


Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 4, NO. 12 “EXALTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION” —EDWARD R. MURROW DECEMBER 2024

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hristmas is the season when heart calleth unto heart. “Amidst the general call to happiness, the bustle of the spirits, and stir of the affections, which prevail; at the period, what bosom can remain insensible?” said the poet.

It is one day, at least when suspicions, hate, and gloom find, but little space for judgment in human breasts; when people forget the things that worry, and fix their mind upon the many things for which they may be thankful; when the spirit of cheer exists in sufficient bounty to reach us all.

Any unhappiness, any sense of the thorns of life, may be sunk in compilation of joy, which today brings to so large part of the world, especially to the children of our immediate world; for the day was born with Christ Child, and has remained largely a festival of the young, it’s sanctified ideals, strengthened by childish, purity, re-creating, faith, hope and charity in their elders.

Then, let us make this Christmas purposeful; a season of regenerated feelings, of love, peace, and goodwill. Let us hang the holly and the evergreen; let us promote the surge of joy. In this spirit, we wish you all a...

Merry Christmas



Proposed Israel Creek water permit raises concerns

Residents quickly took to Facebook to raise concerns over a proposed application by Lockland AG & Turf to apply for a permit to draw up to 576,000 gallons of water per day from Israel Creek to support their turf growing operations. A permit is required for any activity that withdraws water from the Town’s surface and/or underground waters. An exemption to the permit requirement is allowed for agriculture uses of less than 10,000 gallons per day. In a letter received by the News-Journal, Lockland stated that they were looking to draw a daily average of 139,500 gallons per day, with a peak usage during their busiest months of 576,000 gallons of water per day. To put that number into perspective, the proposed peak usage by Lockland represents 88% of the maximum use of water by all the residents and businesses in Walkersville during a typical summer day. In a Facebook post in response to concerns raised by residents over the impact of the amount of water proposed to be withdrawn,

Lockland owner, Matthew Toms, stated that the business had been “drawing water from Israel Creek for years.” “After last year’s drought,” Toms continued, “we thought it would be a good idea to have the ability to draw more water if needed.” Toms stated that “the permit was important to our farm so we can continue to grow a needed product locally.” Toms did not indicate how much water the business had been drawing, or if it ever exceeded the legally allowed 10,000 gallons per day. Tom’s Facebook post however failed to explain that assuming that the current and previous year’s draw from the creek were within the permit exemption limit of 10,000 gallons per day, what conditions changed that led to the need for an increase in average daily draw by 13.9 fold, and a maximum daily limit of over 57 fold. Toms went on to claim that the proposed permitted water draw would “amount to less than 1 percent of the daily flow of the creek,” and “any reduction in flow to the creek will be insignificant.”

Continued on page 4



Merry Christmas from the staff of the Woodsboro-Walkersville News-Journal: Devin, Dolores, Gracie, Cameron, Richelle, Anne, Tim, Boyce, Jack, Marianne, Jennifer, Shawn, Claire, Sonya, Jefferson, Wayne, Ayse, Katie, Jamie, Maritta, Bonnie, Celia, Sharon, Brian & Mike



Israel Creek was barely flowing the day this paper went press. The proposed withdrawal of hundreds-of-thousands of gallons per day from it raising questions in the minds of residents over the effects on its ecosystem.

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WOODSBORO NEWS

P&Z to address car salvage issue

Following last month’s “punting” by the Woodsboro Town Council to defer action on addressing the issue of salvage car storage within the Industrial Zone, Mark Hatgi, owner of Mark 1 VW, formally requested that the Town Planning and Zoning Commission review the current code and modify it to allow the salvaging of vehicles in the Industrial Zone, as he had been promised by prior administrations.

The issue was first brought to the current Council’s attention five months ago by Town Code Enforcement Officer Donnie Strawsburg, when he raised concern over the apparent disparity between how some properties are treated versus others.

The issue stemmed from Strawsburg citing a resident for having inoperable cars in the open on their property, while not citing those in the Industrial Park.

“I can’t cite one person for violating a town ordinance and not cite another for the same violation; if I do so, I open myself, and the Town, to charges of ‘selective enforcement.’ And once that happens, the residents will lose faith in

our enforcement of the Town Code.”

Strawsburg was able to locate Town Planning Commission meetings minutes, dating back to 1987, that did address the storage of unlicensed/inoperable cars for parts or salvage purposes, including notes from Planning Commission meeting minutes indicating these actions were allowable. Unfortunately for Hatgi, there is no record of the then Town Council following up on the then Planning Commission recommendation.

While Mr Hatgi is not engaged in the business of salvaging the used vehicles, some of them do end up as being parts cars. However, this is not the primary function of the business. And as outdoor storage of vehicles is allowed, whether or not a vehicle ends up as being salvaged is the question up for debate.

Hatgi “was very professional and was more than happy to fill me in on his recollection of events,” said Strawsburg. “But the bottom line eventually revolves around the current Town Code, passed in 2014, which does not allow the storage of cars for salvage purposes

in the Industrial Zone, which Hatgi uses some of his cars for.”

Strawsburg suggested that given the length of time the issue has been going on and the lack of follow-up by prior Town Councils to address the situation, the present Town Council should consider providing Hatgi a waiver to allow him to conduct salvage operations in the Industrial Park or to remove the term “salvage” in the Code as it applies to auto related activities in the Industrial Zone.

Following the lack of action on Strawsburg’s recommendation at the last Council meeting, Hatgi officially requested at the November Council meeting that the Planning and Zoning Commission formally address the issue. Commissioner Jessie Case, liaison to the Planning & Zoning Commission, agreed.

While pleased that the Planning and Zoning Commission will take up the review of his request, Hatgi said unlike the prior efforts where he has been promised multiple times that the Code will be fixed, he was going to ensure this time it is.

Town cautioned over water costs

During the presentation of the results of the audit of the Town’s finances, the Town Staff received praise by the Town’s auditor on how they keep the books. However, the auditor cautioned the Council on the poor health of the Town water and sewer fund.

The Town has benefited handsomely by utilizing COVID-era American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA) to help pay for some much-needed upgrades to the water & sewer facilities, to the tune of \$508,650 in FY-23, and \$192,000 in FY-24. But there will be no further ARPA funds coming to the Town in FY-25 to offset costs of upgrading the Town’s water and sewer facilities.

According to the audit report, revenues to the “Water and Sewer Fund” decreased by \$334,697 in FY-24, mostly due to the end of ARPA funding. While at the same time, “Water and Sewer Fund” expenses only dropped \$2,000.

Of particular concern to the auditor was the cost of running the water and sewer plant, which she noted was \$645,727, while the income from the operations was only \$406,933, for a loss of \$238,794.

The audit was performed prior to the loss of the long-time water plant operator in August. The cost of performing necessary water testing and maintenance at the water plant doubled to approximately \$170,000, worsening the

imbalance between the cost of supplying water and sewer service to the Town and the revenue received for that service.

In the Council’s September meeting, Commissioner John Cutshall expressed concern

over how the increased costs of operating the water and sewer plant would be funded in the years to come. Cutshall noted that the \$88,000 increase in the cost of maintaining the facilities, when divided between 450 users, would result in water and sewer bills going up, on average, by approximately \$200/year.

Cutshall’s calculations, however, did not take into account the cost of overdue maintenance and

Woodsboro-Walkersville
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News-Briefs. . .

Parking Banned On West Side of 2nd Street

Citing concerns over the ability of cars to pass each other on the first three blocks of 2nd Street, the Council has banned parking on the west side of 2nd Street from Coppermine Road to Elizabeth Street.

Burgess Heath Barnes said that while the new townhouses being built on 2nd Street would each have a garage and a driveway, he fully expected the new owners to also park on the road. “Since you can park on either side of 2nd Street right now, I can see cars having to weave left and right as they drive down 2nd Street to avoid cars parked on either side of the road. Parking was never a concern when the block where the new townhouses are going was a vacant lot, but with all the additional cars, we are just asking for an accident to happen.”

Commissioner Cutshall added that the parking on both sides of the street would also make it impossible for a fire truck to pass

down the street if it met with an oncoming car.

There was little discussion nor any public opposition to the proposal and the decision to ban parking passed immediately, unanimously.

Ground Breaking Set For New Town Hall

Almost one year to the day when Burgess Heath Barnes told the Council and the public attending last year’s November Town Council meeting that he was hopeful that construction could get underway before winter set in, a date for the groundbreaking has finally been set!

Barnes told the Council at this month’s Council meeting that “construction flags” that are used to indicate where digging would occur have now appeared on the Town Hall lot. “Hopefully that means work will soon begin,” Barnes said. And he was right. The groundbreaking is set for December 18th at 11.

When asked if he was still con-

cerned about the impact of cold weather on the construction, Barnes simply shrugged his shoulders.

Town To Cease Reserving Pavilions On Sundays

Citing the cost of preparing pavilions in the park for use on Sundays, those seeking to reserve them verses the number of times they have been reserved, the Town has opted to cease taking reservations for the pavilions for Sunday use.

Town staff told the Council that the clean up and readying of a pavilion after a Saturday event costs the Town “four hours of Comp Time, even if the Town employees only had to spend 20 minutes emptying trash cans. When we call someone in on the weekend, by Town Code, we have to give them four hours of Comp Time. As the Town only charges \$75 to reserve a pavilion, last year’s ten reservations only brought in \$750 – yet those ten reservations cost the Town 40 hours of employee Comp Time. So we are losing money on every Sunday reservation.

“Saturday reservations, however,

cost the Town nothing, as all the preparations can be done on Friday when the Town’s maintenance staff is on duty, and can include any preparation tasks necessary before they head home for the day.”

upgrade items would be released to the public, Barnes said the report would be issued “once we have had a chance to sit down and meet with them and see what’s necessary and what’s just a wish list for them.”

In discussing the cost of financing the new Town Hall, Cutshall expressed concern for the looming debt the Town will be taking on while faced with the need to maintain the ageing water and sewer facilities, saying “I think the people of Woodsboro deserve to know how much debt the Town is carrying and how it will be funded.”

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WALKERSVILLE

\$3.7 million approved for Discovery water line

The Discovery Water Main Replacement Project has been on the Town Council's agenda for over a year and promises to be a very expensive project. Discovery, a community outside of Walkersville town proper, utilizes the Town's water services with additional fees even though it is not technically in town. The pipes used in Discovery are old and the last five water line breaks have been within Discovery, thus putting them at the front of the repair list. An estimated 600 homes would be affected by the replacement process.

Replacing a water main is a large undertaking because it first involves installing a temporary bypass that keeps water flowing to residents during the

repair period. Machinery is brought in to excavate a trench in the location of the old water main, tear out the old pipes and replace them with new pipes. Everything is then tied back into the water system and finally, the residents are put on the new line.

For large projects such as Discovery, it is customary to have three bids, allowing the Town to choose the best price and service for their needs. The last time bids were announced for the project, only one company offered a bid to the Town. At the time, the Council decided to research comparable projects in neighboring municipalities before agreeing to the large price tag.

At November's meeting, almost

a year later, Town Manager Sean Williams announced that town staff recommended accepting Mid Atlantic Utilities estimated bid of \$3,661,325. This amount includes covering contingency items, which is a specific amount of money set aside to cover unforeseen costs or risks that may arise during the project.

Commissioner Bob Yoder asked how the Town could afford such a large price tag. Williams assured the Council that it was possible with how the project is broken into phases. "Phase one is large because of ARPA funding. Once the project is awarded, we can scale it back if necessary to ensure we use only ARPA funds," he said.

The Town has about \$2.8 million available in ARPA funds dedicated for this project and they must be officially awarded to the project by the end of the year, pursuant to ARPA's requirements.

Phase one is intended to cover about 163 single-family homes out of about 650 homes in total. That is about 75% of the single-family homes alone. "We are doing the areas with the most issues first," said Williams. At this time, the first phase does not include any townhomes.

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore-Brannen asked what could happen over the next few years with inflation issues if they scale phase one back and have to find the funds for a

larger phase two. She pointed out that the bid came in \$172,000 less than the inflation rate average over the past two years. "What's going to happen over the next two years? Would it be more fiscally responsible paying for it all now?" she questioned.

Williams replied that there would need to be difficult discussions in the Town's future. "We are going to have to really change the way the Town does things," he said. "Even with water rates going up over the next five years, we are going to need to start looking at grants too."

With that in mind, the bid was approved for \$3,661,325 and Mid Atlantic Utilities will now begin work drawing up plans for the replacement.

Town investigates alternative cable providers

November's Town Council meeting introduced a draft ordinance allowing the Town to enter into additional agreements with cable providers without needing to make changes to the Town's Code.

The discussion began last year when the Town Council requested Town Manager Sean Williams investigate the possibility of obtaining a fiber optic network for residents and for town use. The Town currently uses Comcast for phone, cable TV, and internet access, but, per the Town Code,

the agreement is nonexclusive, which means the Town can search around for better pricing and services without penalties. However, with the agreement being in the Code, they would need to go through the official process to codify any agreements with other providers.

That being said, Walkersville is one of the only municipalities in the area that has their current agreement with Comcast in the Town Code. This Ordinance would repeal and replace Chapter 18 of the Code, which specifically

deals with cable television franchises, keeping the current agreement with Comcast in place and allowing the burgess and commissioners to enter into agreements with other entities without needing to be codified moving forward.

Williams said the Town was looking at Shentel, a telecommunications company offering Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) to 182,000 homes. They utilize Glo-fiber for their fiber optic broadband services. By implementing a fiber optic-based system, the Town could see higher

speed internet than its predecessor DSL because DSL uses copper lines to transmit electricity while fiber uses thin glass strands carrying light. Because light is faster than electricity, speeds up to 100x faster than DSL are possible. Other benefits of fiber include decreased risk of wildlife damage and less long-term wear and tear.

Shentel currently has cable franchise agreements with the City of Frederick, Middletown, and recently signed with Thurmont. Emmitsburg has discussed signing on with them as well.

According to Williams, the Ordinance allows the Town to sign the agreements with Shentel to begin development of the installation plans of the fiber optic equipment that will bring Walkersville faster speeds and steadier service. He also said, "This [Ordinance] is simply to clean up the Code and make it easier for the burgess and commissioners to conduct business."

He hoped that with the introduction of the Draft Ordinance in November and a successful passing of the Ordinance in December, the Town could quickly move forward with the plans

Green Street project continues as planned

The scope of the Green Street project has kept it on the Town's radar for over a year now. It includes the replacement of a trenchless structural storm drain-pipe lining, sidewalk, curb and gutter installation and repaving. This work is necessary due to a brief investigation into a portion of cracked asphalt done last year showing a breach in the storm drain. The galvanized pipes in question were installed in the 70's and with over 50 years of wear and tear, they are showing signs of severe deterioration.

In October, a bid was accepted from Wastler & Son for \$453,432 for all labor, materials and equipment required for replacing a total of 530 linear feet of corrugated metal pipe lining. This repair is considered a "middle of the road" option. Wastler & Son is the same company that completed work on Maple Avenue and in the Deerfield community. The Town has been very satisfied with their work.

Up to this point, the residents living on Green Street have cooperated with the Town in making plans for the repairs. However, when the Town discussed adding a sidewalk to the corner of Maple Ave and Green Street, pulling the sidewalk in front of No. 3 Green Street out five feet, and inevitably connecting it to Fulton Avenue, reactions were mixed.

In response to this decision, one of the Green Street residents sent an email to the Council complain-

ing about the addition of the sidewalk, claiming it would prevent them from being able to park in front of their house in the future.

Although sympathetic to the residents' concerns, Commissioner Russ Winch was adamant that public safety is by far more important. "The stated purpose for this [sidewalk] is public safety," he said. "There are a lot of kids that walk up and down that road."

Winch pointed out that the residents will not lose any land

because of the additional sidewalk installation. This was also the reason why the Council discussed turning Green Street into a one-way for its entire length, with parking being restricted to the second portion of Green Street on the Maple Avenue side.

Burgess Chad W Weddle explained that while the complainant was not the owner of the property, it was someone who does live there. He also mentioned that during the Maple Avenue project,

sidewalks were added where they previously had not been and there were upset residents then too.

When surveying the audience at the meeting, Commissioner Betsey Whitmore-Brannen asked

if anyone was specifically there to discuss the Green Street project. When no one stepped forward, Brannen's question was answered.

While the Council agreed further discussion was needed over the one-way designation, they were all in agreement for adding the sidewalk.

Walkersville
Christkindlmarket
& Christmas Parade
Saturday, December 7 - 10 to 2
(Both start at 10)
Santa arrives at the end of the parade
Join us for the Christmas parade and enjoy vendors and artisans, along with lunch items including homemade soups, country ham sandwiches, hot chocolate and baked goods for sale. Credit cards accepted.
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21 Fulton Avenue, Walkersville
301-845-6775
www.gldechurch.org
www.facebook.com/GladeUCCWalkersville
Vendor applications: christkindlmarket@comcast.net
Parade entry info: chrisuebel@hotmail.com



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Member Benefits:

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...and many more.

walkersvillebusinesses.com/join

WALKERSVILLE INFO

Wed., Dec. 4 - 7 p.m. - Annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Creamery park

Fri., Dec. 6 - 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. - Star party at Heritage farm

Tues., Dec. 10 - 7 p.m. - Planning commission meeting

Wed., Dec. 11 - 7 p.m. - Town meeting

Thurs., Dec. 12 - Last day of yard waste pickup

Mon., Dec. 16 - 7 p.m. - EDC meeting

Wed., Dec. 25 - Town hall closed - Christmas

website: www.walkersvillemd.gov

phone: 301-845-4500

 Walkersville: Our Town

WALKERSVILLE NEWS

Concerns raised over proposed Israel Creek water draw

Continued from page 1

Based upon Toms' permit request however, one percent would imply that the Creek's daily flow rate is approximately 14 million gallons per day.

To put Toms' 14 million gallons a day figure into perspective, the flow rate of the full Monocacy River at Bridgeport, where the state has a flow rate measuring station, is just 11 million gallons per day, while the flow for the Monocacy River at the state's Monocacy Boulevard measuring station is 73 million gallons per day.

When contacted, the County was unable to confirm Toms' estimate that he would be drawing less than 1% of the water in Israel Creek. A representative of the County's Division of Energy and Environment said they had no idea what the water flow rate was in the Israel Creek, as they had no flow monitoring stations on the creek, and that deterring water flows in waterways fell under the authority of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

A subsequent review of the proposed permit and its basis with management of the Maryland Department of the Environment's Source Protection and Appropriation Division was – well – insightful.

The MDE representative stated that the Division's initial decision to move forward with 'considering' the permit was based upon the flow rates reported by the State's water measuring station "on the creek" located at Monocacy Blvd.

When it was pointed out that the Monocacy Blvd monitoring station was measuring the flow rate of the Monocacy River, not Israel Creek, the representative, upon confirming that fact, said: "oh my, this changes everything."

"Without a flow measuring system, we don't have a basis for determining how much water flows in Israel Creek, so we have no way of knowing if the applicant will be drawing more than one percent of the water in the creek, a key condition for the approval of the permit."

The representative said that the MDE usually just accepts, as fact, what is submitted in permit applications by applicants and does not do any research into the veracity of information in the applications, or their potential adverse impact on the environment unless it is bought to their attention by a member of the public.

In reply to questions about the impact of drawing up to an average of 139,000 gallons of water per day

from Israel Creek during dry times when the creek would be running at its lowest level, the representative pointed out that the 139,000 could in fact, be lower limit, "The applicant could pulled much more water than that on any given day or period based upon the inclusion of the word 'average' in the permit and how the state determines what 'average use' was."

"Average use," the representative said, "is determined by how many gallons of water is pulled out over the year, then that total is divided by 365." Based upon that, Lochland Turf can pull a total of 50,917,500 gallons of water out of Israel Creek over the year under the terms of the permit, "and can pull all that water out of the creek over a period of 3 months, if they want, as long as they do not exceed the daily allowable limit of 576,000 gallons, and pull no water the remaining 9 months of the year."

The potential drawing of tens of millions of gallons of water from Israel Creek drew sharp rebukes from residents when the mandatory notification letter, submitted by Lockland to adjoining land-owners, as well as this paper, was posted on Facebook.

Many expressed concern that Lockland would be attempting to draw the maximum amount permitted during the driest months of the year, the very time Israel Creek "barely flows at all," and when trees and animals need it the most, said one resident.

Others expressed concern that if the drawing of that much water from the Creek did not cause it to dry up all together, the flow would be so slow that it would become little more than stagnant pools of water that would serve a breeding grounds of mosquitoes throughout the summer, making life outdoor intolerable for residents in the Walkersville developments that boarder the Creek.

"This is a HUGE amount of water per day! This sort of thing usually doesn't work out well for the river & stream ecosystems and surrounding lands." Another posted "How can a business drain water from the creek in our community to use solely to advance their business? I hope this doesn't go through; the kids love that creek! I think these builders and businesses need to stop ruining Mother Nature and work with the environment, not constantly draw from it!"

Another summed up their feelings with a simple: "this is insane."

Potential Impacts of Withdrawals to Stream Flow and Aquatic Habitats

MDE has the responsibility to maintain minimum flows in Maryland streams to support aquatic habitat. To evaluate the health of aquatic habitat, streamflow-ecology relations will be identified using data from USGS streamgages and biological inventories maintained in the DNR's Maryland Biological Stream Survey

(MBBS). At MBSS sites without USGS streamgages, daily streamflow will be estimated to develop streamflow-ecology relations. This analysis will include water withdrawals from streams and groundwater within the same drainage basin to investigate the potential impacts to stream ecology from permitted water allocations.



September 26, 2024

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm reaching out as a neighbor and on behalf of Lochland AG & Turf LLC to let you know about a permit we've applied for, which has been assigned permit number FR2024S002/01. We're planning to use water from Israel Creek to help with irrigation on our sod farm, located right here at 8901 Crum Road in Walkersville.

We're looking to use an annual average of 139,500 gallons of surface water per day, with a peak daily maximum of 576,000 gallons during our busiest month. This water will help us maintain the quality of the sod we grow and supply to our community.

As required by the Maryland Annotated Code, Environment Article §5-506, we need to let our neighbors know about this project. The Water and Science Administration (Administration) has added your name to the "List of Interested Persons" for this permit. Down the line, you'll receive more details about the project, any potential impacts, and how you can share your thoughts or request a public hearing before any decisions are made.

The Administration has started a file for our project. If you're curious and want to review the details or share any comments, you're welcome to contact them by mail at the Water Supply Program, Source Protection and Appropriation Division, 1800 Washington Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, or by phone at 410-537-3590.

Of course, if you have any questions or just want to chat about the project, feel free to give me a call at 240-397-5995 or send me a note. We're always here and happy to talk.

Thank you for your time, and we appreciate your understanding and support as we work on this project.

Warm regards,

Matthew E. Toms

Letter sent by Matthew Toms to the Woodsboro-Walkersville News-Journal announcing his application for a permit to draw water from Israel Creek.

Israel Creek's watershed flows north to south, starting in the Johnsville area of Carroll County. The Creek flows through Woodsboro and forms the eastern boundary of Walkersville and empties into the Monocacy River, south of Route 26. The Creek was barely flowing at all, as it ran under the Crum Road Bridge at the time of the publishing of this edition of the paper.

As part of our due diligence in verify the facts in this article, we had a respected water resource expert review this article - their reply was short and to the point:

"I've gone through old flow data (maybe 20 measurements) for Israel Creek and estimated summer vs non-summer flows. Withdrawal of 576,000 gallons/d in summer would remove ~21% of the creek flow, a HUGE removal for any stream. It would likely lead to very slow flows, perhaps ponding, and warm water temps, all deleterious to fish in the creek as well as the bottom 'bugs' the fish feed on and normal cycling of nutrients in the system."

According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, "a permit is required in order to conserve, protect, and use water resources of the State in the best interests of the people of Maryland, it is necessary to control the appropriation or use of surface and underground waters."

The State is looking for public input on Lockland's water permit application, and depending upon the input it receives, will hold a public meeting to determine if the permit should be issued, or if issued, limit the amount of water that can be drawn.

Those wishing for a public meeting on the proposed per-

mit can do so by calling 410-537-3590 or by writing the Maryland Water Supply Program, Source Protection and Appropriations Division, 1800 Washington St.

Baltimore, Md. 21230.

Editor's Note: Lockland Ag & Turf failed to return calls from this paper requesting input on this story.

EVERYTHING FREDERICK & MORE



Matthew Toms

I can speak on behalf of the business as I signed the letter. Yes we have been drawing water from Israel's creek for years. Farms are permitted by MDE to draw up to a certain amount without a permit. After last year's drought we thought it would be a good idea to have the ability to draw more water if needed. The stated amount is a maximum and it would be unusual to pump that amount. But even that amount of water is less then 1 percent of the daily flow of the creek. The law limits the daily draw to less than 5 percent of the flow under any circumstance.

Any reduction in flow to the creek will be be insignificant. We use a very small screen, as required by MDE, to prevent fish and fish eggs from being sucked into the pump.

If anyone has any questions please call us. We are good neighbors and environmental stewards. This permit is important to our farm so we can continue to grow a needed product locally.

A Facebook post made to the Everything Frederick & More Facebook group made by Matthew Toms responding to posts by residents expressing concerns about his proposed plan to pump water from Israel Creek.

UNION BRIDGE NEWS - COMMUNITY NOTES

Union Bridge mulls locations for cannabis dispensaries

Town Attorney Mandy Porter updated the Town Council on the rules that the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) outlines for local jurisdictions on where dispensaries can and cannot be located.

Her research into cannabis dispensaries was a result of multiple inquiries concerning the possible opening of a dispensary in the restricted industrial area of town.

While MCA's primary focus is on where dispensaries can and cannot be located, they also guide local jurisdictions on the restrictions they are and are not allowed to impose.

These include the distance a dispensary may be to a “sensitive” location. They may not be within 500 feet of primary schools, secondary schools, childcare centers, playgrounds, recreation centers, libraries, places of worship, or public parks or within 1000 feet of another dispensary.

According to Porter, local jurisdictions can choose to increase that number up to 1000 feet and can also restrict a dispensary from being within 100 feet of areas zoned residential use only.

What local jurisdictions may not do is make zoning restrictions more restrictive than the ones existing for registered

hemp farms or alcoholic sales.

She asked whether the Town would want to allow dispensaries in the businesses where alcoholic beverage sales are, which is a typical location, or put them in the restricted industrial district. She also suggested the Council consider whether they wanted to impose a “conditional use” clause where it would be under the Council’s approval.

Once the Town decides on the rules around allowing a dispensary to open in town, the dispensary applicant would have to follow the State and Town restrictions, making sure electricity and security are up to date

prior to opening, as well as other strict requirements.

As of now, Carroll County only has two dispensaries and both are in Westminster. Frederick does have a few dispensaries, however, Porter pointed out that Union Bridge “would be a central location for Carroll County if they choose to allow them.”

Mayor Perry Jones was adamant that they do something soon, stating, "I think we really want to get a handle on this before we have to worry about it because it's going to come this way one day or another."

He mentioned the cannabis

grower “Curaleaf” in Taneytown that is a manufacturer of cannabis only and not a dispensary. This classification allows them to be directly beside Memorial Park.

Jones also read the Maryland Comptrollers Report on cannabis sales which showed a 52% increase in cannabis tax revenue equaling \$22 million dollars between April and June, showing how a dispensary in Union Bridge could possibly benefit the Town in additional tax revenue.

The Council decided to continue discussion on how they will move forward at a future work session.

NIMBYism is self-defeating

Gary Bennett and Hugh Gordon

Members, Affordable Housing Council of Frederick County

NIMBY means “Not In My Back Yard.” It can apply to almost any human endeavor one does not want near them. But, for the purposes of our discussion today, it applies to housing. You are a NIMBY if you push back against any kind of housing initiative in your local area no matter how much sense it might make.

There is no shortage of NIMBYism in Frederick County. For example:

No-growth candidates recently carried the day in Walkersville town elections. Here are some of their comments: "I don't want to see any more townhouses built." I don't want to see any

more houses built." "We don't need more houses." And the most pithy: "I'd like to see people come in, spend their money, and leave." Inexplicably, all this was in addition to comments that the city needs more funding to tackle existing projects, the very thing additional tax revenue from more homes would bring. The irony is hard to ignore.

There's more: Mount Airy stopped a mixed-use development plan in its tracks due to traffic concerns. Brunswick's city council sent back to its city staff a proposed zoning ordinance change that would have

allowed old buildings to be used for housing. Thurmont residents voted in referendum to disallow annexation of 17 acres of county land to stop a high-density development. We could go on and on.

But reasonable people must ask themselves this: Is it worth it to prevent so many people from having a home of their own so I can have things just the way I want them?

Tired old expressions are used repeatedly: "This new development will change the character of my neighborhood." "Our town will lose its identity." "Our way of life is being threatened."

We are not fooled. What this really means is “I like the way things are now and I’m not going to let anyone else come in and change that.” This is not only selfish but short-sighted.

Why should just the generation that benefitted from the wealth of this country – those like me who built their incomes with access to high-opportunity jobs and reasonable, in-balance housing costs – be able to live in the best neighborhoods, in the best municipalities and prevent others from doing the same?

We're shooting ourselves in the foot when we push back on all growth. Research has shown that increasing access to affordable housing is the most cost-effective way to reduce childhood poverty and increase economic mobil-

ity in America. Children living in stable, affordable homes are much more likely to thrive in school and have greater opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom and increase their earning potential.

The hard truth is we don't have enough housing in the county to satisfy demand. That is irrefutable. Experts and politicians from both sides say the same thing.

Ask the 20- and 30-somethings around Frederick County about their housing prospects. You'll get an earful. Many are starting families and would like to find a starter home, but can't. We have let them down. Sure, it has always been tough on young families trying to buy that first home, but the housing situation is worse now than it has ever been.

Young people have few options. Millennials are now the largest generation in American history, outpacing the baby-boomers. They are aging into their prime home-buying years with no homes to buy. In a recent survey, fully 55% of adults under age 30 say the lack of affordable housing is a major problem.

Add to the housing shortage the fact that we're all living longer and hoping to age in place. This causes the turnover of existing homes to slow as well. Many seniors would like to downsize to a smaller home, thereby opening up larger homes to young families, but there is nowhere to downsize to.

The new housing director for Frederick County, Vincent Rogers, sees the problem clearly. "What happens when your adult children want to stay in the area and be close to their families? What happens when you have an elderly parent who can't afford to stay in the home they are in now? I think it is critical for us to help people understand why increased housing is so important for our entire community."

There's nothing to be afraid of. In Frederick County and City (and even in the municipalities), new developments must pass a gauntlet of requirements before they are approved. Either the county or town can support a new development according to its capacity levels or the development must pay its own way. This includes water and sewer, schools, roads, parkland, forest conservation, and parking.

In the Ballenger Creek area of Frederick County (where Gary lives), we have lived it. The Orchard Park at Ballenger Run development in 2019 placed 210 affordable units into the market. He delivers medicine and meals to many of these good folks. Sure, traffic has increased and that took some getting used to, but additional lanes were added to Ballenger Creek Pike and that helped alleviate the problem.

School capacity increased temporarily, too. But the new development also paid for a new elementary school, a beautiful new 4-mile bike and walking path, and additional traffic lanes on Ballenger Creek Pike.

Was all this ideal? Of course not, but you must balance some inconveniences with the clear need for more people to have a home in Frederick County.

So, our plea to you is this: If we want to have a strong, vibrant community that does not stagnate because of the lack of affordable housing, and if we want children, young adults, and seniors to have a chance to live where they love, we must think twice before pushing back every single time a new development appears at our doorstep.

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GOVERNMENT

County Councilman Brad Young

The Frederick County Council meets regularly on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 pm at Winchester Hall, located at 12 East Church Street in downtown Frederick. All meetings are open to the public, and we welcome participation. Members of the public are welcome to attend in person, or participate over the phone. Please not that there will be no Council meetings on December 24 and December 31, 2024.

The Council recently passed Bill 24-17 by 6-0-1 vote (one Council Member being absent), Amending Chapter 1-19 of the Frederick County

Code, Updating Certain Definitions and Adding New Definitions. I sponsored this Bill on behalf of the County Executive. Amended Bills 24-13 and 24-14 recently both failed by 3-4 vote. Jerry Donald was the sponsor for these Bills. The Council had two upcoming Bill advancing through our legislative process.

Bill 24-19 Amends Ch. 1-13-34 of the Frederick County Code, creating a Local Program for the Preservation of Critical Agricultural Land. Bill 24-20 Amends the Frederick County Uniformed Employees Retirement Plan Offering a Deferred Retirement

Option Program. I am sponsoring both of these upcoming Bills on behalf of the County Executive. For the most up to date agendas, full text of Bills, and Bill schedules, please visit our website.

The Frederick County Council is currently seeking individuals to volunteer for the Frederick County Compensation Review Commission. This Commission will review the salaries and allowances of the County Executive and County Council. The Commission will have up to eight (8) weeks to meet and prepare any compensation recommendations for sub-

mission to the County Council for their consideration. The Council may accept, reduce or reject the Commission's recommendation, but it may not increase any recommended item. The Compensation Review Commission shall be composed of seven (7) registered voters of the County.

The Council is seeking individuals who will NOT be a candidate for the Office of County Executive or for County Council in 2026. If interested in applying, please see our website for more details here: www.frederickcountymd.gov/countycouncil. Applications must be received by 4pm on December 13, 2024.

The Frederick County Council encourages public involvement

at every stage of the legislative process. We welcome public comment at every Council meeting on Tuesday evenings. Members of the public are welcome to attend and give comment in person, leave a voicemail to be forwarded to each Council Member, or email us any time at councilmembers@frederickcountymd.gov. Please visit our website at www.frederickcountymd.gov/countycouncil to view our latest agendas, legislation, and upcoming calendar of events.

And as always, if there is ever anything I can do for you, please feel free to reach out to me and my office. You can contact me via email at: BYoung@FrederickCountyMD.gov, or you can call my office at 301-600-1108.

County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

Last month, the Frederick County Council voted against a bill introduced by Council Member Jerry Donald (District 1) to update regulations associated with the growing agritourism industry in the County. Many of the updates in the bill came from recommendations from the Agritourism Workgroup, formed by County Executive Fitzwater in June of 2023 to address this topic. Council Member Mason Carter (District 5) served on this workgroup along with Council Member Donald and other stakeholders.

Currently agritourism is allowed as an accessory use on a farm in the county. It's understandable that many farmers are looking for ways to diversify their operations to create reliable additional revenue. There are many farms to enjoy the beautiful fall season with a trip to a

pumpkin patch for a hay ride or a fun time in a corn maze with family and friends. We have many opportunities for residents and visitors to the county to enjoy "pick-your-own" strawberries, blueberries, apples, and fresh flowers. I've visited several of these farms and they are big part of what makes agriculture such an important part of the economy and traditions in Frederick County.

Since we don't have a lot of state law to regulate how much of a farm's activity can and should be dedicated to agritourism, this bill was trying to provide clarity to local farmers and surrounding residents. Activities like fireworks and fire pits are fun, but they create smoke and noise that negatively affect neighboring properties for weeks, and it's important to recognize that those residents have a right to peacefully use their property, just

as farmers have a right to use their property to make a living for themselves and their families. Although many admitted the bill was not perfect, and it ended up being controversial, I voted for it because I saw for myself the amount of smoke and disruption these more intense activities can create for nearby residents.

It's a matter of finding the right balance, and appreciating the position your neighbor might be in. I'm confident that with more input and understanding from all stakeholders, this issue can be revisited, and more acceptable regulations can be adopted.

Frederick County Compensation Review Commission

The Frederick County Council is soliciting letters of interest and resumes from individuals to volun-

teer their time to serve on the Frederick County Compensation Review Commission. The Compensation Review Commission will review the current compensation structure for the Frederick County Executive and County Council Members to provide a target of fair compensation to individuals entering into elected public service. They will also consider what level of compensation is needed to attract and retain valuable, qualified persons for office. All meetings will be televised and open to the public. Additionally, the Council is seeking individuals who will not be a candidate for the Office of County Executive or County Council in 2026.

The Compensation Review Commission will have eight weeks to meet and prepare recommendations

for the County Council. It will be comprised of seven registered voters who have lived in Frederick County for a minimum of four years. The names of all interested applicants will be made available to the public, and resumes will only be shared with the Council. If you are interested in serving, please send a letter of interest highlighting your relevant experience, including past local community involvement and knowledge of Frederick County Government by regular mail or e-mail to RCherney@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

Letters of interest and resumes must be received by Friday, December 13. If you have questions about the Compensation Review Commission or any other topic, please feel free to contact me at rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a peaceful holiday season!

Woodsboro Burgess Heath Barnes

Greetings, I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving. It is hard to believe that we are now in the last month of 2024.

I am very excited to announce that after many setbacks we are at the point of breaking ground on the new town hall. On December 18th at 11. We will be holding a ceremony at 605 South Main Street in Woodsboro to officially break ground. Everyone is invited to attend.

Mt. Hope, Rocky Hill, St. Johns, and Oak Hill cemeteries will be participating in the Wreaths Across America program for the first time

this year. This is a nationwide event where volunteers place wreaths on veterans' graves. The Mt. Hope Cemetery board is excited to be participating in this program. To donate towards the cost of a wreath donations may be sent payable to Mount Hope Cemetery, PO BOX 481, Woodsboro. Please note wreaths on the memo line of your check. The wreath-laying ceremony will take place on Saturday, December 14th at noon at the Mount Hope Cemetery on South Main Street, everyone is invited to attend. This event is being sponsored by Mt. Hope Cem-

etery with participation at the 3 other above-mentioned cemeteries.

I would like to address the letters that went out to all town residents with homes built before 1972 since there have been a lot of questions. The State of Maryland has been working with the EPA on water safety. As part of the project, all municipalities were required to send letters to notify anyone whose home was built before 1972 that they could have lead pipes in their homes. The suggestion is that if you have lead pipes to have them changed, but there is no mandate to discontinue water service, for anyone

with lead pipes. I would like to repeat no one is having their water disconnected for possibly having lead pipes. To comply with the state guidelines we were required to send out the notification letter by November 15th, and that is why the letters were sent.

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

I would like to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from my home to yours. I would

encourage you if you can to help a family or individual in need during this holiday season.

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

Woodsboro Town meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7. In addition, Planning and Zoning meetings are at 6pm on the First Monday of the month as needed. If you have an item for the agenda, it needs to be submitted 14 days before the P&Z meeting. Town Council meetings are at St. Johns United Church of Christ, located at 8 N 2nd Street Woodsboro. The public is always invited to attend.



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GOVERNMENT

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

December is a time of celebration, gratitude, and anticipation for the future. It's an opportunity to take stock of what we have achieved and set our sights on new goals we aspire to reach in the coming year. As 2024 draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on the year and all we have accomplished as a community.

While Frederick County faces challenges, we have also seen countless examples of resilience, compassion, and progress. Together, we have strengthened the bonds that make our county a place where people can thrive.

As we gather to celebrate the holiday season, let us also remember those in our community who are in need of support. The spirit of service and kindness defines this season, and I encourage everyone to look for ways to lift up those around us.

Part of our preparation for the upcoming year includes setting priorities for the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. In this important work, I will be holding six town hall meetings in the coming weeks where members of the

public are invited to attend and share feedback on budget priorities and concerns.

There will be one meeting in each of the County Council Districts and one general hearing. The District 5 meeting will be held January 25 at 1 p.m. at Walkersville Middle School with Council Member Carter. The general public hearing will be held December 4 at 7 p.m. at the Prospect Center in Frederick.

All meetings are open to the public. Those interested in attending are welcome to join whichever meeting is most convenient. Attendees are not limited to the meeting in their home district.

Those who cannot attend in person may submit comments online at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublicHearing. Additionally, each town hall will be recorded and posted online for later viewing on FCG TV.

I am looking forward to hosting these events, along with the County Council, so we can hear from and continue to meet the needs of our

residents.

Another way Frederick is County working to meet the needs of its residents is through the newly revitalized Business and Industry Cabinet (BIC). The BIC will serve as an advisory board on matters related to sustainable and inclusive economic and workforce development, including strategic planning, marketing, and business recruitment, retention, and expansion.

The BIC also will provide a forum for business leaders and government officials to share ideas, solutions, and creative approaches to business and workforce topics and issues facing Frederick County.

Membership of the board will reflect the diversity of Frederick County, including representatives of our key sectors like agriculture, life science and biotech, and manufacturing, as well as associated sectors like banking, law, and nonprofits.

Restoring the advisory board was a recommendation of the community-led Transition Team. I look forward to hearing regularly from small

businesses and major employers about economic trends and workforce opportunities they see in our County. Learn more about the BIC at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Boards.

In the upcoming year, I am also looking forward to continuing to partner with local nonprofits to serve residents more effectively. These types of collaborations leverage our strengths, which results in improved services and stronger communities.

I recently announced the opening of the Fiscal Year 2026 Community Partnership Grant Program. This program awards competitive grants to local nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of Frederick County residents.

The application period for this year's grant program will be open from Monday, November 25 until Wednesday, January 8.

Applications should focus on the areas of addressing homelessness and housing solutions, quality of life, public health, and supporting the arts. These areas are crucial for fostering a strong, thriving community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Last year, we awarded \$1.2 million through this program. We saw firsthand the incredible impact that these organizations made. From providing stable housing to promoting health and wellness to enriching our lives with arts and culture, these programs foster resilience, bridge gaps, and bring innovative solutions that help our County thrive.

For example, in Emmitsburg, the Seton Center's DePaul Dental Program used grant funds to work with local dentists and oral surgeons to provide adult dental services at reduced rates.

I encourage all interested nonprofit organizations to apply. For more details on the application process, please visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/CPG.

Together, through our shared efforts, we can continue to build a stronger, more vibrant community and make Frederick County a place where everyone can thrive. I am proud of what we have accomplished so far and am optimistic about the possibilities that lie before us. As we close out this year, I wish everyone a joyous holiday season and new year filled with promise and success.

County Notes. . .

Community Partnership Grant Program Application Period Opens

Eligible nonprofit organizations are invited to apply for Frederick County's Fiscal Year 2026 Community Partnership Grant Program. This program awards competitive grants to nonprofit 501 (c) (3) community organizations that provide and deliver services to Frederick County residents.

"Frederick County is proud to partner with local nonprofit organizations to serve residents more effectively," said County Executive Jessica Fitzwater. "The Community Partnership Grant Program values the amazing work nonprofits do and enhances programs in key areas that foster a strong, thriving community."

The FY26 grant program will accept applications that target the following priority areas:

Addressing Homelessness and Housing Solutions, such as housing insecurity, affordable housing opportunities, financial literacy, and initiatives to help people age in place.

Quality of Life initiatives, such as childcare, support for seniors, youth empowerment and engagement, programs that increase community inclusion and belonging, and transportation innovation.

Public Health, such as programs addressing food insecurity, mental health, behavioral health, substance use disorder, intimate partner violence, health equity, and maternal health.

Supporting the Arts, such as expanding access to cultural enrichment, using the arts to build bridges and make connections, placemaking, and providing community arts programming.

Applications will be accepted from eligible nonprofit organizations, with a limit of one application per organization. Grants come with accountability standards that all grantees must meet. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, January 8.

Interested nonprofits are encouraged

to sign up to receive updates and reminders on the FY26 grant cycle.

For more information on the application process and eligibility requirements, please visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/CPG or contact CPG@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

Bill Expands Who Qualifies for Veterans Tax Credit

More Frederick County veterans could see their property tax bills drop, under a proposed change to the county's Disabled Veterans Property Tax Credit. County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

introduced the expansion to close a loophole that previously prevented service members in Maryland from receiving the tax credit if their disability is classified as non-permanent.

"On Veterans Day, and every day, we should honor the sacrifices made by our service members," County Executive Fitzwater said. "This proposed bill will make it easier for veterans to stay in our community. The tax credit is a meaningful way to thank them for their service."

Frederick County's Disabled Veterans Property Tax Credit originally passed in 2021, thanks to a bill co-sponsored by then-Council Member Fitzwater. Until this year, Maryland law did not allow

local governments to issue the tax credit for veterans who have non-permanent service-connected disabilities of 100%. Council Member Steve McKay, who sponsored the 2021 bill, agreed to sponsor the revised legislation.

"I was proud to sponsor the original Disabled Veterans Property Tax Credit during my first term," Council Member McKay said. "This is an important tool that we have to show our appreciation for our veterans who have given so much for this country. I'm now very pleased to

work with the County Executive on this amendment to the property tax credit, which clarifies the status of our veterans who may be 100% disabled, but still not able to qualify for the State property tax exemption."

In honor of the more than 16,000 veterans who live in Frederick County, County Executive Fitzwater ordered Winchester Hall to be lit in green from November 4-11 as part of the National Association of Counties' Operation Green Light.

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COMMENTARY

Words from Winterbilt

Where are we going?

Shannon Bohrer

“In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same.”
—Albert Einstein

December is upon us; the election is over, and the election promises may have some unexpected consequences. While we know what was promised, what happens when the promises are kept? Thanksgiving was a time to be thankful, as it should be for most of us who live in a free country. Now we have Christmas, just around the corner, which is a time to celebrate Christian values and see our friends and families. The election, Thanksgiving, and Christmas all seem separate and distinct, yet they can also be related. It appears that everything, if not directly related to the election, has been influenced or affected by the outcome.

Was our Thanksgiving a reminder of everything we must be thankful for or an omen of what we can lose? Will we just talk about the Christmas values of kindness to strangers and the less fortunate, or will our actions match our

words? We are a divided nation, and while half of the nation is still celebrating, the other half is apprehensive. How and when our differences can be lessened or diminished is unknown. Half see a bright future, and the other half see a future with hardships and tribulations.

News media outlets continue to discuss the future under the new administration, questioning our future. Will the new administration stop the wars/ conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, as promised? Or, without our support, will some of the disputes expand? If the new administration institutes a 20 percent tariff on all imports, will we experience a return of inflation? If we deport eleven million undocumented immigrants, “Operation Aurora,” what will the cost include? Will the price include the loss of labor, and if so, what happens to the economy? The new president also said, “I want to drill, drill, drill,” talking about oil. Of course, currently the oil companies produce the most oil they have ever made.

While the winner was elected with both the electoral college and the popular vote in a fair election, there is considerable consternation about our future related to the previously mentioned promises and a few others.

Many citizens who voted for the president-elect have expressed the view that not everything that was promised will be delivered. Others see his promises as a road map to be followed and look forward to the enactment of his policies. A fair argument could be made that many politicians’ promises are never realized.

The president-elect made numerous additional promises, one of which greatly bothers me. He repeatedly said he would pardon the “people who were arrested for their role in the riot at the capital in Jan. 6, 2021...” His party created a choir group of insurrections that attended and performed at many of his rallies. The chorus released a single that includes a recording from the former president. The charged and convicted have been labeled as both patriots and political prisoners, not just by him but also by members of his party.

I have strong beliefs in the criminal justice system. I was in law enforcement for 42 years, full-time and 10 years part-time. The criminal justice system is supposed to represent fairness to the citizenry, with no one above the law and with equitable enforcement. Being treated equally in the eyes of the law is foundational to a democracy. I understand that we have problems in our criminal justice system; I even wrote a book about these issues. Our system of justice is not perfect, but pardoning persons convicted of assault-

ing police officers sends a message of inequality and corruption.

Ty Cobb, a lawyer who worked for the future president, said that there is a high probability that Trump “will go forward with these pardons.” He further added that when done, the pardons would be viewed around the world, and not in a positive manner. He said, “I mean, this is the type of conduct that, when viewed internally, makes it impossible to distinguish the United States from a third-world country... This is lawlessness of the highest order and there’s no principal basis for it.”

Why would anyone believe that pardoning people convicted of assaulting police is the correct path to take? It was reported that 114 officers were injured on January 6th, and that is just physical injuries. Since the insurrection, four officers committed suicide, and the number of officers with mental health issues is unknown. We do know that retirements are up, and hiring is down. We also know that many officers received permanent injuries and have retired on disability. One officer was temporarily blinded with bear spray, and her assailant is to be pardoned!

If there is another insurrection, what motivation would the officers have to perform their duties? If the currently accused and convicted insurrectionists are pardoned, will they return to the capital and have another insurrection – as a celebration? If so, will the capi-

tal police officers perform their duties or allow the entry? What happens if there are more disruptions and additional destruction of property? What happens if one of the pardon subjects assaults another officer?

Throughout my life, I believed that the citizenry of this nation believed in the rule of law. I now question my beliefs in that over half the citizenry voted against the rule of law by voting for an individual who labels persons who attacked police officers as “Patriots” and “Political Prisoners” and intends to pardon them.

Lady Justice is blind, as she is supposed to be, so justice should be applied with facts and not favor. If associates of the president-elect commit crimes, should officers arrest them or just turn a blind eye? With no real justice that applies to everyone, how does the criminal justice system function? When we have a justice system that is not blind and favors the individuals in a ruling party, we no longer have justice. The next step is authoritarian rule.

“At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst.”
—Aristotle

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

The Bulwark

Let Trump be Trump

Jonathan Last

Everything you need to know about the state of our political parties can be found in the following two stories.

Last spring, Arizona Republicans were in a pickle. The conservative Arizona Supreme Court issued a ruling saying that an obscure 1864 law criminalizing nearly all abortions was valid. Republicans controlled the Arizona legislature and so public pressure fell to them to repeal the 160-year-old law. Yet Republicans in the legislature declined to do so.

Arizona already had a ballot initiative scheduled for November. This referendum was sure to pass and when it did, it would invalidate the 1864 law. Republicans did not want to take a vote that would put them at odds with their pro-life base.

But in the six months between then and November, women in Arizona would suffer from the effects of this Draconian law. So Democrats in the legislature and the Democratic governor, stepped in. They provided the votes to repeal the law that Republicans had pushed for—thus saving their constituents—but also saving Republicans from the political consequences of their actions.

Democrats fixed the problem the GOP majority had made, instead of letting the unpopular law hang there, like a millstone around the necks of Republican candidates.

At roughly the same time, President Biden and the Democratic Senate majority approached Senate Republican leader Mitch McCon-

nell about negotiating an immigration bill. McConnell tapped the conservative Oklahoma Republican Sen. James Lankford to write a border hawk’s dream, and that’s exactly what he did. The Lankford bill was easily the toughest immigration law in generations—Democrats gave away the store and asked for nothing in return. Republicans got everything they ever said they wanted.

And then, after the Republicans’ designated negotiator declared victory, the rest of the Republican party in Congress balked. They chose to abandon their own bill because instead of solving the problems at the border, they wanted to be able to use immigration as an issue to help Donald Trump’s presidential campaign.

Voters rewarded one of these parties and punished the other. What should Democrats learn from that outcome? One simple thing: Do not expend political capital trying to protect voters from Trump.

Americans listened to everything Trump said over the last two years. They heard him talk about abandoning Ukraine, imposing massive tariffs, putting RFK Jr. in charge of healthcare policy, and rounding up millions of immigrants and either deporting them or putting them into camps.

A majority of voters affirmatively chose those policies. So let Trump implement them. Let’s walk through what that would mean, one policy at a time.

Ukraine

President Trump is likely to abandon Ukraine to Russia. Pulling back American support of Ukraine will have a number of bad outcomes.

It will reward Putin’s aggression, endangering the Baltic states and Eastern Europe.

It will strain NATO; or perhaps even break it. All of which will spook global markets.

It will signal to China that they have a free hand with Taiwan. Which would also cause a massive disruption to the global economy. And—not that American voters care about this—it would also mean the death or enslavement of large numbers of Ukrainians.

Because they are silly, the great and good American people have asked for these outcomes. Democrats should not get in the way of them. If Republicans want to fight Trump over Ukraine, they can have at it. But they should do so with zero Democratic support.

Democrats should sit on the sidelines and point out all of the dangers. When things go sideways in Europe they should relentlessly highlight the bad outcomes and heap blame on Trump. They should score an endless number of political points and use the outcome chaos and bloodshed in Ukraine to damage Trump politically. But under no circumstances should they extend themselves politically to stop Trump from doing what he promised to do.

Tariffs

President Trump has promised to impose a massive tariff regime. The result will be rising prices for consumers. Rather than trying to stop it, Democrats should welcome this development.

The only way in which Democrats should fight back against tariffs is by exposing the crony capitalist loopholes Trump carves out for his allies. Democrats should relentlessly high-

light the ways in which Trump uses his tariff scheme to help his billionaire friends and they should never shut up about the prices of everything. But they should not attempt to stop the imposition of the tariffs themselves.

RFK and vaccines

President Trump wants to appoint RFK to head the Department of Health & Human Services. Democrats should let him.

RFK wants to do away with vaccine mandates? Okay. Democratic governors can support state and local mandates for childhood vaccinations and can run campaigns to encourage their constituents to protect themselves with free vaccinations. But if Cletus in Alabama wants to abandon polio and MMR vaccines? Let him. No more saving people from themselves. And then, when dangerous childhood diseases reappear, Democrats can demonize both Republicans and the slack-jawed yokels who made it possible.

Will some innocent people die as a result? Perhaps. But elections have consequences. And Americans have demonstrated, over and over, that they don’t give a political party any credit for preventing harms.

Deportations

It’s unclear exactly how serious Trump is about his deportation promises. Is he really going to round up 15 million immigrants and deport them? But he may try to arrest some thousands of immigrants and either deport them or warehouse them in camps.

Either way, why should Democrats do anything to obstruct Trump if he tries to institute a regime of mass deportation or incarceration?

Because one of two things is possible. Either: Trump has no intention of following through on his promise—in which case he should not be given an excuse that Democrats somehow prevented him from doing it; or Trump really will try to arrest 15 million people. In which case it will be a logistical, legal, moral, and economic catastrophe. Either way, let him do it. Give him no way to blame Democrats for obstructing the glorious immigrant round-up of 2025—whether because it happens or because it does not happen.

Because either way—and this is the key—Trump’s deportation policy isn’t going to disproportionately affect Democratic voters. And Democrats can no longer afford to spend political capital protecting anyone who can’t support them electorally, just because it’s nice or the right thing to do.

At the end of the day, that should be the precept that guides Democrats’ decisions about when and how to spend capital trying to obstruct Trump during the next two years.

If Trump is trying to break the rule of law, then yes, Democrats should attempt to stop him. But for everything else? Democrats should stand back and stand by. And then, when the fit hits the shan, they should demagogue the ever-living-crap out of Trump for any bad outcome that occurs, anywhere.

Make him own it. All of it.

The American people have chosen. They should not be insulated from the consequences of their choice.

To read other articles from the Bulwark, visit www.thebulwark.com.

COMMENTARY

The Liberal Patriot

The Democrats’ long goodbye to the working class

Michael Baharaeen

As we continue to sort through the wreckage of the election, one thing has become very clear: Donald Trump gained ground relative to 2020 in almost every state and with almost every demographic group. Even the most reliably Democratic constituencies, including racial minorities, shifted in his direction, an ominous sign that their coalition may not be as solid as they once thought. Indeed, these results shone a spotlight on long-festering problems in the Democrats’ coalition, which have left them a shell of their former selves—as the party not of the multiracial working class but of society’s elites.

Though it may be hard to believe this fate has befallen the party of FDR, these changes didn’t happen overnight. Democrats were long considered by many Americans to be the party of the common man and woman. Mark Brewer, of the University of Maine, has found that in every presidential election between 1952 and 2004, the trait voters said they most liked about the Democrats was that they were “the party of the working class.” By contrast, the biggest mark against the Republicans was that they were viewed as the party of big business and the upper class.

These perceptions created a clear divide between the parties’ coalitions during that period: Democrats were likelier to win lower-educated and lower-income voters while Republicans were the favored party of many college-edu-

cated and affluent Americans.

By the 1990s, the country was growing more diverse and better educated. Bill Clinton was a beneficiary of this new reality, as he made sweeping gains with women, young people, voters of color (specifically, Hispanics), and college-educated voters. Importantly, he also retained significant support from white Americans and lower-educated voters, who made up the vast majority of the electorate. As Clinton rode this coalition to victory twice—marking the first time since FDR that a Democrat had won two full terms as president—some political observers saw the emergence of a new majority, one that could consistently win elections using the formula Clinton had used.

In 2008, Barack Obama built on the Clinton coalition, bringing in even higher levels of support from almost every major party constituency, including blacks, Hispanics, Asians, young people, and women. But that year saw the rise of another trend as well: Obama became the first Democratic nominee since at least 1988 to decisively win voters who held a bachelor’s degree. He also fared far better with high-income earners than past Democrats had. These were the first signs of a growing professional class whose cultural values had aligned many of them with Team Blue—a departure from the past.

Obama’s two wins led Democrats and Republicans alike to believe in the “emerging Democratic majority” thesis. Gone were the days when Democrats needed to win a majority of white voters, a feat they had found nearly impossible to achieve since the 1960s. Now, the party that represented

America’s demographic future stood to lead it as well.

But no sooner did that consensus emerge than Donald Trump arrived on the scene. Trump disrupted the Democrats’ plans for building a dominant coalition and, in the process, helped precipitate a dramatic realignment between the two parties—one rooted in economic and social class. This change has tipped the demographic advantage in favor of Republicans and left Democrats at very real risk of losing many of the voters who not long ago were expected to deliver them a permanent majority.

In 2016, non-college-educated voters, a group that had backed Obama by four points in 2012, swung to Trump, who won them by six. This was a core driver of Trump’s win, as these voters made up a whopping 63 percent of the electorate that year. Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton gained substantial ground with college graduates, who went from also backing Obama by four points to supporting her by 15. This was an early sign that Democrats would struggle to win without a critical mass of working-class voters behind them.

Four years later, as Joe Biden defeated Trump, the education gap grew even wider.

It seems plausible that because Democrats found success in 2020 and unexpectedly did so again in the 2022 midterms, they overlooked real problems under the hood of their coalition. Now, these problems finally caught up with them.

Initial data from the 2024 AP VoteCast survey shows that Kamala Harris matched Biden’s margin with white voters, but Trump made historic gains with non-white voters. He earned the highest share of Asian support since 2004, the highest share of black support since 1976, and the second-highest share



of Hispanic support ever (he even nearly won Hispanic men outright). All this points to an American electorate that is becoming less polarized along racial and ethnic lines. While that may be a welcome development for society, it comes at the obvious expense of the Democrats, who had hoped these voting blocs would help them build a demographically dominant coalition for years to come.

Meanwhile, the transformation of the parties along class lines appears to be moving full steam ahead. Harris came close to matching Biden’s level of support among college-educated voters, winning them by 14 points. But perhaps just as telling: she carried voters earning at least \$100,000 by seven points—by far the largest margin for a Democratic nominee in the modern era. On the other side, Trump became the first Republican nominee on record to win low-income voters, narrowly carrying them by three points. He also continued growing his advantage with non-college voters, winning them by 13 points—the largest margin for the GOP since at least 1988. And his 44 percent support from union households marked the greatest share for a Republican since Ronald Reagan.

Looking at this picture, it’s hard

not to see that the Democrats have now become the party of the very thing they have long fought against: the elites. This stands in sharp contrast to their longtime image as the party of the working class, which is further and further in the rearview mirror. According to political scientist Matt Grossmann, college-educated white voters this year became a plurality of the Democratic coalition for the first time ever, surpassing both non-college whites as well as voters of color.

On a more practical note, this new coalition also risks putting the Democrats on electorally unsound footing. Although college graduates are more reliable voters than their non-college peers, they also constitute a much smaller share of the population. Without a meaningful share of working-class voters in the mix, the party will struggle to be competitive.

Strategists and pundits will argue in the months ahead about the best path forward for the Democrats, but suffice it to say: from both an electoral and moral standpoint, the party’s aim should be to return to its roots as the party of the people.

To read other articles from the Liberal Patriot, visit www.liberalpatriot.com.

Good Day Neighbor

Fiscal responsibility, Repudiation Day

Dorothea Mordan

Frederick, Maryland has a long history of calling out leaders, and speaking truth to power.

On November 23, 1765, twelve judges in Frederick County, Maryland, refused to enforce the newly passed Stamp Act. This act of defiance, eight years before the Boston Tea Party, was an early step towards the American Revolution.

The Stamp Act required a tax on various printed materials, including legal documents, newspapers, and playing cards. The colonists, had no representation in the British Parliament, and declared this Taxation without Representation. Those Frederick County judges agreed and took a stand by refusing to use or require the use of stamped paper.

This act of defiance became a line in the sand, and once crossed, led to the Colonies’ Revolution

against the British government. Repudiation of the Stamp Act inspired other colonists to resist the King. While the Stamp Act was eventually repealed, the line was crossed and the newly minted Americans created a strong, flexible form of government. Our government, from local all the way up to Federal, functions on participation of the public.

After our contemporary election a couple of weeks ago, it’s a good time to remember how it all started. We have a new list of elected officials to hold accountable, from local to national offices.

Several months ago there was a communication that Maryland was directing municipalities around the state to conduct assessment of pipes in public water systems that bring water to residences. Towns, large and small, including Woodsboro would be conducting such an assessment. It is our responsibility as residents, to follow up on what that means when using the

water from the town’s water and sewer treatment plant. Updates should be found at the town website - www.woodsboro.org.

In the last couple of weeks, every resident should have received the letter from the Corporation of Woodsboro. “Public Notice Letter: unknown Material Service Line, Subject: Important Information Regarding Your Water Service Line.” This raised more questions than it answered.

It’s not enough to recognize a problem and expect someone else to fix it. We have a government system that is founded on citizen participation. Right here in Woodsboro we have monthly town meetings that are open to the public. We need to help them help us. A good example of an issue that calls for public awareness is the water and sewer treatment facility we have in Woodsboro.

The Woodsboro Council meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the meeting room behind St. Johns Church, 8. N. Second St. Bring your questions to the next Town Council. Their next meeting is

scheduled for December 9th.

Get up to speed on the ongoing discussions of water by reading some the articles published by this paper from the last several months by visiting www.woodsboro.net and clicking on the Current Events tab. Once there scroll down to the bottom of the page to see the list of all the news articles related to Woodsboro published by this paper since its inception in 2020.

Specifically, I recommend you read the following news articles titled:

- Woodsboro vexed by mandate to inspect for lead pipes
- Path forward on lead pipe inspection uncertain
- Woodsboro hires contractor for lead pipe survey
- Woodsboro to raise water rates by 25%
- Water and sewer plant costs increase
- July Woodsboro News-Briefs (this article has multiple issues of concern related to the operation of the water and sewer plants)
- Commissioners do double take on Town Hall bids

- Council votes to move forward on Town Hall
- Town signs contract to build Town Hall
- Concerns raised over Town’s debt
- Town cancels loan to itself
- FY-23 budget approved with no tax increase

The paper has done a good job documenting the discussions and decisions of the Town Council. As I already said, It’s not enough to recognize a problem and expect someone else to fix it. We need to help them help us.

So did you vote? Or are you on the Naughty List. Let’s not have another Repudiation Day, or be the cause of one.

We have a responsibility to ourselves and each other, to our home and country.

It’s always a good day to remember how this all started, and it is always the Year of the Vote.

To read prior editions of Good Day Neighbor, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net, or visit her website: ChandlerDesignsLimited.com.

PASTOR'S DESK

A message of hope

Pastor Sean DeLawder
Woodsboro Evangelical Lutheran Church

Once again the turkey dinner is a distant memory and Advent and Christmas is upon us. Christmas is often called the season of joy and goodwill and carries with it a profound and universal message: hope. Beyond the festivities, the decorations, and the gifts, Christmas holds an enduring significance rooted in the promise of renewal, peace, and love. It is a time when hearts are lifted, communities come together, and a sense of purpose is rekindled in ways that transcend cultural and religious boundaries.

The story of Christmas begins with a message of hope, as described in Christian tradition. Over 2,000 years ago, in

a humble stable in Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus Christ was proclaimed as the arrival of a savior who would bring light to a darkened world. Angels heralded this event to shepherds, saying, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10).

The imagery of that first Christmas is one of humility and simplicity—a child born in a manger, visited by wise men and shepherds alike. This setting reminds us that hope is not confined to grand or powerful events. Instead, it often emerges in the quiet and overlooked moments of life, in the ordinary and the small. The Christmas story teaches that no matter how dire the circumstances, light can break through the

darkness, bringing renewal and purpose.

Although Christmas is rooted in Christian tradition, its themes of hope, love, and renewal resonate universally. At its core, the season reminds us of the human longing for a better world—a world marked by peace, justice, and unity. During Christmas, people of all backgrounds are drawn to practices that emphasize generosity, kindness, and connection. Whether through giving gifts, sharing meals, or reaching out to those in need, the season inspires acts of compassion and selflessness. These actions serve as a reminder that hope is not a passive emotion but an active force. It drives people to work toward a brighter future, not only for themselves but for others.

The message of hope at Christmas is especially poignant in times of difficulty. Historically, the season has offered solace and strength during periods of turmoil. During World War I, for instance, the Christmas Truce of 1914 saw soldiers from opposing sides lay down their weapons, share food, and sing carols together. For a brief moment, the spirit of Christmas overcame the horrors of war, showing that even amidst the bleakest circumstances, hope can inspire extraordinary acts of humanity.

We all remember the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic which highlighted the importance of the hope that Christmas brings. As people faced isolation, loss, and uncertainty, the season became a reminder of resilience and togetherness. Virtual gatherings, drive-by parades, and socially distanced celebrations underscored the adaptability of the human spirit and the enduring power of hope and most of all reminded us that Christ never leaves us in our loneliness but is always with us sharing his peace and love to all.

There are many traditions and symbols associated with Christmas that reflect hope the hope of Jesus. Consider the evergreen tree, which remains vibrant and alive even in the depths of winter. It is a powerful symbol of endurance and life, reminding us that even in seasons of cold and scarcity, there is potential for growth and renewal. The star atop the Christmas tree echoes the star of Bethlehem which represents guidance and the pursuit of something greater. It reminds us that even when the path is unclear, there is light to guide us forward if we remain open to it. Candles and Christmas lights, which illuminate homes and streets during the season, also carry a profound message. They symbolize the triumph of light over darkness, a theme that resonates deeply during the long nights of winter. These glowing decorations remind us that no matter how dark the world may seem, Jesus’ light can always be found—and shared. Christmas also reminds us that hope is not about ignoring difficulties but about confronting them with courage and faith. The season encour-

ages reflection on the year gone by and a renewal of purpose for the year ahead. It reminds us that, like the winter solstice giving way to longer days, our struggles can lead to growth and brighter tomorrows.

One of the most cherished aspects of Christmas is its ability to bring people together. Families reunite, communities gather, and even strangers find reasons to connect during the season. This togetherness is a powerful source of hope, reinforcing the idea that we are not alone in our journeys. This sense of unity fosters a reminder of our shared humanity. In a world often divided by conflict, inequality, and misunderstanding, the season challenges us to look beyond differences and focus on what unites us. It encourages us to practice forgiveness, extend grace, and build bridges where there were once walls. For those who may be lonely or struggling, Christmas can be a lifeline. Acts of kindness—whether it’s inviting someone to join a meal, donating to charity, or simply offering a smile—can have a profound impact. These simple gestures remind us that hope often begins with small, intentional acts of love.

Christmas also invites personal reflection. It’s a time to pause and consider what gives us hope in our own lives. For some, it might be the support of loved ones; for others, it might be a deep-seated faith or a sense of purpose. The season encourages us to nurture these sources of hope and to share them with others. In doing so, we become part of the Christmas story—a story that continues to unfold in the lives of those who choose to believe in the possibility of a better world.

But the challenge of Christmas, is carrying its hope into the rest of the year. It’s all too easy for the goodwill and generosity of the season to fade as everyday routines resume. However, the true spirit of Christmas calls us to keep its light alive in our hearts and actions long after the cookies are eaten and the decorations are put away. This might mean committing to acts of kindness throughout the year, seeking opportunities to build community, or finding ways to serve those in need. It might also mean cultivating a mindset of gratitude and hope, even in the face of adversity. By doing so, we honor the deeper meaning of Christmas and allow its message to continue transforming our lives and the world around us.

The hope of Christmas is a powerful and timeless force. It reminds us that even in the darkest of times, there is light; even in the midst of challenges, there is potential for renewal and growth. As we celebrate the season, let us embrace its message of hope and carry it forward. Let us be inspired by the simplicity of a child’s birth in a manger, the resilience of an evergreen tree, and the warmth of candles shining against the cold. Let us be the bearers of hope in our families, communities, and beyond, ensuring that the spirit of Christmas remains a guiding light in our lives all year long. For in the hope of Christmas, we find not only the promise of a better tomorrow but the courage and inspiration to make it so.

To learn more about Woodsboro Evangelical Lutheran Church visit them online at www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com, or better yet, join them for Sunday service.

Graceham Moravian Church

Come join us
Christmas Eve - Dec. 24
Candlelight Service
at 5 & 7 p.m.

Served With Grace Free Dinner
December 2 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Regular Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

8231-A Rocky Ridge Road, Thurmont
301-271-2379 / www.gracehammoravian.org

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* **Christkindlmarket & Christmas Parade** *

Sat., December 7th - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Enjoy vendors, artisans & lunch items including homemade soups, country ham sandwiches, hot chocolate & baked goods

~~~~~

**Annual Holiday Concert**

**“Repeat the Sounding Joy!”**

**Wed., December 18th at 7**

\* **Join us for a festive evening of holiday music!** \*

Light refreshments will be served following the concert.  
Please bring a food item to share with the Glade Valley Food Bank.

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

* **Musical Prelude at 7 • Service at 7:30** *

Join us as we welcome the light of Christmas!

~~~~~

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

**Chad Weddle - Pastor**  
**[www.gladechurch.org](http://www.gladechurch.org) • [www.facebook.com/GladeUCCWalkersville](https://www.facebook.com/GladeUCCWalkersville)**

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**“the best kept secret in Thurmont”**

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Please join us for our annual Christmas Sunday School Program on  
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**Sunday Service at 9:30 a.m.**

**[www.applesucc.org](http://www.applesucc.org)**  
7908 Apples Church Road  
Thurmont  
301-606-2169

**St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
14 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Walkersville

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

*Come celebrate – share the light, hear the story, be community, & welcome God's love in Jesus.*

**December 24 at 7 p.m.**

**All are welcome, come as you are!**

**Holiday Bazaar** \*

**Saturday, December 7 - 9 to 2**

**Food! • Shopping! • Baked Goods!**

**Church Tours!**

**Santa will visit from 10 to Noon**

To place orders for chicken corn soup, chicken salad and/or country ham sandwiches, text Roger at 301-606-5046 or online at [www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com](http://www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com)

**Woodsboro Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**101 S. Main Street, Woodsboro**



THE BOOK OF DAYS

The severe Christmas of 1860



On November 25th, 1788, a great freeze swept over England, lasting seven weeks. The Thames River in London was completely frozen over, allowing Londoners to walk between the frozen in ships.

The Christmas of 1860 is believed to have been the severest ever experienced in Britain. At nine o'clock in the morning of Christmas-day in that year, the thermometer, at the Royal Humane Society's Receiving House, in London, marked 15° Fahrenheit, or 17° below the freezing-point, but this was a mild temperature compared with what was prevalent in many parts of the country during the preceding night.

Other observations recorded throughout England correspond with this account of the intensity of the cold, by which, at a nearly uniform rate, the three days from the 24th to the 26th December were characterized. The severity of that time must still be fresh in the memory of our readers. In the letter of Mr. Lowe speaks of having: 'just seen a horse pass with icicles at his nose three inches in length, and as thick as three fingers.'

Those who then wore mustaches must remember how that appendage to the upper-lip became, through the

congelation of the vapour of the breath, almost instantaneously stiff and matted together, as soon as the wearer put his head out of doors.

What made this severity of cold the more remarkable, was the circumstance that for many years previously the inhabitants of the British Islands had experienced a succession of generally mild winters, and the present generation had almost come to regard as legendary the accounts which their fathers related to them of the hard frosts and terrible winters of former times. Here, therefore, was an instance of a reduction of temperature unparalleled, not only in the recollection of the oldest person living, but likewise in any trustworthy record of the past.

During the three days referred to, the damage inflicted on vegetation of all kinds was enormous. The following account of the effects of the frost in a single garden, in a well-wooded part of the county of Suffolk, may serve as a specimen of the general damage occasioned throughout England.

The garden referred to is bounded

on the west by a box-hedge, and on the south by a low wall, within which was a strip of shrubbery consisting of laurels, Portugal laurels, laurustinus, red cedar, arbor vitae, phillyrea, &c. Besides these, there stood in the garden some evergreen oaks, five healthy trees of some forty years' growth, two yews (which were of unknown age, but had been large trees beyond the memory of man), and a few younger ones between thirty and forty years old. All these, with the exception of the young yew-trees, the red cedars, the box, some of the arbor vitae and some little evergreen oaks, were either killed outright, or else so injured that it became necessary to cut them down.

Nor was this done hastily without waiting to see whether they would recover themselves; ample time was given for discovering whether it was only a temporary check from which the trees and shrubs were suffering, or whether it was an utter destruction of that part of them which was above ground. In some cases, it was found that the root was still alive, and this afterwards sent forth fresh shoots, but in other cases it turned out to be a destruction literally 'root and branch.' Some of the trees, indeed, after having been cut down level with the ground, made a desperate attempt to revive, and sent up apparently healthy shoots; but the attempt was unsuccessful, and the shoots withered.

Nor was the damage confined to the evergreens: fruit-trees suffered also; for instance, apple-trees put forth leaves and flowers, which looked well enough for a time, but, before the summer was over, these withered, as if they had been burned; while one large walnut-tree, half a century old, not only had its young last year's shoots killed, but lost some of its largest branches.

Beyond the limits of the garden referred to, the effects of this frost were

no less remarkable. Elm-trees were great sufferers; they, along with the very oaks, had many of their outer twigs killed; and a magnificent, perhaps unique, avenue of cedars of Lebanon, which must have been among the oldest of their kind in the kingdom was almost entirely ruined.

**Intense cold and its effects**

Notwithstanding this unexampled descent of temperature, the nadir, as it may be termed, of cold yet experienced in Britain, the period during which it continued to prevail was of such short duration that there was no time for it to effect those wonderful results which we read of in former times as occasioned by a severe and unusually protracted frost. From a periodical work we extract the following notice of similar instances which occurred chiefly on the continent of Europe in past ages.

In the winter of 1848-1849, the public journals recorded that the mercury, on one occasion, froze in the thermometers at Aggershuus, in Sweden. Now, as mercury freezes at 39° below zero, marked scientifically as -39°, that is, 71° below the freezing-point, we know that the temperature must have been at least as low as this—perhaps several degrees lower.

Such narratives excite a curiosity to know how such intense cold can be borne by the human frame. All the accounts obtainable tend to shew that food, clothing, activity, and cheerfulness, are the four chief requisites.

Dr. E. D. Clarke, the celebrated traveler, told Dr. Whiting that he was once nearly frozen to death—not in any remote polar region, but in the very matter-of-fact county of Cambridge. After performing divine service at a church near Cambridge, one cold Sunday afternoon in 1818, he mounted his horse to return home. Sleepiness came upon him, and he dismounted, walking by the head of his horse; the tor-

por increased, the reins dropped from his hand, and he was just about sinking probably never again to rise—when a passing traveler rescued him. This torpor is one of the most perilous accompaniments of extreme cold.

In reference to the torpor produced by extreme cold, Dr. Kane further remarks: 'Sleepiness is not the sensation. Have you ever received the shocks of a magneto-electric machine, and had the peculiar benumbing sensation of "Can't let go," extending up to your elbow joints? Deprive this of its paroxysmal character; subdue, but diffuse it over every part of the system—and you have the so-called pleasurable feelings of incipient freezing.' One day he walked himself into 'a comfortable perspiration, 'with the thermometer seventy degrees below the freezing-point. A breeze sprang up, and instantly the sensation of cold was intense. His beard, coated before with icicles, seemed to bristle with increased stiffness; and an unfortunate hole in the back of his mitten 'stung like a burning coal. 'On the next day, while walking, his beard and moustache became one solid mass of ice. 'I inadvertently put out my tongue, and it instantly froze fast to my lip. This being nothing new, costing only a smart pull and a bleeding afterwards, I put up my mitted hands to "blow hot," and thaw the unruly member from its imprisonment. Instead of succeeding, my mitten was itself a mass of ice in a moment; it fastened on the upper side of my tongue, and flattened it out like a batter-cake between the two disks of a hot griddle. It required all my care with the bare hands to release it, and then not without laceration.'

To read other selections from Robert Chambers's 1864 *The Book of Days*, visit the [bookofday.com](http://bookofday.com).



"And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger because there was no room in the inn. Luke 2:7

Sunday Worship Service - 10 a.m.  
Each Sunday morning during Advent there will be special music during our 10 a.m. worship services

If you are unable to join us in the sanctuary you may view our services on our YouTube channel.

For more information on how to access our services please visit our website or contact the church.



\* Free Community Dinner  
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ECOLOGY

More nature oddities: Tardigrades

Anne Gageby  
Director of Environmental Education  
Strawberry Hill Foundation

I was scrolling through Instagram recently and a suggested video popped up on my feed. Normally, I'd keep scrolling without giving it a second thought. This time, something caught my eye. The video was of a creature I'd never heard of before: a tardigrade. It wiggled and danced to ABBA's Dancing Queen. I sat, mesmerized, by this microscopic creature moving along to a fun beat. What was this thing I was watching and why was it so fascinating?

I immediately went to Google to find out all I could. It turns out tardigrades are even cooler than I imagined. First, they have two nicknames, and both are as cute as can be: water bear and moss piglet. Water bear is an appropriate moniker for a creature that truly resembles a microscopic bear and looks almost huggable. The nickname Wasserbär was first used by Protestant pastor, Johann August Ephraim Goeze in 1773. The word Wasserbär means "water bear" in German. The nickname moss piglet comes from the fact that these miraculous creatures can be found clinging to droplets of water within mosses and lichens.

But what are they exactly? Tardigrades are small invertebrate animals that live in a variety of habitats including freshwater, terrestrial, and marine environments. Invertebrates are creatures that lack spinal columns. Invertebrates make

up more than 90 percent of all living things and include earthworms, crabs, insects, spiders, jellyfish, and more. Interestingly, tardigrades appear plump and squishy under a microscope. But they are covered in a tough exoskeleton made of chitin similar to the exoskeletons of insects. Like their insect cousins, tardigrades shed their exoskeletons to grow.

The name tardigrade comes from Latin for "slow walker", and they're known for having a bear-like gait, hence the name. Their bodies are made up of five sections including a defined head and four body segments. Each segment has a pair of legs with four to six claws on each foot. Depending on the species, the claws can be anything from truly bear-like to more akin to paddles. With about 1,300 known species in the world, there is a lot of room for variation. One of the strangest adaptations, however, is the tardigrade's hindmost legs' configuration. These legs are attached backwards and drag behind the tardigrade unless used specifically for grasping or switching direction.

Another adaptation that's quite odd is their mouth structure. Yes, water bears have mouths. They're round and miniscule and are connected to muscles inside the head that act like cheeks, creating a suction action to pull food into the body. Unlike many other creatures, they don't have teeth. Instead, they have spear-like pinchers called stylets, which pierce cell walls and allow tardigrades to suck out the nutrients of whatever meal they find.

Not all tardigrades share the same diet, however. Some are plant-eaters that consume algae while others feast on smaller creatures and single-celled organisms. Some species of tardigrades are cannibalistic and will consume other tardigrades. Cute, adorable, and sometimes blood thirsty. Nature is odd.

These tiny powerhouses also have a secret weapon: they are nearly indestructible. Terrestrial tardigrades need only the smallest amount of water to stay alive. Without water they go into a protective mode called a tun state which allows them to stay dormant for extended periods of time. In this tun state they pull their arms and legs into themselves and curl into a ball. They essentially shrivel up but don't die. Water is essential to life on earth, but tardigrades can exist without water for years at a time. But how?

It's believed that tardigrades synthesize special molecules that replace lost water within their cells. These molecules create a matrix which protects things like DNA and other sensitive pieces of their complex puzzle. This protection allows their bodies to completely dry out without harming their metabolic system. When they're reintroduced to water, these special molecules dissolve and leave behind undamaged cells. It's an incredible adaptation that not only protects tardigrades but allows them to thrive no matter the condition.

Tardigrades can tolerate more extreme conditions than just desiccation. They can survive cold as low as -328 °F and heat all the way up to 304 °F. They have survived in



An enhanced, microscopic image of a Tardigrade in a moss habitat.

the vacuum of space, extreme pressure, radiation a thousand times stronger than humans can handle, and chemical treatments. Water bears are the definition of beauty and brawn. They're adorable and built to last.

Tardigrades are considered microfauna, complex multi-cellular animals just like any we see in our backyards, only tinier. Much, much tinier. Tardigrades clock in at between .002 and 0.06 inches when fully grown. Big enough to be seen with the naked eye but just barely. The easiest way to spot them is with a low-powered microscope. Or, if you have a keen eye, a decent magnifying glass will suffice.

But where should you look to find them? You can find water bears just about anywhere - leaf litter, soil, creeks and streams, and of course moss and lichen. These cuties need only a small amount of water to survive so if there's water, there's tardigrades. Searching for water bears could be a fun weekend activity especially if you're looking

for something science-y to do with your kids or grandkids. Head out back to a tree covered in lichen or moss. Gather a few samples in a paper bag to allow them to dry out a bit. Soak the moss or lichen in distilled water overnight to give the tardigrades a chance to rehydrate. Squeeze out the water into a petri dish or another flat-bottomed glass dish under a microscope and start looking.

It might take a few samples from different areas of your property to find some tardigrades. They are abundant but elusive. Don't let that stop you from searching. Or, look for videos online of our littlest friends. There are wonderful resources out there with videos of live water bears in action. Try to spot different species and make a note of which ones live in your area. Either way, when you spot one, put on Dancing Queen and enjoy the party.

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



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THE RETIRED ECOLOGIST

Old, unhappy, far-off things

Bill Meredith

*"Will no one tell me what she sings?  
Perhaps the plaintive numbers  
flow  
For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago."  
—William Wordsworth, "The Solitary  
Reaper"*

December 17, 1975, was a significant point in my education, for it was on that date that Public TV showed the first episode of "Rumpole of the Bailey." Horace Rumpole was a barrister (British word for trial lawyer) who spent most of his career defending petty criminals, and every episode would have a scene where he was walking to work in the rain, wearing an old black hat and carrying an ancient briefcase and a broken umbrella. He would be puffing a cheap cigar, and in the background you would hear his rumbling, Shakespearean voice mixing lines from poems with the problems of his domineering wife or the ironies of his profession. There's nothing that good on TV any more, so I watch the re-runs whenever I find them.

A couple of weeks ago, as Rumpole shuffled across my television screen he muttered a phrase about "old, unhappy, far-off things." The phrase fit my mood of the moment, and it stuck in my mind, so later I looked it up. It was from a poem written about 200 years ago by Wordsworth. He had been walking along a country road and saw a girl cutting wheat with a sickle, as they used to do on small farms in England. She was alone, and he could hear her singing, but he was not close enough to distinguish the words; and as he walked on he tried to imagine what she sang about. . . hence, the verse quoted above. It resonates with me; as I grow older I seem to be spending more time thinking of old, far-off things. Sometimes my memories fit the line as Wordsworth wrote it, but more often my mind inserts "familiar" or "forgotten" in place of "unhappy." And sometimes the verse is triggered by memories of an event that was unhappy at the time, but has mellowed over the years.

When I was in college, all biology majors were required to take a course in Historical Geology. That was in 1953. . . long ago enough to qualify as an old time. . . and it was an unhappy time at first, because I did not see why I needed to take it. But it came to be a very important part of my education. It dealt with the history of life on earth, and when "Doc" Roberts walked in to teach it the first day, I thought he looked like he was old enough to have lived through most of it. But he sat down and began to talk in a conversational tone, and I was mesmerized.

He was a great story-teller, and he made it come alive. He would get up occasionally to scrawl the names of geologic periods on the blackboard. . . big, mouth-filling words like Pre-Cambrian and Ordovician, that I had never heard of. . . and then he would tell us what the climate was like back then, hundreds of million years ago. . . more time than I had ever imagined could exist. . . and when each major group of plants and animals appeared in the fossil record. He told us that from time to time conditions on earth had changed and thousands of plants and animals became extinct. At that time, no one knew why.

Since that time, scientists have learned a lot. New fossils have been discovered, filling in gaps in the family trees of many forms of life. We now know that in the past 500 million years, there have been at least five times when major extinctions took place; in some of them, more than 75% of all the animals and plants on earth died out. We have learned the causes of the two most recent extinctions. At one time, all of the world's land masses were jammed together into one enormous supercontinent called Pangaea, which began to break apart about 230 million years ago. North and South America broke off from Europe and Africa and began drifting apart. This was accompanied by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and vast changes of climate, and thousands of species became extinct. After that, dinosaurs appeared in the fossil record, and multiplied to become dominant. Then, about 65 million years ago a comet or asteroid struck the earth near what is now the

Yucatan region, just south of the Caribbean Sea, and caused such changes in the atmosphere that as many as 90% of all animals were killed. The dinosaurs disappeared, and mammals gradually took their place as the dominant animals. Those indeed were old, unhappy, far-off times.

I am presently reading a book called The Sixth Extinction, which was published earlier this year. The title is based on geologic history, and it reviews all that material "Doc" Roberts taught me, as well as what has been discovered in the 61 years since then. The author, Elizabeth Kolbert, proposes that irreversible changes which were beginning even before I was first learned about the earth have started us on the path toward the end of our present geologic age. She reviews evidence from many places, from tropical rain forests to coral reefs, that show many species of plants and animals are declining rapidly in numbers because of warming and drying of the climate, acidification of the air and water, and habitat destruction by the exploding human population. Some have already become extinct in the wild and exist only in zoos and botanical gardens. At the rate things are changing, thousands of species will no longer exist by the end of this century.

2014 has gone by quickly; if you're counting, only 8% of it is left. My daily records show that here in Emmitsburg the temperatures were lower than average for the first 11 months, and toward the end of November they got even colder. The local temperature fell into the teens for the first time since March, and the evening news



The evolution of mammals has been marked by significant events such as the mass extinction that wiped out non-avian dinosaurs, which is believed to have facilitated the rise of mammals.

reported that six feet of snow fell in New York. It is hard to convince the public who live in local areas like Emmitsburg or Buffalo that global warming is a real problem; but meteorological records show that on a world-wide basis, 2014 is on record as the warmest year since accurate measurements began. For those who will be here in another 40 years, it is a bleak future to contemplate.

Sometimes now it feels as if age is gradually erasing those beautiful details of science that I enjoyed learning so much, and replacing them with poetry. Folks like Wordsworth continue to remind me of those old connections; but W. B. Yeats keeps slipping in to replace him:

*When you are old and grey and full of sleep,  
And nodding by the fire, take down  
this book,  
And slowly read, and dream. . .*

More and more, that's what I do. Perhaps in the next few weeks my friends Claire and Shane will come to visit, and bring their new baby brother to sit on my lap in front of the fire while they decorate my Christmas tree. The New Year will come. . . let's enjoy it. And think. There are still those who believe there may still be time to prevent, or at least delay, that sixth extinction. We should at least make the effort.

*To read past editions of The Retired Ecologist, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

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IN THE COUNTRY

Beavers: the dynamics of a complicated keystone species

Anne Gageby  
Environmental Education Manager  
Strawberry Hill Foundation

There are few animals that agitate the well of emotions quite like the beaver. On one hand, farmers and landowners regularly lament the immense damage done by this instinct-driven animal. On the other hand, ecologists praise the positive ripple effect brought about by the animals' efforts. The undeniable reality is both are correct and justified in their opinions. Beavers are simple animals that produce complicated outcomes. They are, in effect, a true keystone species.

Keystone species are either predators, mutualists, or ecosystem engineers. Beavers fall into the latter category. River ecosystems depend on beavers to take down and remove old and dead trees. In doing so, healthier trees have more resources and opportunities to flourish. Furthermore, beaver dams affect a wide variety of species. Once a dam is built, the area surrounding the dam becomes a pond and marsh. As water covers the bases of trees, it cuts off oxygen for trees' root systems, killing

the trees within a relatively short time frame. Snags, dead trees that haven't fallen, provide homes and perches for a wide variety of birds and animals, from owls and hawks to bats. These new marshes provide a healthy habitat for ducks, geese, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Otters, raccoons, herons, ospreys, and other predators are drawn to the marsh's abundant prey. The new wetland quickly becomes a thriving ecosystem with incalculable benefits to local flora and fauna.

It's easy to wax poetic about beavers' ecological impact but the reality isn't entirely positive. Innumerable farmers have faced crop loss and devastation because of beavers damming creeks and ponds. The resulting floods can and have decimated a year's worth of crops, costing farmers income and lost time. Repairing damaged fields and streams further digs into landowners' pockets. To many, beavers are a frustrating and damaging animal to have around. Trapping and hunting are seen as vital to controlling population numbers and saving landowners from potential financial ruin.

The back-and-forth between valuable asset and troublesome nuisance

isn't new. This strange-looking rodent has a storied yet complicated history going back thousands of years and spans the globe. Beavers have been featured on some of the oldest animal effigies in the world. The oldest known monumental wood carving (10,000-12,000 years ago), the Shigir Idol, was partially carved with tools made of the lower jawbone of a beaver. In ancient Persia, beavers were considered sacred and protected by law. A medieval bestiary held within Oxford's Bodleian Library contains depictions of beavers with silvery coats and long, wolf-like bodies. Beavers were considered so important to the city of Oxford that heralds included the rodent on the city's coat of arms alongside an elephant. We still see evidence of this importance in modern-day America. Oregon, which was founded in 1859, adopted the beaver as the official state animal.

During America's early days, beavers were an especially valuable resource. Their pelts are thick and were used to trim clothing. In the early 1800s a single raw beaver pelt could earn a trapper roughly \$4, or about \$80 in today's money. Castoreum, produced from castor sacs, located near the anus of a beaver, has been used for centuries in medicines, perfumes, and even food additives. The oil can be processed with alcohol to create a surprisingly vanilla-like aroma.

Within a few generations, however, this valuable resource was nearly wiped out by unregulated trapping and hunting. By the end of the nineteenth century, beavers had been eliminated from most of the East coast and Pennsylvania. The tide turned for beavers after the state legislature passed a law protecting this keystone species in 1903. The Pennsylvania Game Commis-



After last month's news story on the beaver dams being built on Israel Creek, we got lots of e-mails in favor of Beavers and were asked to run something to educate the public on the benefits of beavers to the environment - so here you go!

sion released a pair of beavers from Wisconsin in the northern part of our state in 1917, setting off a string of planned releases between 1918 and 1925. The Game Commission imported Canadian beavers to be released within designated refuges throughout the state. The effect was nearly immediate. By 1934, the beaver population was large enough and healthy enough to allow trapping. There are now an estimated two million beaver thriving across North America.

Beavers once roamed North America in numbers estimated to be hundreds of millions. During the Pleistocene, beavers fell into the megafauna category alongside saber-toothed tigers and giant sloths. Prehistoric beavers were at one point the size of grizzlies. As the last ice age melted into history and glaciers became swirling rivers and lakes, beavers settled in for the ride. They chewed through the prehistoric forests and built dams, eventually redirecting the flow of mas-

sive waterways. Over the years, these waterways encouraged rich sediments to swell from within. Eventually, the water receded, through beaver colony dispersion, dam failure, or something else, leaving behind a slurry of nutrients vital to a budding ecosystem. After all, rich soil begets rich forests. The forests of North America would, in time, become something breathtaking.

Though considerably smaller than their ancestors, beavers haven't changed much over the ages. They are herbivores, preferring branches, twigs, and buds from trees such as poplar, willow, aspen, cottonwood, maple, birch, and black cherry trees. Pine, on the other hand, is usually too sticky for the average beaver, though there are exceptions to this rule. They also feast on water lilies, ferns, mushrooms, duckweed, algae, and water plants such as cattails. Beavers gather sticks to build their feed piles and anchor them to the bottom of the creek or pond. From there, they gather sticks and branches to create a pile of brush beneath the water. From this pile of brush comes their feed pile which provides food throughout the winter.

Despite appearances, beavers don't actually eat the wood of a tree, just the bark. They prefer trees that are about three to four inches in diameter though they will fall trees several times if necessary. Ironically, beavers don't produce cellulase, the all-important enzyme needed for digesting cellulose. Instead, microorganisms called caecal microbes convert cellulose into nutrients on behalf of the host. Beavers, similar to ruminant animals such as sheep, goats, deer, and cows, digest their food twice.

On a larger scale, keystone species such as Yellowstone's wolves garner more attention and more debate than beavers. It's not likely beavers will ever be splashed about on television with experts chiming in on news segments or writing major articles for or against their existence. No, the North American beaver is less sensational than other keystone species. And yet, if you ask locals for their opinion, you'll likely get a heated opinion, one way or another.

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



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## SCIENCE MATTERS

# The brain of a fruit fly is the largest mapped to date

Boyce Rensberger

What you see in the picture above is the wiring diagram of the brain of a fruit fly. Creating it was a landmark event in neuroscience. This is, in fact, the largest and most complete map of any animal brain to date.

Each dot is a brain cell, or neuron, and each line represents a communication link from cell to cell. These links are extensions from each neuron called axons and dendrites. Actually, the lines are links between each neuron and a great many others. As in the human brain, each neuron "talks to" many others. And, in turn, each one receives messages from many others.

As you may be able to make out, we are looking at a three-dimensional structure with the neurons in front obscuring our view of many, many more neurons behind. The bug's brain is made up of about 139,000 neurons which connect to one another through 34 million synapses (points where one brain cell talks to another).

This brain map is the product of hundreds of scientists at nearly 50 laboratories around the world. Each lab worked on a tiny portion of the tiny insect's tiny brain.

Neuroscientists call this kind of diagram a connectome, following the wording pattern of "genome," the complete list of genes in an organism.

Keep in mind how small a fruit fly is—small enough to fit inside this O, wings and all. You may have seen them around bananas that have been on the counter too long. Fruit flies have been a favorite research subject for more than a century. If you'd like to look deeper into this, I recommend the scientists' website at flywire.ai. Anyone can use their online tools to examine the little brain.

What neuroscientists would love to have is the connectome

of the human brain, but creating that will be the work of many decades, if not a century.

Earlier this year, for example, an international team of 31 researchers published the connectome of one cubic millimeter of a human brain. It contained 57,000 neurons that made 150 million connections among themselves. The little cube also contained an astounding nine inches of capillaries.

The scientists found all this by using a special type of electron microscope to examine a bit of human brain cortex that was removed during surgery needed in a deeper part of the brain to treat epilepsy. The cortex includes the outer layers of neurons, where much of intelligent thinking takes place. (The patient is fine.)

The technique is something like that of a CT scan, producing a series of stacked slices, each with millions of voxels (the three-dimensional counterparts to pixels). A computer examines each slice and fills in connections to the slices above and below. In total, the analysis produced 1.4 petabytes of data. That's 1.4 quadrillion bytes or 1400 terabytes. Still not impressed? That's enough data to play high-definition movies continuously for more than 11 years.

Needless to say, it took some major computing power to analyze the data and create a three-dimensional reconstruction of that one bit of brain. Figure that the average human brain has a volume 1.4 million times as much as that tiny bit, and you get a sense of the task ahead.

## A Monster Centipede

Imagine a centipede as big as an adult alligator. Had you been around during the Carboniferous period, 300 million years ago, you would not have had to imagine. Just such ani-

mals roamed Earth, the largest land-dwelling arthropod discovered to date. (Arthropods are the group with no internal skeleton that includes insects, spiders, crabs and the many-legged wormy animals we call centipedes and millipedes.)

Paleontologists (the two-legged creatures who study prehistoric life) discovered these giants three years ago, but they had only fragmentary fossils. Just recently a French-British group has analyzed nearly complete specimens and discovered that this species, called *Arthrop-leura*, looks like a hybrid of centipedes and millipedes. Their report is in the latest issue of *Science Advances*.

The difference between the two groups, by the way, is not that one has a hundred legs and the other a thousand, though the names falsely imply that. Centipedes have one leg on each side of a body segment, and millipedes have two on each side.

The analysis revealed that these giant critters are something like hybrids, having two legs on each side of each segment (like millipedes) but a head and mouth parts typical of centipedes. The mouth part differences are too detailed for me to follow; suffice it to say that the experts know the differences. The researchers also note that recent DNA studies show the two groups to be much more closely related than was once supposed. So, if you get the two confused, you're really not so far off base.

The point is that this prehistoric beast would be pretty scary if it had survived to our time.

## Breast Feeding Mystery

When a new mother breast feeds, she needs to pack her milk with enough calcium to build the child's growing skeleton. Where does she get the mineral? Some will be in her diet, but also her body pulls calcium out of



The brain of a fruit fly is the largest mapped to date.

her bones.

That's been known for a long time, but it has posed a mystery. Why don't such young mothers develop osteoporosis. Osteoporosis typically affects older women whose bodies normally make less estrogen, a hormone that helps maintain strong bones. Furthermore, a new mother's estrogen level normally drops after giving birth. The combination of factors suggested that something else must be happening to keep those women's bones strong.

A predominantly female team of scientists has now found the answer, and they say it may lead to a new treatment for people with osteoporosis. It may also help broken bones heal faster in anyone.

Researchers at the University of California at both the San Francisco and Davis campuses have discovered that once a woman gives birth, her brain makes a previously unknown hormone that takes the place of the reduced estrogen. It keeps the mother's bones from losing too much calcium. Also, it probably extracts more of the ele-

ment from the mother's food to supply her and the baby.

The U.C. researchers tested those hypotheses by giving doses of the hormone, which they call Maternal Brain Hormone (CCN3), to mice with broken bones. (Yes, the scientists deliberately snapped the animals' bones, but they gave a local anesthetic first.) It turned out that the bones healed much faster than without the hormone.

Scientists also experimented on lactating mouse mothers whose bodies had been blocked from making the hormone. Those mice rapidly lost bone mass and their babies began to lose weight. But when the researchers injected the mothers with CCN3, mothers and babies returned to normal.

Boyce Rensberger retired to Frederick County after some 40 years as a science writer and editor, primarily at *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. He welcomes feedback at boyce-rensberger@gmail.com.

To read other articles by Boyce Rensberger, visit the Authors section of *Walkersville.net*.

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

## Traditions behind our favorite winter plants

Maritta Perry Grau  
Frederick County Master Gardener

December is probably one of the most tradition-bound months of the year. We hang mistletoe in strategic spots and wreaths on our front doors, put up Christmas trees, tack stockings to the mantel; burn Hanukkah candles in the menorah, spin the dreidel, buy bags of “gold”-covered chocolate coins and other presents; and seek out gift plants, just to name a few traditions. Probably every family has its own unique traditions, whether the family is celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa.

But did you ever wonder why a particular plant is so strongly associated with this winter season? Is it just the advertising? Just the demand for the plant? Family tradition? These days, we rarely know anything about the long-ago traditions, most of which were once part of celebrations of the winter solstice, symbolizing, good luck, peace, fertility, and eternal life, among other things.

And what the heck are you supposed to do with the plant once January and February come? It’s too cold to plant most things outside (although our family has been known to buy balled-and-burlapped live trees, keep them in the house for only a week, and then hurriedly plant them outside in a hole dug weeks ago; most are still growing in our yard).

If you get one of those plants that brighten up your winter décor into

January and beyond, you might want to call a master gardener or check on the University of Maryland extension website to get some pointers on caring for it. And just for fun, find out what old traditions that plant represents. But in case you don’t have time to do any of that research, below are a few hints to help you out with four favorite holiday plants.

### Amaryllis (Hippeastrum)

You probably are familiar with this plant—the bold, bright, large flower grows on a thick stalk with strappy leaves and is often given as a winter season present. The Greek mythology associated with this plant tells the story of a shy shepherdess, Amaryllis, who fell in love with a shepherd named Alteo. The Oracle of Delphi advised her to pierce her own heart with a golden arrow every day until Alteo noticed her. Of course, he didn’t notice until a beautiful red flower nurtured by blood from her heart sprouted. So the flower is supposed “to serve as a metaphor for inner strength and resilience,” according to the website gardenia.net.

In caring for the plant, once you’ve planted the bulb, put it (in the container, of course) in a bright window and in temperatures of 70°–75° F; once the flower forms, move it to a place with less direct light and lower temperatures of about 65° F. Water thoroughly when you plant the bulb, but after that, just water when the soil dries, says the website gardeningknow-

how.com. You can consult the University of Maryland extension service or some other gardening sites to find ways to keep your amaryllis growing for years to come.

### Mistletoe (Viscum album; American mistletoe, Phoradendron leucarpum)

Mistletoe is the common name for several families of poisonous, evergreen, parasitic plants often found high in trees; since they are parasitic, mistletoe roots often penetrate the branches to which they cling and suck out the nutrients. Even so, many ancients—Greeks, Druids, Celts, and the Norse—considered mistletoe a sacred plant and hung mistletoe in their homes to encourage good fortune and peace, according to the U.S. Forest Service’s website. Because it was so vibrant and green even in the dead of winter, mistletoe was also associated with fertility, says the website Plants of the Winter Solstice. And like the poinsettia noted below, most reliable medical websites don’t recommend mistletoe for anything except perhaps an excuse to kiss under!

### Poinsettia (Euphorbia pulcherrima)

Although the poinsettia is thought to have been used by Aztecs in certain rituals and dyes thousands of years ago, its popularity as a holiday flower is sort of a Johnny-come-lately. In the early nineteenth century, botanist Dr. Joel Poinsett was captivated by these “Mexican flame flowers” when he served as the United States’ first ambassador to Mexico. He grew some in his South Carolina greenhouse, then started sending them as gifts to friends and nurseries throughout the country. By the mid-twentieth century, they had become quite popular.



Amaryllis

You might not realize it, but those bright red “flowers” (they may also be pink, white, striped or marbled) are actually bracts, or specialized leaves. The flowers are those small, beady clusters in the center. While the poinsettia is probably not as poisonous as its reputation indicates, there is no good scientific evidence to support medicinal uses, according to web.md and other reliable medical sites. In fact, because of its latex-based sap, poinsettias are still on Santa’s no-no list, as they can cause stomach upset and rashes if ingested, whether by humans or by pets.

Your poinsettia will probably be happiest indoors. Make sure it grows in well-draining potting soil; receives bright indirect light, perhaps near a sunny window and at 65–75° F; and is watered when the

soil surface is dry, less frequently when it goes dormant.

### Holly (Ilex, various species)

Holly was prized in ancient times and like the other plants mentioned above, associated with the winter solstice because its leaves stay green such a long time when brought inside. Ancients in Britain believed holly had protective powers when it was hung inside their homes; it was supposed to ward off evil, bring good luck during the winter solstice, and be a symbol of fertility, eternal life and rebirth.

Today, hollies are primarily prized for that lasting green and their brilliant red berries. The berries are produced only on the female holly; both male and female trees are needed pollinate the flowers. If you have at least two trees/bushes, but no berries, then most likely, your trees are either all males or all females. When you buy a holly, you may be able to tell its sex simply by its masculine or feminine common name. Otherwise, you’ll have wait until spring to early summer, when the holly flowers bloom and you can then examine the blossoms. The male hollies have more prominent stamens than do the females, according to gardeningknowhow.com.

One warning: make sure the holly you purchase is an American one; others may be invasive. “American holly is a great alternative to invasive, non-native hollies. American holly can be distinguished by its relatively flat, nearly symmetrical leaves that curl down slightly at the leaf tip. The leaf of American holly is usually less shiny, and broadest near the middle of the leaf,” according to the Maryland Invasive Species Council.

You may want to contact the Frederick County Master Gardeners or the University of Maryland Extension Service for more details on caring for your own winter or temporary “house” plants. While you’re doing that, look into the Master Gardener classes, which will start up in another month or two. Our free Saturday seminars begin

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THE MASTER GARDENER



The Christmas cactus is a popular houseplant that blooms indoors in the winter, so it's popular during the holiday time and makes a great gift too. Unlike regular cacti however, this is not a plant from a dry, hot, desert location. Instead, they are native to tropical rainforests so it's important you water them regularly. Plants should be kept in bright, indirect light; an east-facing window or a bright bathroom is ideal for these conditions.

again in January. You might find the classes the perfect match for your late winter and spring activities.

Locally, Frederick County Master Gardeners are headquartered at the University of Maryland Extension Service, 330 Montevue Avenue, Frederick. Visit our website at [www.bit.ly/FCMG-Home-Gar](http://www.bit.ly/FCMG-Home-Gar)-

dening for upcoming free seminars, Master Gardener certification classes, gardening information, advice, and publications as well as other announcements or call us at 301-600-1596.

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Small Town Gardener

Nailing the holiday wreath: do's and don'ts

Marianne Willburn

As holiday projects go, making a wreath is a safe one. For one, there's no royal icing involved. Two, it's intended to look rustic. That's extremely encouraging for those of us who routinely create an island of misfit toys while aiming for perfectly iced cookies in shades of wild juniper.

And yet, there can exist a gap between 'respectable effort' and 'elegant showstopper.'

No problem. Once you understand three easy dos and their corresponding don'ts, you too can create a sophisticated holiday wreath, confidently yell "Nailed it!" and decorate your front door this year with a DIY project you can be proud of.

Tools & materials needed for your holiday wreath

Tools: gloves, lightweight florist's wire, sharp pruners and a wire wreath frame.

Materials: Split into three categories – Assorted Greenery, Assorted Luxury and Assorted Bling.

Assorted greenery – Think in terms of one main actor and two to three supporting roles. Use your strongest greenery in the main role – such as spruce or fir – and use sprigs of pine, juniper and cedar to complete the cast. Don't forget about the extras – accent greens that bring unusual color and texture: holly, boxwood, magnolia etc... Many of these you can find in your garden or the gardens of friends.

Assorted luxury – Everything from pinecones to pomegranates. Let your imagination run wild – raiding your fridge and cupboards just as much as your backyard. Tiny artichokes, wrapped bundles of cinnamon sticks, clove-studded clementines, holly berries and the seed heads of favorites such as teasel or grasses.

Assorted bling – Battery operated lights, ribbons, raffia, small ornaments, and if you can find a tasteful one – a garland.

Set out the materials you've gathered on a protected surface.

Nailed It! Making a Holiday Wreath Tip #1

Don't: Bend individual straight branches and attach them.

Do: Create small 'bouquets' in your hand with greenery, then wire those to your wreath form, overlapping them as you go.

Attach the end of the florist's wire to any part of the wreath form and set aside.

Use your pruners to cut five or six ten-inch tips from the greens and arrange them in one



hand – start with one or two stems of the spruce or fir and back them with supporting greenery.

Fan the bunch in your hand and place it against the wreath form. Wire only the ends to the form, wrapping the wire around the form and bunch ends several times. Do not cut your wire.

Repeat the bouquet-making, and this time, overlap the display ends of the current bunch over the cut ends of the first one, making sure to overlap them generously.

Continue this process until you reach the beginning of the circle. With your last spray of foliage, tuck the cut ends under the display ends of your first one, wiring tightly in place. Twist the wire to secure it and cut.

Hang up your wreath and look for rogue branches that need trimming or areas that could use extra foliage. Don't be too much of a perfectionist –messy bed head is endearing if the wreath is full enough. Tuck in accent greens to create yet another layer of wonderful.

If you've been generous with your bouquets and miserly with your spacing, you're currently looking at a wreath ten times better than anything you've attempted before. And we're not done.

Time to add a bit of luxury.

Nailed It! Making a Holiday Wreath Tip #2

Don't: Empty the contents of your craft box onto your wreath.

Do: Pick a few luxury items in varying size for maximum impact.

It is very easy to gild the lily, taking your wreath from Kate Middleton-sophisticated to Clark Griswold-tacky in the space of five minutes.

Think about the theme you are working towards. Natural? Exciting? Minimalist? Pick out things that go together and that are in scale with the size of the wreath itself, and use an easy hand in applying them. If you've been drinking alcohol during

any part of the process (no judgement here – I was), stop at once, have a cup of coffee, and apply your clearest head to the proceedings.

Nailed It! Making a Holiday Wreath Tip #3

Don't: Add materials in circular patterns to create a big eyeball on your doorstep.

Do: Think in terms of grouping, triangles, odd numbers and a bit of asymmetry.

Objects grouped together create more impact than when they are separated and at regular intervals. For even better placement, think in terms of triangles superimposed on your circular wreath, and add objects at the apex of each angle. Odd amounts work best – 1, 3, 5, &c.

Now for a bow and other assorted bling. But resist the temptation to place them on the absolute bottom of the wreath. Instead, place them slightly off-center and group them with a few smaller objects.

As for a garland, the best ones are made of natural materials – and made by hand. Use an evening of binge-watching to string together cranberries, wooden beads or seed heads from the garden. Drape the garland on your holiday wreath like you were icing an elegant cake – in swirls and flourishes – allowing it to hang free of the wreath in places and give it an authentic sophistication.

It's your holiday wreath – have a blast with it; but remember that less is often more.

*Marianne is a columnist for The American Gardener and GardenRant, and the author of Tropical Plants and How To Love Them and Big Dreams Small Garden. She writes from her home in Lovettsville, VA.*



PETS

A kitten’s first Christmas



Auto is a 3-year-old brown tabby boy who came into the shelter as a stray. He is one happy fellow who just loves getting his ears rubbed. Could you show him what a loving, forever home is all about?

Jennifer Vanderau  
Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

I like the Christmas tree. Like, really like it. The branches are wide enough that my paws fit perfectly and thankfully, I’m small enough to slide right up the trunk. I can’t really make it all the way up because things get a little less sturdy the higher I go, but I’m just about at eye-level with the humans.

The people don’t ever know I’m here and the dog can’t find me either. I never would have guessed when my new family started talking about Christmas it could be this much fun.

They adopted me a few months ago from the animal shelter. I’m still kind of little—not a year old yet—and I had to say goodbye to my brothers and sisters at the shelter. We came in with mom and still lived together in the cat adoption area. I was sad to think about not having them in my life anymore, but something happened the day the family brought me into the bonding room.

I just knew when I looked in the lady’s eyes and how careful her kids were with me that I’d be okay. I was right. I pretty much rule this house, if you want the honest truth. Even the dog, Charlie, gives me space if I side-eye him a little.

He’s a Lab mix, though. Those guys can be pushovers. That’s what one of the cats at the shelter told me on the day I got adopted.

So far since I moved into the house, I’ve slept in the dog’s bed, tried a little of his kibble, walked across the bookshelf (which is pretty high up there, if I do say so myself), knocked over everything on the coffee table more than once, changed the channel on the TV right in the middle of that show they all like and did something to Dad’s computer when I walked across the keys that took them a whole day to figure out how to fix.

Oh, and I climb the curtains. What? They’re the perfect material for my claws. Sometimes you just have to see if you can make it to the top. That’s all I’m saying.

And you know what? Still, at night time, the nice lady lets me curl up next

to her head on her pillow and I purr and she kisses me.

Can you believe it? After all that, she still kisses me! Seriously. I am the king around here. No joke.

The little boy walks through the living room and points at my hiding place in the tree and hollers, “Mom! Simba’s in the tree again!”

Time to go! I turn around on the branch and kick through the limbs and ornaments and tinsel and I guess I miscalculated something—the angle or my own strength or the general sturdiness of the tree or something—because just as I make my jump I sense the tree going the other direction.

By the time I land on the floor and turn around, I get to watch the whole thing fall right into the middle of the living room. I’m pretty sure the sound I hear is the water from the tree stand spilling onto the carpet.

The boy screams and his sister races into the room to see what’s happened and she screeches, “Simba! Oh my God!”

Charlie even barks at me. I try not to roll my eyes, but come on. Is he serious? What’s he going to do?

It’s maybe five seconds later that the man and woman are in the hallway staring at the mess on the floor and I know maybe a moment of real worry. I’d heard stories from the other cats in the shelter about reasons people surrender animals. A couple of the stories weren’t even close to what I’d just done.

I crouch low on the floor. Maybe if they don’t see me I could figure out a way to blame Charlie.

Mom inhales slowly and looks right at me. Uh oh. This is probably it. I’m in for it. I’ll be back in the shelter by tomorrow, which would be a shame because these are really nice people. I really do like it here.

Mom looks to the girl and says, “Ashley, get Charlie out of here. There’s broken ornaments and I don’t want him to tramp on them.” She says to the boy, “Gabe, grab the vacuum cleaner from the closet for me, would you, please?”

The Dad reaches down and rights

the tree—ornaments and lights and tinsel twinkling. Probably not in the way the humans meant it to, though.

There are some sighs and a question of how could something that little make this big of a mess? and a general sense of awe and confusion, but none of them—not one—does a thing to me. They don’t scream at me or hit me or even pretend they’re going to punish me.

I slink under one of the chairs and watch the clean-up and part of me really thinks the cat carrier will come out when they’re done and we’ll be heading back to the shelter. They can’t possibly be okay with this.

The Dad who watches DVDs of an old show called MacGyver says he thinks he can figure out a way to anchor the tree to the wall so this won’t happen again. The Mom says that would probably be a good idea. Gabe says, “Simba’s really bad, Mom.”

And Mom says, “He doesn’t mean it, Gabe. He’s just a kitten.”

Huh. Is this for real? Just to be sure, I stay under the chair even after the vacuuming and the clean-up is finished. I don’t even go into the kitchen when everyone eats dinner. It’s only when dessert comes out that I sneak around the corner and give Mom a quick glance.

Mom laughs when she sees me and points for the rest of the family to turn and look. “It’s okay, Simba. You’re a little stinker, but we knew that when we met. Just try not to hurt yourself or anything, okay?”

I slip around the chair legs and move over to Charlie’s bowl and take a couple of bites because apparently I can.

Wow. Did I hit the jackpot here or what? These people are awesome.

It’s a few hours later and I’m taking a bath in Charlie’s bed when the family turns on Christmas carols and sits around the tree that’s only a little worse for wear. I glance up with my paw still near my mouth and Mom actually smiles at me.

I sigh a little to myself. I may actually understand what humans mean by the Christmas spirit. Looks like I found it with these people.

And also a little something called unconditional love. Best present ever if you ask me. Merry Christmas, everyone!

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



Gracie was brought into the shelter when her owner sadly passed away. She is a sweet 1-year-old girl but can be on the shy side at first. Gracie was much loved by her owner and is a good looking girl who would love a second chance.



Sebastin came into the shelter as a stray. He is a 2-year-old German Shepherd who can be pretty reserved. He does have a high chase drive so a home without cats would be best. Sebastin also does not care for other dogs. So being the only animal in the home would be best for him. Due to his size and no past history, an age restriction for children in the home may apply, please discuss this with shelter staff. Sebastin does need time to trust you but once you are his friend, you have a very loyal guy! He may take several visits with his potential adopters to establish a bond before going home with them. He loves going for walks and loves going to the play yard to enjoy the sunshine! Sebastin is always watching what is going on around him. Do you have the right spot for this gorgeous boy?



Daisy is a 2-year-old Rottweiler who was returned to the shelter when she needed surgery on her CCL after injuring herself and could no longer go through with service dog training. Daisy was evaluated by a specialist veterinarian, and it was determined that she needed a Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy, or TPLO surgery, on not one leg but both of her back legs. A foster home was found so that Daisy could have her surgeries and recover in a home instead of at the shelter. Her foster home did a wonderful job over the past several months of recovery from two surgeries and making sure that she had the best of care to heal and get a lot of TLC. Daisy has now been fully recovered and ready to find her forever home! She is a super sweet girl that has been a trooper throughout her surgeries and recovery.

For more information about Auto, Gracie, Sebastin, or Daisy call the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter at 717-263-5791, or visit them online at [www.cvaspets.org](http://www.cvaspets.org) or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter.

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



# Holiday thoughts

Bethany Davidson  
Frederick County Animal Shelter

As we approach the holiday season at the Frederick County Division of Animal Control and Pet Adoption Center has much to be thankful for. What comes to mind first is the consistent, ongoing support of our community. Each day we witness multiple votes of confidence through animal adoptions, donations in the form of goods as well as financial, and positive comments on creative enrichment and how content the animals seem to be.

We are fortunate to have previous adopters return to the shelter when they are looking for an additional furry, finned, or feathered member for their family. All of these things serve as inspiration for us even when the shelter population exceeds 165 animals, when there is a significant disparity between our workload and our staffing, and when we take care of longer-term residents like Rosie. After being adopted from FCAC as a kitten in January of 2018, the now senior cat found herself back at our facility in June.

While Rosie is a sweet and gentle cat, the addition of several children in the household proved too overwhelming for her. This beautiful dilute tortie enjoys naps in cozy beds, sitting by the window and playing with her toys. Rosie can be a bit shy at first but she has definitely won over our volunteers who



Rosie

love spending extra time with the long-time resident. To ensure she feels comfortable in her new home, FCAC is recommending that Rosie go to a family without young children and that she be the only pet.

In addition to Rosie, we still have over 40 adoptable cats that include Opossum, an 11-month-old male that's now available after a four-month stint in foster care as well as Brooklyn and Khloe, our bonded senior Siamese mixes.

If you favor pets that bark over ones that meow, there are still ten adoptable dogs searching for forever homes including Evan and Harley who have been shelter residents for over a year.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the residents and pet-owners of Frederick County. We are thankful for the ongoing support from the community that enables us to provide excellent care to the animals in our shelter.



At ten years old, these two golden girls are looking for a nice, quiet retirement home. Brooklyn and Khloe are Siamese mixes, and this is not only evident by their appearance but also by their ability to hold up their end of a conversation. Both girls are very friendly, however, they would prefer a home without small children since they are slightly arthritic and prefer a quiet, slower paced home.



Opossum arrived at the shelter in April as a stray and no one stopped by to reclaim him. He lived in a foster home for a few months, and this is what his foster mom had to say: "Opossum is wonderful. He is attentive and always happy to see me. He entertained himself with cat toys and likes to relax on his cat bed. He's very friendly and wants to be a part of his person's life."



Hanging out with Evan is always a good time. He enjoys hiking, dressing up, playing in a yard, belly rubs and cuddle time at the end of a long day. What he doesn't prefer is other dogs, when you don't trade him for his toys, or quick or startling movements due to his limited vision. Evan has all the makings of a great companion; he just needs someone to give him a chance.



Harley is a familiar face around the shelter since she has been with us for over three hundred days. Admittedly, she is not a good fit for any family, but we do know there is someone out there for her. What does her ideal home look like? Harley enjoys agility training and/or daily exercise. She is smart, so she needs to be stimulated mentally. Lastly, Harley prefers not to share your love with another dog, so she needs to be an only dog. Do you have what it takes to make Harley your new best friend?

For more information about Rosie, Brooklyn and Khloe, Opossum, Evan, or Harley, call the Frederick County Animal Shelter at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at [www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac) or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!

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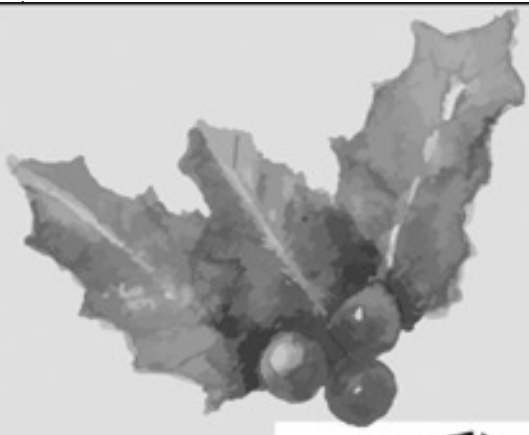
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# Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

SECTION 2

## Catoctin Forest Alliance's Artist in Residence Program

Linda Sundergill

Art has been part of the history of national parks since the 1860's when Hudson River School painters captured the majestic Western landscapes that became our first iconic national parks. Their awe-inspiring works spurred Americans to preserve those lands for future generations. Artist George Catlin, during an 1832 trip to the Dakotas, was perhaps the first to suggest the idea of a national park. Catlin traveled extensively and noted that Indian civilization, wildlife and the wilderness were in danger unless they could be preserved "by some great protecting policy of government... in a magnificent park....a Nation's Park, containing man and beast, in all the wild[ness] and freshness of their nature's beauty!"

Today, there are Artist in Residence (AIR) programs in more than 50 National Park Service units which preserve the connection between arts and the parks. Catoctin Forest Alliance (CFA) manages the local Artist in Residence program jointly with Catoctin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park. Artist selections for the program are made by a panel that includes local literary and art professionals.

The CFA was established in 2009 as a partner organization to Catoctin Mountain Park NPS and Cunningham Falls State Park MSP. One of the CFA founders was artist Elizabeth Prongas, who began the local AIR program here in 2010 to bring a new and diverse voice and constituency to the parks. Since the inception of the AIR program

CFA has welcomed 34 artists to the Catoctin Mountains.

The artists include painters, photographers, poets, a writer, a videographer, cast metal artist, a wool felter, a journaling artist and, a fabric artist/quilter. The artists stay in an historic cabin in Catoctin Mountain Park or a campsite at Cunningham Falls State Park for two to three weeks and produce art influenced by the mountain setting. After the residency, each artist donates one piece of the art they created during their stay to the CFA AIR collection.

The AIR art collection has been on exhibit in the Thurmont Library, the Emmitsburg Library and the Visitor Center in the Manor Area of Cunningham Falls State Park. The collection is permanently housed in Catoctin Mountain Park.

The Artist in Residence program not only strengthens the bond between nature, art and the outdoors but the sale of the art produces funds to bring children to the parks for outdoor learning experiences. This fall we were privileged to have two artists doing residencies in our parks—Rachel Wojnar and Reagan Herndon.

Rachel Wojnar practice is focused on themes of ecological entanglement, biology and naturalism as they relate to human experiences of community, transformation, and healing. Using both traditional media and raw natural material, Rachel highlights ecological anecdotes as tools for understanding—specifically recognizing parallels between systemic abuse of the environment and of women, trans and queer bodies. While in residency in Cunn-

ingham Falls State Park in September, Rachel presented a program at the park—“Hand-Bound Nature Books”. Each participant made a nature journal book, hand-sewed the binding and decorated the cover with pictures cut from magazine or hand drawn artwork.

Reagan Herndon is a visual artist currently living in Raleigh, NC. She works mainly with acrylic paint, but enjoys exploring other mediums such as wood, mixed media, and digital techniques. This passion has continued in her personal works as she focuses on themes of life and nature and blends them with surreal imagination. She takes the realistic natural elements around us and exaggerates their color and shape to create fascinating compositions to give the audience new but familiar worlds to explore. She uses her work to get the viewers' attention and inspire them to look at the unique life and landscapes we have all around us in a new way.

During her residency at Catoctin Mountain Park, Reagan presented a program at the Thurmont Regional Library—Visual Storytelling: An Exploration of Color”. The participants did a short nature walk around the library. They then used elements that they had seen on the walk to tell a story with a drawing and explore the ways that color can help to relay the message of the story.

For more information on CFA and the AIR program, please visit [www.catoctinforestalliance.org](http://www.catoctinforestalliance.org).



Artists-in-Residence Rachel Wojnar and Reagan Herndon

**Come visit our  
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**First Baptist Church**  
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~ Frederick Chorale Concert ~
Sunday, December 1 at 3 p.m.
St. John's Union Building - light refreshments following concert

~ Emmitsburg Community Chorus ~
Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 15 at 4 p.m.
Followed by a dinner in the parish hall featuring fried chicken, ham, succotash, Harvard beets, sweet potato casserole, macaroni & cheese, cheese platter, cranberry relish, coffee, tea and baked goods

~ Candlelight Christmas Eve Service ~
Tuesday, December 24 at 7 p.m.
In the main 1908 sanctuary - light refreshments & hot chocolate following concert in the parish hall



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HISTORY

Williams History of Frederick County

Continued from last month

Alexander Ramsburg

Alexander Ramsburg, retired, resides in the Lewistown District, 1 mile north of Lewistown, spent an active life participating in agriculture pursuits. He was born in the district, and which he now lives, near Bethel Church, April 11, 1838. He's a son of Jacob and Elizabeth Ramsburg.

The Ramsburg family is of German lineage and is found to be located in Virginia at an early date. Henry Ramsburg, the grandfather of Alexander was a native a Berkeley County, Virginia. He was accidentally killed by cutting himself by butchery.

Jacob Ramsburg, son of Henry Ramsburg, was but an infant at the time of his father's death, and he was brought to Lewistown District, where he was raised by relatives. He died at 65 years old. He was one of the wealthiest and influential farmers of the district. In politics, he was a Democrat, and very aggressive in a support, but the only position ever held by him was the Judge of Elections. Mr. Ramsburg was married to Elizabeth Shook. She lived to be 91 years old.

Alexander Ramsburg, son of Jacob

and Elizabeth Ramsburg, became familiar with a various duties of a farmer's life as a boy. After obtaining his majority he started out to make his own way in the world, and became a farmer. The first land he owned, was a farm adjacent to his present home. This track being still in his possession.

Soon after the close of the Civil War, he purchased the valuable farm on which he has since resided. This track is situated on the Emmitsburg and Frederick Pike. At the time of his purchase this farm was in poor condition, and had no buildings upon it.

In 1883, Mr. Ramsburg erected a fine brick residence, two stories in height, of modern plan, and costing over \$6,000. It stands upon an elevation, which commands an excellent view of the surrounding country, and is a most desirable country place. The farm has excellent barns and the water needed for the place is furnished by a hot air engine that pumps the water from a well 239 feet deep, which was drilled, mainly through solid rock.

Mr. Ramsburg is the possessor altogether of over 400 acres, comprising, three farms, and 50 acres of fine timberland. He started life with only such an education as the pub-

lic schools afforded, and in very poor financial circumstances, yet today he is probably the largest landowner and taxpayer in the Lewistown District. Mr. Ramsburg was one of the promoters of and served as Vice President of the Walkersville, Frederick & Gettysburg Railroad.

In politics, Mr. Ramsburg is an active supporter of the Democratic Party. In November 1899, he was the nominee of his party for the office of County Treasurer, and was elected. He served a term of two years, discharging his duties with ability and fidelity. In religion, he is a consistent member of the Utica Reformed Church in which he has served in official capacities, having acted as Deacon and trustee. Mr. Ramsburg is married to Hannah Cronise and they are parents of five children.

Charles Norwood

Charles Norwood, the leading dentist of Liberty, was born at the mansion home at that place, February 22, 1843. He is the fourth child and first son of Robert and Rachel Norwood.

Dr. Norwood spent his boyhood in his native place, and when he turned 13 years old his father removed to his farm, a mile and a half from town. Here he grew to manhood. He began his education in the village public schools under, J. A. Lefever, who afterwards became a prominent minister in the Presbyterian Church in Baltimore.

Dr. Norwood's education was continued at Liberty Academy under Professor Brockett, where he finished his courses at the age of 18. Up to this time he lived on his father's farm. He then entered the old Baltimore

Dental College, which was the pioneering dental school of the United States, being organized by professor Chapman Harris, in 1839. Dr. Norwood graduated from this institution in 1867, two years after entering.

Immediately upon the completion of the studies, he began to practice of his profession at Liberty, and is one of the oldest dentists in Frederick County.

During this time the advance in dentistry has been remarkable in the ways of appliances, material, and skills. Bridgework was then unknown. Dr. Norwood, however, has kept abreast of the times, and his skill is widely recognized. He always possessed a large and lucrative practice, up until five or six years ago, when he gave up active practice. He however still gives attention to some of his old customers.

Dr. Norwood is the possessor of the old home farm, which he looks after. He is one of the foremost citizens of Liberty and ranks high in the community. As a dentist, he made an enviable reputation and achieved financial success; his wealth by far exceeded that of any other citizen of the town in which he lives.

Dr. Norwood has never taken more than a citizen's interest in politics. He has been a Republican all his life. In his youth he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is a member of the congregation at Liberty. He takes much interest in religious affairs, and is an active church worker. For 25 years, he has filled official positions, and is now steward, trustee and superintendent of the Sunday school.

Dr. Norwood was married Febru-

ary 22, 1871 to Pauline Mills. They have no children.

Morris Birely, MD.

Morris Birely is a well-known and prominent physician, is a native of Ladiesburg, Woodsboro District, in which place he was born, September 1, 1872. He is the son of Samuel and Barbara Birely.

Samuel Birely, father of Morris, was a native of Frederick County where he was born, December 22, 1794, and died at Ladiesburg, January 28, 1877. At the time of his death, he was widely known, and was a man who was held in highest team in the community in which he lived. He spent his active life as a farmer and merchant. In politics, he was an old Line Whig, and later, and adherent of the Republican Party. In religion, he was a member of the Lutheran Church, in which she served as an Elder, in which he was a liberal supporter. He named the town of Ladiesburg, in the Woodsboro District.

Samuel was married twice, his first wife was Margaret Anders, their only child died in infancy. His second wife was Barbara Kemp, they were the parents of five children.

Morris Birely, the youngest child of Samuel and Barbara, was educated in the public schools of Ladiesburg and Thurmont. In 1890 he graduated from the Cumberland Valley State normal school at Shipensburg.

Having decided to become a physician, he entered the medical department of the University of Maryland, from which institution he graduated in 1894. In the same year, he located in Thurmont, and began the active practice of his profession, where he has ever since remained. He met with success from the start, and soon acquired a large practice, numbering among his patients many of the leading citizens of the county. He has won a high rank in the exacting field to which he has devoted himself, and is one of the leading physicians of Frederick County. Dr. Birely is married to Bertha Bush, and they have one son.

John W. A. Haugh

John W. A. Haugh, an enterprising, up-to-date businessman of Haughsville, the Woodbury District, where he conducts a jewelry, drug, optical and notion store, was born in Urbana, November 30, 1854. He is a son of William and Henrietta Haugh.



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HISTORY/OBITUARY NOTICES

His great-great-grandfather, Isaac Haugh left England with the brother, and came to America. His brother went to live in New Jersey. Isaac located in Frederick County, and took up a track of land along little Pipe Creek, at what is now Haughsville. From this family that hamlet takes its name. Haugh served as a soldier in the revolution.

Paul Haugh, son of Isaac Haugh, the immigrant, succeeded to the farm of his father. He was a blacksmith by trade. He bought a farm adjacent to Haugh's church, and he and Matthias Mort gave the land for church and cemetery. For many years, until about 1860, there was a union chapel, Lutheran, and Reformed. Paul Haugh was a member of the Reformed church, and Matthias Mort, Lutheran. The church was called Saint Paul and Saint Matthias. Mr. Haugh died on his farm and is buried at Mount Zion Church.

William Haugh, son of Paul Haugh, was born on the old homestead at Haughsville. He was also a blacksmith by trade, and carried on the shop of his father, which is still standing. He married for his wife, a widow Sowers, from Pennsylvania, and they died at the homestead. They were the parents of four sons.

John Haugh, son of William Haugh, was the grandfather of John W. A. Haugh. He was born at Haughsville, and after the death of his father bought the homeplace. He died on this farm in 1862, being then age 62 years. At the time of his death, he was Republican and politics. Mr. Haugh was married to Catherine Smith.

William Haugh, son of John and Catherine Haugh, was born at the ancestral home at Haughsville and received his education in the common schools. He learned the trade

of wagon making at the old Haugh blacksmith shop, and followed that occupation for many years, from 1853 to 1878. After learning this trade, he went to Urbana and carried on wagon making there for 11 years. He then removed to Woodsboro, where he spent one year. He then went to the old family estate, where he died in 1892. He was a lifelong Republican. He held membership in Reformed Church. William was married in 1855 to Henrietta Leather, she died in 1905. They are intern at Haugh Church cemetery. They had four children, one that died unnamed.

John W. A. Haugh, son of William and Henrietta, acquired his learning in the public schools at the Urbana and Grove Academies He learned wagon making and blacksmithing under his father and great uncle, David Haugh, he afterwards went to Trifon, Ohio, and learned the jewelry business. He returned home and took up the optical business. He is a graduate of the South Bend College of Optics, South Bend, Indiana.

In 1878 he opened a small jewelry and watch repair shop. In 1901, he built his present store. He carries a line of watches, jewelry, optical goods, and drugs. In addition, he deals in phonographs, pianos and organs. John is one of the prominent citizens of Haughsville, and possesses much business ability. From a boy of 15 years, he showed remarkable aptitude for mechanics, constantly tinkering with watches. This natural talent has been much help to him. He is a man of intelligence, fond of reading, and a good conversationalist. He is a loyal Republican.

John bought his brother's interest in the home place in 1906. John was married January 1, 1878 to Louisa Fickinger of Abbottstown they are the parents of two children.

Americus Cronise

Americus Cronise, an intelligent and progressive agriculturist, was born in the Lewistown District, February 3, 1850; his parents were Jacob and Annie Cronise.

The grandfather of Americus Cronise was Frederick Cronise, who was married to Anna Nicodemus. They were parents of Jacob Cronise, and seven other children. The youngest of the sons was William, who went with his brother Jacob to Virginia, where he still living.

Jacob, son of Frederick and Anna, was born at 1827 and died in 1900. He was a prominent farmer of the Lewistown district, where he owned a farm of 200 acres fine land. This place was located about 1 mile north of Lewistown, and is now in the possession of Alex Ramsburg. In 1868 Jacob disposed of this farm and removed to Virginia, settling near Roanoke. He purchased a farm of 1,400 acres and made his home there until he passed away.

Americus Cronise, son of Jacob acquired as education in the public schools. He remained with his father until he was 23 years old, when he began farming on his own account. In 1875 he bought part of his father's farm and successfully cultivated until 1889. In that year, he sold the place which contain 208 acres and in September that year returned to Maryland, and bought the farm that he now owns. This track lies about three and half miles north of Frederick on the Emmitsburg pike.

On this farm is one of the oldest mills in Frederick County. It was built in 1768 by Adam Barbara, and is today known as the Franklin Mill. Mr. Cronise is a practical and progressive agriculturist, and by intelligent method, secured large crops annually. He is the supporter of the Republican principles.

In 1873 Americus married Alice Bream, they were the parents of five children. Mr. and Mrs. Cronise hold membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church where he has acted as an official at various times.

Emory Crum

Emory Crum, a civil engineer, son of Henry and Mary Crum, was born on his father's farm near Walkersville, June 30, 1884.

Renee Beverly Willour Hartman



Renée Hartman, 92, left this Earth for her eternal heavenly home on Sunday October 27, with family at her side.

Renée September 18, 1932, in Sunbury, Pa., where she met her future husband Hugh Hartman. They were married in 1951.

Hugh's military service mandating frequent relocation, from 1953 to 1975, Renée lived in many locales, both in the U.S. and abroad. From 1982 to the time of her death, she resided in the Frederick/Walkersville area.

Renée loved and was devoted to our country, a true Patriot. Love of God and Country were important to her. She was intermittently employed at various, usually seasonal or part time jobs over the years. She additionally did volunteer work at a military family thrift store. However, her most important full-time job was the hardest job there is, and her priority. Renée was a homemaker, a stay-at-home wife and mother, raising 5 children. She excelled at her job. She was patient and

understanding with all her children. She insisted on her children showing others respect and using good manners.

She was their counselor, taxi driver, cheerleader, tutor, cook, housekeeper, even referee on occasion. She did the mending by hand and loved sewing. She made doing all these things with all the other daily chores that come with running a household full of children, appear effortless. She never complained. Renée was selfless, always putting others first, especially her family. She lived the Golden Rule, daily.

Renée truly enjoyed and appreciated many of the simpler things in life. She had a contagious, positive and an encouraging demeanor, never said a harsh word to anyone. She was wise, humble, kind, loving, gentle and she loved her family with all her heart and soul. Her work ethic was outstanding and admirable. The Lord and family were her priorities.

A Christian woman, her faith, integrity, morals, values and perseverance were superior. She was an inspiration to her family. Her smile could and can be seen in her children. Renée will forever be remembered for her bright, beautiful eyes, sweet smile, her joyful laugh, big heart and tender, kind manner. She lived a life full of love of family and will be greatly missed until we see her again one glorious day!

Renée was preceded in death by Hugh, her husband, of 56 years. To read Renée's full obituary visit www.resthaven.us

John Crum, grandfather of Emory Crum, a retired farmer of Walkersville, was born February 14, 1821. In early manhood, he engaged to farming and spent the greater part of his life in the cultivation of the soil. Hard work made him successful in business. He owned three valuable farms near Walkersville, and by, intelligent care, improve all the land that came into his hands. In 1885,

Mr. Crum retired from farming, and removed to Walkersville, where he bought a comfortable home in which he spent the rest of his life. He enjoyed the respect of his fellow citizens, and for a number of years held the office of constable in and around Walkersville. John was married to Mary Browning, and eight of their children reached adulthood.

continued next month

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December 5

Christmas Advertising

About the next three weeks this paper will be crowded with Christmas advertising. We hope to handle the business without issuing supplements, which are unsatisfactory, both to patrons and ourselves. We make no apology for this crowded condition of our pages – read the advertisements and make them pay you.

New Auto License Tags

The Maryland auto license tags for 1925 are now being sent out to those who have made application for.

Tags this year will start with the number 100,000 as all numbers between 30,000 and that mark have been reserved for Baltimore City. In confining certain numbers to certain sections, the State's Motor Vehicle Commissioner said that it is the hope of his department that theft of cars will be minimized. It is also the intention of the Motor Vehicle Commissioner to facilitate locating the owners of machines in case of accidents.

The Motor Vehicle Commissioner also said that it is the intention of his office to stage a campaign against motorist who cover the license plate with isinglass, a practice that renders it difficult for officers to distinguish the numbers and often results in mistakes and identification.

The new tags this year are especially distinctive, having white numbers against the green background. The price per horsepower this year is \$.32. In calculating the amount payable to the commissioner's office, the applicant should multiply the number of horsepower by price per horsepower and add \$.10 for postage. The application sent out by the Motor Vehicle Commission office should be filled out properly and sent in immediately.

Drove Tractor Over New Paving
John Longnecker, of Keymar, was arrested Tuesday afternoon by state

police on charges of failing to title his tractor and trailer; to provide license plates for the same; and for driving his tractor over the newly laid state road without providing protective cleats.

The police said, Longnecker's tractor and equipment, consisting of a wood sawing attachment, did not come under the classification of farming implements as designated by the law. He also claimed that Longnecker was engaged in other branches of work, and did not employ his tractor and equipment in farm work. Tractors and trailers, under the classification of farming implements are not required to carry tags or titles.

The officer further stated that he followed Longnecker's tracks onto the newly paved State Road and will be charged with the unnecessary destruction of state property.

Plans For Three New Schools

Plans and specifications for three new school buildings in the county were submitted and discussed at a meeting of the County's Board Of Education Wednesday. The new school buildings are being considered for Sabillasville, Lewistown and Creagerstown. According to present plans, a three-room structure will be erected at Sabillasville, and two room buildings at Lewistown and Creagerstown. It is the object of the Board to have work on the erection of the buildings started as soon as possible. It is expected that bids will be asked for in the near future. Rural schools are being consolidated as much as possible, pupils, thereby, obtaining more advantage than would otherwise get, it was pointed out.

Big Blasts Echoes Through Woodsboro

Residence of Woodsboro were startled on Tuesday afternoon by an explosion of which reverberated over the rolling hills in that community. An investigation revealed that a huge blast was set off in the lime stone quarry of S. W. Bar-

rick's, near Woodsboro.

The blast, which was set off by blasting experts, consisted of approximately one and a half tons of dynamite. The amount of limestone dislodge by the blast left a void in the quarry 134 feet in length, 60 feet wide, and 20 feet deep. An examination revealed the dislodge stone to be of high-grade quality, said Leonard Barrick, and the capacity received as a result of the blast will be sufficient for a supply of six months.

Mr. Barrick expressed satisfaction over the results of the blast, which is among the largest ever set off in this section. He was well pleased with a manner in which the experts supervise the work.

December 12

Warnings Of Grip Epidemic

The Frederick County Health Office, stated Friday, that the epidemic of the Grip, throughout the county for the past week or two, has not assumed threatening proportions, but every effort should be made to check the progress of the ailment.

Grip, although very unpleasant to the patient, is not considered serious. In many cases it resembles symptoms of a heavy cold, and is usually reported as such by the patient. Severe headaches, nausea, and a bilious condition are the symptoms.

While a number of new cases have been reported, little fear is held by the health officer, as no serious turn, has been noted in the epidemic. The health officer repeated that every precaution should be taken by the public to prevent the spread of the Grip. Close contact in public places, sneezing and spitting are termed as conducive to the spread of the epidemic.

The health officer recommended plenty of fresh air, cold water, and rest in bed, as the best and simplest treatment for the Grip. Several days in bed usually breaks the hold of the disease upon the patient, and



relief usually follows the treatment recommended.

Trivial Court Cases Burden To Taxpayers

Trivial family troubles again loomed up in Police Court, when charges of assault and battery against Mrs. Hattie Kenny, and her son, Walter, of Woodsboro were dismissed by Judge Guy Motter. The charges were preferred by Mrs. Daisy Eyerl also of Woodsboro. After hearing the testimony the magistrate concluded that the evidence was not sufficient to substantiate the charge, and the case was dismissed.

Mrs. Eyerl alleged that the two defendants attacked her at the home of a neighbor in Woodsboro, following some minor altercations over differences between the children of the two women. Mrs. Eyerl alleged that Walker was "eyeing" her daughter", while Mrs. Kenny retorted that her son was "too stupid to know what to

do with Mrs. Eyerl's daughter, which everyone knew was sleeping around with every boy in town." Some doubt as to whom struck the resultant first physical blow, and the manner in which the alleged assault was made, caused the judge to drop the case.

Motter stated that these types of cases are becoming very serious from the taxpayer standpoint. He added that the case should have been settled amicably between the two parties involved, and should never have found its way into court. The principles were warned to conduct themselves in a more peaceful manner in the future.

December 19


Violators Of Dry Law Fined \$100 And Sent To Jail

Robert Eyerl, 28, of Woodsboro, was sent to the Frederick County jail for a period of two months on Friday on a charge of selling intoxicating liquor. He was convicted in a trial for having sold a pint of whiskey to a resident of Woodsboro.

Witnesses testify that Eyerl was reported to be carrying on an illicit liquor business in and around Woodsboro. He was acquitted on a similar charge at the last term of the court, having been indicted on two counts of selling liquor by the September Grand Jury. He delayed trial, following his acquittal on one during the earlier term of court, and was not placed on trial until Thursday.

Having already served 71 days in the county jail awaiting the trial, this was taken into consideration by the judge and passing sentence. The two-month sentence will begin dating from Thursday morning.


Lindsey Stickle and William Cecil of Walkersville were fine \$100 each and sentence to the County jail for period of three months for selling liquor. Sickle was granted a special leave for one week to enable him to arrange his business affairs. He was released until December 19, under a \$1,000 bond, and



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will be compelled to begin his sentence at that time. Sickie was also required to arrange for the payment of Cecil's fine. The latter began his jail sentence on Friday.

Three separate charges were lodged against Cecil, and one against Stickle, all which arose out of a brawl, occurring at the poolroom on Green Street, in which Cecil was a clerk.

The brawl took place on August 2, and before it ended, Harry Kemp, sustained a badly broken leg and minor injuries. The liquor charges were brought against Cecil by Kemp who testified that he bought four half-pints of whiskey from Cecil, but when he got home, he discovered that Cecil had sold him 'horse piss.' When Kemp returned to the poolroom and demanded his money back, Stickle and Cecil attacked him. The brawl quickly escalated until everyone in the hall was fighting one another. Apparently, said one lawman, the 'horse piss' in question must have had a 'good kick' to it.

Windstorm Causes Damage Across County

A heavy windstorm, Saturday night and early Sunday morning caused extensive damage across the county. A barn on the farm of Upton Gilsbert, about 2 miles south of Creagerstown was completely demolished. The structure showed signs of toppling over soon after the storm set in, and the cattle and horses, usually quartered in it were stable for the night in a shed some distance away.

The wind completely crushed the barn. The lumber from which it was built, was torn and twisted apart, resulting in a complete loss to Mr. Gilsbert. A new barn will be built on the site of the old one demolished.

In the same section of the county, a number of barn doors were torn off, and carried some distance. Stocks were blown over and the fodder separated and carried a long distance. In many places, the wind lined stocks of fodder against

fences, and carried a grate amount of it into the road. Throughout the county, trees were uprooted and other damage done.

The gale was very heavy Saturday night. Several times the electric lights flickered, caused by branches and trees blowing against the wires. Union Bridge was in darkness for several hours caused by the blowing over of a number of poles and wires. Woodsboro also was without power and light for sometime. It was the worst windstorm experienced for sometime.

White Christmas Predicted

Those unfortunate mortals of Frederick, who are unable to bask in the sunshine of the sunny south, may as well make up their minds to endure more winter weather, and from all indications a winter that will be more severe than any in recent years.

While the weather for Christmas day is yet a little uncertain, except that another drop in temperatures is then due, all sorts of disagreeable elements are promised for Christ-

mas Eve, the day before the greatest holiday of the year begins.

Christmas Eve is expected to be the coldest of the present winter with the mercury slipping to the 12° mark and snow falling across the County. The snow will possibly change to sleet or rain on Christmas but will be followed by colder weather again, Thursday.

The present month is the coldest December on record, perhaps since 1917. January 6, 1924 was the coldest day this year when the mercury registered a low mark of 6° above zero. The present winter will see this mark beaten, said the local observer, giving as one reason the fact that winter this year said in about a month earlier than a year ago.

December 26

Christmas In The Air

Radio listeners have been rather overfed, since last Sunday, with Christmas carols, "Santa Claus" talks, solos and choruses producing old standbys, and Christmas programs. Generally, all demonstrating that Christmas is much the same everywhere, and there is no substitute for the simple story of the birth of the Christ child, what it has meant, and still means, for the world.

From dozens of broadcasting stations, far east to far west, and south, have come strains of "Silent Night", "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing", "Adeste Fedelis", and like hymns, together with nursery stories, and jingles, and for once, it is literally true that "Christmas is in the air".

All the churches have presented the same story, some more elaborately than others, but the one predominating over all messages have been "Peace On Earth, Good Will Towards Men", and "Glory To God In The Highest" – that brings happiness to the children and the real Christmas spirit to the older folks.

Fatal Accident At Bridgeport

A fatal accident occurred at the dangerous curve on the State road at New Midway, on Wednesday night, about 7:30, at the exact spot that has seen multiple former wrecks – the tele-

phone Paul at the curve near the blacksmith shop. A car, driven by William Eckert, of Littlestown, with three companions, was driving towards Taneytown, and at the curve crashed into a new pole that had just been erected in place of one broken off by an auto two weeks ago. The car may have skidded on the icy road, or may have been going too rapidly to make the turn safely. The car was badly wrecked, and turned over.

All four men in the car were knocked unconscious by the crash. John Shadell, who was in the back seat, recovered consciousness first. He was bleeding from the nose, but had no apparent injuries. Shadell aroused Frank King, who was sitting next to him, and who was bleeding from the ears, but was otherwise unhurt.

Charles Boose, who was in the front seat, was unable to move because of his broken leg. Shadell and King found Eckert pinned beneath the wreckage of his machine. He was still breathing, although unconscious. They carried him to a farmhouse across the road, and a doctor in Taneytown was notified. Upon the arrival of the physician, the removal of Eckert and Boose to the hospital was advised.

William Marker, who lives near the scene of the accident, offered his machine to take the intro to the hospital. Eckert was placed in the rear seat, with his head pillowed in Cell's arms. When 2 miles west of Taneytown on the Emmitsburg Road, Marker's car slid off the road and the axel on his car snapped.

The Taneytown Garage Company

was notified of the accident to Marker's machine and sent a service car to tow in the disabled vehicle. When the car arrived at Taneytown, Dr. Benner was notified, and upon viewing Eckert, pronounced him dead.

Meanwhile, another machine was hurrying Boose to the Warner hospital. He suffered considerable pain from his broken leg, but is reported to resting easier.

If Editors Never Lied

A short time ago, a Kentucky editor became tired of being called a liar, so he decided to print one edition containing nothing but the truth. We don't know what became of him the following week, or where he went when he headed out of Kentucky, but here are some of the news items:

"John Beenin, laziest merchant in town, was in Beeville on Monday."

"Tom Coyle, our grocer, has lost most of his trade on account of his store being musty and dirty."

"David Conkey died at his home Tuesday. The doctor gave it as heart failure, but whiskey killed him."

"Married, Sylvia Rhodes, and James Jones. The bride is an ordinary looking girl with a walk like a duck, and absolutely no knowledge of housework. The groom is an up-to-date loafer, has been living off his poor old father and mother all his life and isn't worth the powder and lead it would take to blow his head off."

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

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Santa Run
Sat., Dec. 14
New Midway/Keymar
Estimated start time 2:15
Cash Smith Rd.

Estimated start time 2:30
Renner Rd., Warner Rd., Baker Rd.

Estimated start time 3
Delour Rd.,
Haugh's Church Rd. (Towards 194)
Keymar Rd.

Estimated start time 3:15
Good Intent Rd.
(Towards Union Bridge)
Bunker Hill Development,
Handboard Rd.,
Simpson's Mill Rd.
(Towards Good Intent Rd.)

Estimated start time 3:45
Legore Bridge Rd.

New Year's Eve Bingo & Buffet
BINGO Wed., December 31
Doors open at 5 - Buffet at 6 - Bingo starts at 8
Buffet includes: turkey, fried shrimp, mashed potatoes & gravy, coleslaw, rolls & butter, coffee, tea and dessert!
Tickets: \$50 (By 12/16) \$60 (After 12/16)
For info call: 301-271-4650 or 301-898-7985
Proceeds benefit the New Midway Fire Company & the Frederick County Farm Museum.

LIBRARY NEWS

Do you love the library? Want to spark the same excitement in others? Looking for a way to invest in your community? If you answered yes to any (or all!) of these questions, then you're a friend of the library. Make it official by joining The Friends of the Walkersville Library community group! We're seeking new members and volunteers to help fundraise and advocate for more high-quality programs and events. Stop by the Walkersville Branch Library or give a call at 301-600-8200 to learn more.

Please note that all Frederick County Public Libraries will be closed December 24, 25 and will close at 5pm on December 31.

Stop by the library during the 7th Annual Walkersville Christkindlmarket and Parade on December 7. Other winter festivities for the month include a storytime with Mrs. Claus on December 11 at 6pm and celebrating "Noon Years Eve" on December 31 at 11:30.

Holiday rush got you feeling stressed? Calm your mind and body

with a 1-hour, free yoga class offered by Sol Yoga will be held at the Walkersville Branch Library on Monday, December 10 and December 23 at 6. This is a great way to center yourself before the week ahead. Looking for an exercise class that will invigorate instead? We have that too! Freedom BANG Fitness happens every Saturday at 10.

The Walkersville Branch Library has programs designed for adults with developmental disabilities on the first three Wednesdays in December at 10:15. Welcome in the holiday season and make a card or two on December 4, meet a working therapy dog on December 11, and dance away to karaoke on December 18!

Twice a month, the Walkersville Library hosts a coffee and conversation group in tandem with an engaging program. On December 5 at 10, Country Meadows will guide you through a gentle Chair Yoga class. Learn how to do calligraphy on Thursday, December 12 at 10am and impress everyone with beautiful script

in your holiday cards this year. If you need help expunging your record from a past conviction, an attorney from Maryland Legal Aid is available to discuss your options and begin the process. This is a free service offered on December 5 from 4 to 7 at the Walkersville Library. Improve your reading confidence and make a new friend when you read aloud to a Go Team Therapy Dog on November 12 from 6:30 to 7:30. P.S. You don't have to read to the dogs, all are welcome to come say hi and get some cuddles from the best dogs around!

If you have a 'tween' looking for activities after school in a safe, welcoming environment, the Walkersville Branch Library has programs just for them! Minecraft Monday is back again on December 2 at 6 or learn how to play Magic the Gathering on Monday, December 16 at 6pm. Turn old books into a winter wonderland with just your imagination and a pair of scissors! Recycle discarded pages and transform them into one-of-a-kind snowflakes on Wednesday,



Practicing school skills after Preschool Storytime.

December 11 at 4. Its the perfect way to get crafty, celebrate the season, and give books a second chance.

Teen Tuesdays at 3:30 are the perfect time to decompress after school, meet new people, and have fun with friends. Paint the library windows (yes,

you read that right!) and turn the Loft into a winter wonderland on December 3. Learn and play Magic the Gathering on December 10 and decorate sweet treats on December 17.

Avoid cabin fever with your little one and join us at the library for Fri-Yay on Fridays at 11am. Full of hands-on and engaging activities, there's plenty for everyone to do at their own pace! Come to "Construction Junction" on December 6, wear your favorite color to the library on December 13 to search for the end of the rainbow, and have loads of winter fun while staying warm and cozy on December 20!

Our schedule for storytimes is as follows:

- Monday: Infants at 10; Baby Steps Skill Building at 10:30; Babies at 11
- Tuesday: Toddlers at 11
- Wednesday: Family at 6
- Thursday: Preschool at 11

Bilingual Storytime at the Walkersville Branch Library will be on Wednesday, December 4 and 18 at 6. This dynamic and engaging storytime is fun for the whole family and will feature songs, rhymes and more in English and other world languages.

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SCHOOL NEWS

FCPS’s community budget listening holds sessions

The public is invited to several community budget listening sessions as FCPS Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Dyson gathers feedback prior to releasing her Recommended Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget in January.

Feedback from all stakeholders is welcome. In September and October, Dr. Dyson offered staff engagement opportunities.

“Listening to the community is an important step in our budgetary process,” Dr. Dyson said. “We wanted to provide multiple opportunities to ensure as many voices could be heard as possible. I

look forward to hearing about the community’s priorities.”

Four feedback sessions are scheduled:

- Budget Virtual Listening Session - Tuesday, December 3 from 6 to 7 p.m.
- Google Meet Link: meet.google.com/tdj-gtwf-moi
- Budget Virtual Listening Session - Monday, December 9 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- Google Meet Link: meet.google.com/tdj-gtwf-moi
- Budget In-Person Listening Session - Monday, December 16 at 6 p.m.

Where: Board Room, 191 S. East St., Frederick.

Dr. Dyson is scheduled to share her Recommended Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget on Monday, January 6, with a budget discussion scheduled during the Wednesday, January 8, Board of Education of Frederick County meeting.

The full FY-26 Operating Bud-

get Calendar is available online at www.fcps.org/about/fy2026-budget-calendar, where stakeholders can also view the FY-26 Budget Roadmap with details about the process.



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Christmas in Rocky Ridge!

Friday, December 6th
from 5 to 9

*Food trucks, games, crafts,
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Tree lighting ceremony at 6:45
Entertainment with 5.5 Men at 7
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Free event!
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Tuesday, December 31

Over \$17,000 of cash payouts

\$50 per ticket (advance) \$60 at the door

Tickets: Friday night bingo - 301-748-5359 - 301-271-3820 or Eventbrite.com

Ticket includes:

- Dinner platter - Served from 6 to 8
Kitchen open during break!
- 9 pack of 27 games (\$300 ea.)
- 3 special games (\$1,000 ea.)
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Doors open at 5 • Bingo starts at 8

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FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

This month we asked our Four Years At The Mount writers to reflect on their Christmas and holiday traditions in a way that allows readers to fully immerse themselves in each writer's experience of the holidays.

Freshman

How holidays happen

Cameron Madden
MSMU Class of 2028

We find ourselves in the kitchen, with plates stacked up containing remnants of gravy, bits of corn, and cranberry sauce someone couldn't stomach this time around. Alone sits the person who was insisted upon to clean up the dishes for this Thanksgiving dinner. Let's just say I am the one alone with the dishes, probably falling asleep from the food intake and revelry coming from a family get-together. As the last of the dishes finally begin to wrap up and I head upstairs quietly with intent to fall fast asleep, I catch glimpses of a changing time. Autumn turning to winter of course, but also something in the mood of those around me; all sleeping with a sort of relaxed mood, excited for the days to come despite no real change. As I drift off to sleep, and the cold finally begins to come in full effect, I feel nothing but warmth. The holiday season is here; Christmas is on the horizon and there is now nobody in my ear to tell me to wait until after Thanksgiving!

In the slow beginning days of December, animals begin to hibernate, the color of tree bark begins to blend and form a wall of gray and the leaves have disappeared. It feels perhaps lifeless. It's funny though, in the transition from November to December there is green prevalent all around us. I certainly notice it in my own home, as the first couple days of the month involve my mother busting out the boxes of Christmas decorum she has been mulling over since last December. While I usually would be busy drowning in schoolwork, I instead am sat with my siblings, helping and conversing with one another over whether the lights should go here or there, or if the newest decoration my mother had bought can fit on the dining room table. I come home to a lot more pastries and sweets than usual, filling the house with either a fresh smell of chocolate-chip cookies, or of fresh bread bought from the local bakery. It usually will be gobbled up in the span of a day, and with the sufficient supplies of eggnog and other warm beverages, it was an inadvertent but expected outcome. It's always been funny, when younger plugging in the decoration lights and watching them light up the rooms of the house was a huge deal. We would turn off the main lights and gaze upon

yellow string lights in wreaths or long strings of fake foliage. Always a week or two into the month, we would finally go and pick out a tree. We would usually go to the local fire station and sit by barrels of fire, eating candy canes as either my mom or dad would pick out a tree. They would hand out some cheap, but filling hot chocolate, which paired well with the aromas of peppermint and evergreen, and the feel of the cold air. As the month went on and the house gradually filled with more decorations—and of course, louder Christmas music—the spot of the tree would finally be picked out and set up. After days of waiting for the tree to settle, the big box of old ornaments would be brought out, and we would all take turns putting whatever we wanted on the tree. There were a few specific to each person, making it all the more special. Some music or a holiday movie was put on as we did this, and the family has fun and laughs all the way through the process. Throughout this time, we had some pretty normal traditions: like Christmas lists and visits to Santa Claus at the mall, eating candy canes the whole way to really cement peppermint as the flavor of the season. In the few days leading up to Christ-

mas, I would be conflicted on which parent I would spend the first half of Christmas Day due to their split, but regardless of the unease, the principles and experiences were the close to the same: love, laughter, joy and connection. We would spend Christmas Eve excited with what usually turned out to be a big dinner, as we tend to have larger dinners on the Eve rather than on Christmas Day. Afterwards, my siblings and I would usually spend the rest of the night eager for the presents but, also in appreciation and revelation of the peace and love surrounding us. Partially due to the youngest sibling's wishes, we would all sleep in one room. Overtime though, it just became the standard, and we would all find a space to sleep in my brother and I's room. On Christmas Day, my family partakes in traditions that may be similar to those of other people in the world. We awake in the cold morning to take a picture of all of the children, myself included, waiting to be let loose on the unsuspecting and innocent Christmas tree. Once the photo is snapped, it is off to the races to get to those presents! Coming from a family that did not have too much money to spend, gifts were either a collection of smaller items of varying expense or one big item with

many lesser ones. All of which were usually determined by what was specified on a Christmas list, yet all were loved and cherished. From that point on, the same thing would repeat at the other parent's house and the rest of the day would be spent with bonding over candies, presents, and probably a Charlie Brown movie. As I said before, a big dinner would usually be held on the day before, but dinner on Christmas would always be like a smaller Thanksgiving in terms of food like ham and turkey, mashed potatoes and such. The next few days usually are quiet; we all relax with our gifts and take appreciation of the Christmas feel up until New Year's Eve. Aside from the occasional party filled with plenty of snack/food platters, the most memorable tradition we carry out on New Years is banging wooden spoons on pots and pans, being an annoying neighbor by enjoying life in the easiest way: showing the love you hold, for and with, those closest to you through making noise and exerting laughter in a moment of complete togetherness.

To read other articles by Cameron Madden, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

Sophomore

Christmas Eve

Gracie Smith
MSMU Class of 2027

Christmas Eve is one of the most memorable nights for children around the world. As for my family, Christmas Eve is not only the most memorable night, but the most traditional. Since before I was born, my family would host a big Christmas Eve party. Everyone would gather at my grandparent's house and celebrate the night before Christmas. There would be food and appetizers galore, drinks for everyone's fancy, and sweets to satisfy even the pickiest eater. Let's just say, no one ever left hungry. The house is filled with the brightest spirits, the warmest smiles, and the happiest of hearts. This tradition goes as far back as my grandparents hosting Christmas Eve when my mother was little. My mother always says how she would watch Rudolf and other

Christmas entertainment all day just to stay out of my grandmother's way, and to attempt to make the time go by faster. Several years later when my mother had grown up, on Christmas Eve of 2003, my parents had announced their engagement; my father had proposed the day before so they could share in the excitement with their family. Little did everyone know that that was going to be one of the last Christmas Eve's at my grandparent's house before my mother took over the tradition upon welcoming me into the world. Christmas Eve of 2005, my first Christmas, and my parent's first time hosting the infamous Christmas Eve party, with a baby nonetheless, was certainly one for the books. Despite my lack of attention to it all, I do believe it was a success; surely I would've heard otherwise by either my mother or grandmother. Christmas Eve of 2007 was my little brother's first Christmas and our first Christmas in our newly built home. With tons of new space for decorations and food, my mother did not miss out on the opportunity to be festive.

Over the years my parents really began to hold our Christmas Eve tradition close to their hearts. So much so, that we have special dishes we use strictly on Christmas Eve. This might not sound so abnormal for some but I do find it amusing. The Christmas Eve plates are used one time a year and remain in our basement for the other 364 days of the year. However, my mom has been very particular about what she likes for Christmas Eve, it all has to be perfect. So much so, that one of my mother's Christmas presents one year was a hotplate for some of the appetizers we have on Christmas Eve. Add that to the list of things that are seen once a year on Christmas Eve. As my brother Jack and I grew older, we became easily more restless on Christmas Eve. Watching our parents run around the house cleaning and cooking, we learned quickly that it was best to stay out of the way; as my mother did when she was a child. Then, at 6 o'clock sharp our friends and family would arrive. As the night goes on, the more excited each of us gets. I remember one year that my dad absolutely blew my mind. Since we do have picky eaters in our family, my parents always go

to McDonald's and get 40 nuggets for the kids. I have to admit, I was one of those picky eaters who ate McDonald's on Christmas Eve and I was perfectly okay with that. However, a few years ago I caught my dad putting my mom's homemade crab dip on a McDonald's nugget and he replied simply, "I made Chicken Chesapeake". He continues to enjoy his "Chicken Chesapeake" every Christmas Eve now. Another more recent story of Christmas Eve takes place in 2019. My cousin Sabrina, a United States Marine, was not supposed to be home for Christmas. That year, my aunt, uncle, and cousin joined us for Christmas Eve. My mother, continuing to work her Christmas magic, was able to help Sabrina surprise her family and be home for Christmas. That year we actually had our biggest turnout, that is, before COVID-19 hit in 2020. Christmas Eve of 2020 was certainly very different. The only people in attendance were my family of 4, my grandparents, and my uncle's family from my mom's side. Instead of mingling with people we didn't have the opportunity to see very often, we played Christmas games. Off the top of

my head, the only two I remember playing are Christmas charades and Christmas trivia. Despite not having nearly as many people there, my parents still had all their usual dishes; ham, crab dip, meatballs, nuggets, chips and dip, cookies, chocolates, fudge, black bottoms, and more that I know I'm forgetting (sorry, Mom). At the end of the evening, me, my brother, and all of our cousins sit on our couch, and my grandfather sits in the middle to read us all 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. This is sort of a tradition inside of a tradition if you will, and this tradition goes way back to when my great-grandfather would read to my mother on Christmas Eve. At one point, all of us could fit on the couch because we were so little, but now we're sitting on top of each other for the sake of tradition. Nevertheless, my grandfather puts on his Santa hat and his Santa beard I made him when I was little, and reads to us all. As the years go by, I find myself not listening to the story anymore and instead listening to my grandfather; his passion, his excitement, and his pure love for our family are some things that get me emotional every year. When he reads the story, everyone goes silent and listens; hearing not his words, but him. One day, it will be me who hosts Christmas Eve, and it will be my father who reads the story to my kids and my brother's kids. But, for now, I cherish every Christmas Eve when my poppy reads to us.

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



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CHRISTMAS AND HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Junior

The Owen family Christmas

Devin Owen
MSMU Class of 2026

Growing up, I was always told that Christmas should be my favorite time of year because I got to have ‘two Christmases’ due to my parents’ divorce. Personally, I thought it was unnecessarily tense and not as “holly jolly” as it was supposed to be. As I got older though, I managed to reignite my love for the holiday season with new traditions and better ways of carrying out the older ones.

One of my favorite holiday traditions is Christmas Morning Breakfast, which has been a tradition from my mom’s side of the family since before I was born, with my sisters experiencing it long before I came along. Each year, we spend Christmas Eve prepping a casserole that my mom calls “Christmas Morning Breakfast,” it’s made of egg, sausage, cheese, and bacon. I’ve had other people make it for me before when our holiday custody agreements would change, but I don’t think anybody makes it as good as my mom does. Come Christmas morning,

mom gets up and cooks the casserole while we all gather and wait for her in the living room to open presents.

In recent years though, the tradition of Christmas morning has changed a little bit. In September of 2020 my niece, River, was born and a year and a half later, my nephew, Wilder, came along changing the trajectory of how the day was spent. Since then, we have spent Christmas morning over at my sister’s house. Now, we still prep the casserole the night prior, but we bring it over with us to cook there instead while the kids are hollering out to anyone who will listen about opening their presents. In addition to the casserole, my sister makes homemade cinnamon rolls and preps coffee and orange juice for anyone who might want it. We spend the morning watching the kids ripping through wrapping paper and hearing the sounds of laughter and love flow through the house with the delicious scent of sweet cinnamon and vanilla wafting through the air. I sit on the floor with the two human embodiments of my heart as they climb all over me, giving hugs and kisses, helping me open my own presents, fighting over who gets to sit next to me for breakfast and asking me to play with them and the toys that they got. Moments like these are my favorite, holiday or not.

From Christmas morning I move on to time with my dad and his side of the family. Around 1 o’clock my brother and I will head over to my grandparents’ house to give them their presents from us. My absolute favorite part of this is giving my grandfather his gift: chocolate-covered cherries. For some reason, he’s obsessed with them and without us even realizing it, gifting him the sweet treats became a tradition right under our noses. He knows what he’s getting each year without me even having to give him the gift. Giving my family their gifts might just be my favorite part of the holiday each year. I try to make or buy more thoughtful gifts for everyone in my family because, sentimentality, is one of the most important values in our home. I think the best gift I ever gave was to my Uncle Charlie; I made him a collage of our pictures together with a note saying just how important to me that he was. It made him cry, which of course made me cry too.

The holiday here has felt a little different as of late though. In my freshman year of college, my uncle passed away from cancer. For the last few Christmas holidays I got to have with him, I would make homemade raspberry turnovers. He always said that they were his favorite treat. Unfortunately, after he passed, I couldn’t find it in me to make them

for our first holiday season without him. However, I plan on making it a tradition to have them at every holiday get-together we have in order to keep him with us in spirit.

It’s no secret that as you get older things in your life begin to change. Since coming to college, the holidays feel different. I drown myself in work during finals week and then go home for a month to celebrate the holidays with my family. We jump from house to house, with plans of gift giving and receiving, breakfast, lunch and dinner plans set up well in advance, and the goal of spreading Christmas joy. Something I have found myself cherishing about Christmas as a college student is making new traditions with my friends and roommates here at the Mount. Since freshman year, we always have a night where we do something fun and holiday themed. Freshman year my roommate and I got matching pajamas, made gingerbread houses, and played games like Uno and Exploding Kittens on the floor of our dorm. Last year, since there were four of us instead of two, we exchanged gifts for ‘secret Santa’ and played games while wearing light-up reindeer antler headbands. This year, we are exchanging gifts again and having

a hot chocolate bar to make fancy hot chocolates for one another while watching holiday movies!

This Christmas, I was offered the opportunity to spend the holidays in Switzerland with my boyfriend and his family. Talk about a Christmas present! I’ve never been out of the country before, in fact, I just recently (last month) got my passport. I’ve been grappling with the decision on going or staying with my family in Delaware. I have always spent the holidays with my family—we have our traditions and I’m not sure that I’m ready to part from them just yet.

But that’s a part of growing up. Our traditions change over the years, our families grow as we get into relationships, have kids, and go off on our own as adults. Changing traditions doesn’t change the love we have for our families, nor does it mean that we’re giving up on what we grew up with. Instead, it means that we’re in a position to make new traditions with our bonus family members and spread our traditions amongst new people. Personally, I’m looking forward to everyone knowing the Owen family traditions and keeping them alive.

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

Senior

Cozy do-nothingness of Christmas

Dolores Hans
MSMU class of 2025

My restful slumber is interrupted when I awaken at the remembrance that it is almost Christmas. From beneath the covers, I shift my feet back and forth, carefully feeling the foot of the bed for something that doesn’t typically belong. When my foot arrives at the heavy object at the end of my bed, I am filled with excitement and fall back to sleep with a smile on my face. When I awaken again, it is morning. The icy breeze drifts through the thin slits that surround my windows, and the warmth that I had built up beneath my blanket is disturbed as I frantically search the foot of the bed once again. The first exciting moment of Christmas Day is the discovery of the stocking full of gifts at the end of my bed. I take a quick glimpse, the first thing I lay my eyes on always being toothpaste or shampoo, and hastily, silently, make my way to the bathroom to brush my hair and teeth before the festivities begin. As I walk through the hallway to my little sibling’s bedroom, stocking in hand, I take a quick peak at the tree in the living room. The lights glisten on the tree, creating a warm glow throughout the room. The multitude of Santa statues that have been collected by my parents throughout their marriage are scattered around the room. Baby Jesus is present in the Nativity as it is now the day of his birth. Presents line the space beneath the tree’s branches, and there is a handwritten note beside a plate of crumbs that used to hold our

iconic Italian cookies. I take a deep breath, taking it all in, and then quietly, I approach the bedroom door of my little sibling’s room. I open it gently and sit beside my baby sister, gently stroking her back. I beg her softly to wake up because it’s Christmas. She sits up, her disheveled hair standing up in all directions, and she groggily wraps her arms around me, still mostly asleep. Once she has finally processed what I said, she bounces up full of energy and says, “It’s Christmas?!” She finds her stocking at the foot of her own bed, and begins to pull out the trinkets within as I go to wake my baby brothers in the same way.

Once all the children are awake, one by one, each of the rest of my siblings enter the bedroom and go through their stockings. We all compare gifts, sometimes even trading, and delight in the gifts we got, even the toothpaste and shampoo. This is my favorite time. Just me and my siblings, hanging out in our matching pjs, waiting for our parents to wake up so we can all go to the living room. My dad finally enters the bedroom that we all have congregated in, classically wearing a robe and a Santa hat. He wishes us a ‘Merry Christmas’ and gives us all hugs. Then he goes back to his room, probably to tell my mom that all us heathens are awake and ready to open presents. Once she is up, we all go to the living room, dad blasts some classical Christmas music, and mom plops herself down on the couch with a massive cup of tea. My siblings and I all claim a spot around the room and await the commencement of gift giving.

Every year, my family and I do a secret Santa, only we are required to make the gift. This is also my favorite part. Getting to see how each of

my family members made something that is specifically for another person. I can recall all the best gifts that were given, but the absolute best was when my parents had picked each other in the secret Santa. My mom created a wooden manger to go on the front lawn, something my dad had been wanting for years, and my dad really broke out the carpentry skills by hand-making a bench that is a replica of one that they call “our bench” which rests at a botanical garden they used to frequent in their relationship. After this, we get to open our gifts from Santa. After all presents have been opened, we spend the rest of the day sitting around in our pajamas, and just doing whatever; ranging from crafts, watching movies, eating, playing outside, and more. I spend the day reminiscing about Christmas Eve, which for my family, is bigger and more festive than Christmas Day. We spend the morning making Italian Christmas Cookies with my grandma, we get dressed up and go to mass, and then my family, including all of my aunts, uncles and cousins, all meet up at my grandma’s house. We have a wonderful dinner, spend an agonizing time taking photos, and then we open our first gift. It is always from my grandma, and it is always matching pajamas. My siblings and cousins and I all call dibs on the bathrooms and bedrooms to get out of our fancy clothes as soon as possible. We all emerge in the wackiest Christmas pajamas you can imagine, and plop down in the living room to continue with the gift giving with a secret Santa. The best part is waiting to see who my grandpa had, because he always ‘conveniently’ forgets that there is a \$25 limit. Then, we sing happy birthday to my grandma (and Jesus) because both

were born on December 25th. At the end of the night we gather by the front door, grandma reads a classic Christmas book to the youngest kids, and the rest of us women regret not bringing a change of shoes while we stuff our feet back into our heels, which are the perfect fashion statement with our Christmas pjs. Christmas Eve is one of my

favorite days. But Christmas Day is its own kind of wonderful. After the cozy do-nothingness of Christmas Day, the night ends with a massive order of the most delicious Chinese food you’ve ever tasted, brought right to our door.

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



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ARTS

Totem Pole Playhouse's "A Christmas Carol"

Totem Pole Playhouse, America's summer theatre located in Caledonia State Park, is excited to announce the return of its beloved holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*, at the historic Majestic Theater in downtown Gettysburg. This cherished adaptation by Carl Schurr and Wil Love will run for eight performances, from December 6th through 15th, as part of the Gettysburg Christmas Festival.

Totem Pole Playhouse is honored to welcome back Ray Ficca, a true institution at the Playhouse, who will step into the role of Ebenezer Scrooge for the first time in this production. Ficca's ties to Totem Pole run deep—he served as a resident actor (2005–2013) and Artistic Director (2008–2013), during which time he produced 38 summer shows. His recent performance in *On Golden Pond* (2023) marked his 25th show at Totem Pole.

Joining Ficca is a cast of nearly 40 local artists, including 16 talented young performers. This year's company includes professional actors with over fifty productions under their belts, as well as young people stepping onto the stage for the very first time. Entire families are involved in the production, with some cast members returning for their fifth year in the show. Notable cast members include Ariabella Davison (*Ghost of Christmas Past*), Sam Little (*Ghost of Christmas Present and Fezziwig*), Richard Sautter (*Jacob Marley*), Bailey Hovermale (*Belle*), Adam Wenick (*Fred*), Catherine Blaine (*Old Joe*) and Christopher Kauffman and Taylor Whidden as Bob and Emily Cratchit. Larkin Bucher and Liam Spang will alternate in the role of Tiny Tim alongside many fresh and new faces!

The production is directed by Ryan

Gibbs, making his directorial debut for this piece. The creative team is led by Scenic Designer James Fouchard and Lighting Designer Jonathan Stiles, both of whom worked on the original Totem Pole production in 1988. Bailey Hovermale serves as Music Director, with choreography by Jenn Reed.

Additional team members include Costume Coordinator Juls Buehrer, who maintains Patricia M. Risser's original designs, and Sound Designer Kate Wecker, featuring original music by Terrence Sherman and Darren Server. Production management is by Kia Armstrong, with stage management by Mickey Acton.

Gibbs shared his excitement about working with Ficca, saying, "Everyone in our community knows, admires, and loves Ray. Having him with us is the best holiday gift any of us could ask for. We hope you will join us to witness him play this role for the first time



at Totem Pole. Treat your family to this dynamic, fast-paced spectacle that is packed with magic, Christmas spirit, and warm feelings."

Tickets are on sale now by calling the Majestic Theatre Box Office at 717-337-8200 or visiting totempole-playhouse.org or gettysburgmajestic.org. A Christmas Carol has public per-

performances on December 6, 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15.

Totem Pole Playhouse will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2025, with subscriptions going on sale this December. Tickets for *A Christmas Carol* are available now by calling the box office at 717-352-2164 or visiting www.totempoleplayhouse.org.

Way Off Broadway's "Christmas Chronicles"

As The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre prepares to close out its blockbuster 30th Anniversary Season, the theatre will celebrate the holidays this year with the 'Christmas Chronicles.'

In the show, following a boisterous family Thanksgiving dinner, Pap Pap McCallister heads up to the attic to start bringing down the Christmas decorations, having not been allowed

to start putting them up until after Thanksgiving--a rule set by Grammie McCallister. As he's sorting through the collection of decorations, family members begin joining him as they rem-

inise about past Christmases and talk about their hopes for the year to come. A heartwarming and fun filled evening with the McCallisters will have audiences in the holiday spirit as

they leave the theatre.

Always the most popular show of the year, *Way Off Broadway's* Christmas production blends songs and music from Christmases past and present and is always a show perfect for the entire family.

Christmas Chronicles stars some of the most recognizable faces to appear on the WOB stage over the years, with Steve Steele leading the cast at Pap Pap McCallister. He's joined by Jessica Billones, Betsey Whitmore Brannen, Melissa Ann Martin, Sarah Melinda, Ari Messica, Randy Stull, Megan Elizabeth West, and Caleb Whitcomb.

The production is directed by Justin Kiska, who also wrote the show, with music direction by Tina Marie Bruley. Christmas Chronicles is the fourteenth Mainstage Christmas show Kiska has written for the theatre.

Christmas Chronicles will run through December 22nd with performances every Friday and Saturday evening, and matinees every Sunday in December. Ticket prices vary by performance date and may be purchased by contacting the Box Office at 301-662-6600.

To learn more about the show, or any of Way Off Broadway's productions or events, including its upcoming 2025 Season which includes Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap, A Second Help – The Church Basement Ladies Sequel, Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella: The Broadway Musical, Company, and Once Upon a Christmas Night, visit the theatre's website at www.wayoff-broadway.com.

The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre, under the direction of the Kiska family since 2002, is currently celebrating its 30th Season of producing live theatre. Since it first opened in 1995, the theatre has been a leader in the area's theatre community, proudly bringing both classic musicals, as well as regional and area premieres to the Frederick stage.

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PLAYHOUSE

A graphic for "A Christmas Carol" featuring the title in a stylized, ornate font. The text is enclosed in a decorative rectangular border with floral and scrollwork patterns. A small holly leaf with berries is positioned to the left of the word "CAROL".

December 6 - 15

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COOKING

The cookie edition

Sonya Verlaque
FCC Culinary Program

My husband loves chocolate and orange together. And with the orange zest in this cookie, you can get a little vitamin C for the winter cold season. These are cookies you need to chill, and then slice and bake. So, you can prep them a day or so ahead of time and then bake them when you need them.

Ingredients

- 1 cup plus 2 tbs. (2 1/4 sticks) cold salted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 12 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped, divided
- Zest of 1 medium orange (about 2 tbs.)
- Flaky sea salt and more orange zest, for topping (optional, but highly recommended)

Preparation: In a large bowl using an electric hand mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, beat butter, sugars and vanilla on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 to 5 minutes. Scrape down sides of the bowl, then stir in flour on low speed until just combined. Stir in 6 ounces chocolate chunks and 2 tbs. orange zest until just incorporated. Divide dough in half. Place each half on a large sheet of plastic wrap. Fold over plastic wrap to cover dough, then use your hands to roll each piece of dough into a log about 2-2 1/4 inches in diameter.

Wrap dough in plastic wrap to cover completely and chill at least 2 hours until firm (can be chilled up to 1 week). Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Uncover one log and, using a sharp serrated knife, gently slice log into 1/2-inch-thick rounds (use a sawing motion to cut through chocolate chunks). Place cut side-up on prepared cookie sheet about 1 inch apart. Sprinkle with sea salt, if desired.

Bake 13 to 15 minutes or until edges of cookies are just beginning to brown. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheet, then transfer to cooling rack to cool completely. Repeat with second log of dough. Melt remaining 6 ounces semisweet chocolate in microwave or in a double boiler according to package directions. Dip one end of each fully cooled cookie into melted chocolate; let excess chocolate drip off, then place cookie on cooling rack. Sprinkle with more sea salt and orange zest, if desired. Chill dipped cookies in fridge 30 minutes until chocolate is set.

Lemon Ginger Cookies

My friend's mother has cancer, and I wanted to make her a little treat but also stay away from refined sugars and have some additional nutrition snuck in while she

is undergoing treatment. Almond flour adds Vitamin E, riboflavin, zinc and other nutrients as well as being lower than wheat flour in carbohydrates. This recipe is from my friend and nutritionist, Tina Brockett the owner and founder of Encompass Integrative Wellness, who I appreciate so much.

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 cups almond meal/flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tbs. ground ginger (+optional 1 tsp fresh grated ginger)
- 1/4 cup grape seed oil or melted coconut oil
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 2 tbs. lemon zest or more for a more robust flavor

Preparation: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a Silpat. In a large bowl, combine the almond meal, baking soda and ginger. In a medium bowl, combine the oil, syrup and zest. Add to the dry ingredients and mix until well blended. Scoop 1 Tbsp. of the dough onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 8-10 minutes, or until the tops start to crack! This is an excellent vegan cookie that keeps well for more than a week if it lasts that long, very easy to make with only a few ingredients.

Italian Nut Roll Cookies "Nocatole"

I remember eating these cookies when we visited West Virginia for Christmas. They are one of my dad's favorites that his sister, who is now 95 years old, used to make. Maybe the walnuts provides longevity. But we will be making them again this holiday season.

Ingredients

- For the Dough:
4 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup granulated sugar
1 tsp baking powder

- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the Filling:

- 2 cups finely ground walnuts (or pecans if you prefer)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 large egg white (for binding)

For the Glaze (Optional):

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1-2 tbs. milk
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Preparation: Prepare the Dough: In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Cut in the cold butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, sour cream, and vanilla. Add this mixture to the flour mixture, stirring until it forms a dough. If it's too sticky, add a bit more flour.

Divide the dough into two portions, wrap in plastic wrap, and chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour. Prepare the Filling: In a mixing bowl, combine the ground walnuts, sugar, honey, cinnamon, vanilla extract, and egg white. Mix well to create a thick paste. Assemble the Rolls: Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) and line baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out one portion of dough into a thin rectangle on a lightly floured surface. Spread half the filling evenly over the dough, then carefully roll it up lengthwise, like a jelly roll. Repeat with the second portion of dough.

Slice each roll into about 2-inch pieces and place on the prepared baking sheets, cut side down.

Bake: Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the rolls are lightly golden. Allow to cool on a wire rack.



Italian Nut Roll Cookies "Nocatole".

Optional Glaze: Mix powdered sugar, milk, and vanilla extract until smooth. Drizzle over cooled rolls for extra sweetness.

Pecan Delights

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

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup corn syrup
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1.5 pound pecans (24 ounces)
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate morsels
- 1 cup milk chocolate morsels
- 2 tbs shortening

Preparation Direction: Com-

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

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

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ASTRONOMY

The night sky of December

Professor Wayne Wooten

The new moon is December 1st. The waxing crescent moon is below Venus on December 4th. The waxing crescent passes Saturn in the south on December 7th, and is first quarter on December 8th. The full moon, the Yule moon, is north of Jupiter on December 15th. The moon just misses Mars, passing its own 1/2 degree diameter north of it at 3 a.m. on December 18th. The Winter Solstice, the shortest day, occurs at 4:21 a.m. on December 21st. The last quarter moon is on December 22nd. The waning crescent moon makes a spectacular triangle with Antares and Mercury in the dawn of December 28th. The new moon is December 30th.

Mercury will become visible in the dawn at the end of the month. Venus dominates the SW evening sky, at magnitude -4.2 bright enough to be seen now in broad daylight. Mars is in the morning sky in Cancer, and has a very close encounter with the moon on the morning of December 18th. Jupiter is at its best, reaching opposition on December 7th, rising at sunset and up all night.

Saturn is well up in the south now at sunset, in Aquarius. Here Freddy Bowles captures its rings, now tilted 5 degrees to our line of sight, on October 25th. By January 7th, they will narrow to 4 degrees, and just 3 degrees by January 28th. The rings will be edge on from Earth between March 23rd and May 6th, but it will be lost then in the Sun's



Galaxy NGC 7741 can be found with a good telescope within the Great Square of Pegasus.

glare or just reappearing in the dawn.

While the naked eye, dark adapted by several minutes away from any bright lights, is a wonderful instrument to stare up into deep space, far beyond our own Milky Way, binoculars are better for spotting specific deep sky objects. For a detailed map of northern hemisphere skies, about November 30th visit the www.skymaps.com site and download the map for December 2024; it will have a more extensive calendar, and list of best objects for the naked eyes, binoculars, and scopes on the back of the map. Also notable is wonderful video exploring the sky, available from Hubble Space Telescope website at: www.hubblesite.org/explore_astronomy/tonights_sky.

Sky & Telescope magazine has breaking news and highlights of the

best events for each week at www.sky-andtelescope.com/observing/astronomy-podcasts/.

The square of Pegasus dominates the western sky. South of it are the watery constellations of Pisces (the fish), Capricorn (Sea Goat), Aquarius (the Water Bearer) with Saturn now, and Cetus (the Whale). Below Aquarius is Fomalhaut, the only first magnitude star of the southern fall sky. It marks the mouth of Pisces Australis, the Southern Fish. If you want an ideal ap for learning the constellations, download "Nocturne" for Apple phones, and mount it on a tripod for 2' exposures of the sky, which you can then annotate with star names, constellation lines, and even the mythological figures. Makes the sky come alive.

The constellation Cassiopeia makes a striking W in the NW. She contains many nice star clusters for binocular users in her outer arm of our Milky Way, extending to the NE now. Her daughter, Andromeda, starts with the

NE corner star of Pegasus' Square, and goes NE with two more bright stars in a row. It is from the middle star, beta Andromeda, that we proceed about a quarter the way to the top star in the W of Cassiopeia, and look for a faint blur with the naked eye. M-31, the Andromeda Galaxy, is the most distant object visible with the naked eye, lying about 2.5 million light years distant.

Overhead is Andromeda's hero, Perseus, rises. Perseus contains the famed eclipsing binary star Algol, where the Arabs imagined the eye of the gorgon Medusa would lie. It fades to a third its normal brightness for six out of every 70 hours, as a larger but cooler orange giant covers about 80% of the smaller but hotter and thus brighter companion as seen from Earth.

Look at Perseus' feet for the famed Pleiades cluster; they lie about 400 light years distant, and over 250 stars are members of this fine group. East of the seven sisters is the V of stars marking the face of Taurus the Bull, with bright orange Aldebaran as his eye. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance. Their appearance in November in classical times was associated with the stormy season, when frail sailing ships stayed in port. Aldebaran is not a member of the Hyades, but about twice as close as the Hyades; distances in astronomy can be deceiving. Usually the brighter objects are closer, but exceptionally luminous objects, like Rigel in Orion, may be over 2,000 light years distant yet still first magnitude.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the overhead sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer. Several nice binocular Messier

open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pollux highlight the Gemini. UWF alumni can associate the pair with Jason and the Golden Fleece legend, for they were the first two Argonauts to sign up on his crew of adventurers.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern sky at dusk. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. It is part of a huge spiral arm gas cloud, with active starbirth all over the place. This wide angle shot, with my Dwarf Labs scope (\$450) also captures a geosynchronous satellite just above the nebulae. While it appears the satellite is moving, relative to US, it is stationary. Our own rotation is carrying the nebula westward during this five-minute exposure. The scope is tracking the stars!

Last but certainly not least, in the east rise the hunter's two faithful companions, Canis major and minor. Procyon is the bright star in the little dog, and rises minutes before Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. Sirius dominates the SE sky by 7 and as it rises, the turbulent winter air causes it to sparkle with shafts of spectral fire. Beautiful as the twinkling appears to the naked eye, for astronomers this means the image is blurry; only in space can we truly see "clearly now". At 8 light years distance, Sirius is the closest star we can easily see with the naked eye. Below Sirius in binoculars is another fine open cluster, M-41, a fitting dessert for New Year's sky feast.

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"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."
—Charles Dickens(1812-1870)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Mild and dry (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); rain, then turning seasonably cold (6, 7, 8, 9, 10; dry and seasonably cold (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); seasonable with a few flurries and sprinkles (16, 17, 18, 19, 20; dry then breezy with a heavy rain/snow mix (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); seasonably cold with periods of light snow (26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

Severe Weather Watch: The Town and Country Almanack sees heavy snow and high winds in December's forecast (24, 25).

Full Moon: December's full moon falls on the 15th. Because many Native American tribes noticed beavers scurrying to finish their dams and lodges before the lakes and ponds begin to ice over, it has been called Ice-Forming Moon and Beaver Moon It also has been referred to as Cold Moon by other tribes because of the lower temperatures during the month.

Special Notes: The Winter Solstice, signaling the beginning of win-

ter, will occur on Saturday, December 21st. Remember that The Almanack makes a great gift, one that keeps giving throughout the entire year! Go to www.almanack.com/order and order a holiday copy or two (or three or four!).

Holidays: In 2024, Advent Sunday is December 1st. The first day of Hanukkah is the same as Christmas this year, Friday, December 25th, and Kwanzaa begins on Saturday, the 26th. Enjoy the holiday festivities with family and friends day and try to keep the that joyful and giving spirit alive throughout the coming year! Everyone at the Town & Country Almanack wishes all its readers (and followers on social media!) the happiest of holidays and again, pledges to continue to inform, inspire, and entertain as it has done for the past 229 years! New Year's Eve falls on Tuesday, December 31st. For a safe, family-oriented evening of fun, food, and entertainment on the very first night of the year, go to www.firstnight.com/ cities to find a First Night Celebration nearest you.

The Garden: Utilize this time to do any major last-minute cleanup projects around the garden area. Haul away any debris that is too large or woody for the compost, build paths, turn the

compost pile to keep it warm, and generally make the garden space tidy before it is under heavy use again in the spring. Turn your gardening attentions to those houseplants (and other plants you have moved inside for the winter). Remember that warmer indoor temperatures can quickly dry out most plants and they will need a bit more than usual. Consider a garden shop gift card, garden tools, or offering to clean or refurbish and sharpen garden equipment for the gardener in your life. Books on their favorite type of plants, or a gift card to a popular gardening catalog are also welcomed gifts.

The Farm: Best for planting root crops (23, 24); weeding and stirring the soil (18, 19); planting above-ground crops (7, 8, 9); harvesting all crops (10, 11); the best days for setting hens and incubators (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23); the slaughtering and butchering of meat (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 30, 31); transplanting (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 30, 31); the weaning of all small animals and livestock (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 28, 29, 30, 31); harvesting and storing grains (22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29).

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

WALKERSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Have a holly, jolly breakfast

Celia Alspaugh
WHS Class of 2026

Walkersville High Class of 2028
It's that time of year again. Time to take down the fall decorations in exchange for tinsel and colorful lights. Everyone has different and unique ways to celebrate the holidays, and Walkersville High School is no different. Each year, the Walkersville High School Music Department invites the community to their December fundraiser, "Breakfast with Santa", also known as the "Jolly Jubilee". Taking place on Sunday, December 15th from 9am until 1pm, dedicated music students provide holiday activities, musical performances, and of course a delicious breakfast.

To be sure you do not miss out on this holiday cheer, here are the ticket costs! Prices vary with age: children under 3 are free, students and senior citizens are \$5, and adults are \$10. Tickets are available for purchase at the door as you enter WHS. Your ticket includes your breakfast, crafts and games, live music performances, and a picture with Santa Claus himself! Interested? Check out www.whslionsmusic.org under the events tab, or simply scan the QR code for extra information.

Of course, it couldn't be named "Breakfast with Santa" if Santa himself wasn't in attendance! Each year, children and their family members are invited to take photos with Father Christmas, a memorable family photo worthy of the front of the fridge. Our very own senior and drum major, Autumn Hall, has been an active participant in the Breakfast with Santa fundraiser these past few years. Hall states, "it's been really fun to serve the community with this event. It's super rewarding to see all of

the children's faces light up when they see the one and only Santa. It's definitely one of my favorite events to host." Each and every one of these students genuinely enjoy spreading happiness.

Don't think that Mr. Claus would travel all the way from the North Pole without bringing his lovely wife! Children are welcome to sit and get comfy among pillows to listen to a story read by none other than Mrs. Claus herself! If your kids aren't into listening to stories, there are a multitude of other activities, such as crafts and face-painting, available.

Curious about the food? Lucky for you, breakfast includes pancakes or toast, scrambled eggs, milk or juice, and multiple different fruit options. Gluten free pancakes and bread are available upon request. Breakfast is served by the music department's student volunteers themselves.

Breakfast is not the only thing made with love at this event. Small business owners may purchase a slot with which they can sell their wares, many of which are homemade. Visitors are free to peruse these miniature stores along "Winter Wonderland Way" at any time during the day. Stocked with festive holiday cheer, you may just find the perfect last-minute gift while supporting local businesses in the process! A familiar face sure to show each year is Dwayne Weddle, an exceptionally talented carpenter who displays his beautiful Christmas-themed shadow boxes. Colorful and eye-catching, these decorations make great holiday gifts and are sure to spread Christmas cheer. Weddle states, "This year will be my third, and every year it gets better and better. The event is well attended and it's always great to see so many familiar faces. The coordinators put on a great event, and I look

forward to it every year." Weddle hopes that through his craft he can share his joy with the Town.

The title of Coordinator goes to the one and only Crystal DeTemple. A veteran band mom, DeTemple works hard each year to make the Jolly Jubilee the best it can be. With this year being her third, DeTemple has come to treasure Breakfast with Santa and runs it with efficiency. "The WHS Jolly Jubilee is not just a musical celebration; it's a testament to the unwavering dedication and tireless efforts of our exceptional students and their families year-round. It's a joyous culmination of hard work, commitment, and love for the community, creating an unforgettable experience for all who join us in celebrating the beauty of music and the spirit of the holiday season." DeTemple truly is the glue that holds the whole event together.

If cheerful trinkets are not your thing, do not worry, WHS has crafts, baked goods, and raffle tickets available for purchase as well. WHS volunteers take time each year to put together a lovely bake sale, along with various raffle gifts from local businesses. From stuffed animals to handmade wood items to makeup samples, try your luck at winning one of the many prizes this raffle has to offer!

Many of the events the band members participate in overlap with the other arts. For example, not only will you hear smooth jazz from the jazz band playing while you enjoy your breakfast, but you may also hear the WHS Choir performing jolly Christmas carols throughout the cafeteria. If you venture to the auditorium, you may just catch choreographed light shows performed by the Color Guard and percussion ensem-



Walkersville High School's Music Department students are hard at work spreading holiday cheer at this year's Jolly Jubilee!

bles! The music students do their best to make Breakfast with Santa a memorable holiday event for families, one that some have even turned into a tradition. Chontelle Borden, a mother of three, loves bringing her children to the Jolly Jubilee. "Our family has been attending the WHS Music Department's Breakfast with Santa for at least the past six years, and it's always a favored tradition. We love the sense of community, the festive atmosphere, fun activities for the children, and, of course, seeing Santa!" This just goes to show how an event as simple as this can be magical to people of all ages.

The support of local community at events like these fuels the year-round giving of the Music Department. As autumn draws to a close, one would think that the State Champion Marching Band students have earned their well-deserved break. But alas, this is not so.

There are multiple opportunities for you to see them all around Walkersville in the month of December. You can spot the band and the chorus at the annual Walkersville Tree Lighting on Wednesday, December 4th at Creamery Park. Later that week, sev-

eral WHS band ensembles will participate in the Christkindl Market Parade in downtown Walkersville. Expanding their community outreach, you can also spot the WHS Marching Lions at the Kris Kringle Parade in downtown Frederick on Friday, December 13th. If outdoor events are not your speed, the music students will wrap up their December activities with a winter concert on Thursday, December 19th in the auditorium. It is clear how much these students care about providing for their community and bringing joy to their Town. In return, community members who attend these events are giving back to the ensembles with their support and appreciation.

The Jolly Jubilee is a perfect way to welcome in the holiday spirit for both children and parents alike. Whether you're a passionate breakfaster, or you just need to get those Santa photos each year, or just enjoy the arts and live music, WHS has it all. Come celebrate the holiday season on Sunday, December 15th from 9am to 1pm. A community event, Breakfast with Santa doesn't cost much to get in to and is sure to create lasting memories for the families that attend.

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Frederick Health’s Annual Community Impact Report

Frederick Health, the largest healthcare provider in Frederick County, has published its FY23 Community Impact Report. This annual report provides a snapshot of Frederick Health’s positive health outcomes and intangible contributions to improving wellness. The report, covering July 2022 – June 2023, highlights Frederick Health’s mission to positively impact the well-being of every individual in our community.

With nearly 4,000 dedicated, compassionate, and talented team members, Frederick Health accomplishes its mission through thoughtful programs, helpful community services, continued education, financial assistance, and more. The 2023 Community Impact Report explores the innovative ways Frederick Health improves access to excellent healthcare services regardless of age, demographic, or gender.

As an independent, not-for-profit healthcare system, Frederick Health differs from larger corporate healthcare entities in that it is flexible enough to respond dynamically to community needs. New programs, services, and locations can be established quickly and effectively.

“We work to provide the resources needed to establish healthy behaviors and engage all members of our community in their wellness,” said Tom Kleinhanzl, President and CEO of Frederick Health.

The recent report covers a wide range of topics.

From free in-home visits for newborns and their families as part of the Family Connects Frederick County program to assisting the growing senior population with navigating everyday healthcare needs by partnering with the Frederick County government, Kleinhanzl says the healthcare system aims to improve access and reduce barriers to provide the resources needed to establish healthy behaviors and expert care.

“Our team is dedicated to providing the community with quality

services, innovative programs, and seamless access to care,” he stated.

The report also includes stories about how the Comprehensive Care Center, Dental Clinic, and Breast Center play a role in caring for patients when it matters the most.

A common thread throughout the Community Impact Report is how Frederick Health consistently seeks to expand access to critical care and reduce emergency department volume and readmission rates. This last point has become the focus of attention across the nation.

For example, 13% of patients discharged from the Frederick Health Hospital emergency department returned for a second visit before the Comprehensive Care Center was developed. After monitoring the number of patients who were referred to the Center, only 1% of ED patients were readmitted.

These proactive steps have helped ease the hospital’s emergency department volume.

According to recent data, Frederick Health has the fourth busiest emergency department in the state, with nearly 76,000 visits last year. Statewide, Maryland saw emergency departments had almost 1.7 million visits. When the new Critical Care expansion opened, Frederick Health was able to increase its emergency department treatment capacity to 70 beds. These physical enhancements are partnered with proactive programs and services that help to reduce emergency department volume. This is essential as it allows the healthcare system to allocate resources for patients arriving at the emergency department with critical issues like heart attacks or strokes while steering patients into services where they can continue their care.

But caring for the community’s wellness extends beyond the doors of just Frederick Health facilities. As the saying goes, it takes a

village. The healthcare system has undertaken expansive efforts that often reach beyond the traditional healthcare setting and include partnerships with many community groups and organizations.

“We’ve always benefited from a generous community,” said Kleinhanzl. “We all succeed when we work together and develop very successful partnerships with our local nonprofit groups and organizations.”

While the healthcare system partners with numerous groups to collaborate on projects and programs, one such relationship highlighted in the report is that with the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County. Frederick Health and the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County work together on essential

programs that improve the community’s health and well-being. Based on the identified priorities, a multi-year plan is created to spread awareness and develop ways to address those priorities. One notable program that has emerged from this process is the Family Connects Frederick County program, mentioned earlier, and the Data Equity Maryland program.

The Data Equity Maryland program reviews population insights through data analysis of criteria such as race, ethnicity, gender, and income to provide a clear picture of healthcare disparities. The findings are then leveraged to give community stakeholders a deeper understanding of systemic inequalities and advocate for programs and actionable steps that create positive

change for our community.

Finally, the report captures Frederick Health’s financial investments in the community. In FY23, the healthcare system provided \$54.7 million back into the community through community health services, clinical research, services, financial assistance, donations, and various community benefit operations. This represents a significant investment in Frederick County’s health.

“Frederick County is a growing community, and Frederick Health is honored to play a role in ensuring that we all have the opportunity to thrive,” said Kleinhanzl.

To view the report, you can visit www.frederickhealth.org/CommunityImpactReport.



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