The Catoctin Banner

DECEMBER 2026

FREE NEWZINE

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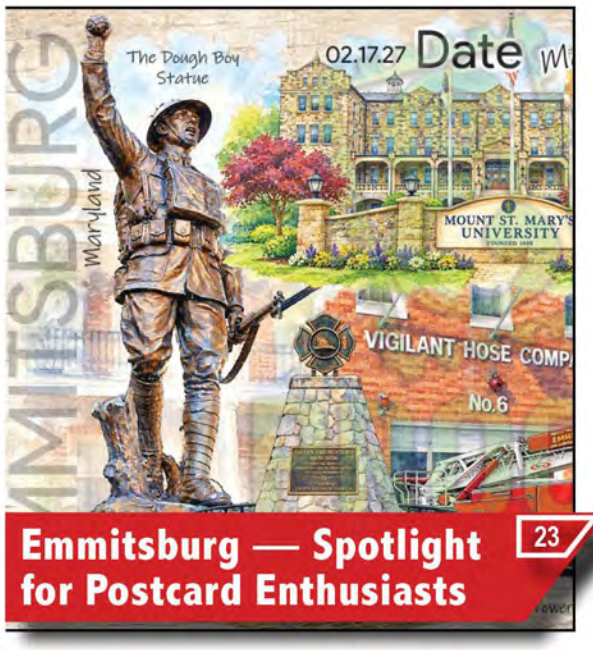
Christmas 1776
Marylanders at Trenton 12



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Tax Planning Now Makes for Happier Holiday Season 39

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Energy assistance is available to all Maryland residents who are eligible. Let us help make your energy costs more affordable.

Office of Home Energy Programs
Your Home Energy Partner

Call

1-800-332-6347

to see if you qualify and to apply.

You do not need a Turn-Off Notice or to be off-service to apply.

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First Baptist Church of THURMONT



SUNDAY SERVICES
8:30 AND 11:00 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES AT 10:00 AM

You Belong Here!

JOIN US FOR OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AT 6:30 PM DECEMBER 24

7 SUNNY WAY, THURMONT, MD
www.fbcthurmont.org

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

CATOCTIN BANNER FANS:

As this issue goes to print, Thanksgiving is upon us, and it has made me reflect on the many blessings this newspaper has brought. I have been the owner of *The Catoctin Banner* for three years now, and I have learned a lot along the way. But I think the ability to meet so many wonderful people in this community has been the biggest blessing of all.

As I travel around the area, I am often greeted with a smile, a nod, or, perhaps most heartwarming of all, a reader who approaches me to tell me how much this paper means to them.

Frequently, someone will say, "Your paper brings me joy," or, "With all the bad going on in our world, it is so nice to read about the good things happening in our community." And those statements are exactly why we at *The Catoctin Banner* keep doing this each and every month!

If you need a little help getting into the holiday spirit, be sure to read "Unwrapping Christmas" on page 6. Written by our newest student writer, Masyn Sanders, a student at Catoctin High School, the article takes you on a journey through the history of some of our holiday traditions. Did you know eggnog dates back to the 13th century? Keep the holiday cheer going on page 41 with Michele Tester's *My Two Cents,* "A Tall Christmas Tale."

Of course, as 2026 comes to a close, we must take the time to thank our many advertisers. We may sound like a broken record, but having a free community newspaper would not be possible without the support of our many local businesses. Please be sure to patronize them this month, and let them know you saw their ad in the paper. And remember to shop small businesses for all your gifts.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful holiday season!

— Alisha Yocum,
Publisher

Factoid

EMMITSBURG

In 1976, the Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners voted to adopt a Village Zone in town to simplify zoning in town and encourage the continuation and establishment of small businesses, along with residential uses.

Factoid

FREDERICK

Frederick Memorial Hospital celebrated the opening of an annex that added 17 private rooms to the hospital, exclusively for obstetrical care, in 1951.

Factoid

EMMITSBURG

In 1951, Sgt. First Class Virgil L. Stambaugh of Emmitsburg was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device (for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy) for actions during the Korean War to help a surrounded platoon of American soldiers.

OUR TEAM



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Since 1995

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AD/CONTENT DEADLINE:
On or before the 15th of month prior to issue month.

Additional Banner Team Members:
Joan Fry, Dr. Thomas Lo, John Nickerson, Buck Reed, Michael Betteridge, Mitchell Tester, Tricia Bush, Jeff Yocum, Aditi Dhananjaya, Makayla Comer, and Jack Davis.

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTIONS: $37.00

POLICY: The publisher of *The Catoctin Banner* reserves the right to revise, reclassify, or reject any advertisement or any article for any reason, at any time, and to omit all copy when not submitted in time to conform with deadline. The views expressed in advertisements may not be those supported by the staff of *The Catoctin Banner*. The deadline for submission is no later than the middle of the month prior to the issue month. Information and advertising copy received after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the publisher. The publisher assumes no liability for misinformation, misprinting, or typographical errors. The publisher reserves the right to edit all submitted material.

2026 Christmas in Thurmont

23rd Annual Christmas in Thurmont

Saturday, December 5

Guardian Hose Fire Hall, 21 North Church Street



10:00 am - 12:45 pm & 2:00 - 2:20 pm
FREE Photos with Santa



10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Make and Take Craft

10:00 am - 2:30 pm
Music by DJ Brian Mo

10:00 am - 2:30 pm
Enter to Win Children's Prizes • Ages 17 & Under
Adult Map Stamping at Local Businesses
Completed Adult Maps Must be Completed by 2:30 pm



2:30 pm
National Award-Winning ESP Dance Performance



3:00 pm • Prize Drawings
Adult Drawings First, Chilrdren's Drawings Follow





THE CATOCTIN BANNER
Good News
send to: news@thecatoctinbanner.com



Unwrapping Christmas



BY MASYN SANDERS, Student Writer

Christmas, celebrated annually on December 25, is a holiday steeped in centuries of evolving cultural traditions, historical anomalies, and surprising origins. While modern celebration is typically gift-giving, lit-up trees, and family gatherings, many of these common traditions have unexpected beginnings.

The contemporary, modern-day image of Santa Claus as a jolly figure dressed in red and white is attributed to a 1931 Coca-Cola holiday magazine advertising campaign illustrated by Haddon Sundblom. Although Coca-Cola did not invent Santa Claus, earlier illustrations of him by Thomas Nast in the late 19th century also depicted him in red. Due to this advertisement by Coca-Cola, the widespread marketing solidified this specific aesthetic in the global consciousness, replacing the earlier depictions of him wearing green, purple, or brown robes. The "original" Santa Claus was inspired by a real person, St. Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop. He was famous for his generosity and kindness, especially toward children and people in need during the 4th century.

Speaking of Santa Claus, we cannot forget about Rudolph. Did you know that Rudolph almost had a different name? Rudolph was created as a promotion by Robert L. May in 1939 for a Montgomery Ward department store Christmas coloring book giveaway. Rollo and Reginald were the other two names that May had considered for his reindeer's name.

The tradition of bringing evergreen trees inside a house during winter predates Christianity. Ancient Romans and Celts used evergreen boughs (the large primary branch of a tree) to symbolize eternal life during the darkest days of the year (winter). The modern Christmas tree tradition started in 16th-century Germany, where devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. However, this tradition did not gain widespread popularity in the English-speaking world until 1848, when the Illustrated London News published an engraving of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert standing with their children with a decorated tree in the background.

Despite Christmas being a major cultural and commercial event, Christmas was once strictly prohibited in parts of the Western world. Back in the mid-17th century, English Puritans, led by Oliver Cromwell, banned the celebration. This was because its festive excess was too extravagant and was viewed as unbiblical and not supported by scripture. From 1659 to 1681, the Massachusetts Bay Colony outlawed Christmas celebrations in Boston and implemented a fine of five shillings for anyone caught feasting, taking off from work, or expressing holiday cheer.

The modern spectacle of illuminated holiday trees took a major step forward in 1895 when President Grover Cleveland introduced the first Christmas tree to the White House that was electrically lit. Before this innovation, trees were dangerously decorated with open-flame wax candles, which were a severe fire hazard. Building upon the 1882 invention of electric lights by Thomas Edison's associate, Edward Hibberd Johnson, the Cleveland family adorned their tree with red, white, and blue bulbs. Although the display was well-received by the public, electric tree lighting remained very expensive for decades and required private wiremen to install.

One of the most well-known Christmas songs was actually never intended for Christmas, but for a church's Thanksgiving concert. "The One-Horse Open Sleigh," known today as "Jingle Bells," was composed by James Lord Pierpont in 1857. The tempo of the song was reportedly inspired by the popular winter activity of horse-drawn sleigh rides and races in Massachusetts. Back then, people would race their one-horse open sleighs through the snowy streets. As the sleighs traveled down the streets, the horses' bells would jingle on their harnesses. The song describes exciting rides through the snow, racing, laughing, and enjoying the winter weather. Its association with Christmas only began decades later. Fun fact: this song also became the first song to be broadcast from space in December 1965.

The well-known candy cane dates back to 17th-century Germany. It is believed that a choirmaster had a local candymaker bend plain white sugar sticks into "shepherd's crooks." The candy canes were then given to the children to keep them quiet during long church services. The peppermint flavoring and red stripes evolved around 1900. Automation and mass production of candy making over time turned this candy into a global holiday staple.

Eggnog began in Europe, around the 13th century, when medieval monks in Britain were drinking posset, which is a warm ale punch with eggs and figs. Over time, this merged with various milk and wine punches and was served at social gatherings. Around the 17th century, sherry became the primary ingredient, and the eggy drink was used for toasting to prosperity, usually among the wealthy, as milk, eggs, and sherry were scarce in Europe at that time. As this holiday drink transitioned to America, it began taking on a whole new taste and popularity. American colonists had access to rum (from the Caribbean), which was considerably less than other liquors shipped from England. Along with the available supply of milk and eggs, the rum version quickly became a drink for people of all economic classes and not just the wealthy.

Perhaps the most popular Christmas flower is the poinsettia. This flower is native to Mexico and is called "Flor de Nochebuena," which means Christmas Eve flower. A Mexican legend tells the story of a poor child who did not have a gift to bring to the church for Jesus. The poor child gathered some weeds, which somehow grew into bright red, beautiful flowers. Over time, this flowering plant, the poinsettia, became associated with Christmas throughout the world. The poinsettia got its name after Joel Roberts Poinsett, who was the first U.S. minister to Mexico. The flower was introduced to the United States in the 1820s and can also be found in white, pink, and cream colors.

As we celebrate the joy and beauty of the Christmas season, let us remember that the true meaning goes beyond presents, decorations, and holiday traditions. It is a time to lend a helping hand and reach out to those who may be struggling, lonely, or in need of a little extra kindness. The smallest gestures can make a lasting difference. The greatest gift we can give is the gift of compassion, generosity, and love.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous new year!

The Catoctin Banner's 2nd Annual Photo Contest!

Calling All Photographers!



Calling all photographers—amateurs and pros alike! Show off your best shots of animals and get a chance to be featured in our newspaper**. The submission deadline is January 16, 2027.**

How It Works:

- Submit your vertical, print-quality photo (horizontal photos cannot be accepted as photo needs to fit our cover format).
- Our newspaper staff will select the top finalists.
- Readers vote for their favorite photo!

Grand Prize: The photo with the most votes will be featured on the cover of *The Catoctin Banner,* and the photographer will be interviewed and celebrated within the pages of that issue, as well as receive a $25.00 gift card from the advertiser of their choice.

Don't miss your chance to showcase the beauty of our community—start snapping today!

Submit your photos at https://bit.ly/CBPhoto27 or scan the QR code.





HORSE & CARRIAGE RIDES

5-8 PM by Reservation Only
$10 Per Person
Call 301-271-7313



UGLY SWEATER CONTEST

8:30 PM
10Tavern



SHOPPING & MINGLING

Do your holiday shopping and support local businesses

Another Great Event by Main Street Thurmont
thurmontmainstreet.com



From the MAYOR

THURMONT

Mayor John Kinnaird

Christmas is a time of love and joy. We can help spread both by donating to the many area charities that help our friends and neighbors get through tough times. Cold weather brings many challenges, including increased heating costs; the loss of work; the need for warm clothing; and the need to secure healthy, nutritious meals. Your donations of clean, wearable clothing, jackets, gloves, and hats to the Thurmont Clothes Closet can help ensure local families will have warm clothing for both children and adults. Donations to the Thurmont Food Bank help put nutritious food on the tables of local families in need. Non-perishable food, personal hygiene items, and infant diapers and clothing will all be greatly appreciated. You can reach out to the Seton Center or the Thurmont Food Bank to make cash donations to help with heating bills, gasoline costs, and other family expenses. There are also many other organizations collecting donations of toys, clothing, and cash to help bring joy to families this Christmas. Please help in any way you can. Our friends and neighbors will appreciate your generous donations.

I want to thank the Thurmont Scouts and our residents for the amazingly successful food drive held in mid-November. In total, the Scouts collected over 4,465 lbs of food donations, all of which will benefit local families. Thanks also to all the businesses, individuals, and Scouts who have been donating toys to the Marine Corps Toys For Tots program. I am proud to know that Thurmont residents continually step up when asked to help those in need.

The Town of Thurmont Water Department recently sent out another notice of service line lead status letter. For the majority of residents, no action is required. These letters are required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and are designed to identify water service lines made of lead, galvanized metal, or of unknown material. Currently, the town is working to identify the type of water lines feeding all the town-owned portions of the water service. Previously, residents were asked to help identify the type of water line connecting to the water service inside their homes. If you have plastic or copper lines, there is no need for concern. If your indoor lines are made of lead or galvanized metal, you should be aware of the possible hazards these lines can cause. The recent letter goes into great detail regarding those possible hazards. Be sure to read the letter carefully and follow the guidance provided. If you are going to be replacing your portion of the water service line, please notify the Town of Thurmont by calling 301-271-7313. If you have any questions about your water service lines, you are invited to attend a public meeting at the Town Office on Thursday, December 10, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., where you can ask questions or get more information.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends, and that you enjoyed having time together. Our family is spread all over the place, and we do our best to get together with them for the day. We are thankful for all of our family, friends, and neighbors.

Everyone will be attending many family, friend, and public events over the next four weeks. Please give yourselves ample time for travel, drive carefully, and don't overdo your celebrations!

Karen and I want each of you to have a safe holiday travel season. We also want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years.

I can be reached at 301-606-9458 or by email at jkinnaird@thurmont.com.



Advertise With Us
•Alisha@TheCatoctinBanner.com•

TOWN HALL REPORT

BY JAMES RADA, JR.

THURMONT

For more information on the Town of Thurmont, visit www.thurmont.com or call 301-271-7313.

Middle School Communications Upgrades Approved

The Thurmont Mayor and Commissioners recently approved a $67,746 bill to upgrade the radio system in Thurmont Middle School to improve communications between people inside and outside of the school, particularly police, fire, and ambulance members. Hankey's Radio will perform the upgrades, which will be funded by a grant the Thurmont Police Department received.

Town Considering Time Limits for Public Comments

The Town of Thurmont is considering putting time limits on public comments at the end of town meetings. This is something most town and county governments do. Although not taking an official position, the Thurmont Mayor and Commissioners want to consider adding a five-minute limit on public comments. They will take up the issue at a future meeting to hear what residents have to say.

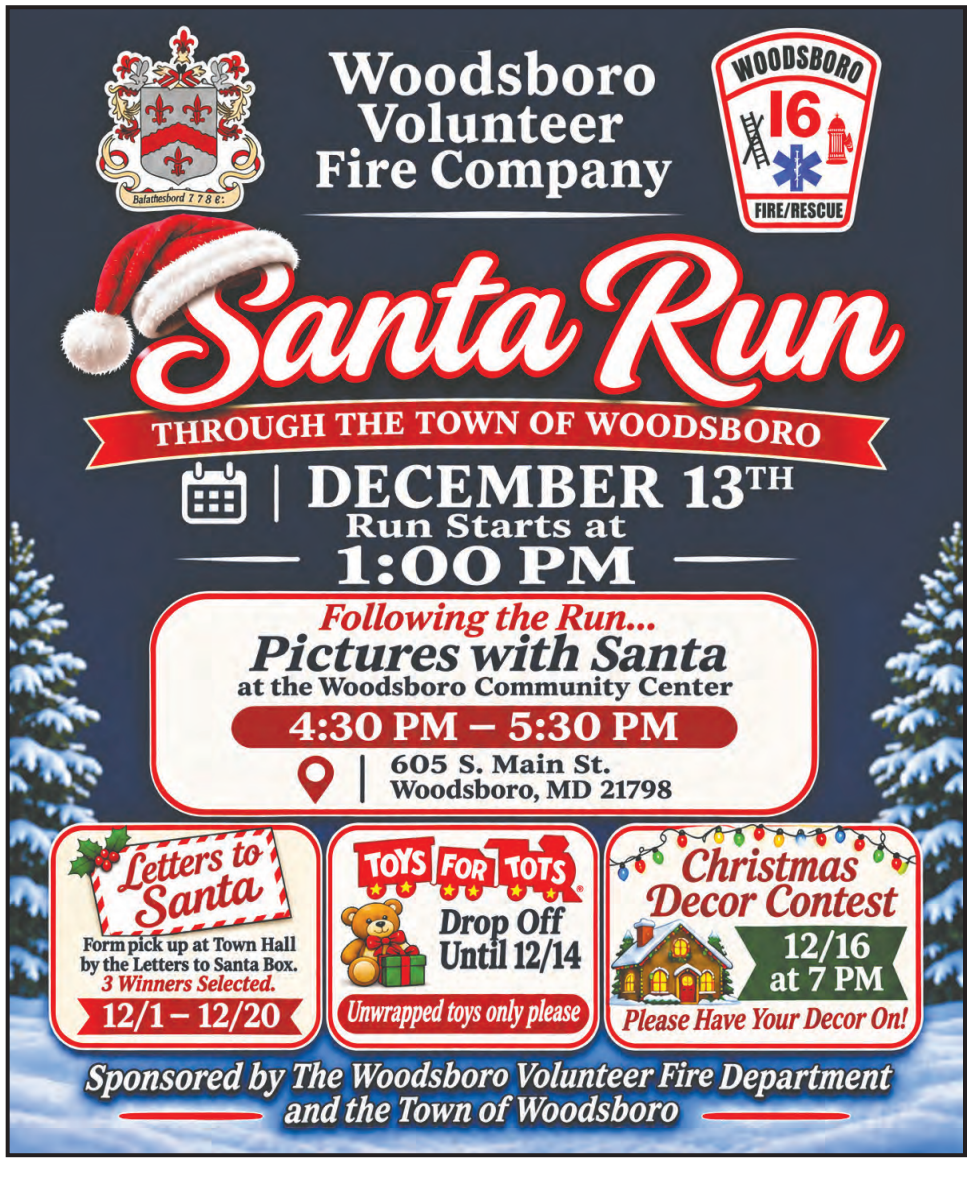
Lead and Copper Notices Mailed

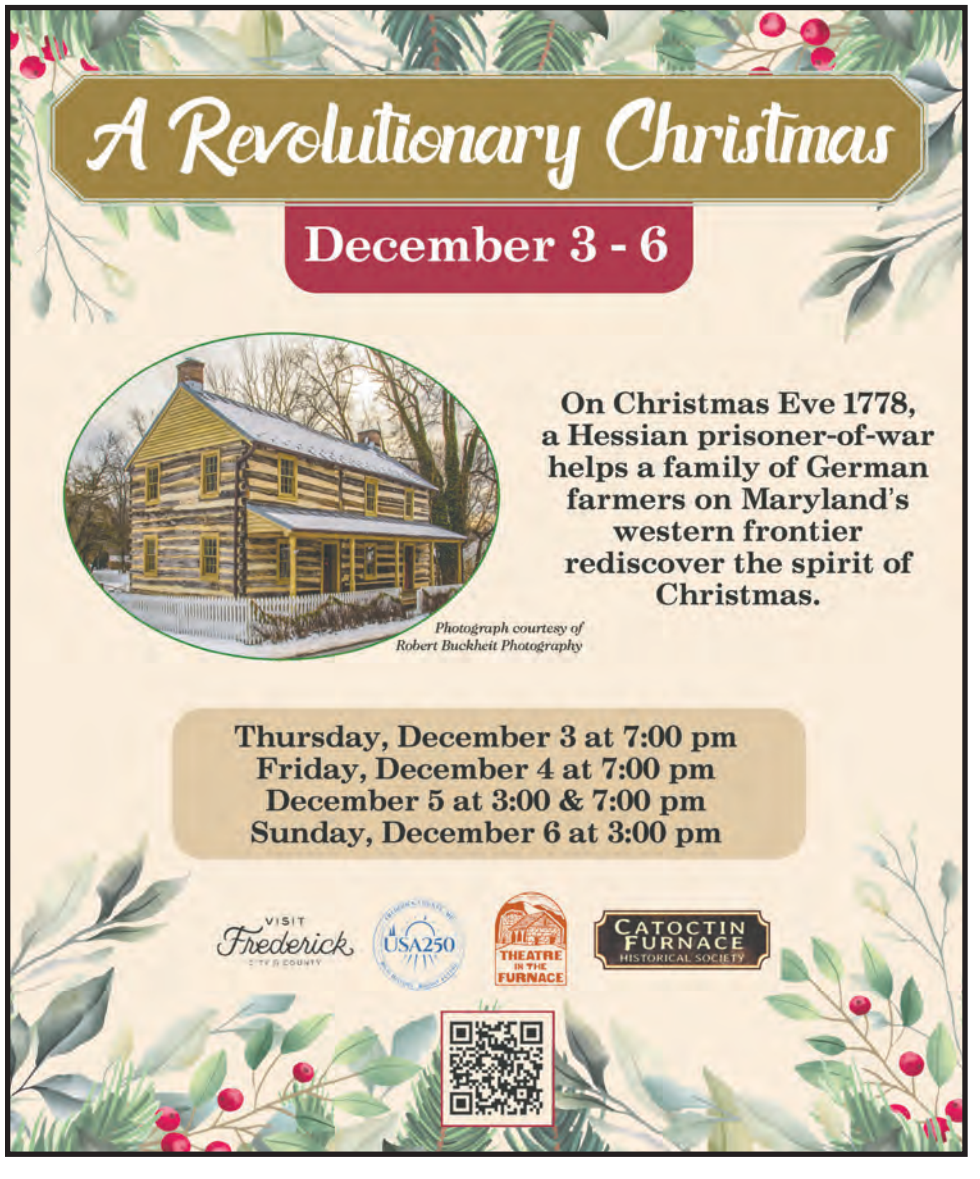
The Town of Thurmont mailed its annual Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) consumer notification notices to residents recently. This is a required notice that is part of the federal Lead and Copper Rule Improvements. If you have questions about the letter, you can follow the communication instructions provided within the notice. Town staff understands that some residents who are asked to submit a photograph of their water service line may find it difficult or impossible to do. Town is available to assist residents with this. The town will hold a public information meeting to answer questions about the notice on December 10 at 10:00 a.m. in the town office.




Christmas
MUSIC
presented by the Emmitsburg Community Chorus
60th year
Winter 2026
Concert Schedule
Basilica of St. Elizabeth Seton
St. John's Church, Creagerstown
Lewistown United Methodist Church
Homewood Living, Frederick
Sunday, Nov. 29, 4 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 6, 3 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 13, 3 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.
Emmitsburg Community Chorus concerts are made possible in part through a grant from the Frederick Arts Council.
EmmitsburgCommunityChorus.org


WINTER IS HERE, CATOCTIN!
GET A ONE-TIME TUNE-UP ON YOUR HVAC SYSTEM TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR THE COLDER TEMPERATURES!
Holtzople
Heating, Air Conditioning & Electrical Services
TRANE COMFORT SPECIALIST
301-898-3494 HOLTZOPLE.COM


Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Company
WOODSBORO 16 FIRE/RESCUE
Santa Run
THROUGH THE TOWN OF WOODSBORO
DECEMBER 13TH
Run Starts at
1:00 PM
Following the Run...
Pictures with Santa
at the Woodsboro Community Center
4:30 PM – 5:30 PM
605 S. Main St.
Woodsboro, MD 21798
Letters to Santa
Form pick up at Town Hall by the Letters to Santa Box.
3 Winners Selected.
12/1 – 12/20
TOYS FOR TOTS
Drop Off Until 12/14
Unwrapped toys only please
Christmas Decor Contest
12/16 at 7 PM
Please Have Your Decor On!
Sponsored by The Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Department and the Town of Woodsboro


A Revolutionary Christmas
December 3 - 6
On Christmas Eve 1778, a Hessian prisoner-of-war helps a family of German farmers on Maryland's western frontier rediscover the spirit of Christmas.
Photograph courtesy of Robert Buckheit Photography
Thursday, December 3 at 7:00 pm
Friday, December 4 at 7:00 pm
December 5 at 3:00 & 7:00 pm
Sunday, December 6 at 3:00 pm
VISIT Frederick
USA250
THEATRE IN THE FURNACE
CATOCTIN FURNACE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



From the MAYOR

EMMITSBURG

Mayor Frank Davis

As 2026 draws to a close, I would like to reflect on a year of progress, investments, and community spirit for our great town. Together, our residents, businesses, staff, and elected officials have worked hard to preserve our small-town charm while building a stronger and sustainable future.

Here is a look back at what we have accomplished in 2026:

- The North Seton Avenue Waterline and Green Street Project is well underway. The $5.3 million project will bring much-needed upgrades to our water system, storm drains, and roadways. Work will pause in late December for the winter months and will move full-speed ahead in early spring. The projected completion is September 2027.

- West Main Street Waterline Replacement Project will be going out to bid within the month. Staff have been able to secure grant funding to assist with the project.

- The town has partnered with Downtown Strategies to launch a practical, five-year revitalization plan, focusing on filling storefronts, enhancing the streetscape, and bringing vibrant energy to our downtown.

- The Façade Improvement Grant was a great success in providing matching grants to help property owners restore building facades in our Sustainable Communities Area.

- The Emmitsburg Community Garden continues to grow with more beds added in the main garden area, as well as the addition of the Monarch Butterfly Garden in Myers Park.

- Our Community Meal Program served over 1,500 meals to those in the community who may need assistance or for folks just looking for a night out for fellowship and friendly conversation.

- The construction has begun on the final phase of the Brookfield Development. Ground is moving, and you will see new rooftops soon.

I look forward to keeping you informed in the upcoming months, while sharing new initiatives on the horizon.

With the mid-term election completed, I am looking forward to continuing to work with the officials who were reelected to represent us at the county, state, and federal levels. For those newly elected, I extend my congratulations to you and invite you to visit our community for a firsthand look at our amazing town.

Please contact me anytime with questions or concerns. I'm always happy to talk over a cup of coffee.

From my family and the entire town staff, we want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season.



Thurmont Lions Club
FUDGE SALE

Makes a Great Gift!

Place Orders by December 13

Call 301.606.7873

FLAVORS

Vanilla; Chocolate; Maple; Peanut Butter; Peppermint; Maple Pecan; Cheesecake; Sugar Cookie; Red Velvet Cream Cheese

1 lb - $17.00 - 1/2 lb - $9.00

Pick-Up Orders on December 19, 10 am -12 pm

(at St John's Lutheran Church, 15 N Church St, Thurmont)

TOWN HALL REPORT

BY JAMES RADA, JR.

EMMITSBURG

For more information on the Town of Emmitsburg, visit www.emmitsburgmd.gov or call 301-600-6300.

Impact Fees Increased

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners recently voted unanimously to increase the impact fees paid by each new home in town from $1,200 to $3,500. Impact fees in Emmitsburg have not changed in 18 years, and that change was to decrease them. The commissioners also voted to remove a $200 earmark in those fees for the emergency warning system. The fees can be used for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of municipal roads, sidewalks, streetlights, and corresponding electric service, park, and recreational areas.

Officials Can't Enter into NDAs

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners voted unanimously for an amendment to the town code to prohibit town officials and employees from entering into non-disclosure agreements or any type of confidentiality agreement with a person or business doing business with or seeking to do business in the town. Doing so would automatically void any agreement made.

Additional Water Bonds Can Be Issued

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to issue up to an additional $2,575,000.00 in tax-exempt bonds to be issued pursuant to MDE's Maryland Water Infrastructure Financing Administration and in connection with the North Seton Avenue Waterline Replacement project. This was needed because the board had previously approved Emmitsburg Drinking Water Bonds to not exceed in the amount of $859,164.00. However, the town was awarded an additional amount of $2,573,450. This necessitated increasing the bond principal amount by a matching amount.

Change Order Approved

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners approved a change order from Fox & Associates for $14,535 for engineering for the North Seton Ave. Green Street project related to construction materials testing.

Appointments Made

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners made the following appointments to town commissions:

- Wendy Hagan was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee with a term of November 4, 2026, to November 4, 2028.
- Luellen Maskeny was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee with a term of November 2, 2026, to November 2, 2028.
- Tim O'Donnell was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee with a term of November 2, 2026, to November 2, 2028.
- Gail Fowler resigned from the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Apples United Church of Christ

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Wednesday, December 23rd at 7:00 PM

Refreshments following the program

COME AS YOU ARE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December24th at 4:00 PM

Gather at Apples UCC for this gratitude-filled, low-church celebration anticipating the arrival of Christ our Savior. This humble experience of simple song and storytelling promises to harken back to that first Christmas with an intimate, meaningful, and authentic service that puts faith and love and the center of our worship.

7908 Apples Church Rd • Thurmont, MD 21788



From the BURGESS

WOODSBORO

Burgess Heath Barnes

I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

I always like to remind people to look out for others who may not have as much during this time of the year and help someone in need if you can.

I can report that several of the water leaks in town that were discovered during the testing of the water have been repaired; however, we still have a few more to repair. We are working to get them all completed before hard winter sets in.

I am happy to announce that a community food bank will start, hopefully, in December at the Woodsboro Community Center. I am really excited to announce this partnership with Autumns Table to provide food for our community residents that need it. We will keep the community updated once the pantry has officially started.

On December 13 at 1:00 p.m., Santa will make his annual run through Woodsboro on the fire truck with the Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Department. In addition this year, we will host Santa for free pictures with Santa at the Woodsboro Community Center (backside of the town hall) between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. after the Santa run. Please see the advertisement in this month's paper on page 11.

Beginning December 1, we will have a toy drop box at the town office, if you would like to donate an unwrapped toy. We will then donate the toys to a local organization that helps local children in need. In addition, there will be a letter to Santa box outside town hall. A letter form can be picked up at the town hall or community center for the children to place in the mailbox. We will draw several letters out of it across the different age groups to award gifts, so be sure and get your letters in to Santa.

Our second annual Christmas decorating contest will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 16. Be sure to have your decorations turned on that night as the judges will drive through town and pick the winners.

The community center is officially available for use. If you would like to use it, please call the town office on 301-898-3800, and block it off with Mary. Currently, it is available for use Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and evenings and weekends on a case-by-case basis.

Woodsboro Town meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. In addition, Planning and Zoning meetings are at 6:00 p.m. 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 Planning & Zoning meeting. Meetings are held in the Woodsboro Town Hall, located at 605 S. Main Street, Woodsboro, MD 21798. The public is always invited to attend.

Tom's Creek United Methodist Church
Come journey with us...

Sunday Worship Service - 9 am
Sunday School • 10:30 am
Services are livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube

Christmas Cantata – "Christmas...Sing Noel"
Please join us on December 20, 9 am, at Tom's Creek United Methodist Church, 10926 Simmons Road, Emmitsburg, MD.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Church Services
Please join us on December 24, for services at 5 pm and 11 pm at Tom's Creek United Methodist Church, 10926 Simmons Road, Emmitsburg, MD.
Every neighbor is welcome!

301-447-3171
www.TomsCreekUMC.com

FREDERICK COUNTY TOUR of Country Churches
DECEMBER 12, 2026
FROM 1 PM - 5 PM

Mount Moriah Evangelical Lutheran Church
15116 Foxville Church Road
Sabillasville, MD

Foxville School House
Scandanavian Themed
14814 Foxville-Deerfield Road
Sabillasville, MD

Christmas Eve Services

MOUNT MORIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
15116 Foxville Church Road
Sabillasville, MD
THURSDAY • DEC. 24TH
STARTING @ 7 PM

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
13025 Greensburg Road
Smithsburg, MD
THURSDAY • DEC. 24TH
STARTING @ 9 PM

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For information, call or text Pastor Julie Brigham at 240-405-2173 or email prjulie@verizon.net

Thurmont Community Ambulance SERVICE
BINGO!
EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT!
Doors Open @ 5 PM
Bingo Starts @ 7 PM
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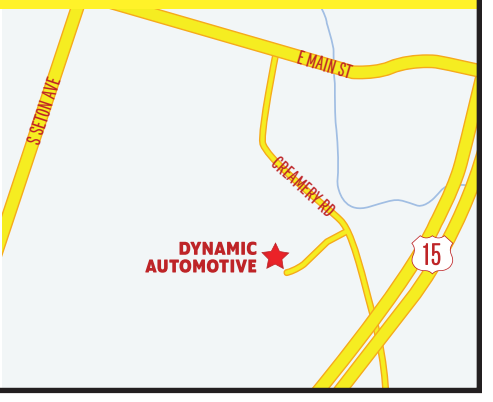

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PRAISE SERVICE 10:30 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL (K-ADULTS): 9:30 AM
~ Special Events ~
THURMONT CHURCH TOUR
Dec. 12 & 13, 5-7 PM
MUSICAL CELEBRATION
Dec. 20 • 9:30 AM
COMBINED SERVICES
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
Dec. 24
7 PM • with Puppet Ministry
9 PM • Traditional Service
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1067B FSK HIGHWAY, KEYMAR, MD
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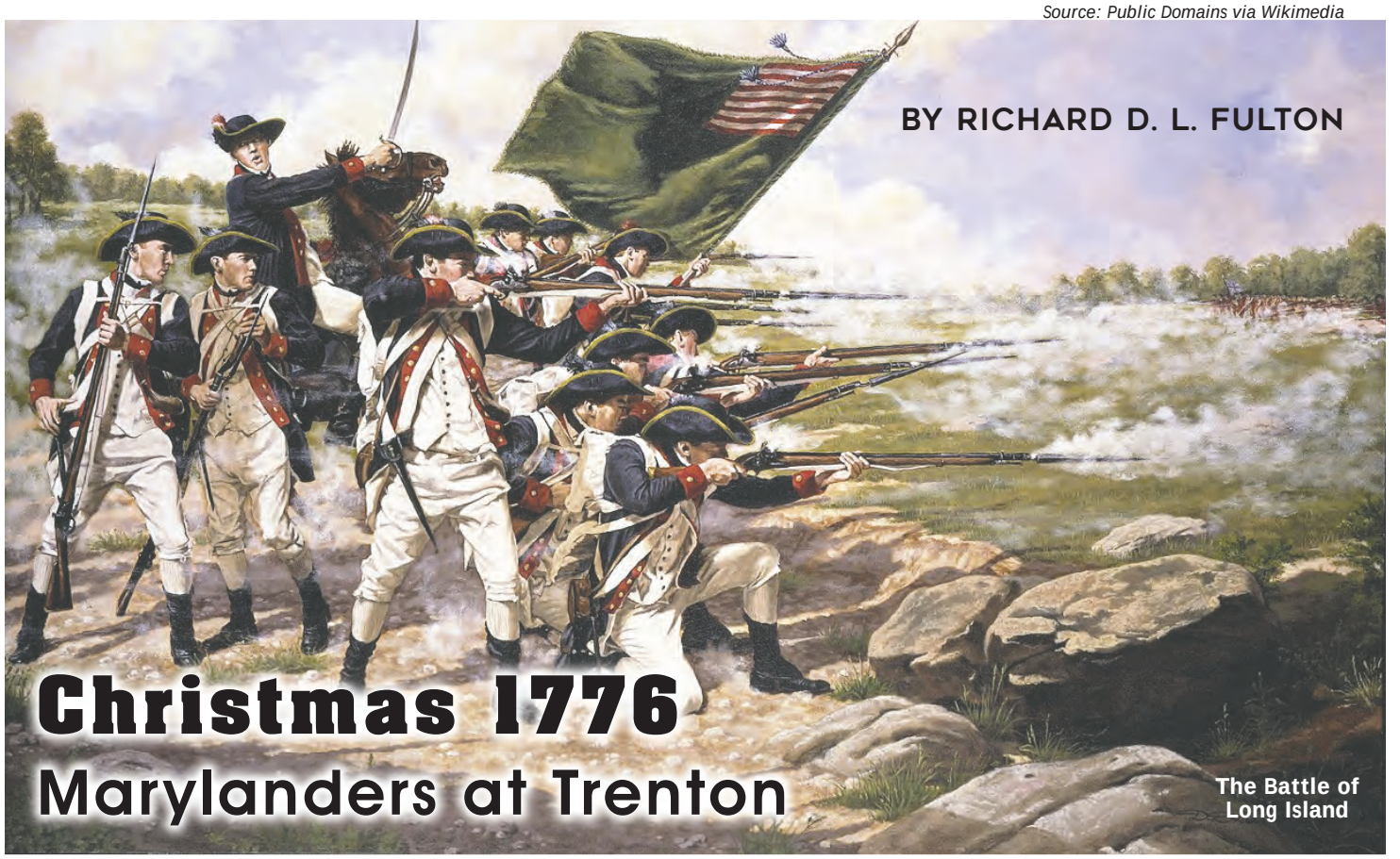
SATURDAY 8 AM - 12 PM

Source: Public Domains via Wikimedia



Christmas 1776
Marylanders at Trenton

The Battle of Long Island

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

It may be doubted that whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting results upon the history of the world. ~ George Otto Trevelyan, British historian

The Continental Army, under the command of General George Washington, went into his first major battle of the Revolutionary War at Long Island (also known as the Battle of Brooklyn), on August 27, 1776, with 28,500 troops.

But the defeat at the hands of the British and German mercenaries (referred to as the Hessians) in that engagement sent Washington and his troops into a defensive withdrawal, which resulted in two additional defeats at the Battle of White Plains on October 28 and the Battle of Fort Washington on November 16.

Thus began the "Long Retreat," with Washington doing all he could in order to avoid a final battle with the enemy, a retreat that ultimately ended on the Delaware shoreline in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

The path he took to get there was strewn with abandoned equipment and supplies, as soldiers dumped extraneous loads, and horses that hauled supply wagons gave out. In addition, casualties of war, illness, and desertions had taken a significant toll on the troops.

With the British and Hessians hot on his trail, his rag-tag army barely made it across the Delaware, the enemy nearly capturing his rear guard, which were caught in the open in boats on the Delaware.

Washington's forces completed their withdrawal into Pennsylvania on December 8, but only 3,000 of the original force of 28,500 remained; half-starved and exhausted, they were in bad shape.

Watching the troops disembarking into Bucks County, Lieutenant Charles Wilson Peale, of the 2nd Battalion of the Pennsylvania militia wrote, "The sick and half-naked veterans of the long retreat streamed past. I thought it was the most Hellish scene I have ever beheld."

THE SHATTERED MARYLANDERS

Among those numbers of exhausted men were the survivors of the 1st Maryland Regiment under the command of Colonel William Smallwood that had been devastated at the Battle of Long Island when Washington ordered the regiment, along with some Delaware troops, on what basically amounted to having been a suicide mission, in order to make a stand, with only 400 men, against the enemy to allow for the main body of the Continental Army to retreat.

The Marylanders and the Delaware troops stood against overwhelming numbers allowing the army to escape, but it cost the Marylanders and the Delaware troops 256 killed and a hundred of their numbers captured—the lion's share fell on Maryland with a loss of 300 killed, wounded and captured. Only a dozen escaped either fate.

To this day, the alleged "mass grave" in which the dead were buried… has never been found. But the survivors rejoined the main body and found themselves involved in the "long retreat."

That which was left of the 1st Maryland Regiment was brigaded with New York and Delaware troops, in order to maintain a stronger hold onto Chatterton's Hill during the Battle of White Plains. In the effort to hold onto the hill, the Marylanders suffered more than 40 casualties, including their commander, Colonel Smallwood. and captains John Day Scott, and Bennett Bracco, according to Finding the Maryland 400's website (msamaryland400.com).

The 1st Maryland had something of a break by going into the Battle of Fort Washington, but by then, other Maryland units had also entered the army…. including Colonel Moses Rawlings' 200-man Maryland and Virginia Riflemen and Captain Barton Lucas's (Maryland) Company.

By the time the smoke had cleared, and the Americans surrendered Fort Washington, two-thirds of Rawling's troops were killed, wounded, or captured. Lucas' Marylanders didn't fare much better, with over 60 percent of his men killed, wounded, or captured, according to Finding the Maryland 400's website (msamaryland400.com).

And then, the "long retreat" commenced.

■ continue reading on Page 13

continued from page 12

THE BATTLE OF TRENTON

(Primary source: "The Victory at Trenton," by Richard D. L. Fulton, and published in the November/ December 1988 issue of the New Jersey state magazine *New Jersey Outdoors*.)

As was stated, Washington's retreat across the Delaware was completed on December 8. The British, convinced that the embattled and serially defeated Continental Army could no longer pose a real threat, and the British established a winter encampment at Pennington, New Jersey, thereby leaving Trenton occupied by around 1,200 plus Hessian troops under the command of Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall.

The British Commander-in-Chief, General William Howe planned that if Washington was intending to make a "last stand" along the river, they would hold off until the river—which was even then full of floating ice-chunks and sheets—froze over, which would then enable the British troops to cross.

The Hessian troops were part of the British forces that attacked the 1st Maryland Regiment at Long Island.

But Washington had no plan to sit and wait for the British and had already formed a plan to cross the river and attack the enemy forces before the river froze over.

Of all the Marylanders that had survived to be present for the planned assault on Trenton, their massed total amounted to some 700-plus individuals: 1st Maryland Regiment had 163 soldiers present, the reorganized Maryland and Virginia Rifle Regiment had 105 individuals present, and the German Battalion, which included individuals from ethnic German colonists in Maryland and Pennsylvania, had some 375 troops.

As far as reorganization, the 1st Maryland and the Maryland and Virginia Rifle Regiment were attached to Brigadier General Hugh Mercer's Brigade, while the German Battalion served in Brigadier General Matthias Alexis Roche de Fermoy's brigade.

Washington had managed to assimilate a force of about 2,400 troops concentrated at McConkey's Ferry, as well as 18 artillery pieces. Additionally, boats manned by the 14th Massachusetts Regiment under the command of Colonel John Glover were to be employed in executing the crossing. The attack was to occur on Christmas day.

The general planned a three-prong assault on Trenton as weather conditions worsened. Washington was to attack from McConkey's Ferry: Troops under Brigadier General James Ewing were to cross the river and capture a key bridge; Colonel John Calwalader was to cross at Bristol and attack Trenton from the south; and General Puttnam was to cross and attack Mount Holly.

As the weather worsened, and a driving sleet, hail and snow commenced, the four-prong plan went to pieces. No one could get across the river, but nevertheless, Washington was determined to proceed.

Once across the river, the troops were faced with a three-hour march to Trenton. By the time Washington's force was in a sound position to attack, it was 7:30 a.m., on the day after Christmas.

The 1st Maryland and the Maryland and Virginia Rifle Regiment, as well as the rest of Mercer's Brigade approached Trenton from the northwest to cut-off any Hessian troops from escaping in that direction, and moved into town, flanking and firing into any Hessian troops trying to form a battleline to defend against Washington's advancing forces.

The attack caught Colonel Rall and the Hessians totally off-guard. The attack of the Continental Army was so overwhelming that the battle was done and over by 9:30 a.m.

Source: Public Domains via Wikimedia



General George Washington crossing the Delaware.

Unbelievably, Washington's army sustained a mere four wounded. The Hessians suffered a loss of some 120 killed and wounded, with Colonel Rall having been mortally wounded. About 800 to 900 Hessians were taken as prisoners, and some 500 successfully escaped.

The last group of Hessians to surrender did so to Roche de Fermoy's German Battalion and his Marylanders, who reportedly demanded the surrender of the enemy in their own language!

The troops also captured six brass cannons, 40 horses, 1,000 muskets and rifles, musical instruments, and 40 barrels of rum.

The battle turned the tide of war in Washington's favor, but the war would drag on for another seven years.





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$589,000

4 Bdrm/ 3/5 Baths 3 Fully Finished Levels/ Gas Firepl/ Morning Rm/ In-Ground Saltwater Pool w/ Waterfall



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309 HORNERS LANE, ROCKVILLE, MD

$349,900

2 Bdrms/ 1 Bath/.29 Acre Lot/ Hdwd Flrs/ Brick Fireplace/Screened Porch/ Attic Storage



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14516 PEN MAR HIGH ROCK RD, CASCADE, MD

$279,000

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1545 COTTAGE LN, TOWSON, MD

$335,000

3 Bdrm/ 2 Bath/Brick End Unit Townhome/ Hdwd Flrs/ Finished LL/ Fenced Rear Yard



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301-401-8620
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UNDER CONTRACT



3627-6 BANQUO DR, SILVER SPRING, MD

$390,000

4 Bdrms/ 3/5 Baths/ Townhouse-Style End-Unit Condo/Finished LL/Hot Tub/Recent Improvements Complete/Assigned Parking



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Twelve Days of Christmas Lottery Drawing

Support the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company by purchasing tickets for the Twelve Days of Christmas Lottery Raffle. The cost is a $10.00 donation per ticket. The winner will be picked by the evening Maryland Pick 3 Lottery numbers for December 14-25. Get your tickets online at tockyridgeevfc.org, or call one of the numbers listed in the advertisement on page 45.

Thurmont AMVETS Turkey & Shrimp Giveaway

Members, join the Thurmont AMVETS Post 7 (Members Only) on Saturday, December 12, for the Turkey & Shrimp Giveaway. View the advertisement on page 44 for more information.

Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company Bingo

Mark your calendars for the next Bingo at the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company in Rocky Ridge on Saturday, December 12. Doors open at 5:00 p.m., with games starting at 7:00 p.m. Come hungry! Food is available for purchase. View the advertisement on page 35.

New Year's Eve Bingo

Ring in the New Year by winning some cash! The Thurmont Ambulance Company will hold its annual New Year's Eve Bingo on December 31. Doors open at 5:00 p.m., with games starting at 8:00 p.m. Over $17,000 in cash payouts. Advance Tickets are $50.00. Tickets at the door are $60.00. View the advertisement on page 35 for details.

Catoctin Sports Boosters Spirit Wear Sale

Join the Catoctin Sports Boosters for a day of shopping, spirit, and holiday fun! Stop by the Catoctin High School cafeteria on December 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., for new spirit wear and blanket releases, and get your photos with the Cougar mascot and Santa! View the advertisement on page 33.

Harriet Chapel Events

Harriet Chapel will celebrate Christmas with the Traditional Village Christmas on December 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and the Museums by Candlelight on December 12, from noon to 5:00 p.m. Both events will include free refreshments, make-and-take crafts, and Docent-led tours, plus a Christmas Bazaar with homemade crafts, jewelry, ornaments, and more. View the advertisement on page 30 for more details.

Santa and Donuts in your PJs

Join Santa for Donuts in your PJs at Elias Lutheran Church in Emmitsburg on December 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The event will include free crafts, food, and fun. View the advertisement on page 29.

Thurmont Christmas Church Tour

Discover the beauty and peace of the season with the Thurmont Christmas Church Tour on December 12 and 13, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The tour includes five historical churches, where you can admire their architecture and Christmas decorations. The churches include Apples Church of Christ, Thurmont United Methodist Church, Trinity United Church of Christ, Weller Methodist Church, and Harriet Chapel (Saturday only). View the advertisement on page 28.

St. Paul's Christmas Eve Service

Join St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Thurmont for its Christmas Eve Service on December 24. A musical prelude will begin at 6:00 p.m., and the service with lessons and carols begins at 6:30 p.m. View the advertisement on page 27 for more information.

St. Anthony's Bingo

Join St. Anthony's for an evening of good food and fun at its Old-fashioned Bingo on December 5. Doors open at 5:00 p.m., and games begin at 6:30 p.m. The event includes 50/50, tip jars, and raffles, as well as baked goods for sale. View the advertisement on page 27.

Thurmont Lions Club Soup Sale

Warm up with some delicious homemade soup from the Thurmont Lions Club. The sale will include Chicken Corn, Ham & Bean, Sausage Tortellini, and Stuffed Pepper soups for $10.00 per quart. You can order by calling Joyce at 301-606-7873. Pickup will be on January 30, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church in Thurmont. View the advertisement on page 26.

Free Breakfast with Santa

Join the Thurmont Ambulance Company for its annual free Breakfast with Santa at the Thurmont Event Complex on December 12, from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.. Breakfast includes pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, orange juice, milk, and coffee. View the advertisement on page 26.

Dirty Dawg Twelve Days of Christmas and Celebration

Bring the pups and celebrate Christmas at The Dirty Dawg in Thurmont. Each day, the store will offer specials through December 12. View the advertisement on page 25 for a full list of specials. On Saturday, December 12, join them for the big Christmas Celebration and fill a stocking for $25.00. Red Envelope Coffee Co. will be serving up hot drinks from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and come kiss Paco the Beer Buro with all proceeds going to the Special Olympics of Maryland. View the advertisement on page 25.

Frederick County Parks & Rec Winter Programs

The Winter Recreater registration is now open. Sign up for one of the many programs your whole family will love! Programs include fitness, sports, nature, history, dance, cooking, arts and crafts, preschool, homeschool, and much more! View the advertisement on page 24 for more information about how to register.

Thurmont Lions Club Christmas Cookie Contest

Do you like to bake and support a good cause? Bring six of your finest cookies for the Thurmont Lions Club Christmas Cookie Contest on December 11, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Cost is $10.00 per entry, and all proceeds go to local charities. For more information and a listing of prizes, view the advertisement on page 20.

St. Paul's Free Christmas Concert

Join the Catoctin Brass Quintet for a free Christmas Concert, Making Spirits Bright, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Thurmont. View the advertisement on page 20 for more information.





Live Music at the Thurmont AMVETS

Love live entertainment? Check out the dates for live music at the Thurmont AMVETS Post 7! On December 5 is Retrospective Band, 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.; on December 11 is Lauren Hill Acoustic Guitarist, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.; on December 19 is Firehouse DJ, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. This is open to the public, and there is no cover charge. Food is available for purchase until 7:00 p.m. View the advertisement on page 20.

Trinity UCC Christmas Eve Service

Join Trinity UCC as they celebrate the greatest gift of all—Jesus Christ. The Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be held on December 24 at 7:00 p.m. The church will welcome Rev. Dr. Barbara Rowlett to the pulpit every Sunday in December and for the Christmas Eve Service. View the advertisement on page 19 for more information.

Rocky Ridge Holiday Assistance Drive

The Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company is holding a Holiday Assistance Drive. Drop off new unwrapped toys, blankets/throws, or holiday meal items by December 13 at the Fire Hall. View the advertisement on page 16 for more information.

Graceham Moravian Church Events

Graceham Moravian Church will hold its monthly Served with Grace Free Dinner on Monday, December 7, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. On December 24, join them for their Candlelight Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. View the advertisement on page 13 for more information.

Children's Christmas Party

Come celebrate the holidays with the Emmitsburg Lions Club at its Annual Children's Christmas Party on December 12, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Vigilant Hose Company Activities Building. The event includes crafts, hot dogs, cookies, hot chocolate, and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus at noon. View the advertisement on page 13.

Weller UMC Events

Tour Weller UMC's building on December 12, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., as part of the Thurmont Tour of Churches. On December 20, join them for a musical celebration at their combined service at 9:30 a.m. On December 24, join them for Christmas Eve Services at 7:00 p.m. (includes puppet ministry) and 9:00 p.m. (traditional service). View the advertisement on page 12 for more information.

Mt. Moriah and St. Paul's Lutheran Church Events

On December 12, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., take the Frederick County Tour of Churches, which includes Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church and the Foxville School House in Sabillasville. For Christmas Eve, you can join the congregations for their Christmas Eve Services on December 24 at 7:00 p.m. at Mt. Moriah and 9:00 p.m. at St. Paul's in Smithsburg. View the advertisement on page 11 for more information.

Tom's Creek Services

Tom's Creek UMC will host a Christmas Cantata – "Christmas…Sing Noel" on December 20 at 9:00 a.m. at the church. Then on December 24, join them for their Candlelight Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome! View the advertisement on page 11.

Apples Church Christmas Events and Christmas Eve Service

Join Apples Church for its annual Christmas Program on December 23 at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served following the program. On December 24 at 4:00 p.m., join them for a gratitude-filled celebration anticipating the arrival of Christ through song and storytelling. View the advertisement on page 16.

Lions Club Fudge Sale

What makes a better gift or treat for yourself than fudge from the Thurmont Lions Club? Place your orders by December 13 by calling 301-606-7873. The cost is $17.00 per pound or $9.00 per half-pound. Orders will be picked up December 19 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Thurmont, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. For a full list of flavors and more details, view the advertisement on page 10.

A Revolutionary Christmas

The Catoctin Furnace Historical Society presents A Revolutionary Christmas, highlighting the story of when a Hessian prisoner-of-war helps a family of German farmers on Maryland's western frontier to rediscover the spirit of Christmas. Showtimes are December 3 at 7:00 p.m., December 4 at 7:00 p.m., December 5 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., December 6 at 3:00 p.m. Tickets required. View the advertisement on page 9 for more information.

Woodsboro Santa Run

Join the Town of Woodsboro and the Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Company for the Santa Run on December 13. The run starts at 1:00 p.m. Following the run will be pictures with Santa at the Woodsboro Community Center, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Don't forget your letters to Santa Box (December 1-20), Toys for Tots Drop-off (until December 14), and Christmas Deco Contest (December 16 at 7:00 p.m.). View the advertisement on page 9 for details.

Emmitsburg Community Chorus Christmas Concerts

Listen to the wonderful sounds of the Emmitsburg Community Chorus during its Christmas Concerts this season. Concerts will be held on November 29 at 4:00 p.m. at Basilica of St. Elizabeth Seton; December 6 at 3:00 p.m. at St. John's Church, Creagerstown; December 13 at 3:00 p.m. at Lewistown UMC; and December 20 at 7:00 p.m. at Homewood Living, Frederick. View the advertisement on page 9.

Christmas Spirit Night

Come celebrate the true meaning of Christmas together as a community at An Evening of Christmas Spirit on Monday, December 7, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Carriage House Inn in Emmitsburg. The event will include a tree lighting ceremony; a visit by Santa; complimentary hot dogs, cookies, and hot chocolate; a live nativity; hay rides; and live music in Joann's Ballroom. Bring a canned food for the Lions Club Food Drive. View the advertisement on page 8.

Mingle & Jingle on Main

Come celebrate the holidays on the streets of Thurmont at the Mingle and Jingle on Main Street on December 11, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Take a ride in a horse and carriage ($10.00 per person; reservations only). Wear your ugliest sweater for a chance to win the Ugliest Sweater Contest at 10Tavern at 8:30 p.m., and, of course, shop and mingle all downtown Thurmont. View the advertisement on page 7 for more information.

Christmas Cookie Sale

Stock up on cookies and candy for your holiday gatherings at the Emmanuel Baust UCC's Christmas Cookie Sale. The sale features 12 kinds of cookies and 3 kinds of fudge/candy. Cookies are $7.00 per dozen and fudge/candy is $8.00 per pound. Pre-order by December 4. Pickup is December 12, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. To place your orders, call Sandy at 410-857-0416 or email sandys46@netscape.com. View the advertisement on page 6.

Christmas in Thurmont

Bring the whole family for Christmas in Thurmont on Saturday, December 5, at the Guardian Hose Fire Hall at 21 N. Church Street. The event includes free photos with Santa (10:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.); Make & Take Crafts (10:00 a.m.); Music by DJ Brian Mo (10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.); enter to win children's prizes until 2:30 p.m., adults map stamping at local businesses for prizes; ESP Dance performance (2:30 p.m.); and prize drawings at 3:00 p.m. View the advertisement on page 5.

First Baptist Church Christmas Eve Service

Join the First Baptist Church of Thurmont for its Christmas Eve Service on December 24 at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome! View the advertisement on page 2.

ADVERTISE YOUR EVENT & GET A WRITE-UP IN AROUND TOWN
alisha@thecatoctinbanner.com



Victorian Rose Quilt Fabrics and Crafts Opens in Thurmont

BY ALISHA YOCUM

Courtesy Photo



Victorian Rose Quilt Fabrics and Crafts celebrates its Grand Opening in Thurmont with a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on November 14.

Thurmont has a new destination for quilters and crafters alike! On November 14, Victorian Rose Quilt Fabrics and Crafts celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The store, which offers a variety of quilting supplies, kits, and fabrics, has been a long time-coming, according to owners Desiree and Chris Moreland.

Desiree has been quilting for 22 years and has wanted to open a quilting shop for many years. "This has been an idea for many years in the making, and it just seemed like the right thing to do for Thurmont," Desiree said.

In addition to quilting and sewing supplies, the shop will also offer sewing machine services. Whether you are new to quilting or have been sewing for years, the Morelands hope to offer something for everyone.

They will be hosting a variety of project and quilting classes, led by an experienced group of instructors.

The first class, which will teach participants how to make a Holland Boxy Bag, is scheduled for December 10.

"I love making things and inspiring other people to make things," expressed Desiree.

Frederick County Councilman Mason Carter, Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird, and Commissioners Stouter, Hooper, and Lookingbill were all on-site to help welcome the new business to town.

Victorian Rose Quilt Fabrics and Crafts is located at 133 E. Main Street in Thurmont. The store is open Tuesday through Friday, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

To learn more about the shop, its products, and upcoming classes, visit www.victorianrose.netlify.app or follow Victorian Rose Quilt Fabrics and Crafts on Facebook.

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A New Place to Explore Nature Opens at Fort Ritchie

BY ALISHA YOCUM

Photos by Alisha Yocum



(above) Mountainside Nature Center opens at Fort Ritchie in Cascade, housed in the renovated former Youth Activity Center.



(left) Herbalist, Teresa Boardwine, teaches participants how to make tea from local plants.

Tucked away in the trees of Fort Ritchie in Cascade is one of the newest businesses to open: Mountainside Nature Center.

The business is part of the revitalization efforts to restore the old military base, called Ritchie Revival, which now boosts a variety of businesses.

Director of Operations Joyce Johnson said, "Historically, the building served as the Army's teen center. There was a game room, a cafeteria, a playground. Just like most of the buildings on Fort Ritchie, the teen center had been vandalized and needed complete renovation."

The newly restored building features large windows that allow you to take advantage of the view of nature as you enjoy the programming, which includes things like storytime in the Nature Nook, nature hikes, nature gift making, and even karate.

On the day I visited, herbalist Teresa Boardwine, who is founder of Green Comfort School of Herbal Medicine and co-founder of Dreamtime Center for Herbal Studies, was on-site giving an afternoon class about making tea from a variety of local plants, such as cherry bark, goldenrod, and eucalyptus.

The tea is ideal for fighting those winter colds that will soon be setting in.

Of course, a Nature Center wouldn't be complete without animals. Wolfes Exotic Encounters has helped set up a reptile room, which currently serves as home to a variety of frogs, toads, snakes, and turtles.

"We want to be able to bring back a place that people can meet, kids can hang out, and maybe learn something new at one of our programs," said Johnson, who hopes to offer camps and field trips in the spring.

The hours are Tuesday through Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information on upcoming classes, visit www.mtnsidenature.com or follow them on Facebook.

With opportunities for learning, exploring, and gathering, Mountainside Nature Center is another welcome addition to the growing Fort Ritchie community.















Business BRIEF

Emmitsburg New Business and Development Briefs

The following are the statuses of new businesses and developments coming to Emmitsburg from the town planner's report:

- Emmit Ridge — The preliminary plan was approved on August 10. Improvement Plans were resubmitted on August 24 and are under review by the town engineer.
- Brookfield Phase 5 — Construction work is ongoing. A permit has been submitted for the first new house construction at 355 Timbermill Run.
- Patriot Crane — The Planning Commission conditionally approved the site plan on September 28. The applicant submitted and appeared before the Board of Appeals for a variance of the allowable fence height on August 25.
- Seton Center Subdivision — Subdivision application has been reviewed. Comments were provided to the applicant. The Planning Commission reviewed the application and conditionally approved it on June 29. The project is pending submission of a revised plat for approval before recordation.

Thurmont New Business and Development Briefs

The following are the statuses of new businesses and developments coming to Thurmont from the town planner's report:

Subdivisions:

- Mechanicstown, LLC (Emmitsburg Road) — Final Plat conditionally approved for 31 single-family lots in R-2/ ARP. Discussions between developer and builder are ongoing.
- Mountain Brooke (Emmitsburg Road) — Final Plat conditionally approved for 11 single-family lots in R-2/ ARP. Discussions between developer and builder are ongoing.
- Leal Homes (Eyler Road) — The improvement plan has been conditionally approved for six single-family lots in the ARP zoning district.
- The Meadows (Simmers Property) — The concept plan proposing a subdivision of 61 single-family lots in the R-2 and R-5 zoning districts has been submitted.

Site Plans:

- Michael & Holly Late — The final site plan has been approved for two duplexes totaling four dwelling units in the Mixed Use Village-1 zoning district.
- Mountain Gate Business Park — The final site plan has been approved for an access road connecting Thurmont Boulevard to Lot 1 of Thurmont Village in the General Business zoning district.
- McDonald's — The final site plan has been approved for demolition and reconstruction of the existing restaurant in the General Business zoning district.
- J&R Transport Office Building — The preliminary site plan has been conditionally approved for an office building in the Office Industrial zoning district.
- Boundary Crossing (200 N. Church Street) — The preliminary site plan has been conditionally approved for a commercial and multifamily development in the General Business zoning district.

Patronize the Advertisers in *The Catoctin Banner*!



Taneytown Creamery Company

Source: Google Street Views



Abandoned Taneytown Creamery building.

Taneytown Creamery Company was established in a building constructed in 1892, located in Taneytown, Maryland, behind the former Country Kitchen, in which the business commenced operations around 1896-1897 (possibly earlier).

The (Frederick) *News* reported in its January 9, 1896, edition that the "Taneytown Creamery Company has made some improvements lately," adding, "They have placed in their building the latest improved butter worker, and also have a brand-new icehouse."

Interestingly, the company was listed as the Taneytown Creamery and Ice Storage Company in a list of stocks in the June 6, 1896, issue of *The* (Westminster) *Democrat Advocate*.

In 1897, Creamery Company owner Charles Rice and his wife were injured when they investigated an abnormal noise emanating from a milk separator.

According to a May 1, 1897, article re-published in the May 6, 1955, edition of *The* (Baltimore) *Evening Sun*, Rice and his wife approached the source of the noise, the milk separator, which at the moment exploded, injuring the couple who was standing nearby. The newspaper noted that the cause of the explosion remained "unknown."

The (Frederick) *News* reported that the separator "exploded, breaking into hundreds of pieces." Several of the flywheels were also broken and that Mr. Rice was cut in the face by some of the flying pieces.

In 1901, the building owned by the Taneytown Creamery Company was rented to the Hanover Creamery Company, according to an April 6, 1901, article published in the *Adams County Independent*, which reported that H. M. Stokes would manage the new company, and that "improvements will be made which will place the plant in first-rate condition," and that "no butter will be made there (Taneytown), as the cream will be shipped to Hanover…"

This essentially marked the end of the actual Taneytown Creamery Company as a functioning entity.

The *Adams County Independent* noted in an article published on November 29, 1928, that Joseph Forward had served as the proprietor of the Taneytown Creamery, but did not specify a time reference.

The Taneytown Creamery Company building was devastated by fire in 1907. According to an article published in the August 23, 1907, issue of *The* (Westminster) *Democrat Advocate*, the fire occurred on August 13 and "completely destroyed both building and contents," and that "the origin of the fire is not known."

The (Frederick) *Evening Sun* reported in the June 4, 1965, edition a re-printed story regarding the 1907 fire, "The Taneytown Creamery building leased and conducted by ex-councilman H. M. Stokes was entirely consumed by fire yesterday." *The Evening Sun* also reported in another re-published account that the fire was "thought to have been of incendiary origin (a term which generally applied to a fire that was intentionally started by human action)."

The structure remained unused after the devastating blaze until 1913, when *The* (Frederick) *News* reported in its March 25, 1913, edition, "The Hanover Creamery Co. closed the deal for the location for the new condensing and icemaking plant which they will build and operate in Taneytown." The *Adams County Independent* further reported that the creamery will be re-established, as well as producing ice-cream, condensed milk, and butter.

Presumably, the existing ruins were to be replaced with a new building "of brick and concrete, 70 feet long, and two stories high," and constructed by the Eline Brothers of Littlestown.

The operation was handed over to the Fairfield-Western Maryland Dairy in 1927, which managed to operate the creamery until 1938. Then the operation went downhill, and, according to Downtown Taneytown's Facebook page, the property was sold by Fairfield-Western Maryland Dairy.

The last documented use of the abandoned creamery occurred over several years, when it was used seasonally as a haunted house by the local Jaycees through 2001.

Presently, Taneytown government is assessing the fate of the old structure.

Reportedly, then-Taneytown Mayor James McCarron told *The Baltimore Sun* in an article published on June 21, 2013, that it had been estimated that it could cost $1.6 to $1.7 million dollars to redevelop the property, or $250,000 to demolish the structure.

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THE *USS FREDERICK*

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

A special "First Day in Commission (FDC)" cover was issued commemorating the commissioning of the *USS Frederick* into the United States Navy, which took place at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard in California on April 11, 1970.

All of the FDCs were canceled (postmarked) on board the *USS Frederick* in the ship's post office. The ship, of course, was named after the City of Frederick.

The *USS Frederick* was designated as an amphibious landing ship, specializing in landing artillery, armor, and tanks, as well as troops, and was thus designated as LST 1118, LST standing for "landing ship, tanks," with 1118 being the ship's identification number.

The event cover features a 6-cent American flag stamp with the ship's post office cancellation, and a sketch of the *USS Frederick*, along with an applicable notation about the ship's construction. The cover depicted is one of a variety of covers produced to commemorate the event.

The reverse (not shown) depicted the *USS Frederick's* coat of arms in red, which incorporated symbols of the sea, the amphibious fleet, and the sponsoring city and county (and the black and gold crosshatching of the Maryland coat of arms), according to the navsource.net website.

The ship was built by the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company based in San Diego, California, after the contract for the ship was entered into on July 15, 1966, with the keel laid on April 13, 1968, according to the navysite.de website.

The ship was 522 feet in length and could sustain a speed of 20 knots (a little over 23 miles per hour). The ship was armed with a 20mm Phalanx CIWS (a rapid-fire, radar-guided gun system designed as a final line of defense for naval ships), and four three-inch 50-caliber guns. It also contained a helicopter flight deck.

Upon being commissioned, the *USS Frederick* was assigned to the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, homeported at San Diego, according to the history.navy.mil website.

The ship was upgraded at some point in time to additionally include two single-barrel, electric-motor-driven autocannons, and two more three-inch 50-caliber guns.

The navysite.de website further noted that the ship's crew consisted of 14 officers, 210 enlisted, and approximately 350 embarked troops.

Because of the ship's design, it could deploy materials being transported directly onto the shore without the need for docking facilities.

From the date of its commissioning to the date of its decommissioning, the *USS Frederick* served numerous deployments around the world, which included some 13 major deployments.

During the Vietnam War, the *USS Frederick* was awarded three campaign stars for its service during the war, and the Armed Expeditionary Medal for the ship's participation in evacuating Marine troops and assets in Operation Frequent Wind, the military's designation for the withdrawal from Vietnam, according to the navsource.net website.

History.navy.mil also states that the ship had additionally received the Meritorious Unit Commendation as the result of the ship's participation in the Vietnam War.

Another chapter in the ship's lengthy deployment history occurred as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, triggering "Operation Desert Shield," the initial efforts of a United States-led coalition of more than two dozen countries to stall any further advances of Iraq's incursion beyond Kuwait. The actual effort to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait, designated as "Operation Desert Storm," commenced on January 16, 1991.

As the allied forces prepared to attack, the *USS Frederick* was dispatched with its load of Marines and equipment to deceive and distract the enemy by engaging in faux landings on the beaches of Kuwait's coastline, thereby forcing the Iraqi army to allocate troops to that area to address the supposed challenge, according to navysite.de. The deception worked well, and the subsequent battle to liberate Kuwait was a total victory.

The *USS Frederick* also became involved in a good number of humanitarian and training missions before being decommissioned on October 5, 2002.

The ship was subsequently sold to the Mexican Navy "to help fight the war on drugs," according to the mcbhawaii.marines.mil website under a new name: ARM Usumacinta. The ship is still in active service.

Source: Collection of Richard D. L. Fulton



1970 First Day in Commission (FDC) cover for the USS Frederick.

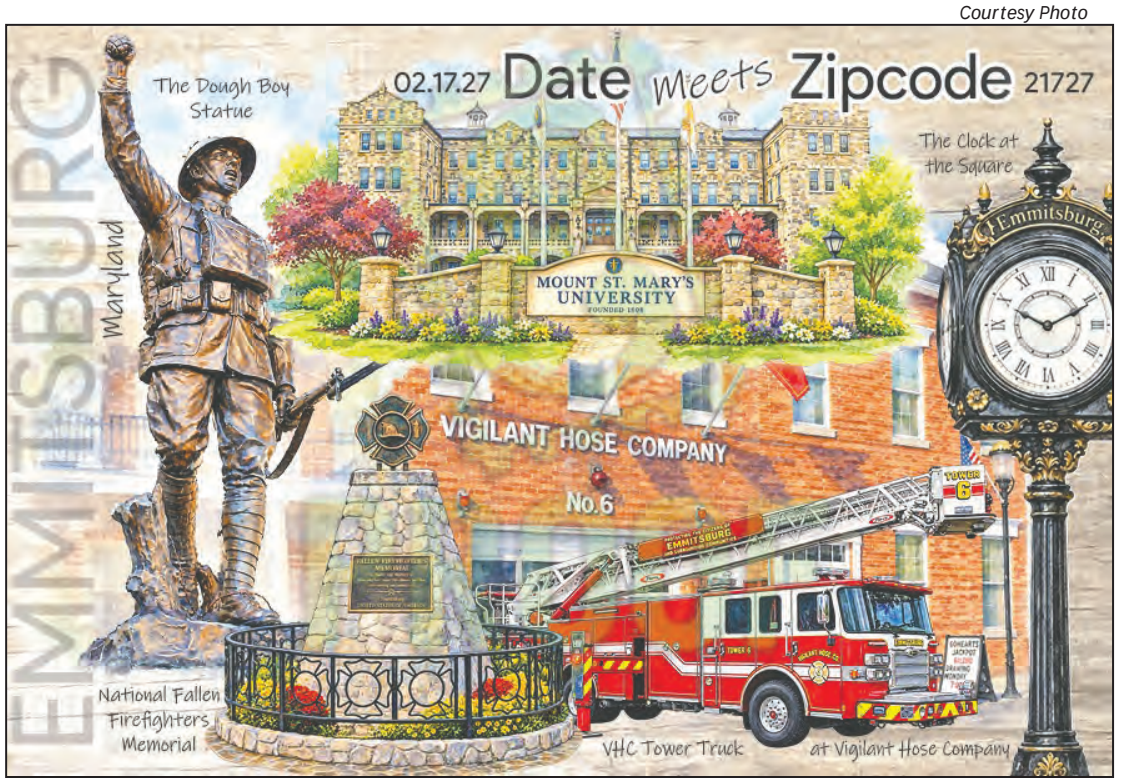




Emmitsburg Becomes Spotlight for Postcard Enthusiasts

BY ALISHA YOCUM

Courtesy Photo



The Capitol-Beltway Postcard Club will be commemorating the day the date matches the Emmitsburg zip code on February 17 at the Post Office (check website for exact time).

Did you know Emmitsburg will be the center of a once-in-a-century event? On February 17, 2027 (2-17-27), the numbers in the date will match Emmitsburg's ZIP code (21727)!

The Capitol-Beltway Postcard Club (CBPCC), a non-profit organization, will be on hand to celebrate this unique numerical coincidence, which postcard enthusiasts call a DMZC (Date Matches ZIP Code) event.

Clarissa Ferraris, president of the CBPCC, explained that when these special dates occur, the club works with a local business to design and print a commemorative postcard highlighting the community. This year's postcard was designed by Grace Eyler and printed by E Plus Graphics & Promotions. It will feature many of Emmitsburg's iconic buildings and institutions.

Club members will travel to Emmitsburg on February 17 to have the postcards hand-postmarked at the Emmitsburg Post Office with the special date, 2-17-27, and the Emmitsburg location.

Postcards may be pre-purchased through the CBPCC website, or you may come to the Emmitsburg Post Office and purchase a postcard for $2.00 on February 17 (or until sold out).

All 100 members of the Capitol-Beltway Postcard Club are also invited to purchase Emmitsburg DMZC postcards in addition to receiving two of these special postcards at no cost.

CBPCC members primarily collect vintage postcards, some which date back to the late 1800s. Member Iris Wingert became a postcard collector as a child after receiving a vintage postcard of a cat with a squeaker from a cousin. "From then on, I was hooked," said Wingert, who also participates in the hobby of Postcrossing.

Postcrossing is a worldwide movement that connects postcard enthusiasts through an online platform, where participants send and receive postcards from people around the world. Wingert has sent approximately 1,200 postcards and has received just as many in return.

Part of Wingert's vintage postcard collection highlights the history of Baltimore City. Some of these include pictures of the city back in the 1700s.

Ferraris also became a collector after discovering her grandfather's postcard collection, and her collection has an unusual focus: concrete. The postcards feature photographs of construction for major buildings, mainly from the early 1900s. For her, continuing the tradition of collecting postcards as her grandfather did all those years ago is meaningful.

The CBPCC holds monthly meetings, either virtually or in person. In these meetings, members present their collection on often recorded presentations or exchange and buy postcards for their collections. Postcrossing meet-ups are also occasionally sponsored and organized by the club. These gatherings provide Postcrossers opportunities to connect, share their interests, and meet fellow enthusiasts.

While some may worry that technology will eventually make postcards a thing of the past, Ferraris and Wingert say that isn't the case. In fact, a large portion of the Postcrossing community is under the age of 40, and many schools and libraries are getting involved in the movement.

To join the CBPCC, learn more about the DMZC postcard, or place an order, make sure to visit their website at https://sites.google.com/view/capitolbeltwaypostcardclub.

And who knows? Perhaps the Emmitsburg DMZC will inspire a few local residents to become postcard enthusiasts themselves!







Emmitsburg's Halloween Parade Costume Winners

BY DIANNE L. WALBRECKER

Courtesy Photo



The White Family wins second place in "Best Group" category with their Beauty & The Beast costumes.

Emmitsburg's 2026 Halloween Costume Contest took place on October 31 at the Vigilant Hose Company Activities Building on Creamery Road. With the cooperation of many of the organizations, businesses, and citizens of Emmitsburg, the Halloween Party and Parade were a lot of fun.

The following is a list of the winners: Most Original — 1st: Xavier Myers – Trap Spring (3), 2nd: Kenny Carter – Space Shuttle (34), 3rd: Bridget – Kitty Cat (314); Cutest — 1st: Angela Blakelynn – Cow & Calf (212), 2nd: Olivia – Sky Paw Patrol (67), 3rd: Dumpster Fire (335); Scariest — 1st: Burns Family – Stitch (206), 2nd: Little Shop of Horrors (317), 3rd: Scary Zombie (24); Funniest — 1st: John Costa – Pinata (250), 2nd: Seymour & Audrey 2 (397), 3rd: Ella Vogt – Dino Skeleton (327); Best Group — 1st: Carter Family – Woodland Creatures (37), 2nd: White Family – Beauty & The Beast (268), 3rd: Frozen (2).

A big thanks to our judges: BJ Troxell – Knights of Columbus, Tina Sweeney – Emmitsburg Lions Club, Sheila Pittinger – Total Look, Brenda & Gary Suit – Lions Club, Rosario (Ben) Benvengi – Emmitsburg Commissioner, Wayne & Sandy Slaughter (list of winners & pictures); and our sponsors: Ott House, Tuscany's Pizzeria, Melissa Wetzel CPA, Thurmont Kountry Kitchen, Emmitsburg Glass, Emmitsburg Tattoo Company, Veterans of Foreign Wars & VFW Auxiliary Post 6658, Sons of American Legion, American Legion Post 121, Jubilee, EPlus Graphics & Promotions, Lions Club, Town of Emmitsburg, Carriage House Inn, and Mount St. Mary's University.

CYASC Gives Back

On October 27, players from Catoction Youth Association Soccer Club (CYASC) U12 and Coach Beil volunteered to help set up and dress up in costumes to hand out treats to local kids at the Thurmont Regional Library, Not so Spooky Haunted Trail.

"It was fun to see many of the players come together to give back to the community," Penny Tolson said.





"All Creatures Great and Small"

BY LION RUTH HEANEY

James Alfred Wight is better known by his pseudonym, James Herriot. James Herriot was a veterinarian in the 1930s Yorkshire Dales. His book, *All Creatures Great and Small*, is a long-running, much-watched, and much-beloved television series.

Beginning in August 2026, the Thurmont Lions Club (TLC) service projects affected those individuals—great and small—in need. These projects included the following:

August 2026 – "Brave bags" to Thurmont Middle School's new sixth graders, given out on "Back to School Night."

September 2026 – Hygiene packets and first-aid packets for the homeless, delivered to Frederick Cold Weather Shelter and to the Thurmont Food Bank.

October 2026 – Pet bags for the Humane Society. Lions made bags for cats and dogs, including "adopt me" bandanas, treats, and toys. Club members supplied dog and cat food for their emergency food supply.

November 2026 – Members were encouraged to bring snack food items for the snack food drive, and the club made packets of personal care items, games, journals, pens, and other items for distribution to Veterans.

November is gone, and December is here! Anyone who joins has the opportunity to participate in future projects:

December 2026 – Lions are collecting cold weather items such as gloves, mittens, and scarves.

January 2027 – Collections for Advocates for Homeless Families. TLC supplied kitchen set-ups in spring 2026 and will be pulling together bathroom and bedroom items for new apartment residents.

February 2027 – Members will put together Valentine bags for residents of nursing facilities, including signed Valentine cards.

March 2027 – Lions will be assembling Easter Baskets for children whose families frequent the Thurmont Food Bank.

April 2027 – Lions members will be collecting personal hygiene items and assembling bags for new Heartly House residents.

May 2027 – "Thank you for nurses" notes will be created and added to a little "thank you" bag for nurses.

June 2027 – Teacher Appreciation snack boxes will be put together and delivered to local schools.

Each of these endeavors mirrors the TLC motto: "We Serve." As part of the Lions Clubs International Centennial Celebration in 2017/2018, Lions around the world adopted the message: "Where there's a need, there's a Lion."

Come join the Thurmont Lions Club on the second and fourth Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m. in the Mountain Gate Family Restaurant on Old Frederick Road. Visit www.thurmontlionsclub.com for FAQs. It is a time to meet others who assist those in need. Who knows. Maybe James Herriot would join the TLC if he lived in Thurmont and care for those creatures great and small.





What does it mean to submit yourself to God? It seems that the biblical doctrine of choosing to be a total follower of God is not a particularly popular one. What we mean is this: people tend to pick and choose the parts of the Bible they like. A person might say "I like that the Bible says not to steal **(Ephesians 4:28: 'Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need')**, so I won't steal. But I don't like that it says that I ought to go to church **(Hebrews 10:25: 'not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near')**, so I'll skip that part.

This is the practice of partial-following. And it is not truly following God. If a person wants to be a follower of Christ, it is just as important to follow the difficult commands as it is to follow the easy commands, if not more important. That's what it means to show true submission. If you only follow the commands you would have done anyway, you aren't actually following God: you're following your own desires. The Bible speaks of dark times when people only followed their own desires. **Judges 17:6: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."**

So how do we avoid this folly? Simple: we commit ourselves to fully following God. We do this when it is easy and we do it when it is hard. Jesus said that if we don't fully commit to following him, we are not worthy of his name. **Luke 9:62 "Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'"**

Submit yourself to God fully. We think you'll find it's easier and happier than you think. 1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

We hope you come to worship Christ with us soon! We would love to meet you.

JOIN US FOR LIVE WORSHIP AT 10 A.M. ON SUNDAY OR VIRTUALLY AT
catoctinchurchofchrist.org



Maryland Junior Angus Association Holds Its Annual Meeting

Courtesy Photo



In November, the Maryland Junior Angus Association (pictured above) held its annual meeting at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds, where they selected new officers.

The amazing new officer team is as follows: President, Raelynn Wagner; Vice President, Hayden Hahn; Secretary, Layla Shepard; Treasurer, Parker Hahn; Membership, Aubree Pelan; Adult Board Reporter, Jack Orndorff; and Social Media/Reporter, Evie Wood.

Stay tuned for more exciting news from this group as they start their 2027 livestock show season.

Rocky Ridge Youth Group Holds Its Fall Activity

Courtesy Photo



The Rocky Ridge Youth Group (pictured above) had its fall activity at Magnolia Meadow Farms in Thurmont.

They enjoyed the ziplines, jump pillow, and, most importantly for all ages, the corn pit. It was a fun evening for all members and their families.

Be on the lookout for these kids and their singing voices in December, when they make their rounds for Christmas caroling.





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Dynamic Automotive Donates Food to the Emmitsburg Food Bank

Dynamic Automotive brought a table full of food to the Emmitsburg Food Bank after a Thanksgiving Food Drive for the last several weeks at their shops throughout Frederick County. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you to all that donated.

Courtesy Photo



Dynamic Automotive donates a table full of food to the Emmitsburg Food Bank after a Thanksgiving Food Drive at their shops in Frederick County.

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Catoctin Youth Association Soccer Club 10-U "Team Renegades" won 2nd Place in their division on June 8!

Featured On Our Cover

Ira Burrier tells his wish list to Santa!

Cover Photo by Photographer Missy Bishop

Happy Memories



Garrett and Gracie at Thurmont Ambulance Company Christmas Craft Show!

Out & About



Weston helping pick up sticks at his Nana and Pap's house!



Folton Beard on the pitcher's mound for last fall baseball game!

Kenny Carter enjoying the fall foliage on a drive in his Cozy Coupe!





4H Club fills Good Samaritan boxes for a community service project!



Discover the beauty and peace of the Christmas season during Peace on Earth: A Thurmont Christmas Church Tour, December 12 & 13 from 5-7 p.m. Step inside five of Thurmonts historic churches to admire their distinctive architecture, beautiful altars, and Christmas decorations in the warm glow of an evening setting. Visit each church with family and friends for a peaceful journey celebrating faith, history, and the spirit of Christmas.

Churches to Explore



Apple United Church of Christ
7908 Apples Church Road



Thurmont United Methodist Church
13880 Long Road



Trinity United Church of Christ
101 E Main Street



Weller United Methodist Church
101 North Altamont Avenue



Harriet Chapel
(Participating Saturday Only)
12625 Catoctin Furnace Road

New Discoveries



Everly and her friends celebrating her 7th birthday at Thurmont Luxe Nails!



John and Steven Sanders are ready for christmas!

Family Time is happy time!



Marlee, Mattee, Matt, and Mylee Lambert pose for a family photo!



Rebecca Flohr helps crack and prepare about 45 dozen eggs for the AMVETS Veterans Day breakfast!

Memories with Family & Friends



Christopher Best catches this Red Drum fish, over 40 inches, in the Chesapeake Bay, off of St. Leonard, in the beginning of October 2026!



Everly and Mama at Donuts with Grownups at TPS, thanks to the PTA!



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Beyond the Classroom: How Frederick County CTC Is Shaping Students' Futures

From Hands-On Learning to Career Preparation, Frederick County's Career and Technology Center Gives Students Opportunities to Explore Their Passions and Prepare for Life After High School

BY DONOVAN BRIDGETT

For many high school students, deciding what to do after graduation can feel overwhelming. Some plan to attend college, while others hope to enter the workforce or pursue specialized training. At the Frederick County Career and Technology Center, students can begin exploring career interests before they receive their high school diplomas.

The Career and Technology Center, known as CTC, connects classroom education with practical experiences. Students can explore professional interests, develop skills and learn alongside classmates who share similar goals. For students considering their next steps, that kind of exposure can make a difference.

For me, CTC was more than another place to attend classes. As a former student in its Homeland Security and Criminal Justice program, I had the opportunity to explore a field I have been passionate about for years. My interest in criminal justice and my goal of one day working for the Federal Bureau of Investigation made the program especially meaningful. CTC helped me think more seriously about my future and what it would take to get there.

Learning Beyond the Traditional Classroom

One of the most valuable aspects of career and technical education is the connection between lessons and the work students may someday do. A traditional classroom provides an important academic foundation, but CTC gives students a setting focused on the careers and trades they want to explore.

Professor Andrew Zucco (pictured right), an instructor at CTC who is in his 10th year of teaching, said that the shared interests of students are a major part of what makes the school different. Students come from their regular high schools to learn alongside others interested in similar fields.

"I think the CTC helps prepare students because it provides a more professional setting, with many of the teachers coming directly from an industry or practicing a trade," Zucco said.

That professional perspective matters in fields such as criminal justice, where communication, critical thinking, accountability and good judgment are important. Zucco said hands-on learning is central to preparing students for future careers: "We try to replicate that as much as possible at the CTC and in our program."

Courtesy Photo



A Student's Experience

Hope Lehto, a current third-year student in CTC's Homeland Security and Criminal Justice program, said she initially decided to attend because of the opportunities and experiences she heard about from friends already enrolled.

"CTC has helped me tremendously with my interviewing and conversation skills," Lehto said. She explained that she entered the program with limited confidence in her communication skills and has since learned how to hold conversations more comfortably.

Lehto said her teachers have also guided her through the college process and helped her look for an internship and a possible job after high school. Those are

continue reading on Page 31

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.....continued from page 30

opportunities she believes she would not have experienced in the same way at her home school.

Her favorite part of CTC has been participating in SkillsUSA. Lehto described attending multiple levels of the organization and taking on leadership responsibilities for her class and school as particularly meaningful.

"It truly is a school that benefits you for the real world," Lehto said, adding that students have the chance to work one on one with people in the fields they want to study.

Success Beyond Graduation

For Zucco, one of the greatest rewards of teaching comes after students leave CTC. He said former students have returned to share their experiences and accomplishments, including becoming lawyers and joining police forces.

"The most rewarding experience is when I hear about successes from former students, such as a former student becoming a lawyer or making it onto the police force and enjoying their career," he said.

Those stories reflect a broader benefit of career and technical education: students do not have to know exactly where their careers will lead to gain something useful. Zucco said students can learn skills that remain valuable even if they ultimately choose a different field.

For Lehto, the people she has met are an important part of what makes the experience memorable. Her comments reinforce something I came to appreciate during my own time at CTC: the program is not only about studying a possible profession. It is also about building confidence, forming connections and taking the next step toward adulthood.

A Hidden Gem in Frederick County

Zucco believes more people in Frederick County should know what CTC offers. He described it as a school sometimes called the "Hidden Gem" of Frederick County Public Schools, while noting that growing interest has also increased the demand for classroom space.

"You will learn things about a career or trade that you wouldn't learn about in your home school," he said in advice to families considering CTC.

As a former student, I know how meaningful that chance to explore a career can be. My experience in the Homeland Security and Criminal Justice program helped turn an interest into a more serious goal.

Zucco's reflections and Lehto's experience show that the benefits can take many forms, from practical skills and mentorship to greater confidence about the future.

For Frederick County students deciding what comes after high school, CTC offers something valuable: an opportunity to start finding out before graduation.

SES Leo Club Organizes Hero Walk & Breakfast for Veterans

BY ADRIAN HILL & SKYLAR MOHLER,
Leo Club Members

Photo by Alisha Yocum



User Support Specialist and Veteran, Ms. Mason, along with students Emma Santos, Mattee Lambert, and Skylar Mohler welcome Veterans to the school.

On November 11, students in the Sabillasville Environmental Leo Club organized a hero walk and breakfast for Veterans. Students invited friends and family members from the community who have served in the military. Veterans were honored by being served breakfast from Leo Club members.

Students walked their Veteran down the hallway while other students clapped and held up signs to honor and show their appreciation for their service.

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Catoctin FFA Members Attend the 99th National FFA Convention & Expo

Courtesy Photo



Twenty-four Catoctin FFA members attend the 99th National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana, in October.

The National FFA Convention is held every year and attracts FFA members from every state, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The 99th National FFA Convention and Expo was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, from October 21-24, 2026. While at the convention, 24 Catoctin FFA members joined over 73,000 other FFA members and guests from across our nation.

The National FFA Convention and Expo is one of the largest student conventions in the world, with a mission to develop, educate, and inspire. This year's convention theme centered around the words Envolve, Engage, Empower.

The chapter made several industry stops on the way to the convention, including the Trans Alleghany Lunatic Asylum in Weston, West Virginia, and the Indiana Speedway and Hunters Honey Farm in Indianapolis. Catoctin FFA members were also able to visit and explore the National FFA Headquarters. They were able to walk the gardens, view pieces of FFA history, and even found the Catoctin FFA brick on the floor in the center.

Agricultural Sales. This year, students had to learn the ins and outs of their product, Lincoln Electric Welders, and put that knowledge to the test in several areas in competition. At the convention, they competed in a team activity, a service call, a sales call, and a general knowledge exam covering the sales process and product knowledge. The team placed silver at the national convention. Simon Burrier placed bronze individually. Grady Abruzzese, Faith May, and Grace May were silver individuals.

Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR). This event fosters student interest, promotes environmental and natural resource instruction in agricultural education, and recognizes skills and competencies gained through such instruction. Students engage in various activities and practicums, working under challenging conditions to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in environmental and natural resources management. This includes soils, water, ecosystems, waste management, navigational mapping, and environmental monitoring skills through GPS. Connor Smith and Preston Clark earned a silver placing individually, while Blake Smith and Caleb Krantz were gold individuals. The team was 10th in the nation (a gold team)!

Many of our students attended this year's convention as chapter delegates. They had the opportunity to attend the Career/College Expo with over 345 exhibitors. They also attended workshops, watched the final levels of competition for several Leadership Development Events (LDEs), participated in the national service activity, and were able to watch states showcase agriculture in their state. Representing our chapter as delegates were Gabby Brauning, Makayla Comer, Makyala Eckenrode, Avery Harbaugh, Josie Harbaugh, Landon Kelley-Voisine, Marcus Kuhn, Valeria Lake, Jada Morgan, Leah Morgan, Jordyn Ohler, Ainsley Savage, Earl (AJ) Schuebel, Addy Smith, Kylee Thomason, and Sophie Wagaman.

American FFA Degree recipients. Less than 1 percent of FFA members receive this prestigious degree. To be eligible to receive the American FFA Degree, members must meet qualifications such as receiving a State FFA Degree, holding active membership for the past three years, completing secondary instruction in an agricultural education program, and operating an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program. This year, Catoctin FFA had four members receive this highest honor: Ella Burrier, Caroline Clark, Owen Cook, and Colt Sanders. A total of 5,818 degrees were awarded this year.

Catoctin FFA would like to thank everyone for all of the support in helping them participate in the 99th National FFA Convention.

These students have gained skills and memories that will last a lifetime.





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SPORTS TALK

WITH MICHAEL BETTERIDGE

The Alumni Movement Continues!

Before we look ahead to high school winter sports, let's share some highlights from the end of the fall season.

The Catoctin Cross Country team finished 5th in Maryland, led by junior Noah Riling, who placed 3rd overall in the final meet. Olivia Hoyt and Isabel Brodsky finished in the top 20 in the girls meet.

The boys soccer team finished 3rd in the 1A West Region II standings and made it all the way to the regional semifinal. Shoutout to foreign exchange student and goalie, Lukas Schalitz, who hopes to play Division 1 college soccer here in the U.S.

Speaking of soccer, the girls finished 7-4-1 and also made the regional semi-final. The last time that happened was when Catoctin girls soccer star, Cheyenne Harley, led them in 2009. Cheyenne went on to play D1 soccer. She is now a coach for the Catoctin Youth league.

The field hockey team had only 11 players and still made the regional final. The team beat Oakdale for the first time ever, led by college commit Josey Schaffer.

And now on to the BIG NEWS in Catoctin winter sports.

NO JUNIOR VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM IN 2026-27!

After graduating superstars Brooke Williams and Kelsey Troxell, the girls basketball team is only able to field 16 players, so Coach Amy has decided to move everyone to varsity. There were 11 players on varsity last year, including one ninth grader, the scrappy Leah French. This year's seniors, Autumn Glotfelty, Faith May, Madelynn Myers, and Katelyn Veronie, will step into some big "kicks" without Williams and Troxell. Last year's motto was "Be the Light," exemplified when Madelynn Myers would carry a pretend torch onto the court for the opening circle up at center court. With 16 players, they will be much deeper, but the fans will miss the early JV girls basketball games. I know I will; they were very exciting.

The alumni movement continues at Catoctin with Cougars Athletic Director Brett Campbell bringing in another former player as head coach. Evan Ott, who played for Coach Brian Burdette and graduated in 2020, has taken over the head boys basketball coaching position from Mike Wagner. I spoke with Evan, and he is really excited about the coaching staff he has put together. He only learned in mid-November that he got the job. He will be joined on the hardwoods by former Catoctin players Dylan Click (2021) and Ryan Tokar (last year's JV boys basketball head coach). The coaching staff is rounded out with one of our favorite coaches, Bill Offutt. That's three Cougars and a Lion. Pretty good company!

I spoke with Coach Brian Burdette in Florida and broke the news to him that one of his favorite players, Evan Ott, had taken up the mantle, and Coach Burdette beamed with pride at hearing that one of his own had joined the Catoctin basketball head coaching fraternity. When I shared Coach Ott's coaching staff with the former Cougars boys basketball head coach, Burdette said, "Wow! That's a winning combination."

Coach Ott is fielding a pretty experienced team with six seniors: Gabe Contreras, Isaac Dayberry, Tanner Shorb, Connor Smith, Aeden Campbell, and Justice Myers. Coach Ott told me he's going to focus on defense, hard practices, and everything he learned playing for Coach Burdette. They open the season at home against Brunswick on December 4. Depending on the football playoffs, WTHU might be there. It would be great to mark Coach Ott's debut on the radio.

Continuing with winter sports, I had a chance to speak with Catoctin girls Swim Team Coach Randy Barrera, who was really excited about what is happening with the Catoctin swim team. Both the girls teams and the boys teams practice and compete together. Coach William Warran is the boys swim team coach, along with assistant coach Ashley Fisher. Coach Barrera is also the SRO (safety resource officer) at Catoctin, an important position that places a trained law enforcement officer in local schools whose primary role is to build relationships and trust on campus between students and law enforcement.

With 12 years in law enforcement, Coach Barrera had a recent medical procedure, which has him on the sidelines as the SRO, but not at the pool. Coach Barrera was excited because for the first time in years, he has 19 players on the team—4 girls and 15 boys. Seniors Simon Burrier, Rebecca Cross, Zachary Long, Seamus Riddle, Patrick Sayre, Blake Smith, and Tristan Van Echo will anchor this team. Speaking of anchors, Coach Barrera has a girls relay team for the first time in four years. That alone is huge progress.

The swim team begins the winter season on December 7 against Tuscarora.

Remember, as we begin the most wonderful time of the year, giving is the best gift. So, let's give our Catoctin winter sports teams our support on and off the court.

See you at the games and meets!







The Catoctin Banner Brings You a Serial Fiction Story for Your Enjoyment

The King's Gambit

written by
JAMES RADA, JR.

12: Lincoln is the King

Lou Preston's coffee had long gone cold as he sat at the desk in his home office of his Gettysburg home. He wasn't sure how long he'd been staring at the map spread across his desk, its creases worn soft from years of handling. His great-grandfather, Harley Preston, had reimagined the entire Gettysburg battlefield as a sprawling chessboard, identifying stone monuments and bronze markers as pawns, knights, and kings.

The scale of the undertaking was staggering. Harley had created his sprawling chess board during his time as park superintendent. To create the layout he desired required certain markers to be deliberately misplaced, shifted yards from their true historical positions.



They were changes often not noticed at ground level. It was only when seen from above that Harley's plan could be seen.

The pressing question hummed in the silence of the room: Why? What was the purpose of misrepresenting the opposing armies on the Gettysburg Battlefield? It couldn't be mere eccentricity, the whimsy of a man fond of games. Harley had been precise, deliberate. Lou felt certain it tied back to the secret peace accord his great-grandfather had helped broker during the Civil War—the one that died with Colonel David Donaldson in a patch of forest on the Mason Dixon Line between Emmitsburg, Maryland, and Fairfield, Pennsylvania. The answer had to lie in his great-grandfather's journal where he had found other answers to this puzzle.

Lou carried the heavy leather-bound book to the couch, its spine cracking softly as he opened it once more.

July 1, 1863

I remained beside Colonel Donaldson's body in the moon-dappled clearing, the two dead soldiers nearby already attracting flies. The documents in my pocket seemed to burn through the wool of my coat—the peace agreement and the colonel's signed confession. He had been killed to prevent this war from ending.

A moral duty settled on me, cold and heavy. I had to see this through to finish the colonel's mission. But powerful men stood to gain from continued slaughter that had killed men on both sides of the war to prevent peace. Approaching General Lee with the peace agreement was pointless if General Meade opposed peace. And once these men in the shadows knew I carried these papers, I'd be hunted.

I needed to hide them. Quickly. Hopefully, it would only be a temporary measure until I could figure out who I could trust. Maybe there was still a path to peace to be found.

I also needed to decide what I should do with the colonel's body. If it was found near the Union soldier who had tried to kill me and had killed Colonel Donaldson and his Confederate counterpart, it would make it more difficult to convince people we were acting on behalf of the Union.

It needed to be done quickly, too. Someone would eventually miss the soldiers and come looking for them, most likely the person who had sent the Union soldier to kill us.

Then, I had an idea. I'm not sure it was a good one, but I was desperate and overly stressed from what had happened this evening. And quite honestly, I didn't want to die. I had promised myself that if I made it through the war, I would marry Martha McNally, get a safe job running a store, and together, we would raise a brood of children. Tonight was the first time I thought that might not be a promise I could keep.

The boy who'd led me into the ambush had fled with my horse, but three remained that the dead men had ridden. I heaved Donaldson's body onto one of them, tying him securely with strips torn from a dead man's shirt. Then I mounted another horse and rode north. Let them find the other bodies together and draw their own conclusions.

July 2, 1863

That night… I will not detail it. Even now, I fear that this journal may be found. I buried the colonel with the honor he was denied in death, and I hid the documents with care. I also made certain contingencies so that if I should vanish, the truth would not.

Dawn found me exhausted, dirt under my nails, listening to the distant rumble of artillery moving toward Gettysburg. Lee had turned east. There would be no peace today.

Despite Donaldson's suspicions, I struggled to believe General Meade was a traitor. Yet Confederate generals had once worn blue. Hadn't they betrayed their oaths?

I reported to Meade's headquarters, claiming I was returning to Washington.

Continue reading story on page 35

Continued from page 34

"And what will you tell the president?" he asked, his voice level.

"That a Union assassin succeeded in killing both negotiators before terms could be exchanged."

Meade's eyes held mine. "Your proof?"

"The boy who laid the trap will have found the bodies by now."

"And how is it you live while Colonel Donaldson does not?"

"He saved me before succumbing to his wounds." I let out a breath. This was the critical junction where I had to rely on Colonel Donaldson's instincts. "He also left a testament."

One of Meade's eyebrows twitched. "What does it say? Can I see it?"

"It names his betrayer. And it lists families in both the North and South who are profiting from this war's continuation. He signed it in his own blood."

"Let me see it."

I shook my head. "I buried it with the unsigned treaty for safekeeping. The president will decide its use. Although should I disappear, copies will find their way to him."

"You speak boldly on a dead man's word."

"A man handpicked by Lincoln. A man whose own family is on that list."

Meade stroked his mustache slowly. "I cannot halt this battle. Lee advances."

"Because he never received the agreement."

"Then you are in check."

"Check is not checkmate."

Meade almost smiled. "It suffices. It means you scurry while war continues."

"You overestimate your position," I said quietly. "Lincoln is the king. You are but his queen—expendable, despite your power."

The general did not like thinking he was not the one with ultimate control of the game. His composure flickered. I, on the other hand, did not like thinking of this war as a game of chess. If Lincoln was king and Meade queen, then who held the board? Who moved us?

Riding south from Gettysburg, I felt grimy. General Meade had as good as admitted his disloyalty. Did all generals lose regard for their men's lives?

It was a feeling that troubled me.

I passed through Emmitsburg, which once again seemed to be a tiny hamlet. I was preparing to enter Mechanicstown when the road took a sharp turn. As it did, something hit me in the back, and I fell from my horse.

I grabbed at my side, and it came away bloody. I'd been shot! I crawled across the ground to get behind a small rise. I pulled my pistol out and looked over the rise to see if I could see where the shooter was. I couldn't see anyone.

My side throbbed. I took my bandana off and used it to plug the wound. The bullet had gone through my side.

I looked over the rise again. I still couldn't see anyone, and there had been no more shots. My horse had walked away a few yards and stopped. I got to my feet and scurried to my mount. I kept it between myself and the direction where the shot had been fired. I walked further along the road.

Once I felt it was safe, I mounted and rode quickly into town. Someone directed me to the doctor's office, and I rode there. Luckily, he was in and could see me.

As he sutured the wound, he paused at the sound of far-off cannons booming like distant thunder of an approaching storm.

"How close are they? Do you know?" he asked.

"When I last saw them, they were south of Gettysburg, but the fighting hadn't started yet."

"Gettysburg. Makes sense. We saw them come through here and heard they had camped at Emmitsburg. Still, Gettysburg's about 20 miles northeast of here. Would we hear cannons firing?"

"If there's enough of them."

The doctor nodded and finished stitching me up. "I thought you said you left before the fighting started."

"I did."

"Then how—"

"I'm not sure. It happened just outside of town."

"Must have been a stray shot or someone nervous about seeing soldiers with all the fighting going on."

"Maybe." I wasn't convinced, mainly, because I had spent the night digging Colonel Donaldson's grave. "Is there a hotel in town?"

He directed me to a boardinghouse—the Miller House—little more than a large home with a spare room. I slept deeply despite the guns' thunder.

That evening, I rode for Washington.

July 4, 1863

President Lincoln received me amid reports of mounting casualties at Gettysburg. I told him everything.

He listened gravely as he read the list of names Colonel Donaldson had written out.

"Some names I know," he said tiredly. "Some are strangers. But if we move against them now, we risk collapse. The Dohertys supply our rifles. The Collins and Partridge families build our ships. The Cunninghams feed our armies."

"They are traitors."

"Yes, but what concerns me are the families I haven't heard of. In addition, you say that Colonel Donaldson is… was not even sure that his was a complete list."

"Yes, sir, but certainly some action can be taken against those families we know of, and perhaps use them as leverage to discover more families."

"And removing them may leave us disarmed and starving." He rubbed his beard. "Perhaps we must win this first… then settle accounts."

"Will General Meade push to defeat General Lee, though? He let him escape last year."

President Lincoln raised an eyebrow. "I know you said Colonel Donaldson believed that General Meade allowed the Southerners to escape, but, sadly, it could also be that the general is not up to the task of commanding the Army of the Potomac."

"Yes, sir."

"We must press the advantage we have. General Grant has sent word that Vicksburg has surrendered, and we will now control the Mississippi River. The South is in retreat. If we press south and east, we can pin them against the coast until they surrender."

I stared at him, and I wondered if the profiteers had gotten to him. I know now that is not the case, but until a few days ago, I believed that the commander of the Army of the Potomac believed in the country. It is understandable that I would have suspicions of the President.

I searched the president's face for compromise—or corruption.

Then I saw the exhaustion in his eyes, the weight on his stooped shoulders. Here was a man trying to save a nation entire, even if it meant sparing its parasites.

He still sought a path to peace that minimized the deaths as much as he could.

What happens next? Stay tuned for Part 13 in our January 2027 issue!





GAMES

Play Our Games!

Call or email your guess: 301-241-9249
news@thecatoctinbanner.com

Each month, you're invited to participate in our Where Am I? Photo Contest and Hidden Object Game. The winners of each game are announced in the next issue of *The Catoctin Banner* newzine. Winners are given a gift **certificate to the advertiser of their choice. To participate, call 301-241-9249 or email news@thecatoctinbanner.com to record your guesses by the 15th of each month. Please don't forget to include your full name. Don't forget that** you need to check the next month's issue to see if you won.

Please note: The contests are not based on who gets their guesses in first. Each month, we put all correct guesses in a "hat" and randomly draw a winner.

Where Am I? Contest



For the "Where Am I?" Photo Contest, take a look at the photo to the right and tell us where it was taken. It is somewhere in or around our Northern Frederick County Area, which is defined as Rocky Ridge to Cascade, Lewistown to Emmitsburg, Foxville to Creagerstown, and everywhere around and in-between. Good luck!

November's "Where Am I?" photo was taken of the outside wall at the Ritchie History Museum at Historic Fort Ritchie. The winner of the Where Am I? Contest for November's issue is Stacy Shriner. Stacy, please select an advertising business from which you'd like your gift certificate. Then, contact *The Catoctin Banner at news@thecatoctinbanner.com or call 301-241-9249*, so we can mail you your prize!

Hidden Object Contest

The hidden object for November's issue was a gnome dressed in green. It was hidden on page 41 in the Main Street Upholstery ad. The winner of the Hidden **Object Contest for November's issue is Charles Kolb.** Charles, please select an advertising business from which you'd like your gift certificate. Then, contact *The Catoctin Banner* email news@thecatoctinbanner.com or call 301-241-9249, so we can mail you your prize! Happy hunting for this month's hidden object!

This month's hidden object is a frog with a Santa hat  **Good luck!**

**Note: Hidden Object is always hidden in one of our advertiser's display ads.*

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Word Search

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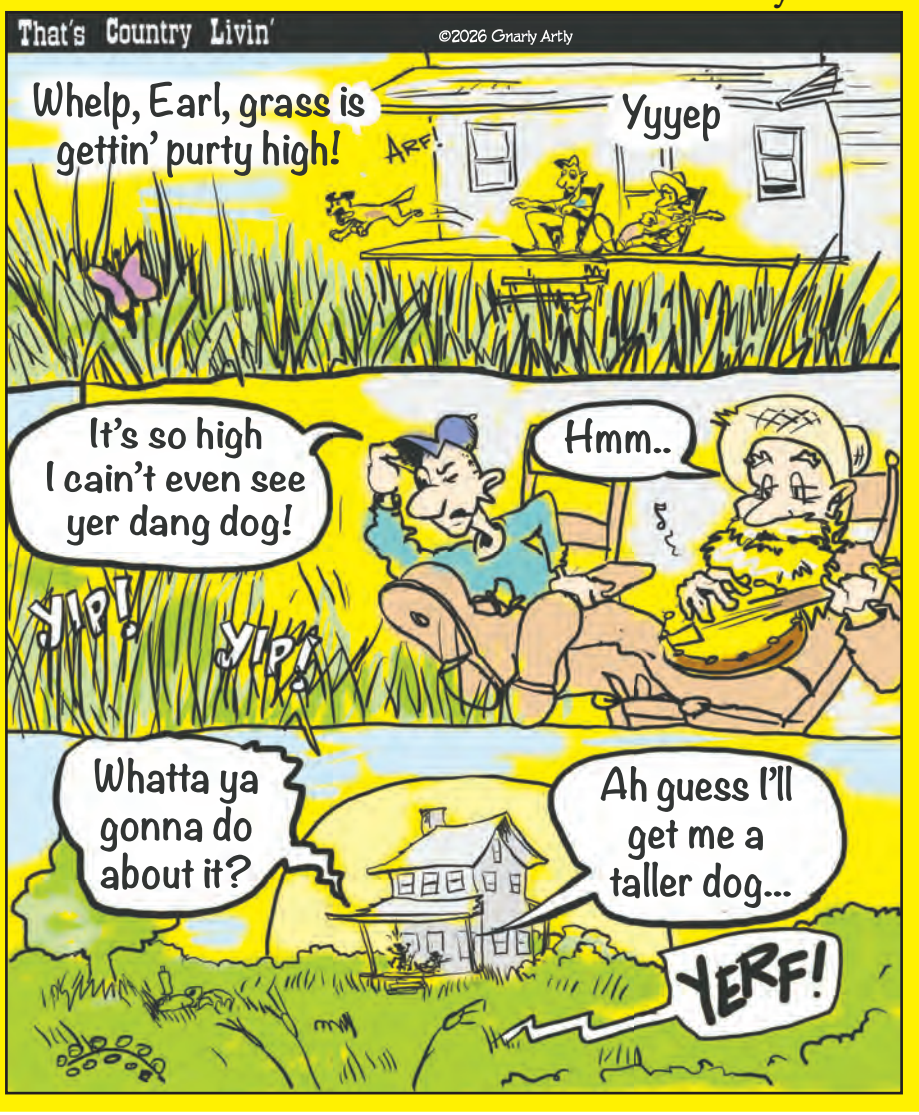

LOOK WHO TOOK US ALONG!



Katherine O'Donnell took The Catoctin Banner along to the Ocean City beach in New Jersey.



~Thanks for taking us along, Katherine!

We appreciate you!

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LOOK UP

BY MITCHELL TESTER





Have any QUESTIONS or SPACE TOPICS You Would Like to See Covered? SEND to: lookupcolumncb@gmail.com

Happy Holidays, everyone! In this month's edition of "Look Up," I will be discussing my favorite NASA Space Mission: Lucy.

Lucy focuses on a couple of different areas inside our own solar system. One area follows Jupiter's orbit, and another area orbits in front of Jupiter. These areas are home to a group of asteroids called "Trojan asteroids." The Trojan asteroids both follow and lead Jupiter as it orbits around the Sun.

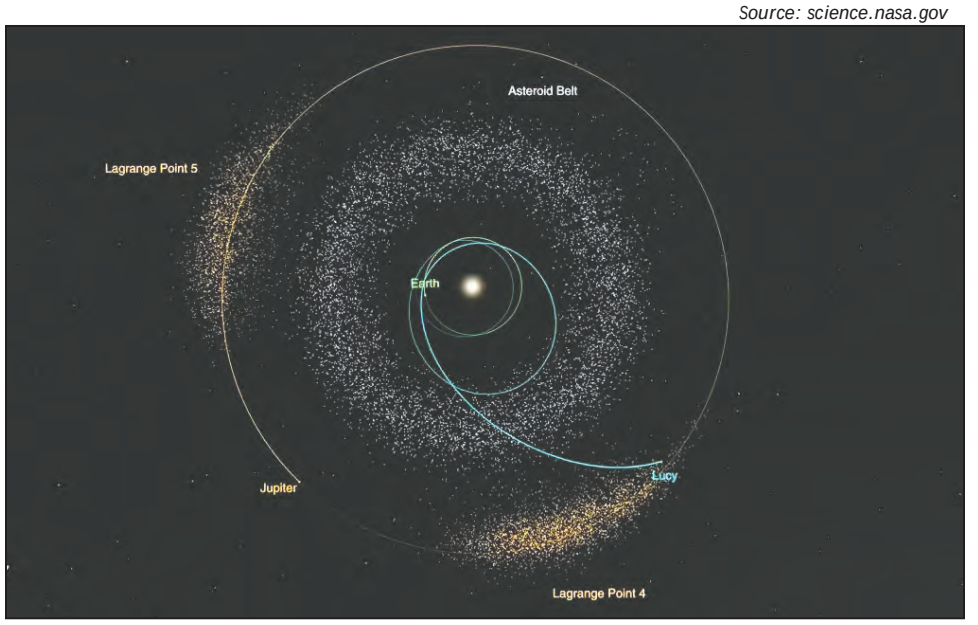
It is theorized that these asteroids are some of the earliest objects formed in our solar system. Why do we think this, though? The answer is due to their gravitational relationship with Jupiter—as in how they orbit with it (more than 400 million miles away)—it tells us that they have been gravitationally stable for billions of years. In addition to this, their composition of primitive materials tells us that they are old, very old. Studying these ancient asteroids can help us further understand how our solar system came to be.

In addition to the Trojan asteroids that follow Jupiter, Lucy was also launched to do fly-bys of asteroids in a region known as the "asteroid belt."

The asteroid belt is a region of asteroids, roughly one million of them, that sits between the planets of Mars and Jupiter. These asteroids, too, are capsules of the early solar system. Lucy was launched on October 16, 2021. Thus far, this spacecraft has traveled through the asteroid belt and now has its sights set on the Trojan asteroids. This means that Lucy has traveled over two billion miles since it was first launched. Two billion miles is, of course, a very long distance, and to put it in perspective, I did the math for you. Two billion miles is approximately 80,000 trips around the Earth. If you were to take 80,000 trips around the Earth in a commercial plane, nonstop, it would take you nearly 400 years to do so.

Due to the nature of this NASA mission, exploring ancient mysterious objects, NASA scientists needed to give it a fitting name.

Source: science.nasa.gov

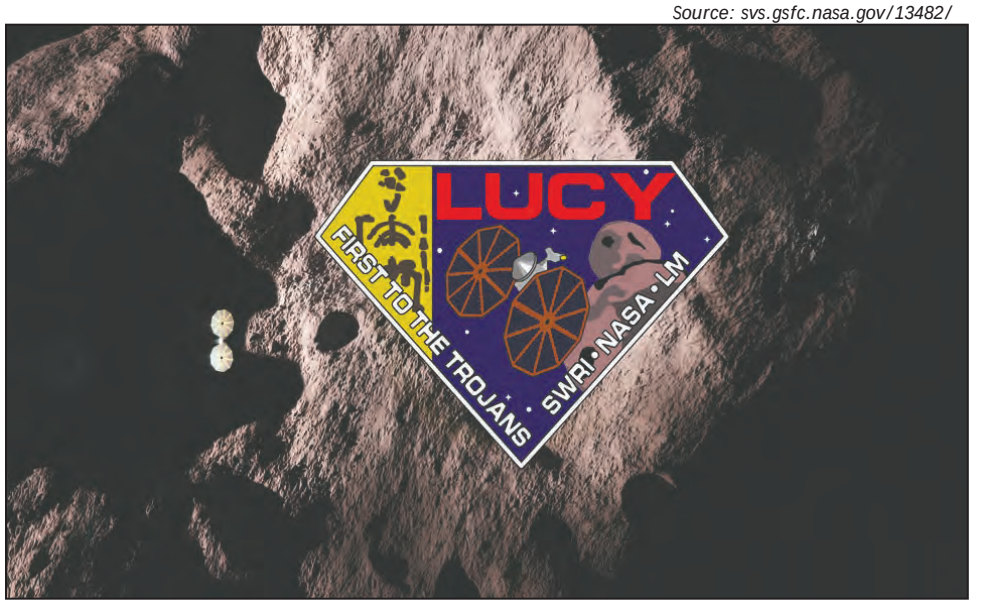


Lucy's (depicted in blue) current trajectory to the leading group of Trojan asteroids (depicted as Lagrange Point 4).

The name "Lucy" for the space mission originated from a fossilized skeleton of a human ancestor that was found in Ethiopia in 1974. After the fossil was discovered, it was given the name Lucy by the team. It is said that the fossil was named by the team after the Beatles song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" because the crew was listening to the song when the fossil was excavated that night of discovery. The Lucy spacecraft has many more years of work ahead of it; it is expected to study asteroids all the way into 2033. The spacecraft will finish with a fly-by of two asteroids that orbit each other. When two asteroids orbit one another, we call them "binary asteroids." These specific binary asteroids that Lucy will be investigating reside in the trailing region of the Trojan asteroids.

The Lucy spacecraft will help us understand the evolution of our solar system, just as the Lucy fossil helped us understand the evolution of ourselves.

Source: svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/13482/



The official Lucy mission patch with an artist rendition of an asteroid and the Lucy spacecraft behind it.



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A LITTLE TAX PLANNING NOW CAN MAKE FOR A HAPPIER HOLIDAY SEASON

Between holiday shopping, family gatherings, and everything else that comes with the end of the year, taxes probably aren't at the top of your to-do list. But before you close the books on 2026, spending a little time reviewing your finances could save you some stress when tax season rolls around. Here are a few things worth checking off your list before December 31.

Take another look at your deductions and savings opportunities. One of the biggest changes for 2026 involves charitable giving. Even if you typically take the standard deduction, you may now qualify for an additional deduction for cash donations to qualifying charities, up to $1,000 for individuals or $2,000 for married couples filing jointly.

If you itemize deductions, there are a couple of changes to keep in mind. Charitable contributions now have a new income-based limit. Also, if you expect to owe state income taxes for 2026, paying an estimated amount before December 31 may help increase your federal deductions rather than waiting until January or April.

Your year-end tax planning checklist:

- Charitable giving: Have you made the charitable contributions you intended to make this year? Remember that the new deduction for taxpayers taking the standard deduction applies to qualifying cash donations.
- State taxes: If you itemize, would paying an anticipated state tax liability before year-end increase your federal deduction?
- Retirement savings: Are you taking full advantage of your available 401(k) contributions? Changes to payroll deductions need to happen before the end of the year.
- IRA and HSA contributions: Have you reviewed your traditional IRA, Roth IRA, and HSA contributions? Eligible contributions can be made through April 15, 2027, for the 2026 tax year.
- Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA): If your employer offers an FSA, check your contribution elections. The 2026 health FSA limit increased to $3,400, and the dependent care FSA limit increased to $7,500 for most households. Make sure your employer's plan reflects the new limits and that you're taking advantage of the available savings.
- College savings: If you contribute to a Maryland 529 plan, remember that contributions may qualify for a Maryland state income tax deduction. Check whether you've contributed enough to take advantage of the available deduction before year-end.
- Retirement distributions: If you're required to take a distribution from a retirement account, have you met your annual required minimum distribution (RMD)? Most must be taken by December 31. If you're age 70½ or older and charitably inclined, a direct charitable distribution from your IRA may also help satisfy your RMD without adding to your taxable income. Also, if you have traditional IRA savings, consider whether converting some of those funds to a Roth IRA this year could make sense from a tax perspective.

Don't overlook some newer tax breaks. Don't forget about the new tax breaks that started last year. If you earn tips or overtime pay, you may qualify for an additional federal tax deduction. Your W-2 should help identify the amounts that qualify. One important detail: the overtime deduction applies only to the extra amount of your pay for overtime hours, not your entire overtime paycheck. There is also a deduction for interest paid on certain qualifying new vehicle loans and an additional deduction of up to $6,000 for eligible taxpayers age 65 and older.

And parents, don't forget about childcare expenses! The Child and Dependent Care Credit became more generous in 2026, allowing you to deduct up to 50% of qualifying expenses vs. just 30%. If you paid for daycare, after-school care, or qualifying summer day camps so you could work, gather those receipts. If you're using a dependent care FSA, remember that you can't use the same expenses for both the FSA exclusion and the tax credit.

Don't forget about the income that doesn't come with a W-2. Did you pick up some freelance work, drive for a delivery service, do some seasonal work, or earn a little extra money through a side hustle? Make sure you account for it when estimating your taxes. Not all income comes with taxes already withheld.

If you sold things online, don't automatically assume the full amount you received is taxable. Selling a personal item for less than you originally paid doesn't create taxable income, but selling it for a profit does.

And if you have investments outside your retirement accounts, take a look at any stocks or funds you sold this year. You may have realized capital gains or losses, and selling an investment at a loss before year-end may help offset taxable gains.

Give yourself the gift of knowing where you stand. Perhaps the most valuable thing you can do before the end of the year is get a better idea of what your 2026 tax bill will look like. Look at your federal and state tax withholding or estimates to see whether you've paid enough throughout the year or if additional amounts are required by January 15, 2027. You can start with the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator or work with an Enrolled Agent (EA) or Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to prepare a year-end tax projection. Either way, knowing what to expect gives you time to make adjustments, set aside money, and avoid surprises when tax season arrives. After all, one of the best gifts you can give yourself this holiday season is the confidence of knowing where you stand financially, leaving you more time to enjoy the holidays without an unexpected tax bill looming in the back of your mind.

Disclosure: This article is for educational purposes only and is not intended as financial or tax advice. Every financial situation is unique, and you should consult with a qualified professional before making decisions regarding your specific circumstances.







BY JEFF YOCUM

A Change of SCENERY

"A Change of Scenery" focuses on day trips from Thurmont that are within 150 miles (give or take). These trips will not include "Disney-level" destinations, but rather, lesser-known points of interest. The purpose of the article is to suggest venues for folks seeking a short, easily accessible change of scenery. In the process, hopefully something will be learned. Some will be historic, some cultural, and others just plain quirky. I confess an ulterior motive for writing this article: I have a wanderlust addiction.

Really Great Falls



Photos by Jeff Yocum

Great Falls from the Maryland side.

Within just a few miles of our nation's capital, and just an hour away from the Catoctin area, is some of the nation's most picturesque scenery. I'm referring to Great Falls. And, as a bonus, the Falls are inextricably linked to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. But more about the C&O Canal in a later article.



During the early months of the year, when the Potomac River is running full and stout, the roar of the Falls penetrates your body to the point of feeling the river's power within the most inner parts of your being. Of necessity, you must shout to be heard just a few feet away. The best part of the experience is the walk along the boardwalk and footbridges that take you to the observation point. The footbridges cross craggy ravines, full of rushing waters. Suspended on the bridges above the flumes, you're just a few feet from a fall that would not be survivable. It's perfectly safe, but it does give you a rush of adrenaline.

When you reach the observation platform, you're treated to a vista rivaling more famous falls. The views are accessible from both the Virginia side as well as the Maryland side. Both sides of the river offer multiple parks and trails. The trails range from easy to strenuous. Be sure to be on the lookout for wildlife. My wife and I encountered a 9-point buck along the boardwalk. He was more interested in the doe just a few feet away than us.

When hiking close to the river itself, there is one rule paramount to all others: Respect the power of the river. The water flows very swiftly along that section of the river. Many people have lost their lives to the waters. A killer selfie could become just that.

The National Park Service operates the park and surrounding environs. Both sides of the river have visitor centers with maps and other information. The parking fee is $20.00 per car. This is a good place to encourage you to buy a lifetime pass to the national parks. My wife bought one several years ago, and it has paid for itself many times over.

Just a personal side note: Over the years, my wife and I have had many visitors from around the country. Many of them want to see the sights of Washington, D.C. Whenever possible, we try to include Great Falls as part of the sightseeing plan. We love watching their surprised reactions to the beauty they see in a place so close to a major metropolitan area. It's such a hidden gem among all the other attractions.



Nine-point buck seen at Great Falls.



BY MICHELE TESTER

My Two Cents

A Tall Christmas Tale

My Two Cents: "A Tall Christmas Tale" originally appeared in the December 2024 issue of The Catoctin Banner. I had such fun writing it that I thought I'd change it up a bit, add more to it, and feature it again. I hope you enjoy it.

It was the evening before the night before Christmas, and all through the town, citizens were busily scurrying all around. In anticipation, in excitement, in cheer...of jolly old Saint Nick's arrival this year.

Darting to and fro to their favorite local restaurants and stores, with merry excitement of buying one final gift to check off a last holiday chore.

I was among them, these last-minute shoppers, adorned in my red Santa hat and yearning for Christmas spirit, as I was suddenly jolted by voices ringing out, "Do you hear it?"

Hear what, I thought, even as I found myself moving toward the sound. And, just then, I saw a group of townspeople gathered in the middle of town.

Candycane Town Square was lit up with Christmas lights twinkling bright. Red bows and shiny tinsel chasing away the dark night.

Just then, I heard it too, just as plain as day.

It was bells jingling and the sound of hearty laughter in a warm, jolly way.

"Look up, Look up!" I heard Lady Tinsel Georgine shout. And look up, we did, as something quite spectacular came into sight. A vision so magical, it could leave no doubt.

"Is that what I think it is? It's like I'm looking at a Christmas movie in the sky!" I heard Lady Dazzling Diane cry.

Now, I know what you're thinking. Such a story could not be true, you know. Is she about to say that she saw nine adorable reindeer with Santa in tow?

Indeed, I did. And what happened next? I'm sure you want to know. "My sleigh has lost its engine," bellowed Santa. "Not enough Christmas spirit to make it go."

"But, Santa," Lady Twinkle Kathy declared, "don't reindeer make your sleigh fly?"

That's how all the classic stories go. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph—they are the brawn, pulling the sleigh from dusk until dawn.

"My reindeer are what carry it, but your Christmas spirit is what gives it power. And that's been lacking lately, so I'm here to claim it back this hour."

Now you might wonder, as you read on through, why Santa didn't fix it himself with a snap or a shoe. He's magical, after all, from his head to his toes, and his sleigh flies through mighty blizzards and snows.

But Santa had a message, and it was very clear to me. We should all come together to help one another. "Many hands make light work to be."

Peppermint Queen Tammy spoke suddenly, tears in her eyes, "It's not the gifts, or ribbons, or presents wrapped with flair…it's the togetherness, selflessness, and kindness that today seem so rare."

We can bring it back. Of this, I'm sure. One step of kindness, one dash of hope, one act to assist. Maybe wonderment really can persist.

Everyone sighed in agreement, the task at hand now clear. "Let's grab my tools," Lady Sugarplum Tracy instructed the crowd. "We need to get Santa rolling out of here!"

When we were all done fixing Santa's sleigh, his jolly laughter rang out so sincere, belly jiggling, eyes crinkling, as he asked, "Is there anywhere around Candycane Town to grab a quick beer?"

We all went with Santa that night, bonding over a beer, toasting our renewed Christmas spirit and our new abundance of holiday cheer.

Can it really be so easy? Can our Christmas spirit be revived? Can we all simply admit that we need to be a bit more kind and giving inside?

"A simple smile," said Lady Dazzling Diane, "shouldn't be so rare."

"I so agree," expressed Lady Sugarplum Tracy, "We all need to show more that we care."

"Be thoughtful in the things we do," Tinsel Lady Georgine gave a wink to the crew. "For if we forget to care every day, the spirit of Christmas will dwindle away."

"We have to slow down, take the time to do good," uttered Peppermint Queen Tammy, as she now understood.

"We will make it happen, Santa, all of us now know," beamed Lady Twinkle Kathy. "We must sprinkle little bits of joy everywhere we go."

Santa thanked us, as he sped up, up, and away. I heard him loudly exclaim, and I recall to this day:

"Keep that holiday cheer always throughout the year and all the good it represents."

And as Santa sped out of sight, I swear I heard him faintly whisper… *That's just my two cents.*







LOOKING BACK

1862

Love and Honor in a Time of War, Part 2

BY JAMES RADA, JR.

In September 1862, Samuel Cormany, a Franklin County, Pennsylvania, resident, joined the Union Army. "The fear of being drafted, if I did not volunteer—had possible some weight in inducing decision," Cormany wrote in his diary.

However, a larger part of the decision was that the war was on everyone's minds and stirred a need for a person to do his or her patriotic duty. The war was talked about in churches and around dinner tables. Occasionally, army units would pass through Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, on their way to a new duty station, like the battery unit that rumbled through the town on September 7, heading for Baltimore.

While this interaction with the military did not cause fear among residents since they were both on the same side, one interaction did. Rumors that the Confederate Army was heading in the direction of Chambersburg spread through the county.

On September 7, Cormany wrote that the rumor in Chambersburg was that the rebels were near Hagerstown.

Two days later, after lots of discussions and prayers with his wife, Rachel, Cormany headed into Chambersburg to enlist. "The air is full of calls for men who are patriotic to enlist—I really inwardly feel that I want to go and do my part—as a Man—as a Volunteer—leaving others to wait and be drafted—and Darling is likeminded," Cormany wrote.

He enlisted in Captain William Sullenberger's cavalry company. Sullenberger was a master carpenter in town who had served a three-month enlistment in the army in the fall of 1861 as part of Battery A, First Pennsylvania Artillery, as a lieutenant. Early in the summer of 1862, he had accepted a captain's commission on the condition that he recruit enough men to make up his company, the Sixteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry (Volunteers).

Cormany's first duty immediately after enlisting was to help recruit other men into the company to reach a full complement of men. However, even with this easy duty, he and his comrades slept with their rifles because the town was placed under martial law on September 11. Families started fleeing the area because of word that the Confederate Army was moving north from Hagerstown.

"People are awfully scared—Many are leaving town—poor fools—When I came uptown to Henrys (Reboks) [Cormany's brother-in-law] they had partly packed up to leave—I set to making fun of them. Then they unpacked again concluding to remain quietly in town and see!" Cormany wrote in his diary.

Despite being convinced to stay on September 12, the Reboks still left the next day because of the worry of being caught in the middle of a battle.

The Battle of Antietam occurred on September 17 and the sounds of the cannons firing on the armies nearly 40 miles to the south. This only heightened the tension in Chambersburg. After a delay of getting started, the Sixteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry (Volunteers) finally left for Harrisburg on September 19, and Cormany would not return home for nearly three years.

In August 1865, Cormany wrote of his homecoming to Chambersburg and his family. "O what a joy to press my Darlings to my bosom and know that now we can plan to be together. Yes! Day by day to be at home, together, and live with and for each other," Cormany wrote in his diary.

Photo Courtesy of the Franklin County Historical Society – Kittochtinny



Samuel Comany's wife, Rachel, and his daughter, Cora.

Rachel Cormany wrote in her own diary of her husband's return, "Joy to the world—My little world at least. I am no more a war widow—My Precious is home safe from the war. I am so thankful that he is once more home & that to stay. I am happy all the time now. I do not feel now as if I were alone in the world—as I had so often to feel during his three years absence & now that the war is over I hope we can once get to our home & live as God intends we should."









In 1913, Gettysburg hosted Civil War veterans in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. More than 56,000 Veterans returned to the Gettysburg battlefield, spending a week camping once again in tents.

The Veterans ranged from 61 to more than 100 years old. A highlight of the event was the meeting of Confederate and Union Veterans at the wall that marked the high water mark for the Confederate Army. The Veterans shook hands across the wall instead of shooting at each other.

Using ChatGPT, the original image gets colorized, sharpened, and repaired to let you see history more clearly. AI brings detail out, such as the tents that can be seen in the background.

Pre-AI Retouching



Photo Courtesy of Thurmontimages.com

Post-AI Retouching



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VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

Norman Elsworth Elsbree, Jr.

Presidential Service Badge Recipient

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

Thurmont resident Norman Elsworth Elsbree, Jr. was born on September 27, 1939, to parents Norman Elsworth and Marjorie Eleanor Elsbree of Snohomish County in the State of Washington.

According to an article published in the September 14, 1962, issue of *The Gettysburg Times*, Elsbree graduated in 1958 from the Marysville High School, and Centralia Junior College, both in the State of Washington.

Elsbree enlisted in the Army sometime between 1957 and 1960 and served as a military White House communications specialist. Lacking a specific year, the timeframe is based on his being of age to enter the Army in 1957 and the year President Dwight D. Eisenhower left office (1961), the first president under whom he served.

During his service in the Army, Elsbree served as a White House communications specialist under the presidential administrations of Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson.

The particular agency in which Elsbree was involved underwent a number of name and organizational changes over the decades. Initially established in 1942 as the White House Signal Detachment; in 1954, the unit became the White House Army Signal Agency (WHASA) under the Office of the Chief Signal Officer.

In 1962, control of the unit went to the White House Military Office and was reestablished as the White House Communications Agency (WHCA)—sometimes referred to as "the voice of the president."

Regardless of the name and organizational changes, the duties of the unit remain little changed—coordinating communications and provide "communication systems that enable the president and the presidential staff to lead the nation efficiently…"

"The agency provides worldwide audiovisual, voice, and data communications support for the president, vice president, presidential emissaries, White House staff, the United States Secret Service, and others as directed by the White House Military Office," according to the White House Communications Agency's LinkedIn account.

Typical duties for which Elsbree would have been responsible at the agency would have typically included: setting up and managing secure networks in order to protect highly confidential executive data; installing wiring, radio base stations, and switchboards needed for the purpose of ensuring that the president never lost contact with Washington during travel; operating and maintaining emergency communication facilities and mobile command hubs linked to continuous executive command and control; and maintaining communication links between the White House staff, senior military officials, and the United States Secret Service detail, according to various sources.

It would appear that specific assignments in which Elsbree may have been involved remain classified.

For his service in the Army at the White House, he was awarded the Presidential Service Badge and Certificate, the Good Conduct Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

His engagement to his soon-to-be wife Diane Meisenhelter, a 1961 graduate of the Littlestown High School, was announced in the previously cited article that appeared in the September 14, 1962, issue of *The Gettysburg Times* during his tenure at the White House. The article stated that they had planned a December wedding.

The couple had three children: Norman "Rusty" Elsbree (Norman Elsworth Elsbree, III), Kim, and Brian Elsbree.

Following his tenure in the Army at the White House, Elsbree was employed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It has been presumed that the work he performed at the DOE was similar in scope to the work experience that he had acquired during his tenure at the White House.

Elsbree retired from the U.S. DOE in 1994.

Elsbree passed away on February 25, 2024, at the age of 84, and was survived by his wife of 61 years, Diane, and their two children, Norman III and Kim. He was preceded in death by his son, Brian, and his cherished cat, Coco.

According to Elsbree's obituary, A Celebration of Elsbree's Life, complete with military honors, was held on April 27, 2024, at Thurmont Grange #409, "to honor his memory and the impact he had on all those around him."

Source: Resthaven Funeral Home and Crematory



Norman Elsworth Elsbree, Jr.





If you are a Veteran, or you know a Veteran, who would like to share their experiences in the military for publication in *The Catoctin Banner*, please contact us at news@thecatoctinbanner.com.

Community Veteran Event Board

Thurmont AMVETS Post 7

Want some great food? Come out to Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, located at 26 Apples Church Road in Thurmont, for lunch and dinner every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, from 12:00 to 7:00 p.m., with weekly specials Wednesday through Saturday, from noon to 7:00 p.m. Check out the Friday Night Special: Bucket of Domestic Beer and an appetizer for only $20.00! Follow them on Facebook for the weekly menus, featuring a variety of delicious food! View the advertisement on page 26.

Every Thursday is Bar Bingo at AMVETS Post 7! Enjoy cash prizes, drinks, food, and fun! Doors open at 5:00 p.m. Bingo is open to the public. Come early; it fills up quickly! Check out the advertisement on page 52.

The AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Post 7 is holding a Lottery Fundraiser for Scholarships. They will be selling lottery tickets from November 9 through December 17. The drawing will take place on December 17 during Maryland's Pick 3 Lottery evening drawing. Only 100 tickets will be sold. The winner wins $500. Ask an Auxiliary member for tickets.

On December 13, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., is the Auxiliary's Children's Christmas Party.

Love listening to live entertainment? Thurmont AMVETS Post 7 is now hosting live music! The upcoming schedule for December is as follows: December 5—Retrospective Band, 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.; December 11—Lauren Hill Acoustic Guitarist, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; December 19—Firehouse DJ, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Don't miss out! The public is welcome. There is no cover charge. Food is available for purchase until 7:00 p.m. View the advertisement on page 20.



VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

If you are a Veteran, or you know a Veteran, who would like to share their experiences in the military for publication in *The Catoctin Banner*, please contact us at news@thecatoctinbanner.com.

Thurmont American Legion Post 168

What a wonderful November we had at the Legion! The Auxiliary held its annual Veterans Luncheon. It is so great to see the Veterans come together and reminisce about their time in the service! The Military Ball was also very successful. It was great to see the Veterans in their Dress Uniforms. We were graced by the presence of Gold Star Mothers of Maryland. Julie El Taher led the Reaffirmation of Enlistment with the Veterans. Then we toasted with the Grog Bowl; nothing like bringing back great memories.

The Events Committee has been putting together a great list of events for families through the holidays and in 2027. We will be having more Candy Bingo and Family Game Nights. Members, make sure we have your email and mailing address so that you are informed of what is happening. Of course, there is always Facebook and the website.

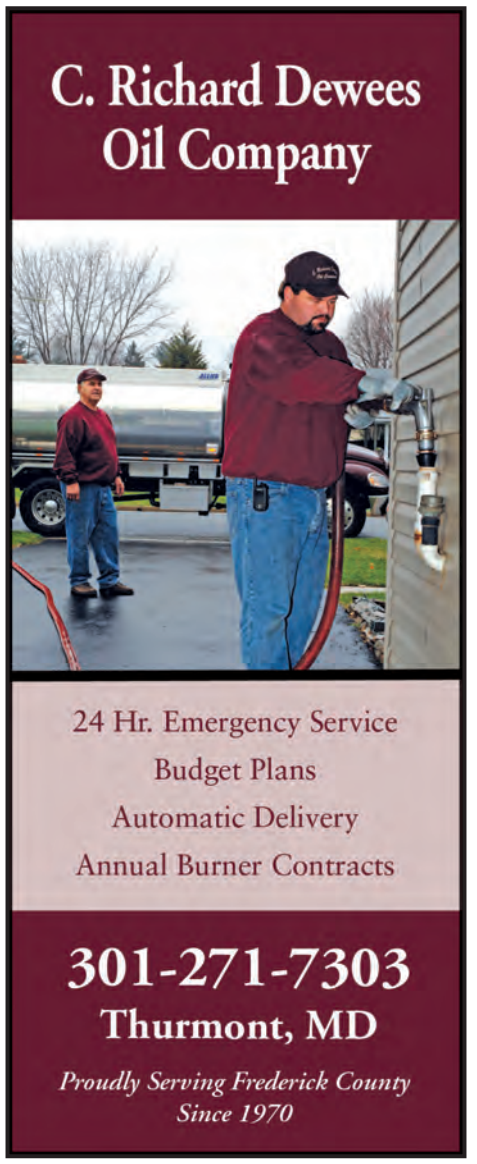
Make sure you have your membership dues paid by December 31, 2026. If you have a key card and your dues are not paid, your card will be deactivated until payment is received: Legionnaires ($45.00); SAL ($25.00), under 21 ($15.00); Auxiliary ($35.00); Juniors ($15.00).

The Americanism Essay Contest, supported by the Auxiliary, is in full swing. The contest is for students in grades 3-12. The theme this year is "How can you be a Beacon of Light to our Veterans?" Parents/Guardians: You can find information on the school website "Peach Jar" or stop by the Legion.

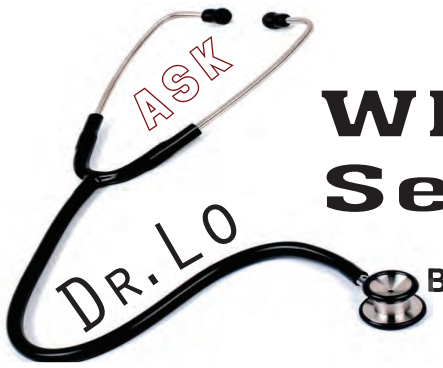
For those of you wondering how to spend your New Year's Eve, the Events Committee is putting together an awesome night with Topside Entertainment! So, mark your calendar!

For Banquet Hall rentals, call the Legion, Monday through Friday, between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. at 301-271-4411.









What Can Be Done About Low Serotonin Levels?

BY DR. THOMAS K. LO, Advanced Chiropractic & Nutritional Healing Center

Serotonin helps us feel good. It has also been referred to as the "happy molecule" for its role in helping to create a positive mood.

Unfortunately, it is all too common for many to deal with low serotonin levels.

Serotonin is also an inhibitory neurotransmitter that helps us with impulse control and pain relief, and it is also a precursor to the sleep hormone melatonin.

Ninety-five percent of the serotonin in the body is produced in the intestines, also referred to as the second brain.

Many experts consider serotonin more of a hormone than a neurotransmitter because its effects impact the entire body. Low serotonin levels have been shown to increase the risk of heart disease, Alzheimer's, and dementia. In addition, low serotonin can increase the severity of other health problems such as migraine headaches, asthma, and fibromyalgia.

When its production in the gut drops, it can be a major contributor to the development of irritable bowel syndrome.

Which Neurotransmitter is to Blame?

Both serotonin and the neurotransmitter dopamine, as well as endorphins, play a role in mood and the overall sense of well-being. When dopamine is low, the individual will have slower movements and low overall drive toward goals. They can also develop Parkinson like symptoms.

When individuals are not producing endorphins, they will have chronic pain and a lack of pleasure in anything they do. Individuals with low endorphins will also have trouble controlling their emotions and will tear up very quickly.

When an individual is deficient in both dopamine and serotonin, they will often experience a combination of depression, slowness of movement, lack of drive, compulsive behaviors, and cravings. These individuals will commonly turn to sugar, smoking, drugs, sex, and other vices to cope with stress.

Individuals with fibromyalgia are often marked by a deficiency in dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins.

Serotonin Facts

Although poor serotonin signaling symptoms are wide-ranging with lots of crossover between sexes, they are twice as likely to impact males and females in the following ways.

Women. Women are more than twice as likely to experience anxiety, depression, or other mood disorders as men. Women may also experience more carb cravings, binge eating, and weight gain.

Men. Men who are low in serotonin are more likely to experience problems with ADHD, addictions (such as alcoholism, sex and pornography, smoking, or food addictions), and trouble with impulse control that can express itself with uncontrollable anger, rudeness, or other socially unacceptable behaviors.

Response to Antidepressants

If the issue is low serotonin, then an individual's response to antidepressants is often good, as most of these are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, which act to increase serotonin activity in the brain. This NEVER gets to the cause of the low serotonin but can improve symptoms for a period of time.

Individuals who don't respond to SSRI's typically have issues with low dopamine and endorphins.

A person needs to be cautious using SSRIs as a long-term health strategy, as the medications have tremendous side effects and can be addictive and hard to wean off.

Response to Melatonin

Serotonin is the precursor to the sleep hormone melatonin. Individuals who struggle with insomnia but see improvement when they take melatonin are most likely deficient in serotonin.

Taking a melatonin supplement can be extremely helpful, but the long-term solution is to improve natural serotonin production.

Natural Strategies to Boost Serotonin Levels

Healthy Sun Exposure: The sunlight stimulates serotonin production. The best time for this is in the morning and around the middle of the day. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is due to a lack of sunlight exposure, which dramatically lowers serotonin production.

Get in the Dirt: Microbes in the soil have been shown to increase serotonin levels. This is why gardening is one of the best hobbies for your mood. Going to the beach and getting in the sand works great also.

Regular Exercise: Walking, running, and resistance training all help boost serotonin levels. Exercise beats antidepressant medications in every clinical trial.

Cultivate Gratitude: Focusing on positive thoughts has been shown to increase the brain's serotonin levels. Decide to stay upbeat despite your circumstances.

Prayer and Meditation: Focused breathing, empathy, and the ability to control your thoughts through meditation and prayer will help you make life so much more enjoyable.

Best Serotonin Boosting Foods

There is a lot of information about foods that boost serotonin; however, you want to avoid foods that are high in carbohydrates, which can throw off our blood sugar. The best foods for optimizing serotonin levels include whole foods like seafood, dark chocolate, fermented foods, nuts, seeds, grassfed meat and dairy, and organic fruits and vegetables.

Supplements

Some supplements can also naturally boost serotonin levels. The following are the most effective and well-researched.

5-HTP: This is the best molecule for boosting serotonin levels naturally. It is easy for the body to convert 5-HTP into serotonin. 5-HTP is short for 5-hydroxytryptophan. It is a compound your body naturally produces from the amino acid tryptophan. It serves as a steppingstone in the production of serotonin. Unlike serotonin itself, 5-HTP can cross the blood-brain barrier, allowing it to directly

continue reading on Page 47



WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT LOW SEROTONIN LEVELS?

increase serotonin levels in the brain.

Since 5-HTP is synthesized from tryptophan, including these foods in your diet can help increase 5-HTP levels:

- Poultry: Turkey and chicken are excellent sources of tryptophan, which the body converts into 5-HTP and serotonin. Roasted turkey breast is particularly rich in tryptophan and also provides vitamin B6, which aids conversion to serotonin.
- Dairy Products: Milk, yogurt, and soy milk contain significant tryptophan, supporting 5-HTP production.
- Seeds and Nuts: Pumpkin seeds are high in tryptophan. One ounce of pumpkin seeds contains roughly 161 mg of tryptophan.
- Seafood: Salmon, sardines, mackerel, and tuna provide tryptophan along with omega-3 fatty acids, which support brain health.
- Vegetarian Options: Mushrooms and soybeans are good plant-based sources of tryptophan.

Omega 3 Fatty Acids: These are anti-inflammatory and have a positive effect on brain health.

Some of the best sources are fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines. Nuts like walnuts and seeds such as chia seeds are packed with healthy fats. Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats. Dark chocolate contains healthy fats and is rich in antioxidants. Pick high cocoa content and low sugar options.

Magnesium: This helps to modulate stress hormone levels in the brain, which can have a direct impact on neurotransmitter levels involved in mood, calm, and nerve signaling.

Top magnesium-rich foods include pumpkin seeds, cooked spinach, Swiss chard, black beans, quinoa, and Brazil nuts.

These foods provide some of the highest magnesium levels per serving.

B Complex: Getting B vitamins can be extremely effective.

Some foods that contain plenty of B vitamins are leafy greens, organ meats, eggs, milk, beef, oysters, clams, mussels, legumes, chicken, turkey, yogurt, nutritional and brewer's yeast, pork, trout and sunflower seeds.

L-Theanine: L-Theanine is a naturally occurring, biologically active, free-form amino acid that provides relaxation support by supporting neurotransmitter levels.

Green, black, white and Matcha teas are some of the best sources of L-Theanine.

Source: drjockers.com







Recipe of the Month

BY MAXINE TROXELL

Here's a fun, festive Christmas cake for you! Poke cakes are the best, aren't they? They're exceptionally cute and colorful, and they're easy (especially if you use boxed cake mix and boxed gelatin). They are also a very potluck-friendly dessert. This recipe comes from The Pioneer Woman website. I hope you enjoy it.

Christmas Poke Cake

Ingredients

- 1 (13oz. to 16oz.) box white cake mix, plus necessary ingredients
- 1 (3oz.) package lime gelatin
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 (3oz.) package raspberry or cherry gelatin
- 1½ cups cold heavy cream
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- Green food coloring gel (optional)
- Christmas sprinkles for decorating

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350˚F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with oil. Prepare the cake mix according to the package directions.
2. Pour the batter into the prepared baking dish and bake as directed. Place the baking dish on a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes. Use the handle of a wooden spoon to poke holes all over the cake.
3. Meanwhile, combine the lime gelatin and 1 cup boiling water in a large measuring cup or bowl. Stir until dissolved. Repeat with the raspberry gelatin and the remaining cup of boiling water in a separate bowl. Transfer ¼ cup of the lime gelatin to a small bowl and set aside. Slowly pour the remaining gelatin mixtures over the cake, going straight across the pan to fill one row of holes with the lime gelatin, then the next full row with the raspberry gelatin, alternating flavors. Keep the colors in separate rows and fill the holes evenly. Let the cake and reserved gelatin cool completely in the refrigerator, about 1 hour.
4. In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the heavy cream and powdered sugar on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, about 3 minutes. Reduce the speed to low and add the reserved gelatin mixture. Add food coloring, if desired, to achieve a deeper shade of green. Increase the speed to medium-high and whip the mixture back to stiff peaks, about 30 seconds.
5. Spread the lime whipped cream over the cake. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes and up to overnight. Decorate the cake with the sprinkles before serving.

Enjoy!



Kids HOLIDAY FUN



Ingredients

- 6 full graham crackers
- 1 cup vanilla frosting ®
- 12 mini candy canes
- 3 Ocean Spray Craisins Original Dried Cranberries
- Milk chocolate candy bars (1.55 oz. each)
- 12 large marshmallows
- Food-safe decorating pens
- 6 pretzel sticks
- 6 1-inch red licorice strips
- Toothpicks (as needed)

Directions

TO MAKE SLED:

Spread about 1 tablespoon frosting on the top of a graham cracker. Place two mini candy canes, hook side facing up, evenly spaced on top of frosting. Top with a 2-inch by 1½–inch piece of chocolate. Place a teaspoon of frosting in the center of the chocolate; set sled aside.

TO MAKE SNOWMAN:

Using food-safe decorating pens, draw a face on the front of one marshmallow (head) and buttons down the front of the other marshmallow (body). Break one pretzel stick in half and insert half into each side of the body marshmallow.

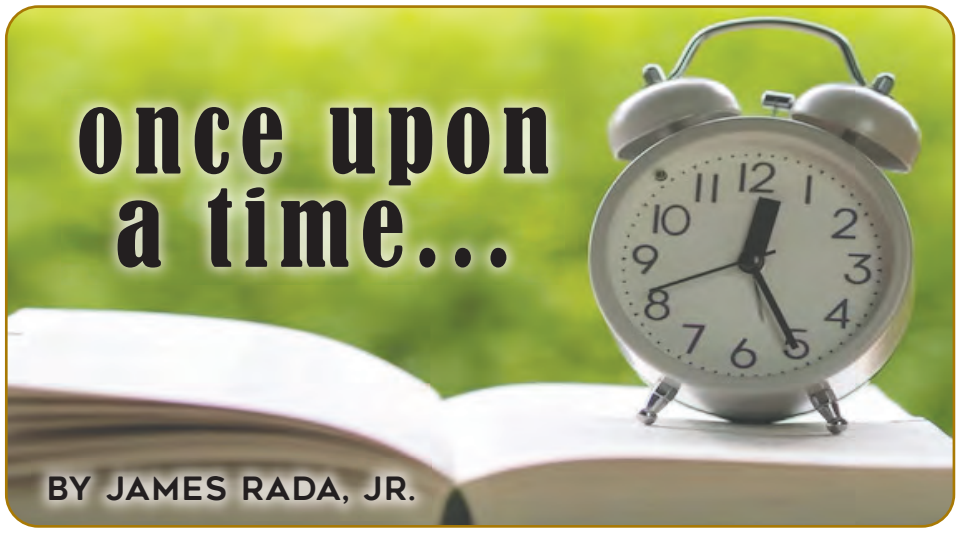
Insert a 1-inch strip of red licorice into the top of the head marshmallow. On both sides of the head, place a small amount of frosting just under the licorice straps; add two Craisins® Dried Cranberries for the earmuffs.

TO COMBINE:

Set the snowman body on the sled atop frosting mound. Add another teaspoon of frosting in center of body marshmallow and place head marshmallow on top. Tie a licorice scarf around the snowman's neck.

Makes 6 snowmen.

Source: https://www.oceanspray.com/recipes/marshmallow-snowmen



Note: Newspaper excerpts are as they appeared in their respective issues.

December 1926, 100 Years Ago

Fire at Thurmont

A combined electrical shop and shed in the rear of the East street residence of William Foreman, Thurmont, was destroyed by fire about 11:15 o'clock Friday night despite the efforts of Thurmont firemen to save the structure. The cause of the fire is unknown.

Considerable electrical equipment was stored in the building, Occupants of the Foreman residence were asleep at the outbreak of the fire but upon becoming aware of it, an alarm was given and firemen responded. The building, which was of frame, burned for about an hour.

The cause of the fire had not been determined this morning, nor had the extent of the loss been estimated.

.

– *The* (Frederick) *News*, December 11, 1926

State Built Four Bridges in County

Four concrete bridges were built in this county by the State Roads Commission during the year 1926, according to information from the office of District Engineer W. F. Childs, Jr. Two of the bridges were in the city and the others in the county.

… The construction of 1.3 mile of macadam highway from Thurmont to Graceham, a seven-tenths-mile of penetration macadam through the town of Creagerstown, and a one-fourth-mile of concrete highway on the Rocky Ridge road, was also completed during the year.

– *The* (Frederick) *News*, December 31, 1926

December 1951, 75 Years Ago

Fighting Brothers Return From Korean Front Line

Two fighting sons and Emmitsburg, brothers are expected to return home from the battlefield of Korea momentarily. Sgt. First Class Marshall Sanders, after a 10-months' tour of duty on the front, has already arrived and is currently operating his partnership interest is Sanders Bros. Garage. His brother, Cpl. Thomas Sanders, left the scene of activity several weeks ago and is expected to arrive home today. The brothers, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Sanders, E. Main St., are pictured above as they met recently in reunion in the front line in Korea. Corporal Tom has 13-months' service overseas and is on a furlough. Sgt. Marshall has been placed in the reserves, after suffering shrapnel wounds of the head and leg.

– *Emmitsburg Chronicle*, December 14, 1951

Snow Storms Paralyze District

A surprising six-inch snowfall that turned to rain early Friday evening had highway traffic stalled on many of the main highways in this area. All available State and County roads equipment and personnel worked through the night to remove snow and apply cinders on hills and curves.

Public school children were dismissed early Friday afternoon as the storm threatened to prevent school buses from returning their young passengers to their homes.

It snowed six inches here by 7 o'clock Friday night. Shortly afterward the fine snow turned to rain and began freezing and forming a slippery crust in temperatures ranging from 22 to 26 degrees.

The proportion of the snowfall caught Emmitsburgians unprepared and local garages were hard-pressed to meet the demand for chains, anti-freeze, knobby tires and towing service.

The forecast had been for fair and cold and conditions but the storm swept ahead of schedule.

– *Emmitsburg Chronicle*, December 21, 1951

December 1976, 50 Years Ago

15 Dualization Doubtful

Secretary Harry R. Hughes announced the transportation program he will propose for fiscal years 1978 through 1982. In summary, Secretary Hughes stated, "Our allocation of state funds, through 1982, for both our operating and capital programs, totals $1.6 billion. This is a transportation program that lives within our income. To assure some degree of solvency for the department beyond 1982, it is a program that, with a few exceptions, includes no new primary or secondary highway projects, and no new major transit, port or aviation projects. Projects now underway will be completed."

This program places the dualization of U.S. 15 in doubt as his budget may not allow any new major projects.

Secretary Hughes outlined his program in anticipation of the annual twenty-three county tour he is about to begin. Meetings will be held with local officials in each of the counties, beginning this week and concluding in January. Comments from the meetings will be considered in the final program presented to the 1977 General Assembly.

– *The Emmitsburg Chronicle*, December 1, 1976

Lucille Beale Honored

Mrs. Lucille K. Beale, Emmitsburg R. 2, a home economics teacher at Fairfield High School, who just completed her 20th year as a volunteer weather observer for the National

Weather Service at her home near Emmitsburg, was honored with the John Campanius Holm award at a Veteran's Day assembly at Fairfield High School Thursday.

She is one of 35 observers selected this year to receive the award from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), parent agency of the National Weather Service.

– *The Emmitsburg Chronicle*, December 29, 1976

December 2001, 25 Years Ago

Preliminary Site Plan Approval for Interfaith Housing

Preliminary site plans for an Interfaith Housing Self-Help Housing program in Emmitsburg have been approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The 17 single family homes will be built on 6.5 acres of building lots on the north west side of Silo Hill Road. Work is expected to begin on the infra structure in spring and construction on the houses in early fall.

Interfaith Housing is looking for families to participate in the program.

Interfaith Housing has sponsored the Self-help Housing program in Western Maryland for close to seven years and construction supervision, and post-occupancy support. In Frederick County, 32 families have built their homes through the program in Brunswick and Emmitsburg

– *The Dispatch*, December 2001

Hance Family Reflects on Christmas Tradition

In November of 1989, during a conversation about the true meaning of Christmas between Jim and Jo Ann Hance and Dennis and Bridget Sherald, the idea of "An Evening of Christmas Spirit" was born.

In order to create a vision of a Norman Rockwell Christmas painting set in the small town charm of Emmitsburg, they became four tireless elves. Local choirs were asked to sing, children and animals were recruited for a live nativity scene, citizens were requested to bake cookies and help staff the many events, and of course Santa Claus was invited.

Now, twelve years later, the tradition continues. An Evening of Christmas Spirit has been and still is our favorite gathering for the year. This year, join us on Monday, December 3, at 6:00 p.m. on the town square for the lighting of the community Christmas tree, then follow Santa to the Carriage House Inn for refreshments, hayrides, live entertainment, and a memory of the true meaning of Christmas.

– *The Emmitsburg Regional Dispatch*,
December 2001

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THURMONT SENIOR CENTER

BY TARA MILLER

806 E. Main Street • 301-271-7911

The holiday season is here, and December is shaping up to be a festive and busy month at the Thurmont Senior Center! We have plenty of opportunities to enjoy good company, get creative, stay active, and celebrate the season together.

Our weekly activities will continue throughout the month. Exercise opportunities include Strength & Balance classes, Chair Yoga, Chair Dancing, and Zumba Gold with Kellie Bevard. We also offer cards and games, the Aging Independently Peer Group, Stitch & Chat, and our popular 50/50 Bingo on the first and third Wednesdays. Our December Bingo dates are December 2 and 16, with a special Christmas Bingo planned for December 16.

Craftin' in the Catoctins will continue bringing out everyone's creative side with two festive projects this month. On December 8, we'll be making Busted Canvas art, followed by Christmas ornaments on December 17. These free craft sessions are a great way to spend an afternoon creating something special while enjoying conversation and friendship.

Music lovers won't want to miss our special holiday concert, featuring Todd Williams, on Friday, December 11, at 1:00 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of live music and holiday cheer!

We will also host our monthly birthday celebration on Friday, December 18, at 12:30 p.m. Be sure to join us as we celebrate everyone with a December birthday!

Our monthly seated massage appointments with Marie will be available Thursday, December 17, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Massages are $1.00 per minute.

The Thurmont Senior Center will once again partner with Roy Rogers for a special fundraiser on Thursday, December 10, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. We will also hold our monthly Bake Sale! Stop by for dinner or use the drive-thru, and be sure to mention the Thurmont Senior Center when ordering. Your support helps us continue providing programs and services to our local seniors.

Speaking of support, we continue working toward our fundraising goal of $25,000 for replacement flooring at the Senior Center. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we have raised $11,100 so far! We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has contributed, participated in fundraisers, and helped spread the word. Every donation brings us one step closer to improving our facility for the seniors who use it.

Lunch is served Monday through Friday at noon for just $7.00. Each weekday features meals from one of our local restaurant partners: Bollinger's on Mondays, Fratelli's on Tuesdays, Mountain Gate on Wednesdays, Rocky's on Thursdays, and Kountry Kitchen on Fridays. Please call the Center at 301-271-7911 the day before to reserve your lunch.

As we approach the holidays, please remember that the Thurmont Senior Center will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We will also be closed on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

The Thurmont Senior Center is located at 806 E. Main Street in Thurmont. We are open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Everyone ages 55 and over is welcome to join us!

In addition to our activities and meals, we provide rides for homebound seniors within a six-mile radius for local doctor and dentist appointments, grocery shopping, and other necessary trips. We also deliver lunches to homebound seniors within six miles for $7.00.

For more information about our any of our activities, services, lunch reservations, or upcoming events, please call 301-271-7911 or email thurmontseniorcenter@zoho.com. You can also find us on Facebook and visit our website at thurmontseniorcenter.org.

From all of us at the Thurmont Senior Center, we would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!

Thank you for being part of our community and helping make the Senior Center such a special place to gather, connect, and enjoy life together.

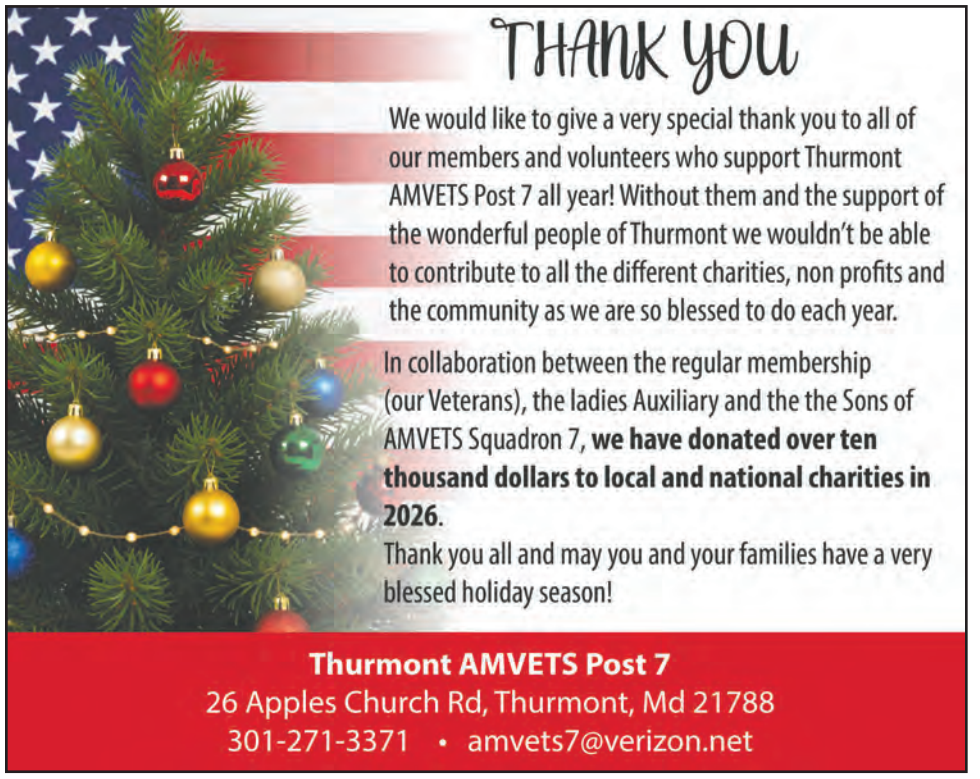
Photo by Nancy Rice



November birthdays celebrated at Thurmont Senior Center: Kathy Dowling and Joan Follin.

View *The Catoctin Banner* Online: www.thecatoctinbanner.com





EMMITSBURG 50+ CENTER

300A South Seton Avenue • 301-600-6350

BY COURTNEY ALCON

The Emmitsburg 50+ Senior Center is welcoming winter with a packed calendar. We've got lots of opportunities to get active, connect with neighbors, and try something crafty. We all know the holiday season is best celebrated over meals with friends, so join us for lunch on Mondays and Thursdays at noon! December's menu includes nostalgic favorites like meatloaf and gravy, corned beef and mashed potatoes, pot roasts, and more. We'll be celebrating December birthdays on Monday, December 28, with dessert after lunch, and we will bring in the New Year on December 31 with a special spaghetti lunch. To reserve your spot, give us a call at 301-600-6350, or stop by any time!

If you're looking for something special to gift to a loved one, join in on one of our craft classes and create something truly from the heart. On Wednesday, December 2, we will be making personalized stamped greeting cards. Dorothea will be returning with a painting class on Tuesday, December 8, where we will paint festive snowmen on wooden panels to bring a little holiday cheer. If you want to try your hand at creating a mosaic Christmas tree, join us for a two-part workshop on December 9 and 16.

With colder weather settling in, bring your workout indoors and join us for a class or fitness group. Open gym time will continue on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. If you prefer something self-paced, we offer video exercises each morning at 9:15 a.m., or drop in any time. If you prefer an instructor-led class, check out chair yoga with Christina on Mondays at 1:00 p.m.

The Emmitsburg 50+ Senior Center will be closed a few days this month in observance of holidays and special events. We will be closed on Friday, December 11. Registration for the Winter Quarter programs (January-March 2027) will begin on Friday, December 18. Call or stop by to register for programs that you'd like to try! For the Christmas holiday, we will be closed on Thursday, December 24, and Friday, December 25. We will be participating in the Hickory Bridge Holiday Luncheon trip on Tuesday, December 29, and the center will be closed for all other programs that day.



Traveling? Day Trip? **TAKE US WITH YOU!**

Photo must be high resolution

Email us a photo of you holding *The Catoctin Banner*, along with the details of where you traveled, name(s) of person(s) pictured, and any other fun, interesting details you would like to add, to: news@thecatoctinbanner.com. Safe Travels!



Peer Support Group for Seniors Aging Alone

BY JANE SACHS

There is a growing community of older adults living independently who are alone and facing the challenge of aging alone, without family support. With aging comes the need to undertake various tasks and make different kinds of plans. Solo agers need to create legal documents, like wills and powers of attorney and advance medical directives; manage finances; arrange appropriate healthcare; choose health insurance or long-term care plans; decide where to live and how to dispose of possessions; engage home care if necessary; find someone to accompany them to doctors' appointments; find public transportation when no longer able to drive; find opportunities for continuing social engagement and exercise; have someone with whom to think through various issues that arise; have someone to call in an emergency; and more. There are a lot of such tasks, and they're often not things that can be managed alone.

Like other seniors, moreover, solo agers will encounter unexpected changes, risks, and emergencies. Yet the family member other seniors can call upon, in the myriad ways that need for help arises, isn't there. So, what's such a person aging alone to do?

Across the country, a movement to support such solo agers has sprung up. People are forming communal housing "Villages," where one can live separately in private homes but help and be helped by neighbors in a variety of ways. Need a screen repaired? A meal cooked? An escort to a doctor's appointment? A ride home from the car mechanic? Others live communally in one house with a caretaker, share expenses, and look out for each other. Still others form solo ager support structures, which include ongoing peer planning groups at local community or senior centers.

As Carol Marak, author of *Solo and Smart: The Roadmap for a Supportive and Secure Future*, writes:

> A person may complete an advance directive, organize financial records, install a home security system, and write down emergency contacts. But documents and technology cannot visit someone after a hospital discharge, notice a meaningful change in behavior, pick up a prescription, communicate with a physician, care for a pet, or coordinate services during a difficult transition. At some point, every plan depends on people.
>
> For solo agers, however, there may be no automatic family system prepared to respond. That means a support structure must be created intentionally—and creating it requires more than attending a presentation or agreeing that planning is a good idea.

In addition to identifying different individuals for particular kinds of help on whom one can depend—e.g., for a ride or to care for pets in an emergency, for legal services, for help managing money, for healthcare advocacy, etc.—an essential part of a solo aging support structure is a peer-planning group. Now there is just such a group that meets every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. at the Thurmont Senior Center. This group offers help that education and presentations cannot: shared problem-solving; continuous encouragement; and practice strategizing, troubleshooting, making clear and respectful requests, and taking action. And with luck, also a sense of meaningful connection. It calls for commitment, confidentiality, trust, and follow-through.

The idea is that having a solo aging planning support team will help those aging alone to remain in control, independent, and prepared for changes that may occur. We welcome newcomers who are aging alone and would like to be part of such a support team.

For more information, please contact the Thurmont Senior Center at 301-271-7911 and leave a message for Jane Sachs to call you.

Please join us!

The Catoctin Banner
Your Good News Community Newzine

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The Catoctin Banner Newzine exists solely due to the advertising support of those featured in each issue.



Meet Storm: A Little Cat with a Big Heart!

Rescued last January just in the nick of time, right before the blizzard rolled in, Storm (pictured below) has proven to be a little ray of sunshine despite her wintery name!

Storm is the perfect mix of playful and affectionate. She loves to have fun, explore, and keep herself entertained. Yet, she's just as happy soaking up attention and enjoying some quality cuddle time with her favorite people. She definitely knows how to win hearts!

Storm is also a food-motivated girl, which makes mealtime one of her favorite parts of the day. A tasty treat is a sure way to get her attention! She's also wonderful with other kitties and would love a home where she can have feline friends to share her days with.



Now that Storm has weathered the storm of her rescue journey, she's ready for her next chapter: a loving forever home, where she can bring plenty of laughter, affection, and happiness.

Storm is waiting to make someone's house feel like home!

Jellybean Rescue is dedicated to giving cats like Storm a second chance at the happy, loving lives they deserve. By rescuing, caring for, and finding forever homes for cats in need, Jellybean Rescue helps turn difficult beginnings into beautiful new beginnings.

Interested in learning more about Storm or adopting? Contact Jellybean Rescue at jellybeanrescue19@gmail.com.

FREDERICK COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL & PET ADOPTION CENTER

HOWIE



#27-0620
AGE: 11Y
GENDER: MALE
BREED: DSH

VONN



#27-0638
AGE: 1Y
GENDER: MALE
BREED: TERRIER X

FOR MORE INFO CALL, 301-600-1546
SCHEDULE YOUR VISITATION AT
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Where Fur and Family Come Together
Animal Shelter
Frederick County

PET of the Month

Levon



meet **Levon**

Levon is a three-year-old Border Collie and the beloved and cherished "best buddy" of Karen and Neil Hingen.

"Levon goes to work with his mama every day and is a true Border Collie through and through. He is excellent at his job and helps round up chickens, along with rounding up his Labrador brother and me. In his free time, Levon loves playing with frisbees and tennis balls!" ~Neil

PET OF THE MONTH

SEND IN YOUR BEST PHOTO OF YOUR BEST BUDDY!

Pets make us healthier, they keep us active, they brighten our mood, and so much more! Send in your "best photo" of your "best buddy," and your pet could be "Pet of the Month" in a future issue! Make sure your photo is high resolution. PLEASE include pet's name, pet's owner's/family name(s), breed, age, personality traits, and any other fun details that you would like us to know about your best buddy!

send to: NEWS@THECATOCTINBANNER.COM

Classifieds

Post Your Jobs, For Sale, Housing, Services, Wanted, For Rent, Pets, Yard Sales, Etc.

To place a classified ad, submit and pay online at TheCatoctinBanner.com under 'Classifieds' tab. The cost is $20 (includes up to 200 characters in the For Sale, For Rent, Help Wanted, Yard Sales, and Wanted categories). Classifieds under the Services category require a paid display ad. When purchasing a paid display ad, you may place a classified ad for free in the months you advertise.

Services

In Home Christian Senior Care: Helping seniors live independently at home. Light cleaning, yard work, transportation, meal prep and more. Call 443-204-7222.

Accounting services, tax management, and filing with Melissa Wetzel in Emmitsburg. Schedule your appointment today by calling 301-447-3797

Asphalt paving and seal coating by Frederick County Paving. Call 301-662-2820 for a free estimate or email frederickcountypaving@comcast.net.

Mountain View Lawn Care: Call 301- 271-2832 for all your lawn care needs

Visit Quality Tire in Emmitsburg for super tire service at 17650 Creamery Road in Emmitsburg. Call 301-447-2909.

Karen's Cleaning Service, in business 25 years. Excellent references. Call for a free in-home estimate. Call 410-736-0486. Serving the Emmitsburg/Thurmont area.

Wanted

Antiques & Collectibles like crocks, jugs, postcards, photographs, advertising items, old signs, old dolls, toys & trains (pre-1965), quilts, political items, guns, old holiday decorations, hunting & fishing items, jewelry, and coins; gold, sterling, coin collections, etc. Will buy one item or a collection. 301-514-2631.

We buy gold & silver. Call 301-788-2626.

For Rent

Looking for a storage solution? Storage units are available for rent in Emmitsburg. Call Dan at 301-788-2626.

Parish Hall for Rent, St. John's Reformed Church, Sabillasville. Sears 75, Kitchen, Handicap ramp, bathroom. Outside pavilion also available. Call Lisa 301-418-3375.

Help Wanted

Los Amigos in Thurmont is now hiring servers. Apply within at 205 Frederick Road, Thurmont, MD 21788.





2.....Queen of Hearts Drawing (Wednesdays), American Legion Post 168, 8 Park Ln., Thurmont. 7:30 p.m.

2.....Cornhole Tourn. (Wednesdays), American Legion Post 168, 8 Park Ln., Thurmont. Doors open at 5 p.m.; games at 7 p.m.

2.....Christmas Celebration, The Dirty Dawg, 224 N. Church St., Unit C2, Thurmont. Fill a stocking for $25. Red Envelope Coffee Co. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Paco the Beer Buro Kissing Booth. All proceeds from the Kissing Booth benefits Special Olympics of Maryland.

3.....Bar Bingo (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. Open to the public. 301-271-3371.

3 .....7 of Hearts Drawing (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. Open to the public. Must buy ticket by 6 p.m. 301-271-3371.

3.....Bingo (Thursdays), American Legion Post 168, 8 Park Ln., Thurmont. 7 p.m.

3.....Line Dancing (Thursdays), American Legion Post 168, 8 Park Ln., Thurmont. 7 p.m.

3.....Theater in the Furnace: A Revolutionary Christmas, Collier's Log House, 12610 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. 1 hr. & 10 min. (no intermission). Reservations required; tickets sold through eventbrite. www.catoctinfurnace.org/events/.

3-6 ..S'mores with Santa, Frederick Co. Parks & Rec, Utica District Park, 10200-B Old Frederick Rd., Frederick. Gather around your own campfire, s'mores, hot cocoa bar. $35/fire pit (registration is per family & includes one fire pit for up to 10 people. Registration required; space is limited. www.recreater.com or 301-600-2936.

4.....Bingo (every Friday night), Thurmont Event Complex, 13716 Strafford Dr., Thurmont. Doors open 5 p.m.; Bingo 6:45 p.m. Tip jars; food; jackpot up to $1,000. Benefits Thurmont Community Amb. Srv. www.thurmonteventcomplex.com.

4.....Pre-Order – Christmas Cookie Sale, Emmanuel Baust UCC, 2940 Old Taneytown Rd., Westminster. 12 kinds of cookies: $7/doz; 3 kinds of fudge/candy: $8/lb. PICKUP date: Dec. 12, 9-11:30 a.m. Info. & to pre-order: Sandy sandys46@netscape.com or 410-857-0416.

4.....Theater in the Furnace: A Revolutionary Christmas, Collier's Log House, 12610 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. 1 hr. & 10 min. (no intermission). Reservations required; tickets sold through eventbrite. www.catoctinfurnace.org/events/.

4,5...Catoctin High School Drama Dept. Presents Varney the Vampire, 14745 Sabillasville Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m.

5.....Catoctin High School Sports Boosters' Spirit Wear Sale, Catoctin High School Cafeteria, 14745 Sabillasville Rd., Thurmont. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. New spirit wear release, new blanket release & more. Take pictures with the Catoctin Cougar Mascot & with Santa (noon-3 p.m.).

5.....Live Music at AMVETS Post 7: Retrospective Band, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7:30-10:30 p.m. Open to public. No cover charge.

5.....Books, Books, Books — Holiday Sale, Thurmont Regional Library, 76 E. Moser Rd., Thurmont.

5.....Breakfast with Santa & Christmas Bazaar, Mother Seton School, 100 Creamery Rd., Emmitsburg. 8 a.m.-Noon. Breakfast: $10/person; $50/family (5-8); Free/ages 2 & under. Admission is free to Bazaar. Now accepting vendor applications. www.mothersetonschool.org.

5.....The Sons of the American Legion Celebrate "Christmas in Thurmont" Artisan Market, 8 Park Ln., Thurmont. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

5.....23rd Annual Christmas in Thurmont, Guardian Hose Fire Hall, 21 N. Church St., Thurmont. Featuring Santa & Mrs. Claus, free photos w/Santa (10 a.m.-12:45 p.m. & 2-2:20 p.m.), Make & Take Crafts (10 a.m.-noon), ESP Dance performance (2:30 p.m.). Music by DJ Brian Mo. Prize drawings 3 p.m.

5.....Theater in the Furnace: A Revolutionary Christmas, Collier's Log House, 12610 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont. 3 p.m. & 7 p.m. No intermission. Reservations required; tickets sold through eventbrite. www.catoctinfurnace.org/events/.

5.....Old Fashioned Bingo & Ugly Sweater Contest, St. Anthony's Shrine Upper Hall, 16150 St. Anthony Rd., Emmitsburg. Doors open at 5 p.m. Games begin at 6:30 p.m. Tip jars, 50/50, & raffles. Food & baked goods for sale.

5.....Traditional Village Christmas, Harriet Chapel, 12625 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free refreshments, free make & take craft & free Docent-led tours. Christmas Bazaar w/handmade crafts, jewelry, ornaments, etc. www.harrietchapel.org. 301-271-4553.

6.....Christmas Music Presented by the Emmitsburg Community Chorus, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8619 Blacks Mill Rd., Thurmont. 3 p.m. Led by choral director, Peggy Flickinger, and accompanied by pianist, Lisa Mattia. Everyone welcome.

6.....Theater in the Furnace: A Revolutionary Christmas, Collier's Log House, 12610 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont. 3 p.m. 1 hr. & 10 min. (no intermission). Reservations required; tickets sold through eventbrite. www.catoctinfurnace.org/events/.

6.....Quarter Auction at AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. Noon-4 p.m.

7.....Come Celebrate the True Meaning of Christmas as a Community at An Evening of Christmas Spirit, Carriage House Inn, 200 S. Seton Ave., Emmitsburg. 6-8:00 p.m. Tree lighting ceremony; visit by Santa; complimentary hot dogs, cookies & hot chocolate; live nativity; hay rides; and live music in Joann's Ballroom. Bring canned food for Lions Club Food Drive.

7.....Served With Grace Free Dinner, Graceham Moravian Church, 8231-A Rocky Ridge Rd., Thurmont. 5:30-7 p.m. www.gracehammoravian.org.

7.....Thurmont UMC Clothes Closet Christmas, 13880 Long Rd., Thurmont. 6 p.m. Snow date: Dec. 8.

10....Bar Bingo (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. Open to the public. 301-271-3371.

10 ...7 of Hearts Drawing (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. Open to the public. Must buy ticket by 6 p.m. 301-271-3371.

11....Bingo (every Friday night), Thurmont Event Complex, 13716 Strafford Dr., Thurmont. Doors open 5 p.m.; Bingo 6:45 p.m. Tip jars; food; jackpot up to $1,000. Benefits Thurmont Community Amb. Srv. www.thurmonteventcomplex.com.

11....Live Music at AMVETS Post 7: Lauren Hill Acoustic Guitarist, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 6-9 p.m. Open to public. No cover charge.

11....Mingle N' Jingle on Main, Thurmont. 5-8 p.m. Horse & Carriage Rides (by reservation only; $10/person; call 301-271-7313); Ugly Sweater Contest at 10Tavern at 8:30 p.m. Do your holiday shopping and support local businesses. Sponsored by Main Street Thurmont. www.thurmontmainstreet.com.

12....Free Breakfast with Santa, Thurmont Ambulance Co. Event Complex, 13716 Strafford Dr., Thurmont. 7-11 a.m. Pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, OJ, milk & coffee.

12....Emmitsburg Lions Club's Annual Children's Christmas Party, Vigilant Hose Co. Activities Bldg., 17701 Creamery Rd., Emmitsburg. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Crafts, hot dogs, cookies, hot chocolate, music & a visit from Santa & Mrs. Claus (Noon).

12....Join Santa for Donuts in your PJs, Elias Lutheran Church, Fellowship Hall, 100 W. North Ave., Emmitsburg. 9-11 a.m. Crafts, food & fun. Free event.

12....Blue Ridge Summit Free Library Annual Yuletide Celebration, 13676 Monterey Ln., Blue Ridge Summit, PA. 4-6:30 p.m.

12....Turkey & Shrimp Giveaway Drawing (For Members Only), AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont.

12....Annual Lions Children's Christmas Party, Vigilant Hose Activities Bldg., 17701 Creamery Rd., Emmitsburg. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Fun for the whole family. Crafts, hotdogs, cookies, hot chocolate, music & special visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus at Noon.

12....Museums by Candlelight, Harriet Chapel, 12625 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont. Noon-5 p.m. Free refreshments, free make & take craft & free Docent-led tours. Christmas Bazaar w/handmade crafts, jewelry, ornaments, etc. www.harrietchapel.org. 301-271-4553.

12....Thurmont AMVETS Post 7 Turkey & Shrimp Giveaway (For Members Only), 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont.

12....Frederick County Tour of Country Churches, 1-5 p.m. Featured Stops: Mount Moriah Evangelical Lutheran Church (15116 Foxville Church Rd, Sabillasville) & Foxville School House – Scandinavian theme (14814 Foxville-Deerfield Rd., Sabillasville). Info.: Pastor Julie Brigham at 240-405-2173 or email prjulie@verizon.net.

12 ... Bingo, Rocky Ridge Vol. Fire Co., 13516 Motters Station Rd., Rocky Ridge. Doors open at 5 p.m.; games start at 7 p.m. Food available for purchase.

12,13.....A Thurmont Christmas Church Tour — Five Historic Churches: Apple UCC, Thurmont UMC, Trinity UCC, Weller UMC & Harriet Chapel. 5-7 p.m. Visit each church w/family & friends.

13....Woodsboro Vol. Fire Co.'s Santa Run Through the Town of Woodsboro. Run starts 1 p.m. Santa makes his annual run through Woodsboro on the fire truck. Following the run is pictures with Santa at the Woodsboro Community Center (605 S. Main St.) 4:30-5:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Woodsboro Vol. Fire Co. & the Town of Woodsboro.

13....PLACE ORDERS for Thurmont Lions Club Fudge Sale (by Dec. 13). PICKUP on Dec. 19: St. John's Lutheran

Community Calendar.....continued on page 55



 — continued from page 54

Church, 15 N. Church St., Thurmont. 10 a.m.-Noon. $17/one pound; $9/half pound. Multiple flavors. Call 301-606-7873.

13.... Christmas Music Presented by the Emmitsburg Community Chorus, Lewistown United Methodist Church, 11032 Hessong Bridge Rd., Thurmont. 3 p.m. Led by choral director, Peggy Flickinger, and accompanied by pianist, Lisa Mattia. Everyone welcome.

13.... Children's Christmas Party, AMVETS Post 7 Auxiliary, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 1-3 p.m.

15.... Auxiliary Bingo, AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 5-8 p.m.

15.... Thurmont UMC Clothes Closet, 13880 Long Rd., Thurmont. 10-11:30 a.m.

17 ... Senior Potluck Lunch (for ages 55+), St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 17015 Sabillasville Rd., Sabillasville. 11:30 a.m.

17.... Bar Bingo (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. Open to the public. 301-271-3371.

17 ... 7 of Hearts Drawing (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. Open to the public. Must buy ticket by 6 p.m. 301-271-3371.

18.... Bingo (every Friday night), Thurmont Event Complex, 13716 Strafford Dr., Thurmont. Doors open 5 p.m.; Bingo 6:45 p.m. Tip jars; food; jackpot up to $1,000. Benefits Thurmont Community Amb. Srv. www.thurmonteventcomplex.com.

19.... Live Music at AMVETS Post 7: Firehouse DJ, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7-10 p.m. Open to public. No cover charge.

19.... Free Christmas Concert – Making Spirits Bright, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 10621 Old Frederick Rd., Thurmont. 3 p.m. Presented by The Catoctin Brass Quintet.

20.... Christmas Music Presented by the Emmitsburg Community Chorus, Homewood Living, 7407 Willow Rd., Frederick. 7 p.m. Led by choral director, Peggy Flickinger, and accompanied by pianist, Lisa Mattia. Everyone welcome.

20.... Christmas Cantata – "Christmas... Sing Noel," Tom's Creek UMC, 10926 Simmons Rd., Emmitsburg. 9 a.m. Every neighbor is welcome. www.tomscreekumc.com. 301-447-3171.

20.... Musical Celebration, Weller UMC, 101 N. Altamont Ave., Thurmont. 9:30 a.m. Combined Services. 301-271-2802.

23.... Christmas Program, Apples United Church of Christ, 7908 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. Refreshments following program.

24.... Come As You Are Christmas Eve Service, Apples United Church of Christ, 7908 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 4 p.m. Gratitude-filled, low-church celebration anticipating the arrival of Christ our Savior, with simple song and storytelling.

24.... Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Trinity UCC, 101 East Main St., Thurmont. 7 p.m. All welcome. Rev. Dr. Barbara Rowlett.

24.... Christmas Eve Service, First Baptist Church of Thurmont, 7 Sunny Way, Thurmont. 6:30 p.m. www.fbcthurmont.org.

24.... AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. Open until 6 p.m. Join them for camaraderie.

24.... Candlelight Christmas Eve Services, Tom's Creek UMC, 10926 Simmons Rd., Emmitsburg. 5 p.m. & 11 p.m. Every neighbor is welcome. www.tomscreekumc.com. 301-447-3171.

24.... Christmas Eve Candle Light Service, Graceham Moravian Church, 8231-A Rocky Ridge Rd., Thurmont. 5 p.m. & 7 p.m. www.gracehammoravian.org.

24.... Christmas Eve Service, Mount Moriah Evangelical Lutheran Church, 15116 Foxville Church Rd, Sabillasville. 7 p.m. Info.: Pastor Julie Brigham at 240-405-2173 or email prjulie@verizon.net.

24.... Christmas Eve Service,St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 13025 Greensburg Rd., Smithsburg. 9 p.m. Info.: Pastor Julie Brigham at 240-405-2173 or email prjulie@verizon.net.

24.... Christmas Eve Service, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 10621 Old Frederick Rd., Thurmont. Musical Prelude at 6 p.m. Service with Lesson & Carols at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Timothy Waybright.

24.... Christmas Eve Services, Weller UMC, 101 N. Altamont Ave., Thurmont. 7 p.m. with Puppet Ministry; 9 p.m. Traditional Service. 301-271-2802.

31.... Bar Bingo (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. 7 p.m. Open to the public. 301-271-3371.

31.... 7 of Hearts Drawing (Thursdays), Thurmont AMVETS Post 7, 26 Apples Church Rd., Thurmont. Open to the public. Must buy ticket by 6 p.m. 301-271-3371.

31.... Vigilant Hose Company's New Year's Eve Bingo, 17701 Creamery Rd., Emmitsburg. Doors open at 10:30 a.m.; games start at 1 p.m. $50 in advance; $60 after Dec. 11. All-inclusive 9 pack, includes 22 games at $300, 6 games at $500 & 2 games at $2,000. Ticket includes dinner platter. Snacks & refreshments available for purchase during breaks. Tickets: Pam 240-472-3484.

31 ... New Year's Eve Bingo, Thurmont Event Complex, 13716 Strafford Dr., Thurmont. Doors open at 5 p.m. Bingo starts at 8 p.m. Over $17,000 in cash payouts. $50/advance tickets; $60/at door. Ticket includes meal. Cash bar & kitchen open during break. Proceeds benefit Thurmont Comm. Amb. Co. Tickets: eventbrite.com or 301-748-5359.

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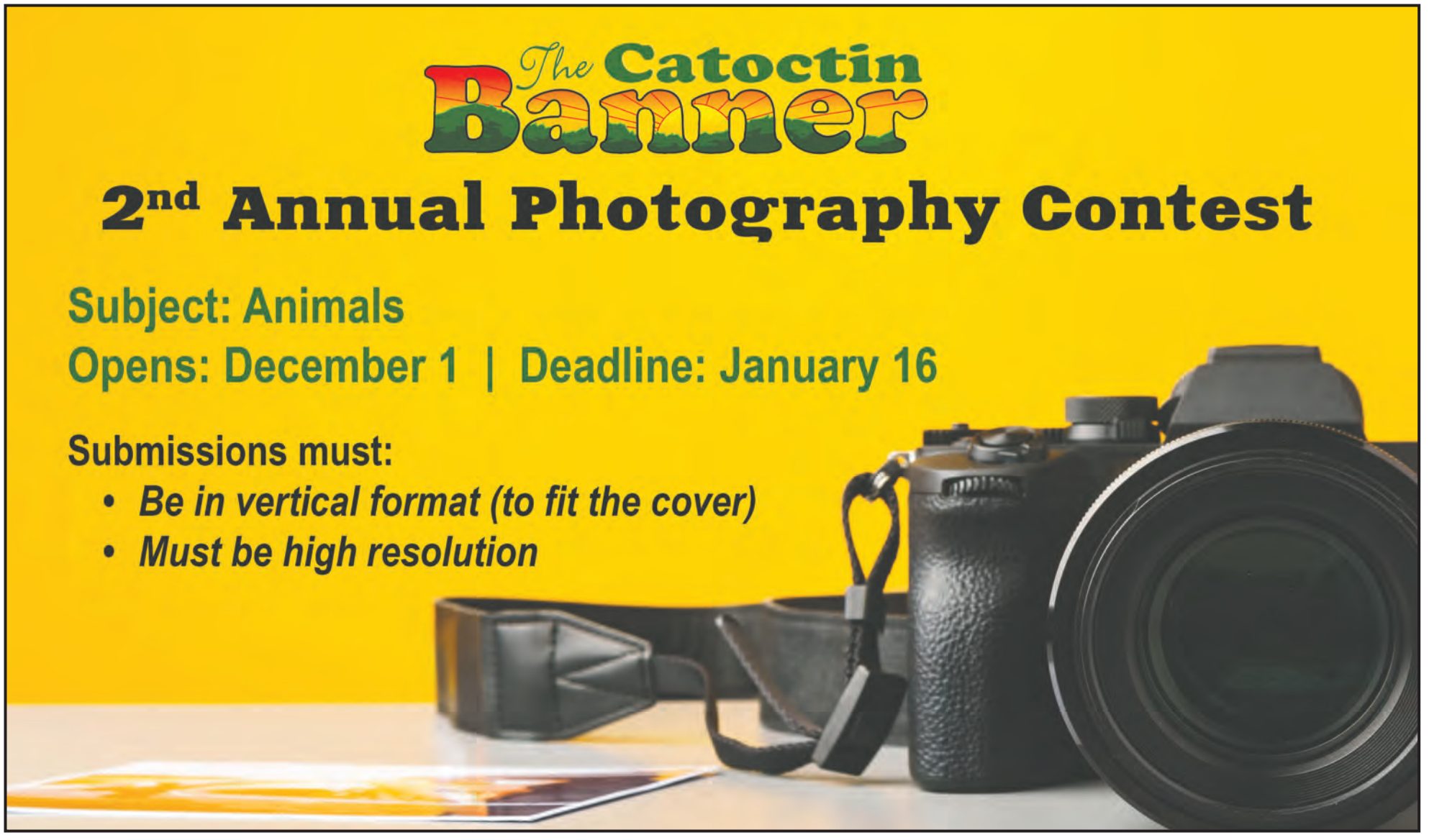

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12 Days of Christmas

Shop Local!

12 Amazing Days
- featuring -
12 Amazing Prizes!

Shop Black Friday thru 12/11/26 for a chance to win one of our...

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS Gift Baskets!

ONE LUCKY WINNER will be picked each day starting 12/12/26!

- **Day 1** WEAVER'S MEATS
- **Day 2** COCA COLA
- **Day 3** MIKE'S FARM MARKET
- **Day 4** PEPSI
- **Day 5** KUNZLER
- **Day 6** BOARS HEAD
- **Day 7** WANTZ DISTRIBUTORS
- **Day 8** JOHN F. MARTIN
- **Day 9** JUBILEE & LIGHTHOUSE SEAFOOD
- **Day 10** MARTINS CHIPS
- **Day 11** UTZ CHIPS
- **Day 12** MONSTER ENERGY



FIND OUR Hidden ELF!

STARTING DECEMBER 6TH, find the elf in the store and

WIN A JUBILEE GIFT CARD!

He'll be hidden for 3 weeks - once a week!

BRING THE FAMILY!

Jubilee CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP

Decorate an ornament & take a picture in our festive photo frame!
DECEMBER 19
from 9 AM - 1 PM



Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas!

We will be Closed
Christmas Day
So our employees can spend time with their families and loved ones!

Thank You for Being apart of our Jubilee Family!