

Emmitsburg NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 5, NO. 12 • WWW.EMMITSBURG.NET • WWW.MYFAIRFIELD.NET • DECEMBER 2013

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Comet ISON will be visible throughout the month of December, but it may not be the hoped for "Comet of the Century." **Page 44**

Two seek election to new County Council

Two candidates have announced plans to run for new positions in Frederick County in the November 2014 election. The new positions were created by the change of governance approved by voters in November 2012.

The two candidates running thus far include current county commissioner and Republican Kirby Delauter and former Commissioner and Democrat Jan Gardner.

Under the charter, the county will consist of five districts, based on population density. Voters will be electing a council member from their respective districts (of which there are five), and elect two "at large" council members in November 2014.

In addition to filling seven new council seats, voters will be electing a county executive. Former Commissioner Gardner officially announced her intentions to run for the position of county executive on November 9.

Commissioner Delauter, of W. F. Delauter & Son, Inc., Emmitsburg, informally announced November 20 that he would be seeking election to the North (5th) District seat on the new Frederick County Council. He

will have a formal announcement in December.

Regarding his decision to run for a seat on the new council, Delauter said, "I decided about a week ago after Jan Gardner announced she was running for county executive. Jan was president of the last Board of Commissioners and left us with a \$48 Million deficit. Every municipality in the County was suing the County when her board left office. The current Board, led by Blaine Young, resolved that suit with no legal action required. Her fiscal policies were a disaster; I just can't sit idly by and take a chance that the hard work of the current board is tossed out the window.

"My goals are to remain a solid voice for business and the taxpayer and to maintain a sound fiscal policy within County government. Being a small business owner I have a sense of fairness and understand what people go through everyday in order to meet payroll. There's a big difference when you sign the front of a check, you understand that taxpayers are not an ATM."

Gardner served three four-year terms from 1998 to 2010 on the



Popular local businessman and current Commissioner Kirby Delauter will be running to represent the interests of northern Frederick County residents.

county Board of Commissioners, and was president of the board from 2006 to 2010. She "chose not to run for reelection in 2010."

Gardner told the News-Journal, "I decided to run for Frederick County executive because I want to restore trust in government, ensure open and transparent government, and create an environment where people can participate and make a difference in the public process."

"I want to restore fiscal responsibility and protect taxpayers," she said, "I

want Frederick County to have the best teachers."

Regarding the change in government structure, Gardner said, "One of the reasons to switch to charter government was to ensure that Frederick County would have a voice in Annapolis and a seat at the table. The county executive will represent the county in Annapolis."

Those elected to the new seats will assume their positions in December 2014.

County seeks to fix reassessment process

The Adams County Board of Commissioners have proposed overhauling the county reassessment system to reform the process, eliminating "fantasy" evaluations (such as calling a swamp a development site) and to removing politics as an influential factor.

The now infamous 2010 county real estate reassessment left a bad taste in the mouths of many citizens. While the reassessment process was created to determine the current, actual value of real estate for the purpose of taxation, the 2010 assessment became a classic example of a process gone awry.

In some cases, undevelopable wetlands, loads too small for anything other than harvesting timber, and plots that couldn't support a well or septic system, were reclassified and taxed as developable tracts of land.

Among the municipalities covered by the News-Journal, Carroll Valley property owners were especially slammed with seemingly illogical evaluations because of the varied types of terrain (from wetlands to mountainsides) represented within the nearly six-square mile municipality.

The process prompted a tsunami of appeals and lawsuits, and a vow by incoming county commissioners to find a means to avoid a similar fiasco in the future.

The "fix" has been introduced as county Ordinance #3 of 2013. In the process of its probable adoption, it will scrap, through repeal, the existing ordinances that set the stage for the much-despised 2010 reassessment.

County Commissioner Marty Qually told the News-Journal the new ordinance (which the board will consider adopting beginning in November) creates a two-step process regarding the initiation of a reassessment.

The ordinance would provide a means of determining current real estate market trends through the application of a formula, called the Coefficient of Dispersion (COC). The COC could serve as a "trigger" that tells the task force it needs to recommend to the county that it consider implementing either a "statistical" assessment (an in-house review) or a "full" assessment (involving "boots on the ground"), depending on what the COC numbers suggest.

The results of the 2010 reassessment, Qually stated, took place after a period of 16 years (some counties did theirs after a lapse of 20 to 30 years) because the decision to conduct a reassessment often became a "can kicked down the road" because some board of commissioner candidates facing election or reelection didn't want to be



The 2010 Adams County real estate reassessment left a bad taste in the mouths of many citizens.

the ones initiating one.

Although the new ordinance does not eliminate the power that the board of commissioners has to initiate a reassessment at any time it chooses, Qually said the ordinance does eliminate "political considerations" regarding the timing of the reassessment by making it more process-driven than election-driven.

The multi-decade timeframe between reassessments, he said, also contributed to aberrations in the 2010 reassessment because it in-

volved comparing the extremes, the real estate market 20 to 30 years ago, and the existing market, and didn't take into consideration fluctuations that occurred in between.

"You can't go 20 or 30 years and then do a reassessment," Qually stated. "It makes it so that your extremes are far apart, producing questionable results regarding the value of property in the county."

Proposed Ordinance #3 of 2013 can be viewed on the county web site at www.adamscounty.us

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NEWS

Wastewater facility on schedule

A representative of the firm contracted by the town to oversee the construction of Emmitsburg's new wastewater facility presented their status report to the board of commissioners at their November 4 meeting.

Presenting the update was Terry Zentkovich, project planner for RK&K, Baltimore, the firm overseeing the project. The construction itself is being performed by Conewago Enterprises, Inc., out of Hanover.

"Almost every project on the site has been started," he said. "Many of the structures (involved) have been completed." Zentkovich told the commissioners, "We're out of the ground big time," meaning all the subsurface work had been completed.

Work on the \$20 million treatment plant was mandated by the state in conjunction with efforts that would reportedly help clean-up the Chesapeake Bay.

Zentkovich presented the board

of commissioners with a time line of events to date, beginning with the notice to proceed issued October 1 of last year.

He noted that the original contract for completed had allowed for 914 calendar days, subsequently amended to 966 days (of which 398 have been used as of November 4), and that the percent of time overruns at the current point has amounted to only 5.6 percent.

The project planner said 15 change orders had been implemented on the project to date, amounting to an additional cost of \$133,965. Change orders are usually the product of alterations determined to be needed as a project unfolds on-site in the form of unforeseen situations or changes requested by the contracting party.

Zentkovich told the board that the facility and upgrades are still on track for the projected completion of the facility in May 2015. "I still think very conservatively the contract (for all the work being performed on-site) is on schedule," he stated.

The project planner noted that "a lot of flux" had been embodied in the construction schedule to allow for unanticipated delays.

Money to pay for the new plant comes from several sources. \$14.5 million of the total price tag has been approved in the form of grants from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the federal Department of Agriculture (DOA). In addition, DOA will be providing the town with a \$5.5 million loan bearing a 2.4 percent interest rate payable over 40 years.

The recently town Board of Commissioners-approved increase in user fees will provide additional money for the project, such as payment on the loan interest.

The state directed that existing wastewater treatment facilities would have to meet stringent processing criteria to reduce various bay-threatening pollutants, such as nutrients, by either upgrading existing facilities or building new ones.

Emmitsburg NEWS-JOURNAL

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State agrees to park & ride site

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has entered into an agreement of sale to acquire land on which to create a park-and-ride site for the Emmitsburg area.

Emmitsburg town staff has been working for some time to entice the state into securing a location for a park-and-ride site to alleviate the use of Silo Hill Parkway and neighboring streets by commuters as an impromptu carpool parking area.

Heather Keels, community liaison for the SHA, told the News-Journal that the agency has en-

tered into an "optional agreement of sale" to acquire a site south of Route 140 and East of Route 15 just outside of Emmitsburg for the proposed parking site.

Keels said the site is 11.3 acres in size, and the agreement of sale sets the price at "around \$500,000."

The land is to be purchased from owner Jeffrey Waybright, and both parties have signed the agreement, although the state has not yet closed on the property purchase. "This means we (both parties) have agreed to the sale but the sale has not taken place" at his point in time, she stated.

The deal agreement was approved by the state on October 30.

Keels said the SHA "just received the design funding, so it (site design and development) is in its very early stages." However, she said, some details are available as to what the park and ride will consist of. "It (the proposed facility) will be a paved lot with lighting," as well as a stormwater management system to control runoff from the site.

Keels said "typically" such facilities also include resources for bicycle parking. The number of vehicle parking spaces will not be determine

until the design process progresses.

As for when area commuters can expect to be able to use the new park-and-side facility, the community liaison officer said, "The project not yet funded for construction. As we get further along, we'll have an idea of about when it will be built."

Keels did say, "I think the earliest we could expect to go to construction is summer 2015."

Local interest in pursuing a park-and-ride facility outside of town had been spurred by make-shift, park-and-ride parking in town

which generated various complaints over the past several years, and which ultimately resulted in the town designating Silo Hill Parkway for commuter parking.

Allowing local workers and commuters to park along the side of Silo Hill Parkway traces its origins to about four or five years ago when the town was approached by residents of the Silo Hill development concerned about their development roads being used as a sort of uninvited, make shift park-and-ride facility.

State finds \$55,000 for Town Square

The Emmitsburg Town Square project has tens of thousands of more dollars in its coffers as the result of a recent state allocation of funding.

Town Manager David Haller told the Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners at their November 4 meeting that the state decided to divvy up some funding that

had accrued among state funds.

"The state legislature, as an afterthought as they were wrapping-up their session in Annapolis, took a little bit (of unspent, accrued money) and divided it up between the counties," Haller stated.

As a result, Haller said the town had receive a check in the amount of \$55,000 to use as the municipality saw fit, with certain restrictions.

The money came from accrued State Highway Administration revenue, and has to be expended on projects would could be viewed as road related."

The town manager told the board that Mayor Donald Briggs suggested the funds could be applied towards the work proposed on improvements of the Town Square, since state highways were involved.

The board of commissioners approved the mayor's request to earmark the \$55,000 for use on Town Square-related projects. If any of the money remains unused after two years, the funds can be allocated for other projects in the town.

Plans to revitalize the Emmitsburg Town Square has been well

received overall by area businesses, town residents, and local commissioners.

The town Board of Commissioners voted unanimously almost a year ago to date to approve a contract that could lead to improving the appearance of Town Square

Commission Christopher Staiger said at the November 4 meeting he was still concerned about the lack of a more definitive time-line for the entire Town Square project.

The project has been getting state grants for some of the work, and the town administration is considering setting-up a 501C to accept donations to help finance improvements.

But, Staiger said, "We (still) don't have an overall budget for the project. My biggest concern is funding this (complete) project, or how we are going to get there." "I'm worried we will get so deep-in with town funds, we don't have a choice (but to fund the project through with whatever money can be amassed, including local revenue)."

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Hamiltonban enacts fire tax effective January 1st

The Hamiltonban Township Board of Supervisors approved a municipal fire tax at their November 6 meeting in a 3-2 vote. The tax will become effective in January 2014.

The divided board's passage of the Adams County Council of Governments (COG)-recommended tax in the rate, effective January 1, making Hamiltonban Township the second Adams County municipality covered by the News-Journal to adopt the tax.

The supervisors set the fire tax rate at 0.25 mills, which amounts

to a tax of 25 cents per \$1,000 of real estate value. For example, a homeowner owning a property valued at \$200,000 would pay an annual fire tax of \$50.

Voting in favor of the fire tax were superintendents Robert L. Gordon, Coleen N. Reamer, and Douglas Woerner. Superintendents Harry Rood and James Grinder voted against the measure.

Board Chairman Gordon said that he struggled with trying to arrive at a decision regarding the implementation of a fire tax.

"This board for seven years

has not raised (township) taxes," he said. "I had a hard time for a long time deciding. I came to the conclusion it is the right thing to do, although I don't like raising taxes."

Gordon also expressed that he felt the initiation of the fire tax throughout Adams County "is a Band-Aid" approach to addressing the needs of the fire companies in the long term. "This really is just a first step. This might help and keep them (volunteer-supported) a couple of years longer."

Rood, in voting against the tax, said, "I think it's a little prema-

ture. We really haven't tried hard enough to see if we can find another way (to provide funding to the fire services)."

"I'm just not ready to jump into it right now," he stated.

The fire tax was adopted in response to a recent recommendation by COG to supplement the financial needs of the volunteer fire companies in Adams County. A rate of 0.25 mills was the tax rate suggested by COG.

A study on the state of the emergency services in the county, financed in part by the Adams County Council of Gov-

ernments (COG), stated, "This action (consideration of enacting municipal fire taxes) needs to be taken now."

Explaining the reasoning behind a push for a fire tax, COG explained, "Fire departments have significant operating expenses and they can no longer be expected to offset those costs by conducting fund raisers."

The Fairfield Borough became the first municipality in Adams County to adopt a fire tax when the borough Council voted unanimously to enact the tax at their September 24 meeting.

Carroll Valley, Fairfield 2013 election results

Carroll Valley Borough Mayor Ronald Harris and Fairfield Borough Mayor Robert Stanley will retain their seats as a result of the Nov. 5 general election, but two Fairfield council seats remained unfilled.

Harris and Stanley ran unopposed in their respective municipalities. Harris received 494 of the 507 votes cast in Carroll Valley. The remaining three votes were write-ins. Stanley received 81 of the 89 votes cast, the difference, as in Harris' case, being write-ins.

Regarding the Borough Council, four candidates, including three incumbents, vied for nomination for three vacant, four-year term seats, and one vacant, two-year-term seat.

The three vacated four-year seats included those of John Van

Volkenburgh, Daniel Patton and Ken Lundberg, all of who ran for reelection. The two-year seat was that from which former Councilman William Reinke resigned, and is being held temporarily former councilman, Frank Buhrman.

Van Volkenburgh, Patton and Lundberg were all reelected, Van Volkenburgh garnering 305 votes, Patton with 311 votes and Lundberg with 293 votes. Defeated in a bid for one of those seats was John Cazalas, with 271 votes. In addition there were 22 write-in votes. Candidate Thomas Fitzsimmons won the two-year seat with 313 votes, defeating contender Donna DePres who received 219 votes.

In Fairfield Borough, three seats needed to be filled, including those of councilmen Dean

Thomas, Alex Kessell and Shawn Gageby. Of these, only Dean Thomas' name appeared on the ballot, and Thomas garnered 91 votes of the 127 votes cast.

The Borough has a couple of options in filling the two remaining vacant seats which were not filled in the election. One is to offer the seats to qualified write-in candidates. Seats remaining unfilled after those offers are made can then be filled by appointment.

In Hamiltonban, two township Board of Supervisors six-year term seats were up for election. The seats being vacated are those presently occupied by supervisors Harry Rood and James Grinder.

Contesting the incumbents were former Supervisor Edward Deardorff and former township

Secretary LuAnn Dille, both of whom prevailed, Deardorff garnering 316 votes and Dille with 258 votes.

There will be four new members on the Fairfield Area School Board. Brad Rigler, Charles Hatter, Lionel Whitcomb and Walter Barlow were all elected to the FASD Board on November 5, along with incumbent Marcy Van Meter who was re-elected.

The District's 2014 budget will be at the top of the new School Board's To-Do List. The outgoing Board voted to cap the 2014 budget at a 2.6% increase, which is the maximum amount allowed by the state. The outgoing Board approved a new three year contract with the teacher's union. The agreement provides teachers with a modest increase

in pay and health benefits.

The proposed Fairfield Area Recreation Program will be another issue facing the new School Board. The District plans to provide available school facilities for adult continuing education, community programs, clubs and events. The program will be funded through a 4-year grant. After that time, it would be funded by participating citizens and municipalities.

Even with the grant and municipal support there will be up-front costs to the District. Incoming School Director Charles Hatter said, "We need to balance the District with the ability of what the taxpayers can afford. Increased budgets during the past few years have exceeded what the community can now cope with."

Borough Council fails to pass cluster zoning changes

The Carroll Valley Borough Council failed to propose a motion following a public hearing at their November 11 meeting regarding changes amending a section of the zoning ordinance addressing cluster housing.

Dozens of residents attended the public hearing, about ten of which expressed their support or lack thereof for the zoning changes, or sought clarification of the details of the proposal.

The proposed changes, which had been prepared by Eluma, Inc. and the borough Planning Commission, was produced in conjunction with the development company's effort to develop a 428-unit housing development on a 107-acre wooded site bordered by Sanders and Tract roads,

and butted-up against the borough's K-section residential area.

Among other changes, such as the reduction of the number of housing units allowed in cluster developments and the elimination of apartment buildings in residential zones, the failed proposal also provided for cluster development to be constructed in phases or "sections."

Eluma is seeking to be able to build the housing complex, based on the creation of a number of phases spread over an unspecified period of time, with proposed housing types based on prevailing housing demands which might occur during the various periods of construction.

The failure to even acquire a motion on behalf of the changes represented a set-back for Eluma, the

corporation that had worked on the draft changes along with the borough Planning Commission.

The planning commission had voted 5-2 at their August 5 meeting to send the draft, revised zoning ordinance to the borough Council for further consideration.

Following the standing-room only public hearing, the proposal failed for lack of a motion without comment by council members. The applicants could ask for reconsideration anytime during the next 90 days without triggering the need for a second public hearing.

Eluma has a circa-2006 approved 107 single-family home, and is further "armed" with a court order which mandates that the municipality provide the development with sewer service. Under the cur-



rent ordinance, the development plans could be changed to build more than 500 homes, with sewer connections paid for by the town by virtue of the existing court order.

The company had proposed to overhaul the existing sewer plant, incorporating the connections at their expense as part of the current proposal.

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NEWS

Harney honors its veterans

"It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle."

— General Norman Schwarzkopf

A persistent, chilly wind failed to deter several dozen Harney veterans and area residents from honoring those who have faced, and those who continue to face, "shot and shell" on hundreds of battlefields in a dozen wars fought over the course of two centuries.

Harney's Veterans of Foreign Wars, Monocacy Valley Memorial Post 6918, held its annual observance of Veterans Day on November 9, opening the ceremonies with Tom Nicolls' rendition of the Star Spangled Banner, to a backdrop of fully-furled flags whip-

ping about in the steady wind.

Post Commander Albert Angell said, "We pause to remember the sacrifices given by our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and the Coast Guard during times of war and conflict."

"It is a day we recognize not just those who have given their lives in war, but all who have served and continue to serve in the United States military," Angell stated.

He said Veterans Day is a time to think of those who served in World War I and World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Granada, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and those who have served in, or continue to serve in, the Middle East, "particularly Iraq and Afghanistan."

Men's Auxiliary President Doug Gross said, "Veterans Day is celebrated on November 11 because

that is the day the ceasefire took place during World War I on the Western Front in France in 1918, ending hostilities between Allied forces and Germany."

While Veterans Day was initially established as Armistice Day to remember those who fought in World War I, after the Korean War the day was changed to honor all veterans, Gross noted.

Regarding all of those who have served, Gross stated, "If it wasn't for all of those who served, giving up their personal lives for the time they served...chances are this great nation of ours would not still exist."

"Take the time to tell our veterans thank you for what you did and thanks for serving our country," Gross said. "It's a small thing to do for those who have done so much for us and



The Monocacy Valley Honor Guard listens as "Taps" is sounded for fallen veterans.

our country."

During the commemoration ceremony, *Emmitsburg News-Journal* publisher Michael Hillman presented the post with the original World War I "Purple Heart" certificate of Emmitsburg

area resident Charles J. Rowe, who was wounded during the Battle of the Argonne Forest.

Hillman acquired the document after having discovered it being offered for sale on eBay by a California seller.

Thurmont readies for Christmas

Thurmont will kick off its Christmas festivities December 7 with a prize giveaway, a visit from Santa Claus, and the lighting of a "Remembrance tree."

"Christmas in Thurmont" will be held starting at 9 a.m. in Mechanicstown Park on the square.

Individuals participating in

the gift challenge can turn-in their entries at the park, where winners will be determined by prize drawings later in the day at Hobbs Hardware at 4:30 p.m.

Maps listing participating local businesses will become available beginning December 2 at the Thurmont Town Office, and anyone wishing to participate can take their map to the various

businesses. Each business will in turn stamp their portion of the map. Participants will have until December 7 to complete their maps for a chance at winning a prize.

The Thurmont Lions Club will light their Remembrance Tree at 4 p.m. before the prize drawings. Santa Claus will also be at Mechanicstown Square from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., and again from 2 p.m. until 4p.m. for pictures.

Shoppers looking for discount merchandise or restaurant coupons to give out during the holidays may want to check around

in Thurmont.

Maryland Main Street, in conjunction with Maryland Neighborhood Business Works Program (NBW), has offered to provide gift coupons for any retail or restaurants business in a Main Street community which includes the Thurmont area.

The discount/coupon holiday promotion offer will become effective beginning November 30 and continue through January 1.

According to Vickie Grinder, Thurmont Main Street program manager, said, "Last year the Maryland Main Street program web site created a page for

all designated Main Street Communities and NBW communities which entitled any business to offer a holiday promotion (to customers)."

"New for this year," she said, "Maryland Main Street will create a different coupon for restaurants and one for retail shopping."

"Thurmont Business Bucks" gift certificates may be purchased at the Thurmont Town Office only, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Gift certificates are in \$25 and \$50 denominations, and must be purchased with cash or credit cards. A brochure of all participating merchants will be handed-out out with each gift certificate.

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One hundred years ago this month

December 5

Bennet Tyson

Uncle Bennet Dead! Such was the startling announcement sprung upon the people of Emmitsburg early Saturday morning. One of the oldest "stalwart oaks" gone! A man of remarkable physique, mind and character. Born here in 1932 and living all these years in one place, it would seem superficial to comment on the life or habits of this "Grand Old Man."

Every man, woman and child newly miss uncle Bennet. One third of the residents were related to him by the ties of kindred. His Parents were among the first settlers - the Hughes - who did so much better for their church in giving ground and laboring unceasingly for the cause of religion and the uplift of the future town. Under the skilled training of Shorb and Storm, Uncle Bennett became a first class carpenter and architect. Some of the finest buildings at St. Joseph's are monuments to his prowess. An honest man is the noblest work of God and Uncle Bennet was pre-eminently the most honest man ever to walk the streets of our fair town. May he rest in peace.

Emmitsburg Loses Pool Match

Gettysburg defeated Emmitsburg in a pool tournament on Monday evening at the poolroom of Mr. McGreevy, at the Hotel Spangler. The game was very close and the local boys had the Battlefield lads defeated by a small margin until the last Gettysburg player put one over on Stokes. The scores were Joseph Elder vs Vaughn, 50 - 42; Francis Rowe vs Doubs, 50-46; Samuel Annan vs Toaneus, 50-48; and Arthur Stokes vs Homan, 25-50.

Shortage of Horses for Army

Army quartermaster's say that there is an alarming scarcity of horses. If there were an emergency requiring a large number of horses, the War Department would have great difficulty in getting them. This is due, in part, to the reduced number of people breeding horses. The autocar has finally had its influence on

these animals. Motor trucks seriously affect the market for draft animals, but that has to do mostly with the mules, so far as the army is concerned. According to the army, the mule will always be a necessity, despite the improvements which have been made in the motor trucks. The animals are a necessity for troops in the field, while trucks are only useful for supplying the columns in the rear. The army said they see no use for any mechanized vehicle in an actual battle.

December 12

Bowling Contest - Yanigans Defeated

The Emmitsburg Duck Pin team defeated the Yanigans at the Matthew's Bowling Department on Monday evening by 113 pins. The Yanigans, strengthened by a few new bowlers, went into the game with so much venom and confidence that the Regulars, where out classed in the first two games by three pins, but the steady bowling of the Emmitsburg Duck Pin team soon dispelled all hopes of victory, as they came back strong in the latter part of the contest and had the pins falling in every direction.

The Yanigans displayed a marked improvement over last week's game, which some attribute to the lack of 'spirits' at Monday's game, but they were not able to withstand the onslaught of the Regulars. For the Regulars, Eichelberger and Pryor excelled, while Hardman and Luther Myers carried off the honors for the Yanigans.

New Railroad Parlor Car

The management of the Emmitsburg Railroad is to be complimented on the new parlor car recently put into service. This car is much appreciated by the traveling public and is in keeping with the progressive policy of our railroad.

Another Wreck on Western Maryland

One of the worst freight wrecks that has occurred in this section for some years took place Wednesday after-

noon near the Monocacy Bridge between Rocky Ridge and Detour. Eleven loaded cars were derailed and the roadbed for considerable distance was torn up and thrown into chaos and confusion. Of the cars derailed, one was carrying autocars, and another pianos. Cars containing terra-cotta, hay, pipe and merchandise were thrown into a heap. Some of the train cars were so badly destroyed that they were burned where they lay.

December 19

Loose Hand at Sawmill

While operating a shingles saw at Stouter's sawmill, near town, Mr. Charles Wagerman had his right hand cut off. It seems that the sleeve of Mr. Wagerman's coat came into contact with the teeth of the saw and in an instant the arm was carried into the blade. The accident occurred yesterday morning. The injured man was rushed to town for where Drs. Jamison and Brawner dressed the wound. That same day, while manipulating a sausage machine, Mr. Clarence Rider severed the tip of his index finger

Butcher Shop Changes Hands

On January 1st, Messrs. Albert and Meade Patterson will retire from the butchering and meat business and confine themselves entirely to dealing cattle and livestock. They publicly thanked their patrons for their loyalty during the 32 years of their career in that business and asked their many friends to extend their patronage to Mr. Gillelan and his son, who purchased the business. The Gillelan's plan to relocate the shop to West Main St. in the building they recently purchased from Mrs. Zimmerman.

Firewood for Sale

Delivered in two cord lots, \$2.50 per cord. Signed James Pecher, Fairfield.

Laws of the Road

Now that autocars are so numerous, it is getting to be very important that all users of the road should



Setting pins for the duck ball league was a prized job of boys, as it offered them a much needed source of cash.

know and observe the rules in order to prevent accidents. When meeting another car all vehicles should turn to the right to pass except those who overtake and pass another, in which case the one which is passing the other should pass around to the left. If everyone followed these rules, would have fewer accidents. But try as we might, riding in an autocar will never be as safe as riding in a buggy, for the horse can be counted on to supply the necessary 'horse sense' when their drivers are lacking it. A trusty horse can always be counted on to get a 'loaded' owner safely home - an autocar on the other hand will merely find the nearest ditch or tree.

December 25

Light Up Your Houses

It is suggested that from Christmas Eve until New Year's, the people of Emmitsburg should raise their front shades at night and allow the glow and warmth of the interior of their houses to shed brilliance on the streets.

The holiday season is naturally a season of cheerfulness, brightness, and warmth. How in keeping then, with the spirit of the time to let the brightness radiated! Why not let the passersby capture the radiance of these happy homes? No one who presume to stop and gaze within - there would be no annoyance, while on the other hand, the whole town would be gleaming with a mellow friendly glow, emblematic of

goodwill, and present a picture long to be remembered.

Presbyterian Pastor and Wife Surprised

Thursday evening a large delegation from the Presbyterian Church, each one carrying a pannier laden with all kinds of good things, called at Pastor Hensel's house to fill the larder. They filled it to its full capacity. With the good things they brought good cheer and goodwill and they lingered to enjoy with the pastor and his wife a delightful evening.

Post Office Turns Profit

The U.S. Postmaster estimates that it will require \$306 million to run the Postal Service next year. While Congress each year makes an appropriation sufficient to defray the cost of the Postal Service, just as it appropriates to defray the cost of each of the other Federal departments, the Post Office is able, with great regularity, to cancel its appropriations by means of its earnings from postage. The Postal Service is the largest growing department of the government, but unlike the Navy, or War Department, each of which cost the taxpayers \$100 million a year, the cost of the Post Office growth has not been borne by the taxpayer. The Postmaster expects that the Post Office will end the current financial year with a surplus of \$4.5 million, thanks, in part, to the recent increase in the cost of mailing a letter from 1 cent to 2 cents. The Postmaster said he could not foresee ever raising the rates for mailing a letter again.



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FROM THE DESK OF . . .

State Delegate Kelly Schulz

As the holidays approach, it is reasonable to get engrossed in the times spent with family and friends. It is an amazing time of year filled with traditions that are so important to our individual lives. However, for the past three years, they have served as a reminder that it is almost time to go back to Annapolis for another legislative session. There are mixed emotions because I have a great deal of pride in representing Frederick County, but I am always sad to leave the community for three months.

The best days in Annapolis are when we receive visits from constituents back home. It is a reminder that we are there to do a job that directly affects you and your interests. YOU play the most important part in the legislative process – or at least you should.

If you are reading this, you know that I am a member of the House of Delegates representing District 4A in Frederick County. This includes all of the northern, eastern, and western parts of the county (basically everything except the City of Frederick and southwestern areas near Jefferson and Point of Rocks). But do you know who your other elected officials are and how they play a role in your life?

There is a great story about a group of business owners in the flooring industry who reached out to me a few years ago. They were struggling with very burdensome regulations and were being targeted by a certain agency in Annapolis who was implementing laws passed before I was elected to serve. They were at the point of leaving the industry and the state all together.

Their industry came together to advocate for their rights and equality under the law. I was able to submit legislation to correct the unfair practices that were being carried out and ultimately pass that bill after much discussion with all stakeholders. (Revisions: Workplace Fraud Act 2012) The end result was that their individual groups formed an association and have become a major influence on laws within their industry.

Advocacy is as important as voting. Once you elect someone to represent your interests, you should have access to them to discuss the issues that mean the most to you. I have spoken with business groups and community organizations and asked them if they knew who their elected officials were at the various levels of government. I am sad to say that there aren't many who

claim to have those answers.

It is also important to know that we may not always agree on every issue. But, my job is to listen to all sides of the issue before coming to a conclusion on how to proceed. As your representative, I take this very seriously and welcome all discussion on any issue.

You can find out who your representatives are at the Federal and State level by visiting mdelect.net. For your local county leadership, you can visit frederickcountymd.gov. There are links to help you to contact those individuals with whom you would like to speak.

It is crucial for you to know how to track those issues that may be important to you, your family and your business. Being proactive in the defense of your interests will make you a part of the solution. Please take the time to visit mgaleg.maryland.gov to review that webpage and get comfortable with the

functions. You will be able to sign up for notification on tracking issues that mean the most to you. If you see something that is of great concern, you have the opportunity to reach out to your representatives in Annapolis and voice your position. I can honestly say that your voice matters when we are making decisions on your behalf.

It is always a pleasure to meet and to speak with residents from across the district. I look forward to my time at home so that we can openly discuss those issues that are most important to you. I will be spending the next month or so getting ready to do the state's work, but will always keep you interests in mind. That is what you should expect.

To contact Delegate Kelly Schulz email her at: kelly.schulz@house.state.md.us, or call her office number: 301-304-0619.

Miller Named as a Director of Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

C. Richard Miller, Jr., president and CEO of Woodsboro Bank was elected to serve as a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, one of 12 regional Reserve banks comprising the Federal Reserve System.

The Federal Reserve System is

the central bank of the United States and was created by Congress in 1913 to provide the nation with a safer, more flexible, and more stable monetary and financial system. It is responsible for conducting the nation's monetary policy by influencing mon-

ey and credit conditions to foster employment and stable prices – in part by determining national interest rates. The Reserve is also responsible for supervising and regulating member banks and other important financial institutions to ensure the safety and soundness of

the nation's banking system and to protect the credit rights of consumers.

Mr. Miller was appointed to a three-year term as a director of the Reserve. He will serve on the Audit Committee and the Committee on Planning and Operations. Mr. Miller, who has 40 years of banking experience, joined Woodsboro Bank in 1996 and has been president and chief executive officer since May 1997. The locally-owned financial institution was founded in 1899 and currently has assets of \$235 million.

Mr. Miller's other professional appointments include membership on the American Bankers Association's Government Relations Council. He also serves on the Maryland Bankers Association's Government Relations Council and is a past chairman of the Association.

"Rick's appointment to the Reserve is a testament to his service to the banking industry on both a state and national level," said Robert Waltz, president of the board of directors of Woodsboro Bank. "It's really quite a professional honor. Our board is thrilled



for him."

Mr. Miller holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in business and public administration from the University of Maryland, and a Master of Arts degree in public affairs from Hood College. He is also a graduate of the American Bankers Association's National Commercial Lending School.



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GOVERNMENT—SOUTH OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE

County Commissioner Blaine Young

You deserve to know the facts. So I'm giving the facts to you directly today because the local media won't report most of our story because of their apparent bias against us.

Please take a few minutes to review the record of the Frederick Board of County Commissioners.

Did you know that through May of this year, 765 senior property owners have saved \$223,717 on their property taxes because of the Senior Tax Credit that was put in place by these commissioners?

And did you know that Commissioners Paul Smith, Kirby Delauter, Billy Shreve and I: reduced the county's excise tax, trailer park tax and the admissions and amusement tax rate to ZERO; eliminated the \$65 permit fee to replace your dishwasher, hot water heater and garbage disposal as promised; eliminated the \$100 annual home security system fee; and abolished the fire tax.

Back in 2010, when the four of us ran for office together, we pledged to you that we would redefine the role of our county government, and have compassion for the taxpayer. I am very proud to say we are living up to that pledge.

Together, the four of us have reduced or eliminated 202 different taxes and fees since taking office. That's right, 202.

We identified over 260 rules, regulations, fees and taxes that we believed could either be eliminated, reduced or modified. I'm happy to report to you that over 77% of that list is complete.

When I ran for commissioner, my priority was to have compassion for every taxpayer in Frederick County. As I've said many times – the taxpayers of our county shouldn't be treated like an ATM machine.

I've worked hard to make sure that every decision this board makes is in the best interest of all of the taxpayers of our county.

Local media outlets like to spend all of their time trying to spin everything we are trying to accomplish into something negative and controversial instead of just reporting the facts.

The Frederick Board of County Commissioners' record speaks for itself, especially when compared to the record of Gov. Martin O'Malley, whose philosophy, apparently, is simply to tax, spend and regulate.

Here in Frederick County we have enacted a very different approach... which has been one of fiscal responsibility and for our government to live within our means.

While the governor was busy increasing state spending by \$5 billion, this Board of County Commissioners has found ways to reduce taxes, fees and regulations while maintaining the same level of service that residents expect and deserve.

While Governor O'Malley was busy increasing income taxes not once, but twice since he's been in office, we rolled up our sleeves and reduced capital expenses in the Fleet Department – saving county taxpayers \$3 million.

And Commissioners Smith, Delauter, Shreve and I convened a special Synergies Committee that saved

over \$6 million in 2011, with projected savings of over \$3 million annually in future years.

You can't tax and spend your way to prosperity.

I am proud of our record as it proves that government can be smarter, more efficient and more sympathetic to the pocketbooks of the taxpayers.

Governor O'Malley has raided \$1 billion from the Transportation Trust Fund since he's been in office. He spent that money on things that have nothing to do with meeting the needs of our roads and transportation systems.

On the flip side, in Frederick County we have fully funded the annual required contribution for retiree health benefits, drastically reducing the unfunded liability to Frederick County taxpayers. We didn't raid the Bond Enhancement or Recordation Funds like the immediate predecessors on the board did.

We have also made significant changes to the Frederick County defined benefit pension plan that has increased the funding of this plan while also further reducing another unfunded liability to taxpayers. The plan is projected to be funded at 91% by 2017.

For some reason the local media won't report these facts. Instead it spends its time attacking our sheriff and this board. So I decided it was too important to just sit back and let the facts be swept under the rug.

I've said repeatedly through the years that elected office is a service to the community and that it shouldn't

be a career. One of the first things we did upon taking office was to start at the top by eliminating the pension plan for county commissioners and reducing commissioners' expense accounts by 90%.

And – to lead by example – I pay my own travel expenses, gas, cell phone bill, and I pay for postage and even my county business cards.

Sadly, the governor increased the budget for his office 12.7 percent and increased his Executive Department's budget 10.3 percent in fiscal year 2012.

Clearly my definition of the role of government is drastically different than that of our governor. We've proven that it can and does work in Frederick County.

I am very proud of the record we have built and continue to build.

Please refer your friends and family in the county to read this column. Then ask them whether they prefer the governor's philosophy or the philosophy we have pursued in Frederick County.

Commissioners Smith, Delauter, Shreve and I have dedicated our term in office to fighting for the taxpayers of Frederick County. I personally pledge to you that we will continue to work in the best interest of the taxpayers until the very last day of our term in office. You have my word.

P.S. I'd like also to address our schools. Between the teachers' union and the media, all you will hear is that ev-

erything is the commissioners' fault and that teachers rank 22 out of 24 counties in pay.

Maryland was the first state in the nation to secure a \$40,000 minimum starting salary for teachers. The starting pay for a teacher in Frederick County is \$41,000. That does not include pension and benefits.

The difference in salary from our rank of 22 to being ranked 10th is around \$3,000, so you can see the disparity that the union and local media claims is way overblown.

Overall, according to recent state reports, Frederick County ranks 7th in average teacher pay.

Simply throwing money at education is not the answer. If it was, the District of Columbia would have the best school system in the country, but in fact they spend more per pupil than every other jurisdiction and have one of the worst school systems in the country.

It's about providing a safe learning environment, good parents and yes, great teachers. That's why Frederick County ranks at the top of the state in education.

The current Board of Commissioners is spending one-time money on education as aggressively as any past Board on school construction, systemic needs and technology.

We have been fiscally responsible in limiting reoccurring increases to the school system because we must live within our means.

The days of free spending and a "have it all" attitude are gone.

Emmitsburg Mayor Don Briggs

“Encourage each other daily while it is still today” (Hebrews 3:13). My wife Libby brought this to my attention from her morning readings. Encouragement and lots of it is more than a holiday sentiment, it's what underscores and defines our community.

Adding to record attendance at the three pool parties, new community inspired events, “Back to School Night” and “Light in the Park” movie night attracted over 400 people for each event. These events join the 6th annual Emmitsburg Wattle and Community Heritage Day event as solid community inspired events. The events are predicated on encouragement. No hubris just a quiet exceptionalism that speaks to our sense of community.

Thank you for the encouragement of recent town initiatives. Without your support nothing could have been possible. Rejuvenation of the square, street and sidewalk connections, swimming pool upgrades, road resurfacing and discarding wasteful practices of taxpayer dollars with energy saving street lighting and use of renewable solar energy.

With regard to the LED street lighting, by applying for a LED street light installation rebate from Potomac Edison before year-end 2012, the town received a check for \$53,517.70. The rebate reduced our investment in the

energy saving project by nearly 70%. Our savings effort did not stop there. In the works is an application for a state grant for part or all of the balance. What was originally projected as a four-year payback of the investment through net energy cost savings now could be less than a year.

Work on phase one of the solar array project has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The array will be located on the WWPT site.

\$15.5 million Wastewater Treatment Plant update. From the town inspection consultant's quarterly progress report to the Commissioners, the project is now out of the ground and appears to be on track to meet the contracted completion date in the spring of 2015. So far the weather has been more than amendable to the construction time line. So far...

In October I previewed the Square project to the Deputy Secretary of Transportation at a forum held at

Winchester Hall. Support for our project was echoed in presentations by Senators Brinkley and Young and Delegates Afzali and Shultz. We have come a long way in two years from only the will to “take back the square”. I will have more on this topic soon.

New store in town update: We met with the developer of the proposed General Dollar store this month. If all goes well, the developer is aiming for a

presentation to the planning in the 1st quarter of 2014.

Town meeting date: Moves to Tuesday December 3rd to accommodate Monday night seasonal festivities.

As the year draws to an end, no matter what has come to pass in our lives, there is still much to be thankful for in order to encourage others. From my family to yours we hope you have a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

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FROM THE DESK OF . . .

Carroll Valley Mayor Ron Harris

On Tuesday, November 12th, the Borough Council met and approved the advertisement of the proposed 2014 Budget. This action made the proposed 2014 Budget available for residents review prior to its final adoption at the December 10th meeting. The 2014 Budget is the end-product of a three step review process over a three month period. The first review is performed by the Borough Manager when analyzing the Borough Department submissions. The second review is performed by the Finance Committee. The third review is performed by the Borough Council during their Budget Workshop.

The tentative budget is based on a millage rate of 2.45 mills - that is 24.5 cents on each one hundred dollars of assessed valuation which means there will be no Carroll Valley Borough tax increase for 2014. However, at the same Borough Council meeting, a Fire Tax of .25 mil was discussed and an ordinance approved for advertisement. This Fire Tax was recommended in the Adams County Council of Governments Financing Fire Services study presented to the municipalities. It is considered a "pass through" tax. This means the monies collected can only be used (dedicated) for the operation of fire and emergency services. This is also why there are two separate ordinances being advertised for approval at the December council meeting. To us who pay the bills it means that we will pay more.

The Borough tax and Fire tax

is only a small portion of the taxes we pay. We do not know what the county or school district will do with their millage rate. At present, the estimated distribution of the total tax breaks down as follows: Carroll Valley is 15%, Adams County is 24% and Fairfield School District is 61%. If interested, a copy of the proposed budget can be reviewed at the Borough office. I have been told that an online version will be available by going to the Carroll Valley Borough website at www.carrollvalley.org.

Thanksgiving is behind us and now on to December. To some, December could be stressful especially for those who have lost a loved one. There was a prediction last year that since the great cycle (5,000 years) of the Mayan calendar will end on December 21, 2012 so would the end of time. Doomsday? No. Life goes on. I do know that being with loved ones, friends and neighbors will help us all weather any storm we experience.

December does have some unique and spiritual holidays. Hanukkah is celebrated from November 27th through December 5th. National Chocolate Covered Anything Day is celebrated on December 16th. I had to include this one for those chocolate lovers who need an excuse to have a piece. December 21st is the start of winter, also known as "the winter solstice". This is the shortest day and longest night of the year. After this date, the days start getting longer. Christmas is on

the December 25th and the first day of Kwanzaa falls on December 26th. Oh yes, National Chocolate Day is December 24th. December is definitely a chocolate month.

Talking about dates to remember, come and join your neighbors on Friday December 6th at 6:30 pm for the Tree Lighting Ceremony in Carroll Commons. Sing some Christmas carols and drink hot chocolate. I want to thank the Carroll Valley Municipal Services for decorating the tree and park area and the Carroll Valley Citizens Association (CVCA) for hosting the evening event. On Saturday morning, December 14th the CVCA is partnering with the Fairfield Fire and EMS to hold their Breakfast with Santa from 8:00 am to 11:00 am at the Fire Hall in Fairfield. I have been told by an air traffic controller that Santa plans to arrive at 9:00 am. If you plan to attend and bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots program, you will eat for free. As always, there will be lots of fun for the kids.

On the evening of the December 14th, you are invited to attend the Annual Holiday Gala party being held at the Ski Liberty Carroll Valley Resort. Join everyone for mingling and merriment and most of all to "Say Goodbye" to the Carroll Valley Resort/Club House built in the 1960s. This will be the last Holiday Party held in the banquet room. This facility will be demolished and replaced by a conference center with all new amenities that will

reflect well on our community. The details are: December 14th, from 6:30 pm to 11: pm, Ski Liberty Carroll Valley Resort Banquet Hall, 78 Country Club Trail, Carroll Valley, PA, Buffet Dining and Dancing at \$25 a person. Come and enjoy. It will be a time to reflect, a time for good cheer, a time for friends and family to come together to celebrate the season. Hope to see you there! You can purchase your tickets from Charles Dalton at Mountain View Realty 717-642-5844; from Bob or Mary Ellen Jesters at Jesters Computer Services 717-642-6611; and from me by calling 301-606-2021. Please help CVCA spread the word!

Troop 76, Fairfield, PA is heavily engaged in three (3) major community support projects that serve our communities in Fairfield, Emmitsburg and Liberty Township. Life Scout Connor Gorman and Liberty Township Supervisor, Robert (Bob) Jackson are developing a plan to restore the old Civil War cemetery at the bottom of Jacks Mountain Road near US Route 16. He is working to clear the overgrowth of brush around the old cemetery, replace fallen tombstones and markers, and build a small path from the road so that citizens can walk through and enjoy the historical significance of the cemetery. Life Scout Matthew Bollinger is working closely with Strawberry Hill Executive Director, Chuck Reid to plan and develop a new hiking trail on the Strawberry Hill Na-

ture Preserve. This new trail originates at the mid-point of the Foot-hills Trail and traverses creek beds and hill sides for over a mile. Life Scout Ian Clements is working on a project in Emmitsburg. He is restoring the old Emmitsburg Presbyterian Cemetery on the edge of Welty road and Old Gettysburg Rd. Troop 76 is mending and painting the old iron fences that surround the cemetery and replacing fallen tombstones and reinforcing the footers that support the markers and tombstones.

Borough meetings and office closures in December are: Planning Commission (Dec 2nd), Public Safety Committee (Dec 9th), Borough Council (Dec 10th), and Parks/Recreation Committee (Dec 18th). The Borough Office will be closed on Dec 25th and Dec 26th. Please reduce your speed to make sure you, your loved ones, your friends and neighbors will be safe. There will be a number of holiday parties you will be invited to. Be careful about drinking and driving. According to U.S Department of Transportation, most drunk driving accidents occur between midnight and 3 am. Be responsible and careful on the road.

If you have any questions call me at 301-606-2021 or email mayor@carrollvalley.org. Thank you for re-electing me as your Mayor. I am honored to serve you. Happy Holidays and I wish you and your family good health and happiness topped with loads of good fortune in 2014. Happy New Year!

Priddy joins Edward Jones

Tres Priddy knows the value of a comfortable pair of shoes. That's because he has been introducing himself to the residents in Adams

County Area.

"At Edward Jones, we don't expect anyone to invest with us until they know our investment philosophy,"

Priddy said. "I believe I have a responsibility to understand the unique financial needs of each and every client, and that's why I'm paying them personal visits."

Before a new Edward Jones finan-

cial advisor even can open an office, he or she must spend several months introducing him- or herself to the residents and businesspeople in the community.

"That's one of the things that drew



me to this firm," Priddy said. "Edward Jones values the individual investor and understands that people still want to do business with someone they know and trust."

Priddy also had to complete one of the most rigorous training programs in the financial services industry.

And although he is well-versed in the technical aspects of investments, the training isn't over. Edward Jones places a lot of emphasis on continuing education, and its financial advisors train literally throughout their careers.

"I know my clients want a financial advisor who is up to speed on investments and someone they know. That's why we do things the way we do at Edward Jones," Priddy said.

Priddy has 10 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Priddy will work out of the office of Frank Pizzuto located at 249 York Street, Gettysburg PA 17325 over the next several months. He will then continue serving investors throughout Adams County Area from a new office. He may be reached at 717-337-2556.

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GOVERNMENT—NORTH OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE

County Commissioner Jim Martin

The month of November in Adams County was anything but uneventful. The Adams County Board of Commissioners covered much of the county, from monitoring Election Day activities to attending various evening meetings with municipal officials. The *one on one* discussions with officials were an excellent opportunity to learn what is important in various municipalities. We also made an unplanned but sobering visit to assess the fire damage experienced by Latimore Township. This was an unpleasant reminder of how quickly our circumstances can change and the value of risk management.

The week of November 19, 2013 in Adams County truly memorialized the importance of the actions of those who have gone before us. This reflection began as we had the privilege to be present for the reenactment of Abraham Lincoln's train station arrival. Fittingly, the event began at the original 1863 Carlisle Street Train Station. The arrival included musicians portraying Lincoln's "The President's Own Band" in authentic uniforms playing the popular pieces of the Civil War era on original instruments. President

Lincoln warmly greeted the crowd that was present and thanked them for their support during such difficult times in our nation's history. Accompanied by David Wills and the welcoming crowd, President Lincoln was escorted to the Wills house on the Square of Gettysburg.

Although this was a reenactment, it represented an important moment in time that contributed to Lincoln's writing and delivering the famous Gettysburg Address. As Lincoln lodged at the Wills House on the 18th of November, neither he nor those that would hear him speak the following day could have ever imagined the impact of Lincoln's to-be-named Gettysburg Address. This reenactment was even more memorable and authenticated as we were treated to more historic music on the Square by the "President's Own Band". It is wonderful to be able to relish such great historic moments, especially when it is in your own back yard. This was a quality event and we recommend it be repeated in the future preceding Remembrance Day.

As most of us are aware, November 19th has become known as Remembrance Day to honor Lin-

coln's delivery of his Gettysburg Address. Adams County has thus become the keeper of this occasion and hosts a parade to add to the celebration. These activities put a spotlight on how one person's action can have such a profound effect. Having these reminders of the greatness of Lincoln surrounding us serves as a genuine motivation to carry out the functions of government through difficult times and challenges.

We as the Board of County Commissioners have also taken on a number of difficult and bold challenges, however not to the level that Lincoln faced. Our first county budget for 2013 was one of our difficult challenges, but planning our budget for 2014 presents a greater and even more difficult challenge. There are a number of factors that will make the 2014 budget extremely challenging. The overall property value of the county's tax base has only increased by .35% over last year. That equates to \$118,900 in additional tax revenues for 2014. That amount falls well short of covering the increase in the union contract wages for correctional and probation officers. Many of our operational expenses, for

example postage and rent, have been increasing at a rate greater than revenues. We are facing 2014 with our County Prison at capacity, a situation that we have not previously experienced. Additionally, the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") has added in excess of \$200,000 to the County's health insurance program costs. There is essential computer hardware and equipment that is at or approaching the end of its life expectancy and, based upon professional assessment, they must be replaced before failure to function. Such failure leads to costly data recovery.

To deal with these and other increasing operational costs, each department of the county government has been tasked with finding all means of cutting their departmental expenses. Once this process is completed it will be determined whether or not sufficient cuts have been made to bal-

ance the 2014 budget. By the first week in December we plan to present our tentative 2014 county budget. In summary, we anticipate that the 2014 budget will require difficult decisions. These decisions will be based upon practical principles geared toward creating a sustainable budget. Unlike our Federal Government that operates a deficit budget, Adams County will produce a balanced 2014 budget.

On a more cheerful note I would like to thank everyone that contributed non-perishable foods to families facing hardship for Thanksgiving. The Adams County Human Resources department recently received hundreds of pounds of food from County employees and friends. The County's Children & Youth Services will then organize this donated food into gift boxes for deserving families they know and serve. May this spirit of care for others extend into the Christmas season. Best wishes for the Holidays, Jim Martin

State Representative Dan Moul

There has been a flurry of activity in the halls of the Pennsylvania Capitol over the past several weeks as lawmakers near the midpoint of this legislative session. After more than 20 years of relative inaction on transportation funding, the House approved a transportation funding package that will fix Pennsylvania's crumbling roads and bridges, direct more funding to local road and bridge projects and raise the threshold on the state's Prevailing Wage Act, which will make those projects more affordable. For details on the plan, go to www.RepMoul.com.

In other action, the House sent two bills to the governor that will update the Small Games of Chance Act for nonprofit organizations and expand small games to taverns. House Bill 1098 will address reporting requirements, distribution of proceeds and background checks. House Bill 290 further defines the "public interest charities" that benefit from small games, increases prize limits and loosens restrictions on record keeping for smaller organizations. Both bills await the governor's signature.

Hunting season is upon us, and this year property owners who allow hunting on their land will be protected against liability under a new law. Pennsylvania landowners can no longer be held responsible for hunting violations committed by those who are granted permission to hunt on their land unless they aid, abet, assist, attempt or conspire in the commission of the crime. This helps ensure landowners will continue to allow hunting on their land. I am sponsoring a similar bill now under consider-

ation in the House. House Bill 544 would expand protection from liability to landowners who open their land to the public - free of charge - for other recreational uses.

An amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution has been introduced, which would create a merit-based system for appointing statewide judges. Constitutional amendments must pass the General Assembly in two consecutive legislative sessions and be approved by public referendum. Merit selection would focus on the qualifications of

legal temperament, experience, ethics, honesty and fairness, and would restore integrity to the process of filling judicial seats in Pennsylvania. The bill has the support of the current and former governors.

The House also moved to make lobbying more transparent in Pennsylvania. House Bill 744, which passed in the House, would increase the maximum penalty that may be imposed by the Ethics Commission when a lobbyist has committed an unlawful act. The bill is now under consideration in the Senate.

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Bill Eiker

COMMENTARY

Words from Winterbilt

The Holidays

Shannon Bohrer

The holidays are special to me for many reasons. The holiday spirit, the Christmas music, and the friends and family gatherings are just a few items at the top of my list. There are so many things on my list, which is why this time of the year is so special. One very special thing on my list that makes this a truly magical time of the year is that we can dream of “Peace on Earth and Good will toward Men.” I like that dream.

This year there is another reason for good cheer: the fact that the government shutdown is over, at least temporarily. We know this will happen again since this seems to be the new normal course of business. The puzzling part is, why? If the Congress approves the laws, which cost money, why would some members of Congress believe that shutting down the government is a good thing? Do they believe they can just not fund the laws they don't like?

Early in the shutdown, the purpose was to defund the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care). If a party did not like Social Security or Medicare— could they simply not fund it? When the idea of defunding the Affordable Care Act did not go well, the plan changed to reducing the size and cost of the government. At the Values Voter's conference (I guess the rest of us have no values), the people who have the values seemed ecstatic and delight-

ed with the thought of defunding the Affordable Care Act along with a smaller government. A common theme presented at the conference was that the Affordable Care Act is hurting millions of people and it will be responsible for the demise of our freedom, thus hurting millions of people and causing the end of freedom— really, these are very strong words.

Believe it or not, similar words and statements have been spoken before. Medicare was going to be the end of a free people. What some may have forgotten is that Medicare was created because insurance companies routinely dropped elderly people when they got sick. Sound familiar. When one thinks about it, it does make sense. If you only insure healthy people you will have very good profits, which seems like a good business model. One well known quote at that time was “if you don't [stop Medicare] and I don't do it, one of these days you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it once was like in America when men were free.” The author of the quote was Ronald Reagan. He also warned us that if a Medicare law passed, the federal government might control where Americans can live and how they could earn a living. Really! The end of freedom as we know it was a common theme with Medicare just as it is with the Affordable Care Act. I wonder if the people saying that really believed it, or if they are just

so mad about the law(s) that the words they use just reflect their anger.

Another negative political quote (they are easy to find): “Never in the history of the world has any measure been brought in here so insidiously designed so as to prevent business recovery, to enslave workers, and to prevent any possibility of the employers providing work for the people.” This quote does sound recent since it reflects words used in the current rhetoric, however, it was said by Representative John Taber (R-NY) about Social Security in 1936. Even if one disagrees with a law, you would think they could explain their disagreement without recycling past arguments, especially the arguments and predictions that never came to pass. It's like the words “Obama Care is hurting millions of people.” I would guess they are talking about the millions that don't like the law.

Another recycled argument: “This is the largest tax bill in history. And to call it ‘social security’ is a fraud on the workingman.... I am not exaggerating the folly of this legislation. The saving it forces on our workers is a cruel hoax.” This quote was by Alf Landon, the 1936 Republican nominee for president. And then there was “Social Security is the end of democracy”, as stated in a pamphlet by the American Liberty League in 1935. A problem with much of the current argument is the recycled rhetoric and positions — that did not work the first time.



The additional argument that we need to reduce spending is valid — and it is being done. In the first year of Obama's presidency, after tax cuts and new spending, the deficit was 10.1 percent of GDP. This is what the administration started with. By 2012, the deficit has declined to 7 percent of GDP. So that's a decline of 3.1 percentage points. You have to go back 63 years to the period between 1946 and 1949 to find a bigger four-year drop than what the country saw between 2009 and 2012. Of course as long as we carry a deficit — we are still adding to our debt. However, the point is that this administration is reducing spending. However, from their rhetoric you would think the deficit is going up— not down.

As long as one side is the minority and continues to recycle their argu-

ments and continues to have intractable positions, they have a good probability of becoming a marginalized party. As a conservative, I don't like that. Currently our political choices are bad and worst and depending on your beliefs, worst could be the better choice. I would prefer to see my political choices as good and better. I want two parties that focus on the counties interest, not the parties' interest. I want my political choices to be like choosing what flavor of ice cream I want, so I can't make a bad choice. I ask you, is that too much to ask?

Well, at least we have the Holidays, you know— maybe peace on earth would be easier....

To read past editions of Words from Winterbilt, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Common Cents

Divide and rule

Ralph Murphy

Shortly after graduating from college, I was six hours into an eight-hour exam at Langley, Va. for a position with the federal government. They wanted a writing sample, and the question to be discussed was “The role of the UN in today's world”. At the time - Israel's breach of the South Lebanese border without a shot being fired by UN peacekeepers was very much on my mind. So were the realities of a bi-polar world with the west fighting communism and the limited role for even well-meaning, intermediaries such as the United Nations. I scoffed at the UN's potential as a peacemaker and it seems my criticism was well received because I got the job.

The world has changed dramatically since that day, with communism all but gone and the Far East making dramatic, economic progress. Also, democracy was somehow taking hold in Latin America. Many nations now looked to the United Nations to give them a voice in foreign and domestic affairs - a primary reason the UN was created back in 1945. From the beginning, it was charged with “promoting and facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, eco-

nom development, social progress, human rights, civil liberties, political freedoms, democracy, and achieving world peace”. There were 51 founding members, Today this number has risen to 193. Many are new nations that appeared following decolonization in the Third World.

UN Organizations

The “International Court of Justice” is the UN's Hague-based, judicial arm, and a “Secretariat” exists to provide studies and information, along with an “Economic and Social Council”. But, the New York City based “General Assembly” and especially the “Security Council” gets most of the press attention because they deal with such issues as international disarmament and peacekeeping.

The General Assembly includes all UN members and votes on matters such as resolving “non compulsory resolutions of (member) states, admission of new members, and budget” matters. However, only its budget decisions are actually binding. It also elects the 15 International Court of Justice judges for nine-year terms.

The Security Council includes 15 members - ten rotating and five permanent.

The latter includes the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France. Unlike most General Assembly resolutions - Security Council resolutions are legally binding on member nations.

UN Roles and Contributions

No standing UN army exists to enforce Security Council decrees. However, when deemed appropriate, member nations have been known to put together a “Blue Helmet” force to deploy and enforce Security Council decisions. Each of the five, permanent, nuclear-capable, member nations can veto a Security Council resolution. This effectively kills a proposed action unless it is saved by some back room negotiations.

The UN budget is based on a member nation's wealth with the United States contributing the most at 22%. Japan is next with slightly under 11%, followed by Germany at 7.1%. France contributes 5.5% and the UK and China about 5.1%. It is curious that Japan and Germany contribute more than other Security Council members. Also, China's GDP would certainly qualify it for a greater contribution, but for now, these are the facts of life. Russia, is in eleventh place overall and pitches in a mere 2.3% of the total UN bud-

get. A figure that is well below that of cash strapped Spain (3.1%).

The UN as a Peacekeeper

The UN is quite useful in serving as a buffer between warring nations- usually after hostilities have ceased. According to a 2005 Rand Corporation report the “Blue Helmets” have been successful in about two thirds of their peacekeeping missions. They have, in the post WWII period, been the front for western action in campaigns in Korea, and the 1990 Gulf War. The body has also been criticized for its inaction in mass killings in Rwanda, the Congo, Yugoslavia's segmentation, and Darfur. Again, the UN is usually a “peacekeeper”- not a militarily, preemptive “peacemaker”. Most of their campaigns have been in Africa and the Middle East to include “hot spots” such as Mali, South Sudan, and Darfur. They are also currently active in the Israeli-occupied, Golan Heights, Lebanon, and the Western Sahara. The UN has also been useful in controlling hostilities in the India-Pakistan area, Cyprus, and Kosovo.

Military Disarmament

Besides its international peacekeeping work, the UN is heavily involved in military disarmament- another founding goal in its 1945 charter. The body has proven very useful in finding and destroying chemical weapons in Syria, although it has not played a military role in ending the minority govern-

ment's hostilities there. The resulting Syrian casualties and refugee problems are expected to worsen as the parties appear intractably at odds. The United Nations Refugee Agency, that is tasked with providing basic needs for all persons displaced by foreign and civil strife, predicts that a quarter of all Syrians will be described as refugees needing the intergovernmental agency's care. A daunting challenge for the world community attempting to help in that region.

The UN is as powerful and effective as the world's military and economic powers allow it to be. It is routinely a convenient source for “low grade” conflict management. The UN can also be useful in providing legitimacy for reacting to one nation's aggressive acts against another. A good case in point would be the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Republican Guard in the Summer of 1990. This action was condemned by the UN Security Council (Resolution 660) and provided justification for Operation Desert Storm in early 1991.

On balance, the UN remains an important tool for international conflict resolution. It is badly needed in today's multi-polar world of economic and military conflict. If it did not exist, we would probably be inclined to create something just like it.

To read past editions of Common Cents visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Pure OnSense

Who killed HealthCare.gov?

Scott Zuke

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare, has been law for over three years, but has never felt settled. After more than 40 Republican attempts to repeal the law in Congress, a costly federal government shutdown during which a delay in implementation was demanded, and a Supreme Court ruling that upheld the law, but on obscure grounds, it has always felt like it's still up for debate, rather than being the established law of the land.

Part of the reason is also in the design of the law, which front-loaded popular items like letting children stay on their parent's plans longer and barring insurers from refusing to cover children with preexisting conditions, and delayed the more complicated portions of the law until now and into next year. This would normally be clever policy design, except that the ongoing fight over the law has prevented the usual public buy-in that develops over time. Even though support for Obamacare has not changed dramatically since it was passed, the fact that it was never allowed to settle into general acceptance

during its gentle phasing in signals a rough path ahead.

Though not really relevant to the debate over the substance of the ACA, the botched rollout of HealthCare.gov has played into the hands of Obamacare critics. With the highly-visible launch of the critical, and embarrassingly dysfunctional website, they've been handed the perfect confirmation of their argument that the federal bureaucracy is incapable of administering the program.

President Obama has said that passing and implementing the healthcare law is the most important thing in his presidency, and the online exchanges have long been promoted as key to making health insurance more accessible and accommodating to peoples' needs. When people started logging on to the website on October 1, however, it buckled under the strain, revealing insufficient server capacity and a system riddled with incomplete features and programming errors that prevented all but a small fraction of users from registering accounts.

How and why HealthCare.gov's rollout went so disastrously is a case study still being written. Blame has

been doled out in varying degrees to the president and his administration, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the IT contractors who received millions of dollars to build the site.

The contractor drawing the most negative attention is CGI Federal, which won a \$93.7 million contract in 2011 to build the health insurance exchanges. The Canadian-owned company has had a mixed record on its government contracts, finishing some projects on time and on budget and having others get so far off track that they were cancelled.

Despite being the lead developer of the ACA's key component, observers criticized CGI for understaffing the project, leading to missed deadlines and shoddy coding. Although CGI had raised concerns that there was insufficient time to test the system before launch date, their warnings were clearly understated, and their own expectations of what they could finish by the deadline were overly optimistic. By the launch, the system wasn't just untested; it was incomplete and defective.

Some blame may rest with DHHS, which took years to release the final specifications for the program and may have cut into the time CGI expected to have for testing. However, the responsibility still would have fallen to CGI

or the federal project managers to revise the deadlines or reasonable expectations accordingly.

Another explanation for the system's failure is that there was poor coordination between the multitude of contractors who developed different portions of the website. There were "(at least) two sets of contracted developers, apparently in isolation from each other, working on two pieces of a system that had to run together perfectly," writes David Auerbach, a software engineer and writer for Slate.

Actually there were 55 contractors involved in the creation of the exchanges. Auerbach's analysis only looked at the disconnect between two of the most visible ones, and the consequences of that communication failure. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is the federal agency charged with overseeing the website's creation, including coordination of the various contractors, so Auerbach's indictment would probably fall on them.

What's clear is that no one entity is solely responsible for the website's failed launch. But is it fair to say that Government itself, or at least the standard government procurement process for such projects, could be the underlying problem? It's tempting to think so since examples of costly, unattractive, dysfunctional government web-

sites come quickly to mind.

The way accountability works in government tech projects, bare functionality is often the best that can be hoped for, since things like nicer appearance and better usability are expensive to produce and don't result in added revenue the way that they would for a commercial website. The reluctance to overspend tax dollars unfortunately also ends up frustrating citizens trying to use the sites their taxes paid for. HealthCare.gov was supposed to be a step in a new direction.

This wasn't so much a matter of misplaced attention on form over function, but rather a result of needing a website of such size and complexity that weaving everything together was always going to be difficult. And in this, we have to come back to the law itself: a massive piece of legislation with many stakeholders and tough deadlines.

From a technical standpoint, the problems with the ACA's insurance exchanges are fixable. If executed well and quickly, the political fallout may even be fairly limited. Nevertheless, we can expect the label of "the latest HealthCare.gov" to be applied to all bungled website rollouts for some time to come.

To read past editions of Pure OnSense visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Down Under

Knowledge is power

Submitted by Lindsay!
Melbourne, Australia

*"Dost thou not know, my son,
with how little wisdom the world
is governed?"*

—Count Oxenstierna, 1648

The title above is the motto of my old college, one that was supposed to inspire its students to learn; it was assumed that power was the ultimate goal, and you could not get it without knowledge. It took me decades to realize that this was quite stupid, it takes a lot more than knowledge to achieve power, (especially personal drive and desire, hard work and planning), and that once achieved you have to learn how to use it.

When it comes to national power, however, a different picture emerges. Every nation, every state, clan and organization possesses power by virtue of its existence, and in order to retain autonomy must learn how to wield and maintain it. No matter which era in history is studied, the use of power is always a large part of the picture, and the very structure of every society is the constantly changing result. Our daily lives are regulated by it, our desires and plans are moderated by it, and most of us soon learn to live with the major dictates it brings.

Groups and societies that are small enough and sufficiently isolated find it easy to recognize both their friends and enemies, and to deal with them according to custom and experience. As the size of cities and nations grow this becomes more difficult, and complications, machinations and power plays become problems; loyalty and trust start to suffer, and information about the op-

position becomes more and more vital. This in turn leads to the development of covert information gathering, often through diplomats, embassies and secret networks, and by the we time arrive in the present day this has become a major part of every country's armoury.

The world has never had power shared equally among its nations, and empires have come and gone over the millennia, but the battle for supremacy entered a new era with the advent of the internet. No one foresaw the speed with which this technology would develop, no one imagined the ends to which it would be put, and most of us became resigned to sitting back and letting the thing rip, unable to comprehend, or even use, the latest devices; this was the realm of the child and the nerd, happy to play in the foam of the incoming ocean waves.

At the same time the sheer mass of humanity caused intense political and sectarian divisions, bringing revolt and terrorism that quickly became adept at using the web for its own purposes, spreading out from known sources into a myriad other groups and individuals who were opposed in some way to their ruling elites. And this became the greatest ever challenge for the nations that were and are being targeted, chief among them being the United States. Reams have been written of why this is so, but although the why is more important, it is less immediate.

The saga of 9/11 became a fissure in the bedrock of stability, and allowed the magma of impossible fear to well up and scarify the collected awareness of the nation. Carefully considered responses became anathema, and wave after wave of

anti-terrorist laws and departments appeared. The real growth, however, was in intelligence gathering, for it was obvious that lack of knowledge was lack of preventative and retaliatory power. And America, being the home of silicon valley and all that it stands for, was able to utilize its world-wide-web ability to collect, filter, assess, and prepare reports that became plans and strategies to deal with future threats. The world of electronic innovation was more fruitful than that of weapon development in the second world war; software, security and spying became the cloud on which the angels dwelt.

All well and good. No nation has ever gone quietly when confronted with invasion, for that is what 9/11 was eventually seen as, and it was not hard to realize that the re-action above would soon become pre-action, or, as it is now known, proactive strategy. When areas other than anti-terrorism were inevitably added, a course of action was set in motion that has now got the whole world talking, screaming, shaking its head, and bringing forth justification on one side and disbelief on the other.

Enter, shadowlike and stage left, the covert world of the NSA.

We may never know when it extended its security brief into military, trade and diplomatic ones, but its justification is obvious: If, for example, Al Qaeda sets up cells in a friendly Western country which has its own anti-terrorist capability, America needs to know at once. If the cells are disguised as trade or manufacturing, for instance, America might not necessarily find out, who knows if that western country has sufficient ability and will to determine it, so it is essential that the NSA find that out as well.

Which puts the definition of 'friend' in the same basket as that of 'enemy', and backlights the icon of American paranoia. Yes, there's a saying that you need to keep your friends close and your

enemies closer, but nowhere is there a maxim to turn your friends into potential enemies, even if you know they are doing the same as you. Trust is trust, and trying to weed out any bits that might be suspect (according to you) are quite unfriendly acts. Distrust is just that, and they don't mix too well. But, once having entered into the world of double-dealing, the dictionary of double-speak emerges: "We've got obligations to the American people... We've got obligations to our allies... We've got to find the right balance here... we're imbalanced as we stand here..." (John Boehner). "Spying on foreign leaders" was a basic pillar of U.S. intelligence operations." (James Clapper)

And, as it turns out, it is easier to spy on foreigners than on Americans in America, yet every user of Google and Yahoo can be accessed through NSA's program 'Prism', which has 'front door' access to their accounts by court order. That was not enough, apparently. Over 180 million new reports were acquired by NSA from Yahoo and Google in January last through the back door. The companies say they were not aware of this activity, but the result included 'metadata', meaning source and recipient details were available, as well as video, text and audio. Naturally, the NSA will not confirm or deny this, but the figures were supplied by America's second most wanted citizen, Edward Snowden, who got this whole ball of wax started. Like the Wiki leaks revelations, the guys behind the leaks are offshore, knowing that if they surface they will be Guantanamo'd forthwith. The world of secrets is enormous, and exposure of even a little is too much because it shows the extent of the clandestine operations around the world.

Whether the expressed exasperation of certain European leaders is genuine, or a 'shock-horror' cover is irrelevant. What is not are the ques-

tions of civil liberty, democratic transparency, world peace, and finally that of trust. All the knowledge in the world is meaningless if it cannot be interpreted in a sane and far-reaching way. The world cannot run on mistrust, especially when it is big brother doing the mistrusting. Suspicion and fear are the province of dictators, yet the need to protect a country and its citizens from invasion and random destruction is paramount. This is the balancing act that is needed, and so far it seems that the spectre of 9/11 has tipped the scales on the side of the totalitarian response.

Yes, we know that some threats have been kept to the status of potential, not actual, and that may be a worthwhile thing, but when you are all more likely to die from a gunshot, traffic accident, poor food, lack of sanitation or simple despair that you are terrorism, surely it is time to stop crouching in the shadows and make social reforms next on the agenda. Of course, that doesn't make good copy.

I reckon you already know that one of the most important things to have in life is a true friend. One you trust, who trusts you, and who is prepared to share the problems and anxieties of the day. One who supports you, does not aspire to dupe or cheat you, and who at times comes with an insight, a ray of light, a gem of wisdom. Time to show those qualities to your allies, once staunch friends, now more suspicious, but nonetheless a sure way to kill off terrorism. You cannot do it alone.

Knowledge may be power, but we can never know it all and a little knowledge is a dangerous thing - it is national wisdom that is urgently needed.

To read past editions of Down Under visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

THE PASTOR'S DESK

All I want for Christmas...

Pastor John Talcott
Christ Community Church

Someone announces, "I've got good news! We're pregnant!" It's a joyful moment and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the gift of life. Each time my wife, Dana, was pregnant with one of our kids, I was thrilled, anticipating the gift of that child. And at Christmas, we too celebrate the birth of a child, a gift; the one whom the angel declared was "God with us". And that's what makes this season so wonderful. We get to think about and celebrate that amazing moment in time, when the eternal God entered into the world he created... when God came down from heaven, was born as a baby, was named Jesus Christ, and became the most important person who's ever lived. And today there are more songs, paintings, and books written about him than anyone else in the history of the world. Even our calendar, the chronological record of human history, is all about Jesus, having been divided

as B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini, in Latin, meaning "the year of our Lord"). So all of life and eternity as we know it, is centered around the birth of this one baby, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In light of that, the question longs for an answer. Why is his birthday, this gift, so important? Why do we sing the songs, send out the cards, and exchange the gifts? Why was He born? Well here's the answer. Jesus was born so that we might live. His name gives away the reason why he came... Jesus literally means he is our Savior... and he is able to be our Savior because he's without sin. He's God with us. He was born of the Holy Spirit, miraculously conceived in the womb of Mary, not having an earthly father or an inherited sin nature as a biological descendant of Adam. So we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, as the one who was identified as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Now the Bible tells us that the boy Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and men

(Luke 2:52). He matured, lived a life without any sin, and began a ministry of preaching, teaching, healing, and caring for the needy. Jesus lived the most extraordinary life in the history of the world, but truly the most incredible fact is... that he lived to die! The Savior Jesus grew up without sin, went to the cross, and there he died in our place... for our sins... as our substitute. He lived to die and that's why we celebrate two major holidays: his birth at Christmas and his death and resurrection at Easter. The documented eye-witness testimony was that death could not hold him (1 Corinthians 15:3-6). You see death is the consequence for sin, but Jesus had no sin, so he died for your sin and my sin, and just days later he rose from the grave. He died for our sin, was raised for our salvation, and his resurrection is our victory. He ascended into heaven and has gone to prepare a place for us (Acts 1:9; John 14:2). Jesus is alive and well today!

In this we rejoice, but we can't simply appreciate the life of Jesus; we need to experience the life of Jesus. You see, anyone can appreciate the life of Jesus, because he's loving, gracious, merciful, and kind. Anyone can admire the life of Jesus; like Nicodemus did... he was a member of the Jewish ruling council, yet secretly, under the cover of night, Nicodemus came to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2). You see, Nicodemus admired the life of Jesus, but had yet to experience the life of Jesus. So Jesus cuts to the chase and replies to Nicodemus, "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). In other words, only someone who's been born again can experi-



ence the life of Jesus, and this requires two things: repentance and faith. Repentance is where we admit that God is right, we're going the wrong way, and we turn around and go God's way. Faith is where we see ourselves as a sinner, in need of a Savior, and we trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ personally for our sin... my sin and your sin. Jesus described it to Nicodemus this way, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up" (John 3:14). So for us to experience the life of Jesus, one must look upon the cross of Christ, just like the Israelites looked upon that bronze snake on the pole and lived (Numbers 21:8). We must embrace the personal ramifications of our sins upon the Son of God and partake of the great exchange.

In this season of gift-giving and exchanges it really comes down to the fact that God initiated it... that "God so loved the world that he gave..." he gave "his one and only Son, that whoever believes in

him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Christianity is about a gift exchange. God gave and now it's up to you. God gave and here's what he wants... all Jesus wants for Christmas is your sin and my sin. He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). Jews, burdened by rites of religion... sinners, wearied in the ways of iniquity, burdened with the guilt of their offenses... believers, tempted and oppressed by the desires of the flesh... all are invited to come, all are promised rest, and all are offered the gift of salvation. This is the great exchange. The Lord Jesus invites you to come, give him your sin, and to receive from him his resurrection life so that you can be born again. Christmas is a celebration of God's gift; it's an invitation not just to appreciate him, but to experience him, and to receive the gift of eternal life.

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THE BOOK OF DAYS

St. Nicholas



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

The history of St. Nicholas does not end with his death and burial. His relics were preserved with great honour at Myra, till the end of the eleventh century, when cer-

tain merchants of Bari, on the Adriatic, moved by a pious indignation similar to what actuated the Crusaders, made an expedition to the coast of Lycia, and landing there, broke open the coffin containing the bones of the saint, and carried them off to Italy. They landed at Bari on the 9th of May 1087, and the sacred treasure, which they had brought with them, was deposited in the church of St. Stephen. On the day when the latter proceeding took place, we are told that thirty persons were cured of various distempers through imploring the intercession of St. Nicholas, and since that time his tomb at Bari has been famous for pilgrimages.

Perhaps no saint has enjoyed a more extended popularity than St. Nicholas. By the Russian nation, he has been adopted as their patron, and in England no fewer than three hundred and seventy-two churches are named in his honour. He is regarded as the special guardian of virgins, of children, and of sailors. Scholars were under his protection, and from the

circumstance of these being anciently denominated clerks, the fraternity of parish clerks placed themselves likewise under the guardianship of St. Nicholas. He even came to be regarded as the patron of robbers, from an alleged adventure with thieves, whom he compelled to restore some stolen goods to their proper owners.

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

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

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

A second nocturnal visit was paid to the house by the saint, and a similar present bestowed, which procured a dowry for the second daughter of the nobleman. But the latter was now determined to discover his mysterious benefactor, and with that view set himself to watch. On St. Nicholas approaching, and preparing to throw in a purse of money for the third daughter, the nobleman caught hold of the skirt of his robe, and threw himself at his feet, exclaiming: 'O Nicholas! servant of God! Why seek to hide thyself?' But the saint made him promise that he would inform no one of this seasonable act of munificence.

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

In convents, the young lady-boarders used, on the same occasion, to place silk-

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

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

The young men, arriving at the town late in the evening, resolved to defer their visit till the morning, and in the meantime took up their abode at an inn. The landlord, in order to obtain possession of their baggage, murdered the unfortunate youths in their sleep; and after cutting their bodies to pieces, and salting them, placed the mutilated remains in a pickling tub along with

some pork, under the guise of which he resolved to dispose of the contents of the vessel. But the Archbishop was warned by a vision of this horrid transaction, and proceeded immediately to the inn, where he charged the landlord with the crime.

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

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

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

To read more from Robert Chamber's *The Book of Days* visit www.thebookofdays.com.



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"... and there is no new thing under the sun."

—Ecclesiastes 1: 9.

Autumn slipped in and is slipping by quietly this year. The rain-fall graph in my computer climbed at the normal rate all year until September; then the regular showers we had been getting every week or so suddenly stopped, and the graph flattened out. There was one storm in mid-October when we got over seven inches of rain in two days, but aside from that, it's been dry. Technically it isn't a drought, because we've had piddling little showers every couple of weeks, and it hasn't been hot enough to cause much evaporation. If the sun hadn't been slipping farther south so the afternoon shadows reached farther into the yard each day, I hardly would have noticed that it was fall.

The trees did notice it, of course; their lives are attuned to rain. Most of the leaves just shriveled up instead of turning color. Then on November 7 we had a quarter of an inch of rain; the leaves came down, and the mountain west of town turned from orange to gray over-night. But everything else was gradual. Chim-

ney swifts, catbirds and chipping sparrows just drifted away instead of flocking, and you hardly noticed until one day you looked around and they simply weren't here any more. Likewise, the winter birds are wandering in with no apparent sign of urgency; white-throated sparrows and juncos appeared a few at a time at my feeder, but white-crowns, purple finches and fox sparrows haven't got here yet.

Of course, we've always had a year like this every so often, and when you're younger it doesn't bother you. But as you grow older, you get to thinking in metaphors... things like the autumn of life, for example... and you end up in a blue funk because you're tempted to think you've seen it all and there's nothing new left under the sun. That's what was running through my mind as I walked to the post office a couple of weeks ago, and by the time I got there I had concluded that if Ecclesiastes is right, old age is going to be pretty boring. That was a depressing thought, and my mood was getting progressively darker until I was almost home. But then, I discovered that it isn't true; right before my eyes was a sight I'd never seen before... in fact, never even imagined. Standing on the roof of the Presbyterian

church was a great blue heron.

Now, don't get me wrong... I've been a serious birder for over 60 years, and great blue herons are a common sight around here. Many local folks call them "fish storks" because they are often seen around streams and farm ponds, wading in the water on legs nearly two feet long and spearing fish and frogs with a beak the size of a bread knife. If you go out and look, you can find them just about any time except when the weather gets cold enough to freeze the water where they fish. They're interesting to watch... their neck is as long as their legs, but they keep it folded against their shoulders when they're flying, and when they land and straighten it out, it looks like their head has popped out of their shoulders on a spring. I've known them forever, almost like old friends, but I never realized before that they were Presbyterians. But there was proof: my old friend, peering down at me from the highest point in the west end of Emmitsburg, clearly displeased because the church was closed and he couldn't go inside to meditate.

An experience like that plays amazing tricks on your mind. I couldn't stop thinking about it, and it nearly got me in trouble. A couple of



days later, I had to go to Baltimore, and I found myself in the middle lane of the beltway, driving eastward at 65 mph in a zone clearly marked 50 mph. Traffic was passing me both sides, and a large truck was about 10 feet behind me, noisily shifting gears and racing its engine, sending a clear message that I should either move it or get out of the way. There was no time to do anything but grip the steering wheel and pray, but then something caught my eye. On the arm of a street-lamp that sticks out over the road, where you expect to see crows or pigeons, were two turkey vultures. They were sitting in their typical hunch-backed posture, gazing down at me through shining red eyes, and grinning in the certain knowledge that disaster was about to happen and I would soon be another lump of roadkill on their menu.

In about a tenth of a millisecond, the idea flashed through my mind that the vultures were in a high place, but they certainly weren't friends... so maybe they were an omen of some kind. The word, "SARKY!" flashed before my eyes, and I instinctively took my foot off the accelerator. The driver of the truck behind me hit his air horn, giving a blast that sounded like all the trumpets of Gabriel, and I recovered consciousness and resumed speed soon enough to avoid disaster. I got out of the way and let the truck pass, and I guess the rest of the trip was uneventful, though I don't remember any details. It was nice to get back to Emmitsburg.

I figured it all out later. In that microsecond, my memory had conjured up a scene from Walt Kelly's comic strip, "Pogo," which took place 50 years ago in the Okefe-

noke Swamp. Among the citizens who lived there was a turkey vulture named Sarcophagus MacAwber. Everyone called him "Sarky," and no one liked or trusted him. He always wore a black stove-pipe hat like undertakers used to wear in the old days, and he didn't associate much with the rest of the characters... which was fine with them. Mostly, he just sat in the top of a dead tree with his shoulders hunched over, peering around with red-rimmed eyes and grinning like Snidely Whiplash did in the "Dudley Do-Right" cartoons my kids used to watch on TV, secure in the knowledge that if he just waited, disaster was bound to happen to someone.

Fall continues to drift along. The leaves on my lawn are damp from a misty drizzle last Sunday, but the drought is still with us and Toms Creek is flowing shallow. The heron is finding it harder to catch fish there, so yesterday he was back on the church roof again; his posture up there suggested that he might be praying for rain, but he was also keeping an eye on the goldfish pond in my neighbor's yard, two lots farther down the road. In the sky above him were two turkey vultures, soaring in circles without moving their wings; they were so high I could only see them in silhouette, but I knew what they are thinking: that which is done is that which will be done, and there is no new thing under the sun. Life goes on, as it always has. Thanksgiving is coming; be grateful for your life, and enjoy it.

To read past editions of The Retired Ecologist visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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Have you seen any Grosbeaks?

Rusty Ryan
South Mountain Audubon Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

literally eat all you have to offer than move onto the next person's feeder.

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

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

Pine Siskin - This non-descript bird has a thin bill designed for smaller seeds. For those folks who choose to provide niger (nyger) seed than this bird may just end up spending time at your feeder. Specialty feeders which are for "finches" are usually tube shaped with a perch located below a slit opening. The siskins thin bill is perfect for retrieving the niger seed. I suggest if you plan to feed niger to the birds that you invest in a proper feeder that allows the specialty birds to eat from because niger seed is quite expensive and you certainly don't want to allow all birds to feed from a feeder full of niger with big openings.

News Flash: According to the 2013/2014 Winter Finch Forecast compiled by Mr. Ron Pittaway of Canada, the general forecast for the upcoming season will be that some southward movement of typical irruptive species is expected. Let's cross our fingers that the forecast is right and we all get a chance to view these northern specialty bird species.

Citizen Scientists Get Involved!

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

Audubon Christmas Bird Count - This annual event is held each Decem-

ber/January and was started in 1990.

It is the world's longest running wildlife survey and it is primarily conducted by everyday citizen volunteers. This count differs from some counts in that the count period is a selected 24 hour period within a pre-determined several week period. Participants are given a designated area by the count compiler. The participant seeks out to locate and count individual birds of each species. The majority of observations are done by identifying the bird species by visual means but the more skilled participants can identify the birds by the sound they make. Data is then given to the count compiler who then logs in the data to the computer where the scientists will look for trends in both population and distribution. Note: The South Mountain Audubon Society (Gettysburg) has selected December 14, 2013 as their annual count day. Check out their website.

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

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)

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

North American Breeding Bird Survey - This count is similar to the various winter counts except the count is generally held in May or June when the majority of North America bird



Have you seen any Evening Grosbeaks?

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

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

Useful web sites

The Great backyard Bird Count - www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Audubon Christmas Bird Count - www.birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count

Project Feeder Watch - <http://feeder-watch.org/>

North American Breeding Bird Survey - <https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/index.cfm>

www.pabirds.org

www.aba.org

www.marylandbirding.com

www.birdingpal.org

www.pabirdingtrails.org

<http://www.southmountainaudubon.org/>

www.ebird.org

<http://www.birdsource.org/ibs/irruption.html>

<http://www.partnersinflight.org/>

<http://www.jeaniron.ca/2013/forecast.htm>

To read other articles by Rusty Ryan visit the Authors section of [Emmitsburg.net](http://www.emmitsburg.net).

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IN THE COUNTRY

Hoooo is coming to Strawberry Hill?

Madison McMann

Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve in Fairfield, PA is excited to announce its newest environmental education project: a brand new Barred Owl exhibit and educational program!

Barred Owls are native to the state of Pennsylvania and their range covers most of the Eastern half of the United States. Their distinctive call of 'Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?' can often be heard after dark at Strawberry Hill and throughout many rural areas. These owls prefer to live in forested areas away from dense human populations. However, as their habitat shrinks due to deforestation they are becoming increasingly common in suburban areas as well. Like most owl species, Barred Owls are nocturnal and do most of their hunting at night. They prefer to sit on high

perches in the trees and swoop down onto their prey, which is most often some kind of small mammal or bird. Barred Owls generally lay two to four eggs between January and May, depending on how far north they are living, and the eggs hatch about four weeks later.

Because they are highly sensitive to areas that have been affected by logging, Barred Owls are often viewed as an indicator species when evaluating the health of forests. While a decrease in the amount of logging occurring in their natural range has led to a population increase for their species, habitat destruction is still the primary threat to Barred Owls, who prefer to nest in large, dead trees. At least twice during the post-Civil War era, the land at Strawberry Hill was subjected to logging to operate the timber mill on the property, located in what

is today called the Lane House. Many of the trails found at Strawberry Hill today were created as a result of the logging on the property. Strawberry Hill has since recovered from the logging, and while selective timbering still occurs on the property to maintain the overall health of the forest, the prominent presence of Barred Owls on the grounds indicates that the forest is in good condition.

With the debut of this Barred Owl educational program, Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve will be providing the community with the only raptor program in Adams or any of the surrounding counties in Pennsylvania. Because Barred Owls and many other raptor species are commonly found in this area, the current lack of educational programming involving these species is a missed opportunity to educate the public about animals they have probably admired in their own backyards. The proposed educational program, in addition to educating visitors about the Barred Owl specifically, would examine the 'big picture' of raptor status and conservation. The program offers the public a unique opportunity to get to know a native animal that they may frequently hear but rarely see. Learning about the wild animals that live in the area will help raise awareness about how our actions impact those animals and the environment as a whole, which furthers Strawberry Hill's mission to provide environmental education.

Many people have experienced an animal program at some point during their lives. But have you ever thought about the type of work that goes into launching a new program? Money might be a requirement that pops into many people's minds. Funds were raised for this project on November 2 at the 12th annual Party for the Preserve. Thanks to the extreme generosity of



Strawberry Hill's Barred Owl educational program will examine the "big picture" of raptor status and conservation.

the donors, Strawberry Hill was able to raise much of the money needed to get the program up and running.

The next phase of the project involves the conceptualization of the educational program itself. The program will be adapted for both children and adult audiences and will therefore be offered in the format of evening program for adults as well as school field trip programs for children. In addition, the bird will be able to serve as an 'animal ambassador' and travel off-site to schools and community events.

After the content of the program has been created, a plan for every aspect of care for the owl will need to be generated. This includes determining the bird's diet and feeding schedule as well as how and when the aviary will be cleaned; creating protocols for how the bird will be handled and trained; setting up a medical care plan for the bird; and determining who will handle the owl; and how they will be trained.

Once the snow melts and spring arrives, Strawberry Hill will begin the next phase of the project: renovating the existing aviary, located by the Lane House, so that it is suitable for a Barred Owl. This includes the addition of perches and a nesting box; a change in the substrate at the bottom of the aviary; and the addition of a second door to the aviary to prevent the owl from escaping. For the safety of the owl and visitors, the area around

the aviary will be refurbished as well to include a fence and the area will be landscaped using native plant species.

Once the aviary renovation is complete, Strawberry Hill will be able to apply for the federal and state permits to obtain an owl. The application process is extensive and the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will carefully review the educational program and the care and training protocols for the owl as well as conduct an inspection of the aviary before the permits are granted. This process will take several weeks; however, after Strawberry Hill receives the permitting, the search for a Barred Owl can begin. It is illegal in the United States to keep a raptor in captivity if it is capable of being safely released into the wild, so the owl will need to be acquired from a raptor rehabilitation facility in the mid-Atlantic region. The owl we receive would not be able to survive in the wild. After the owl has been acquired, potential handlers will be slowly introduced to the owl, and training for the owl and handlers will begin.

In October of 2014, it is projected that the raptor program will debut at Strawberry Hill. In addition to the educational benefits and the increased community outreach, the program is expected to be able to sustain itself after its first year and bring in additional revenue to Strawberry Hill. After the program has been established, future goals associated with this project include the construction of an outdoor amphitheater in which many educational programs, including the owl program, can be given in a scenic outdoor setting. Another goal is to make the aviary area wheelchair accessible so the owl exhibit can be enjoyed by guests with disabilities.

Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve is a 501(c)3 nonprofit located in the South Mountain Region of Adams County, Pennsylvania. Since its inception in 1986, the preserve has strived to protect the Swamp Creek watershed, the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and connect our community with the natural world through forest stewardship and environmental education at our 609 acre preserve. The preserve is open to the public free of cost and visited each year by over 10,000 school children, hikers, birders, picnickers, and outdoor enthusiasts.

For more interesting information about Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve visit www.StrawberryHill.org, call 717-642-5840, or email info@strawberryhill.org.

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IN THE COUNTRY

King of the Forest

Tim Iverson, Naturalist
Cunningham Falls State Park

The Red Shouldered Hawk is known as the king throughout deciduous hardwood forests of Eastern North America. This small stocky bird is the culmination of millions of years of evolution to be a streamlined bird of prey. This little red raptor is capable of dodging and weaving through dense forest canopy and thick brushy understory of old growth forests in search of its prey. Yes, this bird claims its place at the top of the food chain and isn't looking to share with anyone else.

Red Shouldered Hawks are ubiquitously found east of the Mississippi from Maine down to parts of Mexico. It thrives in old growth forests eating primarily small mammals, snakes, amphibians, and from time to time smaller birds. This forest king will perch just below the canopy and scan the forest floor for food. Once prey has been spotted it quickly soars down and snatches its meal. This small hawk contends for the same habitat and food resources as other predator birds like the Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Red-Tailed Hawk.

In order to avoid competition for limited resources the Red Shouldered Hawk is active during the day time, while Barred and Great Horned Owls are active at night. The Red Shouldered Hawk is also very aggressive and defensive. You can often hear their calls ring out through forests sounding like "kee-rah" repeated over and over again. This serves as a warning to interlopers to butt out. Crows regularly gang up on Red Shouldered Hawks in order to drive them out of their territory to protect their young. However, occasionally the Crow and Red Shoulder will team up to drive out a mutual enemy – The Great Horned Owl. There has been at

least one documented case from National Geographic of one Red Shouldered Hawk giving chase to a Great Horned Owl. Meanwhile the hawk's mate captured and feasted on a juvenile Great Horned Owl from the nest.

This forest king is listed as "Least Concern" as far as its overall conservation status. However, populations have been in steady decline due to deforestation. Timber stands are harvested for commercial use and suburban sprawl have encroached on their habitat. As a result population numbers are thinning, especially in the Northeastern United States. Frequently these raptors have fatal encounters with cars. Litter alongside roadsides is a significant contributor to this problem. Often time's people throw food trash such as banana peels, apple cores, or empty food bags that attracts the prey that these birds feed on. When raptors swoop down to secure their meal they are struck by cars. Throwing away trash alongside the roadway is unnecessary and destructive to raptors of all kinds. The best contribution people can give to this or any other raptor is to throw away trash properly.

Another way to positively impact future populations of the Red Shouldered Hawk is to plant trees. The state of Maryland recently began an initiative to increase forested lands to 43,000 acres in the next seven years. This goal was set forth by the Forest Preservation Act of 2013. The Department of Natural Resources also has a program called TREE-Mendous Maryland that allows private citizens to purchase a tree to be planted on public lands. Renewing and providing new forested habitat is another one of the best ways to ensure a steady population. Regardless, last month I discussed trees, so to avoid beating a dead horse, I'll just leave it at that.

The aviary at Cunningham

Falls State Park houses one of these forest kings. This bird, like so many others there, was hit by a car. It is one of the fortunate few that survived, but as a result of being hit can no longer survive on its own. One wing had to be amputated because of the accident, and cannot fly. This bird would surely starve or get picked off by a predator if it were to be released, so his new purpose in life is to educate visitors on human interaction and how we can be fatally careless in regards to others in shared territory. Her home at the aviary boasts several perch varieties and enrichment activities to stimulate problem solving and brain activity.

Another great way to help raptors like this is through the symbolic "animal adoptions" program that is offered by the Scales & Tales program and aviary. *Cue heart wrenching ASCPA type commercial* By symbolically adopting one of these animals the donation money received goes towards paying for veterinary care, new enrichment activities, supplies, and more. Those who choose to adopt receive a fact sheet and cardstock letter of recognition with a picture of the animal adopted. Needless to say, they make great gift ideas or stocking stuffers for this particular time of the year (I know, I know...shameless self-promotion).

Take a hike through the forest, drop by the aviary, or keep an astute eye peeled in your neighborhood and you just might see one of these magnificent birds for yourself. Through simple actions everyone can have a huge impact on securing the future of this forest king. Disposing of trash in a trash can or planting a tree are incredibly easy ways to both save raptors from potential disaster and keeping our shared habitat beautiful.

To read other articles by Tim Iverson, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net



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A PRICELESS CHRISTMAS GIFT...

We had such a great response from our holiday photos last year and the folks at the *Emmitsburg News-Journal* are so awesome that we're doing it again! These are just a few of the sweethearts hoping to find a home for the holidays at the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter. If the time isn't right for you to adopt at the moment, please still take a minute and look over these adorable faces and keep them in mind for friends and family. Talk these babies up! If you can't adopt, you could always donate items on our wish list, which can be found at www.cvas-pets.org under donations. Giving supplies to help these babies makes sure they'll be comfortable while they wait for their forever homes. Please know that none of these animals is in any danger. CVAS is a low-kill facility and once an animal reaches the adoption kennels, he or she is typically there until adoption. I cannot adequately express what a privilege it has been to work with the *Emmitsburg Journal* and its readers. I wish you all the happiest of holidays and be sure to give your four-legged friends a kiss for me!

For more information about adopting one of these pets, please call the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter at 717-263-5791 or visit their website at www.cvas-pets.org. The Adams County Animals Shelter is always looking for humans seeking canine or feline companionship. You can contact them at 717-334-8876 or visit them on-line at www.adamscountyspca.org. And you can never go wrong dropping by the Frederick County Animal Shelter. Visit them on-line at www.frederickcountymd.gov/FCAC or call them at 301-600-1546.



Belle Starr is a 2-year-old German Shepherd mix who was dropped of overnight in the outdoor run at the shelter, so we don't know anything about her previous life story. She can be a little nervous at times, but it's probably because she doesn't understand why she's in a shelter and hasn't been completely socialized properly. Belle Starr does like to play ball. She can also be an "alarm barker, which means if there's a knock on the door, she'll let you know she hears something. This gorgeous girl really needs a home.



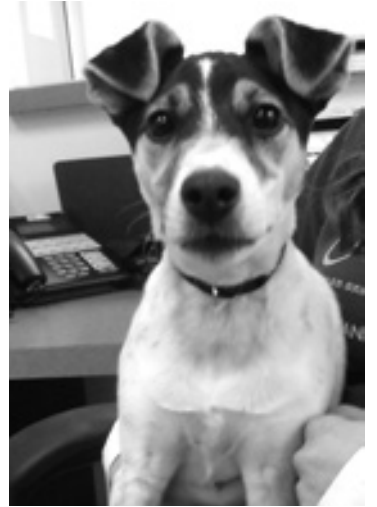
Cheyenne is a 2-year-old Boxer/Shepherd mix, near as we can tell. She's a beautiful brindle color with a little bit of white on her paws and chest and has the most interesting ears, too. One folds over while the other stands straight up! Cheyenne is a playful and active girl looking for someone who can keep up with her. She does know how to sit and would be happy to learn more. Cheyenne would do best in a home with children older than 6. Can you give Cheyenne her second chance?



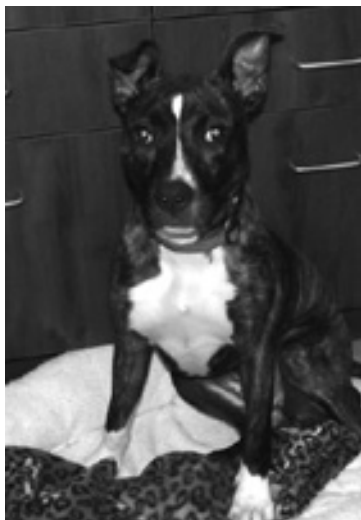
Sergio is a very handsome black-and-white, 2-year-old pit mix, who, with his coloration and perky ears kind of looks like a funny border collie. Sergio is a very happy boy who can listen very well. Due to his size, we recommend that he goes to a home with children older than 8. Do you have the right spot for this sweetheart?



Bonnie is a sweet, 10-year-old girl who would enjoy a nice, fenced in yard and even softer sofa! She was looking forward to spending her golden years with her elderly owners but they unfortunately passed away and she's been left behind. Bonnie had lived in a house with 3 other boxers so she should be okay around other dogs, but it doesn't appear she likes cats. According to her vet history, she has a 1 out of 6 heart murmur but that hasn't changed in the three years she has seen that vet. Her paperwork says that she is a Boxer mix but we think she could be an Old English Bulldog. If you have it in your heart to give this old gal a place to live out the rest of her golden years, stop by and meet her! Can you give Cheyenne her second chance?



Gilligan is a 5-month-old Terrier mix, who, as you can imagine is full of energy. Because of his age and breed and energy level, Gilligan will need someone who can provide him plenty of exercise and training. We've had him around other dogs and he can be a little dominant and rough, make sure your baby can tolerate a nippy puppy. Look at that face, though!



Korin is a 5-month-old, brindle-and-white pit mix. She's very much a puppy and quite active. Korin will do well with some training. She loves to play with toys and cuddle. She's going to make a really great companion.



Danny is a 4-year-old terrier mix who is a real sweet boy, but he can be independent. Danny loves to play and run and meet people. He follows people around and seems to do well with other dogs. Do you have the right spot for Danny?

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

To a poor and lonely stray I'd give:

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

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

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

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

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

-- Author Unknown

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Oh, **Murdock**. This guy is one cool cat. He's a 5-year-old brown tabby who has that cat look, doesn't he? He can be a chatty Cathy when people come up to his cage. This big, sweet boy really needs to get out of a cage and into a loving home.



Zena is a gorgeous 5-year-old lady who has classic tabby markings trimmed in white. Zena loves people and being petted and has been with the shelter since December 2012. She just needs someone to take a chance on her so she can show how great she can be.



Lia is an 8-month-old all white girl with gorgeous blue eyes. She's so sweet and rather unique. From what we can tell, we think she may be deaf, so potential adopters will have to understand all that is involved in having a cat who can't hear. Lia just really needs that special someone to get her out of a cage.



Frisky is a 3-year-old, orange-and-white female who is a sweet girl. She was surrendered to the shelter because her owner could no longer keep her. Frisky likes to talk and will meow when you ask her how she's doing. Do you have the right spot for this sweetheart?



Sateen is a 6-year-old black-and-white girl who was surrendered to the shelter because she and her sister Roxy, who is also 6 and black-and-white, didn't get along with dogs. Roxy and Sateen are bonded pets and we would prefer they be adopted together. They are both front declawed and just need a second chance.



Twinkie is a 3-year-old, all white cat looking for a companion. When she came to the shelter, it appeared as though some other cat had bitten her tail and it was healing. She was also dirty and very thin. Now she's much better and ready to find the love of a lifetime. She's been with the shelter since November 2012 and hopes to have a home for Christmas. Come meet Twinkie and see if you're that special person.



If you're looking for a cat who's larger than life, **Wally** is the fellow for you. This gray tabby-with-white is about three years old and one sweet fellow. Unfortunately, he's been in a cage since February and he pretty much just sleeps and eats. Because of that he's put on a lot of weight. He's the dearest soul and will lick the air when he gets his back scratched. Can you help Wally?



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THE MASTER GARDENER

Holiday gifts for the gardener

Shirley Lindsey, Penn State Master Gardener in Adams County

John Esslinger, Extension Educator, Penn State Extension in Lackawanna County

Mary Ann Ryan, Queen of Christmas Present

It's that time of year again! What do I get for gifts? Here is a wealth of ideas from a few of our Penn State Extension gardeners. And, if, by chance, you know any Master Gardener and wandering what to do, this may just be the list you were looking for this holiday season!

Seed starting kits: This is a great gift for gardeners who like to start their own plants. There are also kits where you can grow herbs from seed to harvest. Heat mats are great as well since this makes seed starting so much easier.

The obvious – Plants! A fruit tree that is the favorite variety of that friend or family member may be just the thing they are looking for. Does the person like wine? Consider giving a couple of wine grape vines. Is the gardener a baker? Brambles, like raspberries or blackberries, or ground covers like strawberries may be just the perfect gift. Who knows, the recipient may

even share a pie or bottle of wine with you some day.

Pollinator friendly plants, like *Clethra alnifolia*, also make a great gift. The plant can be purchased now and delivered in the spring to the recipient directly from the nursery. Plants are a gift that the person will enjoy for many years to come. Is he/she a butterfly gardener? How about coneflowers or butterflyweed to add to their garden in the spring?

Houseplants: Many gardeners not only enjoy plants on the outside, but like plants on the inside as well. If you know the environment that plants will be growing, stop at a garden center and see what's available. This time of year you can always pick up a Norfolk Island Pine or peace lily; both are very easy to grow, and a great gift idea for the gardener. How about bulbs like amaryllis or paperwhites? These can be enjoyed through the winter months – or – there are programs where you can have blooming plants delivered right to their home each month for the gardener to enjoy indoors!

Other blooming plants like cyclamen, Christmas cactus and poinsettias are always a sure thing to give at the holidays. Looking online for care of these plants



Trust me, gardeners never have enough tools! If you're not sure which tool to get for your gardening enthusiast, drop by the Agway in Gettysburg and ask for Eric. He'll help you!

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and attaching the directions to the plant is a great idea if the gardener is a beginner to the indoor plant world.

What about herbs? Growing herbs indoors can be quite a challenge, but gardeners are often looking for that challenge. If the gardener is a cook, this may be just the thing for them!

Tools: Does the person you are shopping for have by-pass clippers? They are preferred over the type that clamp together, sometimes bruising the stem you are cutting. Any kind of tool is always appreciated. I have a dandelion digger - a

long skinny forked metal blade on a handle. It gets lots of use. Another great tool is a lawn rake where the tines collapse to make a very narrow rake; you can get in between your plants with one of these.

Garden Art: How about a sundial or other garden ornament? If you are thinking bigger, maybe the gardener would like a trellis, birdhouse, bird bath, some comfortable lawn furniture, or even a water garden or water garden accessories.

Cozy Necessities: Does the gardener own some good garden gloves? If they do any rough work like pruning roses, they may want

some with a heavy cuff that goes almost to the elbow. Even if they already have a pair, more than one is always appreciated. Personally I have an ambition to have some of those garden shoes that slip on easily and you can just hose them off. Many of us like those foam kneeling pads or knee pads; they make the gardening hours much more comfortable.

A Truck: Not a real truck, (although I'm pretty sure that wouldn't be turned down) but one of those light weight 2-wheel jobs, that are so much easier to pull or push than a wheelbarrow. Our wheelbarrow is so heavy and hard to push that I can hardly move it when it is empty, but the garden truck that my husband fixed up for me is very easy to use. It has a bar handle and you can push or pull, depending on your needs.

Tool Caddy: The one I have fits over a five-gallon bucket. There are pockets on the inside and outside. I think it was designed for a carpenter's tools, but works great for gardening. No more wondering where I might have left my favorite trowel.

Containers: Those of us who have very little space really appreciate growing plants in containers. Although I may not be able to put an arrangement in a lovely container on my deck until next spring, I would be delighted to receive a nice pot or other container for Christmas. Hanging baskets, window boxes or seedling trays are some other container ideas.

Garden Calendar: I have sat at my desk and enjoyed a beautiful calendar that I received last

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The Word did not become a philosophy, a theory, or a concept to be discussed, debated, or pondered. The Word became a person to be followed, enjoyed and loved!

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. *John 1:14*

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THE MASTER GARDENER

Small Town Gardener Death of a conversation

Marianne Willburn

Not so long ago I was leisurely wandering with an old friend through his garden when I spied the familiar burnt orange of leaf blotch discoloring what could only be a large horse chestnut tree near his drive. I was surprised to see the tree in such a dry, rural Californian setting and proclaimed my discovery whilst springing over to examine the telltale conkers lying in a mass of opened husks under its branches.

He was not so sure, having remembered a different name given to him years ago with the tree, lost to the depths of time. We picked up the rich mahogany colored seeds as we talked, and after much time spent in “maybes” and “maybe nots” went on to discuss the Californian Buckeye, slipping into dormancy around those Western towns. The conversation was an easy one, I being fairly sure and he being fairly sure, and much good-natured bantering between us as we wandered along his hillside terraces on a lovely afternoon – eventually moving on to other trees, other thoughts and other stories.

A few days later I am sitting at a dinner party with friends, old and new. We are discussing a film from the Eighties: “Was it made in ’87 or ’88?” someone asks. “Certainly ’87,” says an authoritative film junkie. Another tries to mark it with events...a presidency...or the year banana clips made their debut perhaps. “Was that the year the Wall came down?” another wonders... “Nope, definitely ’89 on that one” shouts a history buff. The conversation is in full swing now, everyone offering their opinion, everyone sure of his or her facts, and much laughter ensuing.

Suddenly one of the participants pulls out his smart phone and starts to tap rhythmically upon its screen, hailing the modern Oracle. Almost in challenge, another guest pulls out hers and they duel silently for the gift of an ultimate answer.

There is a awkward hush to the laughter, as those around the table realize that resolution will soon be reached and to banter further would be futile. Long seconds go by and a guest offers up a new conversation starter, but it will be minutes before the dialogue resumes its momentum. A few more seconds pass and the Oracle speaks: 1988.

Someone is right, someone is wrong. There will be no open ended ‘maybes’ here. The other duelist offers up a youtube clip of a famous scene – it is passed around the table, creating a solitary experience between viewer and screen where a brief moment ago there was group cohesion. Inev-

itably this leads to more clips, and more quiet, as diners politely wait their turn. Now that the ice has been broken, another friend feels justified in checking her email under the table. The age of instant information has not only dawned – it is sitting at your dinner table one-upping the guests.

I readily admit that technological advances over the last ten years have made my job a lot easier. I no longer need to be at my desk with RHS manuals within reach to find out the name of that amazing unnamed Floribunda I came across on a garden tour. I can write on vacation and send articles to editors over invisible wireless connections that hum with the presence of the hive mind – ever busy, ever building, ever updated.

You will not see me trying to turn in my laptop for a Remington 1953 Quiet Riter, nor will I shun the miracle of gardeners communicating internationally and instantaneously over the merits of a certain plant. So you will forgive me I hope for feeling a bit defensive as I watch civilization’s oldest art, that of conversation, being hijacked and left for dead on the information super highway.

You may argue that conversation is evolving into something else, something befitting a new, interconnected world, and though I recognize that our world is changing at lightning speed, I will quietly counter with this:

We will always be, at our core, human animals in need of genuine human contact; and the personal relationships forged in sincere, focused conversation, whether over a fabulous fettuccine alfredo or over a gorgeous *Frittilaria imperialis*, can only make our lives richer and our bonds with one another stronger. Why cheapen that experience with only half of your consciousness - the other half compulsively checking what the rest of the world is up to just in case you miss something? Living “in the moment” cannot mean every moment simultaneously.

So, when you are lucky enough to share a table with your nearest and dearest, please resist the urge to quick-draw the pocket sized Oracle from its holster. No one really needs to know the definitive answers to an evening’s trivia, nor does the world need to be updated on what you’re eating or where you are. The only people who matter are those around that table, and giving them one hundred percent of you is the very best gift you can give.

Save those texts for later, and you will be saving a great deal more than that.



When making your Christmas shopping list, don't forget about your feathered friends who sing to you while you garden!

year. Each month the flower pictures seem more attractive. Many of these garden calendars also have suggestions for what needs to be done in the garden each month of the year.

Hand Lens: For the gardeners out there who really get into the botany of gardening, a hand lens might be just the thing to examine the fine respects of a plant.

Subscriptions: One way to give a gift so the receiver will think of you with each issue, is to give a subscription to a magazine. Most gardeners enjoy magazines about gardening or attracting birds, butterflies, or other wildlife to our gardens. Your local extension offices also have publications like *Growing Vegetables*, *Fruit Production for the Home Gardener* or *Herbs for the Home Gardener* for a nominal fee.

Gift Certificates: You can obtain gift certificates at any nursery or store that sells gardening supplies. Then the recipient can go and pick out whatever he or she needs. It’s such fun to into a store and know that you have the equivalent of money that just must be spent.

Another type of gift certificate is a “promise” type. Can you take your gardener friend to Longwood Gar-

dens or some other lovely public garden? That would be something us garden lovers would look forward to with excitement! Or how about a “promise” to help with spring planting or some other garden chore throughout the season, or a truck full of compost or mulch? Every gardener needs a little compost in their life, any time of year.

And here’s an “out of the box” idea – if you are one of those people that exchange gifts prior to Christmas, what about gifting a Christmas tree? A live tree would be great for the gardener in your life as they can plant it outdoors after the season, so not only are you thought of during the decorating of the tree and throughout the season, but you will be thought of every day as the tree grows after planting! Or take the gardener on a “cut your own” trip and enjoy together what the season has in store.

So take these ideas and run with them! Hopefully this is a good start to opening up the door to some great gardening gifts. Any gardener would envy the person that receives something from this list!

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CIVIL WAR HISTORY

Occupation of the Catoctin Mountains

John Miller
Emmitsburg Historical Society Civil War Historian

Following the Maryland Campaign and the engagements in September of 1862, the Catoctin Mountain was again visited by the Union army. On June 15th, 1863, the advance of the Confederate army crossed the Potomac River at Williamsport, Maryland. Three days later, General Joseph Hooker ordered the mountain gaps along the old South Mountain battlefield to have a Union presence. Union General Robert C. Schenck received General Hooker's request to spare a portion of his artillery, infantry, and cavalry, to seize and hold the South Mountain passes, as well as holding Maryland Heights, and the passage via Sandy Hook.

On June 25 and 26th, the majority of the Union army began crossing the Potomac River at Edward's Ferry in Maryland. The First, Third and Eleventh Corps would begin occupying the old South Mountain battlefield by June 26th and 27th. In addition, the Twelfth Corps would occupy Pleasant Valley, while the Second Corps occupied Knoxville on June 27th. The other Corps of the Army of the Potomac would be situated near Frederick.

On June 28th, after General Joseph Hooker's resignation was complete, General George Meade was given command of the Army of the Potomac. Not liking the layout of

the Union army, he issued orders for his army to concentrate at Frederick. Those Corps occupying South Mountain would march over the Catoctin Mountain to Frederick. Sergeant William Saxton of the 157th New York described the scene as he crossed Braddock's Gap. He recalled: "Today, I had another opportunity of seeing a large number of troops. Middletown lies between South Mountain on the west and the Catoctin Mountains on the east. When we had arrived at the top of the Catoctin range we could look back for five or six miles and see into Middletown, and as far as we could see, forward and backward, the road was filled with marching soldiers of blue."

After the Battle of Gettysburg, the Confederate army retreated through the South Mountain range using Cashtown gap and Monterey Pass in order gain access to the Cumberland Valley and the Potomac River, near Williamsport. General Meade would use several Catoctin Mountain passes and gaps to protect Baltimore and Washington, while trying to head off the retreating Confederates. Hamburg Gap, High Knob, Shookstown, Braddock's Gap, and Jefferson Pass were all used by the Union army as they penetrated into the Middletown Valley. The recent downpours of rain made marching over the Catoctin Mountain miserable for the infantry. Wagons and artillery being pulled by horses and mules tore up the roads



In the days before the Battle of Gettysburg, Union scouts saw roads filled with Union troops as far as they could see from atop the Catoctin Mountains.

leading over the mountain for which the infantry was to follow.

The Eleventh Corps was the first to ascend the Catoctin Mountain. At 3:30 a.m. on July 7th, the Eleventh Corps pressed ahead of the Union army. Their destination was the town of Middletown. Marching for several hours from Emmitsburg, the Eleventh Corps marched down Old Frederick Road to Creagerstown, and then to Utica, where they turned westward and marched to the Catoctin Mountain, crossing over at High Knob Pass. High Knob was a steep, rocky, narrow road which the artillery and wag-

ons found difficult to move upon. The horses, as well as the men, were completely exhausted. The advance of General Carl Schurz's Third Division reached Middletown at around 8:00 p.m. that evening.

Lieutenant Colonel Dobke was among Schurz's Division and recalled: "The heaviest march of the campaign was executed, marching 32 miles from Emmitsburg, and arrived at 10 p. m. at Middletown, a distance of 34 miles, through the open fields, taking a narrow pass road over the mountains in a circuit. Toward night the rain descended in torrents, amid which men

and beasts sank down, tired to death, most of the soldiers without any shoes, barefooted, or shoes so ragged or torn that they did not deserve the name."

The roads were so badly tore up from the heavy rains, that the Second and First Divisions were forced to take Old Frederick Road almost to Frederick, and march westward, passing through Shookstown Pass. As midnight passed, they traveled through Shookstown and to the National Road, where the First and Second Divisions continued their march to Middletown. The Eleventh Corps

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CIVIL WAR HISTORY

covered more ground than any other army corps in the Army of the Potomac. The rear of the Eleventh Corps arrived at Middletown before 11:00 a.m. on the 8th of July.

Before daylight on the morning of July 7th, the soldiers of the Sixth Corps rested in the rain at Emmitsburg after arriving from Fairfield. Colonel Thomas Neill's Brigade remained at Fairfield, following the rear of the Confederate army. The lead elements of the Sixth Corps began marching early in the morning, while the rear of the Sixth Corps started off at 11:00 a.m. The divisions of Sedgwick's corps marched all day, passing through Franklin Mills, Mechanics-town (modern day Thurmont), and following the road directly to Catoctin Furnace. Upon reaching Lewistown, the Sixth Corps took the fork in the road that led to the right, which would take them toward Hamburg Pass. As darkness approached road conditions began to deteriorate, as the wind and rain picked up in intensity. The climb up the Catoctin Mountain on a narrow road, which was nothing more than a path, was a tough one. Upon reaching the top many of the men renamed the pass as "Sedgwick's Pass" and others called it "Mount Misery."

Nelson Hutchinson noted that, "The darkness was intense...nothing could be seen. Mounted officers could not see the men in the ranks. You could not see who was beside you, if anyone was there. We had to make way for the artillery. They got stuck, while we ended up scattered in the woods." General Wright noted, "In consequence of the severe storm and extreme darkness, which rendered farther progress impossible." The artillery was eventually forced to turn around, unhitching the horses and unlimbering the cannon, and head back down the mountainside.

The next day, the Sixth Corps continued its line of march at 5:00 a.m. Many of the men still had to march over the Catoctin Mountain, but the weather that morning would brighten up the men, as rays of sunshine broke through the clouds. This allowed the uniforms and blankets to dry. The soldiers even found a mountain creek and quickly began cleaning themselves, as well as their uniforms. General Joseph Bartlett's brigade was

the first of the Sixth Corps to arrive at Middletown around nine o'clock that morning, covering eight miles.

On July 7th, the First Corps marched into Emmitsburg, where they were met by the Sisters of Charity who shared the food that was contained in several of their wagons. Many of the men were dirty, not having bathed in several days. The cold rain during the evening would not change that feeling, and some of the officers even dismounted, washing their feet in the streams with a dirty handkerchief, as such was the case of Colonel Charles Wainwright. After spending a few hours bivouacked at Emmitsburg, the First Corps marched onward to Hamburg Pass.

Upon marching through Lewistown, many young girls sang out "Battle Cry for Freedom" where members of the 13th Massachusetts complemented them. At Lewistown, as the Union troops marched toward the Catoctin Mountain, the heavy rains and muggy weather became hard on the men. Many Union troops were forced to march without shoes, leaving their feet bruised and blistered. The road conditions gradually improved and quartermaster wagons were able to get through. The roadway to Hamburg was congested, and the march was going at a slow pace. Henry Kieffer noted that the Catoctin Mountain got "steeper and steeper, while the darkness was deeper and deeper."

Colonel Wainwright was alerted about the road conditions leading to Hamburg Pass and he diverted his artillery reserve toward Frederick, taking Shookstown Road, and crossing the

Catoctin Mountain at Shookstown Pass. His artillery horses were doubled up in order to pull the cannon up the steep mountain.

At six o'clock in the morning on July 8th, the Third Corps resumed their line of march toward Frederick. As the Third Corps neared Lewistown, the soldiers began marching toward Hamburg Pass, where they found the road badly tore up. The route was promptly changed, and they marched to Frederick City. The 141st Pennsylvania brought up the rear of the Corps and noted that the country side was a vast "sea of mud." The march was a hard one, as the soldiers carried their guns with the muzzles pointed toward the ground, their blanket rolls were soaking wet, and because of that, made heavier, and those who chose to carry their knapsacks found them bulky. The march halted at 10:00 p.m. that night with the Third Corps resting on the road to Middletown, just outside of Frederick.

After the drenching storm had passed, the first rays of sunlight shone brightly through the clouds during the morning of July 8th, when the Twelfth Corps marched through Frederick, toward Middletown via Braddock's Gap.

On July 8th, the Fifth Corps began marching toward the Catoctin Mountain. At 6:00 a.m. the Fifth Corps marched through Emmitsburg and took the Old Frederick Road, passing through Creagerstown. They encamped near Utica, five miles north of Frederick, at around 6:00 p.m., covering a total distance of about twenty-miles. The march and encampment

was a miserable one. The rain kept falling in torrents and the men were soaked to the bone. With marching orders being light, the soldiers did not have many conveniences such as their shelter tents since those items were packed in the quartermaster wagons.

At daybreak on July 9th, the Fifth Corps broke camp and began its march to High Knob Pass. The road leading to High Knob is narrow and very steep. The Fifth Corps finally made it to Middletown at around 4:00 p.m. By nightfall, the Fifth Corps was encamped near South Mountain. Also during the day, the Second Corps began

moving toward Crampton's Gap, after leaving Frederick. The weather was hot and the march was slow. The soldiers passed through a small horizon of the Catoctin Mountain, passing through the small town of Jefferson and Burkettsville.

Although no battle occurred on the Catoctin Mountain during the days following the Battle of Gettysburg, the experiences written by those men detail an experience that they would not soon forget.

To read other articles on the Civil War visit the Historical Society section of Emmitsburg.net.



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HISTORY

Piney Creek Church

250 Years of Continuous Worship

The Ending

Amanda W. Grant

Even through this turmoil, the church continued on with various supply ministers. Reverend William Yates, who had retired, filled the pulpit from 1958 until his death in 1967. Reverend Leslie Leese preached between May and September of 1967, which may have been when he died, and Reverend Merval Weaver filled in from September of 1967 until June of 1968, when he returned home to the Lord as well. Lay Minister Thomas Kolb and Reverend Charles Weaver supplemented until a call could be made for another pastor. While session minutes document much of the business of the church during this time, clear records relating circumstances involving pastoral supplies were not recorded. During this time, Piney Creek's connection to other churches in the area also changed, but the exact dates and reasons are not available. Although the session minutes relate various church meetings and elders from the different churches, the dissolution between Piney Creek and Taneytown and Emmitsburg Churches is not clearly re-

corded, but seems to have occurred between 1957 and 1961. December 3, 1961 records the first entry that includes New Windsor Church, which Piney Creek is still yoked with today.

Session Minutes from July 9, 1969 reveal that Piney Creek members were asked to join with New Windsor and Kirkridge Churches in order to gain a full-time minister but were not formally yoked until the calling of Reverend Biddle Foster in 1971. Within a decade of Foster's time with the churches, a new challenge jeopardizing Piney Creek's rights and property unfolded.

Increasingly frustrated with stipulations and rules that prevented the church from electing officers whom they saw fit and which claimed church assets and land as its own, the elders of the church sent out a mailing on April 24, 1981 that stated, "Your session has met and is unanimous in recommending that your church . . . sever all relations with the United Presbyterian Church of the [U. S. A.]." The most appalling statement for a Christian church was recorded in the same letter and revealed that "a man was approved for . . . ministry who would not affirm that Jesus Christ was fully God, that Christ was

sinless, that his death atoned for our sins and that he arose bodily from the dead." The elders declared this heresy and were appalled that the Presbytery would affirm this man as a minister. After several meetings, Piney Creek, New Windsor, and Kirkridge Churches voted to sever their ties with the U. P. C. U. S. A., and they joined with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Many churches who left the denomination at the time lost their church properties and other assets, but because of the wording on the Piney Creek deed back in the eighteenth century which specified the land to be used only for a church, the church was able to retain its land and continue in worship and service of the Lord.

Although this was a very challenging time for the small churches, the members continued to adhere to their principles. In 1984, Reverend Foster resigned from Piney Creek and New Windsor and remained with Kirkridge, which separated to form its own charge. Reverend Foster still attends many functions at both Piney Creek and New Windsor even though he is now retired, and he is scheduled to speak at the special service on November 10.



Miss Catherine Hess places the cornerstone of the new social hall at Piney Creek Church. Also pictured is Joseph Reaver, president of the Men's Brotherhood.

Reverend William Forsyth became the pastor of both Piney Creek and New Windsor Churches on January 6, 1985; the minister was known for his warm, thick Scottish accent and his wife's beautiful voice sang with the choir each Sunday morning. In 1993, Reverend Forsyth retired and was followed by Reverend Terry Gordon from 1993-1996, Reverend Clyde Reed from 1996-1998, and Reverend H. Paul Matthews III

from 1999 until the present. Pastor Paul with his wife Ms. Ely, as they are lovingly referred to by their congregations, holds the record for the second longest ministerial leadership of Piney Creek Church, broken only by Reverend Grier who ministered to the congregation for fifty-two years.

Piney Creek Church's rich history can only be attributed to God's grace towards this small but faithful church. Each year, the church still holds its annual Easter Egg Hunt, the Turkey and Oyster Dinner, a Fall Festival, a Strawberry Luncheon, and a special Christmas program. Sunday School for all ages begins at 9:45 a.m. each week followed by a church service at 11:00 p.m. delivered by Pastor Paul. While attendance is small, the love of God continues to grow, and the small church by the side of the road hopes to be characterized as friendly and welcoming for centuries to come. Join us on Sunday mornings in this historic place where so many generations have worshipped together in fellowship and admiration of the Lord's amazing grace and love.

Please go to pineycreekchurch.org for information regarding the various 250th anniversary celebrations occurring throughout the year or to join us in worship. To read more articles on local history visit the Historical Society section of Emmitsburg.net.

Next month we will continue our history of Fairfield.

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OBITUARIES

Margaret Saffer

Margaret M. Saffer, 88, of Frederick, formerly of Emmitsburg, died Sunday, October 20, 2013 at Citizens Care and Rehabilitation Center in Frederick. Born January 8, 1925 in Emmitsburg, she was the daughter of the late John and Marie Stouter Saffer.

Margaret was a teacher and former member of Visitation Sisters. She left the order several years ago to care for her mother. She was predeceased by her only sibling, John Daniel Saffer.

A Memorial Mass was held November 16 in the chapel of Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic Church, Frederick with the Rev. Keith Boisvert as celebrant. A private burial and graveside committal was held in October at St. Anthony's Shrine Cemetery in Emmitsburg.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Myers-Durboraw Funeral Home in Emmitsburg. Online condolences may be made at www.myersdurborawfh.com.

Linnis H. Dagnin



she began her studies at Santa Ana College and on to Fullerton College where she obtained her teaching degree. Linnis taught in Special Education for several school districts, then retired to begin another career in the health sciences as a medical assistant in podiatry.

Linnis enjoyed traveling and reading. Linnis also enjoyed crafting and making ceramics, firing them in her own kiln along with selling at various holiday boutiques. She continued her ceramics classes and attending craft shows up until her recent illness. She was a patient and kind teacher for all those who wanted to learn, a loving wife, mother, grandmother and friend.

Grateful for having shared her life are her husband, Wallace Dagnin (married for 63 years); her only daughter, Joette Pierce and husband Michael, their son, Ryan Pierce of Corona del Mar; sister, Mildred C. McNair; brothers, Dave M. Glass and Eric E. Glass; along with many nieces and nephews.

Memorial gifts in the name of Linnis Dagnin may be made to: OC Stroke Association, 2332 Mill Creek Drive, Suite 110, Laguna Hills, CA. 92653. Please indicate the memorial is intended for Linnis Dagnin.

Linnis Glass Dagnin, 86, of Santa Ana, California, died Nov 19th at St. Joseph's Hospital, following a short illness.

Linnis "Lin" was born June 2, 1927, in Rosehill, Va. Her parents, Paul C. Glass and Lucy Estelle Davis Glass moved to Emmitsburg where they had a dairy and cattle farm. Linnis graduated in 1944 from Emmitsburg High School where her high school newspaper predicted she would move to California.

After nurses training she did move to California in 1947 to the San Fernando Valley and met the love of her life, Wallace Dagnin at the Owl Rexell Drug Store. The two married in 1950 prior to Wally's draft in the army and shipment to Korea for combat. Upon his return they had a daughter, Joette Elizabeth. Linnis enjoyed being a mother and after the family's transfer to Orange County

Melva L. Hardman



Melva Leola Hardman, 94, of Fairfield, PA, formerly of Emmitsburg, died peacefully Tuesday, October 29, 2013 at Comfort Care Personal Care in Fairfield, PA. Born May 23, 1919 in Lantz, she was the daughter of the late John William and Gustava May Jewell Portner. She was the wife of the late William Eugene Hardman who passed away August 15, 1967.

Melva spent most of her life

in domestic work. She came to Emmitsburg in 1939. She went to work for Dr. William Cadle, keeping house for his family and helping in his medical office. In later years she worked at St. Joseph Provincial House, retiring in 1992 after thirteen years in the dietary department. Melva was a member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Emmitsburg since 1940 and was a life-long member of the Francis X. Elder American Legion Auxiliary where she held the office of treasurer for over thirty years. She also attended the Emmitsburg Senior Citizens group from its very beginning. She enjoyed spending time with family and friends.

Surviving are daughter, Barbara Hartman and husband Russell of Fairfield, PA; grandsons, Russell Hartman and wife Peggy, and Curtis Hartman and wife Tammy, all of Fairfield; great-grandchildren, Emily, Kaitlind, Josh-

ua, and Joelle; sister, Frances Fultz of Thurmont; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by brothers, Floyd, Charles, Albert, John Maurice, and Norman Portner, and sisters, Goldie Jones and Anna Bushman.

Funeral services will be held at 12 p.m. Friday, November 1 at Trinity United Methodist Church, 313 W. Main St., Emmitsburg, MD with the Rev. Tiffany Kromer officiating. Interment will follow at Emmitsburg Memorial Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until the time of the service Friday at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Trinity U.M. Church, 313 W. Main St, Emmitsburg, MD, 21727. Arrangements have been entrusted to Myers-Durboraw Funeral Home in Emmitsburg. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.myersdurborawfh.com.

Ralph Hackney



Ralph Clinton Hackney, 60, of Emmitsburg died Monday, November 18, 2013 at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Born July 7, 1953 in Fruitport, Michigan, he was the son of the late Ralph Clinton and Bonna June Carrick Hackney. He was the husband of Cindy Elaine Stewart Hackney, to whom he

was married for 19 years.

Ralph was an Information Assurance Manager for the United States Government. Many of his 33 years of government service were spent at Fort Detrick in Frederick. He was a veteran of the United States Army and the Air National Guard. He enjoyed gardening, photography, traveling with his family in their motorhome, and going on cruises. He enjoyed basketball and assisted coaching his daughter. Ralph was an avid fan of the Michigan Wolverines and the Detroit Lions. He was a devoted husband and father.

Surviving in addition to his wife are sons, Keith Michael Hackney and wife Angela of Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma, and Clinton Lee Hackney and wife Chaz of Fayetteville,

PA; daughter, Amanda Lynn Hackney of Emmitsburg; sister, Suzi McCabe and husband Pat of Fruitport, MI; brothers, Al Hackney and wife Pam of Alto, MI, and Dan Hackney and wife Bernita of Maryville, TN; grandchildren, Kaleb, Gage, and Colton Hackney; and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral service was Friday, November 22 at Myers-Durboraw Funeral Home, Emmitsburg with Pastor Tim Webster of Uniontown Bible Church officiating. Interment was in the Emmitsburg Memorial Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Fund for Johns Hopkins Medicine, 750 E. Pratt St., 17th Floor, Baltimore, MD, 21202. Online condolences may be expressed to the family at www.myersdurborawfh.com.

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COLD WAR WARRIORS

The civilian view

Editor's Note: World War II ended in 1945 just as the war machines on both sides were introducing increasingly sophisticated weapons. Missiles, high-performance, jet aircraft, and the atomic bomb. No sooner had the guns grown silent than a new war was beginning - the Cold War. A war that threatened to use the most frightening of the weapons that emerged from World War II. The 1940s came to a close with such events as the Soviet Blockade of Berlin (1948) and the U.S. Berlin Airlift of 1949. Then came the Korean War (1950), the Soviet takeover of East Germany (1953), and the Hungarian Revolt (1956). Our WWII ally the Soviet Union was becoming our enemy. And becoming more and more bellicose with each passing day. Had they lost their senses? Had they forgotten what global war was really like. As Abraham Lincoln said almost 100 years before "The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature." Such "better angels" are embodied in the memory of two children who survived World War II and are the focus of this article. The first, an American girl who grew up in England during the terrible, Battle of Britain. The second, a Yugoslav boy who was a war refugee in a special camp for Displaced Persons in Salzburg, Austria in the 1950s. Imagine, a decade after WWII ... thousands of WWII war refugees were still trying to rebuild their lives. They were, literally the jetsam and flotsam of the world's most devastating war. The American speaks of the chaos and cost of war. The Yugoslav, of his hope for a better world and future - which he realized. Starting with his first American Christmas - in 1956.

Memories of a "Yankee Girl" during the Battle of Britain

Amy Wilkinson

Elizabeth Prongas was born in New York City in the mid-1920s to an American father and English mother. Her father died when she was five years old and the mother returned to her native England in the early 1930s to live with relatives. After a series of moves the family settled on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel in 1939 just as World War II was beginning. Germany invaded Poland on the 1st of September, 1939; World War II began and Great Britain declared war. It was expected that air raids on English cities would occur shortly after and preparations were taken to limit the number of civilian casualties during the raids. Public shelters were provided and many families erected small "bomb" shelters in their gardens. In addition to the shelters, many school-aged children and mothers with infants were evacuated to the countryside.

The first attack by the German Air Force was aimed at destroying the Royal Air Force, or RAF, in September of 1940. During the war, the Isle of Wight was used as a garrison to alert the British military of incoming enemy planes. Anti-aircraft guns were also stationed on the island. When the anti-aircraft guns were fired, shrapnel would fall from the sky on to the civilians who lived on the island.

When the Battle of Britain, also known as the London Blitz, began, Elizabeth and Grace were still living on the Isle of Wight. On the 31st of

August, 1939, the British Government gave the order for school aged children and mothers with infants to "Evacuate forthwith". The children who were to be evacuated were tagged, like luggage, separated from their parents, and put on trains. Most had no idea where they would be going, what they would be doing, or how long they would be gone.

Elizabeth and Grace were not evacuated. Their mother had decided not to have the children evacuated, as so many others were, because she believed that, as a family, they should stay together. The girls were given gas masks to keep with them at school and shelters were built in the schoolyard.

At school, Elizabeth practiced putting her gas mask on quickly. She was taught how to find appropriate shelter in the city or the countryside when bombing began. It was not uncommon for Air raid sirens to sound at any time of the day or night. In the beginning, the German bombs were not very large. They were called incendiary bombs. Later, the Germans began dropping high explosive bombs, which were heavier and caused substantially more damage. There was an incident one night on the Isle of Wight when a five hundred pound bomb was dropped in the schoolyard, half of a block away from where Elizabeth and her family lived. Elizabeth was on the second floor of their house at the time of the explosion. The explosion knocked her out and when she came round, she was on the first floor with no recollection of how she had gotten there. Eliza-

beth had been, quite literally, blown down the stairs. The windows were all blown in; luckily though, there were blackout shades on the windows and it kept the shards of glass from flying into the house and injuring the family further.

Few homes in Britain had basements at the time; many families spent nights crouching in small spaces under stairs or in closets away from windows. On the Isle of Wight, where Elizabeth lived, there were anti-aircraft encampments. During nights when the bombing was heavy, shrapnel from the exploding shells fell heavily on the island and the sky lit with the flashes of the bombs. During one of the raids, the Head Master of Elizabeth's school was killed when his house took a direct hit.

One day Elizabeth and her sister, Grace, along with some friends were walking through a field of a farm. A common hobby of school children at that time was lying in a field, spotting and naming the different types of British planes. This day, a German fighter plane flew overhead. The girls crouched down and hid in a ditch, as they had been taught to do. They were terrified that they were going to be strafed. Elizabeth could tell that it was a German plane because it had a distinctive swastika on the side of the plane. The plane passed the girls and was heard strafing moments later.

At the age of fourteen, Elizabeth moved to Barming, Kent to live with her mother's sister. When Elizabeth was sixteen years old, the American Embassy contacted her mother. As an American citizen, she was required



Elizabeth Prongas and her sister, Grace.

to go to the U.S. Embassy to register. While Elizabeth was at the Embassy, the Secretary of the Embassy asked her what sort of things she could do. She replied that she could do shorthand, typing, and book keeping. He offered her a job at the Embassy. She traveled from her home in Kent to Grosvenor Square everyday to work. The journey took over an hour each way. As one of the few American citizens working at the Embassy, Elizabeth was one of a small number who were allowed to enter the Embassy's Code Room.

When I asked her what it was like, walking from the station to the Embassy, seeing buildings that had been recently blown up, she responded, "Well, I hate to tell you, but it was a way of life. It was a way of life from the time I was twelve. There always was bombing. It always was destruction. I couldn't even see the time when we would be out of it. It

seemed to be hopeless because things just got worse and worse. There were points in time when we were losing badly; we were losing men. It was just horrible. We kept our hopes up by listening to the King, George VI; we listened to the royal family; we listened to Churchill on the radio. The radio was always keeping us up to date. I would go to church; there was a Catholic church near the embassy. A friend and I would go to light candles. There was frequently debris in the street. I hate to even think of it. At that time, the British were mainly occupied with making do. You had to think about where your next meal was coming from; a lot of British people were very into their Victory Gardens. I spent a summer in Maidstone, and after work, my friends and I, would go out in a lorry, that's a truck, and we could go out of the city and pick strawberries. You see, the men had gone to war. The only men left to do these jobs, until they brought Italian prisoners in, were conscientious objectors. They worked on the farms. So it was mainly up to the women and children in the towns, we would go out to pick the fruit."

In 1940, the British Government began rationing food supplies. Bacon, butter, and sugar were the first things to be rationed. They were followed shortly by; meat, loose tea, jam, biscuits, breakfast cereals, cheese, eggs, lard, milk, canned fruits, sweets, and dried fruits. Clothing and gasoline were also rationed. British citizens were issued ration books that would allow you to purchase a certain amount of various food items per week. Citizens were still required to pay for their items, but now they were only able to purchase small amounts of certain types of food. During the London Blitz, occasionally the grid system would be hit and that would cause the power in the city to go out. It was not uncommon for petty criminals to take advantage of the power outages. They would

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COLD WAR WARRIORS

break into people's houses while all of the lights were out. The most commonly stolen items were the ration books. Elizabeth spoke of the perks of being an American in London during the war. "Rationing was hard on a lot of people." She stated. "I was fortunate, however because, well I was an American citizen and, when I had the money, I could go to the American PX, the Post Exchange, and buy things that the British couldn't get. Cigarettes, stockings, shoe polish to share with English friends."

When I asked Elizabeth how she felt about the American Military joining the war effort, she said, "I heard about Pearl Harbour on the news on the radio. I was so young, just fifteen. At that time it was hard for me to grasp. It seemed so far away. I did know though that the Yanks were

coming into the war. The Americans were coming. I felt great because I was a Yankee girl! I never lost sight of that. The first experience I had, seeing the Americans was at a dance when I was seventeen. I thought it was wonderful that they were there. The British were just so appreciative, really. Finally we started to get the feeling that we could win it. A lot of girls went to dances. There were Americans there, and these service men, well, they thought they were going to die. So they would try to find any sort of comfort they could, going out and socializing at these dances. Most of them missed their families terribly. They were very brave."

As the war progressed, the Germans developed more devastating weapons. In 1944 the Germans began launching V1 and V2 bombs, a

sort of ballistic missile. These missiles went by many nicknames; among them were the Buzz Bomb and the Doodle Bug. "That was really scary, because you couldn't hear them." Elizabeth told us about the missiles, "You could hear the Doodlebugs (V1 bombs), you could hear them coming and sometimes you could actually see them as they were coming down. But the V2s were lethal. They made this tremendous arc and then they would just drop straight down on the target with a massive explosion. It was very frightening."

"When we heard about the invasion of France in 1944, it was amazing. People were pouring out into the streets. We had a huge bonfire on our block. It was just so joyful when Paris fell to the allies. The response was just ongoing. There were so many

people around me who had relatives, men that were fighting or extended family or something in France. No one was untouched. We were always hopeful of winning and when France fell it seemed like a greater possibility. Mainly, though, we thought about our boys. We would hear stories about how hard it was. I think that was my greatest sadness was to think about those boys, just giving their lives, as in any war."

When the British received news that Adolf Hitler had committed suicide in May of 1945, it was a very joyful time. People poured out of their houses to celebrate. There were parties and bonfires in the streets. It was not until later that the British people learned about the enormity of the Nazi German concentration camps, or indeed, the enormity of the war it-

self. It is estimated that between 50 and 70 million people died during World War II. The Second World War has the unenviable distinction of claiming more lives than any other human conflict in recorded history.

I asked Elizabeth what her views of war are now. She replied, "I hate war. I consider myself a pacifist. I believe that the glorification of war is wrong. War is glorified in television shows, movies and video games. But war is not a video game. There is no reset button, you don't have extra lives, and you can't start over. In war, if you get hit, you go down and a lot of times, you don't get up. War is a lamentable human tragedy."

To read past editions of *Cold War Warriors* visit the *Authors* section of Emmitsburg.net.

My first American Christmas

Rondo Sofranac - as told to CW03 Wil Shippe, USA (Ret.)

My first American Christmas happened in Austria. My parents, sister and I were in a refugee camp in Salzburg. It was rather austere, but we had a roof over our heads and we were able to heat the room. We had a nice, little Christmas tree on a dresser on one side of the room. There were plenty of decorations on the tree, but not too many. There had to be room for the candles that were lit on Christmas Eve. A dried out little tree, with lighted candles, in a wooden barracks ... Talk about having faith!

There was always plenty of snow for a white Christmas. The snow was great for the sleds we used to get around. The mountains surrounding Salzburg were too steep and out of reach, but we knew how to make do. We used the mounds of former bomb shelters surrounding the camp as our sled hills. Unknowingly we turned the tools of death and destruction into toys of joy and entertainment.

Once in a while, my friend Friedel and I pulled each other around the camp in a sled. The sleds in Austria were built to be tall so the rider sat high off the ground. It must have been because the snow was so deep. You could lay on your back and have your head hang down on the back of the sled.

The white clouds and white snow

came together in a reversed order as she pulled me around the lager. It was fun and cheap amusement.

We had Catholic and Protestant churches within walking distance. Both Catholics and Protestants had many houses in which to worship. Because the refugee camp called "Lager Parsch" was loaded with Eastern Europeans, they even let us celebrate the Eastern Orthodox Christmas on January 7. So, we had two Christmas commemorations. At that time, in those two branches of Christianity - Christmas did not have the grandeur and ceremony that we see here and now. On our German - Protestant side, the Christmas celebration was about Christmas Eve (Weinachten). A truly Silent Night, Holy night. Literally translated, Weinachten means solemn eve. On our Montenegrin Orthodox side - it was "Bozic" (Christmas Day).

We had food, family, friends, faith, and fun. Soon however we were going to have an opportunity to have more of each.

A few days before Christmas in 1956, our parents said the U.S. soldiers were going to give the camp kids a Christmas party. Since we had lived with American soldiers, and their families for a couple of years, we already knew the generosity of these people. Of course, some could claim that those who have a lot, have a lot to give. But not everyone who has a lot, gives a lot. Sometimes they do

not give even a little.

We were instructed to gather at the front Barracks. Soon, a number of big, green, military trucks pulled into the camp. The sound and presence of the trucks was enough for this seven-year-old to be awed. The trucks were usually troop carriers, but this time, they were going to carry tots. Again unwittingly we were about to turn tools of war into toys of peace.

The American soldiers walked us over to the back of the big, green trucks. I was eye to eye with one of the wheels, so I wondered how we were getting over the tailgate and up into the bed of the truck. Just then, one of the soldiers grabbed me under the arms and lifted me to the skies. I had no idea what he was saying, but his smile said "Come on little buddy, let's have some fun". Into the truck I went. My sister was right behind me. Soon the truck was loaded with kids and great expectations.

The trip itself was yet another amazing ride. Bouncing through the snowy streets of Salzburg, and yes, over the river and through the woods, we made our way - not to grandma's house, but to a huge, wonderfully ornamented and even more wonderfully aromatic hall. The hall was in a building in the center of Salzburg. It was the headquarters of the U.S. forces remaining in Austria.

The hall had a beautifully trimmed tree around which were colorfully wrapped boxes to stretch from here to America. The tables were bedecked with festive decorations and a bounty of food that I had never seen in my life. In fact, if you totaled all the food I had seen, to that point in my life, this was still more. There was no cornmeal mush or lard sandwiches here. (Not that there's anything wrong with that).

Each of us kids got one of the beautifully wrapped gifts from under the tree. My sister received a pretty doll with very lifelike eyes and eyelids that even opened and closed. Unfortunately, the doll was so delicate that the eyes could easily be pushed out of the socket set into the head never to be retrieved again. (It was an accident, honestly, I didn't mean to do it).

I got a remote control, U.S. Army Jeep. From the back of this little, green Jeep ran a 2 foot cord. Attached to the cord was a small handheld device. On the device was a handle the operator could crank to rotate or turn the Jeep's wheels. The faster you cranked, the faster the Jeep would move. There were no

computer chips, transistors, or even batteries. It was low-tech, but lots of fun.

When I think about it now, I can't believe all the gifts we received at that Christmas party. I also can't believe how long they lasted. The gifts of food lasted hours, the gifts of toys lasted months. I broke my sister's doll a few months after she got it. Maybe as retribution - when we left the camp, we could not take my Jeep.

The greatest gift I received was the gift of giving. A profound lesson in what it means to give. What a perfect Christmas in so many ways. First of all, the giver doesn't realize its significance, impact, or value to the receiver. And the receiver is unable to relate that information to the giver. Talk about unconditional love. Almost 50 years later, that gift is still deep within my heart and soul, and hopefully within my behaviors.

Not long after that party, our par-

ents told us we were going to leave the camp. We had been matched with a group that was willing to sponsor refugees. Our parents were disappointed - we were not going to Germany. We were heading to the USA and some spot called Cleveland and another locale called Ohio. Wow! They were willing to give us a place to call "home". Yet another gift of compassion from those darned Americans. A gift from people who didn't even know us. Talk about secret Santas!

My sister and I jumped for joy. Soon we had to learn a new culture and a new language. Certainly we would be far away from family and friends. But, if the Americans and America were half as charitable as those in Austria we would be just fine.

I have celebrated 47 more American Christmases since then - all in America. We have done 47 times more than just fine!



A Salzburg, Austria Displaced Person (DP) camp that was a haven from Soviet Communism in 1953. The small shacks in the foreground were thrown up as the numbers of the East European refugees overwhelmed Camp (Lager) Parsch in the early 1950s. There were probably about 300,000 refugees in the Austrian camps in the 1950s.

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MOM'S TIME OUT

Slow down and enjoy the holidays!

Mary Angle

Is it really December? I know you are all thinking the same thing...what happened to the rest of the year? Whatever the reason, the rest of the year has disappeared faster than my morning cup of coffee. With the coming of December I would normally write an article about Christmas. This month however I want to ask a question that has been posed to me by many children this month. The question is "why can't we just give Thanksgiving a chance?"

Please don't get me wrong about December. This is truly my favorite time of year. I love everything about the Christmas holiday. Good food with family and friends, seeing the kids open their presents from Santa, the excitement of opening another drawer in our advent calendar, and placing baby Jesus in the manger. When several people (some adults) started questioning the speed at which everyone seems to be surpassing Thanksgiving I started to wonder.

It is almost a contradiction in terms that we, as a society, are bulldozing over a holiday that is all about being thankful. Maybe it is just my opinion but being thankful for someone or something should involve us slowing down not speeding up. When some-

one says thank you to me, and I have paid very close attention since starting this article, they have a very genuine pause. There is sincerity to true thankfulness that I think many of us take for granted. I often see people take their loved ones for granted, myself included. Whether it is the day to day things they do for us, like the fact that my husband loves to make dinner for his family, or the special little gestures, like an "I Love You Mommy" note scribbled on a napkin from a child. However, when someone says, "thank you" (not a courteous "thank you") but a sincere heart all in "thank you" do we really appreciate it.

Thanksgiving is holiday that comes every year on the last Thursday of November like clockwork. Every year we get together with family. Over the years, which family we get together with has changed as life as changed, but it is always spent with good food and great family. The past few years we go to Virginia to spend Thanksgiving with my Mother-in-law, Brother-in-law and his family, and my entire brood. The kids all have a blast together and the adults reminisce and catch up. You see, they live only an hour and a half away but with all six of our kids involved in different things we don't find the time to get together like we would

like. So for us Thanksgiving is an almost magical time. We get to see the kids play like they have spent every Saturday hanging out together, like no time has passed since there last video game marathon. This time, on this one day of the year, is something we are all truly thankful for. For me it is what Thanksgiving is all about.

So why then is our society in such a hurry to push through, or simply surpass the Thanksgiving holiday. I have explained to my kids that because Black Friday is such a big financial day for our retail market and our countries finances as a whole it is important for the retailers to advertise well before Black Friday. I, of course, did not word it this way. It was more of a, "because the stores need to sell lots of stuff on Black Friday, they need to tell people about it ahead of time" kind of conversation. I also pointed out that they like to make their Christmas lists before Thanksgiving to make sure they get to Santa in time and how would they do that without all of the commercials on television and all of the advertising in the stores. They seemed to understand all of that but not understand why there isn't concurrent "advertising" for Thanksgiving. "Why can't people just give Thanksgiving a chance?" This is the question that keeps popping up.

I think it has everything to do with our society trying to rush a



more fiscally productive holiday. I totally understand the need for this, but I also understand that this doesn't change the fact that Thanksgiving is a belittled holiday. I don't understand why Thanksgiving can't be given its chance in the spot light. Maybe a few more Hallmark movies about being thankful at Thanksgiving or taking the lead from Charlie Brown (who does have a Thanksgiving movie). Even just the smallest little Thanksgiving token acknowledgement would be an improvement.

If that wasn't enough, moving Black Friday sooner and sooner is definitely a step in the wrong direction. It used to be that people got up the Friday morning after Thanksgiving at the crack of dawn (or close to it) to head out and start Christmas shopping. Note

that I said the day after Thanksgiving. Then a while back it was stated that Black Friday would start at midnight. So after eating Thanksgiving dinner everyone should immediately go to sleep so they could wake up a few hours later to start shopping all through the night. The finally straw (or so I would like to believe) now we are starting our black Friday shopping on Thanksgiving around supper time if not before. I guess we are asking all of those people, who have to work on Thanksgiving Day at retail stores, to be Thankful a bit faster so they can get to work.

A small glimmer of hope came in the form of childhood enjoyment. A commercial for very possibly the first ever Thanksgiving movie came on the television and my kids were in awe. One of my oldest announced that someone was finally giving Thanksgiving a shot. I don't know if Thanksgiving was being given a shot or if someone just found another holiday to make money on. In either case my kids were a little encouraged and regardless we look forward every year to spending that day with family just like we did this year. Now, have a Merry Christmas!



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Preparing your pup for the holidays

Roseann DeLuca
Cold Creek Dog Training

Some dogs are really fond of all the hustle and bustle during the holidays. Is your dog a “party animal” that thinks all guests coming through the door, burdened with packages and slipping on snow, are coming to see him? And all those exciting things are just for him? If you have one of these social souls, you know how hard it can be to get company through the door. Here are some tips to help you deal with your dog and company during this busy time of year.

When people are coming, always take a moment to put your dog on a leash before you open the door. Use your treat (kept handy right by the door) to get his attention and get him to relax. Stand just a little bit in front of him— this gives him the impression that you are “first,” as we’ve talked about before. Then when he is calm and relaxed, open the door! Easier said than done, you say? Well, it does take practice and patience, and especially developing that very important attention work. If you’ve been working on some obedience with your dog (and all dogs deserve to have at minimum the basics of obedience training, for both of your sakes) have him sit before you open the door, pay attention to you, and give him a moment to compose himself and become calm. This is something you should practice each time you have people stop by and it gets easier and easier. Plan ahead before Aunt Mary (who is really a cat person) comes over for Christmas dinner and is greeted by paws and barks before you can even say hello.

Does your party animal pace and stare at folks as they are eating? Does he try to sneak the odd bite here and there? Teach him some boundaries. Don’t expect your company to correct your dog. You should step in and address a situation “before” it happens so your company isn’t uncomfortable. Being proactive is extremely important in preventing naughty things or major holiday catastrophes (remember the hounds and the turkey in “A Christmas Sto-

ry”). Take action before your Christmas tree lands on the ground and the balls go bouncing round! You know your dog, so you can predict his actions. Step in toward your dog with a firm “No” or “Aaack!” to divert his attention away from his prize before something happens. Have him keep all four paws on the floor while he is being petted and only jump when a guest encourages it, not when he throws himself on Aunt Mary’s lap.

Another good tip is to “show off” your dog to your guests. This will wow and impress them in a wonderful show, and it will be doubly beneficial in that it will give your dog the chance to practice his attention and obedience skills in front of an audience that he really admires. Give him 10-15 minutes of full glory in front of family and friends, then put him away in his crate for some rest. This will give him time to reflect and process his learning and it will give you a break to relax and devote time to company without having to keep all attention on your party animal.

If you have a dog who is on the other side of the social scale and hides or really frets when company comes, do something positive to divert his attention from what is happening as his home is invaded by holiday festivities. It’s very important not to baby him, or coax or support any of his anxious behaviors. Act like you are not worried at all about the surroundings of company and chaos or about him being worried. Any time you feel like saying “Aww its ok,” stop and think: what type of behavior

you are supporting and paying attention to? It will always be a behavior you really wish wasn’t there. For your shy guy, don’t put him through the pressure of interacting with guests. Do get him out at a distance and do the same “show off” routine of his attention skills and obedience maneuvers to company. After the show is over, simply put him away for a break. This will build his confidence and he will feel better not being pressured to interact or be uncomfortable with all the commotion going on.

When you are thinking about what to buy for that special four-legged love of your life for Christmas this year, think of durable, mind-engaging toys. These presents to open are always great, but the gift of time spent together is what your dog really wants most of all. Think about taking your dog to a class as a wonderful way to spend time together and learn new skills for the both of you! The gift of knowledge is the most lasting thing. Besides practicing in person with hands on experience, it’s a fun night out that everyone can participate in— for less than the cost of going to the movies! There are lots of choices out there of what to do, obedience, nose dog scent work, agility, tracking and much much more. Come out and see how much fun it can be to learn together, it’s the greatest gift of all. And our wish for you all, on two legs and four, on land, water and air very great or small, a wonderful peaceful Christmas season!



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SCHOOL & LIBRARY NEWS

What's new at the library

Erin Dingle
Emmitsburg Branch Library

The entire staff at the Emmitsburg Branch Library would like to convey our very best wishes to you for this holiday season. Throughout the year, it is our pleasure to offer every visitor to our libraries a comfortable, welcoming place to work, learn and play. Beyond the programs we offer and the materials we provide for you to check out, the public library is at the heart of both communities. It is free and open to all and it's always our personal mission to make sure everyone who walks in our doors receives the very best customer ex-

perience. Please note that the library will be closed December 24, 25 and January 1. We close early at 5 pm on New Year's Eve.

Holiday events at the Emmitsburg Library

The Holiday Children's Tea has grown into one of Emmitsburg's favorite holiday events. This year, the afternoon event will be held on Saturday, December 7 at 1:30 pm. Sponsored by the Emmitsburg Friends of the Library, underwritten by the Silver Fancy Garden Club and held at the Senior Center, the tea has been hosted by the public library for many years. It's been moved downstairs

to the Senior Center to make room for more children to attend and at this time, there are still seats available. Register by calling the library at 301-600-6329 to make this annual free event part of your family tradition.

Teens are invited to decorate their very own hot chocolate mug for the holidays using a porcelain pen. This program will be held December 7 at 4 pm as part of the monthly Teens Make Art! Series.

The Jolly Elf Jubilee will be held on Saturday, December 21 at 11 am featuring all kinds of elf fun. Children of all ages are invited to join library staff to spread holiday spirit through elven mag-

ic and will learn their special elf name before they go on their very own elf hunt. And of course they'll need their own elf hat with pointy ears included so they'll be creating one to take home. And just because it's that special season of giving, all attendees will become one of Santa's helpers and create a holiday gift to give to someone special. Be sure to register at our website.

And the day after Christmas will be a good time to make a K'Nex-tion and get out of the house to have fun at the library. From 4 and 6 pm, kids are invited for an afternoon with K'Nex construction sets. Join your friends to build tall buildings, make racecars, and have an endless amount of fun with K'Nex at the library. The possibilities are endless! Best for ages 6 and up.

And at the nearby Thurmont Regional Library on Dec. 26, 27, 28, 30, school is out and the library is hosting Lunch & A Movie every day. Bring a lunch, blankets and pillow and enjoy a family-friendly movie with your friends on our big screen in the Community Room. While visiting, be sure to look for the special collection of vintage toys that will be on exhibit in the library lobby display case. The toys are courtesy of longtime local collector Larry Freshman.

Friends make all the difference

The Friends of the Emmitsburg Library report new addition to the board of directors. Taking over as President is Noreen O'Donnell, Vice President will be Sister Ann Marie Lamoureux and the Secretary is Caroline O'Donnell. Longtime dedicated treasurer Jim Julian will maintain his office. The next meeting of the Friends is on Tuesday, January 28 at 6:30. Consider attending if you'd like to support your local library. The new board and other members are in holiday high gear to support the library this holiday season. Two baskets of holiday fun are part of a raffle to raise funds to support library programming in the New Year and if you hurry, you might still be able to buy a ticket to support their efforts. One basket is full of fun for kids and the other is a bakers basket to help you make all those holiday treats. It will be a chance to meet your neighbors who are helping the Friends of the Library and find how you and your whole family can get involved. And if you'd just want to make your Valentine a valentine, that's ok too.

The Emmitsburg Branch Library is ready to welcome you and your family to take advantage of our collection, resources and programs. Please contact me at edingle@frederickcountymd.gov if you have questions or suggestions regarding library services.

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SCHOOL & LIBRARY NEWS

Service – A value we instill

Lynn Tayler
Mother Seton School

I just took down the last of the Halloween decorations (one pesky rubber bat was still clinging to our flagpole), and now it's time to hang the holly once again. We've barely finished the turkey leftovers and already I have to start planning our Christmas Eve meal. Even with an extra Saturday in November, I still feel like the time between Trick-or-Treating and lighting the first Advent candle is much too short.

But I really shouldn't complain, because honestly, I just love this time of year! I'm a sap for egg nog and twinkle lights. And it's finally time to break out my copy of "It's a Wonderful Life", which I watch obsessively every year at this time (and only at this time). I just adore the sentiment and purity of that movie. It's about the Christ-like love we are called upon to show one another, and I never fail to sob when George Bailey is toasted at the end as being "the richest man in town". It occurred to me recently, watching my husband take care of some elderly friends, that I'm actually married to George Bailey. (Though I feel like Uncle Billy more so than Mary most of the time!)

My husband and George share many of the same characteristics. He's had to sacrifice some of his dreams for the good of his family, but continues on with great purpose. He's the guy you depend on, the one you call when you need a hand moving something or a ride somewhere. He's the one others come to when they have a problem they can't solve, or they just need to blow off steam. Even the neighborhood kids come to him when they need their scraped knees bandaged. And he's the one charged with the care of his deceased parents' best friends, who, in their eighties, are in need of constant medical attention. But if you were to remark about how amazing he is to do these things,

as many have, he just shrugs it off with honest humility. "I can't imagine refusing to help someone. That isn't amazing—it's what we're supposed to do, isn't it?" he said.

Indeed. In fact, service to others is one of the values we instill in our students at Mother Seton School. It's part of our mission to be Christ-like in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We can preach it, but leading through example is what really makes an impression. That's why we tried something new at school to honor those who inspire us with their Christian faith.

Last month, Mother Seton School held its annual Memorial Service for Deceased Alumni and Family. Each year, those beloved alumni or family members who died since the last service are added to the prayer roll call and remembered in a moving ceremony. This time, we decided to add a little something to the celebration and asked folks to nominate someone deceased whom they consider to be a Champion of Faith. These people were recognized for the Christian example they set in their lives and how they inspired others with their faith.

I nominated my in-laws, who set the example for my husband and inspired me to be a better Christian. They defined patience, grace, and generosity, and were the go-to people for members of their church who needed help. They especially took care of an older French couple who had no relatives here, becoming family to them. After my in-laws died, we worried what would happen to the couple without the support my in-laws gave them. But my husband stepped into his parents' shoes and we became their family. Now he's the one they call when the TV won't work or the car won't start, and he's the one who takes care of middle-of-the-night emergencies. It takes a lot of time from his job and from us, but while I may sometimes grum-

ble about it, he doesn't. He just grabs his keys and goes, because he was called upon and he was taught that you're supposed to answer the call. It's a beautiful lesson in character that he is teaching our children.

Pope Francis said, "Take care of God's creation. But above all, take care of people in need." My husband lives that every day, but

doesn't make a big deal of it. It's why, despite what he thinks, he is loved by more than just me and our children. His compassion and love for others makes him "the richest man in town", as far as I'm concerned. In a world too full of Mr. Potters, we need a few more George Baileys. We need more Champions of Faith. That's my wish for this Christmas. What's yours?

Until next year, from all of us at Mother Seton School, have a blessed and safe Christmas!



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FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

December holidays are often associated with happy gift exchanges and family feasts, but we challenged our writers to think deeper than Santa's sack of goodies for a gift that means a little more than the average trinket. In response, this month's articles are filled with meaningful presents - ones that mean something more to the authors and ones that you as a reader can freely give. Funnily enough, none of them could fit under a Christmas tree.

Freshman Year

The greatest gift

Leeanne Leary
MSM Class of 2017

Time: the greatest gift one can give or receive. Time is a gift that may be underappreciated at times, but in the end, all anyone really wants is more time. Time with family or friends, time to relax, and time to have fun. Similarly, as it is our greatest desire, time is also the greatest gift we have to give.

In my church's youth group, each week we had a new topic always relating to time, talents, or treasures in connection with service. We were taught from day one that even if we have all the unique talents and valuable treasures in the world, they mean nothing if we do not give our invaluable time to share them. This time seems to gain value around the holidays as we try to take as much time off from work to spend as much time as we can celebrating with family. Sometimes people are too busy giving elsewhere that they don't have these same opportunities. These selfless men and wom-

en, willing to give everything protecting our freedom and that of others by serving our country, are our soldiers.

This month I went to the New York Giants and Green Bay Packers football game at MetLife stadium in New Jersey, and it just so happened to be Military Appreciation Day. The entire game was geared towards honoring veterans and active members of the armed forces, but the most touching part was during a media timeout early in the second quarter. As the players stood on the field to watch, a wife and daughter stood at the entrance to a corner tunnel and waved to the stands as they were recognized as the family of an active soldier currently deployed. Their soldier was not set to return to the United States for several months, and everyone in the stadium cheered as they recognized the sacrifices that the mother and daughter were making here at home.

Then, instantly the audience and players erupted into cheers and applause that could be heard for miles. The mother and daughter looked

around, oblivious to the man who had just stepped out of the other tunnel in his army greens and was now running towards them. They remained confused as the announcer said, "And now if you'll look to your right, an early Christmas present from the New York Giants!"

The reunion that took place on the field, magnified on the screens around us, was enough to bring everyone to tears. Here was a man prepared to give the ultimate gift of time, who had already given more than most could even imagine, crying as he embraced his family. The recognition of his sacrifice rang true throughout the entire stadium.

Too many are away for the holidays. Too many miss their children's birthdays, Christmas morning, anniversaries, and weddings. Too many miss so much as they give all they have to give, sharing their greatest gift - time - with others.

In 2003, Sergeant Ristaino, a full-time army recruiter and member of St. Mary's Church in Annapolis, began to work for those who so willingly shared themselves with all. Ristaino's inspiration came when he was watching his 12 children make mission rosaries for their Junior Legion of Mary group. Knowing these rosaries would

not be strong enough for combat, he designed the Ranger Rosary made with parachute cord, dark beads, and no metal parts for safety.

Soon after, other home-schooled families began to help make the rosaries. The word passed from one chaplain to another: "Free combat rosaries are available from St. Mary's of Annapolis, Maryland." Military in war-torn areas are especially thankful for the strength and protection these holy rosaries bring. Groups who prayed the rosaries started to form, especially on the front lines. Those rosaries became a simple sign of the time and effort that we are willing to give to the brave men and women giving each and every second that they have.

A remarkable blessing took place in Afghanistan this past year when a young Marine, a recent graduate of the Naval Academy, was stationed as an officer at a frontline base. His convoy came under heavy fire in an ambush attack, and the first tank exploded in flames. His best friend was in that tank while he was in the third one. Because of the continued assault, he was unable to reach the engulfed tank until the Air Force was called in to quell the fighting. When he was finally able to race to the first tank, he was amazed to see the en-

tire crew climb out of the burning vehicle without any burns or other injuries. These warriors emerging unscathed were the same men who had prayed the rosary together every night at camp. When asked later, they credited the miracle that had happened to that simple act.

Hundreds of thousands of combat rosaries have been made and sent to soldiers of every denomination, but the nonprofit, donation-based organization cannot function without your help. Give your gift of time and resources, so our brave soldiers can continue to feel loved and connected as they give their greatest gift.

Funds are necessary to purchase the rosary making material. Ranger Rosary is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, all-volunteer charity that relies solely on private donations. Without generous donors like you, they would not be able to continue this holy ministry. Contact rangerrosaryinc@verizon.net or call 410-990-4100 ext. 4714 for more information.

Give the greatest gift you can this season, and support the people giving everything they can. After all, it's their time that makes a difference.

To read other articles by Leanne visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Sophomore Year

Gifts that can't be wrapped

Lydia Olsen
MSM Class of 2016

On Christmas morning I am no longer a college kid who sleeps until noon but an excited child whose eyes won't stay shut. The moment I wake, I immediately hop up and look outside my bedroom window, hoping to see a blanket of white covering the ground. Instead I see the neigh-

bor's three children running outside and cheering with excitement as they discover the new trampoline in their backyard. They race down their porch stairs and run through the yard before jumping up and down in their matching flannel pajamas.

I wait under my covers until it is late enough that I can wake up the rest of the house without my family's disapproval. While waiting anxiously, I hear my bedroom door crack open, and I turn to see who it could be. My cat enters my room and walks over to me with her tail straight up in the air. I can't help but recall the familiarity in this scene. The first time we met was years ago on Christmas morning. She snuck into my bedroom the same way she always does and woke me up by brushing her whiskers against my cheek. I was startled and completely perplexed about how and why there was a kitten on my bed. What a surprise that was! When I noticed the bow tied around her neck I began to think that she was a gift, but I never imagined that she was for me. Every year since, she has walked into my bedroom on Christmas morning. As if it were tradition, she lies down in front of me, and we watch the clock across the room slowly count down.

The time finally comes, and I roll out of bed and quickly put on my slippers. I open my door and rush over to my sisters' rooms.

From experience I know I should always start with Jenna first. I push open the bedroom door and whisper her name, gradually getting louder until she finally stirs. I sit down beside her, and we devise a plan to wake up our other sister, Kelsey. Waking her is not a task that can be accomplished alone and failure is always imminent. Jenna and I are aware of the importance of teamwork and know that the plan must be executed precisely. The two of us stand outside Kelsey's door and finalize our attack before pouncing. Jenna pushes open the door, and I get a running start. I jump onto Kelsey's bed and bounce up and down as if her bed was my new trampoline. Jenna and I then start loudly singing Christmas carols. When Kelsey takes the pillow from under her head and uses it to cover her ears, I know we are making progress. Our song gets louder and louder until Kelsey sits up and tries to silence our singing voices by insisting she is awake. Pleased with our success, Jenna and I smile knowingly at each other. The three of us leave Kelsey's room to find our other family members, venturing past the tree as we do. I have to cover my eyes so that I don't peek at the Christmas tree in all its beauty until we're all together. After a few more planned wakeup attacks and a brief pause to don Christmas sweaters, we're finally ready to celebrate.

When the wrapping paper lies crumbled on the floor with bows and tinsel, the Christmas cookies have all disappeared, and the fridge is filled with leftovers for

the week, my mom and I know it is time. Pulling on our boots over our layers, buttoning our jackets, and finding our gloves, we walk out into dusk. With a bag of carrots and cut apples in hand, we hop into the car and drive that old familiar route. When we reach the red gate, I throw off my seat belt and get out of the car. Unclipping the chain, I open the gate to let my mom and her car through so they can continue on the dirt road. I wait as they drive past, then I take off. I sprint past the gate, through a field and into the darkness, the sound of my heavy boots rushing through the grass signals my approach. Before I even reach her pen I know she will be there, that 15 hand, chestnut mare waiting and welcoming me. My beautiful present Indy.

I slide through the crack in the fence and we greet each other, our breath visible in the brisk December air. With disappointment, her tongue would lick my empty palm before she eagerly insists in showing me the way to her stall, grunting with anticipation. I let her inside, and she paces back and forth with excitement. In the barn I look for a note on that green dry-erase board, and I smile as I write, "I hope you had a great Christmas too, Mrs. Pam!" in response to the barn owner. My mother and I break the thin layer of ice across the top of the water tub and carry buckets to refill it. I walk over to the bin that holds reused plastic coffee cans, each already measured with feed. I grab one and enter back into Indy's stall. She matches my steps as we walk to her feed bucket. The moment I open the

can, a mixture of scents fills my nose. I breathe in the combination of honey, oats, and molasses as Indy quickly devours her food. She licks the bucket thoroughly to make sure she hasn't missed anything before walking to the flakes of hay my mother and I had set out for her. Indy happily finishes her dinner while my mom and I brush the dirt from her hair and clean out her hooves. We pat her neck and comb her mane as we talk about the day and about how Christmas came and went too fast. As Indy nudges my pockets, insisting I give her more peppermint treats, my mom and I discuss the gifts we gave and the gifts we received. Somehow we seem to forget to mention the gift we are experiencing right then.

Since I was first able to write to Santa, all I ever asked for was a horse. Indy wasn't ever mine to keep. She was simply mine to borrow, but the lessons she taught me and the memories we shared made our time together one of the greatest gifts I have ever received. Not only did she help me grow and ease the troubles of my adolescent years, she instructed me on how to communicate without using words and strengthened my relationship with my mother. I will forever cherish the times the three of us spent in each other's presence. This year, don't expect to find the greatest gifts in perfectly wrapped boxes, but rather with those you love doing what you enjoy. This Christmas, may you create moments that will last forever.

To read other articles by Lydia visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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GIFTS WITH MEANING

Junior Year

The paper gave to me...

Kyle Ott
MSM Class of 2015

When I was in elementary school, we read a peculiar story called "The Gift of The Magi" by Old Henry. I remember sitting there in the library, cross-legged on the carpet square I had carried with me and just wondering at the love that two people could bear for one another. Something about the piece resonated with me, and even then, before I had decided that I wanted to write for a living (heck, before I had even considered making a living at all) that story resonated with me. Old Henry had struck some primal chord in my mind that just seemed to stick, and I remembered that tale even when all the other little details about my earlier life started to fade.

Years have passed now, but that story still resonates with me. In an age where most people are concerned with

beating the lines on Black Friday, making sure they find a nice Christmas tree, or catching every single re-rerun of How The Grinch Stole Christmas (which I could never blame them for), I start thinking about that story and whether or not someone could give a gift that meant so much. For me, that gift came from Mike Hillman, the editor of this paper and a great mentor. It truly is the most terrifying of things when you're a young freshman and you inform upperclassmen you'll be pursuing an English major, and they laugh. It's a scary world out there, and jobs are getting fewer and fewer while the demand for them is getting higher. Imagine, just starting out in college and already wondering what the heck you're going to do with your life. About a week in, I received a call from Mike (who I had never met before) telling me that not only had I secured the job, but I was also working for an editor who had flunked English in col-

lege. A while back I wrote a lovely article about the relationship that Mike and I have – hint: it's more like Abbot and Costello than an editor and writer. However, this time I want to focus on the gift that it's been to be able to write for a paper that I like as much as the Emmitsburg News-Journal.

The first thing I love is the people. When you have the chance to work closely with a group of talented individuals like the ones we have, it is challenging, wonderful, and at times incredibly funny. In particular, I relish the moments when everyone is sitting in the library, waiting for Mike to walk in so our monthly meeting can start. Almost every time we have a staff meeting, Mike will walk in, take a seat, and then ask us a question. Sometimes the question is an obvious one about history that we should probably know (the anniversary of JFK's assassination), and sometimes it's something that no one would ever care to remember (how long a particular tri-state drought has lasted for instance). Before he arrives, we all have the chance to place bets on what kind of question he'll ask and if any of us will immediately know the answer. Spoiler alert:

we never do. Although we never actually guess the answer correctly, it's wonderful to laugh and joke about what's coming down the line.

The second of the paper's little gifts is the opportunity to do real, meaningful writing and get paid to do it. It's a running joke on the Internet that every other person who wants to be a writer goes on to work in a coffee shop while perpetually working on a "novel" that they never finish. With all those things in mind, I actually feel lucky every time I sit down to write something that I not only love, but that I also know people read. We're blessed with a phenomenal readership, and it's humbling to think that someone out there takes time to sit down and read what I have to say about life every month. People go through life constantly trying to find something that will make a difference, or at the very least affect someone in some small way, and I'd like to think that I have just a little bit.

The final of the paper's gifts to me is its improvement to my writing. Is it a bummer having to change articles sometimes? Absolutely. Is it sometimes difficult having to establish ideas to fit

an overarching theme so the whole paper blends together seamlessly? Without a doubt. Do all the edits, rewrites, and toils make a better product? You had better believe it! The old adage about gold being tested in fire is, in fact, right on the money. Every time I find myself stretching for new ideas, working hard to integrate the concepts I want to talk about within the larger context of the paper, I feel my writing become a little bit better, and every time it becomes just a little easier. It's constant work, but it really does pay to be consistently held to a higher standard and to know that people count on you to deliver something that everyone can enjoy and get behind.

With all that said, Mike, thank you for the greater gift that you gave me. Thank you for giving some starry eyed freshman kid the chance to do what he loves more than anything else. Yes, you can scold me for brownnosing, but the fact is this paper is one of the most important gifts I've been given. Until then, reflect on the things we've been given, and as always, stay and read for a while.

To read other articles by Kyle visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Senior Year

Quality time with quality friends

Nicole Jones
MSM Class of 2014

Senior year has proven to be the most stressful year of my life. Between 15 credits, 5 graduate school applications, 3 jobs, and a social life, sometimes it's hard to stay positive and motivated. I know many of my fellow seniors are in the same boat of stress (some are even overboard with a life vest), but when all is said and done, I've only found one thing that truly helps: spending quality time with the right people.

Of course, this has a different definition to different people and scenarios. Sometimes all I need is someone to listen to my concerns and nod attentively at all the right moments. Other days, I need someone to go on an off-campus adventure with to break free from the constraints of academic responsibilities. This semester has been filled with opportunities for me to both give and receive these gifts of quality time with others, the most recent of which was a trip to Baltimore, MD, for an exciting first attempt at running a 5k.

Most of my friends are active individ-

uals who enjoy a personal challenge, be it intellectual or physical. New experiences are an exciting part of daily life as one of their companions, so naturally there came a time when we decided to run a 5k together. After looking around at different runs both on and off campus, we settled on the Color Run.

The Color Run is a 5k race that travels the world celebrating healthiness and happiness as well as supporting a local charity in its host city. The Baltimore race supported the Cool Kids Campaign, a charity that supports pediatric oncology patients and their families by providing resources for educational, social and emotional support.

We woke up Sunday, Nov. 17 at five in the morning. I had only had five hours of sleep the night before, but with a thermos of hot walnut tea, I sleepily climbed into my friend's car and took over the navigation system. Some impromptu karaoke and an hour-long car ride later, we found ourselves in the foggy streets of Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

Winding our way to Camden Yards, we gradually began to see fellow Color Runners dressed in white, prepared for

the shower of color that was about to stain their day the colors of the rainbow. We stretched and warmed our muscles, jogged in place, and took pictures before being swept away in a herd of bodies pressing towards the start line. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO! A thunderous cheer sent off wave after wave of runners. Packets of colored powder were tossed in the air, dusting the ground with pink, blue, and green.

I jogged past the walkers on the right-hand side of the fenced-off path. My friends and I sang along with the music blasting over the speakers placed along the path. Then we saw it. A cloud of yellow appeared ahead of us. We tossed our hands into the air and ran faster as pediatric oncology patients released an endless stream of yellow powder. I ran through the cloud, cheering on my attackers and enjoying the smiles the color brought to their faces. Yellow, purple, pink, orange, and blue. The finish line welcomed us with a block party, where more color was thrown, circus performers dazzled, and my friends danced, sang and took endless photos together.

When it was time to leave, we wore our colors proudly through the streets of Baltimore, stopping at the local Panera Bread for a much needed repast. Others looked at us with varying degrees of interest. Some people laughed, business-

persons gave us a wide berth for fear of ruining their suit, and children smiled. My favorite people were those who actually asked what the run was about.

"What do you mean what is it about?" I had asked the first person who asked me this as I washed my hands in the bathroom, sending a swirling pool of blackish blue water down the drain.

"What's it for? Why do you do it?" asked the lady with a curious smile as she waited for the sink with a toddler on her arm.

"Well... we sort of just did it for fun to try something new, but it also supports a great cause: The Cool Kids Campaign, which supports pediatric cancer survivors," I explained. This young mother was only the beginning of the inundation of questions and curious glances. During our meal, at the crosswalk back to our parking spot, even once we returned to campus, everywhere we went people asked us what it was we stood for. Cool Kids. I was excited to advocate the cause.

It was incredible to think how the simple act of wanting to try something new with my friends like running a 5k could have a much larger impact. Just by having fun with my friends, I suddenly became part of a cause much greater than myself. Soon, it was easy to spout off what my vibrant colors meant. I told fel-

low Panera customers, the people shopping the streets of the Baltimore Inner Harbor, and the cashier at my campus food court. Everyone supported it. Some people had participated before. Others had connections to Cool Kids and were excited to meet fellow supporters. I was excited to be so incredibly blessed to have experienced the gift of quality time with my friends while still being able to give back to a community in need.

What inspires me the most is that I was not actually seeking to give in this situation. I was merely seeking a fun time, time with friends and time away from schoolwork. While I did have this "me" time, the Color Run surprised me by reversing my role from receiver into giver. I was unexpectedly able to give back, advocating a cause from Baltimore and Emmitsburg alike and leaving people with a positive and colorful impression they won't soon forget. It showed me that every situation is an opportunity to give, even when we are seeking only to receive. There is always something more we can do for the others around us. I encourage you to take the holidays as a chance to do that extra something for someone in your life, or even for the unsuspecting stranger. You'll both be glad you did.

To read other articles by Nicole visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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THE GRADUATE

Counting your blessings

Megan Kinsella
MSM Class of 2013

“When I’m worried and I can’t sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep. Then I fall asleep counting my blessings...” These fabled lyrics sung by Bing Crosby in *White Christmas* have been constantly running through my mind over the past few weeks. Of course, Christmas is coming and it’s one of the most classic Christmas movies of all time. But all holiday sentiment aside, this song holds wisdom that we can all apply in our daily lives. There have been so many things this semester that I have been worried about and because of that I’ve learned even more than ever to always remember the important things in life—to always count my blessings and worry about nothing.

The longest amount of time I have ever spent away from my family was a few weeks while I was in school at the Mount. I would make it a point to get home over breaks and for random weekends during the semester, and they always came to my cross country and track races, so we never went long without seeing each other. So, needless to say, the past five months living in Louisiana, a thousand miles away from my family, have been quite difficult indeed. I have missed my family so much, and I cannot wait until I’ll be able to go home and spend time with them over the Christmas holiday.

There have been days over the past five months that my heart has literally ached from missing them so badly. While this heartache is not the most comfortable or fun feeling the world, it has made me step back and realize how truly blessed I am to have the family that I do. They always say that you never know how much something means to you until it’s gone. Of course my family is not “gone,” but these past five months have shown me how priceless they are to me, and how every single moment spent with them is precious.

Not only do I count them as blessings before I fall asleep, but also the people I have met and come to love here in Lafayette. Instead of wishing the time away until I can go home to see my family, I’ve opened my eyes and begun to recognize all the blessings God has given me here, right where I am. My mom’s mom always told us grandchildren to Bloom where you are planted. When I was growing up, this didn’t make a whole lot of sense to me—I knew Anna (as we called our grandmother) was an avid gardener, so I assumed she was just talking about her flowers. Little did I know how much those words would help me as I got older! For the first couple weeks here in the South, it was hard to not think about wanting to go home to be with the people I know and love. After a little while though, I remembered Anna’s wise words. I realized that God placed me here for a very specific reason and He



was calling me to bloom exactly where He planted me, with the people He planted me next to. When I finally gave up control of my situation and stopped fighting it, I was able to start living in the moments of joy with the students I’m working with and my teammates. Everything happens for a reason, and if we learn to bloom where we have been planted, our worries will be fewer, and our joy greater.

In *White Christmas*, Bob Wallace (Bing Crosby) tells the lovely Betty Haynes, “If you’re worried and you can’t sleep, just count your blessings instead of sheep. Then you’ll fall asleep counting your blessings.” There are so many things in life that we can

worry about: money, health, safety, providing for our families, and so on. Recently, I have been worrying a lot about the future—moving closer to home, wedding planning, putting money into savings for our future family, and every other little thing you could think of.

My grandma on my dad’s side is as Irish as they come, so of course she has a witty saying for every situation you could ever possibly experience. When it comes to worry, she always says, “Worrying is like a rocking chair; it gives you something to do, but doesn’t get you anywhere.”

I realized that if I spend so much time worrying about all of these things that I have no control

over, I am missing the little, everyday blessings of the present. Yes, it gives me something to keep my mind occupied with and allows me to temporarily think that I can actually figure out all of these things right now. But, worrying just causes unneeded stress and tension in our lives, and doesn’t allow us to take deep breaths, look around us, and appreciate the blessings that we have right now.

So, this year, remember to count your blessings; look around you and take time to live in the moment with the people God has blessed you with. Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself. Merry Christmas and a very blessed New Year!

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COMMUNITY NOTES

Seton Center prepares for the holidays

Jackie Corley and Angela Smith
MSM Class of 2014

As the holiday season approaches, preparation in Emmitsburg is in full swing. While many are getting lists ready and planning trips to Jubilee, the local emergency services program at the Seton Center is also preparing for the upcoming holidays.

The primary role of Seton Center is to help low-income families meet their needs by offering supportive human services. The Seton Center is located on South Seton Avenue and is run by the Daughters of Charity. Founded in 1969, it originally ran as a daycare center for local families; after a year, it opened a thrift shop.

The outreach program began in 1974 and provides services based on the needs of the community, including emergency short-term assistance with utilities, rent, medical services, food, or clothing. Volunteers from the Center also visit people in their homes, hospitals, or nursing facilities; staff offers case management and help with job search support and skills training.

Sister Carol Durkin, the thrift shop manager, explains, "The Seton Center started the program to

get to the root causes of poverty."

The Helping Hands Holiday program assists more than 250 eligible families on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Interviews and applications for those in need on Thanksgiving begin arriving at the start of the autumn season. To qualify for this program, applicants are required to attend at least one of the Pa\$\$port to Wealth courses offered through the center.

The Pa\$\$port to Wealth courses teach money management skills. These programs were held in local libraries to benefit those with a lack of transportation. Some topics of the courses include: money management, the importance of credit, and how to get ready for the upcoming holidays. After completing one course, the participants receive a certificate signed by the course instructor, which permits them to qualify for the Helping Hands program.

The baskets distributed to families include canned foods, non-perishable items and gift cards to be used for purchasing perishable food items.

The Seton Center also collects donations for their Christmas program. Applicants for this program must attend one Pa\$\$port



Celebrate the joy of Christmas with the Mother Seton School's Christmas Program December, 16. The program will include choral performances from the Mother Seton School Chorus and from individual classes, our award-winning band, and a student-produced Christmas play. For more information call 301-447-3161 or visit www.mothersetonschool.org.

to Wealth course and complete a family application, a slightly more in-depth process than the Thanksgiving program since the family must show proof of monthly expenses. The family includes a wish list, which explains what each member would like for Christmas.

Families that apply get a sponsor, who can be from local churches or families. The role of the sponsor is to purchase the items provided on the wish list. They receive the age and gender of each member and three clothing items

or toys that the member would need.

On Friday, December 13, sponsors will bring their donations to the Seton Center. On Sunday, December 15, the sponsored families return to the Seton Center and receive their items. At the end of the day, those who were not eligible for the program are still able to receive donations that were left-over.

The Seton Center always welcomes donations so they can help those in need once the holidays are over and they are pre-

paring for the Easter season. The Seton Center also has an Easter basket program, which will start in the spring.

There is also always a need for more volunteers. The Seton Center provides a training program for those who want to help out during the holiday season as well as throughout the year. For more information, please call (301) 447-6102 or email setoncenterinc@doc.org. This is a great way to help out the Emmitsburg community and be an essential part of the Seton Center.

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ARTS AND FESTIVALS

The Adams-Jefferson Letters

Spencer Watson, author of "Bessie Darling", has written a new one-act play based on the personal correspondence between President John Adams and President Thomas Jefferson from 1812-1826. The Thurmont Thespians will hold its world premiere in Thurmont in the St. John's Lutheran Church Social Hall next to the Guardian Hose Firehouse on Friday and Saturday evening, January 10-11, 2014 starting at 8PM.

The play is under the direction of Beth Royer Watson and features the author himself playing President Adams and J. Maxwell Beaver as President Jefferson. Norman Gibat will play the role of Dr. Benjamin Rush, a mutual friend to both Presidents who encouraged them to reconcile their long-held political dif-

ferences and rekindle their earlier friendship toward one another when they both fought for American Independence in the Continental Congress of 1776.

The play takes place over 14 years as both ex-Presidents continue their lives at a surprising pace. Adams is 76 when the play begins and Jefferson is seven years his junior. Their exchanges cover many subjects from the current happenings in Washington and news from around the world to more esoteric topics of religion, education and philosophy. As both great men feel the gradual onset of old age, they share their mutual hopes and fears, both for their deaths and the future of the country. Both men were well educated and fluent in Greek, Latin and French, each having spent years



At one time fierce political rivals, Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson became close friends in their later lives, exchanging letters that discussed the state of their nation they helped to found. This exchange of letters is the subject of the Thurmont Thespians latest show.

living overseas in either France or England as ambassadors. Talk of their mutual friends and acquaint-

ances make for lively exchanges with sagacity as well as flashes of humor.

Prior to the presentation of Mr. Watson's new play, there will be several Tennessee Williams 20 minute one-act plays performed on the same bill. "This Property Is Condemned" a drama featuring Emily Cofer of Thurmont and Nathan Kopit of Frederick and "A Perfect Analysis As Given By A Parrot", a comedy featuring Michele Driver of Thurmont and Jennifer Brown of Woodsboro. Spencer Watson will also direct the first Williams one-act and Beth Royer Watson will direct the second.

There will be limited seating for both evening performances of these one-act plays, so early reservations are strongly recommended by contact Mrs. Becky Urian at 301-271-7613. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults and \$7.00 for students.

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"Smoke On The Mountain"

The Thurmont Thespians will hold open auditions for their spring musical, "Smoke On The Mountain" on Sunday and Monday evenings starting at 7PM at the St. John's Lutheran Church Social Hall

at 15 North Church Street in Thurmont. Director Beth Royer Watson is looking for actors, singers and preferably musicians who can do both for this seven member cast who will perform this southern gospel musical

for two weekends at the Thurmont American Legion Auditorium on April 4-6 & 11-13. Scripts and songlists are available in advance by contacting the director at 301-416-0864 or emailing her at beth.watson@myactv.net for more information.

"Smoke on the Mountain" tells the story of a Saturday Night Gospel Sing at a country church in North Carolina's Smoky Mountains in 1938. The show features two dozen rousing bluegrass songs played and sung by the Sanders Family, a traveling group making its return to performing after a five-year hiatus. Pastor Oglethorpe, the young and enthusiastic minister of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, has enlisted the Sanders Family in his efforts to bring his tiny congregation into "the modern world." Between songs, each family member "witnesses" -- telling a story about an important event in their life. Though they try to appear perfect in the eyes of a congregation who wants to be inspired by their songs, one thing after another goes awry and they reveal their true -- and hilariously imperfect - natures. By the evening's end, the Sanders Family have endeared themselves to us by revealing their weaknesses and allowing us to share in their triumphs.

The family band is composed of Burl Sanders in his 40's-50's who plays guitar banjo, his wife Vera Sanders about the same age who plays piano, their twin children, Dennis and Denise, in their late teens or early 20's who play saxophone, trumpet and drums, June, another daughter in her 20's who plays percussion, whistles in addition to signing the words to the music and Merle's brother Stanley Sanders, 40's or 50's who plays upright bass and doubles on banjo.

This musical's featured gospel songs include: "Church in the Wildwood", "No Tears in Heaven", "Angel Band", "Whispering Hope", "Smoke On the Mountain", "I'll Fly Away" and many, many more.

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ARTS AND FESTIVALS

Christmas!

Caroline King
MSM Class of 2015

Now that all the geese have flown south, the leftover turkey from Thanksgiving is all eaten, and the sunset is getting earlier and earlier (not to mention the colder air moving in), it's safe to say that it's beginning to feel a lot like full-fledged winter. People everywhere are pulling out the snow shovels, dusting off their window scrapers, and getting all their warmest, puffiest coats out of the closet. But with this cold winter weather comes more than just snow gloves and scarves! Christmas will be here before you know it, and the surrounding areas have set up many upcoming events to help you and your family and friends get their Christmas spirit ready to go for this holiday season, not to mention entertain the kids during Christmas break, or maybe if we're lucky, some snow days.

Starting Dec. 1, the Emmitsburg Community Chorus will be presenting their annual Christmas Concert which will include many classic Christmas songs as well as a feature of the classic story, "Twas the Night Before Christmas," but with a twist, as it is set to a musical score. The chorus will be joined by the Spires Brass Quintet. Located in the Seton Shrine, this event kicks off at 4pm. What better way to start off Dec. than with some carols to get you ready for the entire season? Nothing welcomes the holiday quite like singing the old favorite songs we hold dear in our hearts...except maybe a steamy mug of hot chocolate and marshmallows!

The fun doesn't stop there! Dec. 2 will feature the 25th Annual Evening of Christmas Spirit. This event has a ton of activities starting at 6pm and going until 9pm. See the article on page 47 for more information.

If you're looking for something filled with the Christmas spirit to do over the weekends, the Choral Arts Society of Frederick will be performing a holiday concert entitled "A Decade of Favorites" on the Frederick Community College Campus. The concert will take place on Dec. 7 at 3pm. More information can be found at www.CASOF.org. Nothing will get a Scrooge into the Christmas spirit like a concert of holiday favorites attended with friends. You won't want to miss this concert!

A Candlelight Christmas Concert will be hosted by Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Taneytown on Dec. 15 at 3pm. Members of the church's own Luther Choir, Taneytown Community Chorus, the Senior Singers of Carroll County, and the Fourscore String Quartet of Gettysburg will all be featured in this concert. Featuring traditional choral holiday music, this concert is sure to be a hit with anyone who wants to hear a little bit of live holiday music performed close to home. Held inside the church itself, the concert promises to be as visually

beautiful as it will be to hear. A light reception will be offered afterwards and the concert itself is free, no tickets being required. For additional information call 410-756-6626.

Also happening on Dec. 15 (but luckily later that evening at 7pm) is a concert and prayer titled, "Dona Bonis Pacem." The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg is offering this musical prayer for peace to the public. The concert is led by the Schola Contorum chorus, a choral ensemble comprised of experienced auditioned singers from the South Central Pennsylvania and Maryland regions. The concert will also feature the Gettysburg Children's Choir. This concert will take place in the Lutheran Theological Seminary Chapel. "Favorite and familiar" music will be included. Round off your Saturday night with a little Christmas spirit from extremely talented adult and children singers!

Mother Seton School will be offering a Christmas program on Dec. 16. For those early birds, it will be performed at 9am, as well as at 7pm for those who might be able to make a later time. This program will include choral performances from the Mother Seton School Chorus and from individual classes, as well as the band and a student-produced Christmas play. Come out and support the students while getting ready for the holiday season! Call 301-447-3161 or visit www.mothersetonschool.org for more information.

But that's not all being offered this month in way of holiday festivities! The Annual Blue Ridge Mountain Christmas Celebration will be held on Saturday, Dec. 21 this year, starting at 4pm and lasting until 8pm. This event promises a day of fun-filled festivities for everyone. Sponsored by the Blue Ridge Summit Free Library and the Episcopal Church of Transfiguration, this fun Christmas celebration will be located at Blue Ridge Summit Plaza.



Music Gettysburg! will usher in the season of Advent with a festive Vespers choral, Sunday, Dec., 1st at 7:30 pm at the Lutheran Theological Seminary. For more information call 717-334-6286 or visit www.musicgettysburg.org

From 4-6pm there will be songs of the seasons, fire truck rides, horse-drawn sleigh rides, and if that wasn't enough, refreshments will be served from the library porch and the historic Blue Ridge Summit Free Library will be conducting its Annual Holiday Open House. The fun won't stop there! At 6pm, the tree lighting ceremony will take place. Then at 6:30pm, the popular Appalachian Wind Quintet will be playing at the adjacent Church of Transfiguration. If you have any questions regarding the event, please call library board members Duke and Lynn Martin at 717-642-5645.

Just make sure you and your family and friends are bundled up for the chilly winter weather! According to the editor of the Farmer's Almanac, we are in for a rough and snowy winter!

If you're looking for something to put you in the Christmas holiday spirits and help you take a break from the hectic holiday shopping, these events will be a great way to do that. You can get out and about, give the kids something to do, and even give back to the community in the events that sponsor food drives. The holiday season is always busy, but giving and helping others as well as

spending time with loved ones are what they're all about. These events are the perfect way to do that and to socialize all while in the Christmas spirit. After all, it is the most wonderful time of the year!

See more Christmas and holiday related events see pages 46 & 47.

To read other articles by Caroline King, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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The Holidays

Holiday Food & Entertaining With Fabio Cavella
Wed., Nov. 20, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
\$54 (Nonmembers \$58)

Cookies Around The World
Sat., Dec. 7, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
\$47 (Nonmembers \$51)

Gingerbread Construction Zone
Session 1-Adults: Thurs., Nov. 14, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
\$53 (Nonmembers \$57)
Session 2-Parents With Children (Age 10 & up) Sat., Nov. 16, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
\$47 (Nonmembers \$50)

Holiday Centerpieces

The Thanksgiving Table
Mon., Nov. 25, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
\$46 (Nonmembers \$49)

Floral Candle Rings & Spheres
Wed., Dec. 11, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
\$46 (Nonmembers \$49)

"Simply Pretty" Hanging Charms & Ornaments
Thurs., Nov. 14, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. or 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$35 (Nonmembers \$38)

Porcelain Christmas Ornaments
Thurs., Nov. 14, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
\$28 (Nonmembers \$31)

Make A Clay Santa Parent & Child Project
Fri., Dec. 6, 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
\$35 (Nonmembers \$39)

Fused Glass Holiday Decorations
Sat., Dec. 7, 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$62 (Nonmembers \$66)

Stained Glass Holiday Decorations
Sat., Dec. 14, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$73 (Nonmembers \$78)

Easy Gourmet Weeknight Dinner
Mon., Dec. 2, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
\$53 (Nonmembers \$57)

Wines For The Season - Fall in Tuscany
Mon., Nov. 11, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
\$61 (Nonmembers \$64)

Sushi
Wed., Nov. 13, 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
\$49 (Nonmembers \$52)

Visual

Observe And Draw
Mondays, Nov. 4, 11, 18 & 25, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. \$85 (Nonmembers \$95)

Egg & Tempura Oils
Tuesdays, Nov. 5, 12, 19 & 26, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. \$190 (nonmembers \$110)

Canvas And Wine - A Fun Night Out!
Session 1: Thurs., Nov. 7, 6 - 8:30 p.m.
Session 2: Thurs., Dec. 5, 6 - 8:30 p.m.
\$45 (Nonmembers \$48)

Writing

Making Extra Bucks As A Freelance Writer
Thurs., Nov. 7, 14, 21, 6 - 8:00 p.m.
\$64 (Nonmembers \$71)

Creative Writing
Tues., Nov. 5, 12, 19 & 26, 6 - 8 p.m.
\$85 (Nonmembers \$95)

Jewelry

Creative Jewelry - Traditional & Modern Techniques (Ages 16 & Up)
Mon., Nov. 18 - Dec. 9, 6 - 8 p.m.
\$115 (Nonmembers \$125)

Silver Wire Fusing: Make Some Jewelry!
Tues., Dec. 3, 6 - 8:30 p.m.
\$55 (Nonmembers \$60)

Fused Glass Jewelry
Sat., Nov. 16, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$77 (Nonmembers \$83)

Pottery

Stoneware Pie Plate
Thurs., Nov. 7, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
\$39 (Nonmembers \$42)

Glass

Fused Glass Magnet
Sat., Dec. 7, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
\$46 (Nonmembers \$49)

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CREATIVE WRITING

When the Christmas tree smiled

Alexandra Tyminski
MSM Class of 2015

I looked to my left and to my right. The snow sat on the tips of my branches, resting, until it was swiftly blown away by the crisp wind.

"On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree. On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, 2 Turtle Doves and a partridge in a pear tree."

The speakers above me began to play the same song, like they do every morning, since we opened for business. I could never get tired of it. The Christmas music keeps me calm as I eagerly await a new home.

"Daddy! Daddy!" I felt an abrupt shake of my broad shoulders as I was still all snuggled in bed.

I opened my squinty eyes to see Rosie's dark brown pigtails, that one freckle on her nose, and hazel eyes staring back at me. She smiled at me with her little dimple on her left cheek. It was impossible to resist smiling back at Rosie. Her two front teeth were missing and boy, was she the sweetest little 6-year-old I ever met. However, I was probably biased because she was my daughter.

"Let's go, Daddy! It's time to get the tree! We must get the tree!" Rosie looked up at me with her big, eager eyes.

"Alright, buddy. We can go get the tree. We have to eat first!" I said to her, sitting up in bed. She tugged on my arm once again.

"I did already!" Rosie said.

"You did? What did you eat?" I asked her.

"I had Christmas spirit!" she said with a huge smirk on her face.

"You always make me laugh little Rosie. We can get some breakfast on our way there. Go get ready, and we will adventure for our tree."

"You better watch out, you better not cry. You better not shout, I'm telling you why. Santa Clause is coming to towwwwwnnn!"

All of the families walked by me. Up, down, up, down. They took a few glances at me and then moved on to the next one. Was there something wrong with me? Were my branches too thin? Was I not tall enough?

I watched as my friends were all being tied onto the roof of an Escalade, a Subaru, a big black Navigator, an old-school Chevy, and a green van that looked like a space ship. The snow from the morning was still sitting on my outer branches. I began to feel discouraged. I was almost sure that someone would come pick me up today. I could feel my Christmas spirit dropping until I spotted the little girl down at the end of the row. Her smile was infectious. It lit up the entire place. I was hopeful that maybe this little girl would want to give me a new home.

"Daddy, I really like this one!" the little girl said.

In my surprise, I was towering over at the little girl I saw just moments ago. She was wearing white sneakers with pink shoelaces. Her face was freckled, but only on her nose. I thought she seemed very friendly.

"Little Rosie, are you sure this is the tree that you want?" the tall man standing next to her asked.

"Yes!" she shouted.

Then, he looked over at her and said, "Then this is the perfect tree for us! And guess what, Rosie?" She looked up at him with wide eyes, eagerly waiting for what he was going to say next.

"This is a live tree, so even though it costs a little bit more, we can plant it after the Christmas season is over and enjoy it for the rest of our lives!"

The little girl could barely contain her excitement, and neither could I!

The tall man bent down and I

could feel myself being gently picked up. I was so excited to finally be going home. Not only would I get to wear decorations for the first time, but I would also get to ride on the back of a car for the first time. I was hoisted up onto the top of a silver Lexus. I didn't know cars too well for I was only a tree, but from what I've heard, a Lexus is a nice car. So, it made me even more thrilled to experience it.

"Well kiddo, do you think it will fall off the top?" I said jokingly, looking towards the backseat at Rosie.

"No, Daddy! This tree is ours forever! I love that tree already." She said.

"Forever? Love it already? You're funny. It's just a tree, darling!" I questioned her.

"Yes, Dad, but trees have feelings, too," Rosie corrected me.

"Oh, of course they do," I said, quickly redeeming myself. I began thinking to myself: *If Christmas trees were animated, I wonder what they would say. Do they have preferences of where they end up for Christmas? Christmas trees must see so many different types of family traditions. They get to experience all of the decorations and presents. If only we knew what they were thinking. What a funny Christmas that would be!*

"Dadddd! Dadddd!" Rosie caught my attention as I started to day dream.

"We're home!" she shouted at the top of her lungs.

We got out of the car and with all my strength, I lifted the tree off the top of the car. It hung over my shoulder and little Rosie trailed in front of me. It reminded me of when my father and I went to get our Christmas tree together. My mom never liked getting up early nor trekking through the snow, so we always picked it out before she was even out of bed. Rosie and I walked up the four stone steps into the house, and I placed the tree in the stand near our fireplace.



"I'll grab the lights!" she squealed, running into the basement. I sat down on the couch and waited for Rosie to bring the decorations up. It truly amazed me at how much joy Rosie got out of picking out a tree. She never could explain why she wanted a certain tree. She just knew it was the right one. I guess that same concept can be applied to a lot of things in life.

"Rosie! What are you doing?" I asked while laughing. She was tangled up in the colorful lights.

"Let's start at the top and work our way down!" she demanded.

"Whatever you want little Rosie, but I'm going to put on some Christmas music first," I said.

They had such a beautiful home. It wasn't very big, but it was quaint. I had never seen the inside of a home before. It smelled like cinnamon and some type of sugary goodness all around me. I looked at their happy faces, and I was glad that my presence could give them joy. If only Rosie and her dad knew what a Christmas tree smile looked like. *"Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell Rock..."*

The music began again, but this time it was different. I could enjoy it in a place that was now my new home. Rosie and her dad began to place the different colored lights on my branches. As each light hit me, I felt a branch or two gravitate towards one end or the other. I felt beautiful.

"Let's put the sparkly stuff on it!" I heard Rosie say.

Her dad reached to the top branch and decorated me with some gold shiny tinsel-like string. I wasn't sure what it was, but I could feel it illuminating my appearance. Is this what every Christmas tree gets to feel like?

"Does this look alright?" Rosie's dad looked at her and then right at me. I wonder if they could tell how thankful I was for them.

I wondered where the rest of Rosie and her dad's family were. I saw a picture of Rosie, her dad, and a pretty woman with them. She looked like Rosie's mother, but I wasn't sure where she was. Regardless, I was glad Rosie still possessed the Christmas Spirit. Rosie's father seemed very willing and genuine. He would always partake in Christmas because it too was important to him.

That night, Rosie sat in front of me all night. She placed ornament after ornament after ornament on my branches. She hung an ornament that was of an angel and on the wings, it said, "To my little Rosie, for through this I will be remembered." On the back of the ornament was engraved, "Love, Mom."

As Rosie placed this ornament on the tree, she looked up at me, and I locked eyes with her. She smiled at me, and I could see the joy in her heart. Christmas was her favorite holiday. And I was a part of it. Thanks to Rosie, I was given a new home. Her spirit of Christmas gave me life. Rosie had a very special gift. Her gift was joy, and for the first time, I found someone that shared something in common with me. I believe that my gift was joy, too.

Although my smile wasn't visible, I could tell I lit up the entire house by the look on little Rosie's face. It was the best Christmas I had ever had.

To read other creative works by Alexandra Tyminski, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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IN THE COUNTRY

Camp Eder's Christmas Tree Festival

Lori Jackson

Many folks are starting to feel the stress of the season; from shopping wars to house guests to overbooked schedules, the "most wonderful time of the year" can easily turn into the "the most overwhelming time of year".

In response to the growing busyness of the holiday season, Camp Eder, a Christian Camp & Retreat Center in Fairfield, is hosting their Third Annual Christmas Tree Festival on December 13th - 15th from 5pm-8:30pm. Designed as a "Celebration of the Birth of Christ" the Camp Eder Christmas Tree Festival offers a place where families and individuals can experience an evening of refuge from the many things that pull our attention away from the true reason for the season. The festivities will include a tree decorating contest, indoor & outdoor lighting displays, luminaries, refreshments, live music, nativity collections, a candlelit service, alternative giving options and a wonderful evening out with family, friends, and neighbors.

This new tradition began in 2011 with an idea to offer Christmas Trees for folks to decorate and display in Geigley Lodge at Camp Eder. Each tree is sponsored by an

organization, group, or individual which they can decorate with a theme of their choice. Attendees can vote on their favorite tree by purchasing tickets for a dollar each. The funds received from the tree decorating contest ticket sales benefit the variety of programs happening throughout the year at Camp Eder.

Food and refreshments are plenty as the Camp Eder staff and volunteers offer free cookies, punch, and warm drinks as an a la carte food court provides menu options for those wishing to purchase an affordable meal. For those that don't have the time, a bake sale table will be selling delicious, beautifully boxed, homemade Christmas Cookies.

Live music, dozens of nativity scenes, decorated walking paths, and cozy fires set the stage for an evening of reflection as commercialism is tuned out and the simplicity of the Nativity Story comes into the spotlight for this event. The Camp Eder bell tolls each evening at 8:00pm, announcing the beginning of a peaceful candlelit service with a small live nativity. Christmas Carols are sung, followed by the reading of the Nativity Story directly from Scripture. The service closes with the

acapella singing of *Silent Night, Holy Night*. The beautiful sound of Middle Creek and the lights shining in the forest all make for a serene atmosphere of reflection for all.

In addition to offering a place for celebration and reflection, the Camp Eder Christmas Tree Festival also offers a place where we can work together to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

As an outreach to our community, Camp Eder will be collecting new or gently used children's clothing for infants through age six and donating them to *God's Closet*, a clothing pantry run by *Children's Aid Society* of New Oxford, PA. Canned food that is collected will be directed to the Fairfield Food Pantry at the Fairfield Mennonite Church for distribution. Children's clothing and canned goods can be delivered at any time during the Christmas Tree Festival (December 13-15, 5pm-8:30pm) or arrangements can be made at the Camp Office to drop off items at any other time.

Throughout the year, Camp Eder offers a number of events that welcome the local community; the Spring Golf Tournament, the Summer Camp Program, the



Experience the joy, peace, and hope that can be found in remembering that Christmas is a birthday party for a very special baby boy.

Fall Festival, and now The Winter Christmas Tree Festival. Each event has very specific elements that make each one very special to all; however it seems that even as young as the Christmas Tree Festival is, it is stealing hearts and becoming a favorite event for the Camp Eder Staff and those who visit during this very special time of the year.

If you're looking for a way to

find the true meaning of Christmas this year with your loved ones, consider stopping by Camp Eder during evening hours (5pm-8:30pm) on December 13th, 14th, or 15th. Camp Eder is found at 914 Mount Hope Road, Fairfield; additional information can be obtained from www.campeder.org or you may reach the Camp Eder Office at 717-642-8256, Tuesdays - Saturdays 9am-4pm.

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COOKING WITH LOVE

Party foods 101!

Brooke Hagerty
Chef/Owner Gunner's Grille
in Taneytown

The holidays are here and one never knows when unexpected guests will arrive, when an impromptu party will spring up or when the party you have been planning for weeks needs a little extra something. Never fear, a well-stocked "holiday" pantry makes it easy to throw together holiday snacks, appetizers and desserts (and if the thought of stocking your holiday pantry scares you just call Gunner's Grille at Taneytown and we will gladly cater to your every detail)! This month we will focus on how to stock and prepare lite holiday fare in little to no time. We will also provide you with a shopping list that will leave you wanting for nothing in the entertainment department.

The "holiday" pantry includes refrigerated items as well but do not worry about spoilage as all of these items have a minimum of a 2-4 week shelf life. Grab your paper and pencil and get ready to hit the local stores for everything you need! Once we have your list complete the recipes that follow will take no more than 30 minutes to prepare! A shopping we will go, a shopping we will go...hi, ho

the dairy-o a shopping we will go!

Holiday Pantry List

- Cheeses – goat cheese log, port wine cheese and cream cheese or low fat Neufchatel
- Proteins – thick sliced bacon & prosciutto (have the deli thin slice this for you)
- Sweets – frozen pound cake, melting chocolate, slice and bake cookie dough
- Produce – thick asparagus, oranges, fresh ginger, apple cider and frozen spinach
- Miscellaneous – entertainment crackers, phyllo pastry shells, mixed nuts, bamboo skewers for frill picks

Hot Spiced Nuts

Pre-heat your oven to 350 degrees. Place nuts in a bowl and zest with the orange rind and then squeeze the juice over the nuts. Sprinkle with paprika or chili powder, to your desired spiciness. Bake for 20-25 minutes. Can be served immediately or at room temperature.

Goat Cheese Pops

Pre-heat your oven to 425 degrees. On a baking sheet cook ½ pound bacon and then cool to room tem-

perature and then chop into a small dice. One pound goat cheese and ½ pound cream cheese or Neufchatel, softened, add 1 tablespoon of your favorite dried herbs (we like to use Italian seasoning, dried parsley and garlic powder). Mix together by hand or on a slow blender speed. Roll into bite size balls and through the bacon bits. Skewer and serve! Can be made up to 2 days in advance and are best served chilled.

Prosciutto Wrapped Asparagus

Spray asparagus with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with lemon pepper. Grill or roast asparagus to desired tenderness (best if it is crisp tender, about five minutes). Allow to cool and wrap with prosciutto. Serve room temperature or chilled.

Spinach and Goat Cheese Tartlets

Thaw 1 pound of frozen spinach and squeeze out any excess moisture. Place in a bowl. Soften one goat cheese log and add to spinach. Season with lemon pepper and garlic to desired taste. Add two egg whites to mixture and mix well. Meanwhile, remove phyllo pastry shells from package and place on a baking sheet to thaw slightly. Fill



shells ¾ of the way and bake in a 350 degree oven for 15 minutes. Serve warm.

Pound Cake Petite Fours

Thaw pound cake. Using a double boiler melt chocolate. (if you do not have a double boiler place 2 inches of water in a sauce pot, bring to a boil and place metal bowl on top but do not let the water touch it). Melt chocolate using a plastic spatu-

la to keep the chocolate moving. Do not let the chocolate boil, you want a smooth consistency. Cut pound cake into bite size pieces. Using a toothpick or skewer dip the pound cake into the chocolate and remove to a baking rack on a sheet pan. Refrigerate for up to two days and serve chilled. (If you are handy with icing tubes, decorate to you fullest potential – I have others do this for me as I cannot even draw a stick figure let alone decorate desserts!)

Homemade "wink, wink, nod, nod" Cookies

Grab your favorite slice and bake cookies and instead of slicing and baking take pieces by hand to form your own homemade version. Add your favorite sweets to the mix.... for example to sugar cookies sprinkle with a little brown sugar or shaved coconut....to the tried and true chocolate chip cookie chop up some nuts and sprinkle on top. The choices are unlimited, just use your imagination. Grab your favorite cake decorating items and get creative. This is also a great way to introduce children to the world of baking!

Sparkling Ginger Cider

Mix one gallon of cider to 1 pound of peeled and sliced fresh ginger. Let set for approximately 30 minutes. Top with ginger ale. Can be served cold or hot. Turn this tasty recipe into an adult beverage by adding brandy, or dark rum. Again, can be served hot or cold. Please note if you are serving hot bring to a simmer, not a rapid boil.

Remember, the holiday season is about quality time spent with family and friends. This is not a time to stress out over food. Sometimes the best recipes are the simplest. Like I always say food is about fun. Get your family involved and make it a true Family Affair!

As always, if you have an idea for an article or have any questions do not hesitate to contact me anytime at brooke@gunnersgrille.com or 410.756.1080. From all of us at Gunner's Grille at Taneytown we wish you all the safest and happiest of holiday seasons!

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MOUNT SPORTS

Mount Basketball!

Bridgette Nitza
MSM Class of 2015

The Mount St. Mary's men's basketball team is back on the court with their laces tied, uniforms fitted, and ball in hand. Though the action has not yet hit its peak, the players are pumped for the rest of the season.

Head Coach Jamion Christian, along with Assistant Coaches Ben Wilkins, Daryl Bruce and Donny Lind lead the men with a positive attitude.

Christian shared a few thoughts with Mount Athletics in a season preview video. He spoke of adjustments being made: "Mayhem and none of the stuff works unless you have ten healthy bodies. We've done a great job with getting healthy and I think our biggest focus with the new rules is to not foul."

The Coach also spoke of a priority: "Our camaraderie is always one of the most important things, our spirit. We really believe in playing together as a team. Each of our guys has different strengths and weaknesses. So we try to develop a game plan that is based solely on our strengths and allow each of our individual guys to play to those strengths," he said.

This confidence carries through to the players as they speak of the former season and their hope for what is to come. Sam Prescott elaborates, "We

have a lot of depth. We have a lot of players that can come off the bench for us and contribute in the game right away."

Rashad Whack explains that though last year's final game hurt, "We definitely feel a lot of fire and determination to get back there and win it." The veterans are excited to be back and bring the freshman along with them. Though all players are individually talented, they have a solid focus on team unity.

Those included on the Men's roster are: #2 Freshman Byron Ashe, #34 Junior Aaron Brown, #50 Sophomore Taylor Danaher, #12 Freshman Charles Glover, #15 Sophomore Gregory Graves, #21 Freshman Maelik Howard, #13 Senior Kristijan Krajina, #14 Sophomore Will Lyle, 0* Junior Chris Martin, #5 Sophomore Liam McManimon, #11 Freshman Will Miller, #23 Senior Julian Norfleet, #4 Freshman Khalid Nwandu, #3 Senior Sam Prescott, and #22 Senior Rashad Whack.

The Mount will host the next few games (Dec. 4 against Binghamton and you won't want to miss the tradition of "Catholic Clash" on Dec. 7 against Loyola at 2pm!) These games will be open to both the Mount St. Mary's University community and the general public.

The Mount women are practicing

just as much as the men and have hopes just as high. Their determination to fulfill a solid season, like last year's, should earn them an abundance of success.

Head Coach Bryan Whitten, along with Assistant Coaches Brianna Gauthier, Josh Keys, and Britney Pinkney use their experience and knowledge of the game to teach the players what they need to know to be an effective team.

Jessica Kaufman highlights the women's tenacity, "We were picked 3rd in the NEC conference preseason poll, which is an honor, however we won't be settling for third. We are striving to finish 1st in our conference regular season, and then win the NEC championship!"

The alumni and current students of Mount St. Mary's University would love to see the women reach such a rewarding goal.

This team's connection surpasses practice and the competition of each game. "I think we have a lot of strengths as a team, but our biggest strength is our chemistry. On or off the court, we all get along extremely well, which makes this whole journey and experience that much better," Kaufman said.

The next home game for the women will be the "Catholic Clash" following the men's game on Dec. 7 at 4:30pm.



Those included on the women's roster are, #44 Sophomore Sarafina Arthur-Williams, #12 Freshman Kayla Bates, #3 Freshman Kathleen Belanger-Finn, #24 Junior Jacqueline Brewer, #42 Junior Jenn Carney, #21 Sophomore Jody Chickey, #14 Senior Ashley Christie, #45 Freshman Kaitlyn Eisenhard, #20 Senior Kayla Grossett, #22 Returning Senior Sydney Henderson, #32 Senior Jessie Kaufman, #5 Sophomore Jayla Leftwich, #2 Senior Rachel Mathews, and #13 Junior Mariah Powell.

The Mount mascot Emmitt S. Burg and our Mount St. Mary's

cheerleading squad will be dancing along to the pep-band as you fill the arena's bleachers to cheer on these athletes. Let's work to not only fill the student section, but also every row on both sides of the arena. Once again, all spectators are welcome and their support is greatly appreciated. Come on out and show that Mount pride!

If you cannot attend the games, stay up to date on both the Mount men's and women's basketball teams through Mount Athletics online (www.mountathletics.com), or through www.NECFrontRow.com.

Thurmont Little League

The volunteers at Thurmont Little League have been hard at work improving their complex facilities. "Now that major renovations are complete to our Senior League field, we have moved our focus back to our Major and Minor fields as well as many of our common areas." Some of the projects highlighted: new warning track installed on the Major field that encompasses the diameter of the field, upgrades to the batting cages, installation of a field drainage system on the Minor field, re-cutting the Minor and Major infields/base paths, the addition of nearly 1,500 pounds of clay to the pitcher's mounds & batter's boxes, and the addition of new ball mix on the fields. That is only the beginning according to Randall, "Come Spring our clubhouse will get new siding, installation of

new stairs, and we will be painting all of our out-buildings the same color in addition to making water and electrical upgrades to the complex." Ed Lowry, the League Vice President commented, "The Board and volunteers at Thurmont Little League are very committed to providing the youth in our program the very best possible experience and facilities that we can offer. The costs of these projects would be significant if it wasn't for the dedication of our volunteer's time and talents. I am proud to be a part of an organization where it is all about the kids and giving them the best possible Little League Baseball experience. These young athletes will have a life time of memories and friendships that are developed here. We take pride in knowing that we are contributing to that experience."

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FITNESS

Keep Moving

Massage may ease tension headaches

Linda Stultz
Certified Fitness
Trainer/Therapist

A few months ago I wrote an article about how exercise may help relieve head and body aches. Massage is also a way to relieve tension that may be causing headaches. Sometimes people may think of massage as a way to relieve tension and pain in your back or shoulders but may not think of it for a headache. A few weeks ago I suffered from a headache for al-

most two weeks and tried everything I could think of to relieve it.

Usually an adjustment from my chiropractor will take the headache away. Even after a few adjustments the headache persisted. Each time he did an adjustment he told me how tight my shoulder, neck and back muscles were. My massage therapist also told me how tight all the back and neck muscles were and wondered what I had been doing to get them in that shape.

After just one massage my

headache was gone and that was such a relief after weeks of a nagging ache. This type of distraction can interrupt your daily exercise, which in turn, can disrupt your schedule and it is very hard to get back to it once you stop. I know some people may think of a massage as a luxury and it may feel like one but in reality massage can relieve the tension buildup in your muscles that can lead to headache, back and leg pain, foot problems and even knee, elbow or wrist pain.

There are muscles at the base of your skull that can send pain the whole way over your head and into your eyes. Anyone who has had a therapeutic massage knows that the massage therapist

may be working on your back and you may feel it down your arm or even down your leg. Massage is another natural tool used to keep your body in good working condition or to bring it back to feeling healthy again if you suffer from an injury or just the everyday stress of life.

Just like exercise and stretching, massage concentrates on keeping the body in the best working order possible. I try to get a massage every four to six weeks. That may seem like a luxury but for me it is an investment in my overall health. I have a great massage therapist that knows my usual problem areas and how to work on them for the best results. I'll be glad to share

her with you if you are interested. Please take notice that I am referring to her as a therapist and not a masseuse. There is definitely a difference and that is very important.

A therapist has specialized training for helping with muscle problems. Call me with questions or information that may help others with muscle tension or headaches. I'm always willing to share info and help when I can. I hope this article may be of help to you if you have been suffering from anything I mentioned. Sometimes, just reading or hearing something again may get you thinking and you may decide to try it. Remember, Keep Moving!! 717-334-6009.

Fitness Matters

George Puvel
Anytime Fitness Owner

Question: Do you have any thoughts on some of the new functional training equipment on the market—things like TRX bands for example?

Answer: Generally speaking, I'm a fan of TRX bands and other pieces of functional training equipment. Things like TRX, the ViPR, and the Rip-Core FX are taking the fitness industry by storm, and for good rea-

son. They're new, innovative, and fun to use. But best of all, they're functional, which means that using them allows you to mimic traditional daily activities, thereby improving movement, balance, coordination, and strength all at the same time. That's pretty cool! The only real concern here is that people may not know how to use these pieces of equipment properly, which could potentially result in injury. There's definitely a learning curve with these products, so it's best to watch the experts first. I also strongly rec-

ommend working with a trainer until you're completely comfortable with the training methodology. As always, the goal is to educate yourself so you can get the most out of whatever training you decide to do!

Question: Several friends are using websites to track their nutrition and fitness, and they're trying to get me to do the same. Do you think these health and wellness websites are worth the time, money, and effort?

Answer: Ultimately, it depends on the individual. However, research has proven that consistent monitoring and added account-

ability can pay off in the long run when you're looking to make lifestyle changes. This can come in many forms, but one of the most popular these days is certainly through the use of websites. They can be a great tool as you try to change your behaviors, and may be just what you need to maintain your motivation. There are a number of options out there, from basic nutrition or fitness tracking sites to others that offer a wide variety of capabilities in all areas of health and wellness. I have to admit that I'm biased when it comes to this discussion. Anytime Fitness has created one of the most

progressive, comprehensive, and fun websites to use if you're looking to facilitate your own health and wellness. It's called Anytime Health (anytimehealth.com)! The site has a diet tracker, an activity tracker, a workout planner that uses over 300 high-definition videos, as well as a robust community with a Q&A section, support groups, a contest page, and a site blog. And these features are just the tip of the iceberg. If you get a chance, check it out. You can sign-up for a free account that gives you somewhat limited access, and if you like what you see, you can join for a nominal yearly fee.

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COMPLEMENTARY CORNER

No SMOG allowed!

Renee Lehman

This is something that I often talk to my clients about... There is No SMOG allowed in the treatment room. SMOG? You mean like the unclean air pollution in Los Angeles? No. SMOG stands for "Should've", "Must", "Ought to", and "Got to." So, there are No "Should've's", "Musts", "Ought tos", or "Got tos" allowed in the treatment room. Why is this important? Because SMOG means to be obliged to do something, which can lead to a feeling of constraint, restriction, confinement, or limitation. Plus, if the SMOG obligation is not met, one can feel guilt, remorse, or shame. Now, there are moral and legal obligations that we all have to meet, and there are promises or actions that we have vowed to others to keep, etc. Yet, often times, chronic SMOG can create a chronic stress response within our bodies. A chronic stress response within the body can lead to long-term health problems.

Normal Stress Response

What is the normal stress response? Well, suppose you are walking in the woods, and encounter a black bear. Wouldn't you perceive this as a threat? Because of this perceived threat, a small region in your brain called the hypothalamus sounds off an "alarm" in your body. The "alarm" initiates a series of events, which stimulate your adrenal glands that sit atop of your kidneys. The adrenal glands are your body's primary "shock absorbers." They produce hormones including nor-epinephrine (also known as adrenaline), and cortisol, which allow you to respond to the states of your daily life in a healthy ways.

Adrenaline (known as the "Fight-or-Flight" hormone), is produced when something is (or you think it is) threatening. This hormone increases your heart rate, elevates your blood pressure, makes your blood rush to your heart and large muscle groups, widens your pupils, sharpens your brain, and increases your tolerance for pain. It prepares you to "Fight."

Cortisol is the primary stress hormone. It increases the amount of sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose, and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues. Cortisol also curbs bodily functions that would be nonessential or detrimental in a "fight-or-flight" situation. It turns down immune system responses, and suppresses the digestive system, the reproductive system and growth processes. It also helps to maintain stable emotions. Both adrenaline and cortisol improve your ability to recover from episodes of stress and trauma, overwork, temperature extremes, etc.

Chronic Stress Response

When a once perceived threat has passed, the adrenaline and cortisol levels return to normal. This allows

your heart rate and blood pressure to return to your baseline levels, and other bodily systems (like digestion) can then resume their regular functioning. However, when stressors are always present and you continuously feel under attack, the "fight-or-flight" response stays activated. This is even true for when you feel the consequences from SMOG.

The chronic activation of the stress response, and the subsequent overexposure to adrenaline and cortisol, along with other stress hormones, can disrupt almost all your body's functioning. This puts you at increased risk of numerous health problems, including: loss of bone density, muscle wasting, thinning of the skin, decreased ability to build protein, kidney damage, fluid retention, spiking blood sugar levels, weight gain, anxiety, depression, insomnia, digestive problems, heart disease, memory problems, and increased susceptibility to bacteria, viruses, fungi, yeasts, allergies, and even cancer. That's why it's so important to learn healthy ways to cope with the stressors in your life, and to decrease the SMOG in your life.

How to clear up the Stress from SMOG

This will require making changes in your underlying thinking that you SHOULD (or SMOG) BE a certain way. Try a few of the following ideas to reduce the stress caused by the guilt associated with SMOG:


1. Do more things that bring you pleasure and make you laugh, and do fewer activities that feel like obligations. Spend more time with people who make you feel good, and less time with people who are draining. Focus more on what you like about yourself and less on what you see as your limitations. In short, have more fun! Make pleasure a priority instead of a luxury.

2. Actively focus more on loving thoughts. Loving thoughts (about people you love, your favorite pets, a delicious meal, or even a sweet memory) short-circuit the harm done by the body's physiological reaction to stress. Opening your heart and "thinking with your heart" will bring you joy and fulfillment, and will evoke biochemical changes in your body over time that will recharge your adrenal batteries.
3. Allow yourself to accept nurturing and affection. If you didn't learn how to do this as a child, you may need to practice it. Every morning before you get up, spend a minute or two bathing in a memory of a time you felt loved or what it may feel like to be loved. Do the same at night. Imagine your heart being filled with this love. Use affirmations that help you feel deserving of this nurturing and love.
4. Believe in yourself. Self-confidence leads to success; therefore, it is important to have faith in your abilities and believe in yourself so that you can let go of your guilt. Start enjoying the positive things in your life so that you are not harboring guilt feelings.
5. Consciously say YES or NO to requests made of you. When you say "Yes" to one thing, you are automatically saying "No" to something else. Saying yes to a request that will create feelings of resentment, drains your energy and is not in your best interest or that of the requestor. Think about that the next time a request comes your way, and be conscious about when you'll need to say "No" so that you will be able to say "Yes" to a request that will add a level of excitement, energy or fulfillment to your life (even if it means taking away some of your precious time).

6. Let go of the need to conform to the expectations of others. I hear many of my clients say that they no longer feel the need to please anyone. Why wait until you're "older" to begin making decisions that are in the best interest of you and your family?
7. If you have done something wrong, apologize for it. Do not worry about how much time has elapsed since you hurt someone. This is very important in order for you to let go of the guilt and move on. This will make you feel relieved, and you will be surprised how light you will feel afterwards. This helps reduce the load of the guilt that you have been carrying inside.
8. It is also helpful to reframe your belief system and consider yourself a human being who can make mistakes. "To err is human," is a popular saying that elaborates this point. By realizing that "I am human," you will give yourself the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. Learn from your mistakes, forgive yourself, and move on to take new challenges in life. Do not get stuck in your past mistakes, and scold yourself forever!
9. Finally, focus on the present. Guilt based on SMOG is usually about past doings. We cannot change the past by feeling guilty and that is why guilt is the useless emotion. We need to focus on the present and how to bring about change in the outcome in the future.

The payoff for learning to manage SMOG is peace of mind and, perhaps a longer, healthier life.


Renee Lehman is a licensed acupuncturist and physical therapist with over 25 years of health care experience. Her office is located at 249B York Street in Gettysburg, PA. She can be reached at 717-752-5728.



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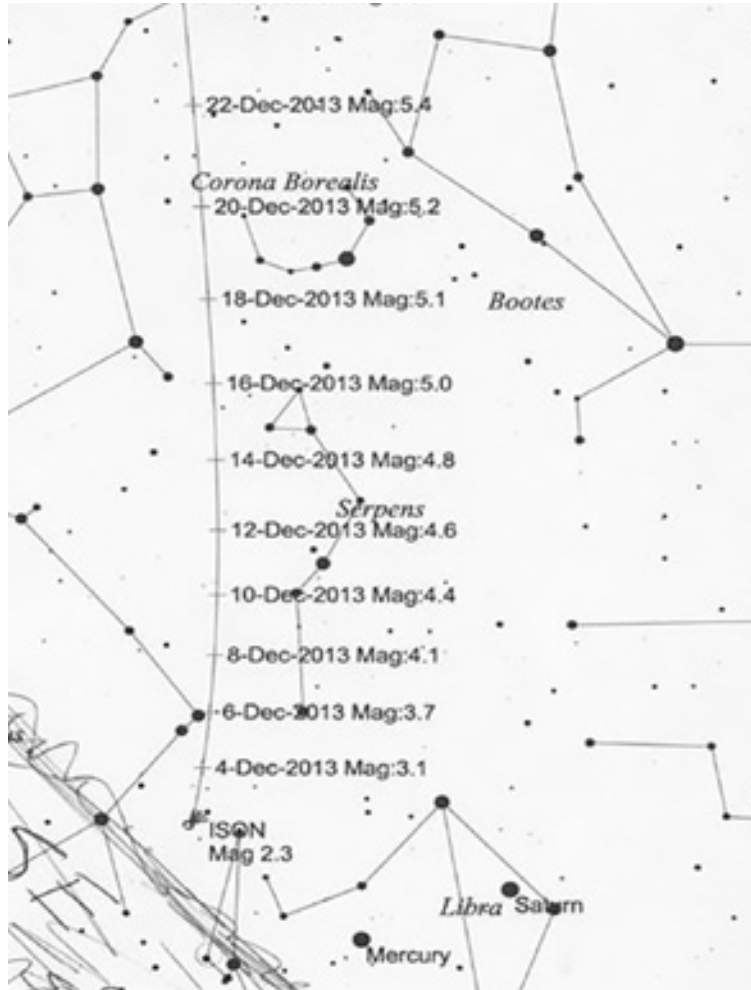
ASTRONOMY

The night sky of December

Professor Wayne Wooten

For December 2013, the Moon will be new on December 3. The first two weeks find the moon waxing in the evening sky. The waxing crescent moon passes 7.5 degrees north of Venus on December 5th. The moon is first quarter on December 9th, and will interfere with the peak of the Geminid Meteor Shower on December 14th. The Full Moon, the Long Night Moon, is on December 17th. The winter solstice occurs at 11:11 AM CST on December 21st, and winter begins on the shortest day of the year. The waning gibbous moon passes five degrees south of Jupiter in the evening of December 19th. The last quarter moon rises at midnight on Christmas Day and passes 4 degrees south of red-dish Mars. The waning crescent passes a degree south of Saturn in the dawn on December 29th.

Venus reaches its greatest brilliancy on December 10th, reaching magnitude -4.7, and easily visible in broad daylight if you know where to look. If you look above the crescent moon on December 5th about 4-5 PM on December 5th, Venus should be easy to spot. She is 30% sunlit crescent on December 1st, but she is overtaking Earth and passing between us and the Sun in early January 2014. At year's end, she is a huge slender crescent, only 4% sunlit and neat to observe even in binoculars, as the phase



Comet ISON will be visible through binoculars throughout the month of December, but will not be the hoped for "Comet of the Century."

changes by the day.

Mars is still far from earth and faint in the morning sky; the earth will overtake it in 2014, with a close opposition making Mars much brighter next

Spring.

Jupiter dominates the evening sky for the next five months, brighter than any other planet now and imbedded among the stars of Gemini. Jupiter reaches opposition in January 2014. Any small telescope will show the four large Galilean moons around at 10X or higher power, but larger scopes will be needed to show the famed Great Red Spot, which seems to be shrinking currently.

Saturn rises about 4 AM in Libra, and the famed rings are now open about 14 degrees. They were edge on as seen from the Earth in 2009, and will be tilted 27 degrees toward us at solstice in 2017, when they will double the planet's present brightness.

As of this writing, the big question will be how bright Comet ISON will

appear after its close perihelion passage of the Sun on Thanksgiving Day. I saw it with binoculars on November 9th in the dawn sky, and hope it brightens to naked eye visibility by mid November. I will be cautious in my finder chart for December morning skies, which show the comet climbing higher in the NE dawn sky, but fading as it pulls away from the Sun. It will hopefully be visible in binoculars throughout the month of December, but not the hoped for "Comet of the Century". But if it does split and spew out a lot of gas and dust on Thanksgiving Day, it may be indeed worth setting the alarm clock for 5 AM and getting up to see an impressive tail.

Stay tuned to the NASA website www.spaceweather.com for a gallery of comet images and daily finder charts and updates on the comet's close passage by the sun as imaged with NASA's SOHO spacecraft's view of the comet in the Sun's corona near Thanksgiving. If the comet does brighten to put on a fine display, I will make every effort to let the local media know. Plan to observe it from a site with a clear SE horizon, since the comet will be brightest when still close to the Sun in the dawn on the first few mornings in December. If it does become spectacular, any digital camera, mounted on a tripod, and set for "nightshot" mode, may capture fine photos of this visitor from the distant Ort Cloud.

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, ly-

ing about 2.5 million light years distant. Overhead is 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.

Look at Perseus' feet for the famed Pleiades cluster; they lie about 400 light years distant, and over 250 stars are members of this fine group. East of the seven sisters is the V of stars marking the face of Taurus the Bull, with bright orange Aldebaran as his eye. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance. Aldebaran is not a member, but about twice as close as the Hyades; distances in astronomy can be deceiving. Jupiter dominates the constellation Taurus this year, and now is retrograding just east of the Hyades, as Scott's photo shows.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the overhead sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer (think Ben Hur). Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pollux highlight the Gemini. UWF alumni can associate the pair with Jason and the Golden Fleece legend, for they were the first two Argonauts to sign up on his crew of adventurers. Jupiter now sits in the middle of Gemini, far brighter than any other object of the winter sky.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern sky at dusk. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. It is part of a huge spiral arm gas cloud, with active starbirth all over the place

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Farmers' Almanac

"I heard the bells of Christmas Day; their old familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the word repeat of peace on earth, good will to men!"

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1802-1882)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Fair and rather cold (1,2,3,4,5). Windy and much colder (6,7,8,9,10,11,12,) with snow mainly in the southern part of the region (13,14). Fair and cold (15,16,17) with heavy snow (18,19). Windy and very cold (20,21,22,23,24,25,26) with more snow, heavy in the south (27,28,29). Fair, windy and cold (30,31).

Full Moon: The Full Moon for December occurs on Tuesday, December 17th. It has been called Cold Moon by many Native Americans (for obvious reasons!) and

also has been called Beaver Moon and Ice-Froming Moon because beavers are scurrying to finish building their dams and lodges before the winter sets in and because lakes and ponds begin to ice over during this month.

Holidays: Celebrate Christmas on Wednesday, December 25th. Make plans with family and friends to watch a classic Christmas movie such as *Miracle on 34th Street*, *A Christmas Carol* (the 1951 version with Alistair Sim is the best!), *White Christmas*, or the very funny, *The Christmas Story* (written by humorist, Jean Shepard). New Year's Eve is Tuesday, 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 to find a celebration nearest you.

The Garden: Rake up all remaining leaves and place them on a compost heap. If left on paths they become a hazard when the colder weather comes. When cutting evergreen foliage from the garden for Christmas decor, cut just above a bud. This ensures that no spurs will be left to encourage decay. Start planning your garden now and decide on what you want to include. If you have seeds left over from last season, perform a simple germination test: 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. Remember that the birds are counting on you to put out plenty of seed out, especially if the ground is covered with snow.

J. Gruber's Thought for Today's Living: "The thought that goes into the giving of a gift to a friend or loved one is so much more important than the value of the gift itself"

COMPUTER Q&A

Holiday gadget gift guide

Aysë Stenabaugh
Owner of Jester's Computer Tutor

There's no denying that this year ends with a bang when it comes to gadgets. It can be hard to choose the best products to meet the needs of person you are buying the gift for. Check out a few top devices that have gotten good reviews and might be a good gift idea for someone you know this holiday season.

IDEAS FOR THE KIDS
Tablets

This is a popular device for kids ranging in ages 3 and up! VTech and Leapfrog both offer toy based tablets which ranged under \$100. I won't be giving much information on that here though because when I personally look for a tablet for my kids I want something that will grow with them. I want something that is flexible and long-term. I found that a few companies are making kid friendly android based tablets with parental controls that allow you to control what your child can do by way of a parental account. Some even have options like limiting the times the kids can access the device, some support multiple profiles (multiple children can access the device with their own settings), and best of all most of them allow you to turn off the parental controls all together. This feature is great because as your child gets older and they are allowed more freedom the device can be unlocked and you can use the device as a full featured android tablet. Also, we parents can join in on the fun on the tablet while they aren't looking!

Some tablets that have good reviews include:

- Nabi 2 - by Fuhu \$179+
- Kurio7- by KD Interactive \$150
- Nabi Jr - by Fuhu \$99

Cell Phones

If you're looking for an inexpensive starter phone and aren't quite ready to give in to your child's demands of a phone on your plan, there are lots of prepaid options available. Many of the companies that offer prepaid services are offering android and even iPhone devices! (But the latter can get really expensive!).

Straight Talk - This is Wal-Mart's own cell phone company. For 45\$/month plus the cost of your device you can receive unlimited talking, texting, and web data.

Tracfone - For years Tracfone has been delivering pay-as-you-go phone services and is now offering monthly value plans as well. Tracfone occasionally provides special promo codes that give customers bonus minutes sometimes double the amount that is purchased!

VIDEO GAMERS

Xbox One - On November 22nd the next generation of the popular Xbox 360 console hit stores all over the US. The new console includes the new console, one wireless controller, 4K HDMI cable, chat headset, and power connections. Some important things to note about the system are that you

previous generation consoles will not download to the new system. To enjoy the majority of the online features the console has to offer you will need a subscription to Xbox Live. The Xbox One features a new Xbox home membership which means that you can have multiple users on the devices for just one yearly membership price! You can now also watch your Blu-ray discs and route your cable TV box through the Xbox One for a complete entertainment experience.

PlayStation 4 - launched on November 15th in the US. Included in the package are the console, wireless controller, ear bud headset, HDMI cord, USB cable, and power cord. Increased Blue-ray speeds and upgraded hardware make the PS4 a new machine. The new console boasts a revamped

controller that is said to add new and exciting ways of gaming. Hardcore gamers can enjoy a new feature which records 15 minute of gaming playtime. The PS4 also comes in at \$100 cheaper but does not come with optional camera accessory unlike the new Xbox One.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Nokia Lumina 1020 - This Windows phone stands out purely because it boasts a 41 Megapixel camera. The phone features a dedicated shutter button for easy access to taking photos. Windows 8 users will see that using a Windows phone will allow them to sync their devices together.

Snapfish Photo Book- What a better gift for a budding photographer than a book with all their own work in

it? You can upload images to the Snapfish website and create your very own custom book for a gift. Feature as few or as many images as you like and design the cover for the book.

If all else fails... You can always give them a gift card! Many local and national retailers sell prepaid cards that will allow the user to scratch off a code and apply it to their own account.

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NEW Jester's Computer Tutor is now able to provide one-on-one tutoring and support through our virtual classroom. Special discounted offers may be available for this service for a limited time contact Aysë at help@thecomputertutor.info or visit the Facebook page for more information.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 1
Emmitsburg Community Chorus's annual Christmas concert at the Seton Shrine. In addition to traditional Christmas music the chorus will feature in their concert the classic story "Twas the Night Before Christmas" set to music.

Dec. 2
Emmitsburg's 25th Annual An Evening of Christmas Spirit. Tree lighting ceremony on the square with local

choirs in caroling and in the lighting of the town Christmas tree. Complimentary hot dogs, cookies, live nativity, entertainment, & hayrides. Local choirs and vocalists will be featured in Joann's Ballroom. Come celebrate the true meaning of Christmas spirit!

Dec. 5
Frederick Community College's Jazz Ensemble's "All That Jazz!" in the FCC's Jack B. Kussmaul Theater. Expect to hear the ensemble perform music by Jimmy Heath, Frank Foster,

Count Basie, Dean Martin, and Nora Jones – to name a few.

Dec. 6
Carroll Valley Christmas tree lighting - Carroll Valley Borough Commons. Refreshments and snacks will be served, Santa will be visiting.

Dec. 6 & 7
Gettysburg Festival's Fourth Annual Gingerbread Celebration and Holiday Mart at the Gettysburg Campus

of Harrisburg Area Community College, 731 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg. Free admission. Enjoy a gallery of gingerbread creations, holiday art mart and activities for families. Proceeds will benefit the non-profit Gettysburg Festival and Survivors, Inc. For more information call 717-334-0853 or visit: www.gettysburg-festival.org

Dec. 7
Mother Seton School's Breakfast with Santa and Christmas Bazaar. Take a photo with the jolly elf himself! Afterwards, browse the Bazaar for Christmas gifts for that special loved one. Contact Lee Royer at weefarm@hi-way.net for more information.

Christ's Community Church's 2nd annual Christmas Bazaar, 303 W. Lincoln Ave. Emmitsburg. 19 Vendors, Silent Auction, Baked goods table, Free scavenger hunt, Free cookie decorating for the kids, Free picture with good ol' St. Nicholas, Soups, Nachos, Hotdogs, and Drinks for sale. For more information call 717-321-5522 or visit www.cccaog.org

Creagerstown St. John's Lutheran Church's Christmas Bazaar and Large Indoor Yard Sale - Parish House, 8619 Blacks Mill Rd.. There will be many home baked goods including: cookies by the pound, cobblers, candy, holiday breads, pies, and cakes. For more information please call 301-898-5167.

Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve's Wreath Making. Are you already tired of the commercial Christmas grind? Join us and learn to make a "field and forest" wreath made entirely from natural collected materials. For more information call 717-642-5840 or visit www.Strawberryhill.org.

Elias Lutheran Church's Annual Ham, Turkey and Roast Beef Supper with Christmas yard sale & bazaar. For more information call 301-447-6239.

Dec. 8
Trinity UMC "Blue Christmas" worship service specifically designed for those going through a difficult time this holiday season. This simple worship service will acknowledge and honor the sadness, sorrow, pain and grief in our lives, as well as provide a space to seek hope in the midst of our struggle. Most of all, it will be a place to gather together, comfort and care for one another, and remember that we never walk alone on life's journey. For more information call Pastor Tiffany Kromer at 301-288-1373.

Dec. 13
Elias Lutheran Church Christmas Coffee House! Children's Praise Choir, Silver Lining Band and ... perhaps Santa will drop by to visit the children! Free event...just bring friend. For more information call 301-447-6239.

Dec. 14
Breakfast with Santa at the Fairfield Fire Hall. Hosted by the Carroll Valley Citizens' Association and Fairfield Fire & EMS!

Carroll Valley Annual Holiday Gala. Buffet dinner, music and dancing. For more information call 717-420-0744.

Dec. 14 & 15
Thurmont Christmas House Tour. This year the tour includes homes in the historic Catocin Furnace area. Sponsored by Thurmont Lions Club. For more information visit www.thurmontlionsclub.com.

Dec. 15
Taneytown's Trinity Lutheran Church's Candlelight Christmas Concert. This concert of traditional choral holiday music will feature the voices and soloists of Trinity Lutheran Church's Luther Choir, members of the Taneytown Community Chorus, and members of the Senior Singers of Carroll County. The concert will also include holiday music from special guest musicians. For more information call 410-756-6626

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec Music, Gettysburg! Christmas concert. Favorite and familiar Christmas music from four centuries will be featured, including sacred and festive favorites. For more information call 717-334-6286 ext 2197 or visit www.musicgettysburg.org.

Dec. 16
Mother Seton School's Christmas Program. Celebrate the joy of Christ-

mas! The program will include choral performances from the Mother Seton School Chorus and from individual classes, our award-winning band, and a student-produced Christmas play. For more information call 301-447-3161 or visit www.motherseton-school.org.

Dec. 21
Annual Blue Ridge Summit's

Christmas Celebration - Come join in the fun-filled festivities at the annual Blue Ridge Mountain Christmas Celebration! This year's event will be held at the Blue Ridge Summit Plaza, located at the intersection of Monterey Lane and Sabilasville Rd. There is something for everyone at this year's activities - songs of the season; fire truck rides; horse-drawn sleigh rides; re-

freshments will be served from the library porch, and the historic Blue Ridge Summit Free Library will open its doors for the annual Holiday Open House. For more information call 717-642-5645.

Dec. 22
Gettysburg's Memorial Baptist Church presents "Glorious Expectations, a Christmas Musical." Free ad-

mission, free childcare provided, free refreshments. 1096 Biglerville Road, Gettysburg. For more information call 717-334-2898.

Dec. 31
Gettysburg News Year's Eve celebration, downtown Gettysburg. Free entertainment, arts for children, music, and fireworks. For a schedule visit www.adamsarts.org

Emmitsburg to celebrate "Christmas Spirit"

Emmitsburg's Christmas festivities, including a Christmas tree lighting ceremony and "An Evening of Christmas Spirit" held at the Carriage House Inn, has become a town tradition for two and a half decades.

This year's "An Evening of Christmas Spirit," which has always been held in conjunction with the town tree lighting ceremony, marks the 25th year that the Carriage House Inn holiday event has been formally held.

The community Christmas tree lighting ceremony, held will be held December 2 at 6 p.m., in front of the old four-story, 2 East Main Street, Emmitsburg Hotel. The public is invited to sing along with Christmas carols that will be performed there as well. Santa Clause will be arriving at 6:30 p.m.

The square served as the traditional location for many years for the tree lighting ceremony until the event was moved several years ago to the county Community Center property.

The move from the Town Square was apparently done out of safety concerns due to its proximity to Main Street traffic.

However, one of Mayor Donald Briggs' campaign promises had been to try and breathe new life back into the square, which included moving the annual Christmas event back to its former location.

Three or four parking spaces in front of the hotel have historically been blocked-off for people to gather, and those spaces will be closed-off once again for the public to gather for the ceremony.

The Carriage House Inn will continue to hold its holiday festivities - "An Evening of Christmas Spirit" - from 6:30 to 9 p.m., following the tree lighting ceremony at the square.

The inn will be offering free hot dogs, cookies and hot chocolate to the revelers, and will be featuring a live Nativity, entertainment in the Jo Ann's Ballroom beginning 6:45 p.m.), including choirs and

vocalists (in the inn's Joann's Ballroom), and hayrides. Santa will appear at the Carriage House to partake in the festivities there.

"We're planning on working on 800 hot dogs, 30 gallons of hot chocolate, and 1200 cookies (for revelers)," Hanse said.

The hay rides have been traditionally provided by Jeff and Brian Glass. "They have helped us for 25 years with the hay rides in town," Hanse noted. Jeff Glass is also president of the Taney Corporation, which provides scrap wood for the fire barrels at the Carriage House event.

Carriage House Inn owner Hanse said, "It's ('An Evening of Christmas Spirit') grown to be a (traditional) town event...really exciting."

Also in the spirit of the holidays, the Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners approved "free parking" at town meters during the holidays. Drivers may park at the meters throughout the town without for free from December 16 through January 1.



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

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Gospel Choir CD Release Concert

December 7, 4 p.m. Knott Auditorium

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Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent

December 8, 2 p.m. Chapel of the Immaculate Conception

Celebrate the Christmas season with choral music and scripture readings featuring the Mount Chorale and Wind Ensemble, with appearances by the Flute Choir and the Chapel Choir.

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Seminary Open House

December 8, 2-4 p.m., Mount St. Mary's University Seminary

Tours every 20 minutes, light refreshments

Holy Hour: 4-5 p.m., Chapel of the Immaculate Conception

Advent Lessons and Carols: 5-6:15 p.m., Chapel of the Immaculate Conception

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Mass at the National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes

December 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, Noon

No Christmas Day Mass

