Dreaming of a White Christmas in Augusta

A Welcome Holiday Home

Sweets, Treats and Recipes Galore

Great Gift Ideas

Welcome Home for the Holidays

Supplement to the Clermont Sun, Ledger Independent, News Democrat, People’s Defender and Ripley Bee
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On the COVER

“Christmas isn’t just a day, it’s a frame of mind.”

~ Valentine Davies, “Miracle on 34th Street”

“Christmas doesn’t come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more.”

~ Dr. Seuss

And the winner is...

Jeremy Curtis, of Maysville, Kentucky, was the lucky winner of a two-night stay in a cabin at Ohio State Park cabin locations. Jeremy was drawn as the winner from all entries that correctly identified the page in Seasons September issue where the maple leaf was found. Congratulations, Jeremy! Look for more fun contests to come. Thanks to Ohio State Parks for their participation and support of Seasons Magazine!

found on page 23

2019 hometown holiday

Seasons, a unique regional lifestyle magazine, is published six times a year and features content that reflects and compliments each season.

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As we gather together with family and friends to celebrate the THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, let's remember the reason that we celebrate Thanksgiving: To offer our sincere thanks and praise to ALMIGHTY GOD for all the GREAT BLESSINGS that he has bestowed upon us! May you be blessed with the gifts of life, love, health, safety, freedom, prosperity, happiness and forgiveness! May GOD BLESS AMERICA! May GOD permit our great nation to overcome all the economic pitfalls that have transpired as of late, and make this nation once again a respected world power, mighty in giving and forgiving. May GOD watch over our soldiers, police officers, first responders and medical personnel — here and abroad — as they risk their lives to save lives and protect our precious freedoms. May GOD’s infinite wisdom be absorbed by all leaders in any capacity around the World, inspiring them to make decisions that are the best for their people and not for their own desires and uses. May GOD help us to find a source of Peace all over the World and bring an end to terrorism, both here and abroad. May GOD bless the sick, ill, injured, and infirm with the miracle of healing, and be with them and their families and caretakers during and through their time of struggles. May GOD Bless as with a Worldwide and Lasting Peace, an end to hunger and homelessness and may Christianity be expanded throughout the World, and may all people find Love, Truth, and Faith in the Lord and may their Faith increase each day throughout the remainder of their Earthly lives. May GOD bless the souls of all the departed, keeping them at HIS right hand in HEAVEN, letting them know how much they are loved and missed by their family and friends who survive them on Earth, and may THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD be with their families, friends, and survivors to console them during their grief. AMEN

HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY TO ALL!!! Craig A. Stanfield Real Estate & Auction Services, Craig, Ben, Family, Friends & Staff.
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“Are you ready for Christmas?”
We hear that question often during this time of year, don’t we? “Ready” is usually defined by how much we have ticked through on our “to do” list... gifts bought and wrapped, cookies made, tree up and decorated, cards sent out... we all have our own unique lists of what makes the holidays special to each of us.

Does that question stir up tension in you like it sometimes does me? I’m smiling my “Happy Holiday” smile as I answer but inside I’m wondering how I am going to get everything done I have planned. I force even more of a smile as they tell me they are ready... and have been since July! Are you kidding me?

But the most important thing that readies us for Christmas never makes that list. Is my heart prepared for this Christmas?

Have I built in quiet time to ponder and meditate on the wonder of the season? Will I take time out of my bustling about to take a walk in the snow? Read a book that quiets my heart, inspires my soul? Listen again to Handel’s Messiah in its entirety?

Seems like no matter how carefully I try to plan the holidays, no matter how many lists I make, I still end up with a schedule that often leaves little space for spontaneity. Little space for solitude. Precious time with those that matter most to me is crowded out by too full an agenda.

I find I have to be very intentional about carving out time to just be with some of the people in my life that are especially important to me.

Otherwise, I find that the people I spend the most time with are on the other side of the sales counter, at the other end of the phone straightening out my order. Or I am holed up in the bedroom I use to wrap gifts – the one that looks like a Christmas wrapping paper factory exploded.

So much extra energy comes from during the holidays, but my evenings turn into late nights of not only wrapping but baking and writing out cards and decorating. It’s like I have taken on another job in addition to my very full-time job I already have.

I so want to keep my life in check and balanced. I want to do the things that really matter. I want to guard myself against trading off activity for quality time with loved ones. And I want to engage with them with all my senses tuned in to the conversation, the time we share. I know I can only do that if I guard my heart by nurturing it. Taking time to appreciate the true meaning of Christmas that is all too often lost in tinsel and glitter and lights.

Do I really want measure the worth of a relationship based on how much I can or can’t get done? Is that ornament I am making for a gift or time spent shopping to find the just-right something for someone worth as much as spending time with that person?

Let me remember the reason for the season! Let me embrace the joy, the hope, the peace that was born 2000 years ago.

These song lyrics written by Linford Detweiler of Over the Rhine so express the longing of my heart for the holidays...

**Bring me a white horse for Christmas**
We’ll ride him through the snow
All the way to Bethlehem
Two thousand years ago

I wanna speak with the angel
Who said do not be afraid
I wanna kneel where the oxen knelt
Where the little child was laid

Won’t you celebrate the real reason for the season with me? Embrace it with your heart... not your “to do” list.

May your season be blessed with great memories, great peace, great joy!

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If someone knows horses and carriages, it’s Charlie Poppe, who at 72, has cultivated a life as a horse-drawn carriage connoisseur. Yep, in the day and age of vehicles and other modes of transportation, carriages and carriage drivers still exist.

Poppe owns and operates a carriage museum with his wife Suzie. They used to live in Williamsburg, OH but now live in Union Township, just behind the Cincinnati Nature Center.

He owns about 30 historical carriages, many previously owned by famous American families, along with all sorts of accessories. Poppe said he has about 10,000 of those accessories, like harnesses, rare bits, rosettes, foot warmers, sleigh blankets, chimes and bells, and so on.

Poppe has been around horses all his life.

“Looking at a horse, it was love at first sight,” he said, adding that it’s always been a passion of his.

He started out jumping horses. This despite the warnings of his parents, who cautioned Poppe how dangerous it was to get in the saddle. He did end up having an accident, and Poppe said doctors told him if he continues to do this, he’d lose his eyesight.

That’s how he transitioned into the carriage side of it instead of jumping. Carriages or “buggies” presented an extra layer of love Poppe didn’t realize he had in him.

He’s been a member of the Carriage Association of America for almost its entire existence, 43 of its 57 years. He’s an honorary lifetime director of the CAA.

Poppe was also a frequent writer for The Carriage Journal, produced by CCA, dating back to the 1980s.

In an August 2005 article for the Journal, Poppe likened himself to a boat owner: always seeking something “bigger and better.” He and Suzie had started with hunters — the horses who show jump over fences — and “fine harness ponies.”

But it’s when the Poppes visited the Henry Ford Museum and Poppe saw all the carriages on display that he knew he had to have them.

In 1974, he bought his first buggy from Skip Ellis, a man who owned a stable in Williamsburg. That buggy survived the fire that burned the entire stable down, Poppe explained.

Poppe paid $175 for it, with the assurance to Skip that he’d...
Cherry Ridge Farm in Georgetown, Ohio, is ready for its 31st incarnation of the Carriage Parade and Christmas Festival. It’s a “new adventure,” said Sherry Mitchell, the owner and executive director of Cherry Ridge Therapeutic Learning Programs at Cherry Ride Farm in Georgetown, Ohio, who first met Poppe at the parade.

“Everyone with a cart or carriage knows Charlie,” Mitchell said. “When we were part of the Carriage Club, Charlie asked our son Dan if he wanted to drive one of his horses in the parade. Of course, Dan, knowing how much I always dreamed of learning to drive a carriage accepted his invitation.”

She continued, “We got all dressed up in period costume and waved to the onlookers lining the streets. As we made the turn near the Gold Lamb Restaurant, a beautiful picture of us was taken and was selected for the yearly etched ornament. What a surprise!”

Mitchell said it was an “enchanted moment” in her life, and that she couldn’t thank Poppe enough for the opportunity.

When it came time for Poppe to retire his driving team of white ponies, Dolly and Frosty, for the Hackney ponies, he gave them to Cherry Ridge’s therapeutic learning programs. It was a “new adventure,” Mitchell said.

“Hundreds of lessons were given by Dolly and Frosty, making each child smile, as they learned to love them both while learning how to ride and some life lessons along the way,” she said.

Poppe said it’s been a “fun, wonderful hobby,” adding that he’s been lucky to afford the hobby.

“With some people, it’s a hobby. For me, it’s an obsession,” he said.

Parade and Festival information
The Lebanon (OH) Horse Drawn Carriage Parade and Christmas Festival is ready for its 31st incarnation of the storied event. Set for Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., the annual tradition is hosted by the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce.

The parade features only horse-drawn carriages, with a 1 p.m. afternoon carriage parade and a 7 p.m. evening parade, where 100 decorated carriages are pulled by minis, Clydesdales, Percherons, and many more.

In between the two parades, visitors will have the opportunity to visit 80 different antique and specialty shops along Mulberry and Mechanic Streets for the Christmas Festival. Food and craft vendors will also be out and about.

Or visitors can just soak in the caroling, holiday lights and entertainment.

But perhaps you’re still looking for more to do?
- Beth Gully, children’s Christmas book author will be on hand from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., reading, “The Other Side of Christmas - An Upside-Down Book,” at the Golden Lamb Gazebo.
- Lebanon Presbyterian Church will be open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. with festive music, a nativity collection, and hot chocolate and cookies available. The church also hosts a Living Nativity from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. “Living” is literal here as live animals will be on hand. The church is located at 123 N. East St. Pictures with Santa from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. are also on offer.
- Ongoing even beyond the parade and festival is the North Pole Express, operated by the Lebanon Mason Monroe Railroad from Nov. 16 to Dec. 29. Visitors can take an hour-long journey, during which, Santa and his elves visit each family on the train. Visit lebanonnrr.com for more information.

For more information, things-to-do around the festival and holiday season, and much more, contact the Chamber at 513-932-1100 or parade@lebanonchamber.org.

Brett Milam is the editor of The Clermont Sun in Clermont County. Prior to being the editor, he worked as an intern with The Cincinnati Enquirer, and The Post Independent in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. When not reporting and writing, his interests include politics, horror movies and professional wrestling. He has a dog named Dallas; she’s named after the Dallas Cowboys. (To be clear, he’s not a Cowboys fan or much of a sports fan, for that matter).
Georgetown Christmas Home Tour

Sunday, December 8
Noon to 5:00pm
Georgetown, OH

The Klosterman home has been featured in past tours in Georgetown. This year’s Georgetown Christmas Home Tour features seven homes, four of which are new to the tour.

Tickets are $10 each and ticket holders will have a chance to win a gift basket valued at $100. The tour is sponsored by the US Grant Homestead Association.

For more information, contact Nancy Purdy at the Bailey House Bed & Breakfast, 937.378.3087.

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Sponsored by Ripley Heritage, Inc. as a fundraiser for Ripley Museum. Ripley Heritage, Inc. also manages the John Rankin House Historic Site owned by The Ohio History Connection.

December 15, 2019, from 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Tickets are $15 and are available the day of the tour at The Ripley Museum 219 N. Second Street beginning at 12:30.

Begin the tour with The Ripley Museum, an 1850 home that features Ripley memorabilia and beautiful furniture from the earliest days of the town including Civil War, 1800s and turn of the century (1900s). Hot spiced tea and cookies will be served.

Eight homes will delight tour goers.

Featured home: The Thomas Collins House, 200th Anniversary

The home at 202 Front Street has been restored by Jerry and Hilda Strange. Known as the Collins House its tablet reads, “This tablet marks the home of Thomas Collins. Englishman, cabinet maker, chief conductor of the Underground Railroad. Its portals were always open, through this door stole refugees innumerable, the night was never too dark, nor the journey too long for its owner to issue forth leading the helpless across the hills to freedom.”

The Chambers Baird House:

New owners, Rachael and Brandon Bradshaw have recently restored this magnificent home.

Situated on Second and Mulberry Streets is the Baird homestead which was occupied by three generations of Bairds from 1845 to 1973. The house was built by...
William Mathers in 1825 and was the home of Dr. Thomas Williamson who married Margaret Poage, daughter of Ripley’s founding father. The important feature of this house is the wrought-iron lace porch and balcony which was purchased from the Rankin Iron Works of Cincinnati and shipped to Ripley by packet boat. Chambers Baird graduated from Jefferson College in Pennsylvania and came to Ripley to study law with Archibald Leggett, whose daughter Judith Ann he married. Their son Chambers Baird, Jr. was born in 1860. It was he who most contributed to the town of Ripley, as a prominent attorney, editor and co-owner of the Ripley Bee, Mayor, Presbyterian and Republican. He was a graduate of Harvard University (Cum Laude, class of 1882) and Cincinnati Law School. He married Jeanette Gilliland and they had three children, two of which lived to adulthood and were also very accomplished. Harold distinguished himself as an aerobatic flying instructor in the U.S. Air Force during WWI. Some of his flying maneuvers were filmed and are on file at in Washington, D.C. Jeanette Florence was a professional singer in New York before returning to Ripley where she engaged in many community activities, especially connected to music.

135 N. Second Street: New Owners, Jessica and Rob Ossenbeck

This lovely Victorian style brick home features a beautiful wrap around porch. The new owners were able to purchase much of the near perfect antique furniture from the estate of the previous owner. They have added a modern twist which is sure to delight tour goers.

105 N. Second Street: directly across from the Centenary United Church was recently purchased by John Bice. This early brick home will feature over-the-top Christmas decorations.

The Pogue Row Houses: 124 and 128 N. Front Street, New Owners

The distinctive row houses 1816 Federal style and were built by Colonel James Poage, founder of Ripley. These connected brick buildings have Victorian front porches which were added many years after the original construction. The home at 124 Front Street is owned by Doris Brookbank. Several years ago this home was completely renovated and redecorated in an “magazine quality” upscale design. The Christmas decorations are sure
to wow visitors. The home at 128 Front Street has new owners who are bringing in their collection of antique furniture and completely updating and redecorating the home.

**The Stivers/Zachman House:**
136 N. Front Street owned by Tom and Jane Zachman

This home is almost always featured on the tour of homes because every time you visit you will discover something new. Visitors will find 12-foot ceilings, eight fireplaces, original woodwork and 1800s antiques that has been remodeled for family living. Tom, who has recently organized the Ripley Ohio Association Rocketry Club will have his “rocket factory” on display in the man cave. The 1875 Italianate style brick home originally sat on ground level and was elevated following the 1913 flood. It was the home of one of Ripley’s earliest banking families. The house stands on the site of the 1800s office of brothers Dr. Alfred Beasley and Dr. Benjamin Beasley. Dr. Alfred Beasley was an Underground Railroad conductor.

**Grant’s Cottage (Kirker House):**
206 N. Front Street

Michael and Jocelyn Palmer currently own Grant’s Cottage. Its marker reads, “In 1838 Mr. Thomas Kirker resided in this house, with whom General U. S. Grant boarded, while attending the Whitmore private school; his parents living in Georgetown.” The school was later Ripley College, not Whitmore. It was a female college. The Palmers use this as a vacation home and offer the very popular home on AirBnB.
Mt. Orab Christmas Parade

A big and beautiful nighttime parade through Mt. Orab, OH. Starts at 6 pm on Saturday, November 30.

A big hit with the crowd are the over 60 costumed characters that walk the parade as well.

You’ll see the likes of Minnie and Mickey, Olaf, Rudolph, Frosty, and many more characters walk the parade route to the delight of the crowds. One of the loveliest parades around!
What began as a promotional event for the re-release of an iconic holiday movie has become a signature event for an historic Ohio River town.

At first glance, the small Southern town of Augusta, Ky. has little in common with the movie “White Christmas” and the tiny Vermont village and resort that is the setting for the 1950s flick. But a closer look reveals ties that have developed over the years and resulted in Augusta’s annual White Christmas Parade.

The relationship began after singer and actress Rosemary Clooney, a native of Maysville, KY, purchased a house in Augusta and made it her Kentucky home in every sense of the word. She and her husband, Dante, were “at home” on Riverside Drive much of the time and became a part of the community, not as visitors or part-time residents but as neighbors.

Following Rosemary’s death in 2002, the historic brick home in Augusta was up for sale. That’s when former Kentucky Lt. Gov. Dr. Steve Henry and Miss America 2000 Heather French Henry, a native of Augusta, stepped in.

At the time, the Henrys said they purchased the home rather than see the property sold to a private citizen who might not recognize its significance as a historical landmark and home to one of the world’s most beloved entertainers.

They developed the home into the Rosemary Clooney House, a museum that pays tribute to the “Girl Singer,” and particularly to the move “White Christmas.” Exhibits include costumes worn by Rosemary and other stars in “White Christmas,” and other movies she starred in. There are also displays of movie memorabilia from her famous nephew and Augusta’s favorite son, actor George Clooney, along
with tributes to Heather French Henry’s reign as Miss America.

Upstairs, visitors can see Rosemary’s bedroom exactly as she left it the last she was there.

In 2008, Paramount Studios planned to issue a digitally remastered version of “White Christmas,” and approached the Henrys and the Augusta Rotary Club about possibly holding a parade in Augusta to mark the event, according to Rotary Club member and one-time president Jackie McMurrin.

The club agreed and worked with the Henrys to organize the parade, which they thought would be a one-time event.

That first year, almost every business in Augusta entered a float in the parade, and 16 of them were lighted for the after dusk event, McMurrin said. Most clubs and organizations took part and the Augusta High School band marched in the parade. Someone even had a snow machine to add to the ambiance.

“It was just magical,” she said, “a magical small town moment.”
The studio which suggested the parade had someone film it from atop some buildings as it made its way along picturesque Main Street, McMurrin recalled. Footage from the parade was included on DVDs of the remastered movie.

Another magical parade moment came when Heather Henry sang “Sisters” and “White Christmas,” with Mica Emerson, Rosemary’s niece, one dressed in the familiar red dress and another in the blue “Sisters” dress from the movie. In recent years, singer Rachel Blackwell has performed “White Christmas” during the parade.

The parade was such a success that it became an annual event, the last big hurrah of the year before the tourists disappear until spring, McMurrin said. It has expanded over the years to include a gingerbread house and elf look-alike contest, trolley tours of the town’s historic homes decorated for the holidays, carolers, bell ringers, a petting zoo and, of course, Santa Claus, arriving in the parade and distributing candy to the kids who stop to visit him later.

A large display of memorial Christmas trees which surround the community Christmas tree at the corner of Main and Second streets each year makes for a stunning backdrop for reviewing the evening.

A cadre of celebrities have visited over the years, some serving as grand marshals, including Rosemary’s brother and George’s mother and father, Nick and Nina Clooney who served as the very first. Others who have visited over the years include other Clooney family members from both the California and Kentucky connections, former Miss America and actress Lee Meriwether, Dante DiPaolo, dancer George Chakiris, who appeared as a dancer in “White Christmas,” and actress Mary Elizabeth McDonough of “The Waltons,” fame.

The parade is set for Dec. 14 this year, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Watch the Augusta Kentucky Historic District Facebook page for more information on events surrounding the parade. Get there early to grab a prime viewing spot along Main Street.

The White Christmas exhibit at the Rosemary Clooney House museum will be on loan in Louisville over the holidays but other exhibits at the museum will be available. For information or to arrange a tour date, contact the museum at 606-756-2603 or visit its website at https://www.rosemaryclooney.org.

Heather French Henry and Mica Emerson, Rosemary Clooney’s niece, sang “Sisters” and “White Christmas,” at the first White Christmas parade.
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Mary Allen is something of a problem-solver; it's just that her "problems" are piecing together the familial tree roots of families, churches, and communities.

Allen, a village of New Richmond council member and who retired from Proctor & Gamble as a manager, is a professional genealogist; she helps people trace back generations of their family. She is also a member of the Clermont County Genealogical Society and the Ohio Genealogical Society.

When Allen was tasked with researching New Richmond's bicentennial in 2014, she realized she had more interest in genealogy than she first thought.

She researched more than 50 African American families, all of whom settled in the village between 1840 and 1940. And like a weaver stitching together threads, she followed the threads of those families to the present time.

That research then became an exhibit known as, "200 Years of African-American contributions to New Richmond, Ohio."

“So problem-solving and putting the picture together is what I've done for most of my career, so I just sort of reframed all of that into a genealogy research career,” she said. “It's just something I have a passion for, and because I found it during the bicentennial, I decided to start my own business and research for others.”

Turning genealogy research into a business meant parlaying her experience at P&G, as well as her Bachelor of Science degree in information processing systems, and her Master of Business Administration degree in management, into the task of researching and then disseminating her findings to the family.

Today, that business is Before Me Genealogy, LLC.

Genealogy research is a multi-faceted process of references, beginning with an oral history to learn about the family, but then moving to primary resource documentation to fill in the gaps, and secondary sources, like newspaper reports, to further add in context and the historical narrative in which people lived.

Primary source documentation includes military, registration cards, death and birth certificates, marriage licenses, land records, court records, naturalization papers, ship boarding lists, and so on from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Nowadays, the most cost-effective way to do the research is virtually all online through various databases and other online resources.

Although, if it was as simple as logging on to the database, and hours later uncovering the roots, anyone could do it. But it’s about planning, mapping out sources, targeting them in the right way. And sometimes it’s about researching a tangential member of the family to then find the family member of interest.

Context is king, too. Allen tries to fill in the context of what was going on at the time, say, the Great Depression, to help people better understand the moment in time their genealogist uncovers familial roots with Before Me Genealogy

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ancestor was living within. Or maybe someone came to the United States in response to the potato famine in Ireland.

Allen also examines their occupation: were they working on the farm, as a barber, serving in the war of the time? That occupation opens more threads and adds more layers of context.

In other words, Allen said her service isn’t merely “this person was born at this time and died at this time and had these children.”

Allen tends to hit 30 days for her research and then provides the summary to the family.

“I love doing it and because I love doing it, I can never really turn it off,” she said.

Or the phrase in genealogy circles, she said, is, “I had a life before I became a genealogist.”

But it’s Allen’s passion, and it’s a service she wants to provide to individuals, churches, and other communities, like what she did for New Richmond.

“It’s always very enjoyable to meet somebody and let them know about their family,” she said.

Allen has also traced her own history, which links up with the nationally recognized Underground Railroad history in New Richmond.

One of the 10 sites in the village of the Underground Railroad tour is the Second Baptist Church, located at 513 Market Street, which was one of New Richmond’s African American churches. It was built in 1861, and, by 1880, the church had a congregation of 125.

A member of that church was Howell Boone. Boone was Allen’s great-great-grandfather on her dad’s side, and came to New Richmond in 1850, the son of a cousin of a plantation owner, who was given his freedom, and that freedom took him to New Richmond.

Boone would go on to be one of the founders of the Union Association for the Advancement of the Colored Men of New Richmond, which was established before the Civil War; the group pre-dates the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People by more than 50 years.

He also owned a store at the corner of Quarry St. and Corner St. and was such a businessman that that area in New Richmond was known as “Boone’s Corner,” Allen said.

Allen explained that when you’re a kid growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, hearing that your dad’s great-grandfather owned a store, it didn’t sound like anything unusual. But then when she learned about more of the details, and certainly, the historical context in which he lived, it was revelatory.

“Being a problem-solver means finding the root cause. If you really want to know why something happened, [it’s bringing] all the pieces together, really digging to find what you want. It’s like investigative reporting in a way,” she said. “And I like people. Nobody’s a stranger. If I feel like I can help in some way by using some skill that I have, then I’m willing to do that.”

Allen said she think it’s going to be a lifelong endeavor because every time she finds something, she “finds something else.”

To learn more about Allen and the services she provides, please call her at 513-553-3942 and mallen1@fuse.net.
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A little over 60 years ago, an article appeared in the August 15, 1959 issue of the News Democrat (Georgetown, OH). The headline read “Miracle of Survival? Infant girls weighed only one pound, 11 ounces”

The two beautiful little premature baby girls were born at Brown County Hospital in Georgetown, OH on the very same day. Both babies were delivered by Georgetown obstetrician, Dr. D. L. Domer, just hours apart.

The first baby born was Christy Ann, daughter of Ramona and Ralph Boone, Georgetown. Ramona was just 15 years old and was less than seven months along in her pregnancy.

The second baby born was Mary India, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hudson of Sardinia.

Ramona Boone took time to share the amazing story of her daughter’s birth.

Christy Ann was finally able to come home November 15, 1959. It had been three months since she was born and only then did her mother and father get to hold her.

“I was so scared and had just turned 16. There was so much I didn’t know!” explained Ramona. “But all I could think was ‘what a gift!’”

“All those months that my baby was in the hospital, most of her time was spent in an incubator,” Ramona said. “The other mother in there and I got to know those nurses aids really well. We became good friends. That was nurses aids, Stella Hanselman and Lorena Schatzman. They even got the first rocking chair for the OB ward, just for our babies.

The following information was taken from the staff-written story that first appeared in the News Democrat in 1959...

“A near miracle in survival has taken place at the Brown County General Hospital.

Two infant girls, whose weight of one pound, eleven ounces, was recorded after birth, have survived against almost staggering odds.

Infants of this size seldom survive, doctors at the hospital report. One in a 1,000, maybe.

The infants are Christy Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Boone Jr. of Georgetown and Mary India, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hudson of Sardinia.”

The article went on to talk about the day the two babies were taken out of the incubator, the first time the two mothers were able to actually touch their precious babies.

“I remember that day I first got to hold Christy as if it were yesterday,” Ramona said with a smile. “My
daughter had a pretty rough beginning to her life, in fact she stopped breathing many times, nearly every day for two months, the doctor and the nurses kept bringing her back.

“They placed Mary India in the same incubator as Christy because she was very active and kicked and squirmed a lot. Neither of the babies could cry,” Ramona said. “They were just so tiny and their lungs weren’t fully developed. They could only make little sounds, not really crying sounds.”

“That doctor, (Dr. Domer) almost never left those two babies,” Ramona said. “He became so attached to them that he seemed to think of them as his own. He was a wonderful doctor and I will always be grateful for his loving care.”

Ramona said that once she and her husband brought their baby home, it was a lot of work for them both. The baby had to be fed every two hours and would only drink small amounts of formula at a time so it was an ongoing process.

“Back then, Ralph was working away from home a lot,” Ramona said, “My own family wasn’t able to offer much help at the time, so I was on my own a lot.

“I remember giving my daughter baby oil baths every day until she was 9 months old. It was all I knew and no one ever told me anything different.”

Ralph Boone, Christy’s father was 19 when she was born and admitted he wasn’t able to help his young wife as much as he wanted to but said that Ramona was a wonderful mother.

“We were young when we got married,” Ralph said, “My sister was 14 when she got married but things were different back then.

“Ramona and I have been married for over 60 years, we’ve raised three children and have always been committed to each other and our family. We made it all work, because that’s what you do. You take what God’s given you and make the most of it. I wouldn’t trade my life with Ramona for anything. It’s been a great ride so far.”

Ralph did admit that when he looks back at the beginning of their lives together, he can’t believe how tough it was.

Christy (Boone) Brierly now lives in Florida. She has two children and four grandchildren.
Beef brisket is a relatively inexpensive, yet highly versatile cut of meat. It’s equally at home in a pastrami or corned beef sandwich as it is on Christmas and Chanukah holiday tables. When cooked correctly, brisket is tender and delicious.

Brisket comes from the area of cows or steers ages two and up, or veal ages two to four months, according to the recipe and cooking technique resource Food Fire Friends. The brisket can be found right above the leg in the area between the front legs. Brisket is essentially the lower chest, or pectoral region of the animal, responsible for holding up the weight of the cow. As a result, this is a dense and tough muscle area with a lot of connective tissue.

Thanks to its density, brisket requires long cooking times at relatively low temperatures to produce a tender, boldly flavored beef dish. Brisket is best smoked or braised, which means simmered in a small amount of liquid. Most briskets will have a layer of fat on the surface. Better Homes and Gardens magazine says that this should be sliced away before preparing the brisket.

Try using brisket in place of a rump roast in this recipe for “Beef Roast with Dark Rum Sauce” from “Crock-Pot® 365 Year-Round Recipes” (Publications International, Ltd.) from The Crock-Pot Kitchens. Keep in mind that brisket will require long cooking times in a slow cooker and may need to be cut in half to fit into the pot.

**Beef Roast with Dark Rum Sauce**

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 beef rump roast or beef brisket (about 3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup dark rum, divided
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 whole bay leaves, broken in half
- 1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup lime juice

**DIRECTIONS**

In a small bowl, combine allspice, salt, pepper, and cloves. Rub spices onto all sides of meat.

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat until hot. Sear beef on all sides, turning as it browns. Transfer to Crock-Pot® slow cooker. Add 1/2 cup rum, broth, garlic, and bay leaves. Cover; cook on low 1 hour.

In a small bowl, combine remaining 1/2 cup rum, brown sugar and lime juice, stirring well. Pour over roast. Continue cooking on low 4 to 6 hours for the rump roast (cook on high for 5 to 6 hours for brisket), or until beef is fork-tender. Baste beef occasionally with sauce. Remove and slice. Spoon sauce over beef to serve. Makes 6 servings.
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HODGES

Chief Deputy – Brown County, OH Sheriff’s Department
Resides in Cincinnati, OH

Favorite season? Fall – the days are warm and the evenings are cool. I love the beautiful colors of the changing of the leaves.

Morning ritual(s)? Once I’m done with my personal hygiene routine, I like to spend time with my wife and kids before I leave for work – normally sitting on the back porch with my kids while they wake up, or on the couch watching the news.

What is your idea of a great vacation? We try to take a family vacation to a new location every year. I like watching my kids learn and experience new things. Anywhere I can teach them a life lesson, while watching them have fun.

Music? I listen to everything – usually dependent on my mood.

Last good book you read? “A Leaders Legacy” by Kouzes & Posner. This book challenges the reader to decide what kind of a difference you want to make. I like to give this book to young leaders early in their career or life.

Favorite movie(s)? I don’t have a favorite movie. I like everything.

Quote you like? “We guarantee that what people will say about you will not be about what you achieved for yourself but what you achieved for others. Not how big a campfire you built but how well you kept others warm, how well you illuminated the night to make them feel safe, and how beautiful you left the campsite for those who would come after you to build the next fire.”

Who is someone who has had a positive impact on your life? My father. When I was growing up, we had a rocky relationship. He realized when I was at a junction in my life where I could have gone down two very different paths. He took the time to guide me towards being a good person. I don’t know where I would be today if he had given up on me.

LAURA

NAZZARINE

Middle School Principal at Clermont Northeastern Middle School, lives in Ft. Thomas, KY

Favorite season? Summer – I get to spend time with family and friends at Laurel Lake in London, KY.

Morning ritual(s)? I drive to work with my daughter, a teacher at the high school, and am outside to greet my middle school kids everyday.

Idea of a great vacation? Beach, sun, family, and adventure.

Music? Elton John and Harry Connick, Jr. – classic rock.


Favorite movie(s)? It’s a Wonderful Life.

Quote you like? “Surround yourself with a team who reflects who you want to be, how you want to feel, how hard you want to work and how big you want to dream. Positive energies are contagious. If you want to achieve success, this is non-negotiable!” from Extreme Ownership.

Positive impact? I have been extremely fortunate to have outstanding leaders in my life - parents, teachers, principals and superintendents. They all have helped me become who I am today.

TIFFANY

FIELDS

Co-Owner Maysville Brewing Company
Resides in Maysville, KY

Favorite season? Spring! I love the colors of everything blooming & begin to feel refreshed after a long winter!

Morning ritual(s)? Is that a thing?

What is your idea of a great vacation? I love any vacation where my kids have fun & I see a smile on their faces!

Music? I’m a country music girl!

Last good book? I’m currently reading Profit First. It’s not the most thrilling book I’ve ever read, but it’s very informational & helpful!

Favorite movie(s)? Mrs. Doubtfire

Quote you like? Don’t wish for it, work for it

Positive impact? I’ve had the opportunity to have many people & experiences to influence my life in both positive & negative ways. All in which I have tried to learn from.

RICHARD

SEAS

Superintendent, Adams County Ohio Valley School District, Peebles, OH

Favorite season? Fall

Morning ritual(s)? Prayer

What is your idea of a great vacation? Being with my family doing something outdoors

What music do you listen to? 50’s, 60’s, 70’s, and 80’s

Last good book you read? Grit

Favorite movie(s)? A Few Good Men

Quote you like? A great man is always willing to be little.

Who is someone who has had a positive impact on your life? My wife
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When we were kids, my mom, Mary Calim Nader, would sequester herself in our tiny suburban kitchen during the holidays, making her famous Lebanese baklava. As we were able, all nine of us kids were allowed to help – whether it was cracking the walnuts out of their shells, grinding them in her ancient cast metal meat grinder or helping stir the special syrup that topped the baklava. We were rewarded with a piece of the cinnamon sticks that flavored the syrup. Mom used a feather to brush the butter between the 30 plus layers of phyllo. Baklava was made only during Christmas.

We make baklava during Christmas with my own family to honor traditions that stand behind it. The aroma of simmering cinnamon and orange flower water syrup transports me back to my mother’s kitchen.

As we butter the phyllo, let the little ones grind nuts in the same hand-cranked grinder and simmer the exotic honey syrup, we talk about those who have gone before us and treasure those who are with us. We cry a bit and laugh a lot. That’s what making baklava is all about - the age-old reason we gather together to share our table.

Now I know this recipe involves technique and patience, but it is certainly worth every minute that you spend with those who are special to you, making this iconic and traditional Middle Eastern pastry.
**Rolled Baklava**

Easier to make than the traditional, 30+ layer baklava recipe that we make. (Our traditional recipe is one that’s handed down, and there’s no “real” recipe - nothing is measured). Each roll makes about 12 pieces. You can make as many rolls as you want. This recipe makes 3 rolls. Preheat oven to 325º.

**PHYLLO**
1 pound phyllo dough, thawed in refrigerator – you’ll use 24 sheets for this recipe. The phyllo dough will keep in the refrigerator a couple of weeks if it is well wrapped.
1 stick unsalted butter, melted or more if necessary

**SYRUP**
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup honey
- 1/2 cup water
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon orange flower water or less to taste (this is optional)
- 2 cinnamon sticks

Bring everything to a gentle boil and then lower to a simmer – mixture will foam up so use a larger saucepan. Let cook until water has evaporated somewhat and mixture is thicker, about 20 minutes or so. This can be done several days ahead and reheated. Let cool to room temperature before pouring onto hot baked baklava rolls.

**FILLING**
Grind nuts in food processor, using the pulse feature or by hand. Mix together:
- 1 pound ground walnuts (each roll will take a generous cup of nuts) or a combination of walnuts and almonds and/or pistachios
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon or more to taste
- 1/4 cup sugar

**ASSEMBLY**
Place one sheet of dough on work surface. Brush very lightly with melted butter. Cover with a second and third sheet, buttering each one. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of the nut mixture evenly over phyllo sheet. Cover with 2 phyllo sheets, brushing each with butter. Sprinkle another 1/2 cup nut mixture over phyllo, spreading evenly. Cover with 1 more sheet of phyllo, brush with butter, then spread with another 1/2 cup nut mixture. Top with a single phyllo sheet, brush with butter and wrap up lengthwise, jelly roll fashion. Roll as tightly as you can. Brush the 8th sheet of phyllo with butter, then encase the whole roll on the phyllo sheet. Roll up again, jelly roll fashion, and brush entire surface with butter and set aside, seam side down. Repeat process for 2 more rolls. Cut the rolls into slices, about 3/4” thick. You’ll get about 12 slices per roll. Lay slices flat on sprayed baking sheet, packing tightly so ends don’t unravel s they bake. Drizzle a little butter on top. Bake 20-30 minutes or so, until phyllo is golden brown.

Remove baklava from oven and pour half of cooled syrup over hot baklava. Let sit 15 minutes, then flip them over to coat both sides with syrup. Let sit several hours or overnight to absorb all the syrup before removing.

Yield: about 3 dozen pieces. Store at room temperature for several days, covered tightly. Store in refrigerator, covered tightly, up to a month, or freeze up to 2 months.

**TIP: **Phyllo dough comes in different thicknesses. If the box is numbered, use #4, the thinnest dough. Phyllo (or Fillo) is very fragile and will dry out quickly. It’s frozen when you buy it so thaw in the refrigerator, not on the counter. As you work with it, keep a hardly damp towel on top of the dough to keep it from drying out.

**Whoops - what to do with extra phyllo or phyllo that tears or breaks apart?** Inevitable when working with phyllo, there are always a few sheets that you can’t use, due to tearing or drying out. Just toss those pieces on a baking sheet and bake until golden. They are crispy crackly good! We use them to top casseroles or on top of ice cream.
There are many different ways to decorate homes and businesses for the holidays. Tall evergreen trees are among the most visible symbols of the holiday season. However, wreaths hung on doors, windows or fences also are ubiquitous this time of year.

Wreaths adorn homes primarily during the holidays of Easter and Christmas. Wreaths have also been worn around the head or neck in ceremonial events around the globe for centuries. It is believed the first wreaths date back to ancient Greece and Rome. Members of the Greco-Roman society were known to hand-make ring-shaped items using fresh tree leaves, small fruits, flowers, and twigs. Oftentimes these headdresses symbolized a person’s social status. Others suggest wreaths evolved to become a Christian symbol of immortality.

Regardless of how wreaths are viewed, many people like to display wreaths for the holidays. Wreaths can be purchased premade, but making a wreath on your own can make the holidays even more fun.

One of the easiest ways to make a wreath is to design it around a circular floral foam form. Gather supplies to make the wreath. For traditional wreaths, supplies will include sprigs of evergreen (real or artificial), ribbon, floral wire, bows, and artificial berries. Working around the foam form, arrange the boughs of evergreen, using the floral wire to wrap or pin into the foam itself. Keep the layers coming until you get the desired coverage. Embellish with a ribbon or place a bow.

The blog A Piece of Rainbow says that creating a wreath jig is an easy way to make a wreath. Cut a dollar-store laundry basket bottom from the top ring to make a template, on which you can place wreath-making materials so they keep their circular form. Use floral wire or natural jute string to tie the materials together. Experiment with fresh evergreen, twigs, holly branches, or whatever materials you choose.

Thick card stock also can serve as the wreath template. Attach artificial flowers or leaves, spray snow, ornaments, or other items to the card stock ring with a firm adhesive.

Many craft stores sell wreath forms made of natural vines that have been strung in a ring. These can be decorated in their entirety or left a little sparse to let the natural twine show through.

Wreaths may seem like complicated creations. But a little imagination and the right materials is all it takes to create a homemade wreath.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Years from our family to yours!

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Preparing for the holidays can be stressful – there’s no doubt about that. But with proper planning, you can enjoy a relaxing time with friends and family without the worries.

Here are some helpful, last-minute tips to guide you in the right path of a stress-free season:

**Spruce Up the Main Spaces**

Don’t worry about getting every nook and cranny. Put your focus on the main areas in your home that guests will be seeing like the front porch, entryway, kitchen, living room and bathrooms. Simple garland around a chandelier or draped up your stairway adds an easy and festive touch. Declutter spaces with a laundry basket you can hide away in your closet. A quick dusting with an old sock isn’t a bad idea, either.
Clean Up and Prepare!

If you plan on cooking the holiday feast, it's a good idea to start by straightening up the fridge and throwing out anything old as well as giving the oven a deep clean. Another tip? Plan ahead and figure out what food you can make beforehand. There's nothing more stressful than trying to prepare a big dinner for your guests in a day. Pies and side dishes can be prepped a few days before, so all you need to do is bake them. Or better yet, in our family everyone brings something which adds to the variety and allows your guests to share their favorite dish.

Use Seasonal Scents

Have your home smelling delightful with holiday scented candles or stovetop scents that will warmly welcome your guests as they enter the home. We have some great scents like Papa's Pumpkin Pie, Cinnamon Twist and Balsam.

Get Ready for Houseguests

Make your guests feel welcomed and loved by taking the time to tidy up the guest room and bathroom for those friends or relatives staying for a few nights. Be sure they have plenty of clean towels, toiletries, blankets and pillows to make them feel right at home.

Set the Table

It's time to bring out the fancy dishes. Create a lovely, festive tablescape complete with color-coordinated dinnerware and fresh, seasonal blooms or fruit. Finding a theme for your table, such as snowmen or Santa, a particular color scheme like red and green or silver and gold will bring in the cheer.
Make Some Memories

Once all the preparations are complete make some memories with family and friends. My kids and I like to decorate themed Christmas trees throughout the house and bake cookies. Every year as a family we head out to Corsi’s Christmas Tree farm to find that perfect tree and the memories are priceless.

Build a Fire

Before company arrives up the cozy factor with a crackling fire going as you entertain your guests. Keep fuzzy blankets handy for those not as close to the fireplace. Enjoy cocktails and conversation with your company — you deserve it!

Happy Holidays to All!
How to be a frugal holiday shopper

The holiday season is a joyous but often expensive time of year. The average American will spend $700 on holiday gifts and other trimmings this year, totaling more than $465 billion says the National Retail Federation.

In a survey for CIBC, Canadians said they were planning to spend an average $643 on gifts and another $300 on decor and entertaining. Such spending can compromise household budgets, making the post-holiday hangover that much more difficult. Here are some strategies to follow:

• Establish a firm limit on gift amounts. The more the merrier is a popular a sentiment during the holiday season, but spending more on a gift doesn’t necessarily mean it will be better received. Many humorous, whimsical, practical, or even glamorous gifts can be had for $30 or less.

• Combine financial resources. If there’s a splurge in mind for a particular person on a list, find out if someone else is willing to serve as a co-gifter. For example, siblings can chip in for a gift for Mom or Dad if they have their sights set on something expensive.

• Consider a grab bag or secret gift exchange. Families or groups of friends can opt for a grab bag this year. In such arrangements, each person brings a gift worth no more than a previously agreed on amount of money, and individuals take turns pulling gifts out of the bag. This is a great way to stay within budget and is a particularly helpful arrangement for big families.

• Shop all sales. Utilize sales to your best advantage to score deals on various items. Those who plan ahead can shop off-season to help stretch a budget over the course of the year rather than over one or two months.

• Include some homemade gifts. People with a talent for knitting or crocheting can create blankets or other gifts. Bakers can whip up tasty, edible treats. The holidays are a prime time to put your unique talents to use and turn them into beloved gifts.

Cash has fallen out of favor among consumers who find it easier to reach for a card in their wallets. Some shoppers may even wonder if people still carry cash when credit cards and debit cards have become so convenient and widely accepted? Actually, they do.

According to a recent study by LendEDU, 32 percent of 875 people surveyed preferred to use cash over cards for everyday purchases. Cash can be a smart choice for many purchases, including holiday spending. Here are six reasons why cash can be king once more.

1. Limits spending in a tangible way: A key benefit of using cash is that it presents a visual cue that spending should cease. If a shopper has set a $200 limit for holiday gifts, when that $200 in cash is gone, it’s a surefire reminder that it is time to step away from the register and leave the store. It can be hard to view spending in real time when using credit or debit.

2. Bills are accepted everywhere. Unlike some credit cards, merchants will not turn away cash. This is especially helpful when shopping at small businesses or pop-up markets that are popular during the holidays. Local artisans or other niche vendors may

6 reasons to use cash to pay for holiday purchases
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A grid-tied system uses electricity from both the solar panel system and the electrical grid. It draws energy directly from the sunlight during the day, and draws energy from the grid (electric company) at night or on cloudy days. The system constantly monitors solar energy production and automatically switches from solar panel to grid-tied as power needs change. When your solar panels produce more electricity than is needed, it can spin your electric meter backwards and credit your account. This is all automatic and no action is needed by the homeowner.

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Shetler Solar has done hundreds of installations in both off-grid and grid-tied systems. We are happy to listen to your needs and discuss options with you. Although off-grid homes were more common in the past (using battery banks for power storage), grid-tied homes are becoming very popular for people who want to save on their electric bill.

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3. Prevent second-guess impulse buys: Parting with hard-earned cash directly can be a great motivator to keep that $20 in your pocket instead of using it for a scratch-off lotto ticket or mall food court snack. Watching cash supplies dwindle may prevent shoppers from making unwise purchases.

4. Cash facilitates tipping. Cash is often best for tipping servers and delivery personnel. According to Kim Palmer, a credit card guru at NerdWallet, a popular financial advice site, recipients of tips prefer cash because they get it immediately. A tip on a card may only be parceled out at the end of the week.

5. Losing cash doesn’t affect credit. Although many people say carrying cash is riskier than sticking to credit, the financial expert Dave Ramsey says differently. While parting with lost cash can be a blow, the risk of identity theft, and sorting through canceling credit and debit cards when they go missing, can be an even bigger threat.

6. Cash may score deals. Paying in cash can be a great bargaining chip at retailers who may offer discounts or waive fees for cash purchases.
Life is full of ups and downs,” my seventy-nine-year-old grandmother wrote in 1993 in the letter she penned to me in her lovely handwriting, “especially in 1921,” she wrote that Christmas when I asked her to tell me about her Christmases as a child. It’s a Christmas memory she never forgot, and though it was a rough one for the family, she coined it My Best Christmas. Here’s her letter to me:

Dear Sherry,

It was Christmas, 1921, and Dad was laid off from the Coat Hanger Factory. My parents loved the whole bunch of us kids (12), but we were poor. So poor, that I was already seven years old and I had never had a store-bought baby doll, and dim hopes of ever having one.

Unlike today, the gifts we received back then on Christmas morning were usually candy, popcorn balls, and one orange. Mother always tried her best to sew each one of us a piece of clothing that she had labored for hours to make, so we would feel special.

Like many others in those days, we never had store bought clothes. Even our underwear was recycled and made from Moses Best Flour sacks and Jack Frost Sugar sacks. Sometimes it was Moses on the front side, and Jack on the backside of our bloomers.

On this sad Christmas morning, we saw Mother and Dad talking to each other so we children couldn’t hear. By noon, there were no usual preparations for Christmas dinner. We knew that because Dad was laid off, we didn’t have enough money for a proper Christmas dinner or presents. But I was so hungry and couldn’t help but ask, “Mother, what is for dinner?” And without a reply or a hint to her grief, Mother and Dad went silently to the kitchen.

Soon, the pleasant aroma of food filled the house. But it was not turkey or fancy food like some folks enjoy on Christmas Day. That Christmas we had potatoes, salt bacon, green beans and corn. All the food Mother had worked so hard to store for the winter. We did not complain, we were so hungry. It was very good and best of all we were loved.

After the delicious meal, Mother began to play the organ, and Dad played the violin. My mother’s name was Grace, so I always loved to hear them sing Amazing Grace—thinking they were singing about her. They sang many Christmas carols and hymns. When they sang Silent Night face to face, their voices blended in perfect harmony and sounded like sweet angels to my ears.

By now we had forgotten about the sad part of Christmas day. Then there came a knock at the door and in came my rich Aunt and Uncle. They brought gifts all wrapped in the most beautiful fashion, and lots and lots of different kinds of food. Much to my
surprise, they handed me the largest package. So large it took my breath away. I had never in my seven years received such a present.

Carefully I tore the wrapping paper off, savoring every moment. I could not possibly know what was in the package, for I couldn't remember ever seeing a package so large! But I said a silent prayer to God for my wish to come true, “Please let this be a baby doll for me.”

I managed to open it by myself as everyone watched my wish come true as I lifted the most beautiful store-bought doll out of the box. The prettiest I had ever seen. Her eyes opened and closed. She wore pretty clothes and she even wore her own shoes.

Just when I thought nothing in the whole world could be better, another knock came on the door and much to our surprise there stood Santa Claus! We kids were so scared we hid behind Mother. He passed out candy canes anyway, another treat, wished us a Merry Christmas, and then left.

To this day, I do not know who Santa was! But I do know that that was quite a learning experience, in that just when we think things couldn't be worse, God sends his “angels” to brighten up our day. For me that Christmas was perfect in every way.

Grandma Fender

Flora Agnes McMillian-Fender

Sadly, she has gone on before us – May, 2008, our angel now – one-month shy of her 94th birthday. She was a wealth of wisdom – learning I suppose from her earthly trials and her many years of living.

And lastly, she further shared in that letter this message of hope for tough times like her family experienced in 1921, when the angels arrived and made a best Christmas in spite of the circumstances.
she cherished. And isn’t this season, a season of hope, joy, family and love? Awe. It surely is.

“It remains a belief of mine, that God sends the rough trials to those He loves the most to test their strength and endurance. And then, He richly blesses them beyond words for being faithful. The Lord will provide.” Grandma Fender

Popcorn Balls

INGREDIENTS
• 1/2 bag miniature marshmallow
• 2 Tablespoons butter
• 1 Teaspoon Vanilla
• 1 bag Orville Redenbacher microwave popcorn
• Sprinkles

INSTRUCTIONS
Melt marshmallows and butter in the microwave until soupy.
Add vanilla. Pour mixture over already popped corn and stir to coat.
When cool enough not to burn your hands, butter your washed hands and form any size balls, let the little kids decide what size. Makes about 8 baseball sized ones. Sprinkle while warm with festive sprinkles.

The popcorn balls we made with Grandma when I was a child was a bit more complicated than this recipe. Like mad scientists, we carefully watched the candy thermometer as we labored over the gas cook stove. This modern marshmallow recipe is easy and quick. Be sure you use an oversized bowl so the popcorn stays in the bowl when you start stirring in the marshmallow mixture. Butter up your hands and form the balls. Little ones love this sensory sensation!
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I have always adored the enchanting Victorian Christmases steeped full of tradition. I have now, for perhaps the last 10 years, incorporated a tradition of my own by watching each year, Charles Dickens’ 1843 novella made movie, *A Christmas Carol*.

This 1984 version starring George C. Scott is hands down absolutely the best Scrooge ever portrayed—as is the poor sickly Tiny Tim. At the end of the movie, there is such a remarkable transformation of the money miser, Ebenezer Scrooge by his visit with the Christmas Spirit. It is certainly worth the watch and ignites in one’s heart what the true spirit of Christmas is truly about.

Which brings us to what is Figgy Pudding? For centuries, Christmas Figgy Pudding, a British tradition, is traditionally a Christmas dessert offered to near and dear ones and Christmas carolers.

Obviously, a special dish in the Scrooge movie when the family cheers heartily as Mrs. Cratchit brings forth her obvious Christmas pudding from the kitchen to the table. Bob Cratchit blows out the flame, then ceremoniously samples the first bite as mother and children watch breathlessly awaiting his reply. Yum. “A triumph, my dear,” he tells his wife. And everyone applauds!

Figgy Pudding, traditionally, is prepared on or around Advent – the 4th Sunday before Christmas. Everyone in the household, including children, make a wish as they stir the mixture. After the pudding has aged, it is served as a Christmas dessert. Upon presentation, it is doused in rum or brandy and presented to the cheering family afame, which symbolically represents the “passion of Christ”.

Traditional Figgy Pudding uses suet and is steamed and usually served with clotted or Devon cream, brandy sauce, or brandy butter. There are absolutely hundreds of variations of this pudding around the globe. The recipe that follows has been modernized for simplicities sake. Or, you may wish to order one premade from online stores.

Perhaps this year, you’ll start a tradition of watching Scrooge in *The Christmas Carol* or by trying a Figgy Pudding! “Hurrah for Christmas. The best day of the year,” exclaimed Tiny Tim.
**Figgy Pudding**

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 cup chopped dried Figs
- 1 cup pitted and chopped dried Dates
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup Brandy
- 1½ cups self-rising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup sugar powder
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon grated orange zest
- 100 grams (4 oz.) grated dark chocolate
- (Rich variations add walnuts or raisins)

**DIRECTIONS**
Put oven on preheat to 325° F. Sift flour and keep aside until required. Grease and flour 9-inch diameter baking pan. Mix chopped dates and chopped figs in a bowl. Heat water in a saucepan until it starts to boil and pour it over dates and figs in a bowl. Stir in baking soda and keep aside to cool for 7-10 minutes. Transfer date and fig mixture to blender, add brandy and make a puree. Take another bowl, beat butter and sugar in it until smooth. Add eggs and beat again until fluffy and light. Fold in the flour, breadcrumbs, ground nutmeg, grated orange zest, pureed date and fig mixture and grated dark chocolate. Pour prepared batter in a greased baking bowl or bundt pan and place it in a preheated oven. Bake until pudding is perfectly set or for around an hour. To verify if pudding is fully cooked or not, insert the toothpick in center and check if it comes out clean. If it does, then it is properly cooked otherwise cook it more for 5-10 minutes. After verifying that it is perfectly cooked, take from the oven and let it cool for 15 minutes. Turn out the prepared Figgy Pudding onto a serving plate and serve with cream or ice cream or brandy sauce. The perfect combination of sweet taste with melt-in-mouth texture and mild flavor of chocolate and brandy is a delight in every spoonful.

Here’s a recipe that Grandma handed down. It’s very good!

Times were tough when Grandma was a child and this candy recipe would be easy to make from ingredients on hand in great-grandmother Grace’s kitchen, especially since money was scarce and to buy store bought candies was not an option. Grandma’s recipe was handed down several generations and quite delicious.

**Old Fashioned Potato Candy**

**DIRECTIONS**
Combine 1V. cup of a cooled, boiled mashed potato, 2 Tbsp milk, 1 tsp. vanilla extract, and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Smash and blend. Stir 1 lb. confectioners sugar into potato mixture until a doughy consistency is reached (save a little confectioners sugar for dusting surface for rolling). Refrigerate dough until chilled, about 1 hour. Sprinkle confectioners sugar on a cutting board or waxed paper. Roll dough into a large rectangular shape on prepared surface about 114” thick. Spread enough peanut butter about 113 cup on top layer of dough to cover. Roll dough into a jelly roll shape; refrigerate roll for 1 hour. Slice dough into pinwheels to serve. A piece of thread to slice with works great!
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As time passes and we continue to pile on the years we also add to our memory bank of events and happenings throughout our lives. Some good, some not so good, but none the less, they are our memories.

An especially good memory for me is Thanksgiving. Of all the holidays Thanksgiving is the one that draws our family closer together.

One year, while my children were still living at home, we decided to not just prepare a Thanksgiving dinner. Instead this would be the biggest and best one ever. For almost two days we planned and prepared. My wife, Sharon, went to the store, picked out the turkey, ham and many fixings. Then she lugged them home. Early Thanksgiving Day we began preparing. What started as a feast turned into a cornucopia of Thanksgiving. We cooked the main dishes and then either my daughter, Meghan or Brendan, or I, would think of another dish to add. And add we did! By meal time, we had used every bowl and spoon we owned and had prepared 26 items. It was an awesome sight. The meal was great but creating that feast as a family served as the main course.

Another year all of our families gathered for the Thanksgiving meal. As we sat down to bless what we were about to receive, my wife, Sharon stood at the table and read from Ecclesiastes 3:1, the verse that says to every season there is a purpose. It was so appropriate and fitting. The adults listening and most likely understanding, probably more than the children, just how true that passage was to us all. It’s a memory I will never forget.

I was raised on a small farm a few miles north of Moscow Ohio in the 50s and 60s. I have fond memories of many Thanksgivings from my boyhood. Thanksgiving was usually at our house since we were still stripping tobacco or preparing to take crops to market in Ripley. Dad and my brother, Ben, and I would be working on some project outside until about 1 pm. I think that was to keep us from being in Mom’s way as she prepared the meal.

My sister, Peg, lived near Dayton where she taught
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school. When school let out for the holiday, she would come home for an extended visit. That was a major bonus to the event! Peg would help Mom and someone would go to Moscow and pick up Grandma Houser. She would help with the meal prep as well. Aunt Marget Hetterick lived up the road about a mile. She was not only my favorite aunt and person in the whole world, she one of the best cooks in the world! I may be a little prejudiced. My favorite was her three-layer German Chocolate cake made from scratch, followed by her pecan pie and banana cream pie.

About 12:30, Dad would say it was time to call it a day and we headed for the house to clean up for the main event. About that time, Aunt Margaret, Uncle Charles and their six children would arrive. The kids piled out of the car and each carried in a dish their mom had prepared.

Mom had made the turkey, ham, mashed potatoes green beans, candied yams, and plenty more. She and Aunt Margaret were both experts bakers and no meal was complete without the homemade yeast rolls. I can’t think of a thing that a person could ask for that wasn’t there. Even a can of cranberry sauce was always opened and sliced. To this day I don’t recall anybody ever eating any of that but it seemed it was a necessary dish for the Thanksgiving table.

About 15 of us gathered around the table. Dad would call all to order and give a heartfelt prayer thanking our lord for the meal. He always remembered those who weren’t as fortunate as we were. The meal began as did the conversations filled with laughter, kidding and love. This was no time for the gloomy side of life. We gathered to enjoy each other and let the world pass on for just a little while.

I look back and I recall these precious memories. A great thing about memories is they are like a favorite movie. A person can play it again and again. There were traditions then and as I heard a person say, “Come Thursday, we will gather and make new memories and traditions.”

I hope we all try to do that. Happy Thanksgiving!
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Come the holiday season, many people look forward to gatherings with family and friends. Such gatherings are often held in private homes, and that means someone must take on the task of hosting.

There are many advantages to hosting holiday gatherings. Hosts won’t have to travel during a notoriously busy time of year to take to the roads and sky. Hosts also won’t have to book hotel rooms or arrange for other accommodations, saving them money and time during a season that tends to be expensive and packed with social engagements.

As the day of their holiday parties draws near, hosts can take several steps to make the day of the party easier, allowing them to spend more time with their family and friends.

• Choose the right menu. The right menu can go a long way toward making hosting easier on the day of the party. Various factors, such as food allergies and the size of the guest list, must be considered when planning a holiday menu. As hosts scour cookbooks for the right foods, look for recipes that don’t require everything to be done on the day of the party. Prep work tends to take as much, if not more, time as cooking the foods. So look for recipes that allow you to do most, if not all, of that prep work in the days leading up to the party.

• Clean the common areas. Guests likely won’t be spending time in every room of your house during the party. So when it comes time to clean, focus on the common areas where guests will be. Living rooms, dining areas and restrooms should garner the bulk of your attention when cleaning. If guests might be wandering outdoors, make sure leaves and dirt have been cleaned off of patios and decks.

• Plan a playlist in advance. Expect to be busy on the day of the party, even if the party is catered or all the food prep was done long before the first guest arrived. Because you will be busy welcoming guests, you likely won’t have time to set the musical tone for the party, so do so in advance of the big day. If you want to stick to holiday music, many streaming apps offer various stations that play holiday music exclusively. Simply choose a station you like and then begin playing music when the first guest arrives.

• Make a list of supplies and check it twice. About two weeks before the party, sit down and make a thorough list of everything you expect to need. Include food, beverages, dining needs (i.e., plates and silverware), and entertainment. A couple of weeks before the party, purchase items that won’t spoil, such as beverages like water, soda, wine, and beer and extra utensils if necessary. Doing so saves time during your grocery store trip the week of the party.
Christmas trees are an iconic symbol of the holiday season. Whether they are personal trees nestled in the corner of a living room for families to enjoy or towering evergreens serving as the focal point of a town square, Christmas trees are a wonder to behold.

Many people have fond memories of time spent around the Christmas tree sharing gifts and family traditions. Live trees and their pine-like aroma can be especially nostalgic trees to include in holiday plans. The National Christmas Tree Association says that approximately 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States every year. North American trees hail from all 50 states and areas of Canada.

While freshly cut trees can be particularly beautiful and aromatic additions to the season, they require a bit more work than artificial trees in order to remain beautiful and thrive throughout the holiday season. Maintenance can help keep Christmas trees as perfect as possible.

- Even though it is tempting to buy a real tree as early as possible, their shelf life is limited even with the best care. Dural Christmas Tree Farm advises that, under the best conditions, a real tree should last up to four weeks before drying out.
- Consider the needles when looking for a real tree. Pull your hand toward your body along the branches. If many needles fall off, the tree is past its peak.
- Think about the room in which the tree will be located. Leave at least 6 inches between the tip of the tree and the ceiling, accounting for the height of the tree stand as well.
- If needle retention is a goal, the Scotch pine variety has the best needle retention and a high survival rate, lending to its popularity, offers Precision Tree and Landscape.
- If possible, buy a freshly cut tree from a reputable nursery or tree farm, advises The Old Farmer’s Almanac. Many pre-cut trees sold elsewhere were likely cut weeks before and may not be fresh.
- Cut the bottom of the tree trunk before bringing it home to facilitate the uptake of fresh water daily. Trees can absorb as much as a gallon of water in a day, so make sure the tree gets fresh water every day.
- Keep trees away from as many heat sources as possible and away from direct sunlight to prolong longevity.
- According to Karabin Farms in Connecticut, to make a Christmas tree last longer, boil a gallon of water and then dissolve one cup of sugar in the water. Allow to cool. After freshly cutting the trunk, pour in the warm sugar water. Continue to add fresh, cool, plain water to the tree stand afterward.
- Once needles begin to fall off with frequency, the tree is reaching its prime. Remove it so it does not become a fire hazard.
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Holiday decor is as much about the sights and sounds as it is about the scents of the season. Few things evoke the holiday spirit as much as the aroma of fresh evergreen or spicy cinnamon and cloves. Incorporating inviting aromas into holiday decor can make homes feel even more special.

Filling a home with fragrant decor takes a little ingenuity and planning. Here are some ideas to incorporate the scents of the holiday season into your decor.

• Use a real Christmas tree. An easy way to create a pine-like scent indoors is to select a real Christmas tree. Ask the tree farm which varieties are the most fragrant. If a fresh tree is not possible, fill a decorative basket with pine cones and evergreen boughs for that woodsy appeal.

• Create a seasonal scented simmer. Take to the stove to make a homemade air infusion from ingredients in and around the house. Simmer pine branches, citrus peels, vanilla, nutmeg, cinnamon, and whatever else can be placed in a pot or slow cooker with water. The scents will permeate the house for hours if enough water is added to the mixture.

• Make holiday sachets. Some of the same ingredients for the holiday simmer can be dried and sewn into sachets. Add ribbon and hang on real or artificial trees. Or tuck the pouches into various areas around the house.

• Experiment with scented candles. Scented candles can be found at various stores during the holiday season. Select among popular holiday aromas like pine, cinnamon, apples, and Christmas cookie varieties.

• Utilize essential oils. Natural food stores and other retailers may sell essential oils, which can be diluted and sprayed on surfaces or into the air. Exercise caution around upholstery, or test for staining before use.

• Spend more time in the kitchen. Add delicious scents to the home by way of freshly baked goods or holiday meals. Nothing beats the smell of cookies right out of the oven, and the scents can linger for hours.

• Make beeswax ornaments. Add scented oils to melted beeswax and pour into molds. Hang these creations as ornaments on trees or in other areas of the home.

• Craft some “gingerbread” ornaments. A mixture of cinnamon, applesauce and glue can be used to make ornaments or gift tags that resemble gingerbread cookies, and these ornaments have more staying power than actual cookies.

• Design a pretty pomander. Stud an orange with cloves. Cut off the top of the orange and hollow out a place for a small tea light. The warmth of the flame will produce more scent.
Decorations and shopping draw much of the attention come the holiday season, and rightfully so. But many people’s fondest holiday memories occurred around the dinner table during meals with friends and family.

Holiday foods tend to be rich, flavorful and time-consuming to prepare. However, all the effort is usually worth the satisfied smiles on the faces of loved ones.

Planning holiday meals is challenging, and hosts often doubt if they have enough food for everyone. No one wants guests to leave feeling hungry, nor do they want to have tons of leftovers, much of which will inevitably end up in the trash. Determining how much food to serve involves figuring out a few key items, including the mix of guests (ratio of children, men and women), the length of the occasion, the timing of the event, and the type of meal one plans to serve. For example, if the holiday gathering is an after-dinner cocktail party, hosts can get away with offering very little food. However, hosts of holiday dinners have a lot more food to prepare.

To get started, consider these general guidelines, courtesy of Allrecipes.com and The Spruce, a home living resource.

- Think about which foods you plan to serve. Popular foods tend to go more quickly than other items, so serve more than the general portion guidelines suggest. Shellfish appetizers, roasted or mashed potatoes, wings, and slices of rich meat are examples of popular fare.
- The more foods you offer, the smaller the portion sizes can be. But because guests will likely want to try all the offerings, expect the average person to consume more food per individual when several foods are offered.
- Most people will eat two to three portions each of appetizers or snacks. In fact, appetizers (for a hungry crowd) may be consumed in greater abundance than subsequent courses.
- Average portion sizes for each guest include: 3 ounces of dips; 3 ounces of salad; 6 ounces of meat or main entrée; 5 ounces of starch; and 1 1/2 pieces of dessert. These estimates can be used to calculate how much food will be needed.
- Think about adding “safety” items to the menu that can be pulled out in a pinch and don’t require much prep work. These can include cheese and crackers, extra bread, nuts, olives, or pretzels.
Some holiday traditions, such as holiday lighting displays, are impossible to miss, while others are more subtle and possibly even unknown to many celebrants. One tradition that falls into the latter category involves the placing of oranges into Christmas stockings. The origins of Christmas stockings are rooted in legend, and one of the more popular tales involves a widowed father of three beautiful girls. According to Smithsonian.com, this father was struggling to make ends meet and was concerned that his financial struggles would affect his daughters’ ability to find a spouse.

As the legend goes, St. Nicholas was wandering through the man’s town and heard of his concerns. Recognizing that the man was unlikely to accept charity, St. Nicholas slid down the chimney of his house and placed three gold ball, which were discovered the following morning, was enough to ensure the girls could eventually wed.

So what does that have to do with oranges? Those who wanted to replicate the tale could not so easily come upon gold balls to place in stockings, so they chose something similar in appearance: oranges.

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The holiday season is rife with tradition. One of the most recognizable traditions involves wrapping gifts. While the wrapping paper many gift givers use today is a relatively recent phenomenon, the tradition of wrapping gifts is centuries old, with some historians even suggesting it dates back to ancient times. The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis® notes that many ancient cultures celebrated various holidays that included exchanging gifts, adding that it’s very likely that, even in ancient times, gifts were wrapped to surprise their eventual recipients.

Bojagi is a traditional Korean wrapping cloth that might have begun being used some time during the Three Kingdoms of Korea period, which began in 57 BC and ended in AD 668. The Japanese tradition of furoshiki, which can be traced back to the 17th century and possibly as far back as AD 710, involves using a traditional wrapping cloth to transport certain items, including gifts. As for the gift wrap familiar to today’s holiday celebrants, that traces its origins to the early 1900s.

The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis® notes that Eli Hyman and Morris Silverman founded the first gift wrap company in the United States in 1903. Unfortunately for gift givers back then, adhesive tape had not yet been invented in 1903, and wouldn’t be for another 27 years.
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Holiday shoppers who are busy making lists and checking them twice should make sure they don’t overlook the family pet. Christmas has gone to the cats and dogs, as a greater number of people include their companion animals when selecting gifts each year.

A study by OnePoll conducted by Rover.com, the nation’s largest network of dog sitters and walkers, found that 95 percent of pet owners have bought holiday gifts for their pets. Gifts can range from everyday needs, like food and treats, to more lavish extravagances like spa treatments.

Pet owners who plan to get their pets gifts this year may want to consider some of the emerging pet trends as they browse wares and services. The Balance, a business, career and industry information site, says pet industry trends point toward these segments seeing growth.

Natural pet products

Just as people are interested in protecting the health of the planet and their own personal health, so, too, are they extending this concern to companion animals. Natural pet products, which can include natural flea and tick remedies, holistic foods, organic items, and all-natural grooming products, can make great gifts.

Specialty pet services

The American Pet Products Association says the demand for high-end pet grooming and other services is substantial. In addition, personalized training, behavioral consulting, portrait photography, dog sitting, and upscale spa treatments like pet Reiki and massage are booming.

Mobile pet grooming

Mobile pet grooming has become the norm in many areas. Mobile pet grooming can reduce the potential stress on animals, and tends to be very convenient for customers, particularly seniors and others who have mobility issues.

Beyond these growing trends, pet owners have a bevy of other ideas from which to choose. Here are just a few different suggestions:

- Tests to detect pets’ DNA and trace breed and ancestry
- Interactive puzzles to keep pets engaged and banish boredom
- Stylish storage baskets for pet toys
- Hidden cat litter or dog crate items that camouflage commonly used pet items
- Heated pet bed for cozy nights and mornings
- Signature vests, coats and sweaters to look good and remain comfortable

Pet gifts are popular this time of year, ensuring all members of the family have a treat to open.
Recipes from our readers

Thanks to those that submitted recipes. If you have recipes you would like to share, please email to: recipes@cmpapers.com.

**Blackberry Jam Cake**

**CAKE**
- 1 box spice cake mix
- 4 large eggs
- ½ cup oil
- 1 pkg. vanilla pudding
- 1 cup water
- 1 ½ cup blackberry seedless jam
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup apple butter
- 1 tsp. Cocoa

**ICING**
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 4 stick butter
- ½ can evaporated milk or regular milk
- ½ tsp vanilla

**INSTRUCTIONS**
For cake, mix all ingredients for 2 minutes, do not over mix. Pour into 2 - 9x9 pans or a 9x13 pan. Bake at 350º for 45-50 minutes. Use a toothpick to test if cake is done. For icing, Boil all ingredients for 1 minute. Remove from heat and let cool. Blend in 1 box confectioner sugar. Mix well and pour over cake. Top with pecans. Enjoy!

*Patty Hanshaw from Tollesboro, KY*

**Peanut Butter Fudge**

**INGREDIENTS**
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ stick butter, softened
- pinch of salt

**INSTRUCTIONS**
In heavy sauce pan, add milk, sugar, butter and pinch of salt. On low heat, bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Once boiling, boil for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and immediately add 2 ½ lbs. peanut butter, 2 tsp. vanilla, 2 ½ lbs. marshmallow cream. Stir quickly with wooden spoon until all is mixed and smooth consistency. Pour into a buttered glass dish. Let cool, then cut into pieces. Put wax paper in dish before pouring fudge in. Enjoy.

*Patty Hanshaw from Tollesboro, KY*
Homemade Chili

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 1/2 lbs. Hamburger
- 1 medium onion
- 2 pkgs. chili seasoning mix
- 4 cans chili beans
- 2 cans tomato juice
- 4 tbs. chili powder
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1/8 tsp. oregano

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Brown hamburger and onion until done. Drain grease, add all ingredients to pan or soup pan. Simmer and cook slow, until done. About 45 minutes.

_Patty Hanshaw from Tollesboro, KY_

Pasta Salad

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 - 12 oz. box of spiral shaped pasta, cooked and drained
- 1 large cucumber, diced
- 2 large tomatoes, cut and diced
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, cut up
- 1 bunch green onions, cut up
- ½ tsp. celery seed
- 4 tbs. of salad supreme seasoning
- 1 large bottle of Italian dressing

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Cook pasta, rinse and drain in cold water. Mix all of the ingredients and refrigerate for 2 hours. Toss again and serve.

_Patty Hanshaw from Tollesboro, KY_

Meat Loaf

**INGREDIENTS**
- 2 lbs. Hamburger
- ½ cup ketchup
- 1 tbs. Mustard
- 1 egg
- 4 tbs. Onions
- 2 cups crackers (crushed)
- ½ tsp. Tenderizer
- salt and pepper to taste

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Bake at 350º for one hour. Mix all ingredients together, mixing well. Shape in a large loaf pan and bake. Take out and pour ketchup over top and place back in oven for 10 more minutes.

_Patty Hanshaw from Tollesboro, KY_
Ripley River Village Christmas Weekend Schedule

Dec. 6th - 8th, 2019

Dec. 6 - Friday
5:30 p.m. Ripley Library Tree Lighting with music by the RULH Music Department The Friends of Library Annual Book sale and FREE Hot Cocoa Social Co Hearts River House Restaurant hosting Holiday Happening with Harriett Groh providing music & Merriment.

Dec. 7 - Saturday
9:00 a.m. Santa at First State Bank till noon. Centenary Methodist Church and Knights of Columbus hosting breakfast till 11am. Keep Christ in Christmas poster competition. Friends book sale at the library annex. Church of the Nazarene crafters bazaar Naz Café open with Santa! Visit our local merchants for treats and specials!
6:00 p.m. Parker House Forest of Lights tree lighting event
7:00 p.m. Community Concert in the sanctuary of Ripley 1st Presbyterian Church. Monti Mallow conducting with the River Village Community Choir.

Dec. 8 - Sunday
Church Services and Merchants open for shopping!
2:00 p.m. Decorated Christmas Cookie Contest sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary Post #367 at 2944 Elk River Road, Ripley, Ohio
2 - 4 p.m. Ohio Valley Manor Holiday Open House (live Reindeer again). Free photos with Santa and refreshments.

Dec. 15 - Sunday
1 - 5 p.m. Holiday Home Tour tickets $15 each at Ripley Museum at 12:30 pm

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Homemade Carrot Cake

**INGREDIENTS**
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1-1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 cups flour (plain)
- 1 cup nuts
- 1 cup drained crushed pineapple
- 3 cups grated carrots

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Butter and flour a large pan. Mix eggs, sugar and oil together. In separate bowl, sift salt, soda, cinnamon and flour together. Add in egg mixture. Stir in carrots, nuts, pineapple and mix well. Bake at 350 for one hour and 15 minutes or until done.

Genoa Lewis from Blue Creek, OH

Sausage and Biscuit Surprise

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 lb. sausage links, cooked and cut into slices
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 can biscuits, cut in half
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 3 cups sausage gravy from package
- 1 tsp salt and pepper (optional)

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Preheat oven to 350º. On the stove, follow the instructions on the back of the gravy package. When finished, set to the side for later. In a 9x13 pan, single layer the biscuits to cover the entire bottom of pan. Sprinkle sausage over the biscuits. In a medium bowl, with a fork beat the eggs together and pour over the sausage. Sprinkle cheese into a layer over the eggs and sausage. Add a layer of gravy on top. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes. 40 minutes is ideal.

Bessie Truesdell from Vanceburg, KY

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As the weather turns colder, many people reach for a cup of tea to chase away a chill.

The story of tea can be traced back to China. Legend states that the Chinese emperor Shen Nung was sitting beneath a Camellia sinensis tree while a servant was boiling water. Some of the leaves fell into the water, and tea was born.

There are many ways to brew a cup of tea, including some that are very time-consuming. Those without much time but a love for tea can try some efficient methods to ensure every drop of tea is as delicious as the first, which involves choosing the right tea and steeping those leaves properly.

A cup of tea naturally starts with tea leaves and water. The experts at The Republic of Tea, purveyors of quality tea, suggest using fresh, filtered spring or bottled water for the cleanest taste. The next steps, which involve water temperature and steep time, are specific to the type of tea used. White or green tea leaves will be more delicate and should be handled with care. Brief steeping periods of 2 to 3 minutes for whole tea leaves with water that has just reached a boil are advised. Heartier teas, such as black and oolong, can benefit from hotter water and longer steeping times, roughly 5 to 7 minutes. Over-steeping the tea can result in tea that is bitter.

The next step is to handle the water properly. Always pour hot water over the tea bag or loose tea infuser directly into the cup or ceramic teapot for the most flavor. Do not put the tea into a cup already filled with water. Avoid squeezing tea bags after steeping is finished, as this also contributes to bitterness.

When the infuser is fully submerged, cover the cup with a small saucer during the entire steeping process so that the water retains as much heat as possible, advise tea experts. Remove the tea promptly when you finish steeping. Remember to drink the tea hot or warm for the best flavor.

Tea drinkers have their own unique tastes. When adding milk, lemon, honey, or sugar, do so sparingly so that the true flavor of the tea still shines through.

Quality tea can be purchased at the supermarket or at mom and pop tea stores, which have become increasingly popular in recent years. Merchants can advise about particular flavor blends and offer their own tips for the perfect cup of tea.
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