

Christmas in the County



The Unexpecteds of Christmas

by Dawn Reed

A few days before Christmas in 1981, my beloved came home with a great big present just for me. We were newlyweds, living on love and Tator Tots. I didn't know what it was or how he had paid for it. He laid it gingerly under our sparsely decorated tree.

Not one time in my entire life had I ever sneaked to open a gift early, but this present was irresistible. The paper was pretty and called to me. I very carefully opened one end and found fur. I was over the moon.

It was the era of those fabulous rabbit fur coats. All the cool girls wore them; I had only dreamed of having one. I was quite positive this precious, wonderful gift was a fabulous rabbit fur coat.

Each time I passed the Christmas tree, I beamed, picturing myself in the fabulous rabbit fur coat.

Finally, on Christmas morning, it was time to exchange gifts. I graciously encouraged my new beloved to open all his gifts first, thinking of the glorious moment when I unwrapped my big gift with mock surprise.

He said, "I bet you don't know what it is."

I innocently smiled as if I didn't have a clue. And boy oh, I didn't.



I slowly opened one edge at a time, savoring the thought of the fabulous rabbit coat. One edge, another edge. And finally, there it was...A TEDDY BEAR!

It was not what I had expected at all. A teddy bear was not even on the radar. Truth be told, it was a better gift for me than a rabbit coat. I kept it for years and years.

The Christmas story is full

of "unexpecteds." Mary had an unexpected visitor and calling. Joseph had an unexpected turn of events. The shepherds had an unexpected journey. In each one, God was working. He was putting special, important puzzle pieces together.

We often find "unexpecteds"

in our lives today – when our plan isn't coming together as we had hoped. Going into the Christmas season, let's keep our eyes open to how God is working, how He is pushing and directing, even when we are dragging our feet. Perhaps our "unexpecteds" are actu-

ally divine interruptions.

In every season, we can trust that the God of the Universe can work our unexpecteds into immeasurably more than we ask or dream (Ephesians 3:20). When the

LORD declared in Isaiah 55:8-9, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," He wasn't kidding. Still, He can be trusted.

If life has taken an unexpected detour, hang on. Commit to the LORD, talk to Him, spend time with Him, be encouraged by reading His Word. Trust Him.

Dig with me into the true story of Christmas. You will find most of it in Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:18-25. I pray you will be swept away by the love of our Heavenly Father and be drawn to the Baby in the manger.

An Unexpected Gift

I had the opportunity to spend some time with the ladies of Allen Baptist Church Tuesday evening. It was their annual Christmas party.

The cooks and bakers of ABC had outdone themselves; tasty treats lined several tables. Women of all ages in brightly colored sweaters and shirts milled about the fellowship hall.

see **Unexpecteds** pg 3

In loving memory of
Thomas Brown

*Deep down in my heart is a picture,
Worth more than silver or gold,
A picture of you, dear Thomas,
Whose memory will never grow old.*

From his loving wife, Evelyn, and son, Thomas

In Memory of
**Mike and Francis Pyne,
Dewey and Crystal Burr
Jean Burr and Sandra Parsons**

*Those who touch our lives
stay in our hearts forever.*

Loved and Remembered by
**Kelly, Jacob, Kevin, Ellie
and Phyllis Pyne**

Missing you always, especially at Christmastime

MAZIE BURGESS 1/1/1938 ~ 8/28/2017

Dear Mom in Heaven,

Christmas is here again, and my heart feels the weight of your absence, I miss your laughter, your hugs and the magic you brought to every holiday.

I wish I could hear your voice and share one more Christmas with you. This year, I'm holding onto our memories a little tighter – they remind me of the love we shared, a love that even death cannot erase.

Though the pain of missing you feels heavy, I know you'd want me to find moments of joy and peace. Thank you for the love and strength you've given me.

I hope you're celebrating in heaven, surrounded by beauty and peace.

Love and miss you so much, Connie

My friend, Becky, asked me to share a devotion with their group. I was thrilled to have the privilege.

The theme was "The Unexpecteds of Christmas." Mary had an unexpected turn in his life. The shepherds had an unexpected journey to find Jesus and share Jesus.

I began with the story of the not-rabbit coat. I was going on and on to the ABC ladies, being dramatic, then went into the lesson.

We read parts of the Christmas story, applying it to our lives today. Finishing up, we prayed, and I went back to my seat for us to start singing carols. A lady named Faye rushed over thrusting a bundle of fur into my arms.

"What is this?" I asked. "It's for you!" she exclaimed with a smile.

It was her FUR COAT. Faye was giving me her FUR COAT. Right off her back. She insisted. I told her I couldn't. She insisted again and again, saying she wouldn't take it back.

I am now the owner of a fabulous 100% faux fur coat – an unexpected gift.

It is the softest thing I have ever worn or touched. (I keep petting my arms.) It was so kind! All the way home – driving in the coat – I marveled at Faye's generosity.

At Christmas, we often see people being more generous, more caring, going above and beyond, giving selflessly. It's one of the best



things about the season.

God is our greatest example of generosity. Of going above and beyond. In the Garden of Eden, He knew exactly how it would go. He knew Adam and Eve would choose to disobey Him. When sin entered the world,

God knew we needed a Savior, so He promised to send one. All through the Old Testament, preachers and prophets told He was coming. They gave hints to the how and where. When He arrived, it was not at all like people expected.

He gave us His most precious treasure: His Son. Born in a stable, laid in a manger. An unexpected arrival to the sleeping world. Angels announced the news. Shepherds journeyed to find the Baby. Mary had unexpected guests.

As we get closer to the celebration of Jesus' birth, how can we be more generous, more caring? We don't have to spend all our money or give the coat off our back like Faye, but how can we love a little extra? Who can we love a little extra?

Mother Teresa once said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." Let's go and do just that!

I may or may not be typing in previously mentioned fur coat.

Missing You This Christmas

*I would give the world if I could say
Merry Christmas to you today,
To hear your voice, to see you smile
To chat and laugh with you a while.*

*Thinking of you this Christmas
And how things just aren't the same.*

*There is this dull and nagging heartache
When someone speaks your name.*

*Sadly, we can't buy gifts for you
Just silent tears that fall.*

*For this time of year without you
Is the hardest time of all.*

In Loving Memory of Leslie Kay Goldizen

*Loved and missed by all,
Mom and Dad and Family*



In loving memory of John Carl Gibb

*Always in our thoughts,
Forever in our hearts.*

*We love you and miss you!
Love, Mom, Dad, Timmy, Katie,
Chris, Andrew, J.T. and David*

In loving memory of Kathy Landis

*She takes good care of her family and is never lazy.
Her children praise her,
and with great pride her husband says,
"There are many good women,
but you are the best!"*

Love, Tony

In Memory of Roy and Mandy Cain, Steve, Roy Jr. and Patty Cain, Vince and Dolores Trotta

*Life and home are
not the same
Since you went away.*

*Love,
Ernie and
Vicki*

In Loving Memory of Mazie Burgess

*Thy will be done,
dear Lord,
We dare not complain
And in our hearts we
have the hope
That we shall
meet again.*

Love, Loy

Letters to Santa from Hillsboro Elementary School

Dear Santa,
Hello!! How is Rudolph? It's cold outside.

For Christmas I would like to have a vr head set. I will use it to play one of my games on my ps5! Can I have it in rainbow.

One thing I need is a new pair of shoes. Can I have a pair of Airforce Ones please. I need them because I do not have to tie them every 30 seconds. Can they be red with blue on them and can they say Roblox. My size is 2 1/2.

Can my sister and Cayson have a vr head set, but for Cayson make it blue please. For Collins make it pink please.

Are you still eating cookies and milk? Hope you don't get spotted on Christmas eve.

Your friend,
Konnor

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,
Hi! Do you have any new reindeer? It's pretty cold here.

For Christmas I really want Steph Curry basketball shoes. I wear size 1. I want Steph Curry shoes because I need new shoes.

One thing I need is Hunt-

ing Clothes and boots. I need army camo.

One thing Marlee wants is a baby doll. She really wants it because she wants to play with it.

I hope your elves and reindeer be good. And have a good Christmas.

Your friend,
Grant

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,
Hi. How cold is the North Pole? How long does it take to travel the earth. How are you doing?

One thing I want is a dirt bike for a 9 year old. I want a dirt bike so I can drive it whenever I want. I want it because I just have to tell my mom and I am gone.

I need building supplies. I would like to use nails and wood. I'm going to build a treehouse. Supplies, rope, nails, hammer, wood, and glass are what I need.

One thing for someone else is a sewing kit for my sister. She likes to sew. Alida likes sewing blankets with it.

Hope you don't get spotted on Christmas Eve. I hope you don't fall off the roof.

Sincerely,
Isaiah

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,
Hi. How are? I hope your raindeer are ready.

I would like to have Mario Galaxy 1 and 2. The brand is Nintendo. I want it so I can play it.

One thing I need a new coat. I want a black one. My

other one broke.
This year I want you to get Cora a barbie. She has been asking every one for one. She wants one really bad.

I hope you don't get spotted on Christmas Eve. I hope you have a good night.

Love,
Elliott

see Letters pg 5

~ ~ ~



WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Many thanks for making our year so special!

sunflower Fabrics LLC

Julie, Cheryl, Lisa and Sandy
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681-318-0767

Merry & Beautiful Wishes

May your holiday season be filled with all of the things that spark joy in your heart. Thank you for making our year so special.

A special wish for Kay - have a happy and healthy retirement!

Sandy, Nancy, Kathy and Johnna

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Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sun. Noon - 4 p.m.

Pocahontas County Catholic Churches

Christmas Mass Schedule

CHRISTMAS EVE
Wed., Dec. 24
St. Mark, Bartow 5 p.m.
St. Bernard, Snowshoe 9 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DAY
Thurs., Dec. 25
St. John Neumann, Marlinton 10 a.m.

Merry Merry Merry Merry Merry Merry Everything

May this holiday season deliver everything you've been wishing for and more.
Thank you for shopping locally!

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Letters, from page 4

Dear Santa,
Hello. How are the elves?
Also how are the reindeer?

For Christmas I would like a hover board because my mom plays music on it. I also broke my old hover board because I forgot it outside. I would like a red hover board.

I need hiking tennis shoes because me and my dad go hunting. My shoes always get wet. It gets my socks wet.

I hope Cooper gets mine coins because he can get mods and skins on minecraft. You can get anything.

Don't fall asleep while giving out presents. Have the best best Merry Christmas.

Love,
Cole

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,
Hey. How are you doing? It's been cold her and we got some snow.

For Christmas I want a Justin Jefferson jersey. I wear XL in kids. It is purple



with a little bit of white and yellow. I have a lot of jerseys. Jerseys fell so good on me.

I don't really need anything. I have everything I need.

My Grandpa needs a new pair of shoes because the track is coming off. It would be great if you could get him a pair. I think he wears size 5.

Hope you get presents too. Have a Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,
Micah

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,
Hi. How are you doing? How is Rudolph doing at the North Pole.

For Christmas I would like to have a pair of wheelies. I wear a size 6 in mens. The color I want is white and blue. I have never had wheelies wheelies before.

I need a pair of muck boot so I can go in the snow and mud. The color I want for my muck boot is Red and Blue. I wear a size 6 in mens.

My mom needs a tread

mill. She needs it to work out so she can run or walk her own speed. She wants to get strong and be touch so she can get a boyfriend.

Have Merry Christmas. Hope you don't get spotted on Christmas Eve.

Your friend,
Jerico

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,

Hi. How are you up in the North Pole? Can you send some of that snow down here?

For Christmas I want a VR head set with joy stick from apple. Please make it blue so I can play Minecraft on it, Hunter Call of the Wild, or Call of duty.

Dear Santa,
Hey. Do you have any new reindeer? I hope you're doing good.

For Christmas I would like

One thing I need is an outfit. I would like Nike and Adidas. I would like blue and red. Blue jeans, skiny are my favorite, yellow, green hoody, size is 7 would be great.

One thing I want for someone else is a phone for Grayson. he been wanting a phone since last year. A green, red and blue Iphone 15. He can watch youtube.

Have a well safe trip. Hope you have a Merry Christmas.

Love,
Micheal

I don't really need anything at the moment. Thank you for everything I've ever got from you.

Please bring my dad a new recliner because his broke and he is not happy about it. Can you get him a tall black that brown would be nice.

Have a good night. I wish you good travels on Christmas night.

Your friend,
Colton

~ ~ ~

Dear Santa,

Hi! Are you doing good? Did you get any new reindeer?

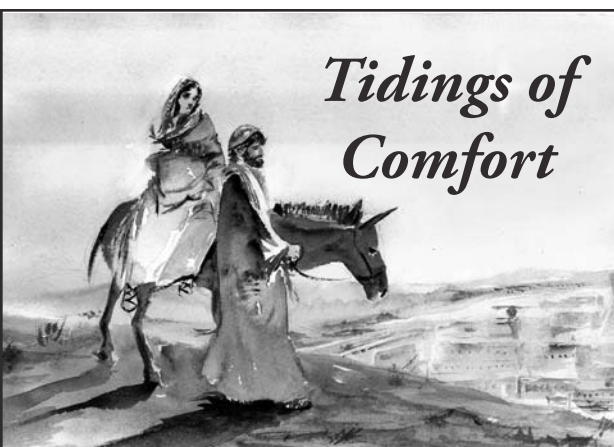
For Christmas I'm asking for a pair of Heely shoes. I can ride them in the hallway at school. I wear size 1 1/2-2.

I need clothes. My other pants are way too small. I wear slim 8-10.

For Kysor Im asking for a 4 wheeler battery. Someone wrecked his 4-wheeler and broke the other one.

I've been good this year. I hope you eat a lot of cookies and milk.

Your friend,
Kayne



Tidings of Comfort

From all of us at Moore's Ready Mix - Deer Creek Supply, thank you for your continued patronage. Merry Christmas, and our best wishes for 2025.

God Bless You!

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"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

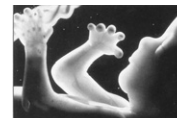
-Matthew 1:23 NKJV

What if abortion had been an option for the Virgin Mother of Jesus?

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." -Matthew 1:21 NKJV

**Celebrate the reason for the season!
Merry Christmas!**

West for Life
Pocahontas Chapter



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...and to all a good season!

We're sowing our best wishes with the hope that they grow into joy and prosperity for the folks that we know!

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Don, Ardel, Audrey, Becky and Leigh

Sweet and Savory Christmas Recipes

Easy Cocoa Mix

8 quarts (10 cups) nonfat dry milk powder

16 oz. pkg. (4 3/4 cups) sifted powdered sugar

1 1/2 cups unsweetened cocoa powder

6 oz jar powdered non-dairy creamer

In a large bowl, mix all ingredients

Store in an airtight container.

For one serving, place 1/3 cup cocoa mixture in a coffee cup of mug, add 3/4 cup boiling water. Stir to dissolve. Topp with whipped cream or a few marshmallows, if desired.

Makes 45 eight-ounce servings.

~ ~ ~

Applesauce Coffee Cake

1 2/3 cups flour

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup margarine or butter

1/4 cup nuts

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

2 eggs, beaten

1 cup applesauce of apple butter

1 tsp. Vanilla

1/2 cup raisins (optional)

Preheat oven to 375°

In a bowl combine 3/4 cup flour and sugar, cut in margarine.

For topping, remove 1/2 cup crumb mixture; stir in nuts and cinnamon, set aside.

To remaining crumb mixture, add remaining flour, baking powder and baking soda.

Add eggs, applesauce or apple butter and vanilla.

Beat until well blended.

Sitr in raisins, if desired.

Pour into a greased 9x9x2 inch baking pan.

Sprinkle topping on batter.

Bake at 375° for 30 to 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Serve warm.

~ ~ ~

Fruit Crisp

Preheat oven to 375°

5 cups sliced, peeled apples, pears, peaches or apricots

2 to 4 Tbsp. sugar

1/2 cup regular rolled oats

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1/4 cup flour

1/4 tsp. nutmeg, ginger or cinnamon

1/4 cup margarine or butter

1/4 cup chopped nuts or coconut

Vanilla ice cream or light cream (optional).

Filling:

Place fruit in an 8 inch round baking dish.

Sitr in sugar

Topping:

In a mixing bowl, combine oats, brown sugar, flour, spice of your choice.

Cut in margarine or butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sitr in nuts or coconut.

Sprinkle topping over filling.

Bake at 375° for 30 to 35 minutes or until fruit is teder and topping is golden.

Serve warm with ice cream or light cream.

Serves 6.

~ ~ ~

Easy Fruit Trifle

(10-inch) prepared angel food cake, cut into 1-inch cubes

3.4 oz. box instant vanilla pudding mix

1 1/2 cups cold milk

8 oz. container whipped topping

4-6 cups fresh mixed berries (e.g., strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)

In a medium bowl, whisk together the instant pudding mix and cold milk for about 2 minutes until smooth. Let it set in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes to thicken.

Wash and slice the strawberries.



Applesauce Coffee Cake

see Recipes pg 7

With
Our Thanks
& Best Wishes,

May your holiday and the new year be filled with health, happiness and prosperity. Thank you for allowing us to serve you!



17009 Mountaineer Drive • Riverton • 304-567-2121
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Merry Christmas, Friends!



At this special time of year,
we celebrate everything that brings us together.
Thanks for making us feel so welcome here.
We're grateful to be a part of this wonderful community!
Reed, Nancy and Allison



Reed McNeer
Agent

reedmcneersf.com

812 Third Avenue, Marlinton • 681-875-4900

From our herd to yours,
Merry Christmas
To All

from

Pocahontas County 4-H!



Recipes, from page 6

Cut or tear the angel food cake into bite-sized chunks.

In a large glass trifle dish or bowl, begin layering the ingredients:

Add a layer of cake cubes to the bottom.

Arrange a layer of mixed fruit over the cake, pressing some strawberry slices against the sides of the bowl for presentation.

Spread a layer of the pre-

pared pudding on top of the fruit.

Add a layer of whipped topping.

Repeat the layers (cake, fruit, pudding, whipped topping) until all ingredients are used, finishing with a layer of whipped topping on top.

Garnish the top with a few extra berries.

Cover the trifle and chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours before serving to allow the flavors to meld and the cake to soak up some moisture.



Easy Meat-Stuffed Pita Pockets

~ ~ ~

Three-Day Coconut Cake

1 box Duncan Hines Butter Recipe Cake Mix
Follow directions on box.
Bake in two 9-inch pans.
Cool.
Slice each layer into two layers to make four.
Mix together
1 bag of coconut
1# sour cream
1 cup sugar
Reserve 1 cup of mixture.
Spread remaining mixture on three layers, but not on top.
Icing
1 cup reserved coconut mixture
8 oz. container of Cool Whip
Refrigerate, covered, for three days.

~ ~ ~

Easy Meat-Stuffed Pita Pockets

1/4 cup sour cream
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 Tbsp. prepared horseradish or prepared mustard
2 cups coarsely chopped cooked beef, pork, ham or

lamb
1/2 cup shredded carrot or chopped celery
2 large pita bread rounds
1/2 cup alfalfa sprouts or 4 lettuce leaves
Combine sour cream, mayonnaise and horseradish. Stir in meat and carrot.
Halve pita bread crosswise.
Line each half with alfalfa sprouts or lettuce.
Spoon in meat mixture.
Serves 4.

~ ~ ~

Chicken Jambalaya

1/3 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup chopped green pepper
2 Tbsp. margarine or butter
14 1/2 oz. can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 1/2 cups chicken broth
2/3 cup long grain rice
1 tsp. dried basil or thyme, crushed.
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. bottled hot pepper sauce

see Recipes pg 8

Merry Christmas

For your goodwill and patronage, we are eternally grateful.

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For the Keeper of the Family Tree this Season:

Pocahontas County Genealogy Group
has Cemetery Books for sale documenting 155 cemeteries:

Oak Grove, 2011; Mountain View; Mace to Brush Country, 2014; Little Levels, 2015; Huntersville, 2016; Woodrow to Buckeye, 2018; Back Mountain Road - Durbin to Cass & West Fork, 2019; Frost to Dunmore, 2021; and Edray Road - Cass to Poage Lane, 2022.

Books are priced from \$12 to \$20 each, plus tax.
Add \$5 for shipping.

Available at The Pocahontas Times office, or by contacting Gail Hyer (mountaincousins@gmail.com) or Jan Orndorff (rjorndorff@htcnet.org).

Thanks *Snow* Much!

We're grateful for every visit, purchase and smile!
Best wishes to you and yours for a wonderful holiday season.

Located on US 219 South, Hillsboro, WV

For more info, visit us on Facebook.
pearlsbuckbirthplace.com 304-653-4430

Pearl S. Buck
BIRTHPLACE

Recipes, from page 7

1 bay leaf
2 cups cubed cooked chicken or turkey

In a large skillet cook celery, onion and green pepper in margarine or butter until vegetables are tender.

Sitr in the undrained tomatoes, chicken broth, rice, basil or thyme, garlic salt, pepper, hot sauce and bay leaf.

Bring to boiling, reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 20 minutes or until rice is tender.

Sitr in chicken; cook until heated through
Discard bay leaf.
Makes 4 servings.

~ ~ ~

Sweet and Sour Pork

1 pound boneless pork loin cut into 1-inch cubes
2 Tbsp. dry Sherry
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 Tbsp. light soy sauce
1/2 tsp. sugar
Mix Sherry, pepper, soy and sugar in a medium container. Add pork cubes and mix well. Refrigerate.

Stir together the following in a very small bowl:

2 Tbsp. pineapple juice
1 Tbsp. ketchup
1 Tbsp. light soy sauce
1 tsp. brown sugar
Set aside.
4 Tbsp. vegetable oil or peanut oil-divided
1 medium onion cut into 1-inch cubes
2 bell peppers, any color, stemmed, seeded
2 ribs celery, cut diagonally

Put 1 Tbsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat until hot but not smoking.

Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until just beginning to brown, yet still crisp, about 2 minutes.



Sweet and Sour Pork

Transfer to a large platter or bowl.
Do the same with the celery and then the bell peppers. Put last Tbsp. of oil in the pan and heat until hot but not smoking. Add the pork cubes in a single layer leaving marinating sauce in bowl. Let cook about 1 1/2 minutes until a golden brown crust has formed. Turn over and let cook another minute or two. Add onions, peppers

and celery to pork and stir to mix. Add marinating liquid and pineapple mixture. Cook, stirring until sauce coats all and thickens slightly – about 2 minutes. Serve over brown or white rice. Enjoy!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We appreciate your patronage and look forward to seeing you soon!

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May Your Days Be Shiny & Bright

We hope this holiday season delivers everything you've been wishing for, right down to the last detail.

With best wishes from our entire team.

Cutlip's Body Shop
402 Curry Avenue, Marlinton
304-799-6220

Merry Christmas

To the Pocahontas Center nursing staff.

Thank you for all you do.
God Bless all of you.

Tidings of Peace, Joy, Faith & Goodwill

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LuAnn, Erica and Kim
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In This Blessed Season

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we recount our many blessings, and your kind friendship is at the top of the list! Merry Christmas to all and many thanks for helping to make this past year a blessed one for us.

Our family serving your family
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THANKS
to all of our friends who have made our year so special!

We appreciate your support, and we wish you a happy holiday.

Marlinton Rotary

Ornaments hold special memories

Suzanne Stewart
Staff Writer

Ornaments are one of my favorite things about Christmas.

When I was young, there was no shortage of Christmas trees for me to enjoy.

Because my parents both taught at the high school, they had the same vacation as my brother and me, so we traveled to visit family.

Of course, we also had a tree at home in Green Bank. It was covered with both handmade and bought ornaments.

As many know, I come from a crafty family, so we always had a lot of handmade ornaments.

Our tree was adorned with a lot of ornaments Tommy and I made – from popsicle stick sleighs to wooden clothespin reindeer.

There were also ornaments that marked milestones – the most memorable to me are two ceramic bears, one blue, one pink – commemorating our first Christmases.

First Christmas ornaments are reminders of the magical Christmas when a baby or toddler experiences the holiday for the first time.

Kay Blackshire, of Green Bank, still has a prominent position on her tree for the first Christmas ornaments for her children. Hers are fabric frames with photos of her children, Amanda Wiley and Jimmy Wiley, Jr., in the center.

At Christmas, we stayed my dad's parents, Ted and Mary Stewart, and later, his sister and brother-in-law, Cindy and Mike Kelley.

Those two households managed to have opposite trees and yet had a lot in common.

My papaw was the King of Christmas. He loved decorating and his motto was the brighter, the better. This included the tree.

It was always lit with colored lights and filled with ornaments.

Papaw made beaded and, sometimes, plastic canvas ornaments – from simple icicles to intricate tin tea in-

fusers.

Granny made the most detailed crocheted snowflakes I've ever seen.

Those handmade ornaments were joined by gifted ones, including a little stuffed bear Mom got them.

It was from Avon and it played a song when squeezed. I swear that thing is probably still singing 40 years later and on the original battery.



KAY BLACKSHIRE, OF Green Bank, always has two Baby's First Christmas ornaments on her tree – reminders of her children's – Amanda Wiley and Jimmy Wiley, Jr. – first Christmas.

Cindy was the only member of my family who always had a real Christmas tree.

It was at least six feet tall and had an elegant aura. She used white lights which

**see Ornaments
pg 10**

Wishing you all the best and joy in your journeys this Holiday season!

Merry Christmas from all of us at Burns Motor Freight
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May the Gifts of Faith, Friendship and Family Light Your Way at Christmas and All Year

With appreciation in our hearts, we wish everyone a beautiful and happy holiday season.

Stephen McCarty and family
Green Bank
304.456.5381 / 304.456.3263
Lic # WV056046

MCCARTY'S EXCAVATING

Happy Holidays!

PAC

Pocahontas County Arts Council
www.pocahontasarts.org

We wish you peace, joy and good health!

Thanks to all the members and friends who have kept us going strong in 2025.

Merry Christmas!

POCAHONTAS COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
Community Wellness Center • Ninth Street,
Beside Marlinton Elementary School • 304-799-7386

Ornaments, from page 9

made it seem to glow from within.

In addition to store bought ornaments, Cindy's tree had a collection of Papaw and Granny's ornaments, as well as ones she made herself.

Cindy is a cross-stitch artist and she made several Santa ornaments and my personal favorites – portraits of her golden retrievers.

Handmade ornaments not only celebrate the talents of family members, but they also serve as reminders of the loved one who made them, and are now gone.

Like my Papaw and Granny, Makinsey Poeppel's MamMa, Shirley Adams, made beautiful satin ornaments covered in sparkly beads and pearl push pins.

"For many years, new Christmas bulbs were created each Christmas season, and we

would battle over who got to pick first, Poeppel said. "Every child, grandchild and even some of the great-grandchildren received a special ornament with their name written in MamMa's handwriting in gold or silver glitter paint.

"Now that this is her third Christmas in heaven, adding these beautiful pieces of art and each individual 'MamMa ornament, including her own 'Shirley' ornament to our family Christmas tree brings just a little bit more of heaven to Earth each Christmas season," she added.

In memory of her mother,



SOME CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS are a reminder of loved ones we have lost over the years. Clockwise from right: Janet Cole keeps her late son, Brian, close with this ornament; Susan Smith-Linton made ornaments out of her mother's shirts as a memorial; and Makinsey Poeppel's family has several ornaments made by their MamMa, Shirley Adams.



Susan Smith-Linton, of Lewisburg, had ornaments made using her mother's Christmas shirts.

"I had ornaments made from her shirts for my brother and sisters, and her grandchildren," Smith-Lin-

ton said. "I sent them as Christmas gifts. This will be my favorite ornament for the rest of my

life."

Janet Cole, of Green Bank, also has a memorial ornament, for her son, Brian, that features a photo of him. "This ornament has been

on my tree every year and will be as long as I live," she said. "Brian passed away

see Ornaments pg 11



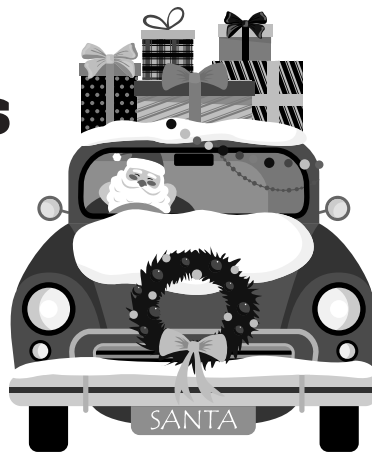
WITH WELL WISHES at CHRISTMAS

For a happy and healthy holiday to all.

Pritt Well Drilling
Ken and Jeff
304-653-4491

Here Comes Santa Claus!

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS IS ROLLING IN, AND WE HOPE IT DELIVERS EVERYTHING ON YOUR WISH LIST!



Thanks for being an important part of our year. Your friendship and support made 2025 a great ride for us, and we wish you all the best this holiday season and in the coming year.

Merry Christmas to You and Yours!
from Justin, Jimmy, Alice, Frank, Joe, Darrell, Murl, Vincent, Noah, Mike, Karen and Susie

COME SEE MIKE FOR A GREAT DEAL!
MURPHY'S USED AUTO SALES
RT. 28/92, DURBIN • 304-456-4858
murphysusedautos.com



Sending holiday greetings to our faithful friends with sincere thanks for your continued support and friendship.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
Huntersville Historical Traditions

Ornaments, from page 10

December 23, 1988. He was only five years old. He is al-

ways in my heart and will never be forgotten.”

Some people display themed trees.

Themed trees or ornaments are a great way to show off your personality, your likes and even special causes you support.

Mark and Terry Wagner, of Marlinton, are dedicated advocates for diabetes education and are always hoping for a cure.

The American Diabetes Association started making “Gift of Hope” ornaments in 1986. They represent the hope that there will be a cure one day.

“That spoke to our hearts because we have always car-

ried hope for a cure for diabetes,” Terry said. “It held a double significance for us because we believe Christmas is a time to celebrate the Hope that Jesus brings to the world.”

The Wagners bought the Gift of Hope ornament every year until they were discontinued in 2017.

“By that time, we had dedicated an entire tree to the ornaments and call it our Gift of Hope tree,” Terry said. “So, in 2018, we started getting our own Gift of Hope ornaments made. The 2018 ornament reads ‘Hope Continues.’

“We now have forty Gift of Hope ornaments on the tree,” she continued. “We continue to celebrate the gift of Hope in Jesus and the Gift of Hope for a cure for diabetes.”

In my family, Mom’s mother, Grandma Reva Hevener, only had one tree, but it soon grew to include more as we got older.

When we would visit Grandma at Christmas, we always had to go to my Aunt

Mark and Terry Wagner, of Marlinton, have a special tree dedicated to their collection of “Gift of Hope” ornaments which were designed by the American Diabetes Association between 1986 and 2017. After the ADA discontinued making ornaments, the Wagners had their own made so they can continue spreading the message of diabetes awareness and hope.

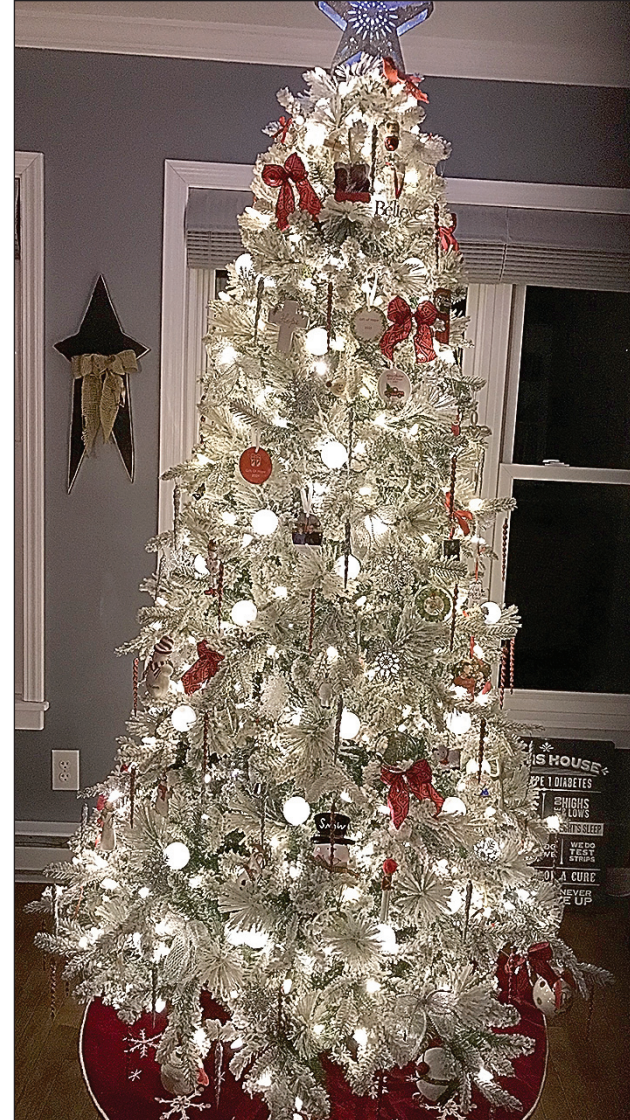
Dianne’s house to see her decorations.

She is Mom’s sister, and she always goes all out for Christmas. She used to joke that my Uncle David, dreaded Christmas because of the spike in the electric bill.

Dianne’s house had multiple themed trees. It got to the point where nearly every room – including the bathrooms – had trees.

The two most vivid in my memory were her Avon tree and the John Deere tree.

The Avon tree was in the living room and was filled with ornaments from, you



Merry Christmas
and best wishes for a
Grrr-EAT
New Year.
Thank you
so much
for your
business!
Shampooches
Dog Grooming
by Josie Kae
120 Old Campbelltown
Rd., Marlinton
304-651-7730

THANK YOU for ANOTHER GREAT YEAR.

*May your holidays be blessed
with warmth and cheer!*

The Christmas spirit is all around us, and we're so excited to be celebrating the season here with all of you. Thanks for believing in us and supporting our small business this year. Your trust and patronage mean the world to us, and inspire us to keep doing our very best.

With deep gratitude, we wish all of our neighbors, customers, associates and friends a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous new year!



818A Tenth Avenue
Marlinton | 304-799-6243

**A Big Helping of
THANKS**
and plenty of Cheer FOR GOOD MEASURE!

As we prepare for the New Year, we'd like to thank all our customers for your continued support. It's been our pleasure to serve you this year and we look forward to serving you in the New Year. We are truly blessed to be part of such a wonderful community. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!



HOLIDAY HOURS:

Tues., Dec. 23 - 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 24 - 8 a.m. - Noon
Closed Dec. 25 - Jan. 12

Regular hours resume Jan. 13:
Tues. and Wed. 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.
Fri. and Sat. 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
At the intersection of Rt. 28/92
Dunmore • 304-456-3176



**We'd like to paws and
wish you a sweet
holiday season!**
Dr. Stacy, Robin and Sydnee



150 Carl McCarty Drive
304-799-6803

guessed it, Avon.

The other tree was in the appropriately named John Deere room.

Mom’s side of the family are John Deere collectors because there were three generations of Heveners who owned and operated John Deere dealerships – including my Aunt Dianne.

So, the John Deere room is full of collectibles – from commemorative plates to coins to toys and models.

At Christmastime, a tree is added to the room and, of course, it is decorated with green and yellow ornaments.

Ornaments are much more than just decorations that are brought out to enjoy for a few weeks each year.

They are cherished reminders of the past and hope for the future.

The Angel of Spruce ~ A Christmas Miracle

Page 12
Christmas in the County • Supplement to The Pocahontas Times • December 18, 2022

**Ken Springer
Contributing Writer**

Prologue: Spruce was founded in 1902 in Pocahontas County, West Virginia and, at an elevation of nearly 4,000 feet, it was known as the highest town east of the Mississippi River. The town grew around a complex built by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company to supply pulpwood to its paper mills. The town had a large hotel with modern amenities such as electric lights and running water, a company store, offices, a schoolhouse and housing for employees. In its 50-year history, Spruce notably never had any roads; transportation was entirely by rail. The pulp mill

closed in 1926, and its machinery was moved away. The Western Maryland Railway then used the location as a coal-train terminal until a new terminal was built in 1949, leading to the final abandonment of the town by its remaining families. Spruce is now a ghost town, with almost nothing remaining except concrete foundations and ruins. Tours are available to visit the historic site via the Cass Scenic Railroad or on horseback. **The Angel of Spruce** At six feet, four inches, with broad shoulders and as strong as an ox, Mark Pogue set off to fight the Germans in May of 1917. Meanwhile, back in the mountain village of Spruce, West Virginia, his wife, Lauren, and daughter, Meagan, went about plowing their vegetable garden with a neighbor's mule on a strip of land bordering Shavers Fork. The war in Europe affected several of the other families in town; the Walshs lost both of their sons early on in the war. The whole town rallied around the grieving parents. But there was one woman in her eighties, still vibrant, who was always there to help others in need in any way she could. Margaret Murphy and her husband, Liam, arrived from Ireland shortly after the town was founded. Liam, a generous and selfless man, was the superintendent at the mill and died before the Pogues settled in Spruce. While walking his dog along the rain-swollen Shavers Fork one cold Saturday afternoon, Liam saw two young

boys floating down the river on a log and screaming for help. Without thinking, Liam, who couldn't swim, jumped into the frigid and roiling waters and managed to get the youngsters to shore. In doing so, his right foot became trapped between two large boulders, and he died of hypothermia before he could be rescued. It was Margaret who showed Lauren how to plant a proper vegetable garden, and she was always available to watch the wee girl when Lauren delivered clothing repairs and alterations to her customers. One dreary day before Mark returned, the postman found the beloved Margaret dead in her rose garden. During Mark's uncertain absence, the only money coming

into the Pogue home was that earned by Lauren, who mended clothes for others in the mill town and occasionally worked at the mill, wire-stitching and cleaning the floors. With Mark gone for God knows how long, Lauren and Meagan were living hand to mouth. It would be tough with Mark serving overseas, but Lauren, being of British stock, would keep a stiff upper lip. Just about the same time that Lauren and Meagan were picking the first of their sweet corn, new potatoes and green beans, Mark huddled in a trench with a long line of soldiers on the Western Front in West Flanders, Belgium, as the bloody battle of Ypres raged. The fighting had been fierce since the predawn hours of July 12, 1917. Then, as if on

cue, all German bombardment stopped, creating an eerie silence across No Man's Land. The American soldiers wondered if this was a good sign or a harbinger of something worse to come. Then, the ominous silence was broken not by a resumption of artillery fire but by an overwhelming smell of garlic, causing soldiers up and down the trench to wonder aloud what it meant. Little did the soldiers know that the invisible cloud of mustard gas that enveloped them would hide its effects for several hours. Hours before Mark began feeling any of the symptoms of the mustard gas, he noticed most of the men were unable to stand up and slumped into

see Miracle pg 14



Page 13
Christmas in the County • Supplement to The Pocahontas Times • December 18, 2025

Visit us online at:
www.pocahontastimes.com

Christmas
THE SAVIOR IS BORN

With gratitude in our hearts for your friendship and support, we wish you a blessed and happy Christmas. May the season bring abundant joy, peace and prosperity to you and your loved ones!

Thank you for your faith in us. Your loyalty and trust inspire us to do more and give back, and we look forward to sharing another wonderful year here at home with all of you.

ALDERMAN'S EXCAVATING, LLC
Charlotte, Jason and Ryan
304-799-6572

YULETIDE GREETINGS

To all our neighbors, customers and friends, we wish a Christmas holiday filled with much peace, laughter and happiness. For your patronage, you have our deepest gratitude, and we look forward to seeing you again, soon.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

City NATIONAL BANK
MARLINTON
304-799-4640
BANKATCITY.COM

Home Is Where the Heart Is

Thanks for warming our hearts with your friendship and kind support this year. Neighbors like you make us especially proud to call this fine community home.

Merry Christmas from the Ramseys, and JR, Eddie, Robbie, Panther and Tom!

Eddie's Service Center
304-799-6651

Wishing You a **Blessed & Beautiful Christmas**

Christmastime gives us so much to celebrate, and we can't think of a better place to share the joy of the season than right here at home with all of our wonderful customers and friends. We hope the love and light of this blessed time uplifts and inspires you.

Thanks to everyone who has inspired so much happiness in us this year. When we count our blessings, we count the kindness of this community among them.

Beloves Cutlip, owner

Flower Garden
212 8th Street • Marlinton • 304-799-4012
Open Mon/Wed/Fri 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Wishing You an Extra Helping of Merry This Christmas

Hope your holiday season is full of reasons to celebrate!

Thanks for dining with us this year; we appreciate your business!

Greenbrier Grille & Lodge

Lorie, Charlene, Lori, Trinity, Tiffany Walton, Tiffany Ryder, Lynn, Eugene, Kris, Noah, Angel, Katrina, Heather, Penny, Hailey, Devon, Mike and Lynette

CELEBRATING THE MIRACLE OF HIS BIRTH

As we celebrate the Miracle that took place in a simple manger so many Christmases ago, we are filled with a sense of peace, joy, contentment and love that we want to share with all of our good friends and neighbors in the community.

Kenny Woods State Farm Insurance
Kenny, Kelly, Jerdina and Dalton

Miracle, from page 13

the muddy floor of the trench, vomiting and screaming in pain. Some had uncontrollable fits, while others were choking on fluid building up in their lungs; many died right in the trench that was supposed to protect them.

A sudden shift of winds back toward the German Army allowed the worst of the affected to be transported back to the field hospital behind the front lines.

Mark began scratching furiously at his face and arms just before darkness settled in over the trenches; by then, many of the soldiers were feeling the effects of the mustard gas.

By morning, Mark's vision was so blurry he couldn't make out the men on either side of him. He and several hundred other troops would be moved to fully equipped hospitals several miles behind the lines. Here, the doctors would inform Mark that he had lost a significant amount of his vision. In addition to that depressing news, he had suffered severe nerve injuries that may be expressed as uncontrolled seizures - Mark would be sent back to the States after two painful

months in a trench hospital. Lauren and Meagan were harvesting their carrots, pumpkins, and beets when they heard the whistle of the train coming up from Cass. Both women dropped their spades and ran to the flag stop as they always did. Today was different from all the previous days, though. Mark, wearing dark glasses, was assisted off the train by a soldier.

The young Army medic stood off to one side as Lauren and Meagan smothered Mark with hugs and kisses, tears of joy at having their man back. From letters, the women knew that Mark had been in a hospital, but not the full extent of his injuries - they tried hard not to show their fear.

After getting Mark back home, the medic sat at the kitchen table explaining to Lauren and Meagan what to expect and what not to expect regarding Mark's recovery. He was nearly blind and subject to terrible seizures, and would, most likely, never work again.

Before Mark was sent off to war, he was a foreman at

the pulp mill, and he did not know how he would care for his family as they deserved. He hated the thought that his wife was the primary breadwinner, and he had a hard time looking his wife and daughter in the eyes. What must they think of him?

The owners of the pulp mill allowed them to stay in their home as long as Lauren was working there. She was not a stranger to hard work and worked part-time at the company store in addition to her job at the mill.

Meagan became her father's eyes and would lead her dad down to the garden when she and her mother harvested most of the remaining produce. She knew that in the physical sense, he was not the man he was before the war, yet her love for him had only grown in his absence.

Mark never told his daughter about the horrors of the war. Instead, he shared what he thought about when sitting in those miserable trenches. He told her that when he was in the trenches he thought of noth-

ing else but his family and occasionally of his love of fly fishing for native brook trout in Shavers Fork; he said it helped him keep his sanity when many around him were losing theirs.

Mark was clearly depressed at his situation, but was a gentle and thoughtful man who would never take out his frustrations on his family.

At the time of World War I, there was no such term as post-traumatic stress disorder and, therefore, no viable treatment for the mental damage inflicted by senseless butchery. There were, however, several categories of battle-induced trauma referred to simply as shell shock.

After the first frost, Meagan escorted her father down to the garden to collect the pumpkins, which would be distributed to all of the families in the neighborhood so that the kids could make jack-o-lanterns.

Lauren and Meagan and her father found a lovely spruce tree along a path that she could safely lead Mark along. That afternoon, Lauren and Meagan decorated the tree with strings of popcorn and cranberries, and they placed a hand-carved angel at the tippy top.

Shortly after dark, and with snow rapidly accumulating, there was a knock on their front door. Meagan jumped up from placing a gift for her mother under the tree and hurried to the door. Standing on the small porch was an older man dressed in light clothing, and no hat or gloves, yet he didn't appear to be cold.

Each Christmas Eve, the owners of the pulp mill would distribute turkeys, hams, and gifts for the chil-

dren of Spruce. Meagan and her father found a lovely spruce tree along a path that she could safely lead Mark along. That afternoon, Lauren and Meagan decorated the tree with strings of popcorn and cranberries, and they placed a hand-carved angel at the tippy top.

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see Miracle pg 15

A ROUND OF THANKS

We're so grateful to be a part of this close-knit community. Thank you for your kindness, friendship and support.

Merry Christmas!

4th Avenue
Mason Jar Trading Post
Est. 2013
304-799-2520

Season's GREETINGS

Merry Christmas to you and yours. We wish you all the best, and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Jerico Pre-Civil War Cabins

749 Jerico Road, Marlinton
304-799-6241 • 888-499-6241
www.jericobb.com

Merry & Bright Wishes

Wishing our clients and friends all the best this season!

Michael C. Doss Attorney-At-Law

and
Tina, Andi, and Amanda

Thanks for Filling Our Year With So Much Cheer

We can't think of a better place to celebrate the holidays than right here with all of you. Thank you for believing in us and supporting our business. To our friends, customers and neighbors all around town, warmest wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy year ahead.

From Your Friends at Fast Break,
Roberta, Gracie, Reagan, Caitlyn, Rhonda, Lisa, Savannah, Aaron, Eddie, Dixie and Karen
Rt. 219 N. Marlinton, WV • 304-799-6121



MAY THE
JOY OF CHRISTMAS

*Warm Your Heart
& Lift Your Spirit*

'Tis the season for rejoicing, reconnecting, reflecting, renewing faith and simply celebrating! As we welcome the Christmas season into our hearts and homes, we're overjoyed and filled with gratitude for all of the blessings that have made our year so special, including the friendships we share here with all of you.

We are so grateful for the relationships we have formed with our customers and neighbors in this community.

At Christmastime and always, we wish each and every one of you good health, great prosperity and abundant happiness.

*Thank you for choosing to shop locally
and for supporting our small business.*

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes!

Glades Building Supply

8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Saturday

19456 Seneca Trail Marlinton, WV 24954

304-799-4912

Miracle, from page 14

No one who came to Spruce was considered a stranger, not even this man who came in out of a blizzard. Lauren invited him into the house and set him down in a large, over-stuffed chair before the fireplace. Soon, she placed a steaming mug of hot chocolate in his hand.

Not wishing to appear nosy, but concerned for the man, Mark asked him how he ended up in Spruce on such a wintry night. His thick Irish brogue was not often heard in the area, but he said that he came from some distance and, due to the inclement weather, knocked on the first door he came to.

The man never said his name, nor his reason for coming to Spruce. But he was clearly an amiable and interesting gentleman, and at the Pogues he would be treated as one. Lauren set the table for the family and their guest. After a sumptuous dinner, they all settled in the living room to sing Christmas carols. Their guest's voice was beautiful, and the accent made the songs even more appealing.

While Mark and the visitor talked about the war in Europe, the visitor asked Mark about his experience there, yet he seemed to already know the extent of Mark's injuries, which was a bit puzzling at the time.

At one point in their con-

versation, the guest asked Mark if he might touch his eyes and hands. The man's gentleness and sincerity made Mark comfortable enough to let him touch him, even though he had no idea why the man had made such a strange request.

Lauren made up the bed in the small guest room for the gentleman, and a little after midnight, they all went off to bed after exchanging Christmas greetings.

The next morning, Lauren and Meagan set off for the kitchen to prepare breakfast. When the meal was on the table, Lauren sent Meagan to rouse her father, while she knocked on the visitor's door. There was no answer, so she opened the door. To her surprise, the man was not there; moreover, the bed had not been slept in.

She ran to the front door and, upon opening it, she saw that there were no tracks – and the snow had stopped falling just before they went to bed. How could this be?

When Lauren returned to the kitchen to tell her family her strange discovery, she nearly fainted. Mark was reading the town's newsletter, and his terrible facial scars were gone. Meagan, standing at the kitchen sink, told her mother that her father needed no help getting out of his bed as he always did since he was injured, and that he was navigating about effortlessly. At that, he jumped up and started dancing with his overwhelmed wife.

As a family, they first de-

cidened not to talk about the incident as it may sound a bit ludicrous to others, though they still had no idea what had happened on Christmas Eve of 1917.

Lauren told Mark and Meagan about the dream she had in which the spirit of Margaret Murphy assured her that Mark would be OK, but that did not solve the mystery of the Christmas Eve visitor.

Several months later, Lauren was going through a box of items that Margaret had given her before she died. The box contained several heirloom brooches, an ivory hair comb, and a picture of Margaret and her husband, Liam, standing in front of their stone cottage in Ireland. She began crying when she realized that the Christmas visitor was Liam Murphy.

Mark went back to work at the pulp mill and later worked for the railroad. The Pogues lived in Spruce until the town slowly emptied out. They then moved to Cass, where they lived out the rest of their lives. Meagan's two daughters still live on the banks of the Greenbrier River just upstream from Cass. Both women worked together to write a book about the *Christmas Miracle at Spruce, West Virginia*.

Miracles do happen, you know.

Merry Christmas to all readers of *The Pocahontas Times*.

Ken Springer

ken1949bongo@gmail.com

Wishing you a Merry Christmas

Thanks to all of our customers and associates for being such an important part of our year.

Steven VanReenen and family 540-815-8159

Books ~ perfect for the young and the young at heart

Laura Dean Bennett
Staff Writer

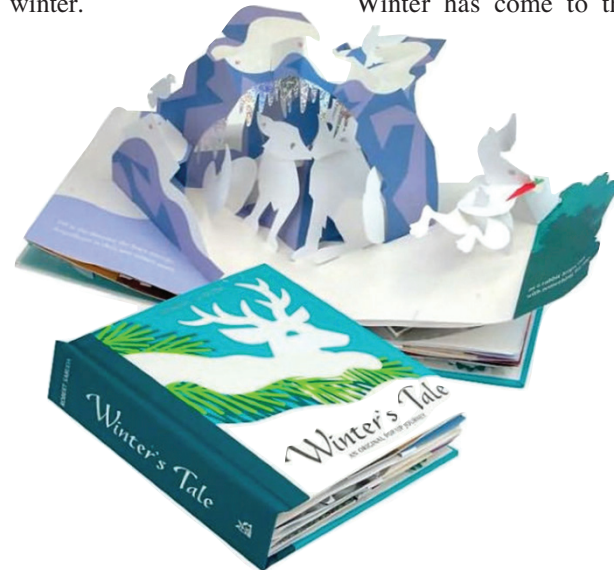
For babies and toddlers

Winter's Tale A Pop-Up Book

by Robert Sabuda
A winter wonderland in
glittering 3D!

Robert Sabuda is known for his great pop-up books, but "Winter's Tale" may be his most spectacular one yet. It's a winter wonderland in glittering 3-D.

The simple, elegant text is illustrated with stunning artwork and extraordinary paper design. Gorgeous visual effects in foil and glitter truly capture the magic of winter.



For little readers 1 to 4 years of age

Barn in Winter: Safe and Warm on the Farm

Written by Chambræe Griffith,
Illustrations by Taia Morley
"Barn in Winter: Safe and Warm on the Farm" is the first of a three-book series, including "Barn in Spring" and "Barn in Fall".

"Barn feels a chill. Her weathervane spins. She braces her beams. A snowstorm begins..."

The theme of this a lyrical, beautifully illustrated board book is comfort and reassurance.

Winter has come to the

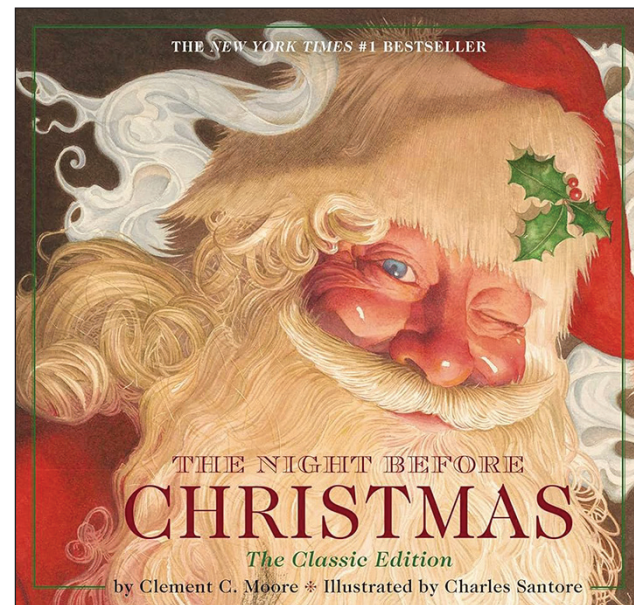


farm and snow has covered everything in an icy blanket. But where is the cow? Where is the pig and the goat?

They are snugly all tucked in – safe and dry inside the warm barn.

Celebrate winter with this beautiful keepsake book that any farm-loving toddler is sure to love.

For ages 1 to 7
And for children of all ages



The Night Before Christmas

by Clement Moore,
with illustrations by Charles Santore

"Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house..."

Make this holiday season special by re-reading this Christmas classic enchanting tale of "The Night Before Christmas."

The legendary story of a

see Young pg 17

Merry Christmas and Many Thanks



to our talented teachers and support staff!
Best wishes to all students and their families!

Because... SCHOOL is COOL!

Sam Gibson,

Pocahontas County Board of Education Member



Warm holiday wishes from the Pocahontas County Convention and Visitors Bureau!

Thank you for exploring with us, supporting local destinations, and helping our community thrive.

May your season be filled with joy, and may the New Year bring memorable journeys and new places to discover.

With warmest regards from the PCCVB Staff and Board of Directors

Young, from page 16

visit from Old St. Nick, is presented in this exquisite #1 New York Times bestselling edition, breathes life into the magic of Santa Claus.

Its beautifully embossed foil-stamped cover, enticing four-page foldout and vintage-inspired illustrations by celebrated artist, Charles Santore, make it an ideal Christmas gift for any family.

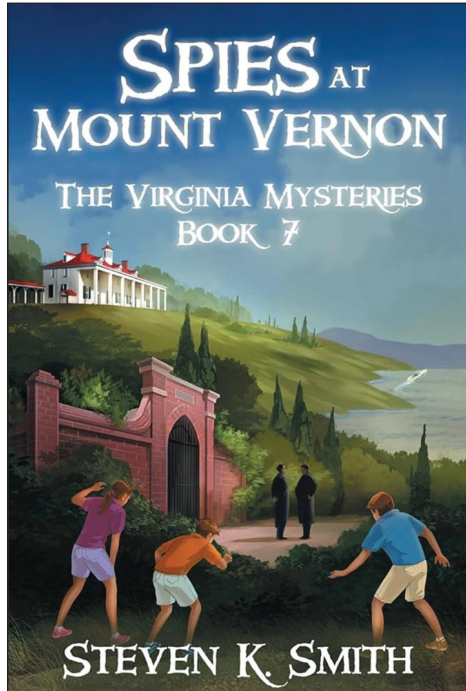
For ages 5-12

James Herriot's Treasury for Children

By James Herriot, illustrations by Peter Barrett and Ruth Brown

This hardcover edition is the definitive collection of all eight of Herriot's classic children's books.

The famous, bestselling author of "All Creatures Great and Small" spent a



lifetime as a veterinarian in the farm country of the Yorkshire Dales.

Herriot's lyrical writing style and lifetime of veterinary experience informed these poignant and often humorous stories which have

inspired lifetimes of love and respect for animals in young readers.

Featuring a host of animals and the people who care for them, the stories are narrated by the country vet himself, with all his warm



and humor.

This new, complete edition will make a wonderful gift.

His bestselling memoirs include "All Creatures Great and Small," "All Things Bright and Beautiful," "All

Things Wise and Wonderful The Lord God Made Them All" and "Every Living Thing."

For ages 9 to 12

Spies at Mount Vernon

by Steven K. Smith

These fast-paced, modern-day adventures are fictional but set in real locations and taken from actual events in Virginia history.

Dead drops, cyphers and invisible ink make this a mysterious tale that even spymaster George Washington would love.

A fun game of pretend turns all too real when mystery buffs, Sam, Derek and Caitlin visit the National Mall in Washington, D.C. They follow a mysterious man to a meeting deep within the Capitol – where real spies are really lurking.

"Spies at Mount Vernon" is the seventh book in The Virginia Mysteries series, but it also makes a great stand-alone read.

For ages 8 and older

National Park Mystery Series

by author and

illustrator, Aaron Johnson

"Mystery In Rocky Mountain National Park" (Book 1 of 5 of the National Park Mystery Series)

This first installment of the New National Park Mystery Series has it all – secret codes, lost landmarks, hidden clues – and it's all set in actual national park locations.

Before Jake's grandfather died, he was on the trail of a centuries-old mystery. And he has entrusted that mystery to Jake, leaving behind a set of hidden codes, riddles, maps and other clues that lead Jake and his friends on a scavenger hunt into the heart of Colorado's wild and rugged Rocky Mountain National Park.

see Young pg 18

Wishing you Pure Joy

Thank you for supporting us at the holidays and all year.

We wish you a blessed and beautiful Christmas season, and a Happy New Year.

Michael, Bill, Jaynell, Cindy, Sunny, Suzanne, Ken, Laura Dean, Melondy and Floyd

The Pocahontas Times

YOU'VE MADE OUR YEAR MERRY AND BRIGHT!



Thank you for your business.

Merry Christmas!

216 Ninth Street

Marlinton, WV

Across from

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Young, from page 17

For ages 12 and older

The Call of the Wild by Jack London

Generally recommended for grades 6-12 (Editions published by Scholastic, Simon & Schuster)

Due to its intense depiction of hardship, brutality and animal cruelty, the original text may be too challenging for younger readers.

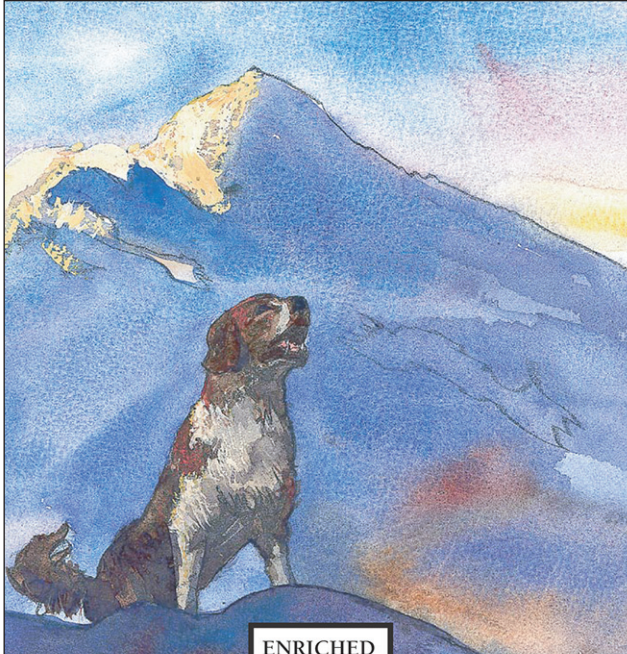
However, there are adapted editions (e.g. Puffin Graphics and some Dover editions) which are suitable for ages 9-13.

"The Call of the Wild" is generally considered to be London's greatest achievement.

This classic by one of America's premier writers was, at one time, considered the quintessential early 20th century adventure book.

London drew on his own experiences in Alaska during the gold rush in writing this thrilling tale.

It's the story of an extraordinarily noble dog named Buck. He's shanghaied from



ENRICHED CLASSIC

THE CALL OF THE WILD

JACK LONDON

Includes detailed explanatory notes and critical commentary

his pampered life as a pet and sold as a sled dog in the Yukon Territory during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896.

Buck must survive all manner of danger by reverting to his primal instincts. He finally returns to the wild, and, like his ancestors, runs with a wolf pack.

This is one of the most memorable books that I read as a youngster. Even now, it's worth reading again.

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Wild and Wonderful Winter Reading List

Laura Dean Bennett
Staff Writer

West Virginia – the only state which lies completely within the borders of Appalachia – is home to some of the richest biodiversity in the country.

With that rich heritage in mind, here's a sampling of books which focus on the wild and wonderful wonders of Appalachia – from the plants and animals to the humans who call it home.

Appalachian Spring, Appalachian Summer, Appalachian Autumn and Appalachian Winter - a four-volume series by acclaimed naturalist Marcia Bonta

Each of the four seasonal meditations in this collection explores Appalachian flora and fauna in a unique way.

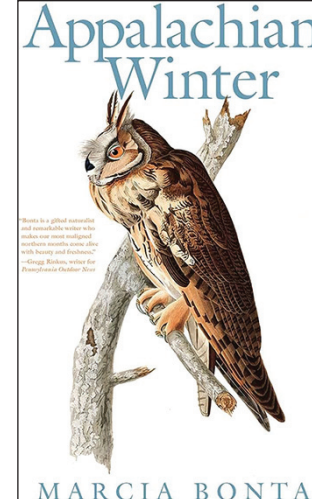
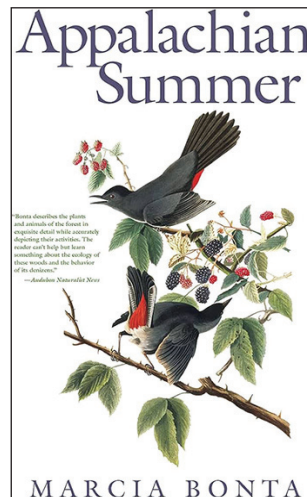
They are written by in the charming style of a personal journal.

The naturalist's daily entries chronicle the struggle for survival faced by plants, animals and insects during each season's changing weather and evolving circumstances.

Each book in the series also includes vignettes about the author's human family, who, alongside the flora and fauna, also call the Appalachian terrain their home.

Wild and Wonderful: The Wildlife of West Virginia
by Edwin Daryl Michael
with photographs
by Steve Shaluta

Two of our state's most keen observers of West Virginia wildlife bring their expertise to bear in this exciting compendium of our most fascinating and beautiful creatures.



Dr. Edward Michael's informative narratives about each species is complimented by the exquisite photography of famous West Virginia nature photographer Steve Shaluta.

Each photograph is accompanied by fascinating facts about the species, with special references to their

lives in West Virginia.

Native of Plum Run, in Marion County, Dr. Edwin Michael, Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Ecology at West Virginia University, has devoted more than 40 years of his life to the study of the state's wildlife. He has published three historical fiction novels, "A Valley Called Canaan," "Shadow of the Alleghenies" and "Death Visits Canaan."

Steve Shaluta is native of Grafton. After 14 years as a railroad engineer, Shaluta turned his photography

hobby into a career. With more than 50 magazine covers, nine books and innumerable published images to his credit, Shaluta is one of West Virginia's most acclaimed photographers.

West Virginia – A Wider View by WV photographer
Frank Ceravalo

This beautiful 112-page coffee table book showcases a collection of panoramic scenic photography representing two decades of work by award-winning photographer and West Virginia native Frank Ceravalo.

Each of Ceravalo's breathtaking panoramic images

provides a unique perspective on the landscape of his home state.

The Appalachian Storyteller,
Volumes One and Two
By J.D. Phillips

This autographed two-volume set of "Appalachian Storyteller" would make the perfect gift for anyone who can't get enough of old-fashioned storytelling.

Phillips weaves a tapestry from stories he heard as a child and historical accounts resurrected from Appalachian history.

see List pg 20

SEASON'S GREETINGS & GRATITUDE



With deepest appreciation, the Pocahontas County Opera House Foundation thanks our board, volunteers, community partners, and supporters whose generosity keeps the Opera House thriving. Built on the vision of our founding board and strengthened by the tireless work of dedicated volunteers, this nonprofit community treasure continues to enrich the cultural fabric of our region. Your ongoing kindness and commitment make everything we do possible, and we are profoundly grateful for the support that carries our mission forward.



JOY to the WORLD

Wishing you a bright and blessed Christmas, trimmed with our gratitude. May the holiday spirit fill your heart with peace and happiness.

Merry Christmas, Friends!

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Merry Christmas

from

Marlinton Fire and Rescue



List, from page 19

Together, the two volumes contain more than 40 tales told with authenticity and respect, straight from the heart of Appalachia.

In addition to being a distinguished author and history buff, J.D. Phillips is a Country Music Association award-winning musician and a teacher.

Christmas In Camelot – A Magical Mountain Holiday Mystery

Prequel to the *Magical Mountain Mystery Series* by Cyn Mackley and Emma Jameson

This novella is the prequel

to the Camelot West Virginia series.

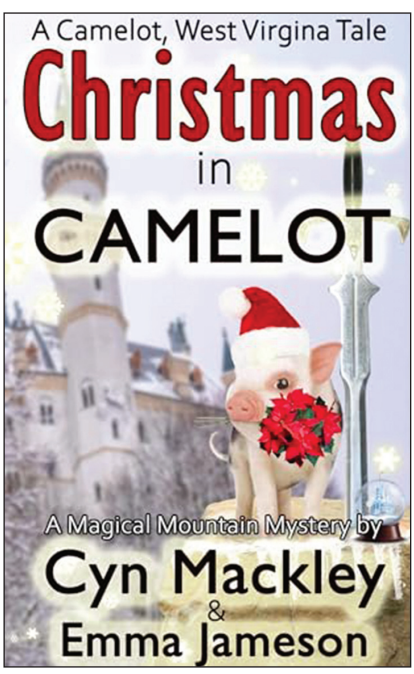
It introduces Camelot, a struggling town under threat by dark secrets whose brave knights wear camo and damsels in distress can usually take care of themselves.

Christmas notwithstanding, there's a mystery to be solved, and it may take a miracle and some old mountain magic to do it.

"Camelot West Virginia" is the first full-length novel of this somewhat "cozy" mystery series.

The series was inspired by the Arthurian legend and informed by Appalachian folklore

and roots and experience as a newspaper crime reporter.



It mixes mystery with mountain folklore and romance, serving all with a dash of dry wit.

In this novel, book one of what is – so far – a three-book series, readers return to Camelot, West Virginia, a coal country town fallen on hard times.

Its mayor is committed to the noble goal of bringing her town back to prosperity.

Its residents are a fascinating cast of characters who reflect the heroes, heroines and villains of Arthurian legend.

Its sheriff, deputies, firefighters and paramedics, are Camelot's modern-day knights, using old

fashioned values and unorthodox methods to confront modern mischief and an ominous murder mystery.

"Come a Blackbird": Camelot West Virginia Book 2 - "An Appalachian Gothic Mystery" is the latest installment in the Camelot series. The Southern Gothic-style mystery is once again in-

fused with a healthy dose of humor as the famous legend of King Arthur gets a modern Appalachian twist.

If you like light-hearted mysteries populated by colorful characters and set in West Virginia, put the Camelot West Virginia mysteries on your winter reading list.



Thank you for all your support this year!

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and good health for the New Year!



God bless you, Mim, Bill and Kane

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When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him...
 –Matthew 2:10-11

At Christmas and always, may your heart and faith in God lead you down the road to peace, joy and contentment. We feel blessed to be a part of this community, and we thank you for your friendship and support.

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Sprucing up for the holidays ~ and beyond

Laura Dean Bennett
Staff Writer

For centuries, humans have used evergreens to “deck the halls” in December. First for winter solstice celebrations and later for Christmas.

Evergreen trees were considered sacred in ancient Rome, as were holly and mistletoe to the Druids.

Their vibrant green color – especially welcome when other trees stand gray and leafless in a snowy landscape – added to their magical fragrance bring the beauty of nature to our December celebrations.

If you are lucky enough to have evergreen trees in your yard or woods, you are living next door to a fabulous supply of décor for Christmas-

time. Whether you’re gathering them outdoors or arranging them indoors, always remember to wear gloves when handling evergreens – some of those branches can bite.

Of course, spruce, pine, cedar and holly make great outdoor wreaths and garlands for porches, fences and gates. And they’re perfect for arrangements in pots on the porch or in the yard.

Porch pots of evergreen arrangements have become popular for outdoor décor and can often last all winter. Spruce tips are pushed into soil in the container, and then watered in. The water freezes, thaws and refreezes, keeping the branches from drying out.

Check porch pots during



DRIED ORANGE SLICES, pinecones and berries add a touch of color to the mixed evergreen garland on the mantel. And Romeo adds a touch of furriness to the hearth. *L.D. Bennett photo*

prolonged periods of above freezing temperatures, as they may need more water. Evergreens make great in-

door décor, too. Most will be equally useful but, as you cut them, check your evergreen boughs for their scent. A few have a scent that you might not want in the house.

With a little planning and care, we can keep evergreen sprigs and branches fresh and green for a month or more, depending on their placement.

They’ll do best in cooler areas away from heat

see Spruce pg 22

Peace.
Hope.
Joy.

Thank you for the joy and purpose
you’ve brought to our year.
We’re blessed to have friends and
customers like all of you.

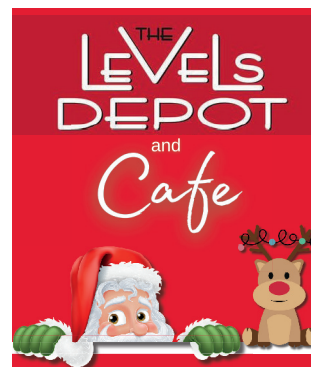


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May your year be filled with the sweetest
gifts of Christmas –
Love, Hope,
Peace and Joy!



In the Rivertown Shops Building, Marlinton

Spruce, from page 21

sources or vents. Evergreen garlands used on the mantel over a fireplace may need to be refreshed or replaced if they dry out from the heat.

Evergreen branches are perfect for tabletop arrangements in a vase, a crock or a pitcher filled with water. Evergreen centerpieces or runner-style arrangements set in floral foam will last well if "their feet" are kept wet.

By keeping them out of direct sunlight, and changing their water frequently, I've kept the tips of pine branches (which seem to last the longest) in vases of water for almost the entire winter.

Holly is a wonderful complement to wreaths and arrangements, but it doesn't stay fresh for long, so plan to remove it within days of placing it in décor.

Other outdoor plant materials can be brought in to decorate in the winter months, too.

Eucalyptus stems, boxwood and cedar clippings, juniper branches and birch



THERE ARE COUNTLESS ways to use pine cones as Christmas tree ornaments. *L.D. Bennett photo*

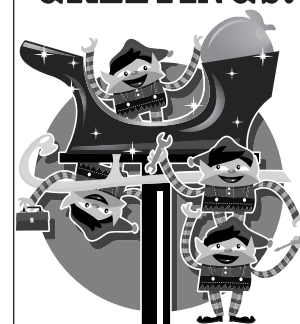
logs make lovely décor. Choose attractively shaped branches of deciduous shrubs, such as dogwood or curly willow, to add interest to winter arrangements.

Dried hydrangea blossoms are also naturals for winter

decorating. Coat them thoroughly with hairspray to keep them from shedding and tuck them into a tablescape or even the Christmas tree. And those dead blossoms still outside on the hydrangea bush will

add a glamorous glow to

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!



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winter arrangements after being spray painted gold.

And, of course, pinecones are always perfect for Christmas and winter decorating. They are some of the most versatile winter décor Mother Nature gives us.

When bringing them in from the great outdoors, don't forget to de-bug them. Place them on a parchment lined baking sheet in a warm oven just long enough to kill any creepy crawly residents. Let them cool, then gently tap them out over the trash can. Now they're ready for use.

Pinecones, all by themselves, make beautiful wreaths, not just for Christmas but for the entire winter season.

And they are perfect for

adding to almost any Christmas wreath.

Pinecones can be fashioned into Christmas trees by wiring them to tree-shaped frames, or included in table arrangements and also hung as Christmas tree ornaments.

For a touch of elegance, pinecones can be sprayed with gold or silver paint, rolled in faux snow or coated in glitter.

With or without any dressing up, pinecones always make classic Christmas decorations.

Gathered in a large bowl, just plain old pinecones make a perfect centerpiece.

I've always kept a pinecone collection – adding

see Spruce pg 23

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Spruce, from page 22

to it over the years – and it's come in handy for all kinds of décor and craft projects.

The collection claims its place on the fireplace hearth every December, where it stays all winter.

Oranges have had an important place in our Christmas celebrations for more than a hundred years, ever since Appalachian children looked forward to finding one in their stocking on Christmas morning.

My mother told me stories of growing up in Cass when getting an orange for Christ-

mas was considered an exotic treat.

Their delicious, fresh flavor, intoxicating scent and many uses make oranges an important staple for the holidays. And not just as food. They also come handy for décor.

The delightful scent of a pomander ball always trans-

ports me back to my childhood.

Some of my earliest holiday memories are of my mom teaching me how to make pomander balls. We decorated oranges with designs made by pressing whole cloves into them.

Using the tip of a tool, like

a nut pick, to make a tiny hole makes inserting the clove easier.

The scent of the orange oil mixed with the cloves sends the most delightful aroma wafting through the house.

Each season of the year provides its own special natural beauty. Wintertime may

not offer blooming flowers, but there's still plenty of natural décor out there, just waiting to be discovered.

With a little imagination, you can transform your home into an indoor winter wonderland – that is a gift to the senses.

Behold the Miracle



*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his
shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

–Isaiah 9:6

**May the miracle of His birth
fill your heart with light at
Christmastime and all year.
Rejoice!**

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Merry Christmas!

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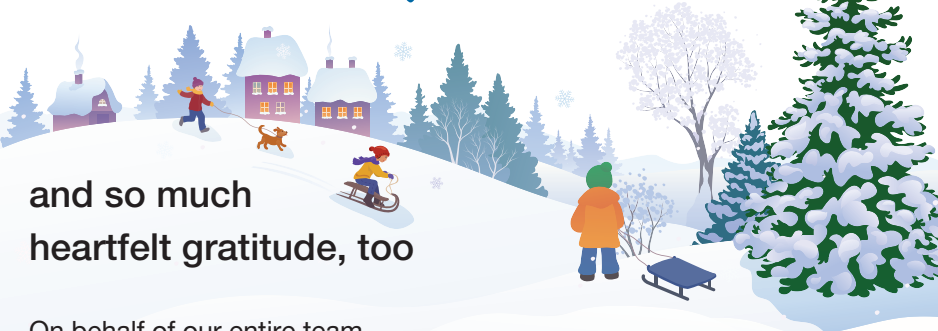
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Merry **Christmas** *From the* **Bunch of Us**

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Small businesses like ours depend on loyal customers like you, and your decision to shop locally makes a difference to our employees, our families and our community. We appreciate your loyalty, and we wish all of you a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

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