keep it simple. Anton Chekhov tried to share that fact as well. Simplicity is everything. Get to the point. I look forward to continuing to work with Dr. Dorsey, and I hope in the future I'll be placed into one of his classes."

As Carolyn illustrates, it is not only with his students where he

has made a difference. Katelyn also has yet to have Dr. Dorsey as a professor, but through working with him on the paper, she also has been inspired by him. She wrote: "I met Dr. Dorsey my sophomore year when I decided to major in English and needed an English advisor in addition to my Fine Arts advisor. Though I have not had the privilege of learning from him in the classroom, I have spoken with him many times in his office. He is one of the most gentle, kind, and considerate people I have come across at the Mount. Dr. Dorsey has been a help to me when I was selecting my Mount courses, when I was considering going to graduate school for English, and most recently, in editing my articles for the Emmitsburg News-Journal. He has always taken care to read my work thoroughly and provide helpful corrections, both for that specific piece as well as giving advice for writing in general. He is a friendly face, always smiling, and always willing to help out where he can. Dr. Dorsey is certainly an asset to the Mount and its students and to the Emmitsburg community by providing excellent feedback for the Emmitsburg News-Journal's Mount contributors."

Dr. Dorsey is a self-proclaimed bookworm and good reader, but he also admits that he was not always a good writer. He attests to the long process he's taken to

improve his writing skills. He affirms that teaching writing to others has actually taught him how to improve his own writing.

He did express in his interview for this article that he feels people are communicating a lot more through blogs, emails, texting, etc. People are doing a lot more writing which is a good thing. However, the quality of the writing is not at the same standard it once was. Those

writing skills need to be better. He sees this task as something that he does in his classes. He tries to place his students in the position of being writing teachers. He asks students to look at their own work from an outside perspective. He has students exchange their writing to help them understand the problems they themselves have in their own writing. This is a process that makes better writers.

When asked what he will look back on as some of his fondest memories someday, he answered they would be of his wife. She earned her M.ED, and he has always been a little jealous that she is a true Mountie. Those of us who are true Mounties are thankful for his contribution to our education while attending the Mount. I studied with Dr. Dorsey about fifteen years ago for a couple of classes, and he showed me a love of literature and the written word in a way that both excited me to learn more about how to write and to convey messages in a way that was both honest and meaningful. I remember him as a professor who was fair and whose door was always open during office hours. What I remember most about him was that I respected him and his abilities as a professor and he inspired me to find a voice as a writer. He helped me channel my creative nature further, and I found through his tutelage a true passion for writing. He taught me to be a better writer, just as he has taught all of us how to be better writers. We all learned to live by the edict that Dr. Dorsey also lives by; as Oscar Wilde said, "Good writing is never finished, only abandoned."

Therefore, all of us at the paper wish to give the gift of gratitude to Dr. Dorsey this holiday season for his guidance and willingness to share his knowledge.

Merry Christmas, Dr. Dorsey.

P.S. Without your guidance, Dr. Dorsey – how did we do?

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## STAGES OF LIFE

# I'm a Dad Again

## Tis' the season for shopping

Brian Barth

What was one of my favorite holidays has slowly turned into one of the worst.

Thanksgiving is supposed to be a holiday where families gather to enjoy each other's company and merriment. Now it has become a black ops pre-planning day for what the retailers like to call "Black Friday."

We ate dinner around 2 p.m.—at that time, most people think of it as lunch—but the ladies decided they need the extra time in the early evening to strategize for their attack on the stores.

After swearing against it, the last person eats the last slice of pie, signaling my sister-in-law to sneak away from the table to quickly and quietly retrieve her laptop. Upon her return, the women begin to huddle around the dining room table. My daughter, without knowing any better, or

on a dare from one of her older cousins, ran into the dining room with the intent to ask her mother, my wife, for something. The women immediately seized chatter, as if a spy just entered the room. Before my daughter had a chance to open her mouth to ask a question, her Nana said, "Go get your father, and stay with him until we are finished." With that, one of the women closed off all entry points to the room. I could have sworn they placed the dog just outside the door to warn them of any oncoming intruders.

No one could string together any sentences other than a lot of words, laughter, and cheers. Without warning, the doors flew open. I heard one of my sister-in-laws say, "Let's celebrate with a drink." Instantly the guys ushered the kids to their mothers and we ran off to the bar room with a TV trying to catch the last football game.

Everyone went to bed early to make sure they were all well-rested for the long day ahead of them. I went to bed especially early because I knew I was going to have to entertain my 1 year-old all day.

I heard this faint crying at 1 a.m. At first I thought it was from my wife thinking she was having a dream about missing out on a deal. As I became more aware of my surroundings I noticed it was my son, who was in a pack-n-play next to the bed. Though my wife won't admit to it, I know she heard him but didn't want to waste her energy fearing the ramification of fatigue the next day. So I crept out of bed to see what was wrong. When I reach down to pick him up he smelled of puke. Man! You have to be kidding me. I quietly take him out of the room, change him and get him from waking up the house. I bring him back into the room and let him lay next to my wife on the bed while I strip down his pack-n-play. Once I got everything cleaned up I gently put him back to rest in his little cage.

Two a.m. came with another whimper. Knowing this noise from just an hour ago, I knew it was my son. He got sick again — figures. I repeated the procedure of changing him. This time we were out of pj's so I had to put him in his sweats and shirt. My wife woke and decided to take him downstairs knowing that I would be with him all day.

The sun slowly began to rise as did the women preparing for their day of shopping. The coffee maker was working overtime. It was about 8 a.m. when my wife and her two sisters were standing by the garage door waiting impatiently for the nieces to come down. They were trying to sneak in a few extra minutes of sleep. I suppose they weren't moving quickly enough. The eldest sister yelled, "We are leaving and if you aren't up when the car leaves the driveway you aren't going."

You'd think with all that precise military planning they would know that one of the first lessons you learn is to never leave anyone behind, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

As the door swung closed you heard this horrible noise from upstairs. My eldest niece (back from Clemson University for the holiday) who tried sneaking in some extra sleep hurried to dress and was running down the steps, three at a time. I guess that was taking too much time and jumped the remaining five steps, fell and crashed into the door. Before anyone could get to the area where the noise was, she had gathered herself and all we saw was a flash of hair and coat streaming across the driveway.

The morning turned into afternoon and the afternoon turned into night. The women still hadn't arrived. My brother-in-law, who worked a half day, began texting his wife about 5 p.m. to see where they were. No reply of course. Conveniently, the explanation was no reception. So, I decided to text my wife, "You know you don't get paid by the hour to shop?" The only response was, "Ha, ha, ha, we are on our way home."

We finally were on the road to come home about 8 p.m. It was a long day for both of us.

# Mom's Time Out

Mary Angle

With Christmas quickly approaching I decided I wanted to do a holiday themed article for the paper this month, but what to write about. This truly is my favorite time of year, like so many others, but do I write about the spirit of Christmas (that's been done), or the wonderful family time we spend (also done), or do I take a comic spin on the holiday and look at the trials of shopping. Christmas shopping for me starts as soon as the holiday is over the year before. A little something here and there throughout the year until about the beginning of November. That is when it hits me that I really haven't accomplished much and should probably get busy. This brings me to the ominous "Black Friday". Before children, and sleepless nights, I used to love to get up at the crack of dawn with the rest of the crazies and head to the stores before they opened. A few years ago (5 or 6) I started a "girls" weekend with my Mom-in-Law, and now two daughters, heading to my Moms on Black Friday for a weekend of Christmas shopping and girly stuff. By the time we hit our first store the Black Friday crowds are still there but not as ravenous. The trade off is a lot of the shelves are bare. This inspired a trip to a popular store on Black Friday at 1am to stand in several long lines, inside and out.

This brings me to the real holiday topic of my article: Family Traditions. The thing I love best about this time of year is my traditions, and my "girls" weekend as made that all too apparent to me. So that is what my article will be about. Traditions aren't always easy and they don't always start with an agenda in mind but that is how they end up. When I started going to my moms with my Mom-in-Law it was not with the intention of starting a tradition, but now I wouldn't have it any other way. I

am one of the fortunate women who are blessed with a Mom and Mom-in-Law that have always gotten along and in recent years come to call each other friend, good friend. Besides me and my Mom-in-Law, the occupants in the car for that trip have changed over the years as it became girls only, and I gave birth to two little bundles of feminine joy. Since my Mom lives on the eastern shore near OC, my Dad now drops her off to meet us at the outlets in Queenstown so we can begin the "girls" weekend even sooner. I am getting excited just writing this for you, I truly can't wait. I am someone who never realized until recent years how important traditions are to me...super important.

I struggled for years with the fact that my family Christmas was different every year to accommodate family. When I was a little girl my Grandparents on my Mom's side lived in Baltimore city and we didn't see them as much as I would have liked, but every Christmas was the same. Christmas Eve we went to my Grandparents and had dinner then headed to church for midnight mass. The church was a giant old high Episcopal church in the city and on Christmas Eve they would have the most wonderful service with carols and incense and the whole kit and caboodle. When we left church, if we could stay awake for the ride home, we could open our gifts from Santa. Since it was after midnight he had always been to my grandparents by the time we got there. If we fell asleep, which we tried very hard not to, then my parents would carry us in the house and we would get up in the morning and open our presents. We would then get up Christmas morning and go home to find that Santa had been at our house while we were gone. I don't remember much from my childhood, but I will never forget this. I am pretty sure this is my motivation (obsession) with tradition.

This year will be our first Christmas without my Father-in-law and I am crying as I type this. He was a huge part of our current tradition for me. I have explained our "girls" weekend to you but have left out that the girls weekend has inadvertently created a boys weekend as well. When the girls leave the boys will play. So after my Dad drops my Mom off to meet us (and sometimes has lunch with his granddaughters) then he keeps headed in west to join the boys. In this I am doubly blessed in that my Dad and my Father-in-law also called one another friend and those weekends were

some of the fondest memories my boys will have from their childhood. This year that all changes since my Father-in-law passed in June from cancer. I know in my heart that all of my boys (husband and Dad included) will still make sure there is a great time had by all, but it will never be the same. This year the four boys are planning on putting up my Mom-in-laws Christmas tree and decorations as a surprise for her. This was something she used to do with my father-in-law. So traditions are a wonderful, heartwarming addition to any family and although it is very difficult when something happens to change

them, it doesn't take away from all of the memories you have to cherish for years to come.

At this busy time of year may I suggest that you take a look at one of your traditions and if you find you don't have any maybe you will start one. You may look around and find that your holidays are already filled with wonderful friend and family traditions. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

To read past editions of Mom's Time Out visit the Authors' section of [emmitsburg.net](http://emmitsburg.net)

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## STAGES OF LIFE

## Lizzy Bizy



Liz Ryan

## Thanksgiving

We have a huge family, like over 100 people. It's so big that we have our own calendar (and that's just on my mom's side of the family). Each individual family has their own month. My Grandfather is one of thirteen, so that explains the big family.

Almost our whole family gets together for Thanksgiving. Each individual family is in charge of the cooking and decorations every year. Since our family is so large we need a large place to celebrate Thanksgiving because no one would ever be able to fit everybody in a house. For a very long time we would have our Thanksgiving in a fire hall where they had a very big kitchen and dining hall. Then the fire hall was sold a few years ago so we are now having our thanksgiving in the Sacred Heart Basilica's School cafeteria since most of our family belongs to that parish.

Our family had the honor of cooking and decorating last year. Just so you know, our family is so artistic we beat all the other families' decorating by far. We strung twinkling lights everywhere and served the family instead of them getting their own food in a buffet type set-up.

We had the typical Thanksgiving food: turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, and my grandmother's homemade stuffing, plus lots more. Every year I look forward to the yummy food and, of course, to see my family, although I don't know the names of half the people in my family; I can only recognize their faces.

So here I am around a bunch of people that I don't know. I keep asking my grandparents who everybody is. It sometimes gets annoying. Of course being in an active Catholic family, we have mass before our meal. When we were at the fire hall my great-uncle (who is a monseiner) would set up an altar there in which to say mass. Now we get to have mass in the actual basilica. It's very nice to be able to celebrate with the whole family.

It really stinks that my sister, who goes to Delone had Tuesday,

Wednesday Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday off around the Thanksgiving holiday. I only had Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday off. But during that vacation time, we not only were able to spend time with my mom's side of the family, but we drove to New York to visit my dad's brother, wife and daughter.

My Uncle Kurt, a colonel in the army, is stationed in New York at Fort Drumm. We don't get to see them very often, so it was really nice to visit with them a few days. We had our second thanksgiving meal on Saturday, when my aunt Jennifer and my mom prepared another meal. Spending time with my cousin was nice too.

On another note, we have chickens, or should I say, had, chickens. My sister and I went out to take care of the exotic chickens that I had mentioned in other articles and they were all gone. Some were scattered dead all over our yard. We were extremely sad considering that we spent a lot of time with them, and they were like pets.

It was weird, though, because we had a total of 24 of them that were gone. There was only one survivor, and he was a special chicken that I named Pretty Boy. He did have scratches on him though like something tried to get him but couldn't. He was pretty traumatized.

After a bit of research we had decided that it was either a raccoon or a weasel. We did end up getting three adult hens from Whitmore Farm, an organic farm in Emmitsburg for Pretty Boy to be with so he wouldn't be alone. I think we will be getting 25 more chicks in the spring. Although now we know that we have to come up with a solution to the free roam chickens and pen them in a yard with a netting over top to protect them.

This isn't the first time that this has happened. Another time, a few years ago, we had gotten home and all the chickens disappeared. No remains and no feathers—they were just gone. My dad always jokes that aliens probably came down and abducted them. If nothing else, we have learned that they will need some protection at our house.

Family and animals are so much a part of my life. I wish everyone the same joy that I have in spending the holidays with those that are most important in your life.

To read other articles by Liz Ryan visit the Authors' section of Emmitsburg.net

## Simply Maya



Maya Hand

## Christmas

Christmas reminds us of family and friends gathering in love, but it's also about giving to and thinking of others... whether it's drawing them a card, taking them out somewhere, making a homemade gift, donating food, money or clothes to the poor or giving someone a big hug. "When you get, give" and do so with a joyful heart. When we get, we feel cared for and loved. It makes us feel good. When we give, others receive the same feeling. Whenever we give, it makes us feel good too, and every time we give, we become better people. At Christmas we give to each other, just like Jesus gave of himself to the world.

During Christmas I can feel the warm flaming fire, family and love surrounding us all, and the excitement as my brother, sister and I fly down the stairs. I smell the pine needles that are scattered all over the branches of our tree, and the homemade Russian nut balls that my Mom is baking. I can hear Christmas music playing and the gasps of my siblings and myself as we walk into what doesn't even seem like our living room anymore... now a glowing room full of Christmas spirit with a glittering tree and magical presents at the foot of the evergreen.

Of course, like Jesus' gifts, gifts aren't always objects or things. The most important gift is love, and in sharing love, sometimes a gift can mean sharing an experience. Like the gift my parents gave me for my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday – a chance to see Maya Angelou speak, in person!!! Maya Angelou could teach us a few things about the Christmas spirit... she is so inspirational. The feeling I had when I was listening to her cannot be described in words. The words I would use would be much greater than amazing, joyful, wonderful, inspirational or moving. It was an indescribable experience that I will never forget. Everyone there had faces full of laughter and joy and all seemed so nice. I sat down in the huge historic theater in Washington DC and looked around. There was a dome shaped ceiling with a crystal chandelier. There were designs and details thrown all over the walls. I was full of anticipation as I looked around the room, listening to the

Gospel music that was playing. "How many more minutes?" I kept asking mommy. "How many more minutes?" Then someone walked onto the stage. It was LaShonda Reese, Sarabi from the Lion King on Broadway. She was wearing a long black dress. She sang her first song, "Give Us This Day." Her voice was strong and beautiful. Then she sang "Summertime" from Porgy and Bess (in honor of Maya Angelou since she was in that play). Then they opened the curtains, and there sat Maya Angelou, 84 years wise.

One of the things that Maya Angelou said was, "When you get, give. When you learn, teach." How important it is to remember this at Christmas and at all times. Maya Angelou talked about her life. She had been abused when she was seven and later found out that the person who abused her had been killed. She thought that her voice had killed him (Let me remind you, she was seven). Maya Angelou said, "I knew something that they didn't, my voice could kill people. So I stopped speaking, for six years." Her grandmother would have young Maya sit between her legs while she braided Maya's hair. One of those times Maya's grandmother said, "I don't care about what people say about you. They say you're an idiot because you don't speak, but I know that when you and the Good Lord are ready, you'll speak. And someday you're going to be a teacher, and you're going to teach all around this world!" Maya Angelou told us that she was sitting there thinking, "I don't know what she's talking about. She knows I am never going to speak!" But with the support of people like her grandmother, Maya ended up traveling the world, teaching others and touching millions.

Maya Angelou told us another story about her grandmother and her. Her grandmother and uncle owned the only black-owned shop in the county. Every once in a while, her grandmother would call Maya to the front of the store. Maya would know exactly what was going to happen. They would watch someone walking down the hill toward the store (one her grandmother knew was a "complainer.") The customer would walk into the store. Maya's grandmother would ask them something like, "How are you doing today Mrs. Jones?" The customer would say something like, "Not well at all! This weather's too hot! I'm so hot and sweaty, and my skin's so dry, and..." While Maya's grandmother was listening, she would say, "Mhm... Mhm... Mhm... I see... Mhm." Then she would look at Maya real fast with an expression of, "Don't you ever do that!" After the person left, she would explain to Maya, "Some people went to bed last night and never woke up, and they would give anything to have just five minutes of that person's misery." People sometimes get so stuck on complaining that they forget to appreciate life. Maya Angelou learned to appreciate life.

Christmas is about celebrating Jesus' birth. Jesus, the greatest teacher ever, who taught us about appreciating life. Jesus, the Son of God, was born this day!!! It's very important to celebrate his birth and his life that he gave for us!!! And, of course, Jesus is the best example of how we should live our lives on Christmas day and every day. Jesus never complained. He only gave of himself to others. That's what we should all try to do. And this season and always, I will keep in mind the words that God inspired in Maya Angelou (and in me too). "When you get, give" and do so with a joyful heart... Merry Christmas!!

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## A TEEN'S VIEW

# Third time's a charm



Olivia Sielaff

I sat alone in the driver's seat of the van. Waiting. My heart was thumping. Everything was quiet, and my mind started wandering. Worrying. I turned on the radio to calm my nerves. That helped somewhat, but I was still as nervous as ever. I went over everything in my head to make sure I wouldn't forget anything.

Yes, I was about to take (cue dramatic music) the Driver's Test. A few weeks before taking the test, I called the MVA to schedule my driving test. That was an ordeal in itself. Because I didn't actually talk to a real person on the phone. I had to try and retry numerous times to schedule an appointment. Let's just say, automated phone systems get on my nerves.

Unfortunately I had put off learning parallel parking until the last minute. The night before the test (like I

said, procrastinator), I practiced parallel parking around town. It was dark and I was tired, but I knew I had to learn this since it was an important part of the driving test. If you were around town that night you might have seen me backing up, hitting the curb, and sighing in distress about hundred times. I was certainly there long enough for someone to have noticed me. After about two hours, I was somewhat sure I had a technique.

The next day I woke up bright and early to be the first one to take the driving test. Of course, I was very nervous. Once my dad and I got to the MVA, I went directly to the desk, told them my name and what I was there for. "I'm sorry," one of the employees said. "I don't see you on our schedule. Are you sure you called for an appointment?" I thought it was some kind of joke. I went through all that hassle of trying to schedule on the phone, and it didn't even work. Unfortunately I wasn't able to take the driving test that day.

After wallowing in my disappointment for a few hours, I realized it was probably for the better that I didn't take the test that day since I wasn't confident I would do well.

Again I woke up bright and early to be at the MVA. Right away I was given some paperwork and then in-

structed to begin the test. And that's where I found myself as I began in this article – nervously waiting alone in the car with the radio on while I watched other teens take their driving test. With just enough time to say a quick prayer, one of the driving instructors came up to the van so I could begin the test. The first thing I had to do was beep the horn and make sure the doors and windows worked. Check. Next, I had to turn on the headlights. Check. After that, the instructor had me push on the brakes. Uncheck. "Miss, one of your brake lights is out," the instructor said shaking her head. "You can't continue with the test until you get that fixed. Sorry." Defeat again! After all those hours of driving, after all those times parallel parking, after all that practicing and worrying, I couldn't take the test because one brake light was burnt out?! To say the least, I was not happy that day. I went home for the second time without a license.

The third time, a few more weeks later, the brake light was replaced, and I was more than ready to just get the test over with. The first driving skill I was tested on was parallel parking. I slowly drove up to the parking space, turned on my blinker, and began backing up. Everything seemed to be going smoothly, for once. In a few seconds I was in the space and put the van in park. "How'd I do?" I asked the instructor. He opened the door to check and bluntly said, "You're too far away from the curb." At that moment I truly felt like giving up! I was about to hang my head in defeat when the instructor told me I still had time. Little did I know that I had three minutes to parallel park even if I didn't succeed the first time. With one last try I carefully inched backwards and forwards, trying not to pay attention to the time, until I successfully parked!

Thankfully this story has a happy ending. That third time, I passed the driving test with just two seconds to spare while parallel parking – my time was two minutes and fifty-eight seconds.

To read other articles by Olivia Sielaff visit the Authors' section of Emmitsburg.net.

# Of Religion and the Crucible



Kat Dart

December has fast approached us. During November, many days for memories (of veterans, firefighters and pilgrims) were celebrated. In December, many religious holidays are celebrated, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and others. These holidays are made to celebrate religion and its God. And I wonder, what is it that makes so many people believe whole heartedly in something intangible, untouchable? Why do they love this Supreme Being so much? How is it possible for someone to have a faith so powerful and unending that even with so much badness in their life, they still can turn to God?

I watch everyday as my friend will happily explain how excited she is, how she wants to become a Sister when she graduates, and how she wants to do nothing but serve God for her entire life. I watched while visiting my friend in the hospital, how to help regain her speech she would read out of the Bible, and discuss with her father that Jehovah helps everyone. This force that you can't see and can't touch but makes a bigger impact on the world is incredible to even think about, much less try to understand. And perhaps in a way, I can understand why atheists don't believe in a God. Belief in something proven is so much easier than belief in the unknown. But, I would rather live my life believing there is a God, and die to find there's not, than to live life believing there isn't a God, and die to find there is one.

I hold great respect those who do believe in God, but not for the people who insist that their beliefs are the best. I have had people tell me, *God wants us all to be the same. You should just believe the same ideals I do, because I hold the perfect ones.*

My response has not, and will never change. If God wanted us all to be alike, then why did he make us all so different? Life moves on, society moves forward, and new ideals are being accepted every single day. You can't stay stoic and unmoving forever, lest you be run over by those who have moved on.

As our generation grows and changes, we need to be able to accept

that many of the ideals held a hundred years ago don't have as big of an impact anymore. Sure, tradition is great to keep and it's really amazing to be able to keep age-old ideas, (such as, say, the constitution that gives us our freedom, or marriage, or holiday traditions), but the fact is that we need to adapt to modern society. Trying to change people won't work. If they truly hold different morals and ideals, you won't be able to change them through force.

We can't make everyone happy through one set of ideals. Everyone believes differently- we all have our own minds to shape our own opinions. Everyone *should* be accepting of others and respect their opinions. Unfortunately, in today's world, a lot of people tend to believe they are right, and will never accept someone else's opinions. However, there are also a lot of people who are willing to hear other people out, and accept what other have to say.

I would like to congratulate a fellow writer, Robin Wivell, on being runner up as a HOBY winner. HOBY (Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference) is an organization dedicated to increasing leadership skills. Only one sophomore per participating High School goes. Robin and I actually had been going back and forth for a few days, tossing our own ideas around while hanging out at Catoctin's Crucible play.

I would also like to thank the cast of Crucible for an incredibly powerful performance. I really enjoyed working on Crucible, and making friends offstage, and joking with Robin (Reverend Paris in Crucible) while talking to Rebecca (Mercy Lewis) and Dottie (Rebecca Nurse). Special thanks to Miss Stitley, for making Crucible come to life and for bringing everyone back to the Salem Witch trials, Beamer, with whom I hung out with before everyone arrived to the play, and Elaine, for being her normal crazy self while playing the invisible yellow bird in the wings. You all really make drama a lot of fun, and definitely a little challenging!

I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays, no matter which one you celebrate, if any. I personally will be celebrating Christmas with a large part of our family – cousins I don't see a lot, cousins I do see a lot, all of my mother's sisters and my grandmother.

I hope everyone takes Winter Break to spend some time with their family, as we have around a week off. Hopefully, we're not being totally overloaded with winter break homework!

To read other articles by Kat Dart visit the Authors' section of Emmitsburg.net.

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THE GRADUATE

# The life of a commuter

Jacqueline Quillen, MSM 2010

My morning and afternoon commute gives me ample time to contemplate life and discuss these contemplations with my train buddy, Marie. Since we both graduated from the Mount, we frequently reminisce about our great college experiences on that mountain we called home for some time. We share our thoughts on this grown-up work scene that we now know as reality.

For the first three months of our commute I worked part-time as an intern having Mondays and Fridays off. As we exchanged work stories of our miseries, Marie always listened intently, but deep down thought, "Yeah, that's horrible for you. Now you go enjoy your four-day weekend while I hop on this train again on Friday and Monday."

Well now I can share in the misery of the full-time commute with Marie as I was recently promoted from intern to full-time employee. I used to be Marie's voice of reason and youth, telling her to stop working so much overtime and enjoy life a little more. Now I understand Marie's situation a little better. As I received more responsibilities and a heavier workload with my new full-time position, for the first few days I found myself leaving work with half of my to-do list left to do. I wondered if I should stay past 5 p.m. to finish work and if I was even allowed to stay later without the Roll Call Police coming after me. If the work was time-sensitive, of course, I would stay later to finish it. If not, however, I felt like catching the train was more important and I would pick up where I left off the next day. By the end of my first week as full-time (which ended up being a short week because of the

holiday), I left work feeling like I would never catch up.

I'm nervous to put in extra time because I don't want it to be a snowball effect where in another year I'm a workaholic. I know I'm jumping to conclusions, but it happens to people and Marie was proof. When is it okay to say, "No" to my boss because I have too much on my plate? How could I even think of saying no to my boss when I am lucky to have a job in this economy? Where is the line between being a grateful and dedicated worker and turning into a workaholic?

BAM! It happened like that. One day I was going about my work in a productive, but not rushing, manner and within an hour of being promoted, my brain couldn't keep up. I had a hard time making the transition from intern to full-time because I still needed to finish intern assignments that people were expecting from me while I was also receiving new assignments that required my immediate attention. It was utter chaos. Luckily the people I work with are very nice and willing to help me get situated in my new position.

The biggest change in my life since college has been the scene transition from the country to the city. It was never too difficult to keep a peaceful mind because the tranquility of nature possessed me, giving me that feeling of being on top of the world. If I was ever in desperate need of that feeling, I knew I could easily find it hiking up the steps to the Grotto or driving to High Rock. Once I got to either of those places, all I had to do was look down to realize I actually was on top of the world, or at least the surrounding cities. There is something about nature

that makes me feel like the world is at my fingertips.

The city is a little different. Getting that nature-high of the world at my fingertips takes some imagination. Looking down on mountains, trees and houses that look like dots is a bit more empowering than looking up at skyscrapers and trying not to get run over by taxis and people dressed in suits. The hardest part of the country-city transition was surviving the train.

Train lesson #1: No saving seats! Marie and I learned this after upsetting multiple people during the evening commute. Marie boards the train prior to my station and tells me which car to get on so we can sit together. One day I counted cars wrong and boarded the car in front of Marie and my saved seat. There were plenty of available seats in the front cars of the train so I wasn't worried about getting to the seat Marie saved for me. When the train pulled into the next station I started making my way back to Marie, but more people kept boarding the train and I ended up further back in line. I was only three seats away from Marie when someone tried to sit down in MY SPOT.

"Can I sit here?" asked Pushy McPusher.

"Actually Jackie is going to sit here and she's right there," said Marie, pointing to me.

"Well, I was here first."

"I know, but she's only three people behind you," argued Marie.

Pushy McPusher exhaled a disgusted, "Ugh! Whatever," and made her way back to another seat mumbling, "You're not supposed to save seats."

I was so grateful that Marie stood her ground and saved me a seat, not to mention proud of her for resisting to give-in to such



bullies. We realized that our seat-saving days are over. If we keep saving each other seats, I have a feeling the other commuters will start an alliance against us and we'll never have any seats!

When I told Marie that there were available seats in the other cars, she explained why people would not sit in the front cars. The front of the train is supposedly not as good as the back of the train. People strategically board the back cars of the train so that when the train arrives to their station, they are closer to the parking lot. The people in the front of the train end up having to walk towards the back of the train to exit, and therefore end up at the back of the line of cars trying to leave the parking lot. The common strategy is to be first in line for everything. Obviously this strategy doesn't work when all 50 people try it together.

My new strategy is to board and exit the train without pissing anyone off. I oftentimes find humor by sitting quietly and watching others. Marie and I engage in the competitive commuter nonsense only to amuse our-

selves. We compare our parking spaces to see who got the better spot and then try to race others out of the parking lot in the most discrete way possible. The people who run to their cars are in no way discrete about their obsession with first place. I prefer the fast-paced walk, taking long strides and having my keys on hand to unlock my car in the quickest way possible. Marie and I have both, on separate occasions, made the record high of being the seventh car out of the parking lot. My goal is to be the fifth car out of the lot someday. I do have higher goals in life, but setting silly goals like this makes the commute more manageable.

I have a feeling I may need to develop a more aggressive strategy for the holiday season when people tend to be extra pushy, especially if I am going to be the fifth car out of the parking lot. My other less-aggressive approach would be to sit in the very first car of the train and build up a higher tolerance for being patient with people. I intend to discuss various strategies with my commuting partner in crime. We Mounties stick together!

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## COLD WAR WARRIORS

# Incident at sea

Captain John Murphy, UNS. Ret.

It was early 1964 and the Cuban Missile Crisis was behind us. Beate mania had hit America. Nikita Khrushchev was about to be thrown out of office in the USSR. The aircraft carrier USS Forrestal was transiting the Atlantic after a tour of duty in the Mediterranean. The crew was on the flight deck – flying kites – a sure sign of a ship that was “at ease”. Then, suddenly, a large Soviet bomber-type aircraft with the distinctive hammer and sickle markings – swooped down from the north and flew directly over the Forrestal’s flight deck at about 200 feet. It circled around and made another, very dangerous pass. Then it was gone... as quickly as it had appeared. Heading for its base in the Murmansk area – about 2900 miles to the north. Naval Intelligence experts identified the aircraft as a TU 142 F – a modified bomber that was given the NATO designation BEAR D.

This was a first. What was Crazy Ivan up to? In U.S. Navy circles a furor arose. This was a violation of traditional, peacetime rules of engagement. A violation of the “airdrome rights” of a naval ship in international waters. You just did not violate the airspace over an aircraft carrier. They might have been in flight operations and the BEAR D might have crashed into jet aircraft flying onto or off of the carrier. A violation of national sovereignty. How dare they do this? What we gradually learned was that Admiral of the Fleet and Chief of the Soviet Navy Admiral Sergey Gorshkov was beginning to pay us back for the humiliation he experienced during the Cuban Missile Crisis the previous year. The aircraft carrier was considered a major Cold War threat.

The landlocked Soviets were trying to show us – and the world – that their Navy was growing in strength and numbers. And, they were no longer landlocked. Particularly in their

Northern Fleet area of the Barents Sea. They could meet the U.S. and the West anywhere in the world. By having a long range bomber find and fly over the USS Forrestal, they were saying “If I can find you ... I can kill you!”

The Forrestal returned to its home base of Norfolk, VA. without further incident, but the Navy decided that they could play this little game with the Soviets if they wanted. Orders were sent to USS Franklin D. Roosevelt CVA 42 to conduct an undetected transit from their homeport of Mayport, Florida to the Mediterranean.

They were free to use every trick in the book in order to reach the Strait of Gibraltar without being overflown by Soviet aircraft. I was assigned as Officer in Charge of a special Naval Security Group Detachment that would ride aboard FDR. We would provide the ship, special intelligence information on any Soviet actions that might relate to the transit. The carrier was a World War II Midway Class carrier that had been upgraded for modern flight operations.

The FDR laid out a transit plan that was anything but normal. We would not use the normal “great circle route” used by carriers when transiting the Atlantic. We would ride well to the south of the normal sea lanes. Also, we would be in EMCON ALFA (no electronic emissions - communications, radar, IFF etc.). When we started transiting through the main shipping lanes we would “darken ship” at night. All lights were off except for a few, navigation lights that made us look like a merchant ship.

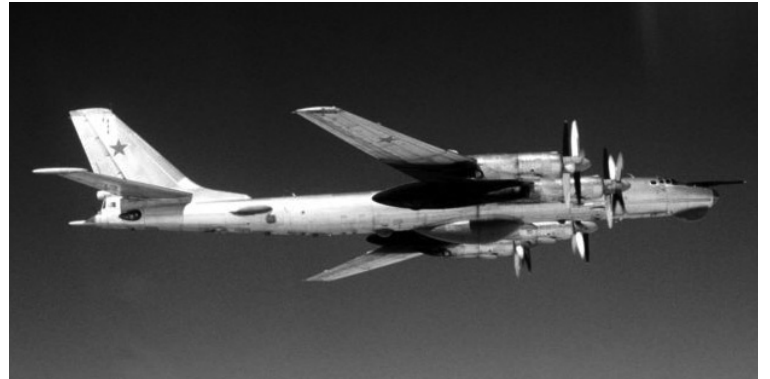
As we approached the Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean we began feeling pretty good about ourselves. There had been no Soviet reaction. We had made it to the Med undetected – or had we? Had the Soviets seen us somehow and just chose not to react? We did not know. I can

recall walking across the flight deck past an F4 fighter that was in an alert status for immediate launch. The pilot leaned out of the cockpit and said “Hey Spook ... what’s going on? “. I felt frustrated. I had nothing to tell him and replied “Nothing I know of. Sorry! “

Once in the Mediterranean, the FDR had a “turn over “ with the USS Saratoga (CVA 42). We transferred our team of “spooks “ to the Sara and prepared for the return transit – this time to Mayport, Florida. We used the same general operations plan... anomalous route, EMCON ALFA; ; no lights, etc. etc. The result? Ten days later, we saw the Atlantic Ocean blue water turn to the coastal green waters off Florida and we asked ourselves “What have we done? What have we proved? “ The answer once again was – nichego, nada, nothing. The only thing we knew for sure was that we had seen no Soviet aircraft. Or ships or submarines.

The Navy stood back after our “No Hits, No Runs, No Errors “ operation and decided to try something a little trickier. It was called the “Kitty Hawk Express “and it would be conducted during the transit of USS Kitty Hawk (CVA 64) from its West Coast home port to the Far East and duty near Japan in 1965. “The Hawk “did all the things that we had done in 1964 until they got within the presumed range of the Soviet bomber bases along the Kamchatka Peninsula. Then they began communicating with their high frequency communications systems. Our SIGINT stations in Japan noted an immediate reaction at bomber bases on Kamchatka. The bombers were launched within minutes and were soon flying over The Hawk, BUT .... Not before they had been met by F4 fighter jets at about 150 nautical miles from their “target “. Beyond the bombers effective weapons range. We had been tracking them much further out, but did not want to compromise our detection capabilities.

A few years later, while serving at the Navy’s Center for Naval Analyses in Arlington, VA. I led a study of ap-



proximately 150 cases of U.S. aircraft carriers vs. Soviet attack aviation in the period from 1963 to 1975. The results were very informative – for future commanding officers and Air Wing commander of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers. We showed that the carriers that were not the sitting ducks that the Soviets wanted the world to believe they were, but they had to be vigilant and situation sensitive. They had to make use of the total force with which they operated – surface ships, aircraft and especially our expanding attack submarine force escorts. Carriers had their strengths, but one had to be realistic about their weaknesses – as well. Especially nuclear carriers.

We have had lots of “incidents “ aboard Carriers over the years. Fires, explosions and collisions, but not sinkings – especially in combat. Amazing when you consider the relatively small size of an aircraft carrier’s flight deck (1000 feet) and the dangerous nature of flight operations – especially when aircraft are being launched with armed weapons.

Then throw in the unexpected visit of Soviet bombers or high performance jets – right over and within what is your “airdrome “. Those early “overflights “ of our carriers in the 1960s were accidents waiting to happen. They still are as the Russian Air Force has recently reintroduced the 50 year old fleet of BEAR D aircraft as modern day reconnaissance and weapons platforms

A few years ago I interviewed a couple of former Bear D crewmen who had flown missions against U.S. aircraft carriers in the mid Atlantic. As one told me “Those mis-

sions were dangerous. They were very long (12 – 14 hours) and there was no escape from them if you got in trouble.” No escape hatches or ejection seats. You were trapped in what the crewmen called “a flying coffin “from liftoff until the return to their home bases in the Kola Peninsula near Murmansk .

For a very dramatic example of how dangerous these missions were – check out the following footage on YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13bijF2-os> This video clip shows a TU 16 Badger conducting a reconnaissance mission against the USS Essex (CV 9) in the very turbulent year of 1968. It occurred on 25 May 1968 in the Norwegian Sea. You can almost see the pilot Colonel Andrey Pliyev as he makes a very close pass of the Essex at a height of 15 meters before turning and crashing into the Norwegian Sea. The footage was taken from the RT (Russian Television) channel in 2008. The Russian commentator is providing a detailed description of the flight’s final moments. He also notes that the footage was considered classified by the Soviets and never shown in Russia until 2008.

Regrettably, dangerous, life-threatening incidents became all too common as the Cold War heated up in the mid to late 1960s. They involved ships, aircraft and submarines and finally led to the INCSEA (Incidents at Sea) negotiations with Soviets in the Spring of 1968. The INCSEA Agreement was formally signed in Moscow in March of 1972 by U.S. Secretary of the Navy John Warner and Soviet Admiral Sergey Gorshkov.

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IN MY OWN WORDS

# The most wonderful time of the year

Kalei Au

You remember me—I'm the black kitten (well, I'm almost a bonafide cat now—after all, I'm already eight months old) who along with my brother Paxton came to live last spring with old-dog Harry and his pet Katherine. Almost every day of our life from that day on has been just one adventure after another. I'm discovering, in particular, that there is a time of year called "the holidays" that really is a special, wonderful time.

My brother Harry kept telling my other brother Paxton and me about Thanksgiving for what seemed like months. He told us of turkey treats, of having a long lazy day where our pet, Katherine, would spend the whole day at home with us, and how in the evening the whole family would watch a movie together. He talked of gravy, sweet potato casserole, and other treats on our pet's table. Harry told Paxton and me that the turkey would be the only thing we would really like, but we weren't sure we believed him since he does like to pull pranks on us sometimes. I have to say that Harry was right—the turkey was the only thing we wanted.

As soon as dinner was over and our bowls were empty of juicy bits of turkey, I asked Harry when we would get more. Paxton and I were concocting a plan to get more turkey as he walked into the kitchen to get a drink of water and so I asked him. I was going to create a diversion and knock a plant over while Paxton took what turkey he could from the counter. We would rendezvous underneath the bed and share our loot. I asked Harry if he wanted to join in with the diversion and get some more turkey with us, but he said no, that our pet would get mad and it might ruin our chances for the next holiday. I asked if there was another holiday like Thanksgiving for our pet and her family. Harry

answered that there was, and it was an even better holiday than Thanksgiving because there were more treats and surprises for a holiday called Christmas.

Christmas, I asked confused. What was Christmas? Harry said we would have to wait a whole month till the holiday but that most likely in a few days our pet would start putting up her Christmas decorations. I didn't know what Christmas decorations were, and on Thanksgiving night I was too concerned about getting more turkey. As it turned out during the time that we were planning our great lift of the turkey, my pet's mom put the turkey in the refrigerator and so the plan of stealing turkey became mute. I then resigned myself for going back to our usual routine of breakfast in the morning, then naps, then my brother and I playing tag in the afternoon, followed by dinner, and then snuggles before bedtime.

But, as it turned out, not two days after my first taste of turkey, my pet brought out crates and boxes that were colored green and red. Harry had a faint smile on his lips. He told Paxton and me that we were in for a treat. He brought up the words Christmas decorations again and told us that the tree would come inside soon. My pet has a lot of plants, some bigger than others, but I have never seen a plant as big as the one she brought into the living room. It almost touched the ceiling. It was then that she opened all the boxes and crates and Paxton and I thought we must have died and gone to heaven.

In the boxes were ornaments and decorations a plenty. What Paxton and I loved was that most everything in the boxes were wrapped in tissue paper. Tissue paper is a lot of fun—it makes noise, it is easily shredded, and it's fun to roll around on. Then, the ornaments started going up on the tree. Now, I heard my pet telling her parents that she was leaving the

breakable ornaments off the tree this year—something about me and Paxton climbing into the tree and breaking them. I was a bit insulted as I would never do such a thing. But I can't speak for Paxton. He likes to climb things.

While our pet was decorating, I asked Harry what Christmas was and he told us it was a wonderful time of year. Harry told us it was the best day of the year as far as he knew. He said it was a day filled with surprises, toys, food, and our pet was home all day with us. I asked if it was more fun than my fish on a string, or my mouse that rattles, or the balls with bells inside them. Harry said it was, but I had one more test for him. I asked, "Is it better than my playing with my mouse while laying on the pile of shoes I've pulled together?" Harry assured me it was.

Paxton asked him if it was more fun than when our pet brought out a plastic bag for him to play in or if it was more fun than a newly opened and emptied box that he jumps in and out of when our pet is finished with it. Harry said it was more fun than both those things. He told us that during the Christmas season there were lots of boxes to play with and even more fun was the paper and ribbon that comes out of storage to wrap the presents, or so he had been told by Iliza, the cat he knew before us.

We already know what ribbon is, and Paxton and I both love ribbon. I don't think our pet is as thrilled with our antics when she wraps a present because she keeps telling us we are in the way. She usually shoos us away while she's wrapping, but then she will have a piece of ribbon that she plays with us with all around the house. If Christmas means more ribbons and boxes, then we both are looking forward to Christmas. Harry assured us we'd have lots of ribbons and boxes to play with, but he also told us that there are even



more fun things to look forward to. I have to say that he had Paxton at ribbons and boxes, but I wanted to know more.

Harry told me that Christmas is more a season than just a one day holiday. He told me that for most of December our pet will be busy with decorating, cooking, wrapping—all of which involve some fun for us. Then, he told me and Paxton about presents. He said we each will have a stocking hung for Christmas and how there are treats and treasures in the stockings on Christmas morning. He also told of presents that are left under the tree. Paxton and I were a little confused when Harry mentioned the part about the presents under the tree and stockings, but we figured he must know what he is talking about since he's been around for many Christmases.

I don't think that Paxton or I have ever had as much fun in one afternoon as the day that our pet decorated. She put on Christmas music, lit some candles that she said smelled like the holiday season, and began to decorate. We liked the decorating part but not the cleanup before the decorating. I personally am terrified of the vacuum cleaner. Paxton just followed it around as usual making sure it didn't get near our food bowls. But, oh, when the actual decorating started it was great. We batted at balls on the tree, we jumped into crates filled with tissue paper, and we

even pulled down a couple of strings of lights from the tree (okay, so our pet was not so thrilled about that part). We had a great afternoon. We were both plum tuckered out after watching all the decorating.

Both Paxton and I took naps, and when we woke up there was red garland laying on the floor for us to play with. That red garland is a very fun string of shiny stuff, and I am so happy that our pet brought some home for us. I told Harry and he just smiled at me and told me that the garland was only the first of our presents. He said we can expect more. I don't know how much more I can take!

I guess it must be true,  
 "It's the most wonderful time of the year  
 With the kids jingle belling  
 And everyone telling you 'Be of good cheer'  
 It's the most wonderful time of the year  
 It's the hap-happiest season of all  
 With those holiday greetings and gay happy meetings  
 When friends come to call  
 It's the hap-happiest season of all."

So, in the spirit of this season that I'm getting more and more excited about, I join my brother Paxton, my brother Harry, and our pet Katherine in wishing you one and all a "hap-happiest season of all."



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## CULTURE, FOOD AND ARTS

## Christmas traditions and treats

Sharon Racine

It's here. Again. *Where the heck did time go?* Christmas has somehow managed to sneak up on us once more, and the strings of lights, holiday sales, and Christmas carols on repeat stand as continuous reminders that yes, Christmas is less than a month away.

But what makes this time of year so special? For me, the importance of Christmas lies not only in its significance in Christian history as the celebrated day of Jesus' birth, but in the traditions that surround us as this day draws near. Perhaps one of the most longstanding Christmas traditions is the Christmas tree, which originated in Germany in the 16th century. Every year, my dad positions a freshly cut evergreen in our living room, where it stands as a symbol of the season for the weeks leading up to Christmas.

I realized the significance of our family Christmas tree tradition last year, about a week before Christmas day. Incapacitated by a snowstorm that lasted through the afternoon, my parents, brother, sister and I had dedicated our efforts to decorating the entire house for the holiday. But we still had no tree. This did not discourage my dad, who claimed that that night was the *only* night we

could get a tree; since Christmas was the following weekend, there was simply no other time we could make the trip to pick one out.

So off we went, into the blizzard to find the Perfect Tree. It's important to note that my dad enjoys living on the edge, and likes us to teeter there with him. Blizzard night was no exception: the roads were virtually empty, and rightfully so – the plows could not keep up, and the swirling whiteness made it nearly impossible to see. We were fortunate to have four-wheel drive on our white Pathfinder, but others were not so lucky; suffice it to say that I will not be taking a sports car out in a blizzard any time soon.

After about 15 minutes of slipping and swerving, we finally turned into an almost-vacant shopping center. Target? I couldn't believe it – after over 20 Christmases spent in the freezing cold searching for evergreen perfection (not too fat, not too skinny, just tall enough so my dad's outstretched arm could graze the top), were we really opting for a *fake tree*?

Yes, we were. And as the only customers in Target on that snowy night, we had first dibs on the Perfect Tree: not only will it never die, it never needs to be watered, and will never shed a single pine needle. At last, my dad's search for

the Perfect Tree has finally come to a close.

Though my family's Christmas tree tradition may have changed over the years, many of our other Christmas traditions have not. Two things that I know I can be sure of on Christmas day are my grandmother's candy cane coffee cake at breakfast and my mom's homemade cream of mushroom soup at dinner. No matter where we celebrate the holidays, we are guaranteed to enjoy these delicious dishes. To me, they exemplify the spirit of Christmas, and I couldn't imagine the big day without them!

## Candy Cane Coffee Cakes

This recipe comes from the 1972 edition of *Betty Crocker's Cookbook*, and makes three cakes. Also perfect as gifts for family and friends!

## INGREDIENTS

2 cups dairy sour cream  
2 packages active dry yeast  
½ cup warm water  
¼ cup butter or margarine, softened  
½ cup sugar  
2 teaspoons salt  
6 cups all-purpose flour (if using self-rising flour, omit salt)  
1½ cups finely chopped dried apricots (one 11 oz. package)  
1½ cups drained finely chopped maraschino cherries (two 1 oz. jars)  
Soft butter or margarine  
Thin icing (see below)

## INSTRUCTIONS

Heat sour cream over low heat just until lukewarm. Dissolve yeast in warm water. Stir in sour cream, ¼ cup butter, sugar, salt, eggs, and 2 cups of the flour. Beat until smooth. Mix in enough remaining flour to make dough easy to handle.



Turn dough onto well-floured board; knead until smooth. Place in greased bowl; turn greased side up. Cover; let rise in warm place until double, about 1 hour.

Heat oven to 375°. Punch down dough; divide into 3 equal parts. Roll each part into rectangle, 15x6 inches. Place on greased baking sheet. With scissors, make 2-inch cuts at ½-inch intervals on long sides of the rectangles.

Combine the apricots and cherries; spread one third of the mixture down the center of each rectangle. Criss-cross strips over filling. Stretch dough to 22 inches, and curve to form cane shape.

Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. While warm, brush with butter and drizzle canes with thin icing. If desired, decorate with cherry halves or pieces.

*\*\* For a softer filling, cook the apricots and cherries in approximately one cup of water before adding to the dough.*

## Thin Icing

Blend 2 cups confectioners' sugar with about 2 tablespoons of water. If the icing is too stiff, stir in a few drops of water.

## Homemade Cream of Wild Mushroom Soup

My mom has been making this mushroom soup for years – thanks to Barefoot Contessa!

## INGREDIENTS

5 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms  
5 ounces fresh portobello mushrooms  
5 ounces fresh cremini (or porcini) mushrooms  
1 tablespoon good olive oil  
¼ pound (1 stick) plus 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, divided  
1 cup chopped yellow onion  
1 carrot, chopped  
1 sprig fresh thyme plus 1 teaspoon minced thyme leaves, divided  
Kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
2 cups chopped leeks, white and light green parts (2 leeks)  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup dry white wine  
1 cup half-and-half  
1 cup heavy cream  
½ cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley

## INSTRUCTIONS

Clean the mushrooms by wiping them with a dry paper towel - don't wash them! Separate the stems, trim off any bad parts, and coarsely chop the stems. Slice the mushroom caps ¼ inch thick; if they are large, cut them into bite-sized pieces. Set aside.

To make the soup stock, heat the olive oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a large pot. Add chopped mushroom stems, onion, carrot, sprig of thyme, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Cook over medium-low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, until the vegetables are soft. Add 6 cups water, bring to a boil then reduce the heat. Simmer uncovered for 30 minutes. Strain, reserving the liquid. You should have about 4 1/2 cups of stock. If not, add some water.

Meanwhile, in another large pot, heat the remaining 1/4 pound of butter and add the leeks. Cook over low heat for 15 to 20 minutes, until the leeks begin to brown. Add the sliced mushroom caps and cook for 10 minutes, or until they are browned and tender. Add the flour and cook for 1 minute. Add the white wine and stir for another minute, scraping the bottom of the pot. Add the mushroom stock, minced thyme leaves, 1½ teaspoons salt and 1 teaspoon pepper, then bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the half-and-half, cream, and parsley, season with salt and pepper to taste, and heat through but do not boil. Serve hot. Enjoy!

*\*\* For a quicker recipe, use bouillon cubes or ready-made stock as your soup base.*

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## CULTURE, FOOD AND ARTS

# David Young: The Lion Potter

Katelyn Phelan

Have you seen the small white signs advertising local pottery northbound on Route 15? Well those local potters are David Young, his wife Junko and their four boys. David and Junko have been working in Gettysburg for the past seven years, making about 30 pieces of pottery a day. Their home, studio, gallery, and kiln (used to fire, or “cook” the pottery so it hardens) are all located off Taneytown road. Recently I had the privilege of talking with David about his pottery and his life.

From the first moment I spoke with David, as he showed me around his gallery and pointed out certain pieces, it was obvious that he was passionate about pottery. When I arrived, David was busy throwing mugs. A quick pottery lesson here: pottery can either be “thrown” on a wheel which spins around quickly with a lump of clay at the center. As the wheel spins, the potter shapes it with his or her hands, creating a mug, vase, or other object. Or, clay can be hand-crafted by the artist, formed and shaped by hand. After the clay is shaped and dries, it is fired in a kiln. A kiln essentially heats the clay and bakes it so that it hardens and cannot be destroyed with water. After the piece is fired, glaze can be applied to it so that it is colored, decorated, strengthened, or waterproofed.

While I talked with David he was throwing mugs to be used at “The Pub” in downtown Gettysburg. This project was commissioned and is a joint effort for the husband/wife duo. David throws pottery, so he makes the basic shape of the mug, while Junko focuses on hand-built pieces. She is making the handle and the little plaque bearing The Pub’s logo.

David did not find his passion for pottery in Gettysburg, though. He became interested in pottery while at Glenelg High School in Howard County, Maryland. As a sophomore David was having a difficult time in school largely because he was dyslexic and couldn’t read. He was illiterate until the age of 22 or 23. One day David overheard a conversation between two teachers concerning a student who was having a really hard time. David came around the corner, and one of them said, “David, we were just talking about you.” This teacher had taken a pottery class, and the school had recently acquired the materials and equipment to teach students how to make pottery. David sat down at the wheel and “it was like magic.” His passion for art—and pottery specifically—was immediate and powerful.

Within a week he had mastered everything his high school art teacher could offer him. Because David didn’t like or excel in any of his other subjects, his teacher felt obligated to find a way for David to keep making pottery. So as a seventeen year old high school student, he enrolled in a graduate program at Antioch College in Columbia, Maryland.

David studied under Richard



Lafean, who built on the foundation David had begun at Glenelg.

While David was enrolled in graduate school, Glenelg High School asked him to teach two pottery classes, essentially as a high school student himself. He was so passionate and talented as a pottery teacher, that students “began skipping other classes to come to [his] class.” David studied for a total of ten years under Richard, who eventually encouraged him to spend time studying pottery in Japan in order to take his craft to the next level.

David went to Japan for a summer to travel between different kiln sites. Each kiln site uses a certain and often different kind of clay; some types of clay are “pure” meaning the clay is made of finely ground minerals, making it very smooth as a raw material and once it is fired. Other types are “natural” and have small chunks of various minerals. When fired, David explained, these pieces of mineral can pop due to the extreme heat, making a blemish and a drip down the side of the pot, like “a pimple on skin,” David says. “While

that sort of flaw is unattractive on a face, it’s really neat on a piece of pottery!” While in Japan, he traveled between the different sites getting a feel for which types of clay and resulting pottery appealed to him most. He settled on the pottery of the town Shigaraki and worked for the summer with Sawa Kiyotsugu.

When David returned to the States, he apprenticed with Rebecca Moy, another potter, and later became her partner. David’s wife, Junko, a Japanese native, ended up apprenticing with him. The two began dating and eventually married; now they work as partners.

David and Junko work together as a team, each complementing the other in style and in theme. The duo is inspired by nature and functionality in creating their pottery. They are both heavily influenced by Eastern ways of thinking, and that comes through in the creation and purpose of their work. David said, “In the West we look at the outside of a pot and ask ourselves questions about its appearance. In the East, in Japan and China, they look at the inside of the pot. If the pot if made

well, if it serves its function well, then it is beautiful. Practical is beautiful.”

David’s example of this practical beauty comes from his observations in Africa. There, he saw women carrying pots of water on their heads for long distances and noticed they had ridges and patterns on them that were quite beautiful. The ridges and patterns helped the women to keep a hold of the pot and catch it in case it slipped. The pots were also light so the women could carry them easily. Following his African influence, David’s thrown pottery is surprisingly light. The outer surfaces are also covered in beautiful patterns which serve their functionality. David and Junko create practical, everyday items—such as teapots, mugs, plates, vases, and bowls—based on their philosophy of functionality of items.

Their philosophy of beauty coming from the inside is not just limited to pottery. David spoke of his (and our!) purpose as artists and believers as making beauty shine from the inside of our work and ourselves. We must always tell the truth, and we do that by being genuine. Being fake as an artist or as a person does no good for our art or for God’s. As a result, we must always ask, is our beauty coming from the inside? And so, David and Junko do not design

things as “pretty” but as functional pieces possessing inner beauty.

It is much easier to create a functional piece of pottery, something that is to be used each day, than it is to create a functional painting. This is one of the reasons David is inclined to pottery, referring to it as the “king of art,” though art is in everything and everywhere. David also loves pottery because it lasts forever: in a museum, a house, or a landfill. It leaves a record on this earth of who we were for generations to come.

David and Junko’s pottery is functional, and so it is genuinely beautiful. Visit their website at [www.thelionpotter.com](http://www.thelionpotter.com), or head North on Rt. 15 to the Taneytown exit, make a left and follow the white signs about a mile down the road to 855 Taneytown Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325, where you’ll find their gallery, workshop, home, as well as their beautiful pottery and fresh Pennsylvania-grown fruits. David and Junko are wonderful, hardworking, and inspirational people. A handmade piece of pottery would make the perfect Christmas gift this year, no matter whom you are buying for!

Katelyn Phelan is a senior at the Mount majoring in Fine Arts.

## Express yourself!

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UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, TUITION IS \$95 FOR ACAC MEMBERS, \$105 FOR NONMEMBERS. MATERIALS FEES ARE PAYABLE AT FIRST CLASS MEETING. CLASSES MEET AT THE ACAC IMAGINATION STATION, 18 CARLISLE STREET, GETTYSBURG, UNLESS NOTED. REGISTER BY PHONE AT (717) 334-5000.

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## COMPLEMENTARY CORNER

# Nourishing your five elements

Renee Lehman

For most of this year, I have been writing about the Five Elements in Chinese Medicine. These Elements or energies are felt to be the prime energetic building blocks from which everything in the material world is composed. So, every living thing and every person is a unique embodiment and combination of these Five Elements. Therefore, when it comes to our health, if all Five Elements are in balance within us, then we are at a state of optimal health/wellness. The Five Elements are Water, Wood, Fire, Earth, and Metal. The associations (the organs, a body tissue, an external manifestation, a sound in the voice, an emotion, a color, a direction, a taste, and a climate) of each Element were described, you were asked to reflect on the “state” of each of your Elements, and suggestions were given on possible approaches to nourish each Element.

This article will cover the Chinese medicine perspective on nourishment, sources of

Source of Nourishment	Definition
Air	Draw fresh air in and exhale stale and toxic air (waste)
Water	Is the blood of the earth
Trees and Plants	Sources of food; relationship with them also nourishes us
Cosmic Energy	Subtle energy from sun, moon, stars, and planets
Sensual Nourishment	Colors, sounds, tastes, touch, and fragrances
Relationships	Belonging to a community
Food	Our ability to receive and transform the food that we eat

nourishment, and a review of the ways to “NOURISH” our Water and Wood Elements to keep us balanced and well. Some information used in this article comes from the book *Recipes for Self-Healing* (by Daverick Leggett, 1999). The ways to nourish our Fire, Earth, and Metal Elements will be presented in the January 2011 edition of the Emmitsburg News Journal.

### Perspective and Sources of Nourishment

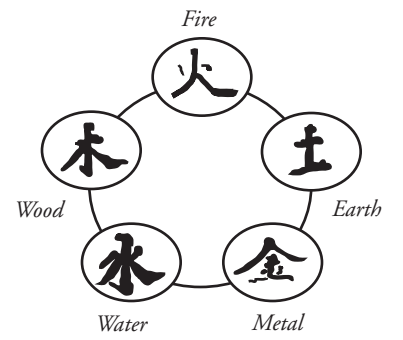
As stated before, in Chinese

medicine, the human being is seen as a microcosm of the universe. The natural laws that govern the weather, seasons, and the movement of the planets and stars are the same as the ones that govern our bodies and our individual journeys through life. We cannot separate our individual health and well being from the health of the planet. If we are a part of Gaia (the planet viewed holistically as a single life form), then our “collective health” is an expression of the planet’s attempts to rebalance life itself.

This above information helps you to “*know*” what you need to take into consideration when taking responsibility for the choices that you make in life, and how these choices will impact your health, and the health of every living thing on Earth.

### Ways to Nourish Your Elements

How can we use non-food and food ways to nourish ourselves as we move through the constant cycling of the Five Elements? Here are ways to nourish our Water and Wood



Elements.

You may notice that there are similarities and repeating themes within the ways to “nourish” yourself to have a healthy body/mind/spirit. Does this surprise you? It should not! This is all based on simple and natural laws! Cut out the tables to use for future reference. Next month there will be more informative tables (on the Fire, Earth, and Metal Elements) to use as a reference.

Blessings for a “NOURISHED YOU” in the New Year!

Renee Lehman is a licensed acu-puncturist and physical therapist with over 20 years of health care experience. Her office is located at 249B York Street in Gettysburg, PA. She can be reached at 717-752-5728.

Element	Non-food Nourishment	Nourishing with food
WATER  Gifts of will and determination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Balance the amount of activity and rest (work, rest, &amp; play). This is a great example of using your resources wisely.</li> <li>2. Exercise wisely (do energy building exercises like yoga, qi gong, and tai chi), versus performing exercises that use up a lot of your energy and run your “batteries” down.</li> <li>3. Take time to meditate or have time for quiet contemplation. This will help keep you from depleting your resources.</li> <li>4. Support and strengthen the low back (with activities such as: qi gong, tai chi, postural exercises, and abdominal exercises).</li> <li>5. Observe and access your deeper rhythm (circadian). How much rest do you need to feel alive and awake?</li> <li>6. Play!</li> <li>7. Spontaneous movements which release deeply-held constraints.</li> <li>8. Liberate yourself from chronic fear. Think about abundance instead of scarcity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eat a wide &amp; varied diet.</li> <li>2. Eat foods that come from saltwater (fish, seaweeds); seeds; salty-flavored foods (if you don’t have blood pressure problems); and dark colored foods (red/black beans). These types of foods support your Kidneys (think about how kidney beans look like a Kidney) and Bladder.</li> <li>3. Drink appropriate amounts of water. This keeps you hydrated and allows for you to move smoothly (body/mind/spirit).</li> <li>4. Avoid too many stimulants or dehydrating drinks. These can affect your mood in a negative way.</li> </ol>

Element	Non-food Nourishment	Nourishing with food
WOOD  Gifts of birth and regeneration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On a physical level, try stretching exercises, especially sideways bending and twisting (remember to be like bamboo). Walk to keep your muscles and joints limber. Try juggling, because it takes coordinated movements and flexible muscles and tendons.</li> <li>2. Practice assertiveness in your daily life.</li> <li>3. Practice “taking up your space” when you walk into a room.</li> <li>4. Practice letting go of long term resentments and judgments toward yourself and others.</li> <li>5. Let anger give rise to “effective action” instead of “fuming” about what angered you.</li> <li>6. Take time to meditate or use a relaxation technique to help decrease your muscle tension.</li> <li>7. If you hate wind, wear a scarf or keep your neck protected.</li> <li>8. Time for planning, and visualizing what we want.</li> <li>9. Get good quality rest &amp; relaxation to develop the quality of “being-ness” within all of our “doing-ness”.</li> <li>10. Creatively express yourself through poetry/writing, painting, sculpting, gardening, etc.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider taking a supplement to help keep your joints resilient.</li> <li>2. Eat foods like dark green lettuce and vegetable, sprouts, and sprouted foods (like bread).</li> <li>3. Eat sour foods like lemons, etc. because they will stimulate tissues to contract &amp; release toxins.</li> <li>4. Eat food which nourishes the blood: (meat, grains, protein, dark red &amp; black beans, dark fruits, &amp; eggs).</li> <li>5. Avoid saturated fats, over-salted and over-processed foods (they will congest your Liver).</li> </ol>

## FITNESS AND HEALTH

# Influenza

Bonita J. Krempel-Portier, D.O.

Once again the bell has gone off and the Flu virus is amongst us. Last year prior to the H1N1 Flu vaccine being available, EOPCC alone diagnosed 16 cases of H1N1. October was clearly too late to wait for Flu vaccine. After we had an aggressive campaign to vaccinate as many as would—nearly 800 souls, the cases of Influenza dropped dramatically. Those that got the flu were among the unvaccinated, except one who had gotten the nasal flu spray and that did not take for her.

Each year, usually about Fall through Spring, coming from Asia to you town, we are invaded by the Influenza virus. This year's flavors are Influenza A/California H3N2, B/Victoria and our "old" new enemy H1N1.



The best treatment for any disaster is to head it off before it happens. Yes, that is the boring way. It is so effective, that it seems one did not have to prepare, because there is no real disaster. Pick up a newspaper, any paper, and what do we read about? We

read about the disasters we did not prevent: pages upon pages.

It is time to get over our needle phobia, the stories we heard about sore arms and perhaps old experiences 30 years ago with a vaccine, roll up our sleeves and get our 2010-2011 Influenza vaccine. Those who are allergic to eggs, or have had an allergic reaction to the vaccine in the past, of course, should not get the vaccine. This year the vaccine includes the H1N1 as well as the other strains for an all in one shot.

No matter where you get your vaccine: your doctor, the health department, the local pharmacies, some grocery stores and other places of public services, eg. senior citizen centers, please call your physician office and make sure that your vaccination is record in you medical chart..

Not only will you be protecting yourself with the Influenza vaccine, but you will also be protecting those you love. Each and every person that

gets vaccinated help the babies, the toddlers, the pre-school, the school kids, the parents, the grandparents, the people at the bank, in the grocery store, those at your place of work, your friends avoid the influenza. This is no small gift.

In this world of hard economic times, who among us can afford to be sick 7-10 days and feel bad perhaps for weeks after that.? The risk of other viral infections and bacterial infections in the aftermath of a case of Influenza is high. These infections are often very serious all on their own, but much worse after a case of influenza. Remember this is the era of "super bugs." Let's try to avoid them or stop them by being in the best health we can be.

In the Washington Post, just a few weeks ago, there was a survey published about America's eating styles. Only 26 percent of Americans got 5 portions of fruits and vegetable on a regular basis. Potato was the most popular vegetable. In India

17 portions of fruits and vegetable are recommended. My conclusion is that it is probably hard for many Americans to feel well and fight off colds and infections. Please broaden your horizons and add more fruits and vegetables into your diet. Yes, we can change history for the good, both our personal history and our community history. We just have to get started. Let's do it!

Should you suspect you have Influenza, you can get tested and more importantly you can get treated for influenza and its related infections. Seek help when you need it! There are several medications that can help blunt the impact of Influenza if taken within the first two days of symptoms.

Get eight hours of rest daily, drink lots of water, eat healthy foods, wash your hands many times through the day and keep your hands moisturized. All of these interventions will help you stay well during the harsh winter season. Let's work together towards health!

# Holiday fitness

Linda Stultz

Christmas is just around the corner. The menu for this meal usually remains the same from year to year. How about making a few little changes to make the meal healthier. Of course, the turkey or ham is the main attraction. Make sure you get a lean turkey or ham that is low in fat. Most of the fat in poultry is in the skin. You need the skin while roasting for a juicy, tender bird, but before you slice it, remove the skin. That will take the temptation away from those folks who tend to tear off a piece when they slip into the kitchen to see how things are going.

Dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, warm bread and desert are also part of the traditional meal. I'm not saying take these away, just alter the way they are prepared. Use fat free milk and low fat butter in your mashed potatoes. Even better, try mashed sweet potatoes. Try whole grain bread for the dressing. Whole grains are much healthier than processed white bread. 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 in fat. The gravy still tastes the same, without the fat. The warm bread can be a variety of different whole

grain buns. This way, everybody gets their favorite kind. Add a big salad to this year's menu. People usually think of salad as a summertime dish with burgers and a cookout. One half of your plate should be filled with veggies. Raw vegetables give you the most nutritional value. Supply a variety of vegetables to pick from. Hopefully, you will have a least one kind that the kids like.

DESERT! Some people live for the "Desert 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. Preparing a small plate of desert 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 the Christmas dinner home to remember for the rest of the holiday weekend and you will not have all that desert around that will tempt you later. Check into some small changes in the receipt that will make a big difference in the fat and sugar content of the desert. Tofu is a great way to add that creamy texture to your pies, cakes and cookies, while lowering the fat. Applesauce in place of oil is another helpful, healthy hint. SUGAR is a big ingredient that packs on the pounds. Check out your grocery store's healthy cooking isle for alternatives to sugar.

Finally, start a new Christmas Tradition. Take a walk after your meal. 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, cool air. Share this time and walk off some of those extra calories 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. These tips are not just for, they work well for any holiday gathering.

Think about giving the gift of health this year. Get yourself and someone you love into exercising. That is the best thing you can do for yourself and your loved ones. Call me to explore the benefits of an exercise program designed just for you.

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## ASTRONOMY

# The December night sky

Professor Wayne Wooten

For December 2010, the Moon will be new on December 5th; the waning crescent moon passes six degrees south of Venus in the dawn sky on December 2nd. The first quarter moon passes six degrees north of Jupiter overhead on December 14th; Jupiter is currently the only bright planet visible in the evening sky, although Mercury is briefly out in the SW twilight during the first week of December. The Geminid Meteor shower peaks on the morning of December 14th, so the first quarter moon will set near midnight and thus interfere little with the approximately a meteor a minute fall of cometary debris from the NE in predawn hours.

The winter solstice occurs at 5:42 PM CST on December 21, 2010; this is the shortest day of the year, and also time for a very early morning total lunar eclipse. For CST viewing, the umbral or dark portion of the earth's shadow touches the Moon's disk at 12:50 AM, with the moon totally eclipsed and probably blood red in appearance by 1:55 AM. The Moon starts to leave the umbral shadow at 3:10 AM, and is completely out by 4:15 AM. Bundle up and join us outside the Pensacola State College Planetarium for a public gaze...bring along your cell phone and digital cameras for great photos of this colorful and rare event. The photo of the month is by Gary Wiseman; it records the last such eclipse seen here, on February 20, 2008. It was taken near the end of totality, about 9:40 PM. The last quarter moon is on December 28th, with the moon passing seven degrees south of Saturn in the morning sky.

Mercury is visible in the first week of December low in the



SW twilight, then passes between us and the Sun, and is visible in morning sky during the last week of the month. Venus dominates the morning sky, with the moon passing six degrees south of it on both December 2nd and again on December 31st. While Jupiter is the brightest object in the SW evening skies, it too will be swallowed up by the Sun in about three months. Saturn rises in Virgo about midnight, but if you use a scope to look for the rings, you find them brighter and more open than last year, when they were almost edge on.

The square of Pegasus dominates the western sky. 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. To the northeast, Andromeda's hero, Perseus, rises. Between him and Cassiopeia is the fine Double Cluster, faintly visible with the naked eye and two fine binocular objects in the same field. 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. Check it out on a clear December evening, and see it the gorgon is winking at you. If so, then instead of being as bright as Polaris, Algol fade to be only as bright as kappa Persei, the star just to its south. Look at Perseus' feet for the famed Ple-

iades cluster to rise, a sure sign of bright winter stars to come; 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.

Y e l - low Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the NE sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer (think Ben Hur). Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor (closer to Capella, rising first about 7:30 PM as December begins) and Pollux highlight the Gemini. UWF alumni can associate the pair

with Jason and the Golden Fleece legend, for they were the first two Argonauts to sign up on his crew of adventurers.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern sky by 8 PM. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. The three stars in a row that mark his belt have a Christmas association in Latin America. As "Los Tres Reyes", they stand for the three kings, bringing gifts to the Christ Child. 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. In amateur telescopes, I rank it next of Saturn as the most beautiful thing in the sky. The bright diamond of four very hot, young stars that light it up are the trapezium cluster, visible even in 60mm refractors.

## Almanac

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: fair and colder (1,2,3) with the possibility of a nor'easter with heavy snow (4,5,6). Fair and rather cold (7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15). Periods of light snow (16,17,18,19,20,21) returning to fair weather and cold temperatures (22,23). Windy with some flurries (24,25,26,27,28) turning fair and very cold (29,30,31)

Tornado watch: no tornado activity forecasted for the mid-Atlantic region in December.

Full moon: December's full moon will rise on Wednesday, December 21st at 3:13 am est. Native Americans often referred to December's full moon as the cold moon (for obvious reasons!) But it also has been known as the beaver moon and sometimes ice-forming moon because beavers get busy complet-

ing their dams and lodges before winter sets in and lakes and ponds freeze over with ice.

Holidays: celebrate Christmas on Saturday, December 25th. Enjoy family and friends during these festive times and keep that joyful and giving spirit alive throughout the coming year. Have a wonderful and safe new year, too! New year's eve is Friday, December 31st. Make plans to attend a first night celebration and enjoy safe, family-oriented fun, food, and entertainment on the very first night of the year. Look online at [www.firstnight.com/cities](http://www.firstnight.com/cities) to find a celebration nearest you.

The Garden: plan flowerbeds now and have the soil tested. Make a list of seeds that need to be ordered, when to start them, and a list of any bedding plants to buy first. Perform a simple germination test on last year's stored seed. Place ten seeds between paper towels and keep

the towels moist and warm for a few days. If less than eight of the ten actually sprout, consider starting with fresh seed. Replant any perennials that have been heaved out of the soil by frost and consider covering them with a light mulch such as pine bark. To avoid rodent damage during the winter, keep a couple of inches clear of vegetation and mulch around the base of young trees. Plastic or metal hardware cloth can be wrapped around the base to deter chewing on bark. Remember to put plenty of seed out for the birds, especially if the ground is covered with snow.

J. Gruber's thought for today's living

"the holiday season offers dual opportunities: a chance to give of oneself to others through thoughtful gifts as well as a time to take stock and resolve to be a better person for the upcoming 12 months in the new year"

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# COMPUTER Q&A

## Holiday buying guide



Rule #1: Never pay in cash.

Ayse Jester

With the holidays coming and literally thousands of computers to choose from it can be difficult to decide which computer is right to give as a gift. There are many factors that you consider when buying any gift. One of the most obvious questions includes how much you want to spend. When buying a computer for someone there may be more questions that you should answer than you think.

### What kind of a computer should I get?

Besides for the obvious choice between a MAC, PC or Linux (if your into that), you should consider what kind of computer to get. Desktops are the most upgradable pc and if something goes wrong or breaks it's generally easier to find replacement parts. Laptops are more versatile but you should seriously consider an extended warranty and/or accident protection. The batteries in laptops typically don't last more than two years so expect extra expenses down the road. Since laptops are mobile devices they are more likely to get damaged or stolen over a desktop. If something does go wrong with a laptop out of warranty the repairs can be much more costly than a desktop repair. Next you have today's slimming stylish netbooks. These "mini laptops" are great for on the go use where a laptop or desktop is too bulky or unavailable. Netbooks are by NO means a replacement for a laptop or a desktop. You won't find a CD or DVD drive and while the batteries last much longer, the processors lack any kind of speed needed for any demanding programs. Lastly you have today's IPAD which like a netbook is targeted for those that are on the go. While many find this is fun it doesn't offer multitasking and due to restrictions the manufacturer placed on accessories it's not meant to replace your home computer.

### How much should I spend?

Today you can go to any big brand store and find some laptops priced at just a few hundred dollars. That is an excellent price as you may have figured but WHY is that price so low? The price is so low because the quality is so low. Any computer with a low price is offering you a product with subpar components. Years ago the cost of a computer was at least a thousand dollars and lasted about 10 years. Now like many

things, computers are much cheaper and quality has dropped in the process. The best thing you can do to protect your investment is to research the products and to know exactly what you may need.

### What do I need?

Consider all the needs for the person you are buying the computer for. You will want to make sure the computer is powerful enough to handle the needs of the users. If you know what software the person will be using that can be a helpful guideline. All software has mini-

mum requirements that the computer must have in order to run. If the person you're buying the gift for is a college student they will probably need an office suite to complete their assignments on. Typically no computer comes with this type of software and you should be ready to ask questions about anything extra you will need. If the recipient of the computer is a gamer you may want to consider letting the person getting the computer help pick out the components due to how pricey and specific some of the parts can be.

### Where should I go?

The internet is a great source of information when deciding which computer to buy. I personally would never recommend ordering a computer online. This is especially true for custom orders during the holiday season because they are built to order and may not arrive on time. Buying a computer in a bigger store, especially with limited computer knowledge, can be a big mistake. Many larger companies train



their employees to make sales not sell the customer exactly what they need. The best place to go when you're not sure what you want is a smaller store where the employees are more knowl-

edgeable and honest about what they are selling to you.

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## LIBRARY NOTES &amp; SENIOR NEWS

## Movies among the stacks

Caroline Rock

Did you see *Iron Man 2* this summer? How about *Toy Story 3* or *Alice in Wonderland*?

Aside from summer, the December holiday season is the busiest and most important time of year for movie-makers. This year is no exception. But, as Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun." Or, we could revise that proverb to say, "There is nothing new on the screen."

Most of us are weary of sequels, prequels, squeakquels, movies based on other movies, movies loosely based on other movies, movies suggested or inspired by, but really having nothing at all to do with other movies. The top three movies of the summer, mentioned above, are sequels and do-overs. But as a book-lover, the most terrifying thing to see among the movie previews that prelude a film is a trailer for a movie based on a book.

This month, the second most important season for film-makers, offers a variety of promising books-into-movies. Here is an overview of the ones that most piqued my curiosity, for better or worse.

December 10 seems to be the release date for the majority of holiday films. That is the day we can expect to see *Hemingway's Garden of Eden* based on Hemingway's final novel, thankfully in limited release. The story is about a young couple seeing Europe on an extended honeymoon. The new bride becomes restless and begins to test the devotion of her husband by enticing him with a beautiful Italian *signorina*. I'll admit I am not a fan of Ernest Hemingway, and despite the extensive collection of classics in my home, this title, completed and published posthumously, is not among them. So see the movie, don't see the movie. I find it better for my emotional equilibrium to avoid Ernest Hemingway altogether, dead or alive.

*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader,*

the next in the fantasy *Chronicles of Narnia* epic, is also set for release on December 10. Dawn Treader is the name of the ship on which the remaining children, Lucy and Edmund, meet up with Caspian, who is in the middle of a fantastic adventure. The addition of surly cousin Eustace adds just that bit of humor needed by such serious themes as saving the world. Eustace, by the way, is one of my favorite names for surly characters. Lovers of C.S. Lewis hope the makers of this film remain as true to the original story as they did in the first two installments of the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

Also coming to theaters on December 10 is an intriguing re-telling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* starring Geoffrey Rush and Jeremy Irons and some chick. I believe Shakespeare should be remade as often as possible, using as many twists and deconstructions as necessary for quirkiness and originality. I never tire of the bard, and look forward to any fresh interpretation of his genius. In fact, even more than his film, which promises to be a serious homage to Mr. Shakespeare, I am looking forward to February's release of *Gnomeo and Juliet*, an animated version of the ubiquitous love story starring garden gnomes. With voices from Michael Caine, Ozzie Osborne, Dolly Parton, and Patrick Stewart, can this film go wrong? Okay, yes, it will probably bomb, but it will not be Shakespeare's fault.

Finally on December 10 will be Johnny Depp in *The Tourist*. This is not based on a book, but... it's Johnny Depp, so I'm just looking out for you!

The character of Lemuel Gulliver, created by Jonathan Swift in his book *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726, has been studied, analyzed, and alluded to in nearly every literary genre from philosophy to anime. Gulliver travels from strange land to stranger land, encountering examples of

societal and governmental folly, the struggle between tradition and nonconformity, and the inevitable corruption of mankind. Who better to bring these weighty themes to the screen than Jack Black?

**Seriously? Jack Black?**

Obviously the makers of this film are not looking beyond sight gags and slapstick. Jack Black will bring his contemporary version of Gulliver to theaters on December 22 in an updated and thoroughly watered-down interpretation of Swift's complex character, complete with goofy facial expressions, 3-d glasses, and maybe even a lesson learned—like, it doesn't matter how big or small you are on the outside, as long as you have a big heart on the inside. In this world of reality tv and shallow pop culture, who needs allegory, right?

But Christmas Day is what movie-goers anticipate in December. This Christmas theaters will be showing the Coen brothers remake of the 1969 John Wayne film, *True Grit*. Does anyone else smell Oscar here? The directors of the amazing adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men* have gathered Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, and Josh Brolin to carry this story closer to author Charles Portis' original narration.

Confession: *True Grit* is the only John Wayne movie I can watch, and I only endure John Wayne because I love the Mattie character and the charm of the story. However, I sense that the Coen brothers will offer something besides charm in their version. The name Coen assures that the viewer will be taken to places darker than she can ever imagine. My only fear for this movie is that Bridges will feel compelled to honor John Wayne by doing a flat imitation of his Rooster Cogburn. At least we are assured that Matt Damon, in the role formerly played by Glen Campbell, has promised he will not be singing in this version. We

will be blessed instead with the haunting voice of Johnny Cash. At least that's what the film's trailer proffers.

But you may not be the movie-going type in December. Like me, you may prefer to stay in your own warm home watching DVD's and eating microwave popcorn. If that is the case, you can look for these titles, movies adapted from books, that are due to be released this month.

On December 4, *Eclipse* from the insipid *Twilight* saga. I know, I have just offended half the population of Emmitsburg, but Mr. Hillman told me I could write anything I want, and I'll be honest with you—I see a vampire on a plane and I move to the nearest exit. They're just not that sexy to me.

Just after the new year, on January 25, you can rent *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*. This is the third in Steig Larson's immensely popular trilogy. But if you are going to watch this mov-

ie, be sure to read the book first. You will not be sorry.

Finally, I mention this award-winning documentary coming out on DVD on December 7. *Restrepo*, while not based on a book, is a movie every American should see. This documentary follows a platoon of soldiers in the most dangerous valley of Afghanistan as they track and fight the Taliban. This will be a difficult film for me to watch, because my son is in Afghanistan now, along with many other sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. It is not a coincidence that I mention it in my column of holiday movies.

While you are escaping to the world of fiction and fantasy at your local theater or movie store, please do not forget our troops this Christmas. They are as far from home as Gulliver or Eustace, and a little comfort goes a long, long way. Go to [www.uso.org](http://www.uso.org) to see how you can help.

## SENIOR NEWS

Christmas is coming, silver bells ring in the air, so deck your halls and let's be jolly! Snippets of carols old and new will run through our heads, along with visions of sugarplums, for the next thirty-one days. Begin your special hometown holiday events with the Emmitsburg Community Chorus on Dec. 5, and follow the next night at the community center for caroling and lighting the town tree. Stroll down to the Carriage House Inn for hot dogs, cookies, hot chocolate and more Christmas music. Fill the days until Dec. 25 with your favorite activities with family and friends. Coast along to New Year's Eve on a wave of smiles and singing as 2010 comes to an end. May you all celebrate a joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS:**

**Thursday, Dec. 2 - Information on Energy Assistance;**

**Tuesday, Dec. 7 - Remember Pearl Harbor, Wii bowling today and each Tuesday in December, 1 p.m.;**

**Wednesday, Dec. 15 - Christmas Bingo, 12:30 p.m.-Bring cookies to share;**

**Thursday, Dec. 16 - Christmas dinner, noon.;**

**Tuesday, Dec. 21-Nurse Steve, blood pressure checks, 11 a.m.;**

**Friday, Dec. 24 - Center CLOSED for Christmas;**

**Wednesday, Dec. 29-Trivia & games, 12:30 p.m.;** **Friday, Dec. 31-Center CLOSED for New Year's.**

The seniors encourage all eligible persons (50 years and older) to join them for regular program activities and special events. Our

lunch program is open to those 60 and older. Programs are held in the Community Center on South Seton Avenue. Call for lunch reservations 24 hours in advance. To register for special events or for information, call program coordinator Linda Umbel, 301-600-6350, or email [lumbel@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:lumbel@frederickcountymd.gov).

**REGULAR ACTIVITIES**

**Bowling:** Mondays at Taneytown bowling center. Carpool; meet at center at 12:30 p.m.

**Strength Training & Conditioning:** Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. Dress comfortably, wear athletic shoes.

**Bingo:** Dec. 15  
**Cards, 500, and Bridge Group:** Dec. 8.

**Men's Pool:** Wednesdays at 1 p.m.  
**Pinochle & 13:** Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.

**Canasta:** Fridays at 12:30 p.m.

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### SATURDAYS NIGHTS:

Bingo at the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company's Activity building. Doors open at 4:30pm and games start at 7pm.

### Dec 1 & 12

Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton's Music for Advent Season series.

Dr. Elizabeth Krouse, organist at the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, and guest organist, Miriam Meglan, Organist at St. John UCC in Chambersburg, PA, will perform music of the Advent Season on the historic Möller organ housed in the Basilica.

### Dec 3

St. Joseph's Parish Christmas Craft Fair - Crafts, Food, Baked Goods. Sponsored By St. Joseph's Sodality For Information Contact Jane at 717-642-1247

### Dec 4

Mother Seton School's Breakfast with Santa and Holiday Bazaar. A fun morning of breakfast with Santa and also a great 'one stop shop' for your holiday gift giving. To pre-order tickets or for more information, please contact MSS at 301-447-3161.

St. Johns Lutheran Church's Annual bazaar and indoor yard sale - Creagerstown Parrish House, 8619 blacks mill road. Cookies by the pound and other baked goods.

Emmitsburg Lion's Club Chil-

dren's Christmas Party at Vigilant Hose Company. Activities include: Children's crafts, Face Painting, KHAN-DU the magician, Food and Drinks, Visit from a very special guest

Elias Lutheran Church's Annual Roast Beef, Ham, and Turkey Supper & Christmas Bazaar. Serving from 12 Noon until we sell out. For more information call Pastor Jon at 301-447-6239

### Dec 5

The Emmitsburg Community Chorus Annual Christmas Concert in the Basilica at the Provincial House in Emmitsburg.

### Dec 6

The Carriage House Inn's an "Evening of Christmas Spirit". Christmas Tree lighting in front of the Community Center at 6 pm followed by an evening of festivities at The Carriage House from 6:30 - 9 pm. The Lion's Club of Emmitsburg will have a collection box for the Emmitsburg Food Bank. Please bring canned foods and dried goods.

### Dec 10

Gettysburg & Adams County YWCA Polish and Slavic heritage Festival - 909 Fairfield Road, Gettysburg. The event will feature personal stories from Adams County residents of Polish and Slavic heritage, children's activities, and a sampling of Polish foods. The event is free and the public is invited. No registration

is required. For more information, call 717-334-9171, ext. 113,

15th Annual Gettysburg Tuba Carol Fest - Tuba players from everywhere playing Christmas Carols on "historic" Lincoln Square in Gettysburg. For more information call 717-334-7719

Elias Lutheran Church's The Basement Coffee House - Our annual Christmas Coffee House, featuring the Children's Praise Choir.

### Dec 11

The Majestic Theater presents A Christmas Carol - One of the best-loved and oft-quoted stories of "the man who invented Christmas"-English writer Charles Dickens--A Christmas Carol debuted in 1843 and has touched millions of hearts since. 25 Carlisle Street, Gettysburg. For more information call 717-337-8200 or visit [gettysburgmajestic.org](http://gettysburgmajestic.org)

### Dec 11 & 12

Thurmont Christmas House Tour - \$20 tickets available at the Creeger House, 11 North Church Street during the tour.

### Dec 13

Mother Seton School's Annual Christmas Program. Snow date is Monday, December 20. For more info: 301-447-3161 or [www.mother-setonschool.org](http://www.mother-setonschool.org)

### Dec 16

"The Storytime Show with Miss Jenni" Mother Seton School, Emmits-

burg, MD. 10 a.m to 10:45 a.m. This exciting and FREE program for preschoolers brings learning alive with music, singing, and puppets. "Toys and Tunes" is the featured show. Due to the great response, please pre-register by calling 301-447-3165

### Dec 18

Open House - Rebecca Pearl Gallery. Visitors will be able to purchase a signed copy of Rebecca's book 'Gilbert' in addition, Rebecca will be unveiling her latest print 'Zentz Farm'

### Dec 24

Elias Candlelight Christmas Eve Ser-

vice featuring Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion. All are welcome.

### Dec 31

Thurmont American Legion New Year's Eve Dance: Contact Angie @ 301-271-2971 or Lisa @ 240-367-0100 for info. To benefit the CHS Safe & Sane Class of 2011

Gettysburg's New Year's Eve Celebration - Entertainment at downtown venues, fireworks and party in Lincoln Square. Lincoln Square, Gettysburg for more information call 717-334-5006 or visit [www.adamsarts.org](http://www.adamsarts.org)

### NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE

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December 31st 6 am - 8 pm

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Amid the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, may we all find time to prepare our hearts in peace and stillness for the coming of the Lord. Blessings to all of the Emmitsburg community and beyond!

*Thomas H. Powell*

Thomas H. Powell  
University President



## Campus Events

*Celebrate Christmas at the Mount*

### December 5

*Mount Instrumental Ensembles Concert*

*Knott Auditorium, 3:30 p.m.*

A concert of music representing styles from the Baroque to this century showcasing students in the Mount Wind Ensemble, Dubois Chamber Players and the Mount Jazz Combo. **Free concert.**

### December 8

*The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Holy Day of Obligation*

*Grotto of Lourdes, 12:30 pm Mass*

### December 8

*Student Instrumental and Vocal Recital*

*Lynne & Joseph Horning Theatre, 4 p.m.*

Please join us for a talented group of Mount singers and instrumentalists from the studios of our music faculty. They will be presenting a year-end concert of masterworks. **Free concert.**

### December 12

*Advent Concert, Lessons and Carols*

*Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, 3:30 p.m.*

The Mount St. Mary's University Chorale Chamber Choir & Women's Ensemble

### December 19

*Advent/Christmas Music and Singalong*

*Recitation of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary*

*Blessing of the Nativity Scene*

*Grotto of Lourdes, 3:30 p.m.*



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