



# Holiday GUIDE

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GIFTS DINING EVENTS AREA FUN  
.....

November 2024  
Special Supplement To

**The Journal**

[journal-news.net](http://journal-news.net)

# Thanksgiving events throughout the Eastern Panhandle

BY AINSLEY HALL  
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EASTERN PANHANDLE — Thanksgiving is a holiday all about celebrating and giving thanks for the things people have and sharing those blessings with family and friends. What better way to celebrate than by spending time with loved ones at some of the fun Thanksgiving events going on in the community.

Every year Harvest Lighthouse Ministries puts together a free Thanksgiving dinner at the Martinsburg Moose Lodge 120. For over 30 years, this meal has provided people in Martinsburg and the surrounding area the chance to celebrate Thanksgiving despite any financial struggles they might be facing. Many guests come out to enjoy a warm meal of turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, green beans and more while listening to music and connecting with others in the community. Volunteers share the holiday spirit with people in the community as they use it as an opportunity to give back.

Many other churches and groups throughout the area are also hosting Thanksgiving meals. Bakerton Market is organizing a Bakerton Community Thanksgiving Potluck on Nov. 23 at 1 p.m. where fami-

lies can bring their favorite dish and share it with others in their neighborhood. Everyone is welcome to come out to 834 Carter Ave. In Harpers Ferry to spend time together. On the same day, Emmanuel Baptist Church is serving a free community Thanksgiving Lunch at 5299 Central Avenue, Great Cacapon. Shannondale Springs Chapel is also hosting a free Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 23 at 4 p.m. at Blue Ridge Primary School.

Before Thanksgiving Day, grab some friends and head over to Anani Brewing to celebrate Friends-Giving on Nov. 27 at 3 p.m. Enjoying some beer, cocktail specials and food as people gather for a fun evening.

Another fun opportunity to make a difference in the community would be to participate in United Way of the Eastern Panhandle Turkey Trot. On Thanksgiving Day starting at 8:30 a.m., join the timed 5k race at James Rumsey Technical Institute to support youth focused initiatives throughout the area. Kids 13 and under can also participate in the 5k for free while kids 10 and under can join the Sweet Potato Sprint at 8:15 a.m. To learn more about this event or register to work off all those extra pounds before the real feast begins visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/WV/Martinsburg/JamesRumseyTechnicalInstitute>.



Journal file photo

Harvest Lighthouse Ministries, led by Pastor Debbie Bowman, will once again host its annual free Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 28.



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# Memorial Illumination planned at Antietam Battlefield Dec. 7

BY TONI MILBOURNE

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On Saturday evening Dec. 7, Antietam National Battlefield, in cooperation with the American Business Women's Association and the Washington County Convention and Visitors' Bureau, will host the Annual Antietam National Battlefield Memorial Illumination in honor of those soldiers who fell during the Battle of Antietam.

The Illumination opens to the public at 6 p.m. and consists of a five-mile driving tour through the park. Held each December, the illumination is done in honor of the soldiers who fell during the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War.

Spectators can witness the 23,110 luminaries that are lit, one for each soldier who was killed, wounded or went missing during what is known to be the bloodiest one-day battle in American history.

The first memorial illumination was held at Antietam in 1988. It continues to draw thousands to the

Battlefield each year.

The manpower needed to make the event happen each year extends to more than 1,400 volunteers who come from around the United States to place and light the luminaries. For 30 years, the event has seen members of cub scout and boy scout troops who return year after year. Families come, as do individual volunteers. They begin lighting the luminaries in the early afternoon, so that when the public arrives at 6 p.m. it sees the nearly endless sea of candles spread over the battlefield grounds, along the roadways and across bridges.

Those planning to attend are reminded that foot traffic is prohibited in along the tour. Vehicles should enter via the main entrance on Richardson Avenue off Maryland Route 34. The line into the battlefield will form on the west-bound shoulder of Route 34.

Vehicles are to use parking lights only, to the extent allowed by today's vehicular technology, and travel the route without stopping.



Journal file photo by Toni Milbourne

Visitors will see more than 23,000 luminaries at Antietam Battlefield Dec. 7.



## MERRY MAKERS MARKET at the ROUNDHOUSE

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# ‘Welcome to Christmas in Shepherdstown’

Town prepares to  
kick off its holiday  
activities

**BY TABITHA JOHNSTON**

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**SHEPHERDSTOWN** — Every year, the Corporation of Shepherdstown marks the return of the holiday season on the day after Thanksgiving, with a “Welcome to Christmas in Shepherdstown” in the town square.

This year, on Nov. 29 from 5-9 p.m., the Welcome to Christmas in Shepherdstown will bring thousands of local residents and visitors to downtown Shepherdstown.

“We invite everyone to come feel the magic of Christmas as we light up the town and host a huge open house!” said the Christmas in Shepherdstown organizers. “Attendees will find a wide variety of activities that the whole family can enjoy.”

The evening will kick off with the Shepherdstown Kiwanis Club’s annual Chili Supper fundraiser in the War Memorial Building (102 East German Street). The supper will be held from 5-7 p.m., during which attendees can enjoy a number of different chili varieties with a freshly baked piece of cornbread. A table filled with gifts and gift baskets will be at the event once again this year, with the proceeds from the gift sales going directly to a designated children’s organization, such as the Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle or the Shepherdstown Day Care Center.

“It’s a wonderful effort by the members in our club!” said Shepherdstown Kiwanis Club Treasurer Margaret Walker. “Our club decided they wanted to direct [some] funds locally and where they would benefit children. We’ve picked different organizations that will help children over the past few years that we’ve done this.”

At the same time as the Chili Supper is going on, a variety of other eating and shopping opportunities will be available from local businesses, many of which will be have extended hours that night. Holiday markets in the En-



Journal photo by Tabitha Johnston

**Mrs. Claus reads a Christmas story to children at the annual “Welcome to Christmas in Shepherdstown” on McMurran Hall’s lawn in 2021.**

tlar Hotel (129 East German Street) and on the first floor of the War Memorial Building will provide additional shopping opportunities for celebrants.

For those wanting to stay strictly in town square, a couple of fun, seasonal snacks will be available on the streets. Freshly roasted chestnuts will be sold by members of the Shepherdstown Kiwanis Club from a stand in front of the Market House (100 East German Street). S'mores kits will be given out by the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department, for attendees to make s'mores on a bonfire the fire department will build on King Street, between Town Hall and McMurran Hall. Donations to the fire department will be accepted, in lieu of the s'mores kits.

Starting at 6 p.m., Mrs. Claus will take a seat at the front of McMurran Hall's lawn, to read Christmas stories for about a half hour to the children in attendance. She will be assisted in retelling the stories, especially Dr. Seuss' book, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," by The Grinch himself, along with Cindy Lou and some of the other

Whos from Whoville.

A Christmas tree lighting ceremony will then take place on McMurran Hall's lawn at around 6:30 p.m., followed by the arrival of Santa Claus on the back of a fire truck. Santa Claus will make his way from the fire truck into McMurran Hall, where families can visit and take pictures with him.

"Experience the wonderment of Christmas in historic Shepherdstown, during this holiday season!" said the Christmas in Shepherdstown organizers.

For Shepherdstown Kiwanis Club Secretary Adele Knott, the beautiful thing about the kickoff to Christmas in Shepherdstown is how it demonstrates the community-first mindset of the many different organizations that work together to bring it to life every year.

"It makes Shepherdstown special," Knott said. "We work together, regardless of our various affiliations."

A number of holiday activities will be held in Shepherdstown, throughout the month of December. To learn more, visit the Christmas in Shepherdstown page on Facebook.



Journal photo by Tabitha Johnston

Celebrants warm themselves around the bonfire made by the Shepherdstown Volunteer Fire Department at the "Welcome to Christmas in Shepherdstown" in 2022.

## NOVEMBER 30 6PM-8PM *Ranson Tree Lighting Ceremony*



### DON'T MISS THESE OTHER HOLIDAY EVENTS

- Nov 29** CHARLES TOWN/RANSON LIGHT THE CITIES CONTEST BEGINS
- DEC 7** 7AM-11AM BREAKFAST WITH SANTA INDEPENDENT FIRE HALL
- DEC 7** 2PM CHARLES TOWN/RANSON CHRISTMAS PARADE
- DEC 14** 11AM - 2PM PIZZA WITH SANTA RANSON CIVIC CENTER



# Shopping small supports local creativity, as well as community members

BY TABITHA JOHNSTON

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SHEPHERDSTOWN — Far too often, shoppers only think about big box stores and online shopping, when searching for holiday gifts. But by doing so, those shoppers may miss out on finding more thoughtful and unique gifts.

Small businesses — both brick-and-mortar businesses and those that sell at local markets — offer many options that can't be found just anywhere, according to A Basketful owner Carol Ann Stansbury.

"You find things here that are unique, that are different! They make nice gifts," Stans-

bury said of her hobby, making handcrafted home goods. "By purchasing locally made products, you are helping the community and supporting the crafters that live here."

Fellow crafter Melanie Cook pointed out that the quality of these products is often superior to that found in a big-box store. Cook herself makes hand-poured candles with whimsical lids, graphic T-shirts and hand-painted signs and ornaments under the business name, MGF Boutique, at locations throughout the region.

"There's so much effort put into this type of stuff!" Cook said. "I love doing this stuff. I put a lot of time and effort into this, and I think that it shows! When you're giving a gift



Barbara Stewart, left, chats with a customer about one of her Barbara's Wreaths floral arrangements at a holiday market in Martinsburg on Nov. 2.

Journal photo by Tabitha Johnston

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Journal photo by Tabitha Johnston

A father and son chat with a knife sharpener at a holiday market in the War Memorial Building two years ago.

like this, I think it makes a big difference, as opposed to just going to Walmart and getting something that was made by somebody on an assembly line.

"It's different. It's unique. It's not the same old thing!" Cook said. "In Walmart, you're going to have 50 of the same thing sitting on the shelf. You're not going to find a wine cork gingerbread house at Walmart!"

Shoppers who support local business owners and hobbyists can also feel good, knowing the money they are spending is improving the lives of their neighbors.

One such hobbyist, who has greatly benefited from selling her floral arrangements and wreaths at local markets, is Barbara Stewart.

"I love to help people get ready for the holidays!" Stewart said of her small business. "Everything that I make is original — nothing is quite the same."

Stewart has always been creative, but a recent tragedy drove her to starting Barbara's Wreaths, to give her a creative outlet from serving as her husband's caretaker.

"My husband had his third heart attack with cardiac arrest, so we don't get out much," Stewart said. "I started doing this a little over a year ago. This is a stress relief for me!"

Without the regular support of shoppers, Stewart said that it would be difficult to continue with her hobby, as she would be forced to create on a much smaller scale or not create at all, due to financial and storage constraints.

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Journal photo by Tom Markland

# ‘Small Business Saturday’ gives locals an edge on post-Thanksgiving shopping sprees

**BY TOM MARKLAND**

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**MARTINSBURG** - In 2023, an estimated 76.2 million shoppers across the country visited brick-and-mortar locations on Black Friday, spending more than almost \$20 billion. Two days later, on Cyber Monday, more than 73 million shoppers spent their money online.

Founded by American Express in 2010 and officially sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) the next year, Small Business Saturday is a newer addition to the post-Thanksgiving holiday craze that aims to support independent retailers and restaurants, rather than chain stores and franchises. In 2022, an estimated \$5.5 billion was spent in small businesses on the day.

According to the American Express, shopping local is especially helpful for communities since when money is spent at a local business, it tends to stay local. For every dollar spent at a local business, an estimated 67 cents

stays within the local economy. Local businesses also tend to sponsor local sports teams and other organizations, as well as hire locally more frequently.

The Eastern Panhandle has a plethora of options when it comes to shopping local, from an ever-growing roster of storefronts, restaurants and retailers in downtown Martinsburg to locally owned and operated shops in various towns throughout Jefferson and Morgan counties.

With how much business has grown on Queen Street in Martinsburg alone, you could almost spend a full day shopping there if you wanted to. For shoppers looking to find presents for the holiday season, there is a diverse selection of places, like Mamba Collectibles, a hobby shop focusing on collector’s items like trading cards, West Virginia Glass Outlet, which sells ornate, handblown glass ornaments and decorations, Jordan and Hess, a flower shop in Martinsburg’s town square and much more.

While there, visitors can check out the constantly expanding variety of food options, from Habanero Mexican

Grill and Sweet Hut Café to upscale options like Brix 27 and the brand new Young American Martini Bar.

In the southern end of the county, Taylor’s Farm Market gives visitors a place to both eat and shop local, with a variety of bakery items, vegetables and more from local vendors, attached to a sit-down restaurant called the Cider Press Grill.

For Berkeley Springs, Washington Street has plenty of options, from Berkeley Springs Antique Mall, which features antiques and collectibles from more than 30 dealers to various different art studios and shops. One especially interesting stop is The Naked Olive, where niche types of olive oil and other olive-based products may make for a neat gift.

In Jefferson County, there is a variety of different locally-owned stores in Charles Town, Ranson, and Harpers Ferry, but one good option with several within walking distance is Shepherdstown. Visitors to the little town can check out small shops like Four Seasons Books, Shepherdstown Pedal and Paddle and even Mountaineer Popcorn.

# Martinsburg plans for a festive holiday season

BY TONI MILBOURNE

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MARTINSBURG — For the second year, the Merry Makers Market can be found at the Roundhouse every Saturday and Sunday beginning Nov. 30 through Dec. 22. Hours for the market are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. A juried arts and crafts vendor event, the Market showcases artists from the Mid-Atlantic region and surrounding states. Admission to the Market is free and offers a magical holiday shopping experience while supporting local farms, small businesses, artists and talent. Food trucks, wine and spirits tastings, live music, a food and clothing drive and visits from Santa himself round out the plans for the weeks-long event.

For more information visit Willow Bourn Farms on Facebook and the “Merry Makers Market at the Roundhouse” event page for updates and past vendors.

Nov. 30 will find crowds gathered at 5 p.m. for the lighting of the town’s Christmas tree. Children and adults alike will be awed by the beauty of the lighted tree and may find a

surprise guest milling about as he ‘checks his list’ and finds out what little boys and girls want for Christmas this year.

The City of Martinsburg continues its tradition of offering residents one of the only nighttime holiday parades in the area as the annual Christmas parade is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 3. Kick-off time for festivities is 6:30 p.m. as organizers encourage a total-family event offering bands, floats and sights galore traveling through the streets. A complete parade route will be available closer to the day.

The parade is just the beginning of the celebration in town as, on Saturday following, Christmas on Main offers what is being dubbed as ‘a year like none other.’ Beginning at 11 a.m. and going through 6 p.m., Christmas on Main offers live music, food trucks, the always-popular Christmas Market and so much more. Folks can take their turn on the artificial ice-skating rink that will be set up or take a relaxing ride in a horse-drawn carriage. Come enjoy the magic found only at Christmas time as Martinsburg welcomes the season.



Journal file photo by Tom Markland

The Christmas Market makes its return to the Roundhouse for the second year, opening Nov. 30.

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# Charles Town and Ranson spread holiday cheer

BY TONI MILBOURNE

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CHARLES TOWN/RANSON — Jefferson Countians don't have to go far to find a wide variety of holiday activities to fill their schedules. Charles Town and Ranson have planned a number of events that begin with Small Business Saturday on Nov. 30 where great holiday gifts can be found in any one of the businesses found in and around both towns. Charles Town's Cheer Booth makes its return that same day and will be a gathering point throughout the holidays as a variety of organizations will man the booth spreading good wishes to all.

In the evening on that Saturday, visitors should find their way to Lancaster Circle in Ranson where the holiday season officially kicks off as Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive with some of their friends to light the tree. Free hot chocolate, roasted marshmallows and gift bags from Santa will be available as supplies last. Children will find the Jolly Ole Elf ready and waiting to hear their Christmas wish lists.

Live music will be performed throughout the evening, beginning with Ranson Elementary School students at 6:15, followed by students from Wildwood Middle School at 6:30 p.m. Special performers Ava Chicchirichi and Donnie Hawkins will wow the crowd at 7 and 7:30 p.m., respectively.

Charles Town officials will host their annual tree-lighting event on Friday evening, Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. The tree will be



Journal file photo by Toni Milbourne

**Bands, floats and more can be founding the annual Charles Town/Ranson Christmas Parade, this year scheduled for Dec. 7.**

found on the lawn of the historic Charles Town Courthouse. Businesses in town will offer late evening hours for those who wish to get in some early shopping.

The two towns once again present the annual parade on Saturday, Dec. 7. The theme this year, 'A Red Ryder Christmas,' centers around the holiday classic, 'A Christmas Story,' that pairs nicely with the holiday show at the Old Opera House as they offer "A Christmas Story

the Musical." Tickets are available for the show which will be offered the first two weekends in December. Contact the Opera House for more information.

The parade, one of the largest in the area, will wow those who line the streets as scores of entries make their way from Ranson through Charles Town. All entries will receive their line up numbers no later than Dec. 6 and are asked to arrive after 11 a.m. in Ranson at 3rd Ave. and S.

George St. for check in.

Ranson continues their annual Pizza with Santa event on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Civic Center where free pizza is available for the children, along with crafts, games and a visit with Santa to share any last-minute wishes. A bicycle give-away for those ages 10 and under will once again be a highlight of the day. Additional prizes will also be available for children throughout the day.

Heading back into downtown

Charles Town on Dec. 15, Abolitionist Ale Works is staying on theme with the holiday parade and hosting a DIY Leg Lamp. Tickets are available now for that event.

In addition, business owners in Charles Town are participating in a window decorating contest. All windows will be complete by Nov. 30 and folks are encouraged to come out and see the creativity and artistry of those participating.



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# Harpers Ferry hosting annual Olde Tyme Christmas

BY TONI MILBOURNE

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HARPERS FERRY — The splendor of Olde Tyme Christmas returns to Harpers Ferry as festivities start with opening ceremonies on Friday evening, Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. at the tent on the green in Lower Town. Multiple activities are planned over the first two weekends in December as Olde Tyme Christmas continues.

Visitors to the town will step back in time, as musicians, specifically Fiddlin' Dave and Morgan, and other entertainers dressed in period garb will be found strolling through the streets throughout both weekends. Opportunities for entertainment continue as Saturday, Dec. 14, as Washington High School's Chamber Choir will perform at 1 p.m. at St. Peter's Catholic Church. On Sunday, Dec. 15, Olde Tyme Tuba can be found on the patio of Town's Inn at 1 p.m.

The National Park Service offers Captain Flagg's U.S. Quartermaster City on The Green throughout both weekends offering family-focused holiday fun. Guests can make a 19th century-style ornament to take home at one location. They can be real tinsel, a tin spiral decoration or even an edible ornament.



Journal file photo by Toni Milbourne

ible ornament.

A model train display will be set up as the importance of trains in Harpers Ferry is shared through stories over the course of the holiday celebration. In addition, one can see how hand-made goods were cre-

ated and donated to help sustain the U.S. Army. Sewing demonstrations of a historic pattern of slippers will take place. These slippers were given to the sick and wounded soldiers by women all across the country.

Harpers Ferry will be aglow in traditional holiday decorations as Olde Tyme Christmas returns beginning Dec. 6.

Plan to enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride along the Shenandoah River, courtesy of the Harpers Ferry Park Association.

Throughout the weekend festivities, guests are reminded that the events do include demonstrations of firing of historic weapons. Loud noises are to be expected and guests should be mindful of children and pets.

While visiting the town on Dec. 14, plan to join in the festivities in Bolivar as Friendship Fire Company presents their annual Christmas parade beginning at 4 p.m. The parade begins at the Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Center and ends this year at the Bolivar Children's Park for the lighting of Bolivar's Christmas tree.

Those planning to visit Harpers Ferry for the holiday festivities are reminded that parking in the town is always a challenge. Visitors are encouraged to be mindful of residents in the town and park at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Visitor Center, which is the starting point for the park's regular shuttle bus service to and from lower town. Shuttle hours will be extended for the two Olde Tyme Christmas weekends.



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# A TIMELY TRADITION

*Be sure to take part in the annual Cookie Exchange*

Metro Newspaper Service

**BY TONI MILBOURNE**

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As the holidays approach, the idea of homemade cookies makes mouths water, but the investment of time to bake the variety of the season's traditional cookies often eludes us as tasks mount up. Not to worry, the traditional cookie exchange offers the answer.

A gathering to celebrate the holidays can turn into a saving grace if it is focused around a cookie exchange where

each guest brings approximately six or so dozen cookies of their choice along with an empty container. To fill their container, they simply select a half dozen or a dozen of their friends' cookies and everyone has a delightful cookie variety to enjoy during the holiday season.

The history of the cookie exchange goes back for decades. The cookie party has been hosted by relatives, friends, neighbors, women's groups, social clubs, churches and schools and has primarily been a "ladies only" event.

The Syracuse, New York newspaper from 1936 shares this in the social column regarding the happenings of the Home Bureaus (equivalent to today's CEOs groups): "Erwin Unit meets at the home of Mrs. I.B. Stafford...for a cookie exchange meeting."

Perhaps the most famous cookie exchange was the Wellesley Cookie Exchange that made the practice of swapping the homemade cookies famous.

The Exchange in Wellesley, Mass., wasn't the first, but there can't be many that have gone on as long, spanning milestones and generations. History of the exchange shares that neighbors Mary Bevilacqua and Laurel Gabel began it in 1969, after Mary read a magazine article about some farm women who gathered before Christmas each year to celebrate the season and swap cookies. That November and for years afterwards, the friends mailed invitations to as many as 35 friends and family members, asking them to bring three or four dozen favorite or unique homemade cookies to share.

The mindset of a ladies only event has changed in the modern era and men and women alike join in cookie exchanges today.

Just what type of cookie one brings to the exchange can vary according to taste; however, the "rules" usually stipulate that the cookie must be homemade. Traditionally there are certain types of cookies that are considered "Christmas cookies" but that does not at all remove any cookie from the table.

Christmas cookies, as labeled today, trace their roots to Medieval European recipes of baked cakes and other goods. Dutch and German settlers introduced cookie cutters, decorative molds and other festive holiday decorations to America.

Gingerbread was probably the first cake/cookie traditionally associated with Christmas and the taste treat making its way to the holiday table still occurs to this day. Sugar cookies, that descended from English traditions, are also a common favorite, often cut into holiday shapes and decorated for serving.

But the standard flavors of cookies are by no means the only types welcome at an exchange. Whatever your favorite, bake up a few batches to share and join a group of friends to alleviate the stress of holiday baking and enjoy some quality time over a cup of tea and a plate of delicious cookies.

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# Getting a pet for Christmas? Be prepared

**BY TONI MILBOURNE**  
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The “wow” factor of having a wiggly, furry puppy wrapped in a bright red bow is very real and very exciting on Christmas morning. It is fun to be the one to hug and pet and even walk and feed for the first day or so. But then the routine sets in and often becomes a chore rather than a joy. Consider that fact before deciding up on a puppy – or any pet this Christmas season.

A most popular gift – a puppy to join the family – brings a change to the household that should be planned out far beyond the thought of Christmas morning. Dogs (and cats or fish or hamsters) require time, patience and dedication to care for. They require a lifestyle change.

Puppies and kittens are the more popular Christmas pet to put under tree. But planning for the pet is key to ensuring that it doesn’t end up in a shelter.

One should note that new pets are not inexpensive. They require veterinary visits regularly, with annual shots, de-worming and other necessary preventive care. And most times, unless one pays extra for it, there is not insurance to cover the costs.

And animals love to eat! And they need a healthy, constant diet which adds to grocery bill each week.

Add in the cost of training the puppy and the potential of hiring someone to pet sit during family vacations or trips away and the financial burden can become more than initially thought.

But, if the time is ripe for adding another member to the family, Christmas can definitely be the most opportune time to do so.

Be prepared for the changes in schedule and be ready for the commitment of taking care of another living thing – one that totally relies on you for food, exercise and good health. And more importantly, for companionship and for love. In return, you will receive the same.

Puppies and kittens are ideal as they are young and can adapt more easily to a new home and new training; however, there are many more mature animals who could also use a home. Before selecting a final choice, visit local shelters to see if there is the perfect animal for your family that needs a home.

The Animal Welfare Society of Jefferson County, located at 23 Poor Farm Road, Kearneysville; the Berkeley County Humane Society, 554 Charles Town Road, Martinsburg and Briggs Animal Adoption Center at 3731 Berryville Pike in Charles Town all offer animal adoption of furry friends in need of homes. Plan ahead and visit them who needs a home and whether yours is the best fit.



Journal photo by Toni Milbourne

**When considering a pet for the holidays, remember that those cute puppies and kittens are lifelong commitments.**



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# Lighting the way to Christmas

BY TONI MILBOURNE

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Christmas lights adorn not only the decorated tree within the home but also trees outdoors, doorframes, roof-lines, bushes and any other place to which the can be affixed. The tradition of using lights dates back to 17th century Germany where small candles were attached to tree branches with pins or melted wax.

It is also said that as a symbol of light, hope and good in the world, the Christmas lights also served to remind good Christians to provide light to others as a reminder to follow the ways of Christ.

Beginning around 1890, candleholders were first used for Christmas candles and by 1914, small lanterns and glass balls to hold the candles were becoming commonplace. Early electric lights were introduced in the 1880s, establishing the illuminated Christmas tree in the United Kingdom that spread to North America and Australia soon after. Until the early 20th century, as electrical power became more affordable, miniature candles were used in decorating.

The first known electrically illuminated Christmas

tree was the creation of Edward H. Johnson, as associate of Thomas Edison. He served as vice president of the Edison Electric Light Company and had Christmas tree light bulbs made especially for himself, in the colors of red, white and blue. The tree was displayed at his home on Fifth Avenue in New York on Dec. 22, 1882, earning him the title "Father of Electric Christmas Tree Lights."

Businesses soon followed suit, stringing lights in their windows by 1900, although they did not replace the candle for the average person until around 1930.

In 1895, President Grover Cleveland sponsored the first electrically-lit Christmas tree in the White House, featuring over 100 multicolored lights. His use of the lighted tree grew inside the home and business. Outdoor lights did not come into play until later with the first recorded use of outdoor lights recorded in 1912 when usage was recorded in New York.

The Library of Congress gives the credit of decorating outdoor trees to a small town in North Carolina when the McAdenville Men's Club, in 1956, conceived of the idea of decorating a few trees around the McAdenville Community Center.

One of the most famous lighted trees is that in Rockefeller Center in New York. That tree has had "lights" since 1931 but not real electric lights until 1956. It was at this time in history that the average household would begin using lights on a yearly basis.

In today's society, Christmas lights are sold in all fashions, from miniature white lights to those of all colors that have remote control units to add speed of blinking lights, music and more. Outdoor specific lights come in all shapes and sizes from running rope lights to cascading strings to light-up lawn decorations. Many use lights inside the home not only on the tree but on mantles, around doorways and in windows. Reverting a bit to the days of candles, many of those window lights come in the shape of candles, but are powered by electricity, offering safer conditions than the open flames of old.

Lights can be found in nearly every store in the area with large sections at many of the big box stores such as Lowe's, Home Depot and Walmart. Smaller stores, too, offer lights galore in their holiday decoration sections. They can be found in any price range so that one and all can light the way to Christmas.



Journal photo by Toni Milbourne



Journal photo by Toni Milbourne

Lights are often the key component of tree decorating, especially when the trees are displayed outdoors.

The use of lights at Christmas has become a focal point of decorating over the years.

# Christmas carols and their meanings



Metro Creative

**BY TONI MILBOURNE**

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There are literally thousands of carols and songs sung at the holiday season. Many are familiar to all who hear them while some may be favorites of only a few. Carols share in common their reflection of the Christmas story. While there is no hard and fast rule regarding what constitutes a carol, they are often denoted as such through their connotations to the birth of Christ and other Christmas themes.

Favorites of the holiday season can be heard as carolers visit nursing homes, walk through neighborhoods or as choirs within church walls celebrate the season.

The selection of which carols to sing are made by personal choice or perhaps by the meaning behind them.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing is a popular choice for many, yet the words and music were not written together. The words, written by Charles Wesley, brother to Methodism founder John Wesley, were penned in 1739. Some words were altered in 1753 by George Whitefield while the musical score wasn't added until 1840 when Felix Mendelssohn wrote a tune to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the invention of the Gutenberg printing press that was used 15 years later by Dr. William Cummings as accompaniment to Wesley's words.

The fusion of these two pieces have created one of the most popular carols of the holiday season.

Another seasonal favorite carol is The First Noel, dating at least to the 17th century. The earliest publication of the song was found in 1833's Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern edited by William B. Sandys and Davies Gilbert. The two rearranged some of the words and added lyrics which were again altered in 1871 by John Stainer, creating the version we

sing today.

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen is said to be one of the most ancient carols, likely written more than 500 years ago.

We Three Kings of Orient Are arose out of John Henry Hopkins, Jr.'s desire to write something new for a Christmas pageant in New York City in 1857. It is believed that this carol became the first purely American carol published.

Another early American carol is It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, written by Edmund Sears for the pastor of the Unitarian Church of Wayland, Massachusetts in 1849. Sears wrote it as a poem while two melodies have been added to the words. The first, by Richard Storrs Willis, was written one year after the poem and is the tune best known in America. The second was adapted by Arthur Sullivan, of Gilbert and Sullivan fame, which is more common in the United Kingdom.

Probably one of the most famous carols is Silent Night, penned by Pastor Joseph Mohr in 1816 titled 'Stille Nacht'. The song became popular when The Strassers, a singing family, performed the song at a Leipzig concert in 1832 and then in America when the Rainer family performed the carol outside of Trinity Church in New York City in 1839. The song took on new meaning in December 1914 when sentimental meaning came into play during the truce of World War One. It was, it seems, one of the few carols both German and English soldiers knew so the as the guns fell silent, the strains of "Silent Night" filled the air instead.

There are many more carols and songs that fill the air at Christmas time, each with their own stories and connotations. Local churches often offer special musical productions during the holiday season where one can enjoy listening to the tunes or even joining in.



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