

The Mount Airy News

TUESDAY/THURSDAY

JANUARY 19, 2022

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HOME > OPINION > Talk — they hear you

Talk — they hear you

🕒 January 16, 2022 👤 John Peters II 📁 Opinion 💬 0

By Charlotte Reeves Guest Columnist



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WEATHER

Mount Airy, NC 27030

Weather	Wind	Rain	Sun	Moon	UV
43.3 °F				W Wind	
Rain/Snow				3.4mph	
32 °F		46 °F			
21 39	13 27	13 36	17 41		
THU	FRI	SAT	SUN		
2:01 PM Wed Jan 19				WillyWeather	

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According to the SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than a quarter of the U.S. population that is too young to drink are doing so anyway. The percentage of people aged 18 to 25 who participated in binge drinking in the past month was 31.4%. This percentage was higher than for adults aged 26 or older at 22.9% and for adolescents aged 12 to 17 at 4.1% (SAMHSA, 2020). When our youth start drinking and experimenting with substance use before the age of 15, brain development, academic performance, and basic safety for themselves and others is negatively affected.

Although the challenge is great, adults should not believe that they are powerless to prevent alcohol and substance use in our youth. Parents have significant influence on their child's decision as whether they start to use substances as children look to their parents as prime couriers of alcohol and substance use prevention messaging. Parents have a noble responsibility to become educated and receive all the assistance possible to initiate and continue the conversation with their children about underage drinking and substance use.

"Talk. They Hear You." provides parents with the tools that build confidence to start conversations about alcohol and substance use with their children even before the teenage years. In doing so, this helps to construct a relationship between the parent and child in which the child is well-informed of how the parent feels about this risky behavior. It also can lead to the child realizing their parent is an authority on the subject which can result in the child consulting the parent with any questions they may have going forward. Having a close relationship with parents is a topmost protective factor in the world of underage drinking and substance use.

In the upcoming months, SCOSAR will continue to promote the "Talk. They Hear You." program. SCOSAR will initiate training sessions with teachers and coaches at multiple schools, to be followed by in-person and on-line training offered to the community at large. There will be more information in future articles about the "Talk. They Hear You." prevention campaign. Please take notice of the message when you begin to see the logo. Talk to your child. They really do hear you.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from learning more about "Talk. They Hear You.", please Start Here, by contacting Charlotte Reeves, Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Community Outreach Coordinator, at reevesc@co.surry.nc.us. Visit our website at surrycountycare.com for more information about substance use disorder and the many resources in our county.

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Charlotte Reeves is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Surry County Substance Abuse Recovery Office. She may be reached at 336-401-8218 or reevesc@co.surry.nc.us.



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Rank	Driver	Points
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2	Martin Truex Jr	5035
3	Denny Hamlin	5034
4	Chase Elliott	5032
5	Kevin Harvick	2361

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POLL



January 16, 2022

Robins are still around

We saw a few robins on the lawn the week before Christmas and they looked active and healthy as they bounced around the lawn looking for insects and making a stop at the birdbath. We believe our winters are mild enough and they have adapted to our temperatures. Even though they don't seem to be abundant, there are still plenty of them around to let us know they are tough and healthy. They have plenty of protection from the cold and find warmth in hollow logs, under outbuildings, inside sheds, under houses or bush piles. Some may still fly south, but more and more are seen here every winter. The robins that do fly south seem to return long before cold weather is over. We are glad to see them around in winter and they are a welcome addition to winter mornings.

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RECIPE OF THE DAY



Easiest Pot Roast With Rich Gravy

The need for snow

As we move farther into January, the garden plot needs precipitation in the form of snow. Rain is great, but snow is heavy and soaks deep into the sod of the lawn and garden plot and adds nitrogen and trace nutrients to the soil. Snow acts as a blanket for the garden and causes the ground to freeze thus killing wintering insects, their eggs and larvae plus slowing down noxious weed populations. Deep down in their sweet hearts, the kids are desperate for a sledding, snowman type of snow to give a break from school and some snow activity and fun.

Season of hearts, flowers, and love

The season of Saint Valentine's Day is only several weeks away. Many shops, stores, flower and garden shops are already decked out in colors of red, white, pink, and lavender. Walmart, Food Lion, and Lowe's Home Improvement have large and colorful displays of Valentine floral arrangements, flowers, seeds, plant foods and potted plants, Walmart has gift cards of all kinds, and cards designed to insert money in, candies, heart boxes of candy, and potted flowers. Local florist have beautiful flowers with Valentine themes and they can now take your order for delivery on Valentines Day. Gift cards from favorite shops or restaurants or fast food restaurants make nice gifts. Whatever the gift you choose, remember to wrap it in special Valentine wrap to make the gift more meaningful and thoughtful.

Plenty of color at the winter feeders

The birds of winter are still active at the feeders all during the day. The red of the cardinals and the white and gray of the chickadees, along with the brown of the sparrows and the occasional appearance of a few blue jays are common sights. At different times of the day, the varieties of birds change. All have one thing in common — they visit the feeder for a quick and easy meal.

Ice in the birdbath on cold days

Ice forms in the birdbath during winter nights. As the sun warms the temperatures, dump the ice and refill with fresh water and repeat this every day to give birds a source of water near the feeders.

Garden and flower seeds

Even though it is mid-January and freezing temperatures are the norm, hardware's, Home Depot, Lowe's Home Improvement, Ace Hardware, Walmart, and seed and garden shops and nurseries now have racks of colorful flower and vegetable seeds on display for the growing season. Buy a few packets each week and place them in a box for storage and add packets to the box each week. Store in a cool dry place. Keep a list of the flower and vegetable seed varieties that you purchase.

Changing furnace filters

Changing your furnace's filter once a month during winter not only makes the air you breath in the home cleaner, but also helps your home to be more dust free and makes your heating system operate more efficiently. Check the size of the filter your furnace requires and keep a few on hand. Use black permanent marker to write the size of the filter on the filter door.

Adding a blanket to spring flower bulbs

As we move past the middle of January, give the spring flowering bulbs of jonquil, hyacinth, narcissus, daffodils, and crocus a blanket of crushed leaves for extra protection from winter freezes. Sprinkle handfuls of bone meal or bulb booster before applying the leaves to boost the bulbs along a bit because in mid-February, they will be spiking out of the cold winter soil.

A sign of the heart showing up in the garden

Glossy green leaves in the shape of hearts are showing up behind the garden plot and in several containers on the deck. They are a natural Valentine which are actually the leaves of the American violets that thrive as we move toward the month of February. Anything that is green in winter is a welcome and encouraging sight. We have several clumps of American violets in pots on the deck that are five or six years old and every year the leaves come back and produce plenty of beautiful violets. As the violets make their leafy appearance, fill a container with potting medium and transplant a clump of the American violets in the medium for a show of heart shaped greenery and violets during spring.

Trimming panda and asparagus fern

The panda and asparagus ferns are spending winter in the living room. As they enjoy their sunny location, they develop long runners as they seek more sun. As these runners grow, keep them

trimmed back with scissors or clippers usually every ten days. Feed them once a month with Flower-Tone organic flower food or Miracle-Gro liquid plant food and lightly water every ten days. If they seem to be receiving too much sun, remove them farther from the windows. To check whether they need water, stick your index finger into the soil to determine if medium is still moist or needs water.

Controlling weeds in the winter garden

There are many weeds that thrive in winter including chickweed, nut grass, Bermuda grass and wild onions. They can be easily controlled by pulling them up by their roots and tossing them out of the garden. Anytime of the year that you see a weed is the time to get rid of it before it gets a head start.

A fair January day: Mother of a storm!

There can be some fair and pleasant days in the month of January, but it is good to look at them with caution. A bit of winter weather lore says that if there is a fair day with blue sky and a temperature of 55 degrees, beware because this can be the mother of a winter storm. All it takes is a shift in the wind to the north to change the course of a weather pattern. In January, we can look for sudden changes in the weather.

The cold and frosty garden

January days are cold, but a few are raw and frozen and the garden plot reflects it. The Siberian kale has a few ice crystals on it and the turnips feel like they come out of the deep freeze. The word that best describes the garden is “frosty.” The garden sod makes a crunchy sound when walking on it, but it is not all that bad because with a hard freeze, you know plenty of moisture is in the soil and this means that the freeze will have an effect on insects and weed seed and noxious fungus in the soil. There is a certain amount of beauty in a frosty garden.

Making a hash brown potato casserole

A hot potato casserole is great in the cold of winter especially when made with hash browns. For the casserole, you will need two pounds of frozen hash brown potatoes, one stick light margarine, one teaspoon salt, half teaspoon pepper, one can Campbell’s cream of chicken soup, two cups finely grated sharp cheddar cheese, half cup chopped onions, two cups sour cream, two cups crushed corn

flakes, one half cup melted margarine. Thaw potato's and mix all ingredients except corn flakes and melted margarine. Pour casserole ingredients into a 13x9x2 inch baking pan or dish sprayed with Pam baking spray. top with crushed corn flakes and one fourth cup melted margarine. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Wrong kingdom!” During the Bible class, the lesson centered on the situation of King Herod offering up to half his kingdom to see the daughter of Herodius dance. The teacher said to the students, “Now, what if you had this problem, and you made the offer of anything she wanted, and the girl came to you saying, the head of John the Baptist, and you don't want to give her the head of John the Baptist. What would you do?” One of the student replied, “I'd tell her that the head of John the Baptist was not in the half of the kingdom I was offering her!”

Full Wolf Moon occurs tomorrow

The full moon of January will be tomorrow night, as it rises in the eastern sky shining through the bare limbs of the mighty oaks. It will look silver and bright as it shines down on a cold clear sky (hopefully) or it could shine on the crest of a new fallen snow.

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Victorian era prosperous for Surry County



January 09, 2022

On a soft April evening in 1904, Florence Alma Prevette entered the parlor in her mother's Wilkes County home. It was filled with family and friends as Mendelsohn's "Wedding March" played on the piano. The flickering light of candles and gas lamps would have danced on the creamy silk crepe de chine gown as she and her sister Viola approached the nervous groom.

"The bride was beautifully attired in white crepe de chine," wrote the correspondent for the North Wilkesboro Hustler. "She is one of Wilkes' fairest daughters while the groom (Bradshaw Partridge) holds a responsible position with the Southern Railway. Both have a host of friends and were the recipients of many handsome and valuable presents."

The young couple lived most of their lives in Mount Airy where, after leaving the railroad, Partridge sold New York Life insurance. They raised seven children here, one of whom donated the beautiful gown to the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History where it now holds a place of honor in the Victorian gallery.

Named for Great Britain's Queen Victoria, the era lasted longer than Her Majesty who reigned from 1837 until her death in 1901. The Victorian Era, especially in the United States, is generally considered to extend to 1910.

American society saw a tremendous economic expansion with what is called the Second Industrial Revolution. Advances in steel and chemical production fueled other industries such as railroad, electric generation, and manufacturing machinery for everything from textiles to bicycles. Surry County benefitted from these advances as existing businesses incorporated the progress to enhance their facilities and new entrepreneurs saw untapped natural resources.

The arrival of the railway in Mount Airy and Pilot Mountain in 1888 and Elkin in 1890 made personal travel and transportation of goods significantly easier. County population exploded nearly 67% between 1880 and 1900 to 25,515 as people came looking for opportunities.

Chatham Mills in Elkin expanded and doubled production. Members of the Sparger family lead business in the northeastern section of the county in many areas including nationally recognized orchards and a booming tobacco manufacturing.

“Our people do a cash business,” said G. W. Sparger, Esq., of Mount Airy, who was in Raleigh recently. “There is very little of the credit business in Surry. Our farmers are not in debt, they buy and sell for cash and are absolutely independent. Merchants who do a business of \$100,000 have little need of a bookkeeper as their business is almost wholly for cash.” That bespeaks a prosperous section.” So reported The Raleigh State Chronicle in October 1891.

Industrialists and merchants built beautiful homes at a surprising pace. Many still stand across the region such as the magnificent Queen Anne-style Alexander Martin Smith home in Elkin with its delicate gingerbreading and the James Hadley home on West Pine in Mount Airy.

Others, like the great brick homes of Jesse Franklin Moore (corner of Franklin and South Main streets) and Jesse Prather (corner of Rawley and North Main) have been lost to development as the communities continued to grow.

Congregations were able to build new church homes in that time as well, sometimes it was the first building dedicated to housing worship services as many congregations met in homes, barns, or open fields in earlier days.

The Westfield Friends Meeting House was built in 1885; The Pilot Mountain Primitive Baptist Church, 1896; Elkin’s Galloway Memorial Episcopal Church, 1897; and Mount Airy’s Main Street granite churches – Trinity Episcopal, Friends, First Baptist, Presbyterian, and Holy Angels – were built between 1896 and 1921.

There is no doubt that some fared better than others and poverty and inequity were still present across the county, but the Victorian Era was definitely one of growth and change for Surry. And it was noticed.

The Wilmington Messenger wrote in October 1891, “A great deal has been said about Mount Airy of late. Its growth, its trade, its business energy, its possibilities well merit attention. It is doubtful whether there is a place in NC to day (sic) that bids fair to have such a growth for the next two years as Mount Airy. Its trade is getting to be astonishingly great.”

But, perhaps the words reported in November 1897 by the Greensboro Telegram were even better. A businessman from Greensboro had visited Mount Airy and Surry County and shared his thoughts after a rough and sometimes hair-raising train ride but clearly enjoyable visit.

“At Mt. Airy, a feeling of wonder ... a feeling of thankfulness that you are up side up ...But for good food, pure air, healthy water, clever people, stirring people, working people, prosperous people, crooked streets, hilly streets and a general good time, go to Mt. Airy and take your chances for getting back.”

Green for the winter garden



January 09, 2022

Green is the year round color in the winter garden

In the coldest part of the year, it is always great to have something green, alive and producing in the dead of winter. A pansy with dark green foliage and purple and yellow faces, dusty miller or coral bells as floral displays or Siberian kale, turnips, mustard greens, collards, onion sets and broccoli. The winter garden does not have to be drab and gray. With the aid of a bed of crushed leaves as a winter blanket, the greens of winter can prosper as well as produce a harvest in the cold, harsh, winter.

January is the month of hard freezes

On January mornings there can be a plenty of ice covering the mud holes as winter really gets down to serious business. A freeze that comes during January does the winter garden a favor because the frozen sod will kill wintering insects and their eggs as well as seeds of weeds and fungus in the soil. Cool weather vegetables will thrive because they are now hardened off to the cold spells of the icy breath of winter.

A cover for ornamental cabbage and kale

As we move into winter's first full month, which is also winter's longest month, pay a bit of attention to the containers of ornamental cabbage and kale. On cold winter nights, keep several towels handy and the cabbage and the kale containers close together so you can spread a towel over them for freeze protection. One towel should cover two containers. Whenever you water them, do not over water because this invites a freeze. When temperatures rise above freezing each morning, remove the towels and fold them up for the next evening.

A message from the mighty oaks

The mighty oaks have only a sparse amount of leaves remaining on them as we reach the second week of January. My Northampton County grandma always said that when oak leaves hung on to their limbs, "They were just hanging around waiting for a heavy snowfall to bring them down." We may soon be receiving that first big snow and it will certainly be great news for kids of all ages. It will be great news for the garden plot because some weather lore says that when snow bends the limbs of the mighty oaks, we can expect bountiful crops in summer. Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

Exercise on winter front porch

Don't just keep a towel to protect the winter annuals on the front porch, but keep a warm blanket and toboggan also close by in the house so you can exercise your body on a cold morning on the front porch and enjoy the warmth of the winter sun as you sip a cup of hot coffee and remove towels from the winter annuals. The winter sun and the north wind will harden your immune system and toughen your body up to adjust to the cold temperatures as well as make you feel better as you begin the day. If winter mornings are a bit cold, you may want to keep a pair of warm gloves close by.

Putting together a no crust apple pie

No dessert in the cold of winter is as good as an apple pie hot from the oven with a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top. This is a simple recipe that has no crust, but plenty of flavor. You will need two beaten eggs, one cup of sugar, five tablespoons of plain flour, one a half teaspoons of baking powder, one fourth teaspoon salt, half cup of golden raisins, two cups diced apples, one teaspoon vanilla, one teaspoon apple pie spices, one stick light margarine. Mix flour, salt, baking powder and set aside. Mix sugar and beaten eggs together and add to the flour mixture. Add all other ingredients except margarine and mix well. Pour into a nine inch pie dish or pan sprayed with Pam baking spray. Dots with pats of margarine. Bake at 325 degrees until firm. Serve with whipping cream.

A crisp sound and the look of diamonds

As January blows in its winter winds, from the north or south, we look forward to seeing a fluffy white snowfall and feasting our eyes and ears on the snow of a cold winter's eve and allowing it to "Speak" to us. There is a majesty, purity, and magic in a snowfall. On a cold evening of winter, the snow makes a crispy, crackling sound as the temperature drops and the street lights and bright moonlight shine down on the new fallen snow. It reflects on crystals and makes them shine like tiny diamonds. A gentle breeze blows making the world outside feel a tiny bit like a Klondike bar!

Keeping water in the birdbath

Birds are active all winter and they drink water in the winter also. We can make it easier for them to find water by emptying ice from the birdbaths and refilling with fresh water as the temperature rises above freezing each day. Repeat this activity and keep a close eye on the activity of the birds at the bath. Keep food in the feeders and refill as needed.

Watering winter plants and annuals

The annuals and perennials on the front porch and deck need water in the winter but not as much. Place your index finger in the medium in the containers and when they feel dry, water until they are damp, but not soaking with water. Watering too much will cause the medium to freeze and become harmful to the plants. A little water in winter goes a long way.

Enjoy good hot coffee on the winter porch

We are not referring to instant coffee, but freshly perked coffee that is hot, black, and strong that will wake and perk you up while basking on the winter porch. A great cup of coffee begins with a very clean stainless steel percolator with a proven brand of coffee, and fresh cold water, not poured in but measured by the cup with one full teaspoon of coffee for each cup of water. Sprinkle the coffee with salt to enhance flavor. Brew coffee until you can see it brown through the glass on the percolator, steam will be pouring through the spout with that aroma only perked coffee can produce. When drinking coffee, only hot is good. We remember a tough drill sergeant in Army basic training who said there were three things he hated in this order, and they were cold coffee, wet toilet paper, and trainees. He was tougher than a railroad spike, a good soldier and leader of men. He was tough, but always there for you.

Brighter days coming

It may not seem like it this early in the winter, but things are getting brighter each day, in fact by one minute brighter each evening. We have gained a quarter of an hour of daylight since winter began in late December. Birds of winter seem to have noticed it and they seem to be a bit more active at birdbaths and feeders.

Robins bouncing around in January

Robins seem to be with us all year and many of them appear all during the winter. We do believe most of them stay in our area and all that we see look well nourished, have plenty of bounce and color and definitely are not shivering. There are enough warm, sunny days and surely they are scratching up enough food. There are enough barns, sheds, outdoor buildings, eaves of houses, hollow logs, areas under buildings and even in piles of hay for them to find shelter, protection, and

warmth, certainly there are enough insects wintering over to sustain them in the winter. We hope they live long and prosper because in winter, they are a welcome reminder and harbinger of spring.

Protecting the American Bee Balm

The American Bee Balm is wintering on the back of the front porch away from the cold winter wind. It has been trimmed so we can protect it with a cover on freezing nights. We have a layer of crushed leaves around the bottom of the container and feed it with a handful of Flower-Tone organic flower food once a month. On sunny days, we remove the cover and let it receive some sun. A small drink of water is all it needs. With only a small amount of winter protection, it will survive.

Pesky chickweed thrives during winter

Many weeds and grasses go dormant in winter, but chickweed survives all winter especially around the edges of the house and near where rosebushes grow. The biggest plus about chickweed is that it has shallow roots and can be easily pulled up and thrown out of the area.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“One for three.” Employee: “I’ve been here for 11 years doing three men’s work for one man’s pay. Now, I want a raise.” Boss: “Well, I can’t give you a raise, but if you tell me who the other two men are, I’ll fire them.”

Different types of sermons: Rocking horse sermon — back and fourth, back and fourth, but going nowhere. Mockingbird sermon — repetition, nothing new. Smorgasbord sermon — a little bit of everything, but nothing solid. Jericho sermon — March around the subject seven times.

Lunch is served. Cook: “Can I bring you lunch, sir?” Captain: “No, just throw it overboard and save time.”

Long winded. Jan: “My pastor is so great, he can talk on any subject for an hour.” Fran: “That’s nothing, my pastor can talk for a whole hour without a subject.”

Keeping Christmas alive, 3,000 away



January 09, 2022

During the Christmas season many people become nostalgic, remembering Christmases past, especially the happy ones spent with family and friends or an unusual one. This is true especially for those of us who are in our senior years. Since our energy levels are lower, we spend more time sitting, remembering those happy times of years gone by.

Recently, during one of my nostalgic “remembering sessions” I held during the most recent Christmas season, the Christmas of 1951, 70 years ago, came to mind.

In the summer of 1949, an army reserve unit, the 426 Field Artillery Battalion, was organized with units in Mount Airy and Winston-Salem. “A” Battery and the Medical Detachment were located in Mount Airy with the rest of the units located in Winston-Salem.

When the Korean War began in June 1950, the 426 was immediately activated and ordered to report to Fort Bragg in September. There were 78 men from Mount Airy/Surry County who were activated and ordered to report to Fort Bragg. Some of those men soon were released for various reasons and returned home.

The 426 remained at Fort Bragg until the summer of 1951, when it was deployed to Dolan Barracks, Schwabisch Hall, Germany.

The men from Mount Airy/Surry County served in important positions throughout the battalion, especially "A" Battery. A vast majority were veterans of World War II; most had families with children back home in Mount Airy.

As Christmas of 1951 approached, the question arose as to how we could best celebrate the Christmas season 3,000 miles from home and families. There was a general consensus that we should do something special which would exemplify the true spirit of Christmas giving.

After a period of discussion by the men, we decided to give a Christmas party for the young children in an orphanage located near our army base. There were approximately 50 children who were residents of this orphanage. Most of the parents of those children were killed during the battles of World War II. We wanted to give this Christmas party with our own money without the involvement of the military command. Led by the senior NCO'S from Mount Airy/Surry County, we took a collection and several hundred dollars were donated.

The plan was to bring the children onto our army base, feed them a meal of traditional Christmas foods, have Santa Claus pay a visit and give each child a gift and a treat of candy and fruit. The army mess hall was decorated with a Christmas tree, Christmas lights, and other Christmas greenery and decorations such as would have been done at home. Never had an army mess hall been so elegantly decorated for Christmas.

The children were brought onto the base a few days before Christmas so that the men could have their own celebration on Christmas Day. A soldier would serve as a host for each child (my guest was a little 5 year old who did not understand English; neither did I understand German but the spirit of Christmas overcame language barriers).

The plan worked perfectly; the children were visibly excited even among a group of strange men in army uniforms and in an army mess hall. The men were equally excited with the spirit of Christmas and the opportunity to make a group of children happy. They enjoyed a touch of Christmas similar to that which would have been celebrated back home in Mount Airy. The children enjoyed a wonderful Christmas party and treasured their meal, the gifts and treats.

These men from Mount Airy/Surry County provided Christmas cheer for children 3,000 miles from home, children who, probably, would have had little to celebrate in a country destroyed by the ravages of World War II. There had been little recovery in Germany since the end of the war. Destruction was to be seen everywhere; millions of the German military and civilians were killed during the war including many of the parents of the children we served. The German economy had not recovered and a vast majority of the population were being fed by American relief efforts under the provisions of the Marshall Plan.

What was done by men from Mount Airy/Surry County for some German orphans at Christmas 1951 is typical of what American servicemen do wherever they go, whether it be Germany, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, or Japan.

The Mount Airy/Surry County men known to be in Schwabisch Hall on Christmas 1951 and who supported the Christmas program for the orphan children included the following: FSGT Zack Blackmon, PFC Frank Haynes, MSGT Thurmond Miller, SFC Joe Bill Neal, SFC Jack Leach, SGT Calvin Welborn, SFC Robert Holder, FSGT Austin Perdue, SFC Jack Robertson, SFC James Callahan, MSGT George Carroway, SFC Harold Sells, SGT Cecil Chandler, SGT Russell Inscore, SGT Aubrey Wall, SGT Dennis Chilton, SGT Charles Allred, SFC Howard Beeson, SGT Harry King, CPL Paul Welborn, SGT Kent Gibson, SGT George Worth, PFC Buford Harvey, SFC Robert Riggs, SFC Harold Moxley, SGT John Browne. (If I have missed someone, please forgive).

All of these men, except Robert Riggs and I, have since passed on to their eternal reward. No doubt this act of kindness shown to a group of orphan children is a part of their written record. Their children and grandchildren can take pride in what their fathers and grandfathers did to make Christmas a happy occasion for some orphan children 70 years ago. They followed the example set by the Master Teacher when He said "Let the little children come to me and don't prevent them. For such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And he put his hands on their heads and blessed them" (Matthew 19:4).

I end this nostalgic trip down memory lane on a personal note: John Browne and I rode the train south to Goepingen, Germany, home base of the 28th Infantry Division, to spend Christmas Day with my cousin, Grover Holder. Once there we met other men from Mount Airy including Bass Shelton, whose home was located on Franklin Street. Fred Murphy, who, along with his brothers, had a country music program on WPAQ Radio in the late 1940's.

John Browne, upon returning home, was in the office supply business for many years. He served for nine years on the Mount Airy City Schools Board of Education and for 22 years as a Mount Airy City commissioner. Grover Holder became a Baptist pastor serving churches in North Carolina and Virginia for over 50 years. Fred Murphy, upon returning home, continued his country music career. I served as teacher/administrator for 36 years in the Mount Airy City Schools and Surry Community College.

Christmas 1951 could have been a lonely, depressing day but the true American spirit of helping one's neighbor brought joy and a spirit of celebration, both to a group of orphan children and to a group of men, 3,000 miles from home. The true spirit of Christmas giving can be found and practiced wherever one finds himself on that special day.

Editor's Note: Reader Diary is an occasional feature in The Mount Airy News, featuring recollections and stories from local residents.

Take the shot or keep to yourself

January 09, 2022

To the Editor,

People who will not get the COVID-19 shot should keep to themselves and not expect their friends, relatives and coworkers to socialize with them. It puts everyone in danger for the awful virus raging the world.

I had the virus in 2020, it is very rough and scary. Since then I've had two original shots and the third booster. I still wear a mask when out of my home, trying to protect the general public as well as myself.

This vaccine is no more dangerous than any shot we've all had at some time in our lifetime.

Please protect the frontline workers, your loved ones and yourself. God gave us the knowledge to do better than his people are doing. The Bible says that our bodies are a temple and to treat it well. Science helps us do that.

Violet Hill

Mount Airy

‘Evil’ Mount Airy? Don’t you believe it



January 05, 2022

“A disturbing snapshot of an angry America. evil.” That’s how the obscure news website Inter Reviewed describes us.

Huh? Who, us?

Famous newsman Ted Koppel’s ballyhooed visit last June to Granite City in search of Mayberry reverberates still. Of late, it’s taken a nasty turn.

The Washington Post newspaper is trying to kick up a storm with a year-end review last week of the controversial CBS TV news report “Mayberry Comes To Life,” complete with reflections now from Koppel, inspiration and longtime anchor of the old, groundbreaking Nightline late-night TV news program.

“People either loved it or hated it,” Koppel told the Post of his report on Mount Airy.

The Post did not go so far as to call us here in the hometown area evil. The newspaper merely called us “an unsettling snapshot.” So what’s so “unsettling” about us?

Let’s go back to the CBS TV program “Sunday Morning.” Its 13-minute news report that aired Sept. 19 began innocuously enough. “The good old days?” gushed program host Jane Pauley about “The Andy Griffith Show,” widely viewed as a reflection of Griffith’s hometown of Mount Airy. “When life was simpler, more neighborly, civilized,” Pauley said.

Next, Koppel strolled South Main Street with the chamber president, across from the Mayberry Courthouse and Jail and Wally’s Service Station tourist sites where the Mayberry squad-car tours are based. The two explained the economics of promoting Mount Airy tourism by drawing on the Mayberry mystique. Koppel chuckled at sounding the siren in a replica squad car.

Then Griffith show actress Betty Lynn, before she died in October, was shown signing autographs for Andy Griffith Museum visitors. At Mayberry Courthouse an adoring little boy from Ohio watches the show four hours a day, his mother gushed for Koppel. Snappy Lunch patrons from Louisiana said they came all this way for a pork chop sandwich.

So far so good. The story had the elements of what the Post called “a seeming puff piece,” newspaper lingo for a feel-good, happy story, a counter to all of the gloom and doom that so often comes from newspapers.

But at 4:35 into the report things began to swing raw. Politics, as Koppel would call it, began to suck the air out of the puff piece.

“A godless society” today stands in stark contrast to the higher moral values displayed in the 1960s Griffith show, an unnamed patron in line at Snappy Lunch told Koppel.

The TV show then took off on that theme.

Next, an African American family described segregation times. They had to take their restaurant food (restaurant unnamed) outside, they told Koppel. “Blacks knew where they belonged,” one told Koppel.

A U.S. flag with a picture of Donald Trump and the caption “Making America Great Again!” was shown waving in the wind.

The climax came on a trolley car tour. Not shown are the highlights of Mount Airy, the pleasant neighborhoods, the energized schools, the fine hospital or the industrious workers. Koppel asked riders – including a Barney Fife impersonator along with one-time Surry County commissioner Gary York – riders who were interested in seeing the town, about the 2020 election and the storming of the U.S. Capitol a year ago instead.

“I know you came here to have a good time,” Koppel told the group from the front of the rolling trolley, TV camera with red light by his side, “and not to talk politics.” Koppel then proceeded to talk politics.

The response? Unsettling? Disturbing? Angry? Evil? You may see for yourself at <https://rayscountryham.com/mayberry> on the internet.

Don't have the time for that? OK, let me answer: Not one bit. The people in Mount Airy spoke frankly, calmly, politely and honestly about the politics when asked.

“We don't even watch the news on TV anymore,” one unnamed rider ironically told Koppel. “We don't feel like that we are being told the truth. ... We're trying to be swayed in a direction that we know is not the right direction.”

In the most touching moment in the report, another rider told Koppel: “I just hope when this airs, it won't show Southerners as a bunch of dumb idiots. ... We have a lot of love in our hearts. We love our country. We love our fellow man.”

Koppel told the Post “that truly never was the intent.”

But some are making his report into just that. Listed as the No. 1 most-read article on the Washington Post website, the story carried a Post online headline: “They believe in Mayberry but suggest Jan. 6 was staged.”

Koppel denied to the Post that his report was a “hit job” on Mount Airy. But he conceded that “some residents in Mount Airy and viewers in Southern states took issue.”

What did all of that have to do with a TV retrospective of the Griffith show? Nothing. But then the CBS report never really was about the Griffith show, Mayberry or Mount Airy. That's what should be so unsettling and disturbing.

Stephen Harris returned home to live in State Road. For more information on Stephen, visit <https://www.facebook.com/AllRoadsShouldLeadToStateRoad?ref=hl>

Board of Education a champion for children



January 02, 2022

Editor's Note: Community Comment is a periodic column in The Mount Airy News featuring commentary from community leaders in Mount Airy and Surry County.

Mount Airy City Schools has an amazing Board of Education. The members go above and beyond to volunteer their time in support of the superintendent and school district as well as listen to the direction of the community. This team of professionals attends two board meetings a month, many school events throughout the year, and statewide training sessions. The role of the board is:

- To provide vision and direction for the school system.
- To create policies in accordance with state law to establish standards, accountability, and evaluation of essential operations of the school district.
- To prepare the budget for presentation to the county commissioners.
- To hire, support, and evaluate the Superintendent.
- To perform judicial functions by conducting hearings as appropriate.
- To advocate for the school district, staff, and especially the students in all interactions with other governmental entities and the public.

Our Board of Education does this for no extra pay and volunteers much of their time and energy. They allow the staff to oversee day-to-day operations within the district and make sure the superintendent and leadership team are supported. They are present and involved in the community and keep an ear to the heartbeat of the community. We know that they are champions for children in their role, they support families, and they have the best interest of the school district in their hearts and their actions.

Our board chairman is Tim Matthews and he is a local pharmacist. Tim has served on the board for 25 years and his three children who are all Mount Airy graduates. Tim's wife Sandy retired from working in Mount Airy City Schools as an exceptional children's teacher. Tim responds when asked about serving on the board, "the opportunity to serve, seeing a plan come together, and impacting

future leaders” is a great way to enhance how Mount Airy City Schools continues to grow and lead. He loves that Mount Airy City Schools is “willing to innovate, take a risk, and always puts the interests of students ahead of other concerns.”

Ben Cooke is the vice chairman and is a local business owner. He is married to Lone and graduated from Mount Airy City Schools. Ben states that “making a difference in the lives of our students, however small it may be” motivates him to be a board member. He also says that he loves the “small community and family atmosphere” of our district as well as “knowing that our teachers love being in our school system.” Ben is always involved in activities throughout the district and his three children all attended and are attending Mount Airy City Schools.

Wendy Carriker, Jayme Brant, Thomas Horton, Randy Moore, and Kyle Leonard are members of the board of education. Together they serve and lead from their seat on the board by supporting the future of the Mount Airy City Schools district. The team of staff and board working together to make decisions is for the benefit of families in the Mount Airy Community. Wendy Carriker served as the board chair for 14 years. She is married to Chip Carriker and has two daughters who graduated from Mount Airy City Schools. She is an entrepreneur with her own business and she is often seen involved in our Blue Bear Cafe and Blue Bear Bus programs. She helps students understand how to begin their own business and have success serving others. “The fact that we are a small school system and that we are a family. I love that our staff and students truly care about each other and want the best for each other,” states Wendy.

A Mount Airy graduate and a district sales manager, Jayme Brant serves on the board. She is married to Tim, they have two daughters and their oldest daughter was recently named MVP of the State 1A Dual Team Finals in Tennis. “Belief that teaching is the hardest profession there is, but one of the most important” motivates her to be a board member as she understands “we have to continue to support teachers.” Thomas Horton is married to Kristi Horton, one of Mount Airy City Schools nurses, and has four children who have attended and are currently attending Mount Airy City Schools. He is an enterprise engineer and wants to serve the community in his capacity on the school board. Thomas says his love for public service was instilled in him, “because my parents set an early example in life.”

When asked what motivates him to be a board member, Randy Moore states, “to continue my service for our children and community, making a difference.” He is married to Rita and has four children and five grandchildren. He retired from the army and was appointed to the board in 2020. You may

see him around town at events with his military style vehicles. Kyle Leonard was appointed to the board in 2018 and is married to Mary Alice. They have three children who attend or will be attending Mount Airy City Schools. Kyle is a wealth advisor and serves in the local community. Kyle said, “One thing I love about Mount Airy City Schools is the close knit family culture we have. Being a small school district, we are able to innovate and provide a great educational experience for all our students.”

Collectively, our board helps set the direction of the district through their strategic plan. Over the years many initiatives have been led by the board working closely with the staff such as the building of the Community Central Office which has become a hub of community outreach in recent years. They have helped begin the first dual language program that has attracted many families and is a great workforce development effort with our graduates being fluent in two languages.

They support administrators, teachers, and staff by building in step increases in salary, bonuses, along with a family and staff-friendly calendar. The amazing arts programs, Career Technical Education, and grant-funded innovative programs are a hallmark of Mount Airy City Schools and the board has provided the conditions and support for these to flourish. Families in the Mount Airy Community are in good hands with these board members. Many families have been attracted and retained due to the amazing programs and staff here in the district. Leadership from a strong board focused on children shows up in our community with one of the best districts in the state.

The Mount Airy City Schools Board of Education members are champions for children. They have led during the most difficult era of modern day education and should be commended for bringing students back safely and continuing to support their growth and development. If you see these folks around town be sure and thank them for their service. If you would like to be part of this community of excellence and leadership visit <http://www.mtairy.k12.nc.us> . There is additional information about the board under the Board of Education tab on our website.

Markers highlight the past



December 27, 2021

Road signs surround us in our daily lives as we drive hither and yon, giving valuable information as we pass by. However, a specific set of signs often go overlooked by motorists – historical markers.

A while back, I wrote an article about Hardin Taliaferro and mentioned the marker dedicated in his memory on Highway 89. It is one of eight in Surry County, the others are: Jesse Franklin, Eng and Chang Bunker, Pilot Mountain, Tabitha A. Holton, Surry Muster Field, and two for Stoneman's Raid.

The North Carolina General Assembly created the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program in 1935. The operation of the program is a cooperative effort among state agencies and the advisory committee which is comprised of ten college or university faculty members who are

experts in aspects of state history. The goal of the markers is to instill an interest in the state's history. There are more than 1,600 markers throughout the state today.

Surry countians have fought in every war America has been involved in, and the American Revolution is no exception. In Elkin on NC 268 east of Big Elkin Creek is a marker that reads: "Surry Muster Field Patriot militia, led by Major Joseph Winston, gathered in this vicinity, Sept. 1780, marched to victory at Kings Mtn." The trail they marched is commemorated as the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. It was created in 1980 by the National Park Service as a 330-mile trail that stretches across Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina and commemorates the path taken by Patriots to the decisive battle at Kings Mountain. The Overmountain Victory Trail Association is a nonprofit that was created to support the Historic Trail in order "to preserve, protect, and interpret the route to the Battle of Kings Mountain."

Located on Highway 89 in the Lowgap community, is the marker for Jesse Franklin. During his political career he sought to do the best for his county and state, and for this he was highly respected. There are vague descriptions of his appearance, and he never allowed a portrait to be painted of himself. For his service during the American Revolution, he was buried at Guilford Courthouse. The marker reads: "Jesse Franklin Governor 1820-21; state & U.S. Senator and representative; officer in Revolution. His home stood 1/4 mile south."

Pilot Mountain has been guiding people to their destinations for centuries. It was privately owned from 1857-1968 as a tourist destination and in 1976 it became a National Natural Landmark. The marker reads: "Pilot Mountain Landmark for Indians and pioneer settlers. Elevation 2,420 feet. State Park since 1968. Stands 3 miles west."

At the intersection of Main Street and Kapp Street in Dobson stands the only marker in the county dedicated to a woman. Tabitha A. Holton was born near Jamestown, North Carolina. She was sworn in as an attorney in Greensboro but moved with her brother to Dobson to practice in Surry County in 1880. In 2019, her 1878 law license was given to the North Carolina Supreme Court to be displayed in the History Room there. The marker reads: "Tabitha A. Holton 1854-1886 First woman licensed to practice law in North Carolina, 1878. Lived thirty yards northwest."

In the White Plains community was the homeplace of the world-famous conjoined twins, Chang and Eng. They met and married local women, the Yates sisters, and had 21 children between them. Each brother had his own house and they would split their time between both homes. They attended and

are buried at White Plains Baptist Church on old US 601. The marker reads: “Eng and Chang Bunker 1811-1874. Conjoined twins born in Siam. Toured widely in the U.S. before settling nearby to farm, 1839. Grave is 100 yards W.”

While no major battles of the Civil War were fought in Surry County, it did not mean the county was unaffected. During the latter part of the war, from March until mid-April, General Stoneman led a force of Union troops from Tennessee to western North Carolina on what is known as Stoneman’s Raid. Its purpose was to deal a blow to Confederate morale and expedite the end of the war.

Surry County didn’t experience major damages or devastation, with the most common items being taken were food, clothing, and horses. Sometimes, news of the approaching cavalry would reach local residents, who would in turn hide their valuables and livestock. Hostilities were high between locals and the troops, giving rise to many stories that have been passed down through time.

There are two markers to Stoneman’s Raid in the county, one in Mount Airy on Rockford Street near the public library and one in Dobson at the old Courthouse. The Mount Airy marker reads: “Stoneman’s Raid On a raid through western North Carolina Gen. Stoneman’s U.S. cavalry passed through Mount Airy, April 2-3, 1865.” The Dobson marker reads: “Stoneman’s Raid On a raid through western North Carolina Gen. Stoneman’s U.S. cavalry passed through Dobson, April 2, 1865.”

These markers serve as a quick snapshot of the local people and events that influenced state and national history. So, go out for a drive and find these markers and connect with the county’s history. Keep in mind, additional markers can be applied for and dedicated in the future!

Justyn Kissam is the director of learning at Kaleideum in Winston-Salem.

Keep working with plants in winter



December 26, 2021

Time for a halo around the moon

The air aloft is getting cold enough to form tiny ice crystals which are the elements for forming a halo around the full or near full moon. It is a beautiful sight especially during the season of Christmas. My mother and grandma in Northampton County would count the stars in the halo. The visible stars in the halo would determine the number of days before we would see a snow according to my grandma. On the other hand, my mother says in these visible stars the number of inches of snow we could expect. Both their predictions come to pass many times simply because when the air aloft forms crystals of ice which form the halo, it is also cold enough to produce snowfall. That is

why sometimes it doesn't have to be very cold to snow, but upper level temperatures can bring us snow.

Will January be a snow month?

As the New Year gets ready to begin will it bring us much snow? The possibility is great that the month could produce quite a few snows. January snow can be a benefit to the garden plot by freezing the sod, killing off the weed seed and wiping out insect pests, eggs, and larva. Snow can also add nitrogen to the soil as well as other trace nutrients. Snow will sweeten the turnip and the Siberian kale. Snow will beautify the winter landscape and make it look like a marshmallow world. Last, but certainly not least, it would make a lot of kids and grandkids very happy!

The green of anything is pretty in the winter

Even with the possibility of snowfall in January, there is plenty of green in winter's garden that snow will not bother. Siberian kale can be harvested with a layer of snow on it as well as mustard, turnips, and broccoli. The benefits of cool weather vegetables is having a green garden full of life in the dead of winter.

A special late Christmas gift that still giving

This gift was opened on Dec. 21 and still being given each day in the form of an extra minute of daylight. We will continue to receive an extra minute each day until June 21. The difference may not be noticed until we reach Valentines Day.

Day of Epiphany will be Jan. 6

This day is known not only as the Epiphany, but Twelfth Night, Old Christmas, and the last day of the Twelve Days of Christmas. It is the day King of King's, Jesus, the Newborn Messiah was revealed to the Gentiles, the Magi Kings from the East. It is the day the light of the world is revealed to them after a long journey from the East. Their quest ended, not in Jerusalem or the palace of Herod, but at a house in Bethlehem. They arrived and worshipped the King of King's and presented gifts unto him.

At Rodanthe, off the outer banks of North Carolina, Epiphany or Old Christmas is celebrated on Jan. 6 every year with an oyster roast, special music celebrations, and a visit from “Old Buck,” a legendary bull to highlight the event and bring gifts. This would be an interesting place to visit. You would not have to worry about a hurricane in early January, but you would have to worry about being on the lookout for “Old Buck.”

After December blooms, Christmas cactus needs a break

The Christmas cactus had plenty of blooms from Thanksgiving and well into the month of December. It is now time to pull off all spent blooms and feed them either with Flower-Tone organic flower food or a drink of Miracle-Gro liquid plant food once a month. Check moisture by sticking your index finger into the soil. If soil is not moist, use a sprinkle can and apply water but do not over water it. Check every eight to ten days for moisture. Check the foliage as the cactus winters over inside the home. If the foliage looks red, it is a signal that the cactus is getting too much sun. You can solve this problem by moving the cactus in the room to a less sunny location.

The front porch is place to be

The sun shines bright on the front porch in winter. In fact, the sun always shines bright, but people seem to avoid it in winter. They seem to forget it is a source of vitamin C that is free. The front porch in winter is a great place to start the day and breathe fresh air into the nostrils and strengthen your immune system, and move the germs out. A cup of coffee on the front porch tastes better and warms you from head to toe. Keep a blanket handy if the North wind is blowing, but don't let the wind hinder you from getting the benefits of the sun in winter. Plants and vegetables need to be hardened off to bear up under cold extremes and so do we. Start your winter day by enjoying the sounds, color, and sights of winter and be aware of all the hidden beauty that winter affords. Winter air is easier to breathe with less pollutants, and another plus is no flies, gnats, or insects buzzing around.

Keeping snow shovel and de-ice ready

Several items need to be kept nearby on the porch or carport during the cold of winter and they are a can of de-icer, a snow scrapper (in the car and on the porch), a pair of gloves, a can of WD-40 oil spray, to oil the snow shovel. The oil spray prevents the snow from sticking to the shovel, a snow shovel, of course, and a toboggan to keep your ears warm, and last but not least, a gallon of

windshield washer with de-icer solution in it. Keep the windshield washer reservoir filled every week.

Weeds are around during winter

Weeds do not take a break because its winter. We always say that when you see one in the garden plot, pull it up no matter what season of year it is. In winter, chickweed, Bermuda grass, wild onions, and other weeds continue to grow. Check your garden often and pull these noxious weeds up by the roots.

Feeding the birds of the wintertime

When the ground is frozen or snow is on the ground, keep the bird feeders filled. Birds will visit feeders and you will make their job of finding food a lot easier. They will also find that your home is a bird friendly place and they will continue to return. When water in birdbaths freeze during winter, empty the ice from the baths and refill when temperatures rises above freezing.

Cranking lawn and garden equipment

Check the lawn mowers, weed eaters, leaf blowers, and tillers each week in winter. Start them up and allow them to run for a minute or two. Keep fuel in them all winter so they are ready to start. We use mowers in winter to break leaves and the weed eater to trim wild onions so we want them to operate when we attempt to start them. A riding mower needs to run until it warms up. It would not hurt to drive it around the lawn a few times to keep parts running smoothly. Keep a can of fuel handy all winter and don't allow machinery to run out of fuel in the winter. Keep plenty of fuel for two cycle engines ready also.

Pansies in the winter are things of beauty

Pansies are the winter hardy flower that adds greenery and color to the winter landscape. Their foliage stays green all winter and makes their blooms of yellow, white, purple, pink, and tan really stand out. Don't water them too much in winter you don't want medium in the containers to freeze. Feed them once a month with Flower-Tone organic flower food or pansy booster.

A pot of salmon stew warms winter

Salmon stew or chowder is great and will warm you up on a cold evening. It will only take a few minutes to prepare and it only has several ingredients. You will need one can of Double Q Alaska salmon, one stick and a half light margarine, one can of evaporated milk, three cups of milk, one teaspoon of Old Bay seafood seasoning, salt and pepper (to taste), two or three teaspoons of corn starch in a glass of water. Place the salmon and liquid in a four quart pot and mash up the salmon, add margarine and allow to melt on medium heat. Add the evaporated milk and three cups of milk. Bring to a boil on medium low heat. Add salt, pepper, and Old Bay seasoning. Mix three teaspoons corn starch in a glass or cup of cold water and stir until dissolved. While salmon mixture is slowly boiling, add corn starch mixture a little at a time until chowder is thick as you desire. Serve with crackers or oysters.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Half and half.” The lady was trying hard to get on the bus, and she snapped at the man in the back of her, “If you were half a man, you would help me get on this bus.” The man answered, “If you were half the lady, you would not need any help!”

“Newscasts.” Husband to his wife: “Should we watch the six o’ clock news and get indigestion or the ten o’ clock news and get insomnia?”

Surry County: A community committed to volunteering

December 26, 2021

Editor’s Note: Community Comment is a feature of The Mount Airy News, presenting commentary from community leaders in Mount Airy and Surry County.

There is no doubt that we are all very fortunate to call Surry County our home. I count myself doubly blessed to have the opportunity to raise my two children here and live alongside a team of highly skilled educators and professionals. Aside from its beautiful landscape and location, I think that one of the best things about Surry County is the abundance of ways that people in our

community give back. Whether it be through volunteering time or money, the residents of Surry County always pull together to provide extra to those in need.

Specifically, volunteers in our school system have been able to make an impact in the lives of students in Surry County during the pandemic. This past year, volunteer opportunities were limited because of COVID-19 protocols that caused the district to limit those coming in and out of our schools daily.

This school year, volunteers have been welcomed back into schools in a limited capacity to assist with many new, exciting opportunities, one being our USDA Fresh Foods and Vegetable Grant. Because of the combined work of our dedicated school nutrition staff and these volunteers, students at ten elementary schools have been able to receive healthy snack options during the school day. The Rotary Club of Mount Airy has also partnered with our school system to provide volunteers to read to students at Flat Rock Elementary. These one-on-one reading sessions help students read aloud and further promote the joy of reading at a young age.

Volunteers have also been critical in the fundraising efforts of the Give A Kid a Christmas Foundation. I am grateful to those who give so freely to our students and dedicate a portion of their time to shopping and packing boxes of food for those in need. This group has made Christmas special for our students for the past 30 years with their tireless work and dedication.

This month, we celebrate International Volunteer Day. During this day, we not only celebrate volunteerism in all its facets – but we also pay special tribute to the hard work of volunteers in making a difference locally, nationally, and globally. Whether an individual helps in the classroom, in the cafeteria, or in the community, their work doesn't go unnoticed. Each and every one of these gifted volunteers has the ability to shape the lives of students. They may not understand the difference they make by offering their time and talents, but this crucial work deserves to be celebrated. As the season of giving continues, be sure to thank a volunteer in your life.

Fond memories of Betty Lynn

December 26, 2021

To the Editor,

I read with great interest the article on Betty Lynn's estate auction (Betty Lynn's estate being auctioned, Dec. 22 Mount Airy news). Having shared a meal or two with Betty Lynn at Ridgecrest, while my parents were also residing there, I cannot agree more with Mark Rodgers' assessment that "...if you spent time with her (Betty Lynn) she made you feel like you were her best friend for life."

Betty Lynn indeed was a star, but she made you feel like you were also a star and treasured friend. My family members miss Betty so much, but we all are left with the great memories of the time we were able to spend with this wonderful, gracious and kind lady during her lifetime.

RIP Betty Lynn.

Gary Niland

Mount Airy

Rock Castle



December 20, 2021

“To forget one’s ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without roots.” – Chinese Proverb

Here in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and atop its lofty hills we, as the mountains caretakers, value history. Each generation is steeped in the tradition, tragedy, hard work, and love that was taken to create a life within its shadows. Each holler, hill, stream, and rock formation echo with the lives lived before us by our ancestors and theirs. Remembering this history is of the utmost importance. The Rock Castle Community is one of those important places.

Somewhere between the Blue Ridge Mountains and Bull Mountain lies the remnants of a once thriving community.

The Rock Castle creek, Bear/Bare rocks, and abundance of virgin forests thrived for many years prior to being given the name Rock Castle. This area which was fed by the Smith River served as a hunting and foraging ground to Native American groups, such as the Tutelo tribes and potentially the Sauras from our very own Surry County.

Artifacts are found occasionally that mark the area with Native American activity. Some say the large and unique clear quartz rocks that were found along the creek were viewed as sacred to many Native tribes, being preserved for ritual needs.

It would be these very rocks that gave the community its name. The crystals looked like the castles of the old country, giving fond memories to incoming settlers. Many settlers traveled to the Blue Ridge via the Great Wagon Road; others came from eastern ports.

The creek and once fertile lands had much to offer to weary and wondering travelers. The spring offered fresh drinking and cooking water, the hardwoods yielded to become cabins and barns. The American Chestnut trees offered sturdy wood as well, but more importantly the much-coveted chestnuts.

Michael Ryan wrote in his book, *Life in Rock Castle, Virginia*, that chestnuts around the 1800s comprised about 40% of the forest in Rock Castle. Once ripe, the fallen chestnuts would cover the forest floor. Children would wake up early to gather up the nuts to eat and barter with. The forest's wild razorback hogs would gorge themselves on the chestnuts in the fall, soon to be gathered and shorted to sustain the community. Each house would mark hogs by making a specific slit in their ear.

The community and its more than 35 families grew, built, foraged, or traded to get what they needed to sustain life. These self-sufficient people worked hard from dawn till dusk carving out a life from the mountain. Many families planted apple orchards along the steep cliffs, using sleds with chains to drag the fresh produce to the top. The DeHart family founded the DeHart Distillery in Patrick County, Virginia, in 1889. This allowed for the abundance of apples to be turned into brandy. It was also common for families in Rock Castle to have their own corn whiskey stills.

The small section of the Blue Ridge once boasted more than five mills, several general stores and eventually one home with electric lighting powered by an overshot waterwheel and generator. Children helped trap live game, fish, and gather chestnuts. The six-month school year, planned around the farm season, took place in a one room schoolhouse, established in 1880, with no

support from the county or state. With the advent of radio, automobiles and more, Rock Castle would continue to thrive for a short period of time.

The disintegration of the community had many factors. The 1916 Virginia Prohibition Bill and the later nationwide prohibition halted “public” selling of brandy and whiskey. A short time after the “Endothis parasitica,” or Chestnut Blight claimed the area’s biggest resource, decimating the American Chestnut to extinction. When the Great Depression hit, the small rural community of Rock Castle was already critically injured. Young folk began leaving their farms in search of work, looking for renewed hope in other communities.

In 1933, President Roosevelt promised to change everything with The New Deal. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) had many sites in Virginia, one of those was located inside Rock Castle. That same year a park-to-park road highway was approved, and the Blue Ridge Parkway began. Land within Rock Castle was purchased, with some happy neighbors and some not so much.

Today many descendants from Rock Castle are happy to see their ancestral homeland preserved and protected. The old pathway is now an accessible hike that follows much of the old roadbed were you might see chimneys, foundations, and an old moonshine car, if you know where to look.

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December 19, 2021

Enjoying the scent of Christmas candles

The scent and glow of candles in a dark room during Christmas is unforgettable. Candles have always been a part of the Christmas season and the subject matter of many Christmas cards. We remember seeing a fireplace mantel with six full white votive candles burning brightly in a darkened living room. The candles were adorned with boughs of holly with red berries. It was a beautiful sight and worthy of being on a Christmas card. Votive candles are worth what they cost because they burn slowly and brightly night after night for a long period of time. Many votive candles have scents such as bayberry, peppermint, wintergreen, pine, Douglas Fir, eggnog, cinnamon, apple pie, pumpkin pie, cedar, and spearmint. For a mantel of Christmas memories, take

limbs of Douglas or Frazier Fir and spread across the mantel and place seven red or white tall votive candles across the mantel and adorn with gold or silver ornaments. When the candles are lit the light scent and heat of the candles combined with the aroma of the fir trims will quickly bring the spirit of Christmas past and present into the room.

Making a Christmas calico salad

This is a cool salad with the colors of Christmas that is simple and easy to prepare. You will need one package of 16 ounce baby lima beans, one 15 ounce can of Le sueer tiny green peas, one two ounce jar of diced pimentos (drained), two cups cooked sea shell pasta, half cup sour cream, one half cup mayonnaise, one fourth cup ranch dressing, one cup cherry tomatoes (cut in halves), half teaspoon pepper, and half teaspoon salt. Prepare lima beans according to package directions (and drain), cook pasta shells until tender (drain), drain green peas, drain pimentos. Add all vegetables except tomatoes to the sea shell pasta and mix well. Add salt, pepper, sour cream, mayonnaise, and ranch dressing. Slice tomatoes in half and add to the mix. Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate for a few hours.

Winter begins

The longest night of the year will occur Tuesday as we welcome the first night of winter. Many children will disagree about this being the longest night of the year. To them, Christmas Eve will be the longest night of the year! All nights after Dec. 21, will become a minute shorter each evening and the days will become a minute longer each day, and this will continue until June 21.

Old fashioned chocolate drops

That cone-shaped dark chocolate mound filled with icy cream filling are mostly available only at Christmas season and this is why they are so traditional, like chocolate covered cherries. We always have the thought that they are so rich in sweetness and flavor that they are too unhealthy to consume all year! The best are sold at country stores and specialty candy shops simply because they are soft and creamy and they melt in your mouth and bring back plenty of Christmas memories. They were a special part of Christmas at our house and my father would buy a pound or two at the local hardware. Daddy thought they were so special, he kept them apart from the other treats that were also Christmas traditions. You can find them in historic downtown Mount Airy.

Making a festive Christmas salad

To make this Christmas colorful salad, you will need one large can crushed pineapple, one can whole cranberry sauce, two three ounce boxes raspberry Jello, small pack maraschino cherries, one small jar green maraschino cherries, one can mixed fruit or fruit cocktail. Drain the crushed pineapple and reserve the juice (for mixing with the Jello). Add enough water to the juice to make three cups liquid. Bring the liquid to a boil and add the Jello and mix, stir in the cranberry sauce. Pour into a large bowl and refrigerate for two hours. Stir in pineapple, pecans, cherries (drained), and mixed fruit (drained). Pour into a tube pan and refrigerate until very firm.

Enjoying old-fashioned Christmas candies

At Christmastime, it is great to enjoy a taste of the candy from Christmas past. At Virginia Carolina Produce on U.S. 52 across the state line, you can find a huge wonderland of old fashion confections displayed in wooden kegs. You can scoop these goodies out of the kegs into paper bags. You can also purchase them in plastic bags already priced.

The search for the candy of your childhood ends here on these aisles as scores of candy varieties of generations past parade before your eyes like visions of sugar plums to whet your memory. They feature coconut bon bons, coconut macaroons, rainbow ribbon bars, orange slices, candy corn, creme pumpkins, spice and fruit gum drops, tootsie rolls in every flavor, root beer barrels, circus marshmallow peanuts in orange, pink, white and yellow, kits, B.B. Bats, peanut brittle, tootsie pops, Bit-O-Honey, caramel creams, chocolate covered raisins and peanuts, stick candy in every flavor you can name including lemon, peppermint, horehound, wintergreen, spearmint, all kinds of fruit flavors. They have several varieties of assorted Christmas hard candies including ribbon mix, filled centers, and they have the round hard mix with trees, stars, Santa's, holly, and other Christmas art in the center. They will fix a basket and place some of these special treats in it for you custom made to order.

In search of a candle lighter and snuffer

Surely the Baldwin sisters in the "Walton's Christmas Homecoming" television series opener would have used a candle lighter and snuffer to light such a large spruce in their parlor on Christmas Eve on that Christmas in the early 20th century. These snuffers are rare and were mostly used to light and snuff chandeliers and yes, also to light candles on Christmas trees only on Christmas Eve. Most

of them were made in the late 1800s and still around in early 20th century homes. What a great find it would be to discover one of them in an old attic or barn or antique shop? It would certainly be a curious heirloom to use near or on the Christmas tree for an attention getting decoration, or as a giant ornament.

Two 1950s wind-up toys

Wind up toys were hot items during Christmas in the 1950s. Two popular models made by Marx were the Honeymoon Express and the Marx climbing tank. The Honeymoon Express was colorful and unusual because it was circular with a train circling the track and an airplane flying around the train in a colorful background of scenery. Not many are found today because they were made to be played with. They became victims of being wound too tight by kids or just wore out from wear. We remember having one of them at Christmas, and most likely, we wore it out.

The Marx climbing tank was popular and featured rubber tracks and guns on each side that produced small sparks that were produced by spinning flints. We would place books on the floor and let the tanks run over them and add more books until the tank would finally turn over. What a tough toy this was. Not many are seen in antique toy shops because these tanks were meant to be played with.

The ugliest of all the Christmas trees

It was defiantly not Charlie Brown's scraggly tree, but one from Jesse Allen's Christmas tree lot in the northeastern North Carolina city of Roanoke Rapids in the mid 1950s. The Christmas trees of choice back then were red heart cedars and there were plenty of them that grew along the Roanoke River. Jesse Allen was a local peddler and a jack of all trades. At Christmas, his trade turned to selling Christmas trees he harvested from along the Roanoke River. He set up a lot beside the local Esso service station, and he did a booming business. Jesse had a huge drawing card which was a large cedar that he had sprayed hot pink. It drew people in to gawk and stare at the tree and they bought plenty of trees, but the pink panther had no takers. All during the week before Christmas, after delivering newspapers, we rode by and all the trees had been sold except the hot pink tree, it had served the purpose Jesse had in mind all along and that was selling the rest of his trees! What a great calling card that unusual tree turned out to be.

Hoe Hoe Hoedown

“A quick subject.” At the annual company Christmas banquet, there were several long-winded speakers who covered every subject except the kitchen sink. When yet another speaker arose, everyone was bored stiff, the speaker said, “It seems to me everything has already been talked about. But if somebody will tell me what to talk about I will be grateful.” From the back of the room, a voice shouted, “Talk about a minute.”

Merry Christmas to our readers!

We would like to wish our readers of the Garden Plot in the Sunday Mount Airy News Lifestyle section a wonderful Christmas filled with the blessings and gifts of love, joy, and peace. Thanks for reading the column every week and we hope your days of Christmas will be merry and bright and your families be richly blessed.

America's sock capitol?



December 13, 2021

Mount Airy has been known for many things – a big, gleaming rock, beautiful yet simple well-made furniture, quality bright leaf tobacco, the Happiest Girl In The Whole USA, and, of course, a folksy sheriff that didn't carry a gun.

And, for most of a century, it has been known for its socks.

Whether it was for your toddler, a bobby-soxer, hiker, farmer, or M-16 rifle, Mount Airy has been turning out socks for 100 years.

The most unusual sock on that list, of course, is the M-16 rifle sock. Robert Merritt, grandson of the founder of Renfro Hosiery Mill and president of the company in 1991, he designed the rifle covers in response to requests from troops in the first Gulf War for nylons.

What they needed was a way to keep the ubiquitous sand out of their rifles and Merritt thought he could do better than a pair of pantyhose. Renfro produced the socks and competitor Kentucky Derby Hosiery dyed, finished, packaged, and shipped them.

Most of the socks produced in Mount Airy have been more traditional styles.

Renfro Corp. makes one out of every five socks sold in America. Merritt's grandfather, William Edward Merritt Jr. founded the company on Willow Street in 1921. The company has been headquartered here ever since. It has recently been purchased by a New York firm.

Their sprawling plants employed hundreds locally producing socks for Fruit of the Loom, Carhartt, Dr. Scholls Merrell, Hot Sox and K.Bell.

That first plant was joined by as many as 13 other companies at one time, with the local business owners joined by companies drawn to the lower costs and large pool of skilled workers in this area.

But no matter where you start, the story of sock manufacturing in Mount Airy seems to lead back to Tollie Barber but it's not exactly clear why.

Surry County has never been a metropolitan area but there has been a strong network of business-minded people who've created a series of industries that may seem unlikely for a county that sits so

far from larger cities. Chatham Mills in Elkin, Spencer's Infantware, Mount Airy Furniture Company and others have been nationally and, sometimes, internationally known brands.

Barber, with a degree in textile manufacturing, joined W.E. Merritt Jr. and his brother Oscar, W.G. Sydnor and W.W. Burke, all men active in the business and civic life of the county, to establish Renfro Hosiery Mill on Willow Street in part of the old Sparger Tobacco complex. They began with \$200,000 in capital, just north of \$3 million in today's money.

By 1933 Barber and others at Renfro had begun two other sock mills, Argonne and Piedmont, each specializing in different products from children's socks to misses' anklets, to men's boot socks. The effects of the Great Depression took their toll, though and Renfro absorbed those mills in order to keep the company financially viable.

In 1937 the company had \$1 million in sales. The next year they lost \$22,000 according to reporting in the Charlotte Observer at the time. It was the last year the company showed a loss until the 1979 flood that destroyed more than \$2 million in stock according to the Wall Street Journal.

Despite the economic challenges, growth of hosiery production in Mount Airy didn't stop and neither did Barber. In 1938 he built Barber Hosiery Mill atop the hill near the intersection of Hamburg and South Main streets.

The Mount Airy News reported it was "the eighth textile and knitting plant to be started in the city." With 100 machines it employed 300 workers.

Lynne and Surry hosiery mills were built in 1941. Barber was, again, involved in operations with Surry, recruited as an advisor to the Surry mill. Though construction slowed during World War II, Barber was involved with local politics, banking, and the formation of the Mount Airy Base Ball Association.

Once the war ended and all those GIs headed home the Baby Boom that followed fueled an economic boom. Members of the powerful Carter family and JW Prather, all successful in business, bought the Blizzard Freight Terminal on South Street and built Carter Hosiery Mills in 1946.

The Moss-Foy Textile Company set up on Newsome Street that same year to do skein dyeing and winding for the hosiery mills. Construction and expansion took off with Renfro adding 50,000

square feet to its Willow Street plant and Granit Hosiery Mill consolidating their several locations under one roof by moving into the larger Renfro #2 plant at the corner of South Main and Worth streets.

Amos and Smith Hosiery in Pilot Mountain, Oakdale, Brown Wooten Mills, Adams-Millis, Blue-Chip, Kentucky Derby, and Nester were added.

As the global market opened, companies moved production, packaging, and shipping to off-shore facilities beginning in the 1990s. Little production remains in the county aside from Nester but the history and all that was accomplished is a point of pride for many in the region.

And if you happen to have one of those M-16 rifle socks in a drawer someplace, the museum would give it place of pride.

Kate Rauhauser-Smith is a local freelance writer, researcher, and genealogist.

Snow in December?



December 12, 2021

Christmas hard candy mix

The old fashioned varieties of hard pieces of Christmas candies has been around since the days of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. These flavors of Christmases of long ago are still around. Flavors of peppermint, wintergreen, spearmint, horehound, grape, apple, lemon, raspberry, strawberry, lime, cherry, orange, and pineapple. Hard mixes in the forms of Christmas trees, Santa's, candles, gingerbread houses, and ribbon shapes. Hard mixes of all kinds and flavors can be found at many candy stores, supermarkets, country stores, produce markets, and in historic Mount Airy along Main Street. At many old fashioned stores, you can scoop it up out of wooden kegs and place it in bags by the pound.

Making Christmas ornament dough

Making your own Christmas ornaments can be fun and you can make many Christmas memories with your children and grandchildren. To prepare this dough recipe, you will need three cups plain flour, one-and-a-fourth cups cold water, three fourth cup of salt, and one teaspoon of powdered alum. In a large bowl, combine the salt, flour, and powdered alum and mix well. Add water and stir until smooth. Shape the dough into a ball. Knead the dough on a lightly covered wax paper lined surface sprinkled with flour for 5 minutes until smooth. If dough is too stiff, sprinkle with water, or if it is too moist, sprinkle with flour. Form shapes of Christmas trees, Santa's, snowmen, candles, stars, candy canes, and gingerbread houses with cookie cutters or by hand. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes. Cool and paint with acrylic paints. Extra dough can be stored in covered plastic containers. Use a nail to punch holes in the top of the ornaments for ornament hooks before baking. You can roll the dough into sticks and make candy canes for your old fashioned tree.

Making Christmas eggnog piggy pudding

Rice pudding is a whole lot like Old English "piggy pudding" (also known as figgy pudding) in English literature. Eggnog adds the Old English flavor to the recipe. It is an easy recipe to make at Christmas time. In a medium bowl, mix one pack of Minute or Success cooked rice, two large eggs and one cup of sugar, half teaspoon of nutmeg, one cup of eggnog (regular or low fat), one teaspoon vanilla, one cup golden raisins, two tablespoons plain flour, half teaspoon cinnamon. Mix all the ingredients and pour into a 13X9X2 inch baking dish or pan sprayed with Pam baking spray. Bake at 350 degrees until firm and golden brown (usually around an hour and maybe a bit more). You can substitute quartered red and green candied cherries instead of golden raisins for a Christmasy look. It is great served hot with ice cream but even better served cold.

Making some red peppermint julip

This is an interesting pepper-upper on a winter evening. Run a small bag of Starlight peppermints through the blender in grate mode and sit aside. Mix two packs of watermelon Kool-Aid, two cups of sugar, four cups of water, one teaspoon peppermint extract, one two liter bottle of Canada Dry ginger ale. Mix all together and pour in the grated Starlight mints.

Plenty of Christmas green in the garden plot

Part of our garden plot never goes to sleep in winter because green is our favorite color and we love something green and growing all winter long. Green in the winter garden is highlighted by the Carolina Jasmine, mustard greens, Siberian kale, collards, purple top turnips, broccoli, cabbage, and onion sets. It is always fun in every season to see something green in the garden.

Country stores and special places

The spirit of Christmas past and some of the present is alive at the country store or at some extraordinary stores near you. It is there you can experience the sights, scenes, and smells of Christmas that will take you back in time. There is Ronnie's Country Store on Cherry Street in downtown Winston-Salem that features country ham, slabs of bacon, W.G. White old fashioned country ham, assorted candies, fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, hoop cheese, and many Christmas traditional goodies. A little further up the hill at 516 North Trade street is Mast General Store where they feature old fashioned items, candies, special treats, toys, gadgets, dolls and other special items. In Kernersville, there is Musten and Crutchfield Market. They feature homemade pimento cheese, chicken salad, bottles of old fashioned soft drinks and fresh meats and vegetables. They are at 245 North Main Street. Across the state line in Cana, Virginia, there is Carolina Virginia Produce with wood floors and huge isles filled with wooden keys of old fashioned candies especially at Christmas. You can buy already mixed and weigh out candies in plastic bags or select your own varieties from wooden keys. They also have jams, jellies, pickles, relishes, pickled eggs, assorted meats, vegetables and fruits by the bushel or pound. They have fruitcakes and hard to find items such as old fashioned dark chocolate drops, orange slices, ribbon hard Christmas candy, coconut macaroons, spice and fruit gum drops, and stick candy in all flavors as well as coconut ribbon candy and coconut bon bons. Historic Mount Airy has several blocks of wonderful specialty filled all year round and especially at Christmas time when Main Street is decked out in lighted snowflakes. You can visit the ice cream shops, old hardware's, great dinning places, and enjoy a pork chop biscuit at Snappy Lunch. Many variety stores and specialty shops line Main Street. You can find hoop cheese, country ham, Jelly Bellies in all flavors, dill pickles from jar and many other extra special items that will pave the way to an interesting day of shopping and fun as well as dinning. Take the family on an old fashioned shopping adventure this Christmas season.

Buying a Christmas cactus as a gift

Give someone special a gift of Christmas cactus so they can enjoy it all during the Christmas season as well as for many Christmases to come. You can now purchase Christmas cactus in full bloom at

Home Depot, Lowe's Foods, Lowe's Home Improvement, Walmart, Food Lion, and most nurseries. Buy a large bag of Miracle-Gro cactus potting medium and a large container and re-pot the cactus as soon as you bring it home. Rewrap the container in bright Christmas foil before giving it to someone special so they can enjoy the flowers.

The mystery and charm of mistletoe

One of the mysteries of the elusive mistletoe is just the fact that it exists. It is as charming today as it was to the ancients for centuries. It is also a mystery how it can propagate itself against such great odds even in this 21st century when many acres of oak and hickory trees are being bulldozed for real estate and business development. It is also a mystery how it evolved into a decoration at Christmastime.

Mistletoe is unique with its olive green thick leaves and semi-transparent white berries that are so dainty with their tiny seed in them. Mistletoe is a parasite that mooches off hickories, oaks, and other hardwoods to sustain itself. Mistletoe reproduces itself when birds peck or bury the tiny seed into the limbs and branches very high up in the trees. It is amazing that mistletoe always thrives at the tops of these mighty hardwoods protected by God from storms and humans.

The mistletoe reveals itself to us in late autumn and early winter when leaves fall and reveal huge clumps of elusive mistletoe in the tops of these mighty oaks and hickories. This brings us to another mystery in the very fact that we didn't break our neck trying to retrieve it as kids back in the 1950s when almost every oak had a clump of mistletoe tempting us because a kiss awaited if we could chase the girls at school and dangle the mistletoe over their head.

I now believe those sweet fourth grade girls realized the risk involved in retrieving that mistletoe and the rarity of seeing mistletoe or maybe mistletoe charmed them like it did the ancients over the centuries and maybe, just maybe, they really wanted a Christmas kiss! Every December, we look for elusive mistletoe in the mighty oaks in the forest and woodlands of Surry County and it still exists in the tops of oaks and hickories, but now out of our reach because we are old enough to not fool around in the tops of mighty oaks, but we are not too old to kiss under a sprig of mistletoe!

Time to dream about a white Christmas

As we move farther into December and winter is a little more than a week away, is there any possibility we could have some snow before Christmas? In 2017, we had a huge amount of snow the second week of December. It does not have to be cold to snow, or freezing, or not even very cold if conditions are favorable aloft. At Christmas, what better time for the dream of a white Christmas to come true.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Voices of reason.” When I see a Christmas cookie, I hear two voices in my head. One voice says, “You need to eat that cookie.” The other voice says, “You heard him, eat that cookie!”

“Pie crazy.” Diner: “Is this pumpkin pie or eggnog pie?” Waitress: “Can’t you tell by the taste?” Diner: “No, not really.” Waitress: “Well, then what difference does it make?”

The leader in me



December 12, 2021

Editor's Note: Community Comment is a periodic column in The Mount Airy News featuring commentary from community leaders in Mount Airy and Surry County.

The Mount Airy City Schools (MACS) school district has been successful over the years and continues to be a leader in education. Last year, we were the only school district to return to school five days a week beginning in August and this year we continue to lead the way with our first semester connecting 52 Career and Technical Education interns, 38 NextGen paid interns (20 hours a week), and new pathways that lead to promising careers.

We have a new construction program, a drone program, technology classes, engineering classes, health science classes, entrepreneurship classes, and many other avenues for students to find their gifts, talents, and abilities. We have used the lessons from our elementary program Leader in Me over the years to lead like champions.

Leader in Me has been in place for over a decade in our elementary programs and is based on Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The habits create successful leaders and we use them every day with children and in our own decision-making. We teach our children – Habit 1: Be Proactive. This teaches one to take responsibility for one's own reaction to one's own experiences. We know when the pandemic hit that we needed to react quickly, turn around technology, get it to students within days so learning could continue uninterrupted and prepare meals and hotspots for delivery out to homes. This habit encourages children to respond positively and improve the situation. Our response was a good lesson for them to follow.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind is important for children. This life habit encourages students to envision what you would like to become so you can work toward that goal. Many of our students want to go into the health field, technology field, education, accounting/banking, and many other careers. They can begin using Xello in middle school to map out the classes and pathways that best align to their natural abilities and interests. Counselors and teachers give them advice to help what they envision to become a reality.

MACS needed to begin with the end in mind this year by prioritizing keeping every child in school. We have been able to participate in Test-to-Stay this year that prevents any COVID exposure in schools from automatically sending children home. If we were in a masked environment we could keep kids in school by rapid testing them instead of quarantining them if they were asymptomatic. The goal of keeping students in school helped us make great decisions resulting in very few students on remote learning.

Students might need help in prioritizing their tasks. They need to think about whether a task is urgent and important such as getting up and getting ready in order to get on the bus on time. Or they may be thinking through whether the homework assignment due tomorrow or the larger project due on Friday is most important and how to manage their time to get both done.

This is outlined in the advice around Habit 3: Put First Things. Our school district sees that urgent and important are the strategies we use to keep all students safe. We also know that making sure all

children have social-emotional support, get fed each day, have their physical needs cared for, and people who will mentor them must occur before children will be able to learn. Our school works hard to make sure all of these needs are met and families get the support they need to raise children.

The next three habits from Leader in Me outline an interdependence on others. One of the biggest lessons we can teach students is how to love their neighbor, negotiate a better solution, listen to people who have a different opinion, and take care of each other.

Habit 4: Think Win-Win is a mature way of having conversations, solving problems, and building a brighter future. We know that there is always a negotiation in schools between parents, politicians, and people within the school system. We are really thankful that the General Assembly and the Governor have used this habit with the current budget. The budget begins to value teachers, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, administrators, and all staff with increased pay as well as bonuses for some of the groups. This habit of win-win allows everyone to be able to come to agreement and move forward even if everyone doesn't get everything they asked for in the process.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand Then to be Understood is a great habit that we all need to adopt. If we are careful to really try to understand what others are trying to say this will help us to be able to help them. We can all move forward together. We are thankful that our community has suspended some of the disruptive behaviors we have seen in other communities concerning schools. We have worked together to keep students safe, come back to school together, hold athletics and activities, and decide on next steps to return to normal. Seeking first to understand and be collaborative is a great lesson for our children to see through us and our behaviors.

Habit 6: Synergize is illustrated every day in MACS. Our children are put in teams to accomplish goals. Our elementary teachers put students in teams to accomplish goals through project-based learning and inquiry-based activities. Our middle school and high school have athletic teams, academic competition teams, and clubs. MACS uses staff teams to show leadership every day through school-based teams, leadership teams, and administrative teams.

The last habit may be the most important right now. Sharpen your saw by taking care of yourself, creating healthy life habits, and sustaining joy and fruitful lives. This is important for our children and ourselves. We hope that everyone uses Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw during this holiday season to take some time for ourselves by doing things that you enjoy doing. Thanks for all the support for

educators that you continue to give as we teach and practice the habits in Leader in Me. If you would like to be a part of our tradition of excellence and help build future leaders visit us at <https://www.mtairy.k12.nc.us>.

Snow in December?



December 05, 2021

Can December begin the snow season?

December could be the month when we see some measurable snowfall. In the past, we have seen some fairly decent amount of snowfall in December and also a few white Christmases. It is always great to be prepared for snow, no matter when it arrives. Keep the snow shovel ready. Keep a bottle of WD-40 oil spray handy to spray the snow shovel with and prevent snow from sticking to the shovel. Spray the shovel a few times as you shovel the snow. Your arms will thank you and we are sure your heart will.

Lighting a Moravian star in season of Advent

The season of Advent is here and time to prepare for Jesus first coming and his birth in Bethlehem. It is the season to light up the Moravian star and let it shine all night to light the way for the Christ child and welcome him into our homes and hearts. You can purchase Moravian stars at Gullians book stores and at Moravian book stores. They come boxed and are easy to assemble.

Pearl Harbor: “A day of infamy,” 1941

Tuesday, Dec. 7 will be Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. On a Sunday morning, 80 years ago at around 8 a.m., the Empire of Japan staged a surprise and unprovoked attack on the U.S. navel base at Pearl Harbor. It was a horrific attack that triggered the United States into World War Two. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed the nation that evening and referred the event as “A day of infamy.” That same night, he urged Congress to declare war between the U.S. and the Empire of Japan. Two fateful days should never be forgotten in America and they are Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day and Patriots Day, Sept. 11. “Remember Pearl Harbor?” “We shall never forget.”

Looking for natural Christmas decor

As December begins, there is an abundance of the most unusual places such as roadsides, woodlands, and probably as close as your own backyard or lawn to find natural Christmas decorations. Honey suckles stay green all winter and blend well with Advent wreathes along with sprigs of red heart cedar. We can almost be sure the early Moravian’s would have used these greens in their Advent wreaths as well as short leaf pine sprigs. Nandena and dogwood berries also make colorful decor. Pine cones and pine boughs make great mantel decor, and wreaths for candle displays. Pine cones also provide Christmas accents. Popcorn kernels can be strung with a needle and thread and used on mantels, window sills, table center pieces and coffee tables. When popping corn, use plain kernels that are purchased in one pound bags, not microwavable popcorn. It works

better, is whiter, and has zero seasoning. Holly is still around even though you may have to search harder to find it. Natural decor and ornaments you gather produce an atmosphere of Christmas past, but also bring us the aromas of past Christmases. The smells at grandma's house were always smells of cedar pine mixed with country ham and chicken dressing.

The fresh cut aroma of Douglas Fir

Nothing brings the smell of Christmas to the home like the scent of fresh cut Douglas Fir and candles burning on the mantel. You may not have a seven foot Douglas Fir to create this atmosphere, but the Christmas tree lots have plenty of trimmings from Douglas Firs. They will be glad to give you some of these cuttings, but please be sure to pay them well because the folks work long, hard, cold, freezing hours in ice, wet, snow, sleet, biting wind and weather. Tell them that you appreciate their labors during this season. Many work for free as fundraisers for churches and other charities and organizations.

The season of recycling

Christmas parties, gatherings, dinners, gift wrappings, reunions, banquets, boxes, as well as bottles, cans, and cartons. All these items are what many families place in their trash containers that makes its way to the landfills. All these items could be broken down, cleaned and placed in recycling bins. More than half the trash we generate could be recycled and kept from landfills with only a little concern and effort. Recycling is easy and you can recycle all cardboard boxes (broken down), glass containers, plastic soft drink bottles, soft drink cans, plastic milk cartons, metal cans, newspapers and plastic bags. To prevent a mess, clean all cans, remove all labels, remove lids from metal cans, place inside the cans and bend shut. Think twice before throwing something in the trash can that can be recycled.

Fruitcakes: most misunderstood desserts

Fruitcakes often get a bad reputation and give many people a bad fruitcake experience simply because that what they tasted was not a real fruitcake, but a concoction of citron peelings and a few dried raisins and prunes, very few nuts and a crumbly dry mixture with no moisture and stickiness to hold it together — probably cost \$6! This is no fruitcake because it simply has no substance, this is a bad experience fruitcake because its ingredients are not really fruits. You get what you pay for and a great fruitcake with plenty of nuts and fruits costs much more than \$6. What does a real fruitcake

consist of? First of all, it has quality ingredients such as pineapple chunks, red and green half maraschino cherries, plump moist golden raisins, chunks of walnuts and pecans, and only enough flour, sugar, brown sugar, molasses, rum, brandy, vanilla, orange, and lemon flavoring to hold the cake together. A real fruitcake will be sticky with flavor, but will also have the quality of moisture from the ingredients. Judge a real fruitcake by the merits of the fruits, nuts, and unique ingredients that hold the cake together. Nothing is like the real deal and a real fruitcake is a work of art, and a joy at Christmas time, a real Christmas memory of a lifetime. Accept no imitations of substitutes, invest in a genuine, real, fruitcake. Create a Christmas memory of good taste, not a horrible fruitcake experience!

Christmas cherry pudding

Cherries are a great product for making a Christmasy desert and this is a simple recipe to kick off the month of Christmas. For this recipe, you will need one 16-ounce can of Oregon (this is the brand name) and there are red cherries (with juice), two sticks light margarine, half stick light margarine, two large beaten eggs, two and a half cups plain flour, four teaspoons of baking powder, one fourth teaspoon salt, one cup milk, one teaspoon corn starch, half cup of water, one cup sugar, and one half cup sugar. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Drain the can of red cherries and reserve the juice. Set both aside. In a large bowl, cream the two sticks of light margarine with one cup of sugar, add the two beaten eggs, and set aside. In another bowl, mix together two and a half cups flour, one fourth teaspoon salt, and four teaspoons of baking powder. Add one cup of milk to the flour mixture. Stir and mix the margarine, sugar, egg mixture into the flour mixture. Spoon the batter into a 13X9X2 inch baking pan or dish sprayed with baking spray. Cover with foil and bake for one hour until firm. To make the cherry sauce, combine the cherry juice, half cup sugar, half cup water, half stick light margarine and one tablespoon corn starch. Heat mixture over medium heat until margarine melts and sauce thickens. If sauce needs to be thicker, add more cornstarch with cold water and thicken to consistency you desire. Pour over the cooled cake and spread the cherries over top of the cake. Serve with Cool Whip, Dream Whip, or dairy whipping cream.

Christmas tree lots greening up

Since the week before Thanksgiving, the Christmas trees have been sprouting on vacant lots of loads of trees are arriving each day. They come in all shapes, sizes, and heights. You can choose from Scotch Pine, White Pine, Frazier Fir, Douglas Fir, and Spruce. Here is what to look for in searching for the perfect tree: (1) The tree must smell and look fresh. (2) Test the tree by bending a

few limbs; they should spring back. (3) Bounce the tree to see if needles stay on the tree, if any needles fall out, don't buy that tree. (4) Buy the tree a day before you intend to decorate it. (5) Make sure the tree is full with no bare spots. (6) Prepare the tree before bringing it into the home by getting a worker at the lot to cut two inches off the bottom if they haven't already done so. Place trunk in a tub of water for 24 hours before preparing it for the home. (7) Place tree in the support stand that allows you to water the tree. (8) A watered tree will last for 30 days in the home. (9) Never leave tree lights on inside the home when you leave.

Hoe hoe hoedown

The father gathered all his children together and said, "Kids, when George Washington knocked down the cherry tree, he told his father honestly that he did it. Now answer me honestly, who knocked down the outhouse?" Finally, the youngest son admitted to knocking it over. After this, he was well disciplined by his father. "It's not fair," said the youngest son, "George Washington did not get punished when he told the truth." "Son," replied the father, "George Washington's father was not in the cherry tree when George knocked the tree down."

"A cheerful giver." On the way out of the church service 6 year old Jan told the pastor, "When I grow up I'm going to give you some money." The preacher said, "Well thank you, but why do you want to give me your money?" Jan said, "Because my father said you are one of the poorest preachers we have ever had."

The almanac for December

The new moon of December occurred on the evening of Saturday, Dec. 4. Pearl Harbor Day is Tuesday, Dec. The moon reaches its first quarter Friday, Dec. 10. There will be a full moon on the night of Saturday, Dec. 18. The moon will be named "Full Cold Mood." Winter begins on Tuesday, Dec. 21. Christmas Eve is on Friday, Dec. 24. Christmas Day is Saturday, Dec. 25. The moon reaches its last quarter on Sunday, Dec. 26. New Years Eve is on Friday, Dec. 31.

Give a Kid a Christmas makes a difference year after year

December 05, 2021

Editor's Note: Community Comment is a feature of The Mount Airy News, presenting commentary from community leaders in Mount Airy and Surry County.

There is no doubt in my mind that the past few holiday seasons have been hard. Regardless, I believe there is only one thing we can do when confronted with difficult times; Push forward. If we continue to push forward, we can focus on the positives and pay our good energy forward.

The Give a Kid a Christmas Foundation shares the same goal of pushing forward against the challenges of life. For almost 30 years, the Surry County Sheriff's Office and Surry County Schools have worked together to provide food, clothes, and Christmas gifts to those who otherwise would go without every year. Beginning in the 1990s, the organization set out with the hope of feeding 50 families, which seemed arduous to organizers at the time. In 2020, the foundation provided clothes and toys for 700 children and supplied more than 250 food boxes to families. Each year, the foundation continues to give more to the children of Surry County.

The goal is to make sure that children in need have an adequate supply of food to get them through the school Christmas break, to ensure that each child has appropriate clothing to get them through the winter, and some toy or other item that they would like to have for Christmas. The Surry County Sheriff's Office and Surry County Schools believe that every boy and girl deserves to experience the joy and exhilaration of a happy Christmas morning with a full belly and warm clothes.

Can you imagine waking up every day and knowing you would be going to school wearing the same clothes as the day before? What if you woke up on Christmas morning and saw that Santa had forgotten you? What if you spent each day of Christmas vacation checking the cupboards with a growling stomach, seeing that there is still no food?

For many children in Surry County, this dire image is their reality. But with your help, we can change that! Together we can make a real difference in the lives of these children! We can make sure they have food, get them clothes, and we can even make their Christmas morning one of joy. Together, we can continue to work to make sure every child has a Merry Christmas!

With Christmas nearly upon us, I'm asking the community to help with monetary donations and help shop and assemble food boxes.

To get involved, donate or mail a check to the Sheriff Atkinson's Give a Kid a Christmas Foundation at PO Box 827, Dobson, NC 27017 or donate online at <http://paypal.me/giveakidachristmas>.

Donations can also be made through Venmo at sheriffsgiveakidachristmas@gmail.com

Volunteers will convene on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 9 p.m. If you would like to come to help us shop at the Elkin Wal-Mart. On Saturday, Dec. 11, at 8 a.m., volunteers will also assemble at Surry Central High School if you would like to help prepare the food boxes.

Reader explains school board responsibilities

December 05, 2021

To the Editor:

Filing for the 2022 General Election begins Dec. 6. Since Board of Education seats are no longer nonpartisan, those interested in running for a board of education must file between Dec. 6 – Dec. 17 for the March Primary. While citizens will cast their votes for numerous candidates please be aware of what members of school boards are allowed to oversee and what they have no control over.

The local boards of education do not set or select the curriculum for their school systems. The curriculum is selected by the State Board of Education, whose members are appointed by the General Assembly. The North Carolina State Board of Education consists of the lieutenant governor, state treasurer, and 11 members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the General Assembly for eight-year terms (three at-large, eight from designated educational districts across the state) and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

What is the role of the Board of Education?

The role of the school board can be summarized in the following areas:

- To provide vision and direction for the school system

- To create policies in accordance with state law to establish standards, accountability, and evaluation of essential operations of the school district.
- To prepare the budget for presentation to the county commissioners
- To hire, support, and evaluate the Superintendent.
- To perform judicial functions by conducting hearings as appropriate.
- To advocate for the school district, staff, and especially the students in all interactions with other governmental entities and the public.

There is a Board Member Code of Ethics and each board member must fulfill the legal requirement to receive a minimum of 12 hours of training annually. The training includes but is not limited to, public school law, public school finance, and duties and responsibilities of local boards of education as well as the state-required ethics training.

If you are truly interested in serving on the Mount Airy City Schools Board of Education and have a passion for our schools and community, I urge you to let your interests be known. Serving as an advocate for the students of our school system can be very rewarding. Contact a current board member, attend the monthly board meetings and be knowledgeable in the current issues and concerns facing education in North Carolina.

You do have to live in the city school district, and in the district in which are filing to run:

- District B (Mount Airy #2, #3 Voting Precincts), one seat
- District C (Mount Airy #4, #5 Voting Precincts), one seat
- District D (Mount Airy #6, #7 Voting Precincts), one seat
- At Large (All Mount Airy Voting Precincts), one seat

If you are sincerely interested in serving the students of Mount Airy City Schools, reach out to an existing board member and research the responsibilities and importance of the position.

Wendy Carriker

Mount Airy

The emotional aspects of substance use disorder



December 01, 2021

When you are in a close relationship with someone who has substance use disorder (SUD), their frightening and dramatic emotional changes can be intensely disruptive. It's common for the person who is witnessing these changes to not understand what is happening to their friend or loved one. Why are they so distant or suddenly paranoid? Why do they disappear for hours or days, then return and act like nothing odd has happened? Why don't they relate to their families or friends in the same manner anymore?

When substance use becomes a long-term habit, it can wreak havoc on a user's nervous system, overall health, and mental state. Being able to recognize the mental and physical effects of substance use will lead to greater awareness. The observer will better understand how to provide help and support if they can recognize the signs and symptoms of SUD.

Marijuana

When the potency of marijuana – measured by the THC content – was much lower, it had the reputation for making users laid back and mellow. However, the THC content of today's marijuana is significantly higher than it was three decades ago. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) studies have linked marijuana use to psychosis, depression, and anxiety. Marijuana can also decrease, or even extinguish, the desire to engage in challenging and rewarding activities. If a person is normally excited about a sport, an activity, an educational effort, or a career goal one month, and a few months later, they abandon those pursuits, marijuana could be involved in that change.

Opioids

The human body has developed its own natural opioid system which modulates a variety of functions related to arousal and motivation. This natural opioid system regulates social bonding and cooperative behavior. Utilizing licit opioids for the pursuit of pleasure, rather than for addressing pain, is the inappropriate application of opioids. Prolonged intake of opioids, like heroin or Oxycontin, can render dysfunctional the brain's social bonding and emotion recognition circuits. Common symptoms of opioid abuse are the inability to cope with stressful situations, illogical reasoning, inability to prioritize, and loss of the ability to self-reflect. People suffering from opioid use disorder have trouble with regulating their emotions.

Cocaine/Methamphetamine

A person who occasionally uses stimulants, such as cocaine or methamphetamine, may be able to function normally day-to-day. When cocaine or methamphetamine use becomes more frequent, the mental and emotional symptoms include agitation, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, and violence. The initial short period of euphoria, pleasure, and confidence that accompanies the initial experience begins to fade when the user may feel irritable, restless, and depressed. Only continued use of the cocaine or methamphetamine will relieve this lowered mood, but again, only for a short while. These dramatic emotional changes may also involve thoughts of suicide in advanced cases.

Identifying signs of substance use, especially in the early stages, can be difficult. Perhaps you've noticed changes in your loved one's moods or behavior that just do not add up. Or maybe your intuition is telling you there is a problem. Even if you cannot identify anything specific, it's worth

taking stock of your concerns. Speaking up and starting the conversation could save the life of someone dear to you. Recognizing the signs of substance use is key in getting someone the help they need.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from learning more about substance use prevention and would like information on our community events, please Start Here, by contacting Charlotte Reeves, Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Community Outreach Coordinator, at reevesc@co.surry.nc.us. Visit our website at surrycountycares.com for more information about substance use disorder and the many resources in our county.

Home demonstration clubs aimed to help rural families



November 29, 2021

The early 20th century was a tumultuous time for the nation; wars, social and political reforms, physical and technological growth, and the Great Depression. A major concern was the well-being and growth of rural communities, especially farmers and their families. Many programs and reforms were started to benefit these communities.

One such program with a long, rich history is the Home Demonstration Club or Extension Homemaker Association.

In 1906, before any other in the South, the NC Department of Agriculture created a separate Farmers' Institute for women and hired female lecturers. In late summer, the lecturers would head

out into rural communities to instruct farm women on matters such as canning, cooking, sanitation, marketing, new work technology, and how to do work more effectively.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the agricultural extension service and gave money for farm and home demonstration agents, if matching financial support was provided in the states. It was a joint effort of the US Department of Agriculture and land-grant colleges and one of its most influential organizations was the Home Demonstration Club or Extension Homemaker Association.

Farm wives especially balanced a variety of responsibilities: mother, friend, farmer, wife, and daughter. Women were expected to take care of the family, complete household work, and contribute to farm labor. With the information provided by home demonstration agents to rural women, the opportunity for personal and financial growth for women grew. Farm women relied on the skills and talents they had accrued over the years to sell surplus food products and handicrafts. Through their own work, women could make money for themselves, establish independence, and create a separate identity for themselves from the farm.

The Surry County Extension Homemakers had eight charter clubs in 1935 and in 1988 there were 24 clubs and 414 members. It began as a volunteer organization to improve quality of life for family, home, and community. The programs were open to all adults and were focused on the needs, desires, and interests of people of varying economic, social, and cultural backgrounds.

These clubs were Beulah, Busy Bees, Copeland, Dobson Early Birds, Flat Rock, Franklin, Good Neighbor, Helpful Hands, Holly Springs, Lazy Daisies, Long Hill, Lowgap, Mountain Park, North Elkin, Pilot Mountain, Poplar Springs, Rockford, Rockford Villagers, Salem Fork, Shoals, Siloam, Union Cross, White Plains, and White Sulphur Springs.

Although the heyday was the early to mid-20th century, home extension clubs still exist. Today there are five active ECA (Extension and Community Association) clubs reporting to the NC Cooperative Extension and 60 members in Surry County. The clubs today are Beulah, Good Neighbor, Happy Tracks Club, Pilot Mountain Achievers, and Siloam Club.

On a side note, on the Historic Downtown Mount Airy Ghost Tour, there's a particular story about a young couple in the early 1950s. He was an agricultural teacher while she was home demonstration agent. You'll have to take a tour to find out the rest of the story!

Justyn Kissam is the director of learning at Kaleideum in Winston-Salem.



November 28, 2021

November's last week for planting pansies

Even though November has only a few days remaining, pansies can still be planted in pots and containers. They are tough and winter hardy with their dark green foliage and colorful flowers with faces. Most hardwares, garden departments, nurseries, Lowes Home Improvement, Home Depot, Walmart, and Ace Hardware still have pansies in six and nine packs. When you purchase pansies, buy a bag of pansy booster and place a half handful in each pot or container to give them a cool

weather burst of energy. Water sparingly each week and not too much water to prevent the medium in the containers from freezing.

The colors of mother nature: November ends

Only a few more days and we end the month of November. Nature's color wheel also changes as we move closer to December. We will see the gray and brown trunks of oaks and hickories and clumps of mistletoe in their top limbs. Plenty of red heart cedars and short leaf pines form a backdrop for an early Christmas card highlighted by the winding vines of honeysuckles and dotted by a few American hollies. All this change in the landscape will transform North Carolina for the arrival of winter later next month.

Poetry in late season

"The pumpkins are now big and round, and have turned to orange on the ground. All the earth is still; a hush is settled over all. Summer has gone and so has fall." These words by Edgar A. Guest depict in poetry what late November is all about. It is truly the calm before the cold weather of the coming winter and the hustle and bustle of the Christmas rush, but also a time to reflect on the blessings of God and a time to thank God for a bountiful harvest, health, and strength to have enjoyed another year of blessings in our lives.

The last days November

"November's last days are winter's stairways." The wintry world of snowy days actually begins with November's browns, tans, and grays. The month paves the way from frost to hard freezes, and then to freezing rain, sleet, ice and snow and the advent of white landscapes. The woodlands, meadows, farms, and yes, the garden plot are on a journey of rest as the days are growing shorter and winter grows nearer. Every season has its share of beauty and the end of autumn and the ailing card of winter is no exception.

Keep bird baths and feeders filled

As temperatures drop, keep the bird baths and feeders filled with water and food. Birds are active in cold weather and your feeders and water will keep them returning in cold weather. Keep a watch for ice in the bird bath and as the day warms up, empty the ice and refill with fresh water.

Rose care for cold weather

Heavy frosts have finished most of the rose blooms. Late November and early December is the time to give rose bushes a little attention. Cut back long canes and deadhead all blossoms and rose hips. Dig around the base of rose bushes and apply a layer of Rose-Tone organic rose food and cover it into the soil. Add a handful of blood meal around the base of the rose bush. Apply a layer of crushed leaves around the bushes to protect from harsh temperatures and freezes of winter.

A warm blanket for purple top turnips

As December gets closer, apply more crushed leaves in between the rows of turnips to protect from ground freezes and prolong the harvest all winter. Apply a layer of crushed leaves around broccoli, collards, kale, and cabbage.

Thinking about the first snowfall of the year

Christmas is less than a month away and our thoughts are on when will we see our first snowfall of 2021. November still has a few days remaining and it does not have to be cold to snow if the air aloft is cold enough. A snow even during November is possible even though winter doesn't arrive until Dec. 21. Most that could fall in November would probably not be much because the ground is still quit warm and any amount that falls would probably not stick around, but amount of November snow would excite kids as well as all snow lovers.

Plenty of red dogwood berries, acorns, and nandina bush berries

Nandina bushes are adorned with clusters of red berries that will make great Christmas centerpieces. Dogwoods have plenty of tiny red berries that remind us that Christmas is only a month away. The woodland floor is covered with acorns from the mighty oaks. My grandma in Northampton County had a large oak near her house and every November, she would always say, "A yard full of acorns pointed to yards full of snow in the winter."

Enjoying a pot of fresh Siberian kale

It is no surprise that kale is becoming the best green in America because it can be used raw in a salad and prepared as a pot of greens. It is the sweetest of all greens. Nothing adorns a garden plot

in the winter more than a row or bed of Siberian kale popping its greenery through several inches of snow. A snowfall only makes Siberian Kale sweeter and more tender. Kale can be canned or frozen for meals all year long.

Making pumpkin butter for the holidays

Pumpkin butter is really great on toast and hot biscuits. Here is a simple recipe that will yield ten pints of pumpkin butter. You will need 8 cups of mashed pumpkin. You can use cans of Libby's pumpkin or fresh cooked pumpkin that is drained and mashed. Add 2 tablespoons of pumpkin pie spice and two three-ounce boxes of Sure-Jell fruit pectin. Mix all these ingredients well and heat on medium heat until it reaches a boil. Stir on medium heat until it reaches a boil and allow it to boil one minute, stirring constantly. Add one tablespoon lemon flavoring, stir and remove from heat. Pour the hot pumpkin butter into sterilized pint jars and seal with sterilized jar lids and rings. Process 15 minutes in a hot water bath canner. It will make a great Christmas gift simply because its unusual and homemade.

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Ending the month of Thanksgiving with a pumpkin dump cake

Extend the season of Thanksgiving by retaining a heart that is filled with gratitude and thanksgiving. You can also prepare this pumpkin dump cake to remind your family that the thankfulness is always in season. This is actually a dump cake. Just dump the ingredients into a bowl and mix and pour into a 13x9x2 inch baking dish or pan sprayed with Pam baking spray, how easy is that? Mix a thirty ounce can of Libby's pumpkin pie mix, one tablespoon orange flavoring, one tablespoon lemon flavoring, one cup sugar, half cup brown sugar, four large eggs, one box yellow cake mix, one can evaporated milk, one three ounce box Jello instant butterscotch pudding mix. Mix all ingredients together. spray 13x9x2 inch baking dish or pan with Pam baking spray. Pour cake mixture into pan. Bake at 350 degrees until firm (about fifty minutes).

Winter protection for American bee balm

There is a perennial that needs protection to endure the winter ahead. On the porch, move it to a position away from harsh winds and exposure to freezes, preferably ice and snow. The very back side of the porch is a good location. Water the balm sparingly. Cut back long stems. Fill container

with potting medium feed now with Flower-Tone organic flower food. Cover the balm each night and remove cover as temperatures rise each day. They will endure for many years with this small amount of care. They can endure some cold but need insulation from extremes such as hard freezes and ice.

The curtain call of mystery mistletoe

As the season of the leaf harvest closes out, the mighty oaks and hickories have pulled off their leafy curtains and now reveal the mystery, elusive evergreen of the centuries, the mystic mistletoe. A mystery just because it exists and the mystery of its very existence. Only the birds of the air and God know the mystery of the mistletoe. The birds must dine on the seeds of the dainty white berries and in the process, the tiny seed are embedded in the crevices of the limbs. Growing high in the hardwoods, out of reach of most animals and almost a hundred percent of humans. The mistletoe is a paradise and gains its substance from the sap and nutrients of the hardwoods. All spring and summer it is hidden by the leaves but now as Christmas draws near, the leafy curtain is lifted and reveals mistletoe in all of its mystery.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Wanted”- The kindergarten class was on a trip to the local police station. While there, they saw mug shots of their ten most wanted men. One of the kids pointed to one of the men. The police chief said, “the detectives want him very badly. We have lost track of where he is now.” One smart kid asked the chief, “Why didn’t you keep him when you took his picture?”

Business wants equal treatment from city

November 24, 2021

To the Editor,

As I read the article for city funds for a variety of projects downtown, (“City designates \$295,000 for downtown projects,” Nov. 21, Mount Airy News),I wonder if other businesses have any value to the

city.

Businesses on Main Street will benefit from this large amount of money, also funded by the group, Mount Airy Downtown Inc.. I understand Main Street businesses have paid an additional tax for which they should benefit from. However, it seems our city commissioners seem to spend more time and money on Main Street, while others just have to look after themselves. The money will come from the municipality's fund balance, with "hope" that they can recoup their money from the federal Rescue Plan Act.

So the city operates on hope. Must be an easy job to just spend money on hope that they can get it back. The city has been hoping for years on taxpayers money.

Donna's Barber Shop has been hoping for help just to survive for years. And, yes, the city has helped when backed in a corner. However, when true support is needed to get the state DOT to address a problem of city and state water from flooding her business, we get nothing. The only thing they say is to spend her money to fix city and state water runoff problems, which could cost thousands of dollars.

Since the first day she opened she has paid out thousands of dollars, lost income and still has the same problem. I do need to mention that the city did do what the state requested, which helped but more work is needed by the state to eliminate the problem. Several years ago the state added drains to help, but put the drains in front of her business.

Collecting runoff water in front of the business instead of before it gets there is pure stupidity. Commonsense, which clearly they don't have, will tell you to stop the problem before it gets there, not afterwards. The city needs to get some backbone and stand behind its businesses. Donna's Barber Shop is not trying to benefit from the city or state, only to survive. The state and city water runoff should be controlled by the "state and city." Not by private citizens.

We – when I say we, I mean Donna and her family, because we stand together as family – have been told that we are not the only ones with water runoff problems. Then why haven't they fixed the other problems instead of spending enormous amounts of money on the Spencer's property? Maybe it is about big money, not long standing businesses that support our city and draw countless people from many other states just to come to get a hair cut at her shop.

We need a complete board of commissioners that are concerned about every citizen and business.

Our family has had an ongoing business in Mount Airy since 1965. We don't want special treatment, just equal treatment.

Mike Hiatt

Mount Airy

Let there be light



November 22, 2021

As the chill of winter creeps in, we huddle in the warmth of our homes, and turn on the lights to drive away the dark that comes earlier and earlier each day. It is easy to forget the luxury that this really is, and that for the majority of human history, up to just about 100 years ago, the onset of winter brought with it cold and darkness that we couldn't just dispel with the flick of a switch.

The electric age shimmered into existence in the late 19th century, with famed inventor Thomas Edison's creation of the incandescent electric light bulb in 1879. This creation would go on to illuminate the country, and the world, becoming one of the first uses of electricity in everyday homes of the time.

The adaptation of the region to electric light was rapid. Salem, before being incorporated as part of Winston-Salem, was the first town in North Carolina, and perhaps even in the whole of the South, to have the newfangled electric lights in its manufacturing plants, with Winston opening a generating plant to provide both street and residential lighting in 1887.

Closer to home, a Mount Airy News article from 1893 titled "Light the Street" voiced the early calls for the electrification of the town's streets. The article laments that people are "heartily ashamed" of the lack of lights in the streets and that "it is a shame to allow the people to grope their way in darkness any longer." As with most communities, before electric lights were installed in the streets, the area was reliant on gas or oil lamps, which were often unreliable and needed to be lit individually by hand. The introduction of electric street lights, that could be automated and provided a brighter level of light, proved popular.

Helping to supply the city with power and lights was the Buck Shoals power plant, located on the Ararat River. Originally built by a local merchant as a dam and cloth mill, the power plant was completed in 1904 by the city of Mount Airy. By 1918, plans were already being made to build an additional power plant, as demand for electricity was far beyond the production that the current plant could muster.

Though the technical restraints of the power grid meant there was a delay in electric spreading to areas outside cities, there was nonetheless a drive to have it available to all residents, both urban and rural. The Rural Electrification Administration, or REA, was established in 1935 by President Roosevelt, with the aim of bringing electricity to rural communities through providing low interest loans.

When the REA was established in 1935, only 3% of all farms in North Carolina were electrified, however by 1946, this rose to an estimated 44%, with a third of these farms being supplied by power lines financed by REA loans.

The Surry County section of the REA was initiated by county agent Bob Smithwick, when he called a meeting in the Surry County Courthouse in Dobson in 1940, to discuss the electrification of rural areas of the county. This group went on to become the Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation. The next year, the corporation had its Mount Airy substation built and flicked the switch to turn on the lights for around 650 households. The following year, this increased to 764 customers, many of which were farmers who used the power for their farm equipment, and the group operated 257 miles of power lines.

As we approach Christmas and begin decorating our trees, they will look much different than in the past, when instead of electric powered string lights, Christmas trees were lit with candles, seemingly much more romantic albeit even more of a fire hazard. For this, we can thank those who campaigned and innovated their way into the electric age.

Katherine "Kat" Jackson works at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. Originally from Australia she now lives in Winston-Salem. She can be reached at the museum at 336-786-4478 or kljackson@northcarolinamuseum.org

A truly American holiday



November 21, 2021

Thanksgiving is truly an American holiday

Thanksgiving as a holiday had its origins on American soil. In 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on the shores of the New World and his first order of business was to thank God for sparing his life from life threatening storms at sea. One hundred and twenty eight years later, the pilgrims arrived after a rough Atlantic journey and landed near Plymouth, Massachusetts, and they also thanked God, and 401 years later in 2021, we are celebrating Thanksgiving. Even though the holiday can be traced to American origins, no other holiday is so taken for granted. Surely it should be a time to have thankful hearts and to count our blessings. We have so very much to be thankful for, and our lives should be constantly lived in a spirit of giving thanks.

Pilgrims gave thanks at Plymouth in 1620

Materialism is the biggest hindrance to giving thanks in America in the year 2021. Oh how far we have missed the mark since the time of the arrival of Columbus in 1492 after a stormy Atlantic journey and the pilgrims in 1620 after a rough journey across the Atlantic in winter and storms. To them, giving thanks was not a ritual, but a priority. Landing at Plymouth in the harshness of winter was not a good situation, but they gave thanks. They praised and worshipped the Lord for sparing their lives. Anyone can sing a song when the sun is shining bright and the future looks good, but the pilgrims had a song in their heart in the dark of the night facing an uncertain future that seemed as dark as the night. Yet, they worshipped in thanksgiving and praise. Why can't we in this land so blessed by God offer up praise, honor, and thanksgiving to God instead of preoccupying ourselves with materialism, self-seeking, satisfaction of appetites and watching sporting events and Christmas bargain hunting? The pilgrim fathers took nothing for granted in that winter of 1620, and neither should we in this year of our Lord, 2021. Like the pilgrims, in everything we should give thanks. Over 150 years ago when Abraham Lincoln wrote his proclamation of Thanksgiving as a national holiday, he made a statement: "How long will it be before we forget God's blessings again? Can we follow Christ without grateful hearts?" How true his words are in this 21st century. Our real desire should be: "Open the eyes of my heart Lord. Everyday, give me a thankful heart so that I will pray and count all my blessings, and sing praises emitting from a grateful heart!" People that are more grateful are more likely to be more positive even when dealing with difficult situations. We need always to remember that gratitude is more a heart situation than a mind situation.

Apples from the Big Apple state

You can purchase apples from North Carolina, Virginia, Washington State, and other places but the very sweetest mellow, moist, tangy and tart, and colorful come from the Big Apple. New York state produces the world's best apples. It may be the gray loamy soil, the cool spring days or mountain air. We really don't know what it is about them, but they are unique in flavor and texture. You can choose from McIntosh, Jonathan. Ginger gold, Jona gold, Winesap, and Jona Mac. These are apples that would make Johnny Appleseed proud.

A bowl of turnips for Thanksgiving

The pilgrims may not have had them at their feast, but they can be a part of your Thanksgiving meal and add some contrast to the calorie rich foods that will fill the table. Turnips are one of the

simplest vegetables in the cool weather garden plot and one of the most beautiful with their white bottoms and bright purple tops. The best way to prepare them is the way you prepare a bowl of mashed potatoes. All you have to do is peel the turnips, dice them into one inch cubes, cover with water, and boil until tender enough to stick a fork through them. Mash the turnips with a potato masher or use the mixer to whip them up. Add one stick of light margarine (melted), salt, pepper, a little sugar, paprika, and a few strips of broiled bacon (crumbled). Mix all together and add a little mayonnaise for texture.

Making a Thanksgiving dirt cake

This is a no-bake creamy cake that will melt your mouth. You will need one 32-ounce bag of vanilla Oreos or pumpkin Oreos if they are available, one stick light margarine, one eight-ounce pack of cream cheese (softened), one three-ounce box of Jello instant pudding or Jello instant pumpkin pudding mix, three and a half cups milk, one twelve ounce carton of Cool Whip, one teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice. Directions: Run the Oreos through the blender in grate mode and set aside. In a second bowl, mix the cream cheese and softened margarine together. In another bowl, mix Jello instant pudding mix, milk, and Cool Whip. Mix the two bowls of cream cheese mixture and Jello pudding mixture. Add pumpkin pie spice. In a 13x9x2 inch glass baking dish or baking pan add a layer of crushed Oreos (you will need three Oreo layers). On the first layer of Oreos, place a layer of the filling, add second layer of Oreos then layer of filling, add third layer of Oreos. Decorate top with cream pumpkins.

North Carolina sweet potatoes

In North Carolina, sweet potatoes have been a tradition at Thanksgiving much longer than turkey. This is because the state produces as many sweet potatoes as it does turkeys. Most of the sweet potatoes in North Carolina are raised in the coastal plain where much of the soil is loamy instead of acidic. From Tabor City to Whiteville and into the Sandhills and northeastern North Carolina, sweet potatoes thrive and are one of the country's largest producers of sweet potatoes and many are exported to other countries. My Northampton County grandma had baked sweet potatoes in her wood stove oven almost every day in autumn and they were always warm because her wood stove never went out. As children, we would peel a baked potato about half way down the potato and leave the rest of peeling on the sweet potato and eat it like an ice cream cone. North Carolina sweet potatoes are best when bought from a local farm or produce stand on the way back from Myrtle Beach. Fresh-dug sweet potatoes have a dark brown sap that enhances their flavor. Most store

bought sweet potatoes have been cured and are dry inside. Sweet potatoes can be fried, baked, made into biscuits, pies, cakes, and casseroles and custards and can be mashed like mashed potatoes, also made into puddings by grating raw potatoes by running through the blender in grate mode or scrapping raw potatoes across an old fashioned “tater” grater.

A simple, quick Thanksgiving dessert

If preparing the Thanksgiving meal is taking a lot of time, you can ease the work load with this simple pumpkin dessert with few ingredients and it requires only a few minutes of time. The recipe is titled, “Key ingredient pumpkin cake.” You will need to box of yellow cake mix, one sixteen ounce can of Libby’s pumpkin, one teaspoon pumpkin pie spice. Mix cake mix, pumpkin pie spice, and pumpkin. Pour mixture into a 13x9x2 inch baking pan or dish sprayed with Pam baking spray. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Allow to cool and punch holes in the baked cake. Make a glaze of one and a half cups of 10x powdered sugar, four tablespoons of orange juice, half teaspoon pumpkin pie spice. Mix until very smooth and pour over the cake. Simple as well as good!

Thank you for reading Garden Plot!

Our seasonal thanks for reading the Garden Plot each Sunday in the Mount Airy News Lifestyle section. May all of our readers be blessed and have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Heaven bound!” An elderly and ailing man was concerned when he died, he would need money in heaven. The man asked his three grown children if they would each promise to slip a thousand dollar bill in his casket when his time came and each promised they would. The man died a few months later. The older son placed a thousand dollar bill in the open casket. Next the grieving daughter placed a thousand dollar bill in the casket. The other son who is nick-named “Slider,” wiped his face with a napkin, whispered goodbye, deposited a check for three thousand dollars in the casket and picked up the \$2,000.

He is my king



November 19, 2021

One of the most famous kings in human history was born in 1341 BC in Egypt. He was the 12th king of the 18th Egyptian dynasty and given the name Tutankhamen, perhaps you know him better as King Tut.

The name Tutankhamen means “the living image of Aten” the Egyptian Sun god believed to be the creator of life. King Tut’s father Akhenaten prohibited the worship of multiple gods in favor of worshipping Aten and demanded his son be worshiped as the living image of the creator.

At the close of the First World War, British archaeologist Howard Carter began an excavation in a place called The Valley of the Kings in Egypt. On Nov. 22, 1922, after years of intense work Carter

discover and entered the chambers of King Tut's tomb.

To his amazement, he found much of its contents and structure miraculously intact. Inside one of the chambers, murals were painted on the walls that told the story of King Tut's funeral and his journey to the afterworld. Also in the room were various artifacts for his journey—oils, perfumes, toys from his childhood, precious jewelry, and statues of gold and ebony.

The most fascinating item found was the stone sarcophagus containing three coffins, one inside the other, with a final coffin made of gold. When the lid of the third coffin was raised, King Tut's royal mummy was revealed, preserved for more than 3,000 years. As archaeologists examined the mummy, they found other artifacts, including bracelets, rings and collars. Over the next 17 years, Carter and his associates carefully excavated the four-room tomb, uncovering an incredible collection of thousands of priceless objects. Over the years many interesting facts about King Tut have emerged. For example he is said to have been about 5 foot, 8 inches tall, began ruling Egypt when he was 9 years old and died of a blow to the head when he was a teenager.

The life of King Tut is interesting to say the least but many years ago on a cold winter's night in Bethlehem a king was born that would change the course of human history. His name is Jesus and He is my King. The name of his birthplace, Bethlehem, means "house of bread" and from this "house of bread" came the bread of life.

I can't help but think about the angels in heaven watching in stark amazement as the eternal God left his throne to be swaddled in the loving arms of a young girl named Mary. Mary gently took the infant king and placed him in a manger, a feeding trough, surrounded only by her espoused husband Joseph and a few animals in the stable. One songwriter said, "the king has left his throne and is sleeping in a manger tonight." It was a night like any other night but it wasn't a child like any other child. This child was the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man fused together in indivisible oneness.

King Tut was known as the image of the sun god but King Jesus is the brightness of God's glory and "the express image of his person" (Heb.1:3). He is my king! There was nothing divine about King Tut but in King Jesus "dwells the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form" (Co. 2:9). He is my king! King Tut ruled with oppression and control but King Jesus was God wrapped in human skin "reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19). He is my King!

King Tut was an earthly king whose remains were discovered 3,000 years after his death. King Jesus, given to the world as God's greatest gift, died on the cross bearing the weight of the sin of the world and gloriously defeated death, hell and the grave to bring eternal life to all who come to him by faith. He is my King! King Tut was king in name only but King Jesus is "Emmanuel God with us." He is my king.

Our world has incredibly complex problems: wars, terrorism, disease, natural disasters and broken families. People have complex problems: physical, emotional, financial and relational problems.

Sometimes we feel overwhelmed as we attempt to help others or as we try deal with our own problems. Fortunately, God in his steadfast love, unlike King Tut, has promised to never leave nor forsake us.

He is a father to the fatherless, a friend to the friendless, and a present help in our time of trouble. He is my King! I trust that King Jesus is your king as well and that he rules and reigns upon the throne of your heart. As we move toward the Christmas season and celebrate the birth of Jesus my prayer is that each of us know him and love him more with each passing day and that you too can declare, He is my king!

Beware the welfare state

November 17, 2021

To the Editor,

Americans love their cars, and buy lots of them (816 per 1,000 people). Europeans also love cars, but buy lots fewer (France 482, UK 475), probably because they pay so much tax they can't afford cars. Those in Europe earning \$40,000 a year pay \$6,000 more tax than Americans earning the same; those who earn \$100,000 pay \$16,000 more in tax. That heavy taxation pays for a generous European Welfare State.

Mr. Biden is offering a similar welfare state in return for your vote, and is lying when he says taxing 'the rich' and wealthy corporations will pay for it. Eventually, everybody will pay more tax, probably payroll and VAT (value added tax). So if you support Mr. Biden's plan, and then decide you want a

newer and more expensive car, you might not be able to afford it; you will have already traded it for a more generous U.S. welfare program. Oh, and you probably won't be able to afford that bigger house you've always wanted.

Richard Merlo

Elkin

Surry families stretch back to the Mayflower



November 15, 2021

On Nov. 11, 1620, the Mayflower anchored in Plymouth Bay. Those aboard had endured a horrific 66-day journey and they weren't done. The 102 passengers and their crew lived onboard the ship

for 130 more days, weathering a severe winter as their food supplies dwindled and disease and starvation ravaged them.

The group originally set out in July with another ship, the Speedwell, but both ships were old and taking on water. After several false starts and a series of major repairs, the Mayflower set out on her own Sept. 16 headed for the Hudson Bay – 250 miles south of where they finally set anchor.

By the end of that winter only 53 people remained. When the weather permitted, they gathered supplies on land and began building huts on the hills overlooking the bay. They finally left the ship at the end of March 1621.

The Wampanoag tribe watched and debated what to do about these newcomers. The Native experience with Europeans was a mixed bag at best filled with betrayals, broken treaties, and outright treachery over the 100 years before.

The tribal leader, Massasoit, weighed the risks – help the struggling band that had already stolen food from them or attack to drive them away. He decided it would be better to build an alliance with them on his terms. It was, after all, a small group.

I don't think any of the Native tribes could have imagined the sheer number of Europeans who would travel to North American in the coming years. The Mayflower was followed by hundreds of tall-masted ships carrying people looking for land and freedom, economic opportunity, and escape from the horrors of war and famine. The Swan. The Godspeed. The Hercules. The Blessing. The list goes on.

In 1635, the Abigail put in to Boston. Among her 220 passengers was the Freeman family from Devonshire England. John would eventually marry Mercy Pence, granddaughter of Elder William Brewster. Their son moved to Norfolk, Virginia and, later, his son brought his family to Chowan County, North Carolina.

Peter Folger arrived in Watertown, Massachusetts the same year as Freeman. His daughter Abiah married Josiah Franklin. They became the parents of Ben Franklin.

Over time sons of this line married daughters descended from two other survivors of the Mayflower. The Quaker family joined the migration of that sect to New Garden (now Greensboro) in 1777.

Several members became physicians, including Walter C. Folger, born in 1868, who set up practice in Dobson.

In 1892 he married Sally Victoria Freeman, the 4x great-granddaughter of John and Mercy Freeman, bringing no less than three lines of Mayflower descendants together in Surry County.

We often think of the monumental events of history in distant terms. Things that happened far away to people with no connection to us but, we are much closer to history than we know. Those Mayflower families entwine through the Freemans and Folgers, Reeves and Marions, Pooles, Riddles, Llewellyns, Mosers, Bowles, Bolichs and many others. They have produced people who built strong communities and kept them safe, patriots who cast off the tyranny of a distant monarch, doctors, musicians, teachers, interior designers, farmers, and so many more.

There are great debates in society these days trying to put the morality of our ancestors' actions into better context. There is no doubt that great injustices happened in the formation of this nation that I love but I will leave that discussion for others more knowledgeable than I to work out.

What I do know is that 400 years ago this month a small group of people sat down to a meal to celebrate their survival. That 242 years later President Lincoln declared a National Day of Thanksgiving to celebrate the survival of the Union. And this month many of us will sit down to celebrate our families and friends as we come out of these recent unpleasant times.

If we have erred as a nation in the past, perhaps we can gather through this holiday season in love and decide to do better as individuals in the future.

Kate Rauhauser-Smith is a local freelance writer, researcher, and genealogist.

Still time to plant pansies



November 14, 2021

Entering the calm days of mid November

Thanksgiving is still nearly two weeks from now and we can enjoy the calm before the upcoming holiday season begins. We love the calm of early November as the garden turns from mid summer mode to the vegetable crops of autumn and winter. Nap time has visited the flower beds and pansies have become flowers of the month of November.

Nature is in a slowdown cycle as the only green in the forests and woodlands shine through in the holly, cedar, and pine trees. The nights of November are so calm you can almost hear the remaining leaves on the trees touch the lawn. Frosts are heavier and linger longer each morning. It is time to

enjoy the best of seasons and prepare our hearts and minds for the season of harvest and Thanksgiving.

The artist of autumn turns lawn brown

The autumn lawn has a new color as the frosts of November have given the lawn many coats of crystal white and the lawn has a tan and brown tint as the result. The lawn looks even more brown with the coating of remaining leaves falling from trees. The leaves are now crisp which makes them easy to vacuum and blow to the garden area and composite bin and pile.

Season of the sweet potato

October is the season of the pumpkin, but November can be called the season of sweet potato especially in North Carolina. The coastal loamy soil of southeastern North Carolina in the Tabor city area makes itself North Carolina's sweet potato capital. We grew up in northeastern North Carolina and Northampton County has its share of coastal loam and they also produce plenty of hefty sweet potatoes. My father and grandma raised plenty of sweet potatoes every year. They stored them in "potato hills" to have sweet potatoes all winter long. The potato "hill" was so simple but practical. It was a hill of soil lined with long leaf pine straw, bushels of potatoes, more pine straw, and hilled up with some more soil, with a stove pipe to gain access to the hill.

Yamming it up

Since this seems to be "sweet potato day" in the Garden Plot and also Thanksgiving Day less than two weeks away, we devote a little more attention to the sweet potato. This is a simple recipe for sweet and sappy candied yams. You can use fresh or canned sweet potatoes. Peel six or seven large sweet potatoes or use two large cans of potatoes. If you use sweet fresh potatoes, cut them into one inch chunks and boil in water until you can stick a knife through them. Drain the potatoes and place in 13X9X2 inch baking pan or dish. In a medium sized bowl, mix half cup dark brown sugar, one large six ounce box orange jello, one stick light margarine, half cup Karo syrup (dark), one tablespoon cinnamon, one tablespoon vanilla, and one cup chopped pecans. Heat ingredients together until margarine melts. Pour mixture over sweet potatoes and bake mixture at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Add a layer of miniature marshmallows and brown the tops of them until toasted.

Trimming the azaleas and evergreens

November is a great month to trim and shape azaleas and evergreens to prevent damage from the snow and ice later in the winter. Trimming and shaping them now while weather is fairly comfortable will make it easier to decorate them with strings of lights next month and also make them easier to install lights and also remove them after Christmas.

Sassafras trees: A tradition of childhood

Sassafras trees are a traditional tree of the southeast states. They are unique in their three perfectly round sections of leaves that turn red and bronze in autumn. The Sassafras tree usually grows in sunny open areas. My Northampton grandma knew the trees well and where she could find their roots which were the main ingredient of Sassafras tea, which is also the main ingredient of root beer along with the syrup, carbonated water, spices, and so fourth. When my grandma made sassafras tea, we don't know if she made it as a tonic or for medical purposes or a beverage. We only knew she served it hot and in coffee cups with plenty of sugar. My mother always said we drank it because it had sugar in it! Grandma knew where the sassafras trees grew and would harvest the roots, not from the tree itself, but from the "shoots" that grew close to the tree. She would brush and clean the roots and place in a sauce pan full of water and boil. The water would turn deep red or bronze in color. She would place a lid on the pot until the tea got to the color she desired (hers was deep red, and probably as red as her morning coffee was black). If you wonder why sassafras tea is served hot, it is because it is like coffee, nothing is as bad as cold coffee. We remember as boys in northeastern North Carolina, we would harvest the roots in early autumn, chop it into small pieces, bag it up and take it to school and share it with other kids. We chewed it and it had a root beer taste.

A hefty presence of Jack Frost

Jack Frost visits us almost every morning in November, leaving his presence on the roof and lawn and white crystals on the Siberian kale. We love to go to the garden plot and gaze at the frosty crystals on leaves of turnips, mustard, broccoli, and kale. Surely the artist of autumn paid us a visit in the form of a late autumn hoary frost. God is in the rain, the frost, the snow, the crystals of ice on the Siberian kale, and he causes all things to grow.

Another interesting fact about oaks

In last week's Garden Plot, we mentioned the mighty oaks and their harvest of acorns. Oak trees grow in many shapes, sizes, and heights all over the world. Worldwide, there are more than 600 types of oak trees. Some oaks produce acorns after two years of growth while other oak varieties grow for 20 years before producing their first acorns. Most oaks enjoy long life, and some in America can be dated back to the Revolutionary War, shades of George Washington!

Ornamental cabbage-kale

Colder temperatures, heavy frosts, and soon, we will experience hard freezes. Keep an eye on your containers of ornamental kale and cabbage and move them to the rear of the front porch and place a towel over them on freezing nights. Remove the towel when temperatures warm up the next day, but keep towels nearby to cover each night a freeze is possible.

Melt in your mouth great peanut brittle

21st century peanut brittle has better texture, taste, and less sticky than the 20th century peanut brittle. When we were kids, peanut brittle was packaged in bags and when you reached into the bag, several pieces would come out because the brittle stuck together, and in the process of getting it from the bag, it stuck to your hands, it was not "finger licking good," but "finger sticking good." 21st century know-how has produced a brittle that will not stick together and comes in one or two inch pieces, and not in bags but foil wrapped packs inside illustrated boxes. The very best brittle is made with eastern North Carolina and southside Virginia peanuts that are grown, processed, parched, and prepared near to where they are grown. The best of all is Old Dominion peanut brittle made in Norfolk, Virginia. You can purchase it in our area at Food Lion, Ingles, Dollar Tree, and most super markets and candy stores. You can find it in downtown Mount Airy along Main Street. Be careful, this peanut brittle is not only very good, but can be addictive.

Goodies for the Thanksgiving candy dish

These Thanksgiving candy dish treats have been around a hundred years and are still a tradition today. They are candy corn, creme pumpkins, Hershey's Kisses, and M&M's. They add a touch of Thanksgiving to any candy dish or dining room table. Hershey's Kisses come wrapped in harvest colors of foil and M&M's have a harvest mix. They have been made by Mars Candy for more than 100 years. The name M&M comes from the initials of Mars and Milky Way. That burst of chocolate in

an M&M is so different than any other in the whole world. They are certainly worthy of any candy dish. Keep plenty on hand during Thanksgiving.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Drive on.” The truck driver drove up to this roadside truck stop in the middle of the night for a dinner break. Three wild looking motorcycle riders roared up with beards, nasty, filthy talking with black leather jackets. For no reason at all, they harassed the truck driver. One of the riders pored peppers on his head, another ate his apple pie, the third rider poured his hot coffee over the table. The truck driver never said one word but just went up and paid his bill and left. “That truck driver is not much of a fighter,” said one of the riders. “He doesn’t seem to be much of a truck driver either,” the waitress said. “He just run his truck over three motorcycles.”

“Family matters.” My wife read ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ and she had twins. She read the “Three Musketeers” and had triplets. I’m now worried because she is reading “Birth of a Nation.”

Yet another resolution

November 14, 2021

It seems that some of our county commissioners have little to do but to pass resolutions.

First there was the “Coca Cola machine” debacle. Now it seems they think there is another battle to fight with yet another resolution. According to the Nov. 3 Mount Airy News article “FBI told to stay out of Surry County Schools,” the commissioner’s latest resolution protests against the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s plan “to hold meetings to assist in developing strategies for addressing threats against public school administrators, board members, teachers and staff.”

Back in the early 2000s, public schools nationwide dealt with the issue of bomb threats. As a principal, I attended training sessions sponsored by the SBI and the FBI. Many of the strategies learned in these sessions led to the development of protocols that are likely still in place today in our school and school district level emergency action plans. My advice is to at least listen to what the FBI professionals may advise. It’s possible that local officials could learn something that better protects a child or a school employee.

Some time ago, the county commissioners declared war on roadside litter in our county. I'm not sure if there was a resolution enacted by the commissioners to support the anti-littering efforts. If there wasn't, there should have been. I applaud their efforts and agree with them 100% on this issue. But these days, we are exposed to a different kind of litter.

I have a suggestion for the next Surry County commissioner's resolution. It should deal with individuals who are driving around Surry County polluting the environment with a different kind of trash. It is not the physical trash like is mentioned above. It is the verbal and visual trash displayed on vehicles spewing hate and profanity for all eyes to see, including our small children or grandchildren. This graphic sexual language and profanity is very hard to look at and even harder to explain to a child. While this trash may be "legal" under the first amendment, it is wrong and it needs to stop.

Evidently, the people who display this offensive language on their vehicles crave attention. Perhaps we could find a constructive way to meet their need for attention. I think the next county commissioner's resolution should direct our sheriff's department staff to assist these folks by giving them their utmost attention. We could also seek the help of the local city and town police officials as well. Who knows? Maybe these folks are just lost and need directions. Quite possibly, they could need counseling on ways to operate their vehicle in a safer manner. By all means, let's give them the attention they deserve on a consistent basis every single day.

I volunteer to help the Surry County commissioners draft this resolution.

Tom Hemmings

Dobson

Commissioners, letter-writer off-point

November 14, 2021

To the Editor,

In reference to the article “FBI Told To Stay Out of Surry Schools,” published Nov. 3, I feel the county commissioners missed the point. To me, the reason Attorney General Garland issued this statement was to protect those associated with public schools, not to prevent parents from speaking out at school board meetings.

Also, in response to G.J. Harmon’s letter in yesterday’s paper, I am curious about his question that he posed to parents: “Are Surry County and Mount Airy City Schools indoctrinating our children with this toxic and vitriolic anti-Martin Luther, anti-Civil Rights, anti-equality, anti-American venom?” Does he seriously think schools teach this? Has he visited a school classroom? The website he listed is invalid, shows “Page Not Found.”

Parents definitely have the right to voice their opinions at school board meetings so long as it’s done in a civil manner. What Attorney General Garland is concerned about is groups who want to do harm, disrupt meetings, and spread their own agenda.

M. Martin

Mount Airy

The great exchange



November 12, 2021

II Corinthians 8:9

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

Born June 23, 1894, Edward Christian was the first-born son of King George V and Queen Mary of England. Edward entered the Naval College at 12 years of age and from there continued on to Dartmouth. In 1911 Edward Christian became Prince Edward, the 20th Prince of Wales. At five minutes till midnight on Jan. 20, 1936 Edward’s father, King George V, passed away and Edward Prince of Wales became King Edward VIII, King of England. King Edward ruled the most extensive

empire in world history. The British Empire controlled a quarter of the world's population and encompassed a quarter of the earth's total landmass. The global expanse of British territory gave birth to the reality that, "the sun never sets on the British Empire."

During his brief reign as King, Edward enjoyed immense popularity until he made a life-changing announcement. He had fallen madly in love with and intended to marry Mrs. Wallis Simpson. The British Parliament viewed Mrs. Simpson and her questionable background to be unsuitable to be the next Queen of England, and forbade Edward to make her his wife. King Edward found himself at a crossroad. He could end the engagement with Wallis and remain King of England or he could abdicate the throne and marry Wallis. He could walk away from the love of his life or he could forfeit the power, the wealth and the honor of the British throne.

On Dec. 10, 1936 King Edward the VIII announced his decision to exchange the crown of England for the hand of his bride. He announced to parliament, "I, Edward the VIII, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Emperor of India, do hereby declare my irrevocable determination to renounce the throne for myself and for my descendants, and my desire that effect should be given to this Instrument of Abdication immediately. This decision I have made has been mine and mine alone."

Talk about a great exchange! The only King in England's history to voluntarily give up the throne Edward VIII exchanged royalty for insignificance, nobility for peasantry, and authority for subordination.

Two thousand years ago a king, far more significant than the King of England, made a great exchange. Moved by the love for fallen humanity Jesus, the King of Glory, abdicated his throne in heaven and entered this world as a helpless baby born in Bethlehem's manger. He traded honor for humiliation, the worship of angels for the mockery of sinful men, a crown of jewels for a crown of thorns and a throne in heaven for a cross at Calvary. Jesus was not forced to leave heaven nor required to vacate the throne in glory but he volunteered to relinquish all that was rightfully his and assume the role of a servant.

When the redemption plans for humanity were prepared the angels witnessed the infinitely wealthy Son of God become the infinitely poor Son of Man. Jesus removed his robe of royalty, vacated the right hand of the Father and entered the human family through the womb of a teenage girl in Nazareth who wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger. As the Son of Man, Jesus

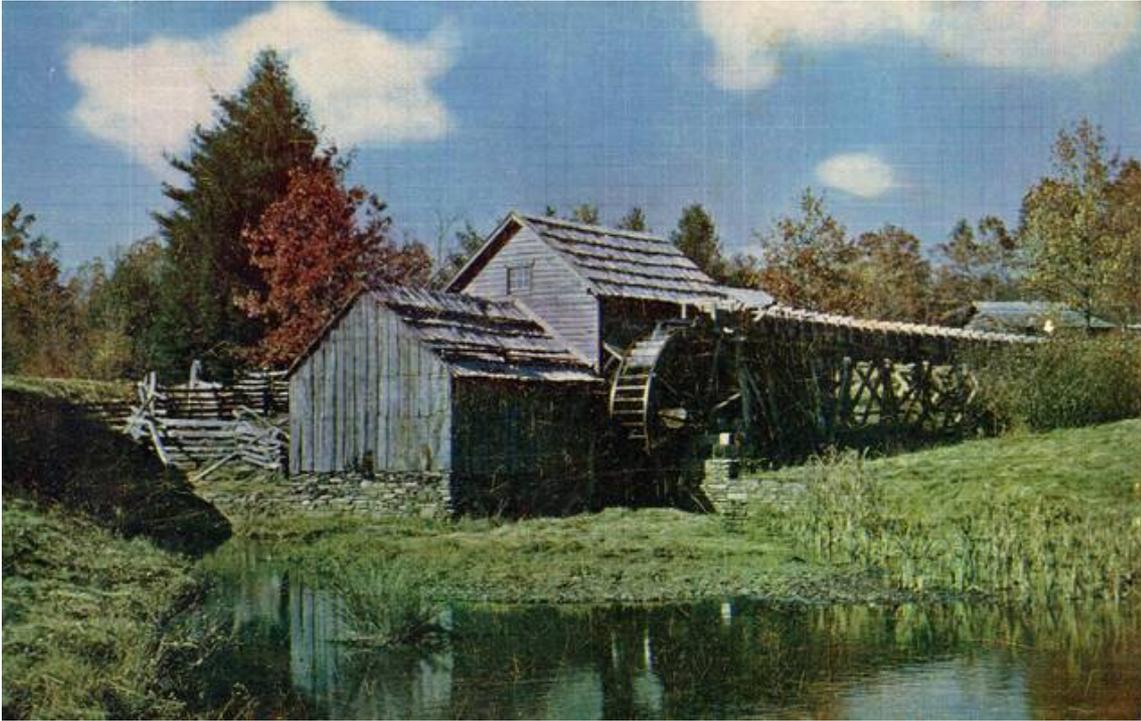
borrowed a little boys lunch to feed the 5,000, he borrowed Peter's boat to use as a pulpit, he borrowed a donkey to enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and upon his death he was placed in a borrowed tomb. Though Jesus experienced all the benefits heaven had to offer he forfeited his rightful place, abdicated his throne in heaven and came to earth for the purpose of taking the hand of one he loved.

During the six hours of crucifixion the Son of Man was stripped of his dignity and bore in his body the payment for a sin filled world. The thirst from his physical suffering would not be quenched nor would the emotional strain of separation from his Father be alleviated. Jesus' death on the cross, consummated the great exchange for the scriptures declare "For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Jesus took our spiritual bankruptcy and exchanged it for his righteousness. He became separated from God the Father so we would never be. He endured the anguish and poverty of Calvary to cancel our indebtedness to God and ensure our eternal destiny. Perhaps the great exchange was articulated best by hymn writer William Newell who wrote, "Oh the love that drew salvations plan, oh the grace that brought it down to man, oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary."

Blessings, Pastor Darrell

Maybry Mill a familiar site to many



November 08, 2021

As leaves of amber, chocolate, and sunshine brush by windshields of cars driving along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia, just north of Surry County, a familiar friend springs into view. At milepost 176 on the parkway the ever-majestic Mabry Mill stands as a constant reminder of the past and future.

The site today has changed from the once bustling community center to the most photographed site on the Parkway. Back then, people from the surrounding community, or “country” as it was called, visited the Mabry’s homestead for mill, blacksmith, and sawmill services. Today, visitors can learn about mill operations, basket weaving, and everyday life in the mountains.

While at the time, many local folks were unsettled about the Parkway passing through town, it is without a doubt the reason the Mill stands today.

Edwin Boston Mabry married Mintoria Elizabeth DeHart on March 1, 1891, both at the age of 24. The couple, who were fondly referred to as “Uncle Ed” and “Aunt Lizzie,” started their lives farming

in Virginia, but soon found that Ed's passion was not in farming but in inventing. It is here that the couple decided to save up money to open and operate a sawmill.

After spending some time in West Virginia learning to blacksmith, the Mabry's moved home and embarked on their dream. From 1905-1914, five different parcels of land were purchased. The first building to go up was the blacksmith shop, and by 1910 the water-powered mill was up with an extensive flume system underway.

Ed used local resources when setting up shop. One Mount Airy iron works supplied the cast iron gears for the mill; Millstones came from the Brushy Mountain Quarry. The sawmill and carpentry shop were the last enterprises to be added. Sometime after the 1920s, the Mabry's built a two-story, white farmhouse. This home had room for guests to visit even though the Mabry's mainly used the bottom floor.

Until the 1930s, families from the surrounding towns and counties came to Ed and Lizzie for their needs. The shops could cut timber, create tools, grind corn to make meal or chop and more. All of these tasks were completed by either Ed or Lizzie. When Ed's health began to wane, Lizzie began to take on her tasks, as well as Ed's. Not long after the mill was closed and fell into disrepair, Ed passed at 69 years old. Lizzie remained in the home for a few more years, eventually moving to live with her sister. By this time the Blue Ridge Parkway Landscape Architects were eyeing the area as a major stop along the new roads path.

The "Scenic," as it was originally called, was the first Parkway of its kind. With 469 miles between two states, it was set to showcase the best and beautiful of Rural Appalachia. To make way for the many sites along its path buildings were moved, repaired, and destroyed, and the Mill site was no different. The Mabry's two-story home was removed, despite disapproval from the then Parkway historian. It was replaced with the Mathew's Cabin from Galax, Virginia.

During the tourist season, visitors flock to the buzzing restaurant and interpretive site. Whether it's for the buckwheat pancakes or the rangers demonstrating historic crafts, the history lives on, as does the legacy of Ed and Lizzie Mabry.

Emily Morgan is the guest services manager at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. She and her family live in Westfield. She can be reached at eamorgan@northcarolinamuseum.org or by calling 336-786-4478 x229

Still time to plant pansies



November 07, 2021

Plant colorful pansies this month

If you still have a few containers with nothing growing in them, you can fill them with colorful, green foiled pansies which are still available at nurseries, hardwares, Walmart, Home Depot, Ace Hardware, and Lowe's Home Improvement. They are available in six and nine packs. You can choose from colors of white, bronze, yellow, purple, lavender, pink, rose, tan, burgundy, and others. To get

pansies off to a great start in November, invest in a bag of pansy booster and apply a handful to each container. Water sparingly in November to keep soil medium from freezing.

Red berries on Carolina Dogwoods

As the crimson leaves begin to fall from the dogwoods, they reveal a harvest of tiny red berries which remind us that Christmas is getting closer and Thanksgiving is near. If the birds don't eat all of them, the berries will make some colorful Christmas decorations. Dogwoods are favorite nesting places for birds, so we will be scanning empty limbs to find that perfect nest for the Christmas tree ornament, preferably one not filled with poop like the one Mary Ellen found on the Walton's Christmas Story.

Enjoying the beautiful splendor of November

November is a month of calm seasoned with the colors of brown, gray, tan and beige highlighted by a Carolina blue sky and hints of green from red heart cedars, pines, holly, and honeysuckle vines. Newly fallen oak leaves are forming carpets on the forest floors and Carolina woodlands. Lawns are covered most mornings with crystals of frost. The gray trunks of trees with mostly bare limbs form a background for the sparse greenery of bunches of mistletoe's in the hickories and oaks that remind us of the coming of Christmas next month. Most of it will remain safe because it is high up in the trees. Only the mighty oaks have a few leaves on them and they will most likely remain until the first snowfall of the year.

Christmas cactus: Endless beauty

As we begin November, Home Depot, Ace Hardware, Lowe's Home Improvement, Walmart, Food Lion, Lowe's Foods, hardwares, and nurseries will feature Christmas cactus in full bloom. A Christmas cactus is a floral investment that will thrive for many years and bloom every Christmas season if you take care of it. There is an advantage in purchasing them now because they are in bloom when you buy them and you can choose from colors of white, red, coral, and pink. You can purchase them in small or medium containers costing from \$6 to \$12. The first step in growing Christmas cactus is to go ahead and buy a larger container and a bag of cactus medium and transplant the cactus as soon as you bring it home. Place it in a semi sunny location in the house where it should remain all winter. Check it once a week for moisture and water lightly when needed. Feed once a month with Flower-Tone organic flower food. Keep cactus away from direct sunlight. A

signal that a Christmas cactus is getting too much sun is the foliage will turn pinkish red. If this occurs, move the cactus to a less sunny location in the room. Use a drip tray under the container to keep water off the floor.

The autumn acorn crop

The mighty oak is a majestic tree that produces wood for floors, furniture, houses, and many wood products. They also produce a harvest of acorns every year that covers the forest floor and produces food for squirrels, raccoons, foxes, wolves, chipmunks, and rabbits. As a 10 or 12 year old boy, we harvested five gallon buckets of acorns for a hog farmer for a dollar per bucket. After school, it would take us until dark to harvest a bucket full, but a dollar was worth a dollar back in the 1950s. An interesting fact about acorns is that if times get too tough, acorns can be used as food. It is well known that during the Depression of 1920s, times were really tight and many families did not have finances to produce flour. So they gathered acorns, took shells off of them, ground the pulp and made meal from the acorn pulp. In the world of nature God created many wonders and provisions. He provided a table in the wilderness and also provided one in the forest.

The grass on the late autumn lawn

The lawnmower is almost ready for a long winter nap as far as mowing grass is concerned. The grass on the lawn is slowing down and turning a lighter shade of green and slowly beginning its change to light brown. The frost are getting thicker and whiter as the month moves along. Continue to use the grass clippings in the composite bin or pile to heat up the ingredients. Make sure the sun has dried the frost before mowing late autumn lawns.

Plenty of dark occurs in early November

Days are still getting shorter by a minute each day. As November moves along, we will continue to lose a minute each evening and continue to do so until winter arrives on Dec, 21.

Making a pumpkin maple bread pudding

Pumpkin is the highlight of Thanksgiving desserts and in November, there is an abundance of pumpkins. This recipe is different because it combines the flavor of pumpkin with brown sugar and maple plus it is simple to prepare. You will need one 16 ounce can of Libby's pumpkin or one pint of

pumpkin, four hot dog rolls, one three ounce box of butterscotch Jello instant pudding mix, three large eggs, half cup light brown sugar, one fourth cup Log Cabin maple syrup, one teaspoon pumpkin pie spices, one can evaporated milk. Run the hot dog rolls through the blender in “grate” mode and place in a large bowl. Add all other ingredients and mix well. Pour into a 13X9X2 inch baking dish or pan sprayed with Pam baking spray. Bake at 350 degrees for fifty minutes. Cool and serve with Dream Whip or dairy whipping cream.

Making pilgrim centerpieces from turnips

Round purple-top turnips can be used to make pilgrim men and women centerpieces for the dining room or coffee table. Wash the turnips and dry them. Cut off the leafy tops and the tip off the bottom so the turnip will be level. Use acrylic paints to design faces on pilgrim men and women with eyes, nose, and mouth. Use yarn to form hair and glue on top of turnips. Use construction paper in black and yellow to make hats with buckets for pilgrim men. Use light blue or tan paper napkins to make bonnets for pilgrim women. Use a bag of harvest mix Hershey's Kisses to spread around the pilgrims. Circle the centerpiece with creme pumpkins. This is an edible centerpiece, so replenish the centerpiece with Kisses and creme pumpkins often.

Saint Martin's Day weather lore

On Thursday, Nov. 11, Saint Martin's Day is celebrated. On his special day, there is a bit of weather lore that says if the leaves are still on the grapevine, we can expect a cold winter. There are some leaves still remaining on the grapevines and most of them are yellow and ready to fall off. Leaves or not, we are looking for a cold weather with plenty of snow to enjoy and also cold to destroy the insects and weed seed, plus make the Siberian kale turnips, and collards sweeter. Saint Martin is right in one sense, winter is the season to expect cold weather.

Old fashioned sticky sweet potatoes

We tried to reproduce a recipe for old fashioned sticky, sappy, baked sweet potatoes that my mother and grandmother made when we were kids. The secret of the stickiness was the sweet potatoes were freshly dug from their potato vines and baked after harvest in their ovens until sap ran out of them. Most sweet potatoes in the stores have been dried before you purchase them and therefore they have zero sap. To reproduce the sappy sweet potato recipe of mama and grandma to adapt to 2021 standards, take six or seven large sweet potatoes, wash them and coat them with Crisco

shortening. Bake at 400 degrees until you can smell them and stick a knife through them. Remove from oven, cool and peel the potatoes, cut potatoes in half. Fry in a pan with a stick of light margarine. When lightly browned, top the potatoes with this mixture: mix three tablespoons of brown sugar (light), one stick melted light margarine, one quarter cup of light Karo corn syrup. Stir the mixture and pour over the potatoes. A taste of mama and grandmas kitchen in the 1950s.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Quiet please.” A patient in a mental hospital placed his ear to the wall in his room, listening intently. “Be quiet,” he whispered to an attendant as he pointed to the wall. The attendant pressed his ear to the wall and said, “I didn’t hear anything.” “I know,” replied the patient. “It’s awful, it’s been this way for many days.”

“Men at work.” Artist- “This is my latest painting. It is called ‘Builders at work.’” It is a piece of realism.” Art observer- “I don’t see any of the men at work.” Artist- “Of course not, That’s what’s real about the painting!”

November Almanac

The new moon occurred on Nov. 4. Daylight savings time ended today, at 2 a.m. The moon reaches its first quarter on Thursday, Nov. 11. There will be a full moon on the night of Friday, Nov. 19. The moon will be named “Full Beaver Moon.” Thanksgiving Day will be Thursday, Nov. 25. The moon reaches its last quarter on Saturday, Nov. 27.

Parents should take action

November 07, 2021

To the Editor,

This is in reference to the article, “FBI told to stay out of Surry schools” by Ryan Kelly in the in the Nov. 3 issue of The Mount Airy News.

I applaud Commissioners (Eddie) Harris and Van Tucker for their stance regarding the intrusion of FBI agents in the business of parents voicing their opinions/objections regarding critical race theory (CRT) in our local schools.

You all do know that CRT is buried deep in the 2021-2022 NC K-12 Standards approved by the NC Board of Education, right? (<https://legalinsurrection.com/2021/03/north-carolinas-new-k-12-standards-push-critical-race-theory-deep-into-curriculum/>) – in particular, the Social Studies curriculum.

As stated in the reference, “Members of the State Board of Education—most of whom were selected by Democratic governor Roy Cooper—voted to adopt the updated curriculum despite opposition from Republican Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson, who said the new standards reflect the board’s political agenda and “indoctrinate our students against our great country.”

The question: Are Surry County and Mount Airy City schools indoctrinating our children with this toxic and vitriolic anti-Martin Luther, anti-Civil Rights, anti-equality, anti-American venom? Have any parents investigated? If it is, have any parents shared their concerns with either of the school boards?

Just repeating the current euphemism, “Let’s Go Brandon,” isn’t enough to remove this hatred. As Mark Levin suggests in his book, “American Marxism” in Chapter 7, take action. How? Run for school board. Write letters to North Carolina, Surry and Mount Airy school boards. Respectfully speak at school board meetings. Get involved. Join our county commissioners (and hopefully the city commissioners as well) to push back.

G.J. Harmon

Mount Airy

A community coming together



November 05, 2021

Editor's Note: This is one of a series of columns to be shared with Mount Airy News readers by the Surry County Substance Abuse Recovery Office.

Last week, Oct. 23 to Oct. 31, was nationally celebrated as “Red Ribbon Week.” Red Ribbon Week is sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and is now the largest alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention effort in the United States. The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) partnered with the Mount Airy Rotary Club, Surry County Schools, the Surry County Sheriff’s Office, and the DEA to provide substance use prevention to community members, specifically our youth.

For a short time, our community came together to put into practice an evidence-based substance use prevention program for our residents. The following are just a few of the benefits gained from implementing a long-term substance use prevention program:

- Substance use prevention increases public safety, as a decrease in substance use has a direct influence on the reduction in criminal activity.
- Substance use prevention lowers healthcare costs, as substance use disorder (SUD) accounts for more than \$120 billion a year in U.S. healthcare costs. This expenditure exceeds the healthcare costs of diabetes, obesity, and even smoking.

- Substance use prevention increases workforce productivity and improves the relationship between employers and employees. Decreased substance use decreases absenteeism, increases efficiency, improves decision making and enhances morale.

An important trend, evident in many effective prevention strategies and programs, is the close coordination between law enforcement, treatment providers, and prevention professionals. These partnerships are vital to the success of communities struggling to abate the impacts of substance use. Prevention, treatment, and enforcement initiatives have a greater impact with well-developed interagency collaboration. These collaborations are vital to providing a responsive and supportive continuum of care – prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery programs – that intervene at all stages of an individual's life and in all community environments, especially in the schools.

Many of our community's agencies worked together during Red Ribbon Week events to provide a fun and informative experience for students. The Mount Airy Rotary was the catalyst to success as they provided volunteers and funding for the purchase of promotional material. Supervisory Special Agent Dirk Ballou, who oversees the DEA Greensboro Resident Office, spoke to students at Pilot Mountain Middle School and Surry Central High School.

The DEA also provided thousands of bracelets, stickers, pencils, and pens. Detectives from the Surry County Sheriff's Office Street Crimes Unit spoke to middle school and high school students and K-9 "Chu Cho" demonstrated his detection prowess. The SCOSAR coordinated with the schools and members of the "All-Star Prevention Group" volunteered to work in the schools. Congratulations to everyone for a successful week of substance use prevention. If we as a community treated every week like Red Ribbon Week the result would be a measurable reduction in the impact of substance use on our County.

If you, or someone you know, could benefit from learning more about substance use prevention and our planned activities, contact Charlotte Reeves, Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Community Outreach Coordinator, at reevesc@co.surry.nc.us. Visit our website at surrycountycares.com for more information about substance use disorder and the resources available in our County.

Mental illness in history



November 01, 2021

The term asylum is often used, but rarely understood. At its essence the term describes an institute that offers shelter and support to people who are mentally ill. Our society has often struggled with how to best care for people who are mentally unstable or labeled as insane.

Through time mental illnesses have been attributed to possession, poisoning, witchcraft, fate and many other tangible and intangible ideas. Prior to proper facilities, those who were ill were often treated with natural remedies, exorcisms, and physical punishments or worse.

The 1800s ushered in a new era for mental health treatment, asylums were erected and labeled as places of hope and compassion for those whose minds were haunted with unseen illnesses. North Carolina and Virginia were no different, with each state planning and facilitating many different units of care.

During the 19th century North Carolina had a great need for mental health care facilities; thankfully North Carolina had a health care champion, Dorothea Dix. Four major asylums opened in North Carolina to cover the majority of the state: Broughton in the west, Cherry in the east, Dorothea Dix in the south, and Umstead in the north. Three of these are still in operation and serving people of

North Carolina. Southwestern Virginia also had an established facility. Originally named the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum the hospital was a self-sustaining farm, complete with a dairy, horse barn, and orchard.

Mental capacity and mental illnesses were looked at differently during the 19th century than today. These spaces offered little safety one would expect from health facilities. The undertrained employees were working with overcrowding and slim staff. These conditions lead to misguided treatment and fear turned these safety nets into many people's worst nightmares.

It is important to note that asylums housed a diverse population from the criminally insane to impoverished people. As poverty ran rampant in Surry and Stokes counties and in Virginia in Carroll and Grayson counties, (and further) families and individuals who simply couldn't sustain themselves often ended up in poor houses or asylums. Some recollections note a lady from Lowgap being sent to Butner State Hospital for mental illness sometime during the 1850s. Another lady was taken from her home in Hillsville, Virginia, leaving behind a young daughter. She was later taken to the Southwestern Lunatic Asylum.

Those who were housed in these locations suffered from much more than mental instability, being subjected to so-called treatments such as electric shock, beatings, hydrotherapy, straight jackets, teeth pulling, lobotomies, opium abuse and more. Inhumane treatment was commonplace at these facilities. The phrase "out of sight, out of mind," is perfect for the treatment and allusivity of these places. Not only did the buildings hold patients, they hid them from the public eye, creating the haunting of minds that will never fade.

Years have passed and our knowledge of treatment and medical practices have grown to better understand mental illnesses. People have come to accept those who suffer from a haunted mind; protection from mistreatment is imperative. The horrors of asylums will likely never be forgotten but hopefully much has been learned.

Rachel Nealis is a longtime museum volunteer and supporter. She lives with her family in Mount Airy.

Frost on the pumpkins



October 31, 2021

Halloween and frost on the pumpkins

Halloween is here and we have already had several frost on the pumpkins and they have covered gardens, lawns, and roofs. These hefty frost have turned many lawns tan and brown and dotted the landscape with leaves. Pumpkins are tough and enjoy a long shelf life so frost will not affect them very much. Halloween is here, so use common sense and caution tonight and keep your eyes out for parents and children. Keep porch and carport lights on to let kids and parents know your home is kid friendly. Serve only treats that are safe and securely wrapped.

A pumpkin pudding to celebrate Halloween

This pumpkin pudding will melt in your mouth and fill your kitchen with a spicy aroma on Halloween. It is simple to prepare with easily available ingredients. You will need one can of Libby's pumpkin or one pint of canned pumpkin, one three -ounce box of Jello instant pumpkin pudding or vanilla pudding mix, two large eggs, half cup brown sugar, half cup granulated sugar, one tablespoon pumpkin pie spices, one teaspoon vanilla flavoring, one stick melted light margarine, one can evaporated milk, one teaspoon orange flavoring, and four hot dog buns. Run the hot dog buns through the blender in grate mode, mix all other ingredients and pour into a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking dish or pan sprayed with Pam baking spray. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes or until pudding is firm. Top with Cool Whip or French vanilla ice cream. You can also use a can of Duncan Hines cream cheese frosting to frost the pudding.

Benefits of Indian summer

As October comes to an end today, we are enjoying low humidity, Carolina blue skies, leaves gracefully falling from the oaks, poplars, hickories, and maples, as well as colorful sunsets painted in pink that matches well with the hues of the leaves of autumn. These pleasant afternoons provide opportunity to clean up the garden plot by removing vines, stalks, residue, tomato cages and stakes, harvesting leaves and preparing compost bins and piles.

Enjoying the aroma of autumn on All Hallow's Eve

The sunsets early on the night of Halloween greeted by the smell of burning oak wood wispy smoke from chimneys of neighborhood homes as the scent kisses the air of the last evening of the month of October. This is the night of voices of excited kids as they move from door to door trick or treating. You can make their evening safe and enjoyable by keeping porch and carport lights on as well as having treats ready and wrapped for them as they arrive at the door. Keep treats in a bowl or dish so they can handle and choose their own treats. It would be nice to give the loving parents a treat too.

Celebrating all Saint's Day tomorrow

All Saint's Day is always celebrated on the first day of November which is the day after All Hallow's Eve, also known as Halloween. This day is also known as Hallowmass.

An extra boost for roses

You can promote rose growth during the cold of winter by applying a layer of bone meal around the base of the roses and mix it into the soil and also a handful of blood meal. Both are organic products that will produce root growth during winter. Feed roses before cold weather arrives with an application of Rose-Tone organic rose food. Trim back long canes from roses to prevent damage from ice and snow.

Searching limbs for an empty bird nest

The leaves are falling from the trees leaving exposed empty limbs. On the trees that have low hanging branches, an empty bird's nest should be easy to spot and carefully removed without disturbing its construction. You can prepare a sturdy bird's nest and make an unusual Christmas ornament that will last for many years. After removing the nest, spray a couple of coats of clear varnish on the nest and allow to dry. Place nest on several sheets of newspaper before spraying the varnish. After nest dries, place nest in a small box lined with toilet tissue or paper napkins. At Christmas, you can find bird ornaments or a few miniature eggs and add them to the nest.

A sauce or gravy made from turnips

My Northampton County grandma always made "pot likker" when the purple top turnips were harvested from her cold weather garden. She would boil the diced turnips in water, fatback meat, pepper, and salt. It was a concoction served in a bowl with crackling cornbread on cool autumn nights (defiantly not recommended by any cardiologist!) We have discovered a better method to prepare this "pot likker" concoction and make it a sauce or gravy to pour over the purple top turnips, sort of like mashed potatoes and gravy. This method is to peel five or six turnips and dice them into half an inch cubes, cover with water, add salt and pepper, a few drops of Texas Pete and a stick of light margarine. Boil the turnips until tender. Drain the liquid and add one cup milk to the liquid and bring to a boil on medium heat. In a glass half full of cold water add three tablespoon corn starch until it is completely dissolved in the cold water. Pour a little at a time into the gently boiling turnip liquid until it gets as thick as you desire. Add a little sugar to flavor the gravy and add a few slices of fried or boiled crumbled bacon. Pour gravy over boiled turnips.

Checking out the stored green tomatoes

The cool weather garden plot is not only green, but productive with the growth of broccoli, cabbage, collards, Siberian kale, curly mustards, turnips, onion sets, as well as mixed greens. Keep

the cool weather vegetables fed with Miracle Gro liquid plant food and Alaska liquid fish emulsion once a month. Keep the vegetables covered with a blanket of crushed leaves. Thin turnips so they can develop into larger turnips.

Protecting outside faucets from freezing

Hard freezes are not too far away with killing frost already in progress. Keep pipes from freezing during winter months by investing in a protective cover or two for your outside faucets. An isolated cover for outside faucets cost about \$12 to \$15. You can purchase them at Home Depot, Ace Hardware, Lowe's Home Improvement and at most hardware stores. They are easy to install and bring piece of mind from freezing pipes. Always remember to remove hoses from outside faucets during winter months and store hoses in winter to prolong their useful life. Replace faucet covers after using water during the winter.

Shaping up evergreens for fall and winter

The end of October and the beginning of November is a great time to trim evergreens and azaleas to protect them from ice and snow and promote all around better appearance. It will certainly make them look better as we approach the up and coming Christmas decorating season. The weather in late October may carry over into early November and this will be an opportune time to accomplish this chore before freezing weather.

Celebrating season of All Saint's Rest

We have already mentioned that tomorrow is All Saint's Day, but the whole week that follows All Saint's Day is known as All Saint's Rest. It is a tradition that started in the 19th century in America. During this time of the year, they took a break from the harvest. It was like an early Thanksgiving and a reflecting on the blessings of the harvest, not just for a day, but for a whole week. It was the time before cold, ice, and snow or freezing temperatures. In the upcoming winter, life in America would become more difficult. They felt like this was an opportune time to be thankful for their blessings and not to take anything for granted. What an example these Swiss immigrants set back in the 19th century. In 21st century America, we can't celebrate even one day without watching football, gorging ourselves, Christmas shopping, and feasting. Why can't we take time to rest in the blessings and goodness of God and forget about ourselves for a whole day like these Swiss

immigrants did for a week? We need to remember that when we become unthankful, we also become unholy, too.

The hard freeze warnings

The temperatures can get below freezing during the nights of November. Protect cool weather vegetables with crushed leaves. Keep a few rags and towels handy to cover flowers and containers on the porch.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Do it yourself lunch!” Bill: “Oh no, not again. A peanut butter sandwich. I cant stand them. Day in and day out it’s a peanut butter sandwich. This is just too much.” Will: “What’s the trouble, all you have to do is tell your wife to fix you something different.” Bill: “I can’t do that.” Will: “Why not?” Bill: “Because I fix my own lunch.”

“Wrong tree.” Single man: “Listen sweetheart, you’ve got to admit that men like me don’t grow on trees.” Young chick: “Sure, I know that very well, they swing from trees.”

“Wild doctors.” Louie: “Did you know that Daniel Boone’s brothers were all doctors?” Dewey: “How do you know this is true?” Louie: “Yes, haven’t you ever heard of the “Boone docs?”

Community makes Mount Airy City Schools great

October 31, 2021

Editor’s Note: Community Comment is a periodic column in The Mount Airy News featuring commentary from community leaders in Mount Airy and Surry County.

Mount Airy City Schools (MACS) has been successful over the years due in major part to the community of which we belong. We are thankful for the outpouring of support throughout the pandemic which has resulted in, not only retaining our students, but growing in numbers. Our

community has been very supportive, understanding that to return to face-to-face, five days a week we needed to follow CDC, NCDHHS, and local health department guidance. This has allowed us to be in school all of last year and this year. We have been blessed to have very little COVID impact, for example, we haven't needed to quarantine sports teams or schools this year. Our Test-to-Stay program allows students and staff deemed as close contacts to remain at school as long as they are asymptomatic. This pilot prioritizes keeping everyone learning and growing while maintaining health and wellness measures.

Mount Airy is a community of caring people. We have great volunteers that serve our staff and students throughout the year by serving on the school board. Tim Matthews (chair), Ben Cooke (vice chair), Wendy Carriker, Kyle Leonard, Jayme Brant, Thomas Horton, and Randy Moore show service before self by earning no pay but making courageous decisions to support students. Our community is full of service-oriented people. We have members of the National Guard and previous military service members in Mount Airy. The United Fund of Surry is currently running a campaign that helps agencies such as Surry Medical Ministries, The Shepherd's House, The Salvation Army, and many more. Everywhere you turn there are church groups and civic organizations such as Rotary making a difference. It is evident that the heart of Mount Airy City is caring and concern for others.

We hope to instill this love for service in our students throughout their academic career with us. We have the Leader in Me program in elementary schools that allows students to take ownership of their own personal and academic goals. They work with the school to run programs and events that give back to the community. They can earn service hours at school, working on school projects, with their churches, with scouts and other organizations. They also have Melody Makers and the Student Lighthouse Club. Each elementary school student is encouraged to build up service hours and experience.

Our middle school has clubs such as Interact Club, which is an arm of the local Surry Sunrise Rotary Club. They also have service opportunities within their Student Government Association, sports, and arts programs. Many opportunities within their middle school years show how they can give back to others that are less fortunate than themselves. There is a schoolwide toy drive and blood drives supported by Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). There is always a chance to pay it forward with all the blessings that we have been given.

Mount Airy High School also works hard to make sure students understand how service is part of their academic life now and they can continue to give back to their community in the future. Groups

such as HOSA, Interact, Chick-fil-A Leadership Academy, National Honor Society, and the Blue Bear Cafe all are examples of giving back and providing service to the community. We can name multiple groups each month that are involved in helping their neighbors and the community.

Mount Airy City Schools has embraced the same culture as our Mount Airy community, which is to care for our neighbor. In the 2018-2019 school year, students provided over 8,510 service hours which improved our community and school culture. A large emphasis for us is Vincent's Legacy, Kindness Rocks which is a locally founded organization that helps show our community that Kindness Matters. You can learn more by visiting <https://www.vincentlegacy.com/>. We are thankful to live in such a wonderful community and help the next generation of students to realize how fulfilling it is to support those in need. In the current school year we hope to have even more service hours and opportunities for our students to serve others.

As a city member there are many ways that you can support education and your local school district. We hope that you will find a service group to join or send encouragement to those who are involved in service work and public service. We also know that you can volunteer to help a school, support a project, or mentor a child. We hope you will stand with educators as we do this difficult work to build up, encourage, and grow the next generation. A heart of care and encouragement along with service comes through serving others.

If you would like to be a part of our tradition of excellence and help build success for the future visit us at <https://www.mtairy.k12.nc.us>.

Now we dance

October 29, 2021

“The plain things are main things and the main things are the plain things.” – Allistar Begg

“5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.” – Revelation 21:5-6

If you were to come see my study, either at home or at the church, one of the things you would realize early on is that I am a big Washington Nationals fan. I was fortunate that a couple of years ago my favorite sports team won their championship. In 2019 my Washington Nationals won the World Series.

Now, I remember being awake for the last game of that series; a series that game down to a decisive game 7, and for most of the game the Nationals trailed. So, with every pitch and with every out and with every swing of the bat I am anxious and worried and at times angry. But then they won! And because that event was two years ago that reality is certain; they win the 2019 World Series.

My love for this team is so strong that sometimes I rewatch these pivotal games and now, even though the situation on the field is the same, my emotions are nowhere near what they were two years ago. There is no anxiety, or fear, or anger. All of this is because victory is certain. No matter how many times I watch game seven the home run always dings off the foul pole and the Nationals always win.

I say all of that because this column is about the book of Revelation and it will come out less than a week before a national election. I will not not be looking at national or global events and laying them on top of cosmic, prophetic, mythological events to show you what Revelations would say to us. Because the main thing Revelation is saying is bigger than that; something eternally more significant than that. From verse one all the way to the end of Revelation there is a theme.

Every verse, every chapter the total of that book has one main point, and that one point is that in the end Jesus wins. Jesus and his bride are victorious and they spend all of eternity celebrating his reign. He will be crowned king, his church will be his bride and they will forever celebrate that reality. And so that Jesus centered truth of the word of God, when it rests deep in our heart and in our soul all of the frustration and anger and anxiety that you and I may feel about what's going on around us should go away.

As certain as the Nationals winning the 2019 World Series so too is the certainty of king Jesus ruling for an eternity. And since I know the certainty I can watch those baseball games with joy. Seeing the ups and the downs are simply the story unfolding toward its celebratory conclusion. So brother and sister in Christ, I do not know what ups or downs may be coming globally or nationally but I know that at the end of the day we celebrate. At the end of the day the church of Jesus Christ dances for we reign with him forever.

Myths, fantasies and spooky lore



October 25, 2021

Have you ever said, “bless you,” when a person sneezed? Or have you picked a four-leaf clover? Blown out your birthday candles and made a wish? If you have, then you may be one of the 25% of the United States population who admits to having superstitious beliefs!

Superstitions are beliefs that things can bring good luck or bad luck to a person. For example, do you know someone who believes that wearing a favorite piece of clothing will cause their favorite football or basketball team to win? You may recognize one famous person who had this superstition: Michael Jordan. When Jordan led the North Carolina Tarheels to a National Championship in 1982, he started wearing his UNC practice shorts underneath his Chicago Bulls uniform, believing that they would bring him good luck and game wins.

Scientists believe that people have superstitious beliefs because they want to feel like they have some influence over forces outside of their control, especially supernatural forces that could cause them harm. In the South, this is especially true because of the area's roots in farming as a way of life. Many superstitious beliefs center around farming and attempts to predict upcoming weather, which could be very important to a person whose entire livelihood depended on good crop production. Take the humble woolly worm for example. A common belief in Surry County and surrounding areas is that woolly worms, those fuzzy black and orange caterpillars, can predict how bad and long a winter season will be. It is believed that if you see woolly worms with large black bands, then the winter season will be long and harsh. Farmers would rather see woolly worms with bigger orange, red, or rust-colored bands because they believe that those colors predict milder winters and better planting conditions. Another animal-centered farming belief is the basis of Groundhog's Day, where it is believed that if a groundhog sees its shadow on February 2nd, there will be six weeks of bad weather or continued cold, a bad omen for farmers who want to get a head start on their planting.

Online polls find that the most common superstition found in North Carolina is a fear of black cats. Many people think of black cats as bad luck, but not many know the origins of this belief. In the Middle Ages, black cats and other black animals, such as crows or ravens, were omens of bad events ahead, especially an upcoming death. Another common belief during this time period was that black cats were witches in disguise. In fact, historical documents show that during witchcraft trials, black cats were often killed because they were believed to be witches or a witch's pet. Crossing paths with a black cat was believed to be a bad omen as well. It was believed that because the black cat was a sign of "evil," having one cross your path meant that you were literally blocked from your heavenly path and your connection to God, making it bad luck to cross paths with one of these feline fortunetellers.

Of course, seeing someone turn completely around when encountering a black cat may seem silly to some, but what about other superstitions that are part of everyday life in the South? The most prominent example of this is the practice of saying, "bless you," when someone sneezes. While the origins of saying "bless you" are not clear, there are several theories about why we do it. One belief is that when the Bubonic Plague was sweeping across Europe, it was known that sneezing was one of the plague's earliest symptoms. It was hoped that by saying "God bless you" when a person sneezed it would protect that person from dying of the plague. Another belief was that when a

person sneezed, the soul momentarily separated from the body, and that if someone didn't bless the sneezing person's body, a devil or demon could swoop in and take over the person's body.

Many people who think of superstitions as something from the past may be surprised by the amount of superstitions that are still around today. Take the number 13 for example. The number 13 has long been thought of as an unlucky number, some tracing this belief back to the Norse Gods while others to Judas Iscariot. What is known is that the fear of the number 13 is prevalent in Western culture that a large number of multi-level buildings will skip a thirteenth floor and some airports will skip a thirteenth gate. In many Eastern countries such as China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, a similar fear exists, but instead of the number 13, the fear is of the number 4.

So, what are some superstitions that you have? What about your friends and family? As Halloween approaches, take notice of those small superstitions around you. Black cats in your neighbor's Halloween décor. Your boss knocking on wood when mentioning something bad. A friend tossing spilled salt over their shoulder. These acts may seem silly, but really, do you want to take that chance?

Casey M. Wilson is a volunteer at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. She and her family live in Mount Airy. For more information, contact the museum at 336-786-4478.

First frost is coming soon



October 24, 2021

The season of Saint Luke's little summer

The weekend heralds Saint Luke's little summer. This is a period of dry, crisp, warm days that feature Indian summer weather, a break from the colder days in the month ahead. We can certainly benefit from a few warm and comfortable days to finish the task of harvesting the autumn leaves and placing them in the middle of rows of cool weather vegetables, mulching around roses and spring flowering bulb beds as well as stocking the composite pile or bin. Saint Luke's little summer is a fun time to relax on the front porch, listen to the crows, and enjoy a cup of coffee with a couple of cookies.

A bit of Saint Luke's little summer lore

A bit of pre-Halloween lore as we celebrate Saint Luke's little summer, it is said that during Saint Luke's little summer, the pumpkins begin to go stale. We do not believe this simply because there are too many pumpkins around in supermarkets, fruit stands, produce markets, and roadside markets. Also especially with Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas on the way – seasons wide open for the consumption of the pumpkins. Saint Luke's little summer lasts only for several days, but the pumpkin has a long shelf life and will out live Luke's summer by many months. Long live the pumpkin harvest, jack o' lanterns, pumpkin pie, and all things pumpkin.

Making a pumpkin scarecrow centerpiece

A pumpkin scarecrow centerpiece for the dining room or coffee table can be made from an orange pumpkin. Use a permanent black marker to outline a face on the pumpkin and color the details with acrylic paints. Color in the black and white eyes and details on the scarecrow's face with pink cheeks. Use an old straw hat and pour a bag or two of Hershey's autumn mix kisses around the base of the scarecrow. Add a few cream pumpkins for a finishing touch.

Sweetening up a stale jack o' lantern

Earlier we mention Saint Luke's little summer lore about pumpkins going stale on his little summer days, (surely we know this is only a lore), but you can sweeten a jack o' lantern that has been lit on the porch for several nights and especially with Halloween so very near. To give your jack o' lantern a spicy scent instead of a stale one, all you have to do is soak the jack o' lantern in a tub of water for several hours, remove from water and rub the inside of the jack o' lantern with a couple of teaspoons of pumpkin pie spices, replace the votive candle, light it up in the evening, and enjoy the aroma of a sweet, spicy, pumpkin.

Pumpkin crisp pie

To prepare this crisp dessert you will need two cups of canned pumpkin, one box Duncan Hines carrot cake mix, one can evaporated milk, one cup of granulated sugar, half cup brown sugar, one teaspoon pumpkin pie spices, three large eggs, two sticks light margarine (melted). Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease and flour a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking dish or pan. Line the pan with waxed paper and spray paper with Pam baking spray. Mix canned pumpkin, sugars, evaporated milk, pumpkin pie

spices, and eggs. Pour the mixture in the baking pan or dish. Pour the box of carrot cake mix over the pumpkin mixture in the baking pan. Spread the two sticks of melted light margarine over top of carrot cake mix, sprinkle a cup of chopped pecans over the cake mixture. Bake at 325 for one hour. Cool the cake completely. Turn cake out onto a cookie sheet. The pecan layer becomes the bottom crust. Make a frosting for the cake by mixing the eight ounce box of cream cheese (softened), two cups of 10x powdered sugar, and one tub of Cool Whip. Decorate with a few cream pumpkins.

The first killing frost can arrive any day

As month moves along, we can expect killing frosts to arrive anytime after Oct. 23. We have already experienced scattered frosts, but a killing frost will wipe out any remaining warm weather vegetables and cause leaves to turn to a shade of tan and brown, cause lawns to lose most of their green, and cover the roof and lawn with a layer of crystal white.

Carolina dogwood berries

The crimson berries on Carolina dogwood are now showing up as their leaves begin to leave the trees. Plenty of red berries adorn their limbs and are an attraction to birds. An abundance of dogwood berries may have a subtle message of a harsh and cold winter.

Still time to plant pansies

There are still plenty of pansy plants in six or nine packs at hardware's nurseries, Walmart, Home Depot, Lowe's Home Improvement, and Ace Hardware. They are still in full bloom and you can choose the color combinations you desire. Buy a bag of pansy booster to get them off to a great start. They will not only bloom through winter, but also produce plenty of green foliage. They perform well in containers and pots on the front porch.

Feeding the purple tops

The turnips in the cool weather garden plot should be well on their way to an abundant and long lasting harvest well into late autumn and winter. Assure a great harvest by applying an application of Garden-Tone or Plant-Tone organic vegetable food on each side of the row and hill up soil to cover the plant food. Then apply a layer of crushed leaves in middles of rows or bed. This will provide extra freeze and frost protection. As turnips begin to develop, harvest the smaller turnips to

allow more space for other turnips to grow larger. As the season moves along, mix Miracle Gro vegetable food with proper amount of water in a sprinkle can and pour between the rows of turnips for an extra boost of food in cold weather.

Moving asparagus and panda ferns inside

The panda and asparagus ferns have spent spring and summer in a semi sunny location on the deck. As the first killing frost is on the threshold, it is now time to move them inside the living room to spend the rest of autumn, winter, and in to early spring. To prepare them for their move, we will trim them back, refill their containers with potting medium, and feed them with Flower-Tone organic flower food. We use a plastic drip tray under their containers to prevent water from leaking on the floor. They don't need quit as much water in the winter. We stick our finger in the container to determine when they need water. They do not need to be in a sunny area of a room. Keep them trimmed back several times during winter.

Using Jack be little's for Halloween

Jack be little pumpkins are about the size of your fist and cost a little over a dollar each. You can draw faces on them with a black permanent marker and spread a bag of cream pumpkins and candy or Indian corn around the base of the pumpkin for a table centerpiece.

A quickie bowl of Halloween tart punch

Here's how to prepare a quick bowl of sparkling Halloween punch by just pouring and serving. All you have to do is mix one two-liter bottle of Fanta orange, one two-liter bottle of Cheerwine, one two-liter bottle of Canada Dry ginger ale, and one two-liter bottle of Mountain Dew. Pour a bag of crushed ice into a punch bowl and then pour in all the two liters of soda. Keep refilling the bowl as it runs out.

Staying ahead of the harvest of leaves

As we close in on the end of October, Halloween, killing frost, and the harvest of leaves, stay ahead of the leaf game by raking, blowing , or vacuuming them up to be used in compost mulch, coverings for cool weather vegetables, rose bushes, and bulb beds. When you run the mower over them or run

through the blower to crush them up, they make great blankets to cover turnip beds and cool weather drops of cabbage, broccoli, onion sets, Siberian kale, collards, and greens.

Frosty is near — it will sweeten turnips

Frost may kill all warm weather crops, but it will sweeten the turnip because it is a root crop. All cool weather crops will thrive especially with a blanket of crushed leaves on them. If you have pumpkins on the porch, don't worry to much about them, they are pretty tough gourds. If you lose any sleep thinking about them, just throw a towel over them when frost is in the forecast.

October is a season of color and beauty

Against the back drop of a Carolina blue sky, the colors of red, burgundy, gold, yellow, tan, and light green leaves contrast with pines, cedars, and climbing honeysuckle vines for a mixture of autumn finery. The golden rods are at their peak and add some extra glow to the autumn scene.

Hoe hoe hoedown

"How to lose weight." Lola: "Marty, let's go jogging together." Marty: "Why in the world do you suddenly want to go jogging?" Lola: "My doctor told me I could lose weight if I went jogging with a dumbbell!"

"Wrong apartment." "For the last ten years, my mother-in-law has been living with my wife and me in the same apartment." "So why don't you tell her to get out?" "I can't, it's her apartment."

"True."- If there's handwriting on the wall, there's a kid in the house.

Context is king

October 22, 2021

"We Christians are going to have so many opportunities to model Christ in the coming days. I don't know what form this should take but God has called us to this task in this time brothers and sisters. Let's do this." Karen Swallow Prior

“He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25-27)

Understanding the purpose behind something matters. If you don't understand the purpose of something more often or not you find yourself frustrated and breaking something.

If you try to build a house using coffee mugs for hammers you will end up frustrated, with no house, and with a lot of broken coffee mugs. Because coffee mugs were not created with the purpose of driving in nails; their purpose was to hold hot coffee. Coffee mugs do a great job holding hot coffee and getting it to your mouth for you to enjoy the flavor; and hammers do a really good job driving nails into wood, but they do a poor job serving coffee. Getting those purposes backwards will lead to a lot of messes, a lot of destruction, and a lot of frustration that does not have to be the case if only we would use mugs for mug purposes and hammers for hammer purposes.

So if this is so important it would most certainly benefit to know the purpose of the Word of God, and to understand the Word of God's purpose we simply need to ask the Word himself Jesus what is this whole thing about?

Jesus tells his disciples over and over again that the whole of scripture is about him. It's completely and utterly about him. He is training up his disciples and he is about to unleash the gospel in its entirety, through the church, and when he sits down with his disciples he does not show them a new governmental system, which obviously could have benefited him. Let us not forget they are being ruled and oppressed and will be tormented by Rome.

And at no point does Jesus sit down and say “Hey, let me teach you how to govern using the Bible.” And the Word of God has a lot to say about governing. He does not say “The Pharisees and the Sadducees have been morally oppressing the Jewish laws so let me tell you how to properly read the Old Testament rules of rights and wrongs.” That could have been hugely beneficial to the Gentiles and Samaritans that have been left on the outside.

And the Word of God has a lot to say about what is right and what is wrong, about what is righteous and what is wicked. Yet what we see Jesus reveal to his disciples is that when they read the Word of God they should see him; they should look and find him.

Fellow brother and sister of Christ one of the reasons you and I get frustrated in our lives is because we are seeking to use the Bible for a purpose that it was not primarily designed for. When we read the Word of God in a world where we wish we had more money, or a world where we worry about putting food on the table, or a world where we wish our government looked and worked differently, or in world where right is called wrong and wrong is called right far too often we get up from our reading only viewing what we have read through those lenses.

So then we walk out our door and we start swinging coffee mugs like their hammers. We get frustrated and upset because the world is not shaping itself to the Word of God even though we are diligently calling it to do so. But in reality we are frustrated because of something we are doing.

Scripture is given to you and I so that we would be more and more like Christ. That we would think on, dwell on, have our spirit conformed with Jesus. And when we seek that first and when we want to see him first and live like Jesus first then all those other things start to make sense and overflow because of that. So we do what is right not because of lists in the Bible but because we want to be more like Jesus the Bible is all about. We model our citizenship not after proper governmental pictures we may find in the world of God but by the citizenship we see Jesus walk in and as citizens under the kingdom of the King of Glory.

You can spot a Christian who is reading the word of God improperly when they speak of the things of Jesus through gritted teeth and flared nostrils. The Word of God shapes you and I to be and live and look more like Jesus. So in a world that is broken and can appear to be darkening before our very eyes use hammers for nails, use coffee mugs for coffee, and use the Word of God to see Jesus.

Fairs important part of county life



October 18, 2021

With cooler temperatures and colorful leaves, fall officially arrived on Sept. 22. For farmers, fall is one of the most important times of the year — harvest time. Food was gathered, preserved, and stored to last through the winter.

Harvests were a time for rural communities to come together and help one another with the work to be done. Afterwards, since community members were already gathered in one place, food, dance, music, and friendly competitions were had. Today, for many people, fall means all things pumpkin, festivals, and a visit to the local county fair. The fairs that we know today differ from those of yesteryear, but one thing remains the same: agriculture.

Fairs began in the United States in the early 1800s and were usually held in August, September, or October. They acted as a social and business event for people to gather together and showcase farmers' best produce and livestock in competition. People sold products for home and farm, but fresh, hot food was a main draw. Entertainment consisted of music, races, rides, and sideshows.

However, education was the prime goal of fairs which included agricultural history as well as introductions to new technology for the public and farmers alike.

Community fair exhibits often fed into the county fair and were a joint effort between community and county officials. The White Plains Community Fair of 1919 is one such example. Locals were encouraged to enter exhibits into the White Plains Community Fair and then take it to the county fair, all in order to have the best fair year for Surry County.

The Virginia-Carolina Fairgrounds, also called the Mount Airy Fairgrounds, held an annual county fair since the early 1900s. What we know as Veterans Memorial Park today was built on the Mount Airy Fairgrounds. Since 1947, the Surry County Agricultural Fair has been held there and continues to do so.

In 1941, attendance to the Mount Airy Fair was high and people came from Surry and its adjoining counties in North Carolina and Virginia. Tensions were high as the second World War raged in Europe and the United States had yet to join the fight outright until December of that year. The county fair served as a welcome momentary distraction and source of merriment.

War disrupts all aspects of life. Many fairs were cancelled due to lack of manpower and allocating all resources to supporting the war effort. However, when possible, fairs were held to keep a sense of normalcy and boost morale. Adding to the fun was a most unusual occurrence: The year boasted its own “Charlotte’s Web” (the book wouldn’t be published until 1952) and the newspaper reports below:

Amazing Spider Writes In His Web

An educated spider who writes in his web as he weaves it has been amazing the townspeople here for the past few days by producing legible writing. The spider was discovered at the home of Roy L. Campbell on Rockford Street on Tuesday morning and at that time his web clearly contained the words “Mt. Airy, NC” and “Winston-Salem” as well as a man’s name beginning “Mr.” with the rest undecipherable. The web was viewed by many interested persons Tuesday but the intelligent spider was not satisfied and tore it down during the night to replace it today. Construction is still going on at last reports.

In 1942, the Mount Airy American Legion Fair was dedicated to a “Victory” theme and was set to “offer fun-lovers of Mount Airy and the surrounding territory six big days and nights of fun and surcease from the worries of a war-torn world.” Due to the “Victory” theme, emphasis was put on the production of victory gardens and field crops. Other incentives included free admission to soldiers, sailors, and marines as well as a \$50 war bond to be given to a school child.

The North Carolina State Fair began in 1853 and is in its 168th year. However, the fair has been cancelled multiple times: from 1861 to 1868 due to the Civil War and Reconstruction, in 1918 due to World War 1 and influenza, and from 1942 to 1945 due to World War II. The year 1953 marked the 100 year anniversary, but due to the cancellations, the Fair was only on its 86th edition that year. The State Fair began last week in Raleigh, and runs Oct. 14 through Oct. 24.

Make sure to support your local county fairs and keep the rich traditions and innovation of agriculture alive.

Justyn Kissam is the manager of learning at Kaleideum.

Memories at the pumpkin patch



October 17, 2021

A trip to the pumpkin patch

The ideal pumpkin for the making of a jack o' lantern has to be round, bright orange, with a sturdy brown stem on top to make a good lid for the carved out jack o'lantern. You can find the very best ones at a pick your own pumpkin patch or a fund raising pumpkin patch on the lawn of a local church in your area. This is an unforgettable experience for kids and grand kids and for them, there is nothing like picking out your own pumpkin on a sunny October Saturday. Top off all this fun with a trip to McDonald's for a meal and an evening of carving pumpkins, is an event children will never forget.

Pumpkin carving kit a great investment and keepsake

Having the right tool to do any job makes the job a lot easier and much more fun. This true in the art of carving out a jack o' lantern. A dull knife is a sure way to cut your finger and break your wrist. They say there are better ways and one way is to purchase a durable pumpkin carving kit that will last for many years and make pumpkin carving fun and easier. A quality carving kit has many blades and accessories. A good kit includes knives, carvers, blades and scrapers as well as other gadgets. You can buy a small kit for about \$7 to \$10, but a durable kit with all the "whistles and bells" cost around \$14. You always get what you pay for, so go ahead and buy a durable and long lasting carving kit that will last longer than your lifetime. A great kit with all the attachments can be used to make watermelon, honeydew, and cantaloupe balls and watermelon baskets for parties and weddings.

Pumpkin cobbler

This is a easy pumpkin recipe with a lot of simple ingredients and it is delicious served with Dream Whip or vanilla ice cream. For this recipe, you will need one 30-ounce can of Libby's pumpkin pie filling, one and a half sticks of light margarine, one can evaporated milk, one cup plain flour, one teaspoon of baking powder, one teaspoon vanilla flavoring, one teaspoon lemon flavoring, half cup light brown sugar, half cup granulated sugar, four beaten large eggs. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt margarine and pour into a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking pan or dish and set aside. Mix together flour, baking powder, sugars, vanilla and lemon flavorings and enough milk to mix it together. Pour this mixture over the melted light margarine. Do not stir (this batter will rise while baking and form a crust) just spread it evenly over the melted margarine and set the baking dish aside. In a bowl, mix the four beaten eggs, the can of pumpkin pie filling, and the can of evaporated milk and stir to mix. Do not disturb the batter because it will rise as the pie bakes and form the crust. Bake until the crust forms (usually about 50 to 60 minutes until golden brown). Allow to cool an hour before serving. Top with Dream Whip, Cool Whip, dairy whipping cream, or vanilla ice cream or a drizzle of maple syrup or Log Cabin pancake maple syrup. Decorate with a few cream pumpkins.

The season for a display of orange

Without any carvings or decorations, a big orange round pumpkin speaks volumes on the front porch. You do not have to carve a pumpkin to make a jack o' lantern. With a black permanent marker, you can draw a face on the orange pumpkin and use yellow acrylic paint to fill in the face.

After Halloween, you can wash the pumpkin, peel it and dice it up, boil it until tender, mash it up and make pumpkin pie, cake, cobbler, pudding, or bread with nights still getting cooler, a pumpkin enjoys a longer life.

Small, decorative jack o' little's

They are only about the size of your fist, but great for coffee tables, dining room tables with plenty of shape and color. Usually you can purchase them at supermarkets for about a \$1 each and they can be the makings of wonderful harvest and Halloween displays. You can also paint faces on them with black permanent markers and color them with acrylic paints or make miniature scarecrows from them. Use cream pumpkins, candy corn, harvest M+M's, Hershey's Kisses, harvest mix around the base of your jack be little display.

Cream pumpkins, a Halloween tradition

Cream pumpkins are made from the same ingredient as candy corn, but oh so much more decorative on cupcakes and around punch bowls that are filled with orange punch. The tiny green "stems" just highlight them as they adorn candy dishes, decorative tables, and displays. We don't know how long cream pumpkins have been around, but candy corn has been an autumn staple for well more than 100 years and we suspect cream pumpkins have been in households that long also.

Keeping an eye on squirrels and acorns

In all the Halloween related paragraphs, we failed to mention that acorns (washed, of course) also make great centerpiece decorations. Acorns are still falling from the mighty oaks and they may be sending a message of this winter's calling card. Another sign of winter is squirrels harvesting acorns and storing them for winter. We don't know if my Northampton County grandma took note of the busy squirrels in autumn and their harvest of them, but we can be fairly certain she did because there were plenty of squirrels in the boonies where she lived. She prepared plenty of squirrel stews to prove that fact.

Christmas cactus almost ready for move

The Christmas cactus only has a few more days before it will be moved to the living room where it will spend the autumn and winter months. The secret of getting a cactus to bloom at Christmas

begins with their spending spring and summer on the porch in a semi-sunny location. In moving them to spend the winter in the house, the containers are filled to the top with cactus medium and some Plant-Tone or Flower-Tone organic plant food. In the living room they receive a drink of water every seven to ten days, checking often for moisture, but never over watering. Also, they need to be kept out of direct sunlight that causes foliage to turn red and stunts their growth. As we move toward the end of October and especially into November, Christmas cactus can be purchased at Walmart, Home Depot, Lowe's Home Improvement, Lowe's Foods, Food Lion, and many hardwares and nurseries. They are available in small and medium containers and cost between \$7 and \$11. To give them a great start, buy a large container and a bag of cactus medium and transplant the cactus as soon as you bring it home. Cactus are available in red, pink, coral, and hot pink. They will be in full bloom when you purchase them so you will know the color you are purchasing. Use a drip tray under the container to prevent water draining from the cactus while it winters over.

The harvest of late green tomatoes

The first frost of the season is around Oct. 15. This means we should keep an eye and ear on warnings of frost so that we can harvest the late, late, green tomatoes. Nights are already getting cooler, and tomatoes are slowing down. The vines are also slowing down and this signals the ripening process is slowing down. As the first date is predicted, gather up the green tomatoes, and wrap each tomato in a whole sheet of newspaper and place them in a single box lid (such as copier paper comes in) . Cover the tomato filled lids with full newspaper sections. Don't place tomatoes in layers but a single layer in each lid. Place in a cool area or a lighted basement. Check for ripeness every other day. Some will ripen quicker than others. Place an apple or two in each box to promote ripening.

Only a week to sow spring bulbs

We are near the first frost of the season and a killing frost is not that many days away and that means hard freezes will soon be with us. Most hardwares, nurseries, Home Depot, Ace Hardware, Lowe's Home Improvement, Walmart, and Tractor Supply still have a supply of spring flowering bulbs. You can choose from jonquils, narcissus, crocus, daffodils, tulips, and hyacinths. While purchasing bulbs, buy a bag of bone meal bulb booster to start the bulbs off. In the prepared bulb bed, apply a layer of peat moss in the bottom of the bulb bed, then set the bulbs, cover with another layer of peat moss, then apply bone meal or bulb booster and cover with soil. As October ends, cover bulbs with a layer of crushed leaves.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“A doggone fake!” Customer: “You told me this was a purebred police dog, but this animal is the mangiest, dirtiest, scariest mutt I have ever seen. How an you get the notion that he is a police dog?” Dog breeder: “He works undercover.”

“Catting around.”- Six year old Tommie sat on the front porch holding his cat. A little girl who lived down the street asked, “What’s your cat’s name?” “Ben Hur,” said Tommie. “How did you come up with that strange name?” Tommie said, “We use to call him Ben until it had five kittens!”

Canned with tomatoes: Customer: “Does the market manager know you turned over the whole skid of tomatoes?” Stock boy: “I think so, he’s underneath the pile.”

Reader comments on News’ editorial page

October 17, 2021

To the Editor,

The Wednesday, Oct. 13 edition of the Mount Airy News contained three outstanding issues:

1. A political cartoon relative to social networks;
2. Their View, “Yes, government can be shrunk”, and
3. Article, “House returns to stave off default with debt limit vote.”

Social networks (1) prey on the insecurities of our youth and only exist to promote the narratives of Marxist-Socialism, aka Democrat-Progressive-Socialists. The cartoon is spot-on.

Yes, government can be shrunk (2) and the final comment encouraging voters to support candidates who advocate a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution is absolutely germane.

Government is funded by the people, who incidentally, must maintain balanced household budgets. Why should the federal government have unfettered, irresponsible, money spending without representative consent?

The assertion in the last article (3) that “Routine payments to Social Security beneficiaries, disabled veterans and active-duty military personnel would also be called into question” is incorrect. Those are all covered by “debt services,” which are paid regardless of the debt ceiling. As provided in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, public debt service (~\$44 billion per month) is paid from the approximate \$230 billion monthly income collected from taxpayers. There is no default on debt services.

The debt ceiling, however, concerns interest on debts incurred for future spending on social engineering projects or other pork barrel items such as those contained in the \$1.5 trillion and \$3.5 trillion bills currently being brokered by the Marxist-Socialist party.

G.J. Harmon

Mount Airy

Red Ribbon Week is here



October 13, 2021

Editor's Note: This is one of a series of columns to be shared with Mount Airy News readers by the Surry County Substance Abuse Recovery Office.

October is the month for the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation called Red Ribbon Week (Oct. 23 – 31). Red Ribbon Week is celebrated to pay respect to the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena who was murdered in 1985 while investigating drug traffickers in Mexico.

Each year a contest is held where students design the theme for the next Red Ribbon Week. This year's theme is "Drug Free Looks Like Me," created by Marin Wurst, a seventh grader at Solon Middle School in Solon, Ohio. The theme is a reminder that every day Americans across the country make significant daily contributions to their communities by being the best they can be because they live Drug-Free.

Red Ribbon Week is intended to be a fun and effective program for community members and especially our youth. There are many ways to participate which include communicating with children about the importance of staying drug free and the meaning behind this year's theme. Another important mission of Red Ribbon Week is to educate and bring awareness to our youth by using creative and consistent messaging.

Given the current opioid epidemic facing our country, Red Ribbon Week is as important as ever. Help us spread awareness and educate children and families about the consequences of drug use and the importance of a drug free lifestyle. The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery is partnering with the Mount Airy Rotary Club and Surry County Schools to get the word out to as many children as possible by celebrating Red Ribbon Week in our high schools. Students will be given information about Red Ribbon Week, receive a red ribbon to wear, sign posters in their school, and sign a Red Ribbon Pledge card.

We are also going to have Special Agent Dirk Ballou from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) speak to high school students. Special Agent Ballou served nine years in the United States Army Special Operations, in which he was awarded a Bronze Star Medal for his 2003 tour in Afghanistan. Since then, he has spent 18 years working for the DEA in southern Arizona, Afghanistan, West Africa, and now is the Resident Agent in Charge of the Greensboro Resident

Office. We are honored to have our DEA Special Agent take such an interest in our county and we greatly appreciate the partnership.

On Saturday, Oct. 16, we will be kicking off Red Ribbon Week a bit early by having a tent at Fisher River Park's 20th anniversary from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Please come join us and help us celebrate the largest substance use prevention activity in the United States. Starting on Monday, Oct. 18, Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery will partner with the Surry Health and Nutrition Center to have Latinx/Latine Outreach by having Red Ribbon information in Spanish and English.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from learning more about Red Ribbon Week and our planned activities, please contact me, Charlotte Reeves, Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery Community Outreach Coordinator, at reevesc@co.surry.nc.us. Visit our website at surrycountycares.com for more information about substance use disorder and the many resources in our county.

Autumn has arrived



October 10, 2021

The season of the pumpkin is here

Orange pumpkins now adorn roadside produce markets, fruit stands, and fundraisers on church lawns across Surry County. One of the pumpkin's positive attractions is that they have a long shelf life and can be enjoyed over the long season from now until after Christmas. Their bright orange will decorate from now until Halloween, and Thanksgiving and fill tables with puddings, pies, and cakes for many weeks to come as well as decorations, jack 'o lanterns, and harvest and Halloween displays.

The best pie pumpkins

The round orange pumpkins with stems on top of them are the best for carving a jack o' lantern, but for pies and desserts, the best pumpkins are the oblong varieties. These are not always orange on the outside but tan or beige or bronze in color, and they are tender inside. With their oblong shape, they are easier to slice open, remove seed, and cut into chunks for boiling into a tender mixture and texture and then draining and running through the blender in grate mode or mashing with a potato masher. To can pumpkin, pour the mashed, drained pumpkin into sterilized pint jars (a pint will usually make two pies), wipe the rims of the jars with a paper towel, seal the jars and tighten the lids. Leave half inch at top of jars. Process in a pressure canner at ten pressure for 50 minutes. Pumpkins are low in acid so they require this lengthy processing time.

Enjoying pumpkin bread

The crisp clear nights of October speak volumes to us of loaves of pumpkin bread in all of its spicy goodness. Not too sweet, not too spicy, but just the right recipe for a nippy October night. Real pumpkin bread is moist in texture and easy to prepare. For this recipe, you will need three and a half cups of plain flour, two teaspoons baking soda, half teaspoon salt, one tablespoon pumpkin pie spices, four large eggs, milk, one 15 ounce can Libby's canned pumpkin, or one pint canned pumpkin, one half cup dark brown sugar, two cups granulated sugar, half cup chopped golden raisins, half cup chopped pecans, one tablespoon vanilla flavoring, one table spoon orange flavoring. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix flour, baking soda, salt, and pumpkin pie spices and set aside. In another large bowl, beat the four eggs well, add Crisco oil, milk, and pumpkin. Mix these ingredients together, add the lemon and vanilla flavoring, raisins and chopped pecans. Pour mixture into two loaf pans, well- greased with Crisco shortening, and floured. Add a sheet of foil to bottom of loaf pans and grease and flour the foll also. Bake for one hour, if not done, bake for a few more minutes. When cake springs back when touched, it is done or when a tooth pick comes out clean. Cool loaves in the pans for fifteen or twenty minutes. Run knife around edges of pans and sheets of aluminum foil, after wrap. Put in Saran clear plastic wrap. This will keep loaves fresh and moist.

The mighty oaks are producing two harvests

Other trees have been delighting us with a harvest, of colors in leaves of gold, yellow, bronze, red, tan, crimson, and beige. We have been using the leaf vacuum, rake and the blower to transfer them to the garden plot and the compost pile and bin. The oaks are now producing a double harvest of not only leaves but a lot of noise from acorns bouncing off metal roofs on barns buildings and

sheds. My Northampton County grandma lived in a house with a tin roof. At this time of year, we would listen to acorns striking the roof all night long. She kept a close eye on the acorns falling from the trees and she said, "If you walk on acorns in October, you could expect to walk on snow all during winter." As October wears on, we may have a hint about what old man winter has up his sleeve for us.

Improving next year's soil

Vines, stalks, leaves, grass clippings, and trimmings and garden residue from the season behind us can be the makings of improved soil for next year's garden. The lawn clippings will help heat up the compost and you can also use Plant-Tone organic vegetable food and Black Kow composted cow to heat and breakdown the ingredients in the compost bin, or pile. When you build a compost pile or bin, you are creating an ecosystem that feeds the bacteria that thrive on organic materials. Most households that have gardens generate more than 1,000 pounds of home lawn and garden waste per year that could be converted into compost using very little space and effort. You can start a compost pile with only a pitch fork to stir the pile once a week or you can use several treated fence posts to form a bin and both inexpensive as well as practical and useful.

Halloween candies and treats

Halloween has arrived in supermarkets and big box stores with colorful orange, yellow, and brown displays of all varieties of traditional candies for Halloween. Everything for the trick or treaters. The season brings several, varieties of candy corn including the old fashioned orange, white, and yellow combo as well as Indian corn in colors of orange, brown, and white combo and the fairly recent brown sugar combo of tan, white, and yellow. Peanut brittle in boxes begins appearing also before Halloween. Other Halloween favorites are the autumn mix of Hershey's Kisses, Hershey's miniatures, marshmallow pumpkins and ghost, Halloween packs of M&M's, Three Musketeers and assorted candy bars. We always enjoy the display that Food Lion presents at the front of their supermarkets that attract our attention all during October.

The quiet of an October evening. The crisp autumn air at twilight whets the nostrils and the lower humidity makes the coming night air easy to breathe. The scent of the new fallen leaves also adds to the evening air. The graceful soft sound of leaves still falling completes the majestic experience of the autumn twilight.

Making a butterscotch pumpkin pudding

This pudding does not have a crust but you can use vanilla wafers for a crust if you desire or also use graham crackers. In a mixing bowl combine one can (15 Oz) Libby's pumpkin or one pint canned pumpkin, three large eggs, one three ounce box instant butterscotch pudding mix, one cup light brown sugar, one stick light margarine, one half teaspoon pumpkin pie spices one can evaporated milk one teaspoon vanilla flavoring, a pinch of salt, one teaspoon maple flavoring (optional), half teaspoon cinnamon. Spray a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking pan or dish and layer with vanilla wafers or graham crackers if desired or make the pudding without a crust. Mix all ingredients together and pour into the pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Serve with Cool Whip or Dream Whip.

Harvest festivals, Halloween parties, and chicken stews

October is the festive month for hayrides, haunted houses, chicken stews, harvest festivals, Halloween parties, trick or treating, and Halloween carnivals and costume contests as well as cake walks. Combine all these events with a hot dog roast and toasted marshmallows, s'mores, and a bon fire and you have the makings of a night of fun for all ages.

Keeping a close eye on late tomatoes

As we move closer to the middle of October, there is much chatter about the first frost of the season. It will not have any effect on cool weather vegetables. We know the calendar date for the first frost date says Oct. 15 but we don't usually get a killing frost until later in the month. Even as October moves on, it's wise to keep an ear and eye out for frost warnings. The late, late, tomatoes sown especially for a pre-frost harvest should be harvested before any frost arrives, wrapped in sheets of newspapers, stored in box lids, and covered with sections of newspapers and stored in a warm room or basement. They should be checked for ripeness once or twice a week. Place an apple or two in the boxes to promote ripening.

Last opportunity to set out bulbs

With the first frost date in just a few weeks, spring flowering bulb planting time is soon drawing to a close. You still have two weeks or more to set out the bulbs or spring flowers. Bulbs can be purchased at Home Depot, Lowe's Home Improvement, Walmart, Ace Hardware, most nurseries and hardware's. Buy a bag of bulb booster or bone meal to get bulbs off to a great start.

Hoe hoe hoedown

“Head of the class.” Teacher: “Johnny could you please pay a little more attention?” Johnny: “I’m already paying as little as I can!”

“Whoa buffalo.” Traveler: “I would like a ticket to New York State, please.” Ticket clerk: “Would you like to go by Buffalo?” Traveler: “No thank you, I’d rather go by bus.”

“Pie in the sky.” Diner: “Is this peach or apple pie?” Waitress: “Can’t you tell by the taste?” Diner: “No, I can’t.” Waitress: “Well, then what difference does it make one way or the other?”

“Drop outs.” Bill: “What school do you have to drop out of to be a graduate?” Jill: “Paratrooper school.”

2021 was a great firefly year

The landscape was aglow with fireflies in the summer of 2021. From mid-May until early July, there were great numbers as we moved into the month of June. Their most glorious display was on the evening Monday, June 21. We counted 169 fireflies glowing during a period of five minutes. We saw the first fireflies on the evening of Sunday, May 16. On that evening, we counted 49 in a period of five minutes. We did see a display almost every evening. They seemed to appear at twilight and reach their peak about nine o clock at night. With the number of fireflies over the summer, next year should produce even more fireflies.

Feds should leave school boards alone

October 10, 2021

To the Editor,

This is in reference to “Their View” commentary, “We all win when we argue” in the Oct. 6 edition of the Mount Airy News.

How timely in light of Attorney General Merrick Garland's letter of Oct. 4 to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which was instigated at the behest of the National School Board Association (NSBA). In that letter, he authorizes the FBI to use their legal power to criminalize parental 1st Amendment Rights to speak at school board meetings in order to advocate for their children's education; not indoctrination (i.e., CRT).

I submit that, in the mien, parents are able to conduct themselves with civil discourse. As the author of the cited article writes, by exercising their 1st Amendment Rights, parents "seek to model and promote...constructive engagement across political differences."

The heavy hand of federal bureaucrats, under the guise of unsubstantiated threats and auspices of domestic terrorism, into a community's business of holding elected school board members accountable is not warranted.

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