



Your Community-Minded Newspaper

YANCEY COMMON

TIMES JOURNAL

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Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Burnsville, North Carolina 50¢



Included in this issue is the annual Season's Greetings from local businesses and individuals along with a wide selection of recipes. We thank you for your support throughout the year and send our wishes for a holiday season filled with love and the happy gathering of family and friends.

Pat, Anna, Katie, Kayti



'Tis the season of giving

Just like the visitors who came from near and afar all those years ago to bring gifts to a child asleep in a manger, many loving people have bought gifts for the children of Yancey County and Western North Carolina who were impacted by Hurricane Helene.

This past Saturday the Grinch found his loving heart, and helped volunteers hand out toys at local Yancey County fire departments.

On Friday, during the Merry Main Street festivities in Downtown Burnsville, vol-

unteers handed out toys near the Yancey County Chamber of Commerce along with Santa.

Many other events have been held during the past few weeks, with many more scheduled for the days leading up to Christmas.

There will be a toy giveaway at the Burnsville Fire Station on Wednesday, December 18 beginning at 10 a.m. This give-away is in memory of Dylan Ruck from Jackson, Alabama. The toys will be distributed on the anniversary of Dylan's birthday. Organizers

shared that Dylan would have been determined to do anything he could to help bring a smile to the children's faces. This is the second year of the Dylan Ruck Memorial Toy drive and giveaway.

In this season of giving, it has been heartwarming to see the outpouring of love and support that has come, and continues to come, to not only Yancey County residents -- but to all communities in Western North Carolina that received so much loss and destruction due to the forces of Helene.

NC Office of State Fire Marshall statement regarding temporary housing emergency rule

State Fire Marshal Brian Taylor is proud to announce that the North Carolina Building Code Council (NCBCC) has adopted an emergency rule developed by the OSFM Engineering Division to streamline the construction process for temporary housing for North Carolinians displaced by Hurricane Helene. The emergency temporary housing rule – 11 NCAC 08.0211 – was subsequently approved by the Codifier of Rules of the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings and entered into the North Carolina Administrative Code with an effective date of December 10, 2024.

As the Winter deepens and temperatures drop – and as FEMA lags behind its prior projection for installation of temporary housing units – many North Carolinians in the counties devastated by Hurricane Helene are without safe and warm shelter. Many of our fellow citizens, churches, and charitable organizations have come forward to provide temporary housing to these North Carolinians but strict adherence to the North Carolina State Building Code and permitting requirements required by the North Carolina General Statutes prevents or significantly delays implementation. Compounding this problem, local inspection departments are stretched thin with their many essential duties helping their counties recover from the devastating storm, making inspecting the wide variety of temporary housing available in their counties – some of which is substandard and poses real danger to their occupants – an impossible task.

OSFM took prompt action to address this dire situation – our engineers developed a list of minimum safety requirements for temporary housing that provides private citizens and charitable organizations with clear and uniform directives to construct temporary housing that will safely shelter our fellow citizens. These minimum requirements address every aspect of constructing safe temporary housing units – from the foundations to the roof sheathing and from the allowed heating appliances to the required life safety mea-

sures like carbon monoxide and smoke alarms.

Equipped with these minimum requirements, property owners may now execute an affidavit affirming that the temporary housing structures on their property comply with the emergency rule, exempting the temporary housing structures from permit and inspection requirements, and releasing the State and local government from liability for the occupancy and use of the temporary structures. The affidavit process created by this emergency rule now empowers property owners to construct temporary shelters for themselves and their neighbors without having to comply with strict adherence to the North Carolina State Building Code and wait for overburdened local inspection departments to issue permits.

The Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) reaffirms its commitment to supporting local governments in their efforts to provide safe and warm shelter for North Carolinians this winter. By actively seeking feedback from citizens, local governments, and stakeholders, OSFM is dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by our most vulnerable residents.

Widespread moderate drought for NC

Most of North Carolina continues to experience moderate drought, according to the latest advisory from the North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council.

The DMAC classified all or parts of 93 counties as experiencing moderate drought, or D1 conditions, while seven counties were classified as abnormally dry. The classifications, released Thursday, were based on an assessment of conditions made December 10th.

“North Carolina saw well below average rainfall in October and November,” said Klaus Albertin, chair of the DMAC.

“Even though it's been dry, impacts are low this time of year since water demands are typically lower. The whole state received at least half an inch of rain, and a band of central North Carolina saw more than two inches in the last two weeks, which has helped.”

Corey Davis, assistant state

Through collaboration and innovation, we remain focused on delivering effective solutions to meet these critical needs.

11 NCAC 08.0211 includes: The owner of the real property upon which temporary housing buildings for use as temporary shelter during the recovery from Hurricane Helene are to be constructed (the “Owner”) shall sign an affidavit attesting that the temporary housing buildings shall be constructed per the requirements provided in this rule. The affidavit shall be provided to the local inspection department within a reasonable time of its notarization. The affidavit limits the occupancy and use of temporary housing buildings to use as a temporary shelter for 180 days from the first day of occupancy. The Owner assumes all liability associated with the construction and use of the temporary housing buildings as a means of temporary shelter. Once the temporary shelter period of 180 days has expired, the temporary housing building shall cease use as a temporary shelter and any reuse of the building is subject to permits and inspections by the local inspection department having jurisdiction and the requirements of the North Carolina State Building Code, unless the proposed new use is currently exempted by law or the North Carolina State Building Code. (The complete ruling can be found at www.ncosfm.gov/news.)

climatologist at the North Carolina State Climate Office, said: “Recent rains have been a welcome way to start this winter, but with the seasonal outlook favoring a La Niña-like pattern, we know that typically means fewer significant precipitation events and overall drier weather for North Carolina.”

DMAC is a collaboration of drought experts from various government agencies in North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina, and organized by the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Water Resources (DWR). Members of DMAC meet weekly and submit their drought condition recommendations to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Drought Mitigation Center for updates to the U.S. Drought Monitor (i.e., drought map), a map of the nation's drought conditions.

NCDOT estimates date for 2-lane traffic on I-40 in gorge

Traffic may be flowing in both directions on Interstate 40 through the Pigeon River Gorge — albeit slower than normal — by New Year's Day.

N.C. Department of Transportation officials anticipate a contractor completing a stabilization project securing the westbound lanes of I-40 in the gorge. The Pigeon River washed away the interstate's eastbound lanes in four long swaths during the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

The completion of the stabilization project will provide enough space for vehicles to travel at 40 mph on one lane in each direction over a 9-mile stretch of the gorge in Tennessee and North Carolina. This configuration will also provide another contractor enough room to safely complete long-

term repairs over the coming years.

NCDOT will award a quick-tow contract to support traditional Incident Management Assistance Patrol, or IMAP, to reduce travel delays associated with crashes. This towing contract will be modeled after a similar contract that proved to be successful during the I-26 widening projects in Buncombe and Henderson counties, where NCDOT's towing contractors are able to take quick action to reduce crashes, delays and congestion.

Contract crews are stabilizing several thousand feet of I-40 by installing soil-nail walls on swaths cut by the flooded Pigeon River. The operation includes inserting long rods into bedrock below the road, filling those with grout adhering the

rods to the rock, and spraying concrete on the cut face to hold the rods in place and create a solid wall.

As that operation concludes, crews will install a concrete safety barrier on 5 miles of the remaining westbound lanes in North Carolina. The wall will separate eastbound and westbound traffic from the double-tunnel to the Tennessee state line. For 4 miles of I-40 in Tennessee, there is a two-lane pattern for local traffic only.

NCDOT awarded an \$8.5 million contract to Wright Brothers Construction for the stabilization repairs and Geo-Stabilization International is the sub-contractor building the soil-nail wall.

Long-term reconstruction plans are still in early development.



Heritage Cougars post Final Four standing for 2024

On Friday, December 13th, Mountain Heritage went up against Corvian in the Football Final Four game for the Regional Championship, once again on the Cougar home field.

The winner would advance to the final game for the State Championship title. It has been a challenging season for members of the Varsity Cougar team

as Helene had not only ravaged their hometown, but forced the Heritage team to play the first games for the season on their neighboring Madison County high school football field.

Not a team to be deterred, these young men took on the task at hand and posted a winning season. And while their season came to a halt on Friday

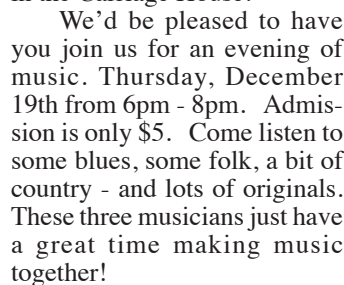
night as the final scoreboard showed Heritage trailing Corvian Community 19 to 28, Yancey County stands proudly behind the Cougars in a show of support and appreciation of their accomplishments.



Sports photos courtesy Jessica Whitson Bryant / Prints on the Paw. Scan for additional photos of local sporting events



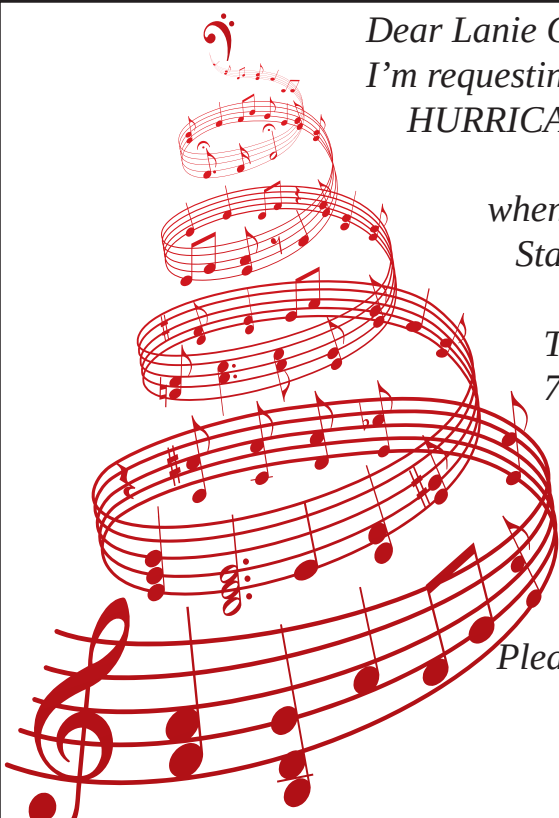
The Yancey County Department of Social Services Board will hold the monthly meeting on Monday, December 23, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the office of the Yancey County DSS.



Sign-up for the caregivers email newsletter for more information about help available for dementia caregivers or volunteering. Contact local coordinator April Henkel at (850) 228-1228, or by email at DementiaCaregiversWNC@gmail.com. Information also on the web at www.DementiaCaregiversWNC.org



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* The Downey Theater is located in Downey, California

My hope is that a family member or friend can pass this message on to Lanje.

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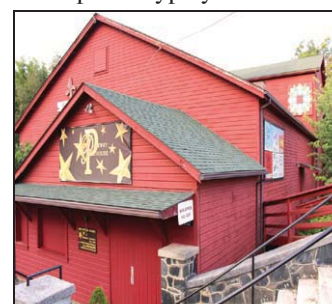


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Maness shares the secret to perfectly roasted vegetables: baking soda and the right ingredients

By Niki Maness

I don't know about you, but there are not many ways that I will not eat a potato. This humble root vegetable can be fixed in so many ways, and to avoid sounding like Bubba from Forest Gump talking about his shrimp, I want to take it back to basics—roasting them.

We had a church dinner this past Sunday, and I wanted to make roasted potatoes but wanted to add some flavor to them. After scrolling through Google for a minute, an article caught my eye: The Best Crispy Roast Potatoes Ever. With a recipe like that, how could you keep scrolling and not try it? You can ask my mom - I'm not a natural cook. She still laughs when she hears I'm teaching someone else to cook or how to do things in the kitchen. It's not because I can't or was never taught; I just always preferred to be outside or crafting somewhere, but I find the science behind many techniques used in the kitchen to be fascinating.

The Baking Soda Advantage

Back to this magical recipe: at the heart of this perfect roasting method is baking soda, something we all keep in the kitchen. If not to cook with, then you're probably like me and use it clean with. Baking soda is an alkaline compound that raises the pH of boiling water. When added in small amounts (about ½ teaspoon per 2 quarts of water), baking soda speeds up the breakdown of pectin, the natural "glue" that holds plant cells together. This



softens the outside of starchy vegetables like potatoes and sweet potatoes, letting them develop a textured surface perfect for crisping in the oven.

Once parboiled or partially cooked in alkaline water (about 10 minutes after being dropped into the boiling water), the vegetables are tossed with oil or animal fat and roasted at high heat for a deliciously crispy finish. The result is a perfectly crisp potato on the outside and nice and fluffy on the inside.

The Office Experiment: A Potato Medley

At the office, we decided to test the baking soda method with a medley of potatoes, including baby reds, baby Yukon Golds, organic Yukon Golds, and sweet potatoes. Five of us tested them, and the winners were clear.

1. Sweet Potatoes were the standout favorite, with a beautifully crisp exterior that complemented their naturally sweet and creamy interiors. I'll be

completely honest—I'm not a huge fan of sweet potatoes, but I could have eaten the whole pan of these roasted.

2. Baby Reds roasted up with a nice crunch and rich flavor, but they got softer as they cooled. For the best experience, enjoy these straight off the pan. I used these in Sunday's church dinner dish, and although they tasted good, they lost all of their crispiness when reheated and darkened in color. My seven-year-old said they looked burnt.

3. Both Yukon Gold varieties were still yummy but lacked the contrast in the crunchy and fluffy textures that set the sweet potatoes and baby reds apart.

Visit our website, yancey.ces.ncsu.edu, for the full step-by-step process for perfectly roasted root veggies and other great information, such as which oils and fats can withstand the higher temperatures required for those crispy, golden outsides.



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Move Over Law helps protect workers on roadways

North Carolina's Move Over Law (G.S. 20-157) protects law enforcement officers, emergency services workers as well as those who work along the roadside. The law requires motorists to move over a lane or slow down considerably when approaching emergency vehicles stopped on the side of the road with lights flashing.

Emergency vehicles include: law enforcement; ambulances/fire trucks; NCDOT safety patrol, or IMPA, truck; NCDOT trucks; highway contractors; tow trucks; utility trucks.

Tips to remember when following the Move Over Law:

- Slow down and move over, if possible.
- If you cannot move over, slow down, and proceed at a reduced speed that would allow you to stop, if necessary.
- Pay attention and eliminate any distractions as you maneuver around the stopped emergency vehicle.
- Be alert for crews who may be outside their vehicles.
- Once you have cleared the emergency or public service vehicle, you may safely merge back into your lane and resume to the posted speed limit.

Yancey Co. Sheriff's Office Felony Arrest Report

12/06/24 to 12/12/24
13 Misdemeanor Arrest.
Calls for Service: 320
Charity Braxton Delaney, 30 years old of Burnsville, NC was arrested on 12-09-2024. Delaney was charged with; Fel-



ony Larceny from the person, Felony Probation Violation, Misdemeanor Simple Possession of Schedule II controlled substance and Misdemeanor Drug Paraphernalia. Delaney was issued a \$50,000.00.

Sabrina Nycole Byrd, 39 years old of Marion, NC was arrested on 12-11-2024. Byrd was charged with; Felony Possession of Methamphetamine, Misdemeanor Simple Possession of Schedule III controlled substance, Misdemeanor Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Byrd was also served with Order for Arrest issued out of Buncombe County for Felony Possession of Schedule II controlled substance x2 and Misdemeanor Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Byrd is being held in the Yancey County Detention under a no bond for all charges.

Christopher Ray Byrd, 38 years old of Marion, NC was arrested on 12-11-2024. Byrd was arrested for a order for arrest issued out of Buncombe County for; Felony Possession of Schedule II Controlled Substance. Byrd was issued a \$20,000.00 Bond and is being held in the Yancey County Detention Center awaiting to be Transferred to Buncombe County Detention Center.



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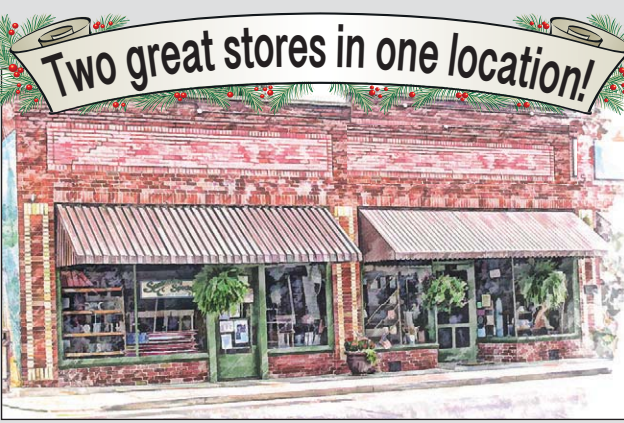


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Stein presents Dogwood Award to WNC residents for their community dedication

Attorney General Josh Stein honored North Carolinians in western North Carolina with the Attorney General's Dogwood Award.

These awards are distributed to honor people who are working to improve the health, safety, and well-being of their fellow North Carolinians.

The recipients were honored with a focus on people who have been helping their communities recover and rebuild following Hurricane Helene's devastation.

Recipients in western North Carolina area included: Yancey County Sheriff Shane Hilliard: "Sheriff Hilliard and his team worked around the clock after the hurricane to respond to calls and help the people of Yancey County," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "He and his team saved lives and helped their neighbors navigate a difficult time." "I am truly humbled to receive the Dogwood Award," said Sheriff Shane Hilliard. "It is such an honor to serve as Sheriff to the extraordinary citizens of Yancey County." Sheriff Shane Hilliard leads the Yancey County Sheriff's Office.

Derek Murphy: "Derek acted quickly during the hurricane to protect several at-risk school properties," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "His work has made it a little bit easier for children to get back to repaired schools and saved the taxpayers money." Derek Murphy is the director of facilities/maintenance/transportation for Yancey County and a member of the Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department.

Shane Dale: "Shane Dale worked round the clock to keep the water flowing to Burnsville families during Helene and its aftermath," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "He helped ensure people had access to clean drinking water." Shane Dale is the public works director for Burnsville.

Ronnie Proffitt: "Volunteer firefighters stepped up in droves across the region to help with search and rescue and relief efforts after Helene, including Ronnie Proffitt," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "I'm grateful to Ronnie and other volunteers who gave their time and skills to the West Yancey Fire Department. Ronnie Proffitt is a volunteer with the West Yancey Fire Department.

Matt and Morgen Yeakley: "Matt and Morgen helped coordinate and prioritize resources coming into Madison County, so that people and places with the greatest need could get assistance first," said Stein. Matt and Morgen Yeakley are residents of Madison County.

Tommy Burleson: "Tommy Burleson is a sports legend, but now he's a legend for another reason," said Attorney General Josh Stein. "He's been selling Christmas trees from an Avery County farm and donating all of his profits to organizations helping those in need. I'm grateful for his efforts and contributions." Tommy Burleson is a former N.C. state basketball star and is selling Christmas trees in Huntersville.

Black Mountain Police Chief Steve Parker: Chief Steven Parker leads the Black Mountain Police Department.

Black Mountain Fire Chief John Coffey: Chief John Coffey leads the Black Mountain Fire Department.

Danny Hampton: Danny Hampton is chaplain and executive director of Freedom Life Ministries.

Biltmore: "Biltmore is an Asheville institution," said Attorney General Josh Stein. Biltmore is a national historic landmark in Asheville.

Ashley Galleher, ZRC Skate: Ashley Galleher is founder and owner of the Zionsville Ramp Company.

Ashley Cook & Freddy Carpenter: "Ashley and Freddy were a glimmer of light in a very dark time for the town of Minneapolis," said Attorney General Josh Stein.

Taylor Schenker: Taylor Schenker is the owner of Schenker Creative Co. and runs the "Photos from Helene" Instagram account.

Detective Sam DeGrave: Sam DeGrave is a detective with the Asheville Police Department.

Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts: The Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts is a craft school focused on Appalachian culture.

WPTL: WPTL is a radio station in Canton.

Canton Chief of Police Scott Sluder: Chief Scott Sluder leads the Canton Police Department.

Chimney Rock Mayor Peter O'Leary: "Mayor O'Leary personifies Chimney Rock's resilience and optimism," said Attorney General Josh Stein.

FizzEd: FizzEd is a restaurant in Boone.

Jaclyn Kiger: Jaclyn Kiger is the chief operations officer at Pisgah Legal Services.

Boone Area Chamber of Commerce: The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce represents the business community in the Boone area.

Katie Button: Katie Button is a five-times James Beard Foundation award nominee and founder of Asheville-based Cûrate.

Sugarloaf Elementary Principal Ashley Newcomer: Ashley Newcomer is the principal at Sugarloaf Elementary School in Hendersonville.

Highland Brewing: Highland Brewing is a craft brewery in Asheville.

Danny Scalise: Danny Scalise is the health director of Burke County.

Amos McGregor: Amos McGregor is a local builder in Marshall.

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- Furniture assistance (replacement for qualified renters and owners)
- Church grant program

In the western North Carolina counties of Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga, and Yancey, as well as in Johnson County, Tennessee

Priority will be given to homeowners with no insurance or who are underinsured. Applicants must also fall between minimum and maximum income levels.

For more information or to apply, call 828-588-4663

Samaritan's Purse is a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world in Jesus' Name.

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Mountain Heritage AJROTC Cadet promotions

By C/2LT Jacob Buchanan

On November 22nd, Mountain Heritage High School (MHHS) Army Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps (AJROTC) first year cadets Emilson Benegas-Rameirez, Dylan Huskins, and Melody Carney were each promoted from Cadet Private to Cadet Private First Class by MHHS AJROTC Senior Army Instructor Colonel Doolittle, for exceptional volunteer service to the community as part of Hurricane Helene relief efforts. Each of them displaying one of the seven Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage.

Cadet Benegas-Ramirez: Dedicated over 100 hours of his personal time providing support to local distribution and feeding centers while school was out due to the storm. A great display of Selfless Service.

Dylan Huskins: Helped during rescue operations; saving the life of a local elderly resident by pulling him out of a house encased in mud. A great display of Personal Courage.

Melody Carney: Who, even with limited communications immediately began checking on fellow cadets and teachers to ensure their safety and accountability. A great display of Duty.

On behalf of Mountain Heritage and Yancey County we owe these young citizens and all volunteers our gratitude for their initiative and bravery in putting others before themselves.



YANCEY COMMON TIMES JOURNAL

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The Yancey Common Times Journal is published proudly for the citizens of Yancey County and surrounding counties. Our goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and strong dedication towards printing the truth. Published and operated by owners Pat Randolph, Anna Webb.

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People Helping People

PC Solutions in Burnsville is offering free internet access in their parking lot, to Mitchell and Yancey county residents. To use their free internet service simply pull into their parking lot and log in to: Pcs-Helene-Guest, password: 092724bnc. Available 7 days a week, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

All information is posted on their front door. PC Solutions is located at 347 E.U.S. Hwy 19E Bypass in Burnsville. For more information call 828-536-5095.

Operation Christmas Child helps send Christmas joy to children overseas

Area volunteers are celebrating the collection of gift-filled shoeboxes that will send a message of joy to children around the world.

Thousands of volunteers contributed to Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan’s Purse, by packing shoeboxes filled with fun toys, school supplies, and personal care items. The global Christmas project will deliver these gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 100 coun-

tries, including many who are suffering from war, poverty, disease and disaster. Each shoebox is an opportunity to share the message of the Gospel and bring hope to children in need around the world.

Although drop-off locations have closed for the season, there is still time to share hope and love with children overseas by packing a gift-filled shoebox online. Shoeboxes built online go to some of the hardest-to-reach areas in the world. Those

who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse samaritanspurse.org/buildonline to select gifts matched to a child’s specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement.

For more information on how to participate in Operation Christmas Child visit samaritanspurse.org/occ.

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan’s

Purse, seeks to demonstrate God’s love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 220 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

What does building resilience look like?

By Tonia W. Hale

Resilience is a quality that defines the people of Western North Carolina, and I have seen great strength in our community during these last few months following Hurricane Helene. Despite destruction and the traumatic loss of loved ones, homes, vehicles, and possessions, our neighbors continue to move forward with faith, purpose, and unity.

Though we have needed to stay grounded and strong to cope with the hurricane and its aftermath, how do we do this? The traumatic effects of living through a natural disaster aren’t something people recover from right away — or easily.

Part of what makes us resilient is being comfortable with vulnerability — our own and that of others. It’s easy and natural for most of us to offer empathy and a needed hug when a family member or friend needs support, but do you offer yourself the same grace in accepting help and comfort when it’s offered by others?

Building resilience involves taking some simple steps as you emerge from a period of hardship. Reaching out and staying connected to loved ones, neighbors, and other community members is critical. We all depend on each other for help, whether it’s a listening ear or something more practical, like a jump start for the car. We know that living in isolation isn’t good for our health, so reaching out to a friend to get together or volunteering your time allow you to maintain those all-important relationships with others.

Cultivating a sense of gratitude — even in the face of something as devastating as a natural disaster — helps us realize that no matter what we have gone through, our situation doesn’t stay the same forever. We grow, advance, and reach milestones as we recover from setbacks.

At the heart of caring for our community is inspiring joy, and taking care of others while being there for each other.

Developing a feeling of

empowerment also helps us make it through hard times. Our faith, a sense of purpose at work, and clarity about our values all help us feel like we are on a solid foundation and that we can cope with challenges that come our way.

Another thing to consider when you feel “stuck” emotionally, with persistent feelings of depression or anxiety, is seeking mental health services. Professional help can be pivotal in helping us work through trauma. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is when a person has trouble getting past seeing or experiencing a traumatic event, such as a physical assault, military combat, or a natural disaster like Hurricane Helene. You might continue reliving the experience, notice that you’re highly reactive, gravitate toward isolation, or suffer with sleep problems. Meeting with a counselor can help you move through PTSD and acquire successful coping strategies.

The road to resilience has much to do with caring for ourselves emotionally, but paying attention to our physical health is essential to preserving our physical and mental health as well. This means eating a healthy diet heavy on fruits and vegetables, lean protein, legumes, and healthy fats like olive oil, and avoiding fast food, red meat, deli meats, and “junk food,” such as chips and candy.

Getting at least 150 minutes of vigorous exercise per week, enjoying enough high-quality sleep, and taming stress effectively are also important.

Many will be dealing with the impact of the storm for months, if not years to come. Part of building resilience is honoring, processing, and grieving our experiences. The ways in which our community and our entire region came together for each other are beautiful examples of the strength of connection. At HCA Healthcare, we believe in unlocking possibilities, and we eagerly embrace the challenges of our profession and welcome new opportunities to grow and make an impact.

Before closing, I would like to introduce and welcome a new member of our team, Dr. Peter Bechtel. He is an accomplished General Surgeon who comes to us from AnMed Health in South Carolina. Dr. Bechtel and his family are excited to be moving closer to family and they enjoy living in a rural area, so they look forward to exploring the mountains of Western North Carolina as well.

Dr. Bechtel loves teaching residents and students, and has served as a Family Medicine Residency Liaison for Surgical Rotation with AnMed. He has also been on staff at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). Dr. Bechtel looks forward to becoming an active community member and serving patients. He will be working for Mission Surgery — Blue Ridge Regional Hospital and Mission Hospital McDowell.

Everyone at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital (BRRH) continues to be here for our community, and we consider caring for you a privilege.

I hope that everyone in our community and our committed BRRH team members have a safe and joyful holiday season. We are stronger together and will continue to heal from the effects of Hurricane Helene by reaching out and helping when we can, reflecting on our blessings, and staying closely connected.

Tonia W. Hale, DNP, MAOM, BSN, RN, is Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nursing Officer of Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine.

Mother and daughter going through nursing school together

East Tennessee State University students Eva Jessee and Kali Holt, both in the ETSU College of Nursing’s MSN-FNP program, have a unique connection for two classmates: mother and daughter.

After seeing both her parents deal with life-threatening health issues, Kali Holt knew she wanted to go into health care.

Fortunately, her mother set a “wonderful example” for her to follow.

As a nurse for nearly two decades herself, Eva Jessee, Holt’s mom, had dedicated her life to service, including serving in the military during Operation Desert Storm. But days prior to graduating with her licensed practical nurse degree, she gave birth and went into postpartum cardiomyopathy, a rare form of heart failure.

“She was in full blown heart failure with 20% of her heart working,” said Holt. “And then previous to that, my dad was seriously injured after being hit head-on by another driver under the influence of drugs.

“Both fortunately and unfortunately, as the oldest daughter, I had a front row seat to what my mom and dad were going through, and I wanted to be able to know how to take care of my family and follow in her footsteps,” said Holt.

It wasn’t long after she earned her licensed practical nurse degree that she approached her mom with a “crazy” idea.

“I said, ‘You’re an LPN. I’m an LPN. Why don’t we be a little crazy and get our bachelor’s degrees together?’” Holt said.

And that they did, with both graduating from East Tennessee State University’s College of Nursing together in fall of 2022.

One degree, however, wasn’t enough.

Passionate about forensic nursing and teaching, both enrolled in ETSU’s family nurse practitioner master’s program, beginning the next chapter of their journey together in the fall of 2023.

Jessee said as a parent, she’s always tried to encourage her children to do whatever they wanted in life, something she credits to their faith.

“I set a high bar because I believe I am raising world-changers,” said Jessee. “I have always told them they’re not average children, and that God

created them with a plan and purpose.

“And for me, this is about getting as much education as I can get, and letting my children know that you’re never too old to go back to school — never too old to start your life over again,” Jessee continued. “It’s been a surreal journey getting to experience this with Kali.”

In addition to their coursework, both are sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) and teach as adjunct professors in the ETSU College of Nursing. It’s that experience and passion that earned them an opportunity to help develop a postmortem sexual assault examination course for certification in conjunction with the International Association of Forensic Nurses.

“My mom and I, we’re both very, very passionate about pursuing all these different things and being a jack-of-all-trades because all of these things ultimately help us better contribute to society to make things better for the next generation,” said Holt.

For Jessee, the best moment of this journey didn’t happen in a class. It was when she and Holt walked the stage at their hooding and pinning ceremony after completing their bachelor’s degrees and saw their family — large enough to take up two full rows of seats — cheering them on. “Every single person has played a role in our success,” said Jessee.

Of course, their journey is far from over. Ultimately, they want to establish a crisis center to support those struggling with addiction, mental health issues and survivors of domestic abuse.

Jessee pointed to the educators who inspired them to want to be the best they could be as the reason she and her daughter are so driven to make an impact on others.

“These were people that didn’t have to care about us, didn’t have to love us, didn’t have to invest in us, but these people impacted us and made us want to be better, go higher,” Jessee said. “It’s like every level of education at ETSU builds upon itself and we’ve had such a great foundation laid for us at ETSU that we never anticipated, and where we end up is a direct reflection and credit to where we came from.”

To learn more about the ETSU College of Nursing, or to apply, visit etsu.edu/nursing/.



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Obituaries



Joyce Remelle Sink

Joyce Remelle Sink, age 86, of Burnsville, passed away peacefully at her home on Friday, December 13, 2024. A native of Davidson County, she was the daughter of the late Garland and Edna Potts Koonts, and the beloved wife of the late James Ardell Sink, with whom she shared 64½ wonderful years of marriage before his passing on August 29, 2021.

Remelle and Ardell were married on June 23, 1957, during their college years, and together they built a life filled with love, joy, and commitment. They owned and operated numerous radio stations across the Carolinas, working side by side in the broadcasting industry for many years. Their dedication and service were recognized with several broadcast awards, including the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters' Community Service Award. Remelle was not only a loving wife, but also the cornerstone of their family and business.

After Ardell's passing, Remelle continued her work as CEO of Mark Media Radio Sta-

tions, a role she held with passion until her death. Her work ethic and commitment were unmatched, and she remained dedicated to the success of the company and the people who depended on her leadership. In addition to her work, Remelle and Ardell shared a love of travel and a fondness for their cats, who brought them much joy throughout their lives. She was a member of Brookstone Church in Weaverville. Remelle will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and all who knew her. Her legacy of love, dedication, and service will live on through her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Remelle is survived by her three children: Marsa Jarrett (Garry) of Simpsonville, SC; Michael Sink (Tina) of Burnsville; and Holly Hall (Steve) of Burnsville. She was a loving grandmother to seven grandchildren: Corey Cianfarano (David), Clint Jarrett (Katie), Jacob Jarrett (Christina), Jeremy Sink (Donna), Jessica Sink Roland, Tressa Hennessee (Shannon), and Chris Hall (Misty). She also leaves behind 18 cherished great-grandchildren: Clara, Ava, Maxwell, Adalyn, Jenaca, Grayson, Carson, Lily, David, Myles, Mia, Victoria, Katie, Emma, Olivia, Isabel, Keaton, and Kason; as well as two brothers: Wayne Koonts (Anna) of Pawley's Island, SC, and Wes Koonts (Teresa) of Greensboro.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2024 in the chapel of Yancey Funeral Services. The family will receive friends from 1 until 2 p.m. prior to the services at the funeral home. A private graveside service will be held.

To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.



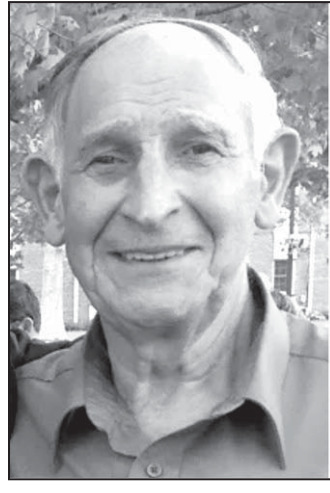
Jerry Scott Haney

Jerry Scott Haney, age 53, of Upper White Oak, passed away on Monday, December 9, 2024. He was the son of Sadie Self Dubois of Bakers Creek and the late Jerry Melvin Haney. He was also preceded in death by his grandmother, Mae Self. Scott loved spending time with his family. His grandchildren were the center of his heart. He was a giving, kind-hearted person who enjoyed being outdoors, especially digging ginseng and pulling galax.

Surviving in addition to his mother Sadie, is his brother, Mark Haney (Tina); sisters: Melanie Ballew (James) and Michelle Lee; cousins: Jeff Webb, Christy Self and Donna Self; nieces: Haley Horney, Bethany Ballew, Marisa McEntyre and Rory Jo McCool; nephews: Ethan Ballew and Jerry Haney; friends: Linda Brackins and Victoria Murphy; granddaughters: Harmony Murphy and Melody Cantrell and a special aunt, Lois Webb. Several other extended family members also survive.

Graveside services were held at 2 p.m. on Monday, December 16th in the Autrey Cemetery. Pastor James Ballew officiated.

To send on line condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.



James Edward Ledford

James Edward Ledford, 92, passed away Wednesday December 11, 2024 with his sons by his side. Preceded in death by parents Mack and Carrie Ledford; wife Sara (AKA Sally) Ledford; and brother and sister-in-law Burl and Dory Ledford.

Survived by sons James (Shelli) Ledford and Rev. Mark (Jill) Ledford; grandchildren Kauri, Kayla, Caleb, Zach, Connor and Camden; great grandchildren Violet, Charlie and Albany; brothers Charles (Carolyn) Ledford, Clyde (Sandy) Ledford and Brooks (Barbara) Ledford; sisters Joyce Ledford and Geraldine (Charles) Briggs.

He retired from Fords' Walton Hills Stamping Plant after 30+ years of faithful service. He was a long time member of Bedford and Westerville Church of the Nazarene. He was known by many as an authentic servant of the God and servant of others. He was loved and highly respected; loved his wife and family. He was a hard worker; disciplined and wanted others to know Jesus. He modeled Christ for others and lived his life for the Lord until he went to be with Him in Eternity.

Funeral services were held on Monday December 16, 2024. Pastors Edward Solano and Jeremy Stanley officiated. Interment was at Blendon Central Cemetery. Donations may be made to Westerville Church of The Nazarene 355 Cherrington Rd. Westerville, Ohio 43081.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a brother, Richard Scott, Garland; sister, Patsy Lou Garland Byrd; uncle and aunt, Fred and Alice Garland; and uncle, Floyd Garland.

Sue was of the Baptist faith. She loved Elvis Presley, Westerns, and everybody around her.

Left to cherish her memory are Rose Marie Yelton, Cynthia McCartney, Cecil Scott Byrd, Theresa Loven, Lloyd Garland, Randy Davis, Lily Byrd, and Brenda Hilton.

A funeral service was held on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 1:00 pm. Interment took place after the service at Garland Cemetery on Bad Creek.

Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home is respectfully serving Sue's family.



Danny Lee Scott

On the evening of Sunday, December 8, 2024, Danny Lee Scott, 64, of Morganton, went to be with the Lord due to injuries sustained in an automobile accident on the way to church.

He was born in Buncombe County on January 9, 1960 and was raised in Burnsville. He was preceded in death by his father, Leland Scott.

He was a dedicated mechanic who shared his skills and passion with the community for 35 years through his beloved business, Danny's VW's. Completely self-taught, Danny's yearn to never stop learning and patience for sharing all his knowledge with others created a reputation for excellence, earning the admiration and respect of countless friends who quickly became like family to him.

Throughout his life, Danny exemplified what it meant to be dedicated and hardworking. He was known for his tireless efforts and commitment to his craft, earning the distinction as the best at everything he pursued. His incredible work ethic was matched only by his vibrant

personality; he was a jokester at heart, known for always having a smile on his face and bringing joy to those around him.

Danny cherished the outdoors and often enjoyed hiking and embarking on dune buggy adventures with friends. His enthusiasm for racing, particularly at dirt tracks, provided him with lasting memories from his early years at Antioch. He also relished the thrill of mudslinging in a rail buggy, embracing every moment that life offered him.

More than anything, Danny loved the Lord and put Him first in all things. He was a faithful member of Nowlings Chapel Free Will Baptist Church. He placed great importance on serving the Lord and never allowed his work or anything else keep him from attending church services. He will be remembered for his frequent prayer and daily Bible reading.

He is survived by his mother, Anna Jean Deyton Scott; his wife of 42 years, Kay McPeters Scott; two children, Kala Mashburn (Michael) and Kasey Scott (Lisa); five grandchildren, Kassie Garnhum, Kayden Garnhum, Allan Fink, Emily Warren, and Marcus Scott; and three siblings, Patricia Edwards (Adam), Ray Scott, and Steve Scott. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews as well as his beloved VW family.

The funeral service was held at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, December 13, 2024 at Nowlings Chapel Free Will Baptist Church. Pastor Darvy Hensley and Pastor Ronnie Peterson officiated. Burial was held on Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at Patterson Branch Free Will Baptist Church Cemetery in Burnsville.

creating beautiful crafts. Her home was a place of comfort, and her porch was her sanctuary where she enjoyed her flowers, and feeding and watching the deer, hummingbirds and cardinals. Her yard was always immaculate because she never allowed anyone else to mow it, and always told everyone that was because mowing was her "thinking time," where she found solace and peace.

Left to cherish her memory is her loving husband of 31 years and the love of her life since high school, Jackie Briggs; son, Dillon Briggs and wife, Abby of Flat Top; daughter, Caitlin Oetting and husband, Alex of South Toe; four grandchildren: Braxton, who was Maw's sweetheart and she his, Canaan, William and Isaiah; mother-in-law, Lena Briggs of Jacks Creek; sister-in-law, Michelle McIntosh and husband, Jordan of Jacks Creek; her beloved canine companion, Kimbear, as well as numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. She also leaves behind a host of friends, especially these with a special place in her heart: Lil, Goob, Dick, Doc, Margie Dulaney, Betty Frye, Maude Sparks, Pat Thompson, and Rev. Roy Whitson.

Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 14th at the Briggs-Oetting Family Cemetery on South Toe. Speakers for the service will include Dustin Atkins and Jordan McIntosh, with Dylan Wilson providing the music. Pallbearers will be Dennis Ayers, Robbie Boyer, Teddy Boone, David Gurley, Justin Gurley, and Scottie Mathis.

Charlene's family would like for her to be remembered for the joy she brought into the lives of others, rather than the sadness of her passing. Her final moments were spent surrounded by the love of her family, a testament to the deep bonds she nurtured throughout her life and the values instilled in her by her mother and father. She leaves behind a legacy of love and kindness, generosity and strength. She was always in the hearts and prayers of her family, and they in hers. She will forever be missed by those who knew and loved her.

Memorial donations may be made to Samaritan's Purse at P.O. Box 3000, Boone, NC 28607, or Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge at 236 Hospital Drive, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.



Patricia Atkins

On November 30th, 2024 after a long fight with COPD, Patricia Atkins (Pat) went home to be with the Lord. Pat is survived by her husband Darrell Atkins of 31 years, 2 children Angie Cox and Eric Grindstaff, 3 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. 1 sister Nina and husband Robert. One niece and one nephew.

A memorial service with immediate family will be held at a later date.



Carolyn Garland

Sue Garland, age 71, of Bakersville, went Home to be with the Lord, on Monday, November 25, 2024. Born on March 2, 1953, she was the daughter of Zebby Dee and Edna Fayne Stevens Garland.



Charlene Geouge Briggs

Charlene Geouge Briggs, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, best mother-in-law ever, and cherished member of the South Toe Community, passed away peacefully at the age of 50 on Saturday, December 7th, 2024, at her home, surrounded by her loving family. After a courageous battle with cancer, she was welcomed into Heaven to be reunited with her parents, Charles and Texie Gurley Geouge, her brother, Charles Geouge, Jr., and her father-in-law, Ralph Briggs.

A native of Yancey County, Charlene was known for her deep love for her family and community, her generous spirit, and her unwavering strength. Her devotion to her family was immeasurable, and she filled their lives with love, laughter, and kindness. Charlene's heart was open to all, always willing to help those in need, whether by feeding them or lending a hand, not out of obligation, but because of who she was and the love she had for her friends and neighbors. Her generosity touched the lives of many.

Charlene had a zest for life and was always ready for an adventure, especially in her Jeep, and never let her challenges hold her back. She loved attending the Great Smoky Mountain Jeep Invasion events with her husband, Jackie. Having spent their lives together since they were teenagers, anytime you saw Jackie, you saw Charlene as well. They never left one another's sides. The beach was her special place, and she always referred to Edisto Beach as her home away from home. She enjoyed taking tours there.

Her heart was always at home, and her love for her family knew no bounds. She found peace in the simple joys - solving puzzles, browsing antique shops, painting, and

J.C. Morrow
May 9, 1952
January 11, 2022

Delia Morrow
April 4, 1927
December 5, 2018

Isaac Guinn
December 8, 1986
June 29, 2006

Clarence Morrow
June 18, 1925
December 23, 2009

In loving memory of

Alta Ruth Hudgins

Merry Christmas,
Mama

We love you and miss you.

~ Your family

Obituaries



Susan Greene Hopson

Susan Greene Hopson passed away peacefully in hospice care on Tuesday, December 3rd, 2024.

Susan was born on June 28, 1955 to Thomas Milton Greene and Juanita Crosby Greene of Cochran, GA. The third of four daughters, she grew up on the Greene family farm in Cochran, surrounded by a large and loving extended family and close friends.

After graduating from Georgia State University with a degree in education, Susan taught school in Gwinnett County for several years before deciding to pursue a career as a physical therapist. She attended the Medical College of Georgia, where she made a number of lifelong friends, and graduated with a concentration in pediatric physical therapy.

Following graduation from PT school, Susan moved to Shelby, NC, where she worked for the hospital and made more friends with whom she would maintain close relationships for the rest of her life. Also, in Shelby, she met Stephen Royster, whom she later married, raising three daughters together.

Susan moved to the Asheville, NC area, working as a physical therapist for Thom's Rehabilitation Hospital and Irene Wortham Center, a non-profit for children and adults with developmental challenges. Susan was not only a committed pediatric PT for the children she treated at Irene Wortham, she was a compassionate advocate for the families she encountered there, providing respite care for parents and caregivers.

Eventually going to work as a PT for the public school system and the NC Infant and Toddler Program Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA), Susan devoted many years to serving the children and families she worked with, primarily in Yancey and Mitchell counties. She also served as a therapist and later volunteer for the Appalachian Therapeutic Riding Center in Burnsville, NC.

In 2003, Susan met Michael Hopson of Burnsville, and the two married on Cumberland Island, GA in 2005. A devoted husband, Michael would remain by her side until her passing. Prior to, and after her retirement in 2020, Susan volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian Ad Litem, continuing her tireless advocacy for the children in her community. She and Michael also provided respite care for foster parents in the area.

A lifelong lover of nature, Susan was an avid backpacker and hiker, in later years with Michael and her dogs by her side. She always maintained a beautiful garden which kept her happily outdoors as much as possible. Susan had an infectious sense of humor, a sensitive and compassionate nature, and a pragmatic attitude toward life. She was a loyal friend and a loving daughter, sister, aunt, wife, mother and grandmother. She touched the lives of countless children and families and will be remembered with gratitude, respect and love by all those close to her.

Susan was preceded in death by her mother and father, and is survived by her loving husband,

Michael, her daughters Sarah Royster (John Gilles), Erin Royster, Laura Royster (Jesse Lackey), her step-children Melinda Hopson Renfro (Doyle), Amy Hopson McCurry (Keith), Adam Hopson (Abigail Ramsay), her sisters Teresa Butler (Ray), Janet Lemmah, Maria Greene (Jim Kautz), her nieces and nephews, her grandchildren, and many friends and neighbors.

The family wishes to ex-

tend sincerest thanks to the dedicated memory care staff of Governor's Bend in Erwin, TN. Gifts in memoriam may be made to the Appalachian Therapeutic Riding Center at 299 Riding Center Road, Burnsville, NC 28714. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

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FILE NO: 24 JT 20
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PUBLICATION
IN THE MATTER OF
O.A. DARK
DOB: 04/24/2020
Petitioner: Alexys Annette Dark

To: Ashton McCandless
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled proceeding. The nature of the relief sought is the termination of your parental rights to the minor child named above pursuant to NCGS 7B-1100 et seq..

You are required to answer this Petition not later than 13 January 2025, being 40 days from the date of the first publication of this Notice and upon your failure to do so, the Petitioner will seek the relief sought by the Petition.

This the 4th day of December 2024.

HOCKADAY & HOCKADAY, P.A.

Daniel M. Hockaday
Attorney for Petitioner
Post Office Box 65
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828) 682-7060

Published December 4, 11, 18, 2024

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the of Estate of Robert Bruce Athey, deceased, late of Yancey County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned:

Robert Bruce Athey, Jr.,
Executor
c/o Joanne M. Dykes
Dykes Law Firm
29 Ravenscroft Drive,
Suite 305
Asheville, NC 28801

on or before March 13, 2025, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the address listed above.

This, the 13th day of December 2024.

Robert Bruce Athey, Jr.,
Executor
Estate of Robert Bruce Athey

Joanne M. Dykes
Dykes Law Firm, PLLC
29 Ravenscroft Drive, Suite 305 Asheville, NC 28801

Published December 11, 18, 25, 2024, January 1, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE,
YANCEY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR COURT
DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24 E 298
Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Wilma Woody Angel of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 19th day of March, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 18th day of December, 2024.

Dennis Woody
44 Jan View Place Road
Burnsville, NC 28714

Published December 18, 25, 2024 January 1, 8, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE,
YANCEY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR COURT
DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Ida Deyton of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of March, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 3rd day of December, 2024.

Mark Deyton
105 Twilight Way
Burnsville, NC 28714
Published December 11, 18, 25, 2024, January 1, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE,
YANCEY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR COURT
DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24 E 296
Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Ursula Bricke Morse of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 19th day of March, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 6th day of December, 2024.

Rosemary B. Banks
131 E Main Street, Ste. B
Burnsville, NC 28714
Published December 18, 25, 2024 January 1, 8, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE,
YANCEY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR COURT
DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24 E 303
Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Tony Daniel Randolph of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 19th day of March, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 13th day of December, 2024.

Sharon Denise Holcombe
818 JR Pate Road
Burnsville, NC 28714

Published December 18, 25, 2024 January 1, 8, 2025

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE,
YANCEY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR COURT
DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 24 E 301
Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of John W. Howell of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 19th day of March, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 12th day of December, 2024.

Elana Young
180 Laws Branch Drive
Green Mountain, NC 28740

Published December 18, 25, 2024 January 1, 8, 2025

Times Journal Deadline

Noon on Friday for Wednesday's publication. 828-682-2120.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE
STATE OF NORTH
CAROLINA COUNTY OF
YANCEY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC
HEARING
To Consider Economic
Development Incentives for
Project Gator in Yancey
County

NOTICE IS hereby given by Yancey County that, pursuant to the provisions of NC Gen. Stat. 158-7.1, the Yancey County Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on 30 December 2024 at 12 o'clock p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Yancey County Courthouse in Burnsville, North Carolina, on a proposal to appropriate and expend county funds and/or convey real estate for an economic development project to aid and encourage Project Gator to locate its new commercial/industrial operations in Yancey County, North Carolina.

The Yancey County Board of County Commissioners is considering entering into an economic development incentive agreement with Project Gator wherein Yancey County will, offer economic incentives to said company including, without limitation, the conveyance to said company that parcel of real estate or a portion thereof, in fee simple, containing 84.5 acres, more or less, located at 104 George Brown Road, and more particularly described at Yancey County Deed Book 884, Page 146 for the construction of a new commercial/industrial facility, said parcel of real estate having a fair market cash value of \$2,671,900.00. The economic incentive hereinabove will be based on and in consideration of the following:

a. A capital investment being made by Project Gator of not less than \$175,000,000.00 in additional real estate improvements and business property

investment in an on said real estate; and

b. The creation of 150 new full-time or full-time equivalent jobs.

The Yancey County Board of County Commissioners believes that the foregoing economic development incentive grant will stimulate the local economy, increase the County tax base and revenues, result in the creation of new and permanent jobs in the County, diversify the County economy, and promote the general welfare of the County and its citizens. All persons interested in this incentive are invited to attend this public hearing and present their views.

This the 18th day of December 2024

Morgan West

Click to the Board of County Commissioners for Yancey County

Published December 18, 2024

EMPLOYMENT



YANCEY COUNTY VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

YANCEY COUNTY is seeking a qualified individual for the following position:
TITLE: Tax Administrator
Full-Time Position

DESCRIPTION: An employee in this class plans, organizes and directs the work of a staff responsible for appraising property, listing taxes, revaluing property, GIS, maintaining property records and other files, billing and collecting taxes and handling appeals of tax assessments. Work involves developing policies, procedures, and methods for program operations in accordance with State statutes and local ordinances; handling budget and staff management matters; and working with sensitive and controversial issues in tax assessment, collection and delinquent tax collection procedures. Significant independent judgment and initiative are required to accomplish goals. Work is performed under the administrative supervision of the County Manager and is reviewed through conferences, records and reports, feedback from the public and audits of records.

QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor's degree with a major in business, economics, public administration, or related field and considerable experience in management of property appraisal and tax billing and collections operations; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Certification from the N.C. Department of Revenue as a county Assessor and Real Estate Property Appraiser within two years of employment.

Certification by the North Carolina Tax Collection Association as a Tax Collector within two years of employment.

Possession of a valid NC driver's license.

LOCATION: Primary duty station for the position is located in Burnsville, N.C.

SALARY: Pay Scale is Grade 76.

TO APPLY: Submit a Yancey County Application to the Yancey County Manager, 110 Town Square, Room 11, Burnsville 28714. Applications are available at the Yancey County Manager's office at 110 Town Square, Room 11, Burnsville or online at www.yanceycountync.gov/employment.

CLOSING DATE: Friday, December 27, 2024. Complete Application must be received by 5:00 p.m. in the Yancey County Manager's Office on the closing date. Late applications will not be considered.

HIRING AUTHORITY: The Yancey County Manager is the hiring authority for this position.

Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

EMPLOYMENT



YANCEY COUNTY VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

YANCEY COUNTY is seeking a qualified individual for the following position:
TITLE: Real Property Appraiser
Full-Time Position

DESCRIPTION: An employee in this class is responsible for performing a variety of real estate appraisal duties for the County, to assure that the final value for real property and any improvements accurately reflect true market value. Work includes performing on-site inspections and analysis work to appraise residential land and buildings; improvements made to sites; damaged property; or other property to determine the present value, and to appraise vacant land and determine the values before and after the land has been divided. Other duties include assisting the public with information about values and other tax issues; participating in processing tax exemption application; assisting with land records updates; and updating property data base. During revaluation years work also includes determining base prices in the assigned area and compiling data for cost of structures. Work also involves researching and gathering information to render an accurate judgment, and involves controversial and appealable decisions. Independent initiative and judgment are required in application of the schedule of values from the last County property evaluation, classifications and grades. Tact and diplomacy are required in working with property owners and their representatives. Duties subject the employee to inside and outside environments and hazards associated with site measuring tasks on construction projects. Work is performed under general supervision and is evaluated through conferences, review of work, records and documents and feedback from citizens.

QUALIFICATIONS: Graduation from a community college with major course work in real estate, business or a related field, and some experience in real property appraisal; or any equivalent combination of training and experience.

Required to be certified by the State of North Carolina as a County Real Property Appraiser within two years of employment.

May require other certifications as determined by the County.

Possession of a valid NC Driver's License.

LOCATION: Primary duty station for the position is located in Burnsville, N.C.

SALARY: Pay Scale is Grade 65.

TO APPLY: Submit a Yancey County Application to the Yancey County Manager, 110 Town Square, Room 11, Burnsville 28714. Applications are available at the Yancey County Manager's office at 110 Town Square, Room 11, Burnsville or online at www.yanceycountync.gov/employment.

CLOSING DATE: Friday, December 27, 2024. Complete Application must be received by 5:00 p.m. in the Yancey County Manager's Office on the closing date. Late applications will not be considered.

HIRING AUTHORITY: The Yancey County Manager is the hiring authority for this position.

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Michelle Boone, Office Manager

Classifieds



Bryant's Land & Development Industries has been awarded the Brush and Debris Cleanup contract for most of Yancey County. We are looking for local Yancey County personnel to work on this contract. We would prefer to staff these positions with our local community.

Now Hiring CDL Drivers

Pay \$30 - \$35 hr. Loader Truck experience a plus.
Benefits and 401K offered.
Paid Holidays, PTO/Sick Pay.

Apply in person at
159 Depot Street, Burnsville or call 828-678-9966

ATTENTION OWNERS OF PERSONAL PROPERTY SITUATED IN YANCEY COUNTY

All owners of taxable personal property situated in Yancey County must submit a listing form to the Yancey County Tax Office during the month of January 2025. Taxable personal property includes but not limited to vehicles not currently registered with the division of motor vehicles (cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, towable campers, mobile homes) apportioned (IRP) trucks and busses, permanent tagged trailers, boats, watercraft, aircraft and business personal property assets including short term rental furnishings, loaders, tractors, excavators, bulldozers, backhoes, trackhoes, skid steers, specialized truck bodies and equipment. Anyone who owns any of these items situated in Yancey County as of January 1, 2025 must list them with the tax office before five pm Friday January 31, 2025. If you do not receive a listing form in the mail you may come by the tax office during regular hours Monday through Friday (except holidays) 8:30 am - 5:00 pm to request a form. A ten percent late listing penalty will apply to properties not listed during the listing period. NCGS 105-296(c).

LEGAL NOTICE FOR SALE

**LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE GENERAL
COURT OF JUSTICE,
YANCEY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR COURT
DIVISION
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Administrator / Executor
Notice**

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of Victor Jan Pressley of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations

having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 5th day of March, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 25th day of November, 2024.
Joshua Grant Pressley
2408 Ivywood Road
Reston, VA 20191
Published December 4, 11, 18, 25, 2024

WNC AUTO PARTS, LLC, specializing in Toyota Trucks, 4Runners, and parts for both, years 79-02. Will buy and pick up the same if you have available. Contact Jimmy at 828-231-5715.

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WANTED:

WANTED: FREE CAMPER, If you need to get rid of a camper, or pontoon boat, from your yard, at the lake, or storage. Call Ricky at 828-442-2658.

Times Journal Deadline

Noon on Friday for Wednesday's publication. Located at 22 North Main Street. Phone 828-682-2120.

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mountainacreageavl@gmail.com

Author of "Roaming Around Yancey" column



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**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT
DEADLINE / COST**

DEADLINE for classified ads and news copy is 12:00 noon on Friday for Wednesday's publication.

COST is \$7.00 for the first 20 words, 25¢ for each word over 20, 50 word limit.

Classifieds

SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL FLOOR SANDING and refinishing. Estimates. Work guaranteed. Call Tim Peterson at 675-9664 or 284-0839. Pd12-27-23un

HUSKINS CLEANING SERVICE: commercial cleaning, foreclosure, construction cleanup, smoke damage. Bonded & insured. 682-3331. Pd12-25-24un

MAY COALITION Simple... Business Loans (828)765-8880un

SIGNS - Quality signs, banners, tags, decals, magnetic, vinyl letters, yard signs, custom design. Robertson Design & Sign. 828.208.7446 JR/pd9-25-02un

HOPSON MASONRY: Concrete pouring & finishing rock, block & brick laying. Fireplaces - sidewalks - driveways - foundations - retaining walls. 35 years experience. Cotton Hopson (828)675-5455, Matt Hopson (828)675-0724. Pd12-12un

LUBE-N-SUDZ: Oil changes, brake service, hand car washes & vacuuming. Free in-town pick-up and delivery. 628 Pine Swamp Road, Burnsville. 678-9611. Pd2-16un

FOX BROTHERS PAVING & TRUCKING - Locally owned and operated. Paving, mulch, dirt, hauling, gravel, trucking. 50 years experience. Max Fox II 828-284-4069, and Shane Johnson 828-284-4756. #2540/un

FENCING - Split rail Locust, barbed wire, woven wire, privacy or others. 20 years experience. Free estimate. Call 284-1232. Pd11-27un

WATSON PAINTING - Affordable quality residential painting service. Deck staining & sealing, log homes siding, pressure washing. When neatness counts. References. Insured. Call cell 284-5676.

Times Journal Deadline
Noon on Friday for Wednesday's publication. Located at 22 North Main Street. Phone 828-682-2120.

YANCEY GRAPHICS - For all your quick copy, full color copy, fax, laminating, binding, graphic design and commercial printing needs, call Yancey Graphics at 828-682-6620. M-F 8:30-4:30, across from TD Bank. Here for you since 1973. 1-18un

RAY'S TREE SERVICE - Certified Arborist, insured, hazardous tree removal, view clearing, round-overs, bucket truck service, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid treatment, pressure washing, landscape design & installation, gutter cleaning. Stump grinding. Free estimates. 828-467-1113. Pd3-9un

CHIMNEY SWEEPING AND CLEANING with digital imagery inspection. 828-208-0323, text preferred or call.

HOUSE'S ELECTRIC - Commercial. Residential. Licensed on burglar alarms & cameras. Dealer and service tech on Generac stand by units L.P Gas. All types of electrical services. Licensed & insured. Keith House, cell 208-0184. #3160/12-25-23un

WHITE FALLS CATERING: Amelia Hoilman 828-682-6768 (home) or 828-208-0044 cell white.falls@yahoo.com. Weddings, reunions, parties, anniversaries, special occasions, business events. Call for consultation & prices.

WILSON HOME IMPROVEMENTS: bathroom remodeling, custom showers, handicap showers, tile laying, decks, deck repairing, handicap ramps and pressure washing. Free estimate. Call anytime, 828-682-1496, 828-284-8256. pd7-31

WILL DO HANDYMAN WORK: Fall cleanup, leaf removal, land clearing and mowing, weed-eating, cleaning gutters, trash and debris removal, clearing away clutter around the house, tree trimming, woodcutting, splitting and stacking. Handyman work of all kinds, anything you need done. Call cell: 828-284-3563 or 828-242-3861 or home: 675-3062. pd10-9

CASTAWAY TRASH, Roll-off dumpster rental. Junk removal and clean-out service. 828-678-5198 or 828-284-1544. www.castaway-trash.com. pd9-18

JOHNSON'S SEALING extend the life of your driveway and protect your investment. Confidence you can trust! Driveways, parking lots and more. Locally owned and operated. Bailey Johnson 828-284-8685. pd9-25

PRESSURE WASH APPALACHIA: Roof & house washing & window cleaning. Quality care for your property! Like us on Facebook. Justin Fox 828-284-1272.

Volunteers needed
Meals on Wheels needs volunteers to deliver meals weekdays from 10:30 to noon. Call the Senior Center at 682-6011.

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Guardian ad Litem volunteers needed

The NC Guardian ad Litem Program is seeking volunteer advocates to represent abused and neglected children in Yancey, Mitchell and Madison.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the local Guardian ad Litem program, please call Erica Edwards at 828-682-4754 or visit volunteerforal.org.

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Rebecca Honeycutt, Office Manager

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**Glen Raven
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**Green Mountain
Grading**
Burnsville 828-284-2121

**Yancey Graphics
Printing**
Burnsville 828-6620

Keep your family safe this Christmas holiday with these safety tips

By Mike Causey
Insurance Commissioner

Christmas is just around the corner. I wanted to share with you a list of home safety and driving tips to keep you and your family safe during the holiday season.

The holidays are a wonderful time to enjoy festive meals with family and friends and deck the halls with beautiful Christmas decorations. Folks are running errands, going shopping and traveling long distances to visit family and friends. It's important to stay safe at all times at home and while driving, to avoid potentially dangerous accidents.

Use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations in many homes during the holidays, means increased risk for fire.

The National Fire Protection Association reports that one-third of home decoration fires are started by candles and that two of every five decoration fires happen because the decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

To cut down on this risk, I "offer these simple phrases kids from 1 to 92" can follow to avoid a fire in your house:

- Place candles out of reach of children and where they cannot be knocked down or blown over.
- Keep matches and lighters up high and out of reach of children in a locked cabinet.
- Use flameless candles near flammable objects.
- Do not burn Christmas trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace.
- Use a screen on the fireplace at all times when a fire is burning.
- Never leave candles or



Mike Causey

fireplaces burning unattended or when asleep.

- Check and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year.
- Do not plug in too many lights into a single electrical outlet, this can cause an overload. It's important to keep

wires away from heat sources such as space heaters and fireplaces.

According to the American Safety Council, most traffic accidents occur between the afternoon of Christmas Eve and the evening of Christmas Day. Data shows traffic accidents and fatalities decline when Christmas falls on a weekday instead of weekend, like it does this year.

Remember the following safety tips to keep your family safe on the roads during the holidays:

Drive slowly. It's harder to control or stop your vehicle on an ice or snow-covered roadway.

Increase your following distance so that you'll have plenty of time to stop for vehicles ahead of you.

Always wear your seat belt and ensure that everyone else in your vehicle is buckled up.

Know whether your ve-

hicle has an anti-lock brake system. Anti-lock brake systems prevent your wheels from locking up during braking. If you have anti-lock brakes, apply firm, continuous pressure to the brake pedal. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, you may need to pump the brakes if your wheels start to lock up.

Have a great Christmas and New Years. and God bless!

Explor Peaks of Otter to operate visitor services at Peaks of Otter Lodge

The National Park Service (NPS) has selected Explor Peaks of Otter, LLC, a subsidiary of ExplorUS, to operate visitor services at Peaks of Otter Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway under a 10-year concession contract. The existing lodging, food service, retail, and shuttle bus services at Peaks of Otter will transition to the new concessioner in early 2025.

The new contract was awarded through a competitive selection process announced in June 2024. The contract was awarded to the highest scoring proposal, with the NPS regional director making the final decision. The operation of this concession contract provides important services that visitors seek while traveling the Parkway and is critical to ensuring a positive visitor experience.

ExplorUS is a family-owned company with almost 30 years of experience operating national, state, and local park concessions, including concessions at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Mammoth Cave National Park.

Peaks of Otter Lodge, located at milepost 85.6 and approximately an hour drive north of Roanoke, VA, includes a three-building, 63-room lodge, restaurant, lounge and gift shop, the Country Store located adjacent to the NPS visitor center, and the Sharp Top Store near the NPS operated campground.



Dr. Kacie Renfro

Dr. Renfro receives Excellence in Research Methodology Award

Dr. Kacie Renfro received the Excellence in Research Methodology Award for her dissertation, The Poetics of Affect: Remembering the Death of a School. Her committee was chaired by Dr. Alecia Jackson and included Dr. Beth Campbell and Dr. Leslie McKesson.

"This award is a testament to the love and support I have received throughout my educational journey," said Renfro.

"Writing about Bee Log Elementary School was a labor of love, and this type of recognition means even more in the wake of Hurricane Helene because many of the spaces on the side of the road that were integral to my work are now gone," she added. "Rememory work, however, allows them to live on forever, and to be recognized for this methodology is such an honor."

From Burnsville, North Carolina, Renfro received her Bachelor of Science in English education from App State.

Renfro is currently a school counselor at Enka Intermediate School in Buncombe County North Carolina.

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682-3033



FEMA IS HIRING LOCALLY!

FEMA is hiring people in Durham, Hickory and Asheville, North Carolina to support their community's recovery from Tropical Storm Helene. A wide range of skills and expertise is needed, including planning, communications, logistics and community engagement. Benefits include sick leave, health insurance and up to 11 paid annual holidays. Applications are being accepted online. To see all open positions and to apply, visit usajobs.gov, type keywords **"FEMA, Local Hire"** and enter your location as "North Carolina." All applicants must be U.S. citizens and 18 years of age or older. Additional requirements vary by position type.

READ YOUR FEMA LETTER CAREFULLY

If you applied for FEMA assistance, you will receive a letter from FEMA explaining your application status. Read it carefully: if you are not currently

approved for assistance, you may need to send additional documentation to FEMA. You can easily upload documents to your DisasterAssistance.gov account or submit them at a nearby Disaster Recovery Center. Find your closest center at fema.gov/drc. Your FEMA letter also provides options to mail and fax in your documents.

HELP FOR PRIVATE ROADS AND BRIDGES

If you or your neighbor have damage to a private road or bridge as a result of Tropical Storm Helene that is the only access route to your home, assistance is available to help with repairs through FEMA's Individual Assistance Program. Funding is available to support private roads and bridges, even if the owner's home is not damaged. As part of FEMA's Individual Assistance program, homeowners should register for assistance and meet with a housing inspector. If you demonstrate that you or your homeowners' association are primarily responsible for maintenance

of the bridge or road, FEMA can provide funding for repairs. Homeowners or homeowners' associations should first contact their insurance company to discuss any coverage for private roads and bridges, as FEMA cannot duplicate funding from other sources such as insurance. To learn more and apply for assistance, residents can visit a Disaster Recovery Center, go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362. The deadline for residents to apply for any individual assistance is **Jan. 7, 2025**.



DisasterAssistance.gov

POST-DISASTER TEMPORARY HOUSING AVAILABLE

FEMA is providing multiple temporary housing options to meet North Carolina disaster survivors' individual needs as the holiday season nears. The quickest form of help may be financial assistance to pay for rent, temporary hotel or motel stays or reimbursement for out-of-pocket hotel costs. These options are available now for eligible households. Everyone's journey to recovery is different, and the first step is to apply with FEMA for disaster assistance.

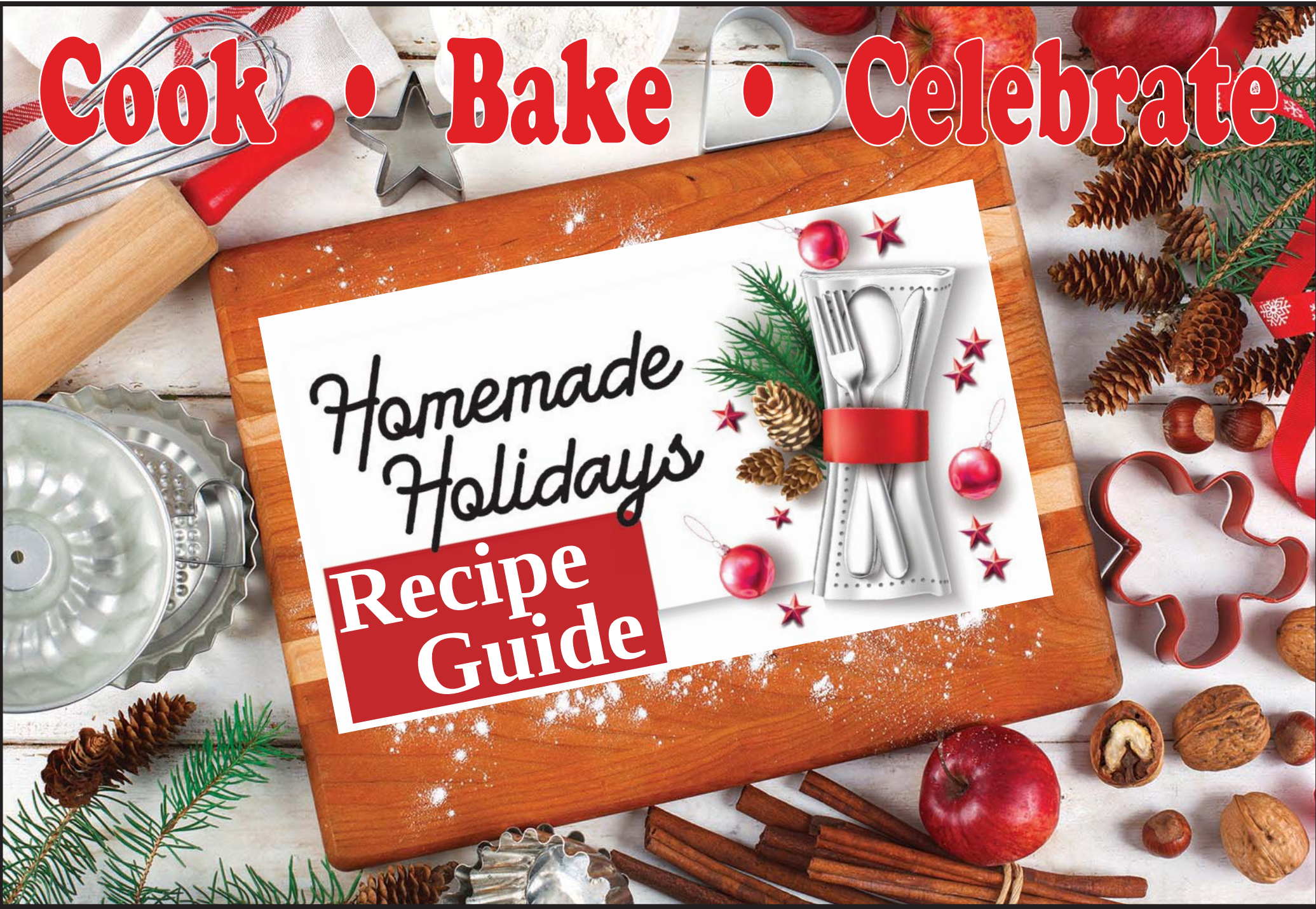
Other temporary housing solutions, such as a travel trailers or manufactured home units, may soon be available too. These options take time, and individuals will be contacted by FEMA if they are eligible. For more information, visit go.dhs.gov/UWx



4 Ways To Apply

- **Online:** DisasterAssistance.gov
- Through the **FEMA app**
- **Call:** (800) 621-3362
- **In Person:** Visit a Disaster Recovery Center: fema.gov/drc





Notable Christmas celebrations around the world

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas all over the world. Christmas celebrations include various time-honored traditions that celebrants hold near and dear to their hearts. Depending on where someone lives, their Christmas traditions may look quite different from those in other parts of the globe.

It can be enjoyable to learn how Christmas is celebrated elsewhere and perhaps even incorporate a few new traditions into your celebrations. Take a peek at these customs near and far.

- Seafood and beachside celebrations: Australia is located in the southern hemisphere, which means Aussies are enjoying the peak of their summer come December 25. A white Christmas is unlikely, unless the “white” refers to white, sandy beaches. Santa is probably swapping his thick coat for a pair of board shorts, and heavy, roast-laden meals

Gingerbread takes the cake

Plenty of foods are associated with Christmastime, but none perhaps as familiar as gingerbread. Although the slightly spicy and warming tang of gingerbread often is enjoyed in cookie form or baked into panels used to create gingerbread houses, the spice combination of ginger, cloves and cinnamon can impart a delicious flavor to cakes as well.

This holiday season, whip up this recipe for “Tender Gingerbread Cake” from “Butter, Flour, Sugar, Joy” (Sourcebooks) by Danielle Kartes.

Tender Gingerbread Cake

Yield: 1 cake
1 cup packed muscovado sugar (dark brown works great)
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs, room temperature
1/4 cup plain full-fat Greek or plain yogurt
1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon apple pie spice
1 cup hot water
3/4 cup molasses
Garnishes
1/2 cup confectioners’ sugar
1 cup pomegranate arils
Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a 9-by-9-inch cake pan with parchment paper.
Cream the sugar, butter, and vanilla on low speed, 3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time and mix until just incorporated,

are unlikely to make it on to the menu. Instead, Australians dine on seafood feasts and spend Christmas outdoors camping or at the beach.

- Krampus parade: Some Christmas elves are not so jolly. Just ask residents of the Austrian, German and Hungarian Alps. Each year in this region, a true “Bad Santa” is the talk of town. Villagers believed that Krampus, a half-man, half-goat creature with a legion of ill-tempered elves, roamed the mountains wreaking havoc. Krampus was said to abduct miscreants and set unruly youth or even intoxicated adults straight. Today, Krampus is more the “bad cop” to Santa’s “good cop” persona. Krampus is celebrated as an antihero at parades and other events.

- Las Posadas: According to scripture, Joseph and Mary had to make an arduous journey from their hometown to Bethlehem for census purposes while Mary was pregnant. When the couple arrived, they found

then scrape down the sides of the bowl and gently fold the yogurt into the batter.

In a separate bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, salt, and spices together.

In a third bowl, mix the hot water and molasses together.

Now mix the dry ingredients into the batter in 3 additions, alternating with the hot molasses water. Do not overmix.

Pour the batter into your lined pan and bake 25 to 30 minutes until the cake is well baked. Allow the gingerbread to cool, then dust with confectioners’ sugar and pomegranate arils. This cake is also lovely with cream cheese icing!



lodgings were nonexistent, and Mary ended up giving birth to Jesus in a manger surrounded by animals. In celebration of that journey, people in Mexico and Guatemala celebrate Las Posadas, a procession representing Mary and Joseph’s journey and their struggle to find lodging.

- La Befana: In Italian folklore, La Befana is a witch-like old woman who, like Santa, delivers gifts to children throughout Italy. Instead of this gift-giving taking place on Christmas, La Befana hands out gifts on the Epiphany Eve in a similar way to how the Three Magi brought presents to Baby Jesus. Le Befana also is believed to fly through the night sky to sweep away all the troubles of the old year and clear the way for a fresh start.



Brunch begins the New Year right

The first official meal of 2025 should be memorable and flavorful. Chances are late night New Year’s Eve revelry will make breakfast a nonstarter, but a New Year’s Day brunch can hit the spot on January 1.

When family members or guests rouse from their post-countdown slumbers, these brunch ideas and tips can kick off the new year with flavor.

Skip the mimosas

While it may be tempting to employ a little “hair of the dog” therapy to combat the ramifications of overindulgence from the evening prior, it is a better bet to skip any extra alcohol come the morning.

Rather, serve plenty of hydrating refreshments, with water at the top of the list. For those who desire something with a little more zip, create a mocktail with fruit juice and sparkling water.

Make-ahead meals

Serving foods that can be made in advance cuts back on the amount of work that needs to be done in the late morning of New Year’s Day. Breakfast casseroles can be the way to go, as they pair many ingredients together and can be reheated.

Fruit salads as well as homemade granola parfaits can be made in advance and then

- Move over reindeer: Although reindeer often garner fanfare this time of year, the Yule goat is a Christmas symbol and tradition in Scandinavia and northern Europe. Each year in towns throughout Sweden and other areas, large statues of Yule goats are built on the first day of Advent and stand throughout the holiday season. This tradition dates back to ancient Pagan festivals, and some believe the goat is connected to the Norse god Thor, who rode in the sky in a chariot pulled by two goats.

Holiday traditions differ considerably in various regions of the world. Celebrants may want to consider incorporating foreign traditions into their own Christmas celebrations this year.

served during the brunch.

Consider bagels and breads

A platter of bagels, croissants and cinnamon rolls are easy to serve and might be a welcome way to fill the stomach. Paired with lox, cheeses and cold cuts, these carbohydrates can help complete the meal.

Sheet-pan options are easy

Brunch hosts and hostesses who choose to whip up foods during the brunch itself can employ some tactics to make the work easier. Crack eggs onto cheese-coated slices of thick bread and put under the broiler for perfectly cooked batch results.

Don’t forget the sweets

Muffins and sweet rolls can blur the lines between meal and dessert; otherwise, serve alternative make-ahead desserts that are relatively easy, such as pound cakes or cookies.

Set up the coffee bar

Chances are a little caffeine might be necessary to jumpstart the day. Make coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and other warm beverages readily available with the accompanying creamers and flavorings so that brunch guests can customize their drinks.

New Year’s Day brunch kicks off the new year with food, family and friends.



Alternatives to alcohol when dining out

Dining out or attending social functions often affords access to various types of foods and beverages. Cocktails and other alcoholic drinks will likely be on the menu as well, tempting people to indulge.

Although one alcoholic drink while out at a restaurant will not sabotage a healthy eating plan, when spending a prolonged time in social situations, individuals may be compelled to have multiple drinks, which can be unhealthy and potentially unsafe.

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, gin, rum, tequila, vodka, or whiskey each feature between 100 and 120 calories per 1.5-ounce shot. The average beer comes in at 150 calories per serving. It’s easy to see how calories can quickly pile up.

Many people would rather save their calories for food than drink them away. Thankfully, individuals can choose from an array of low-calorie, non-alcoholic beverages when hitting the town.

Kombucha

Kombucha is a fermented drink made from tea, sugar, bacteria, and yeast. Since it is fizzy, kombucha can replace beer when dining out. There are various flavors of kombucha, and many replicate the flavor profile of a tangy or refreshing cocktail.

Non-alcoholic beers and ciders

You’ll have to check the nutritional information regarding caloric content since options vary, but if skipping alcohol is the ultimate goal, non-alcoholic beers and ciders are good options. They offer the flavor and effervescence of their traditional counterparts without the alcohol.

Club soda with mixers

Club soda mixed with biters, cranberry juice, lemon/lime, or other flavor combinations can create flavorful alcohol alternatives. Plus they are refreshing and will not cause dehydration, which can occur

when consuming alcohol.

Kanna

Kanna is a plant used in South Africa for centuries, according to Trip, a CBD retailer. Kanna is known for creating a feeling of lightness and tranquility. It may be consumed as an alternative to alcohol to relieve anxiety. While kanna is usually sold in powder form, it can be brewed into a tea or used to make other beverages.

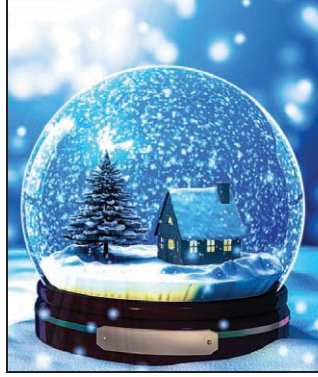
Ginger beer

Ginger beer is spicy and potent, making it much stronger than its cousin, ginger ale. It’s made by fermenting ginger, sugar, water, and lemon juice, says Medical News Today. The result is bold ginger flavor with natural carbonation. Like other soft drinks, the calorie count in ginger beer varies depending on the brand. There are sugar-free alternatives that can help reduce the calorie load.

Matcha or other teas

Matcha is a type of green tea that is exposed to more sunlight to produce higher chlorophyll and amino acid content. Matcha, like other teas, is high in antioxidants, which is a boon for the body. Matcha is widely available at coffee shops and other establishments. Chilled versions of matcha can be substituted for alcoholic beverages when people want to relax and unwind. Additional tea alternatives include regular iced black or green teas.

A night out is a great time to try new drinks. Those who want to avoid high-calorie alcoholic beverages have many alternatives to choose from.





Silent Night Holy Night

With exceeding great joy, we bid all of our friends and neighbors a most joyous and harmonious season.

For your belief in us, we feel truly blessed.



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**Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year!**

Lights and laughter in the air,
Smiling faces everywhere,
Drifts of snow and boughs of holly,
All the things that make us jolly.

All signs point to a Merry Christmas and we can't think of a better place to spend the season than here at home with all of you. We are truly grateful for your kindness and support and we wish you all a happy holiday season.

Yancey County Government

Yancey County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Jeff Whitson,
Stacey McEntrye Greene, Sandi Norton, Mark Ledford, David Grindstaff

County Manager
Lynn Austin



Merry Christmas

May happiness and good fortune surround you at Christmastime and all year!

Thank you for bringing so much warmth and joy to our year. We appreciate you!

Happy New Year!

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A hot punch to help warm up this holiday season

Images of warm family gatherings dominate millions of people's holiday season memories.

But the warmth inside a home come the holiday season does not mean it's not cold outside. Indeed, snow-filled landscapes and/or temperatures below freezing are not uncommon come late December.

As the mercury drops outside, families can warm up inside with a batch of "Hot Holiday Punch" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Hot Holiday Punch
Makes 14 servings
16 cups water, divided
5 cups cranberries, fresh or frozen, plus extra for garnish
2-1/2 cups granulated sugar
1/2 cup red hots cinnamon candies

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
12 whole cloves
3 cinnamon sticks
1 lemon, sliced
Cheesecloth

In a large saucepan, set over medium-high heat, bring 1 quart of water and cranberries to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes or until the cranberries begin to pop. Drain, reserving liquid and cranberries. Put cranberries

Pineapple Glazed Meatballs

1/2 cup barbecue sauce
1/2 cup undrained canned crushed pineapple in juice
1 package (16 oz.) frozen fully cooked meatballs (about 30)
Mix first 2 ingredients in large nonstick skillet until blended.

Stir in meatballs until evenly coated.

Bring to boil on medium-high heat; simmer on medium-low heat 10 minutes or until heated through, stirring occasionally.

Artichoke Dip

1 can (14 oz.) artichoke hearts, drained
1 cup mayonnaise
1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese
1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
4 green onions, sliced
thin wheat snack crackers
Preheat oven 350°F.
Place all ingredients in food processor container; cover. Process just until blended, but not completely smooth.
Spoon into 9-inch pie plate.

Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers.

Queso Dip

1/2 lb. (8 oz.) Queso Blanco Velveeta, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup drained pickled jalapeno nacho slices, chopped
Combine ingredients in microwaveable bowl.

Microwave on High 2 minutes; stir. Microwave additional 1 minute or until Velveeta is completely melted and mixture in well blended, stirring every 30 seconds.

Garnish with finely chopped tomatoes before serving.

Salmon Spread

1 package (3 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1 Tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon prepared horseradish
1 can (7-1/2 oz.) salmon, drained, flaked
1 cup shredded Gouda cheese
1 Tablespoon green onion slices

Beat cream cheese, lemon juice and horseradish in medium bowl until well blended.

Add salmon, Gouda cheese and onion; mix well. Cover tightly.

Refrigerate several hours or until chilled. Serve as a spread for the cucumber slices.

Spicy Crab Spread

1 tub (8 oz.) chive & onion cream cheese spread
1 can (6 oz.) lump crabmeat, drained, flaked
2 teaspoons hot pepper sauce
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Mix all ingredients until blended.

Serve with cut-up fresh vegetables and crackers.

Apple Carrot Salad

2 cups boiling water
1 package (8-serving size) lemon flavor gelatin
1-1/2 cups cold apple juice or water
1 medium apple, chopped
1 medium carrot, shredded

Stir boiling water into dry gelatin mix in large bowl at least 2 minutes until completely dissolved. Stir in juice. Refrigerate 1-1/2 hours or until thickened.

Stir in apples and carrots. Spoon into 5-cup mold sprayed with cooking spray.

Refrigerate 4 hours or until firm. Unmold.

through a fine mesh strainer or food mill. Set aside.

In a Dutch oven or large pot, combine sugar, red-hots, lemon juice, cranberry liquid and cranberry pulp, and remaining 3 quarts of water.

Place cloves and cinnamon sticks in a double thickness of cheesecloth. Tie with string to form a bag; add to pan with the punch. Bring to a boil; stir until sugar and candies are dissolved. Discard spice bag. Strain juice through a fine mesh strainer. Serve hot with lemon slices and cranberries.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Total time: 35 minutes



Spinach all rolled up with flavor

Including more spinach in one's diet can be a healthy decision. Spinach is rich in iron, potassium, magnesium, folate, and vitamins C, E and K. With that strong profile, spinach supports the heart, eyes, skin, and immune system. Spinach also can aid digestion and strengthen bones.

The good news is that spinach is a versatile ingredient and can be added to many dishes relatively easily.

As an alternative to meat-based dishes, "Spinach Balls" serve up flavor in easy-to-portion style. Serve these with a dipping sauce as an appetizer, or place alongside pasta instead of meatballs. Enjoy this recipe courtesy of "It Just Happens to Be Gluten-Free" (Do Life Inspired Publishing) by Jen Fiore.

Spinach Balls

Makes about a dozen
1 10-ounce box frozen chopped spinach
3 eggs, beaten
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2/3 cup gluten-free breadcrumbs
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon dried parsley
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder



der
6 shakes Tabasco sauce
(6 shakes more if you like it hotter!)

Place the spinach box in the microwave for 2-3 minutes until defrosted. Set aside to cool.

In a large bowl mix together the cheese, bread crumbs, salt, pepper, parsley, and garlic powder.

Squeeze excess water out of the spinach. Place the spinach into the cheese mixture. Mix.

Add oil, eggs and Tabasco sauce.

Form into balls and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Bake at 375 F for 18 to 22 minutes.

Serve with garlic aioli.



Crisp salad is perfect for the holidays

A quick and easy salad can be the perfect ending to a long day spent gift shopping. Delicious and light, there's not much fuss that goes into preparing salad, and making one typically does not require turning on the oven.

With already cooked chicken and a dressing that can be made up to one day ahead, all a person has to do is assemble this "Chicken Salad Niçoise." Suggested pairings include crusty bread, and a light dessert of fresh fruit topped with vanilla yogurt. Try this recipe, courtesy of "125 Best Chicken Recipes" (Robert Rose) by Rose Murray.

Chicken Salad Niçoise

Serves 6
Garlic dressing:
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper

2 cups shredded cooked chick-

en
2 cups cooked green beans, cut into 2-inch lengths
6 small new potatoes, cooked and sliced
1 small red bell pepper, cut into strips
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
2 cups sliced celery
3/4 cup black olives
Romaine lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces
3 hard-cooked eggs, quartered
4 tomatoes, cut into wedges

Garlic dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together garlic, mustard and lemon juice. Gradually whisk in oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine chicken, beans, potatoes, red pepper, onion, celery, and olives.

Pour dressing over chicken mixture and gently toss to coat. Line a shallow salad bowl with lettuce and spoon salad on top. Garnish with eggs and tomatoes.

Indulge in food and family fun this holiday season

Families have their own unique holiday traditions, and such customs help to make this time of year so special. Baking together as a family is a popular holiday tradition that rewards everyone with some tasty treats after a fun-filled day in the kitchen.

Incorporating a holiday theme into baked goods can add to the fun factor, particularly for children. Families looking to mix fun and food this holiday season can try their hands at this recipe for “Chocolate Reindeer Cupcakes” courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Chocolate Reindeer Cupcakes

Makes 12 servings
For Chocolate Cupcakes:
2/3 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup superfine sugar
3 eggs
1-1/2 cups self-rising flour
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
For Chocolate Frosting:
3/4 cup butter, softened
3-1/3 cups confectioners’ sugar
7/8 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 to 6 tablespoons milk
For Decorations:
12 sets candy eyes
12 red gumdrops
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

For Chocolate Cupcakes:
Preheat the oven to 375 F. Line muffin tin wells with 12 paper cupcake liners.

In a large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Gradually add flour and cocoa powder, mixing until all ingredients are incorporated.

Spoon the batter into the paper liners. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tops are springy to the touch. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes

from pan and allow to cool completely before decorating.

For Chocolate Frosting:
In a large bowl, cream butter until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in confectioners’ sugar, cocoa and vanilla. Add milk one tablespoon at a time until frosting reaches the desired consistency. Frost each cupcake using an offset spatula.

To Decorate:
Arrange candied eyes and gumdrop nose on frosted cupcake.

Melt semisweet chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Cool slightly, and transfer to a pastry bag fitted with small plain round tip. Pipe antlers with chocolate on parchment or waxed paper; place in the refrigerator or freezer and allow to set.

Once the chocolate has set, carefully remove antlers from paper and insert in cupcake. Serve.

Preparation time: 40 minutes
Cooking time: 25 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes



These dessert bars are peachy keen

Peaches are a favorite ingredient in many different types of desserts, from cobblers to pies. But in this recipe for “Fresh Peach Crumble Bar,” peaches are presented as a cross between a cake and cookie. Enjoy this recipe, courtesy of Saving Room for Dessert, as adapted from AllRecipes.com.

Fresh Peach Crumble Bars

Yield 20
Crust/Crumb topping:
1 cup granulated sugar
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup unsalted butter cold, cut into cubes
Peach layer:
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
5 large peaches, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
Icing:
1 cup powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1 tablespoon milk (more or less for desired consistency)

Preheat oven to 350 F if using a glass pan or dark metal pan, or 375 F for a light metal pan. Lightly grease or spray a 13 x 9-inch baking pan and set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together 1 cup of sugar, 3 cups of flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Using a pastry cutter, blend in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse sand. Add the lightly beaten egg and mix until the dough starts to hold together, but is still crumbly. Gently press a little more than half the dough into the prepared pan. (Optional: Use a food processor to process these ingredients.)

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. Add the diced peaches and toss to combine. Drizzle the lemon juice over the peaches and toss to coat. Pour the peach mixture over the crust and spread even-

ly.

Using your hands, press together handfuls of the remaining crumb topping to create clumps. Scatter the clumps and remaining crumbled topping over the fruit layer, leaving some peaches showing through.

If using a glass pan, bake at 350 F for 50 to 55 minutes or until lightly browned. If using a metal pan, bake at 375 F for 40 to 45 minutes. Cool completely, then chill before cutting and icing.

Whisk together the powdered sugar, almond extract and milk. Drizzle on the bars just before serving.



Merry Christmas!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

When sounds of carols fill the air,
And signs of the season are everywhere
When hearts are light and cares are few
Then we know it's time to give our thanks to you!

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Merry Christmas

and a Happy New Year!

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MAYOR RUSSELL FOX

TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS:
JUDY BUCHANAN, DENISE COLLIER,
BILL WHEELER, RANDY OLLIS

Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year!

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Lemonade Cake

1 package (2-layer size)
yellow cake mix
1 package (3.4 oz.) vanilla
flavor instant pudding
1/2 cup lemonade flavor
drink mix, divided
1 cup cold water
4 eggs
1/4 cup oil
3 tablespoons warm water
1 cup powdered sugar
Heat oven to 350°F.

Beat cake mix, pudding mix, 1/4 cup drink mix, 1 cup water, eggs and oil in large bowl with mixer until blended. Pour into greased and floured 12-cup fluted tube pan.

Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool cake in pan 5 minutes. Loosen cake from sides of pan with knife. Invert cake onto serving platter; gently remove pan.

Dissolve remaining drink mix in 3 tablespoons warm water in medium bowl. Stir in powdered sugar with whisk until blended.

Pierce warm cake at 1-inch intervals with fork or skewer completely through to bottom of cake. Gradually spoon powdered sugar glaze over cake; let stand until glaze is completely absorbed.



Show guests this much maligned staple is a tasty treat

Few foods garner the types of responses generated by the mere mention of fruitcake, which drives many holiday celebrants to run for the hills.

But fruitcake may not deserve its reputation, particularly when individuals brave enough to prepare it serve it covered in a sugary glaze.

Such is the case with this recipe for “Gluten-Free Fruitcake With Sugar Glaze” courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Gluten-Free Fruitcake With Sugar Glaze

For the cake:
4 ounces golden raisins
2 ounces chopped candied
orange peel
8 ounces candied cherries,
quartered

6 ounces raisins
3-1/2 tablespoons sherry
4 ounces butter
1 cup sugar
1 pinch salt
1 pinch grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground mixed spice
3 eggs, beaten
1 cup self-raising gluten-free
flour
6 ounces chopped almonds,
blanched

For the icing:

1 cup confectioner's sugar
3 tablespoons water

For the cake:

Place all the fruit in a bowl with the sherry, stir well, cover and leave to stand overnight.

Heat the oven to 325 F. Grease a loaf pan and line the base with parchment paper.

Beat the butter with the sugar, salt and spices in a mixing bowl until light and creamy, then gradually beat in the eggs.

Gently fold in the flour, followed by the soaked fruits and almonds, stirring well.

Spoon into the pan and bake for 2 to 2¼ hours until cooked through. Leave to cool in the pan.

For the icing:

Mix the sugar with a little water, adding a little at a time, until it is thick and smooth.

Spread the icing on top of the cake, allowing it to run down the sides. Leave to set.

Preparation & Cooking
time: 2 hours and 45 minutes
Resting time: 12 hours

Granny's Cake

1-1/2 cup sugar
2 cups self-rising flour
2 eggs
1 (20 oz.) can crushed
pineapple in its own juice
(don't drain)
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup chopped pecans
1 cup evaporated milk
1/2 cup sugar
1 stick margarine
1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°.

Mix the sugar, flour, eggs and pineapple together and pour into a 9 x 13 pan. Sprinkle the top with one cup brown sugar and one cup chopped pecans. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

While cake is baking, in a saucepan heat the milk, sugar, margarine and vanilla until mixture comes to a rolling boil.

Immediately after removing cake from the oven, pour the heated milk mixture over the entire cake.



Hot Fudge Cake

1-1/4 cups granulated sugar
(divided)
1 cup self rising flour
1/2 cup HERSHEY'S Cocoa
(divided)
1/2 cup milk
1/3 cup butter or margarine
(melted)
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 cup packed light brown
sugar
1-1/4 cups hot water
Whipped topping, nuts,
(optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a mixing bowl combine 3/4 cup granulated sugar, flour, 1/4 cup cocoa. Stir in milk, vanilla, and butter and beat until smooth.

Pour batter into ungreased square 9-inch baking pan. Stir together remaining 1/2 cup granulated sugar, brown sugar and remaining 1/4 cup cocoa then sprinkle mixture evenly over batter. Pour hot water over the top; do not stir.

Bake 35 - 40 minutes or until center is almost set. Remove from oven and let stand about 15 minutes. When serving spoon sauce from bottom of pan over the top of the cake and garnish with whipped topping, nuts, and other desired toppings.

There's No Place Like Home
Merry Christmas



*We're sending
this note to let
you know,*

*That there's
no place we
want to go...*

For there's
no place
we'd rather be,

Than right
here in this
community!

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These colorful cookies are tailor-made for family baking sessions

Baking during the holiday season is a tradition in many households across the globe. Family baking sessions provide a perfect holiday season bonding activity, and the payoff is both cherished family time and delicious, indulgent foods once the items are ready to eat.

Holiday hosts know they'll need to feed their guests over the course of their stay, and that includes snacks. This holiday season, hosts can involve their guests in family baking sessions and whip up a batch of these delicious and colorful "Christmas Biscuits" from Lines+Angles.

Christmas Biscuits

Makes approx. 24 cookies

For the dough:

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 1-1/3 cups confectioner's sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 3/4 cup almond meal
- 1 cup unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 1 large egg yolk



Christmas Linz Shortbread Cookies With Red Jam

Makes 24 cookies

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup almond flour
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/2 cup raspberry jam
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, almond flour, salt, and cinnamon together. In a separate bowl, beat the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add in the egg yolks, vanilla extract and lemon zest and continue to beat until well incorporated.

Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and continue to beat until just combined to form a dough. Divide the dough in half; pat each half into a disc, wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator, and let it soften for about 5 minutes, until soft enough to roll. On a lightly floured surface, roll one disc of dough out to about 1/4" thickness. Using a 3" cookie cutter, cut out cookies. Cut out a top for each cookie using a smaller cookie cutter to cut out the center. Transfer the cookies to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Gather the scrap dough, roll, and repeat.

Place the first batch of cut cookies in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to chill. Preheat the oven to 350 F and repeat the process with the second batch of dough.

Bake the chilled cookies for about 12 minutes or until just starting to turn golden around the edges. Let the cookies cool for a few minutes until transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.

Once cooled, spread the bottom half of each cookie with some raspberry preserves, leaving a thin border around each cookie. Dust the tops of each cookie with powdered sugar and place on its corresponding bottom half. Use a spoon or piping bag to fill the cut-out center with a little more of the preserves.

Preparation time: 30 minutes. Resting time: 1 hour, 30 minutes. Baking time: 15 minutes

This holiday season, those with an urge to bake some cookies can try this recipe for "Christmas Linz Shortbread Cookies with Red Jam" from Lines+Angles.

- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
- For the icing and decoration:
- 4 cups confectioner's sugar
- 3 tablespoons meringue powder
- 7 tablespoons warm water, combined with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, assorted food color (e. g., red, pink and turquoise), assorted colored sugar crystals (e. g., red, pink and white)

For the dough: Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Combine flour, confectioner's sugar and almond meal in a large mixing bowl. Stir well to mix.

Add butter, egg yolk, water, and salt, and mix well with an electric mixer with spiral attachments until mixture starts to come together as a dough.

Turn out onto a floured surface and knead briefly until even. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

After chilling, roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to approximately 0.25" thickness.

Use assorted star-shaped cookie cutters to cut out approximately 23 variably sized star shapes. Arrange between prepared sheets, spaced apart.

From remaining dough, cut out one teardrop and two semi-circles of dough, using appropriate cutters or working freehand with a paring knife. Arrange on one of the baking sheets.

Bake cookies for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden and dry to the touch. Remove to cooling racks to cool.

For the icing and decoration: Thoroughly stir together confectioner's sugar and meringue powder in a large mix-

Raspberry-Almond Linzer Cookies

Makes 36

- 2/3 cup almonds
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled, plus more for the work surface
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar
- 1 12-ounce jar raspberry jam

Heat oven to 350 F. Spread the almonds on a baking sheet and toast, tossing occasionally, until fragrant, 6 to 8 minutes; let cool. In a food processor, finely grind the almonds with 1/4 cup of the brown sugar. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon; set aside.

Using an electric mixer, beat the butter and the remaining 1/4 cup of brown sugar on medium-high speed until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in the egg and vanilla. Reduce speed to low and gradually add the almond mixture, then the flour mixture, mixing until just combined (do not over-mix). Shape the dough into two disks, tightly wrap, and refrigerate until firm, at least 3 hours.

Heat oven to 350 F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. On a lightly floured surface, roll each disk of dough to a 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 2- to 2-1/2-inch round cookie cutter, cut out rounds and place 1 inch apart on the prepared baking sheet. Using a 3/4- to 1-inch round cookie cutter, cut the centers out of half the cookies. Reroll and cut the scraps as necessary.

Bake the cookies, rotating the baking sheets halfway through, until the edges are golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Cool slightly on the baking sheets, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

Sprinkle the confectioners' sugar on the cookies with the holes. Spread 1 teaspoon of the jam on each of the remaining cookies; top with the sugared cookies. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.

Enjoy this recipe, courtesy of "Real Simple Easy, Delicious Home Cooking" (Time Home Entertainment) from the Real Simple Kitchens.

ing bowl.

Gradually beat in warm water and vanilla extract mixture using an electric mixer until icing is smooth and of a flooding consistency; you may not need all of the water.

Divide icing between three bowls. Color two bowls pink and red, respectively, by beating in enough pink and red coloring to achieve uniform colors. Leave the third bowl uncolored.

Spoon pink and red icing into separate piping bags fitted with small, round-tip nozzles.

To ice the cookies, pipe around their perimeters with the icings to create borders. Fill in middle of cookies with more icing; you can use a damp, warm offset palette knife to spread out icing to an even finish.

Carefully transfer iced cookies to cooling racks, decorating with the sugar crystals in festive patterns.

Using same technique as in steps 13 and 14, ice teardrop cookie with red and white icing for Santa's hat and beard, respectively. Ice the two semi-circle cookies with white icing.

Before icings have set, carefully attach semi-circle cookies to teardrop cookie to fashion Santa's mustache. Color any remaining white icing with turquoise coloring and then dab onto teardrop cookie for Santa's eyes. Pipe some pink icing below eyes for his nose.

Let cookies set and harden before serving.

Tip: Flooding consistency should be similar to the consistency of toothpaste. If your icing is too thick, thin it out with some warm water, mixing it into the icing in drops

Preparation time: 1 hour, 20 minutes.

Cooling time: 30 minutes



Santa's Whiskers

20 to 24 cookies

- 1-1/2 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 12-ounce jar pitted maraschino cherries, strained and stemmed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut

In a stand mixer, with a hand mixer, or by hand, cream the sugar and butter until light and fluffy.

Add the cherries, vanilla, almond extract, and salt. Mix thoroughly. Fold into the flour and mix until it forms a crumbly but moist dough.

Lay a 16-inch sheet of parchment paper onto the counter. Sprinkle 1 cup of the coconut on the center in a loose rectangle, making sure it does not reach the edge of the parchment. Place the cookie dough on top, flattening a bit with your fingers, and sprinkle the remaining coconut over the top of the dough.

Form the dough into a 12- to 14-inch log, about 3 inches thick. Evenly press the coconut around the log and roll to make the log an even cylinder.

Roll the parchment up with the dough inside and twist the ends. Chill for at least 2 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Slice cookies in 1/4- to 1/2-inch rounds, place on the prepared baking sheet, about 2 inches apart, and bake 12 to 15 minutes. Allow to cool before serving. Store in an airtight container.

"Santa's Whiskers" likely get their name from the coconut on these cookies, which resemble Santa's beard. Maraschino cherries add some jolly red to the cookies as well, making them perfect for Christmas. Try this recipe from "Butter, Flour, Sugar, Joy" (Sourcebooks) by Danielle Kartes.



Merry CHRISTMAS

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Merry Christmas!

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But the angel said to them,

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11

May this glorious season fill your heart with hope, renew your faith and comfort your spirit. We greatly appreciate everything you have done to make our year special. **From our family to yours, best wishes for a blessed and merry Christmas.**

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Our Best Wishes!

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Thank you for making our year run so smoothly. We wouldn't be here without good friends and customers like all of you.



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Sweeten the day with peaches

Although many desserts make for a sweet ending to delicious meals, there's something so inviting about a moist and tender cobbler to add that yum factor. Cobbler consists of a fruit filling covered in a biscuit batter of sorts. When baked, the ingredients blend together to form a spoonable treat that is tender but with the right amount of bite.

Enjoy this recipe for "Peach Cobbler" courtesy of Taste Better From Scratch and contributor Lauren Allen.

Peach Cobbler

Servings: 9
5 peaches, peeled, cored and sliced (about 4 cups)
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
For the batter:
6 tablespoons butter
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup milk
Ground cinnamon

Add the sliced peaches, sugar and salt to a saucepan and stir to combine. If using canned peaches, skip steps 1 and 2 and follow the directions starting at step 3.

Cook on medium heat for just a few minutes, until the sugar is dissolved and helps to bring out juices from the peaches. Remove from heat and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Slice butter into pieces and add to a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Place the pan in the oven while it preheats, to allow the butter to melt. Once melted, remove the pan from the oven.

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Stir in the milk, just until combined. Pour the mixture into the pan, over the melted butter and smooth it into an even layer.

Spoon the peaches and juice (or canned peaches, if using) over the batter. Sprinkle cinnamon generously over the

top.

Bake at 350 F for about 38 to 40 minutes. Serve warm, with a scoop of ice cream, if desired.

Pecan Pie

Makes 8 servings
1 9-inch unbaked frozen deep dish pie shell, thawed
1-1/2 cups pecans, coarsely chopped
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon molasses
2 tablespoons butter, melted
2 tablespoons flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Preheat oven to 350 F.
Spread pecans along the bottom of the prepared pie shell.

In a large bowl, mix the remaining ingredients and pour over pecans. The pecans will rise to the surface of the pie.

Bake for 60 to 65 minutes until the filling has set. Pie is done when the center reaches 200 F. Pie center when lightly tapped should spring back. Remove pie from oven and let cool on a wire rack for at least 2 hours.

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 1 hour, 5 minutes
Cooling time: 2 hours
Total time: 3 hours, 20 minutes
Recipe for "Pecan Pie" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Pecan Pie

1 cup maple-flavored or pancake syrup
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1-1/2 cups pecan halves
1 frozen deep-dish pie crust (9 inch), thawed
3 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla

Bring syrup, sugar and butter to boil in medium saucepan on medium heat; simmer on medium-low heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool slightly.

Heat oven to 365°F. Place nuts in pie crust. Whisk eggs and vanilla in medium bowl until blended. Gradually stir in syrup mixture; pour over nuts in crust.

Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Cool.



Cherries are the star of this holiday treat

"Cherry Pie Bars" are not exactly a pie, but a pound cake with a cherry pie filling swirl. They can be made for many different occasions. Whip up this recipe from "Butter, Flour, Sugar, Joy" (Sourcebooks) by Danielle Kartes.

Cherry Pie Bars

Yield: One 9-by-13-inch pan
2 cups sugar
1 cup butter, softened
4 eggs
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a 9-by-13-inch pan with parchment paper.

In a stand mixer, or with a hand mixer, cream sugar and butter on low. Add the eggs one at a time. Beat until just combined.

Add the flour, baking powder and salt. Spread a little over half the cake batter into the pan. Evenly spread the pie filling over the top, and spoon the rest of the cake batter over the pie filling. It's fine if the cherries show through.

Bake 35 minutes or until the top has turned slightly golden. Do not overbake. Allow to cool and slice into squares. Enjoy!



Craft an edible holiday classic from the comforts of home

Symbolism features prominently throughout the holiday season. When walking around in December, or even earlier, individuals can't help but notice lighting displays, decked out Christmas trees in town centers and other symbols that are synonymous with the holiday season.

Gingerbread houses may or may not be on public display, but these impressive constructions are yet another notable sign that the holiday season has arrived. As families prepare to celebrate the holiday season, they can work together to create this impressive, and edible, "Gingerbread House" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Gingerbread House

Makes 8 servings or 1 house
For the house:
3-1/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra as needed
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup molasses, warmed
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
For the frosting:
2 cups confectioners' sugar, plus extra as needed
1-1/2 tablespoons meringue powder
1 to 2 tablespoons warm water
To decorate:
Assorted colorful candies, sugared chocolate candies, round peppermint candies, candy canes, etc.

For the gingerbread:
Combine the flour, cornstarch, spices, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Stir well and set aside.

Beat the softened butter with the molasses and vanilla in a separate mixing bowl until pale and creamy, about 2 to 3 minutes.

Chewy Brownies

Yields 8 to 10 servings
Nonstick cooking spray, for spraying the baking pan
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup dark brown sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
2 large eggs plus 2 yolks
1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted
8 ounces semisweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup cocoa powder
Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray.

Combine the granulated sugar, brown sugar, vanilla, salt, whole eggs and yolks in a large bowl; set aside.

Melt the butter and chocolate in a double boiler, then whisk together until fully combined. Mix in the vegetable oil. Pour the chocolate mixture into the sugar mixture and mix until fully combined. Fold in the flour and cocoa.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely before slicing.

This recipe for "Chewy Brownies" courtesy of The Food Network

Beat in the flour mixture in 4 additions, mixing well between additions until you have a rough dough; add more flour as needed to form a stiff dough.

Turn out and knead briefly. Shape into a round, wrap in parchment paper, and chill for 2 hours.

After chilling, preheat the oven to 325 F. Grease and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Roll out to about 0.333" thickness on a lightly floured surface.

Cut out two rectangles approximately 4.5" x 4" for the roof. Cut out 2 pointed rectangles approximately 5" at their tallest points and 3.5" wide at the base; these will be the front and back of the house as per the image. Make sure that one side has a round window cut out.

Using some of the remaining dough, cut out the 2 rectangles to be the sides of the house, approximately 3" x 4" in diameter. Use the remaining dough to cut out 4 even rectangles, approximately 2" x 1.5", to shape the chimney.

Arrange the pieces across the baking sheets. Bake for about 25 minutes until browned and dry to the touch. Remove to cooling racks to cool.

For the frosting:
Combine the confectioners' sugar, meringue powder and 2 tablespoons warm water in a large mixing bowl.

Beat with an electric mixer until the frosting is thick and glossy, about 4 to 5 minutes; beat in more confectioners' sugar if too thin and more water if too thick.

Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a thin, round nozzle. Chill for 15 minutes.

To decorate: Using the frosting as 'glue,' assemble the chimney using the 4 even rectangles of gingerbread. Let dry and set.

Start to assemble the rest of the house by glueing the pieces together as per the image, attaching the front and back of the house to the sides before attaching the roof in place. Let set dry and set at each building interval.

Once the sections are dry, pipe more frosting onto the edges of the roof and down their sides, shaped as icicles.

When the chimney is set, attach it to the top, cutting the pieces to fit if necessary, and decorating the outside with frosting.

To decorate:
Attach the assorted candies to the house, decorating the roof with a tiled pattern using the frosting.

Let the house dry and set until ready to serve.

Preparation time: 2 hours
Cooling time: 2 hours, 15 minutes

Total time: 4 hours, 15 minutes

Tips:
Some of the gingerbread pieces will bake quicker than others depending on their size; keep an eye on them and remove from the oven when ready.

Meringue powder is available online or from specialty cookware stores.

Merry Christmas to Our Customers & Friends

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We hope the cherished traditions of this festive season fill your heart and home with as much glee as they do ours. May your holiday season be merry and bright, and your new year happy and healthy. Best wishes to you and your loved ones this Christmas and always!

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Cheese egg and casserole a brunch staple

On lazy weekend mornings or when entertaining a crowd, it may be more fitting to serve brunch rather than breakfast or lunch.

Brunch enables guests or family members to sleep in a little later. Plus the filling combination of menu items can keep people satisfied until dinner later on in the evening.

The recipe for “Farmhouse Skillet” from “Lord Honey Traditional Southern Recipes with a Country Bling Twist” (Pelican Publishing) by Chef Jason Smith, puts together a blend of savory ingredients into an egg casserole that can be a winner on any brunch table.

Farmhouse Skillet
Serves 8-10
1 pound bacon, diced
2 cups cubed cooked ham
1/2 pound breakfast sausage, cooked and crumbled
1 small purple onion, diced
1/2 red bell pepper, diced
1/2 yellow bell pepper diced



Be your best brunch host this holiday season

Much is made about the main course during a holiday meal, and for good reason. Food features prominently during the holiday season, and many a lasting memory is made around the family dinner table each December.

Though it’s impossible to exaggerate the importance of the main course during a holiday celebration with family and friends, savvy hosts, especially those welcoming overnight guests into their homes, recognize that a sit-down dinner isn’t the only opportunity to show off their culinary skills.

When hosting overnight guests, a relaxing homemade brunch can make for the perfect way for hosts and their guests to ease into a day.

Hosts looking to plan a simple, flavorful holiday brunch can utilize this recipe for “Mushroom Sausage Frittata” courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Mushroom Sausage Frittata
Makes 4 to 6 servings
1 tablespoon good-quality olive oil
2 cups chopped smoked sausage
2 cups sliced mushrooms
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced
8 fresh eggs
3-1/2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
Preheat oven broiler.
Heat the oil in a 10-inch nonstick, ovenproof skillet. Add sausage and sauté until it

Goopy waffles for breakfast or dessert

Waffles can be enjoyed any time of the day. While traditionally breakfast fare, waffles can be a sweet or savory dessert as well.

When waffles are paired with the flavors of a traditional Banana Foster dessert, they can be a decadent breakfast or impressive evening treat. Enjoy this recipe for “Kentucky ‘Nanners Foster Waffles” from “Lord Honey Traditional Southern Recipes with a Country Bling Twist” (Pelican Publishing) by Chef Jason Smith.

Kentucky ‘Nanner Foster Waffles
Serves 4 to 6
Nonstick cooking spray
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup white sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
1-1/2 cups milk, any variety
1/2 cup butter, melted and cooled
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Topping:
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 bananas, sliced thick
3 teaspoons bourbon
Favorite vanilla ice cream
Preheat a waffle iron, and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat oven to 170 F.
In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.
In a small bowl, whisk the eggs and heavy cream.
Stir the hash browns into the skillet, and add salt and pepper to taste. Cook for 5 to 8 minutes, until hash browns start to brown. Remove from heat. Add the egg mixture, top with cheese, and bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until bubbly and cheese is melted.

Meanwhile, place 1 to 2 waffles on a plate and top with a scoop of ice cream. Once banana sauce has thickened, spoon over ice cream and waffles. Repeat with remaining waffles.

Biscuits with Chocolate Gravy
3 cups plus 2 Tbsp. flour
2/3 cup plus 2 Tbsp. sugar
1/2 cup shortening plus enough to grease pan
1 cup buttermilk or milk
1/4 cup unsalted butter (melted)
1/4 cup butter (melted), plus 1/3 stick butter
1/3 cup cocoa
2 cups whole milk
Preheat the oven to 450° F. Grease your iron skillet or baking pan.
In a medium-size bowl, combine 3 cups flour and 2 tablespoons sugar. Cut in the shortening with a fork or pastry cutter, until it looks like commmeal. Then add the buttermilk or milk, a little at a time, stirring constantly until well mixed.
Place the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead lightly a few times. Roll the dough with a floured rolling pin to 1/2-inch thickness. Cut dough into circles with a 2” cutter.
Place the biscuits onto your greased baking pan. Lightly press the top of the biscuits and then brush the biscuits with half the 1/4 cup melted butter. Bake for 12-18 minutes or until golden brown but not over-bake. Once removed from the oven, brush the hot biscuits with the remaining melted butter.

To serve, split the biscuits in half and ladle Chocolate Gravy over the hot biscuits.
Make the Chocolate Gravy:
Heat 1/3 stick butter in a skillet over low heat. Stir in 2/3 cup sugar and 2 teaspoons flour and 1/3 cup of cocoa. Slowly pour 1 cup of the milk into skillet and whisk well, be sure to remove all lumps. Whisk in remaining milk, and stir constantly, until mixture is thick, being careful not to scorch. Serve hot over the biscuits.



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joy and hope to last the whole year through!

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Merry Christmas

Zucchini Lemon Bread
2 cups cake flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
2 eggs
1/2 cup canola/vegetable oil
1-1/3 cups sugar
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 cup buttermilk
zest of 1 lemon
1 cup grated zucchini
Glaze ingredients:
1 cup powdered sugar
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. milk
In a medium bowl, mix flour, baking powder and salt

and set aside.
In a large bowl, beat eggs, blend in oil and sugar. Then add lemon juice, buttermilk, and lemon zest to this mixture and stir together well. Stir zucchini in and mix well.
Add dry flour mixture to this mixture and blend together until combined well.
Pour batter into a greased 9x5 loaf pan.
Bake at 350 for 40-45 minutes.
While bread is still warm, make glaze, spoon over the bread. Allow the glaze to set up before cutting or serving.



Impress guests with this flavorful stuffed mushroom appetizer

Appetizers can make a strong first impression when eating at a restaurant. Indeed, a flavorful appetizer can give diners a taste of what’s to come throughout the rest of the meal, creating a sense of anticipation that will linger all the way to the last bite.
Appetizers may be most associated with restaurants, but holiday hosts can go the extra mile and prepare some flavorful apps at home as well. As hosts prepare to welcome loved ones into their home this holiday season, they can treat guests with these “Stuffed Mushrooms” courtesy of Lines+Angles.
Stuffed Mushrooms
Makes 28 servings
Olive oil, to coat baking sheet
28 mushrooms (21/2 inches in diameter), stemmed
1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
1 small onion, minced
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and

minced
3/4 cup Italian breadcrumbs
1/2 cup Romano cheese, grated
3 tablespoons fresh Italian parsley, chopped
Salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Preheat oven to 350 F. Drizzle olive oil on baking sheet and coat thoroughly.
Gently clean the mushrooms and remove stems. Finely chop stems. Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add stems, onion and garlic, and sauté until stems and onions are soft and garlic is fragrant.
In a mixing bowl, add bread crumbs, cheese and parsley. Season with salt and pepper and stir to combine. Add sautéed mixture to bread crumb mixture and mix well.
Spoon filling mixture into mushroom caps. Arrange on prepared baking sheet, stuffed side up. Bake about 20 to 25 minutes, or until the mushrooms are tender and the tops are golden. Cool for several minutes before serving. Arrange on serving tray or platter.
Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 35 minutes
Total time: 50 minutes

Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

6 medium portobello mushrooms
2 ounces goat cheese
6 Tablespoons roasted sweet red pepper strips
pepper to taste
1 Tablespoon olive oil
Remove stems from the portobello mushrooms, place the mushroom caps in a shallow pan, fill each with a rounded teaspoon of goat cheese. Top each with 1 tablespoon red pepper strips. Sprinkle with black pepper, drizzle with olive oil.
Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until mushrooms are tender and cheese is melted. Yields 6 servings.

Plant-based app for your vegan guests

Welcoming guests into your home for a special occasion often involves crafting an entertaining menu that will appeal to the masses. However, it also is essential to have options for those who may have dietary restrictions.
Vegan diets are surging in popularity as health concerns, climate change and animal welfare are driving many people to turn to plant-based diets. It stands to reason that someone who has adopted a vegan lifestyle may be coming to dinner sometime soon, and it is important to offer foods such guests can enjoy.
This recipe for “Pâté-Stuffed Mushrooms,” from “Plant-Based Gourmet” (Apollo Publishers) by Chef Suzi Gerber can be served as a tasty appetizer or even serve as a plant-based main course.
Pâté-Stuffed Mushrooms
Makes 8 to 10 mushrooms
8 ounces medium cremini mushrooms (with caps larger than a silver dollar), stems removed and reserved for pâté
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup avocado oil
Pinch salt
Pâté
1 cup walnuts, toasted
Stems from 8 ounces medium cremini mushrooms, roasted
1/4 white onion
4 garlic cloves
1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon
1/8 teaspoon lemon zest
Pinch nutmeg powder

Pinch salt
Pinch black pepper
1 tablespoon tamari or soy-free sauce
Combine the mushrooms with the balsamic vinegar, avocado oil and salt in a zip-top bag; seal, and let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, flipping every 5 minutes.
Preheat oven to 350 F.
Combine all the pâté ingredients in a food processor and process until all ingredients reach a consistent small dice, the size of coarse sea salt.
Place the mushrooms open side down on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Roast for 12 minutes, flipping after 8 minutes.
To serve the pâté warm, remove the mushrooms, fill with the pâté, and return to the warm oven for 2 to 4 minutes; otherwise, let the mushrooms cool, then fill with the pâté and serve at room temperature.



Herby Rice and Black Bean Salsa Burrito Bowl

Serves 2
Splash of olive oil
100 grams sugar snap peas
1 avocado, flesh sliced
For the rice:
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
250 grams cooked basmati rice
Juice of 1/2 lime
1 teaspoon maple syrup
40 grams fresh herbs, such as coriander, flat-leaf parsley, mint and/or dill, chopped
Sea salt and black pepper
For the black bean salsa:
240 grams canned black beans, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons sun-dried tomato paste
100 grams cherry tomatoes, chopped
Juice of 1/2 lime
4 tablespoons fresh mint, shredded
1/2 teaspoon sea salt flakes
Pinch of chili flakes
To make the rice, add 1 tablespoon of the oil to a frying pan with the cooked rice, lime juice and maple syrup. Fry for 1 to 2 minutes on a medium heat, then add the fresh herbs. Add the remaining tablespoon of oil and season with salt and pepper. Set aside and keep warm.
Set a small frying pan or griddle pan on a medium heat.

Add a splash of olive oil and the sugar snaps and fry for 2 to 3 minutes until a little charred.
To make the black bean salsa, add all the ingredients to a bowl and stir to combine.
To serve, load two bowls with the rice mixture, black bean salsa, sugar snaps, and sliced avocado.
This recipe for “Herby Rice and Black Bean Salsa Burrito Bowl” from Niki Webster’s “Rainbow Bowls” (Sourcebooks) is full of protein-rich beans, flavorful herbed rice and satisfying avocado.



Blueberry Zucchini Bread

Makes 1 loaf
Baking spray with flour
1 cup shredded zucchini
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 cup unsalted butter (1 stick), melted
3 large eggs
1 tablespoon lime juice
1-1/2 cups whole-wheat pastry flour, plus 1 tablespoon divided
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup fresh blueberries
Preheat oven to 350 F.
Coat an 8-by-4-inch loaf pan with baking spray. Place shredded zucchini on two layers of paper towels; top with 2 more layers of paper towels and press gently to remove excess moisture. Whisk granulated sugar, brown sugar, melted butter, eggs, and lime juice in a large bowl. Stir in the zucchini. Whisk 11/2 cups flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl.
Add the flour mixture to the zucchini mixture; stir until well combined. Toss blueberries with the remaining 1 tablespoon flour; gently fold into the batter. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Let the bread cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Run an offset spatula around the edges of the pan and carefully remove the bread to a wire rack to cool completely, about 1 hour.
“Blueberry Zucchini Bread” is a moist recipe that is both sweet and subtly tangy. This recipe, courtesy of Eating Well and Pam Lolley, can be an easy breakfast or a light dessert. It also happens to be vegetarian, nut- and soy-free.

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This French pastry is sweet and satisfying

An éclair is a delicious French dessert comprised of an eggy but airy pastry traditionally filled with custard and topped with a chocolate glaze. However, éclairs can be customized to feature many different flavors.

Historians say acclaimed chef Antonin Carême is attributed with making the éclair famous by modifying a cake recipe previously known as “pain à la duchesse.” Éclair means “flash,” and the name may suggest that these pastries were eaten in a flash.

The most recognizable version of this popular pastry is the chocolate éclair. Foodies can find éclairs at nearby bakeries, but they’re relatively easy to make at home as well. Try this recipe for “Éclairs,” courtesy of Allrecipes.com and contributor Patty Stockton.

Éclairs

Makes 9

Choux pastry

1 cup water
1/2 cup butter
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
4 large eggs

Filling

2-1/2 cups cold milk
1 5-ounce package instant vanilla pudding mix
1 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup confectioners’ sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Icing

2 1-ounce squares semisweet chocolate

2 tablespoons butter
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons hot water

Preheat the oven to 450 F. Grease a cookie sheet; set aside.

Make choux pastry: Combine water and butter in a medium pot. Bring to a boil, stirring until butter melts completely. Reduce heat to low; add flour and salt. Stir vigorously until mixture leaves the sides of the pan and begins to form a stiff ball. Remove from heat and let



cool 10 minutes.

Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition until incorporated. Using a spoon or pastry bag fitted with a No. 10 or larger tip, spoon or pipe dough onto the prepared cookie sheet in 1 1/2 x 4-inch strips.

Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 325 F and continue baking until the bottoms sound hollow when lightly tapped, about 20 more minutes. Poke a small hole in each éclair to release steam. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Make filling: combine milk and pudding mix in a medium bowl according to package directions. Beat heavy cream with an electric mixer in a separate medium bowl until soft peaks form. Beat in confectioners’ sugar and vanilla. Fold whipped cream into pudding.

Cut tops off of cooled pastry shells with a sharp knife. Fill shells with pudding mixture and replace tops.

Make icing: Melt chocolate and butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Stir in confectioners’ sugar and vanilla. Stir in hot water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until icing is smooth and has reached desired consistency. Remove from heat and cool slightly.

Drizzle chocolate icing over filled éclairs. Store in the refrigerator until serving.

Lemon cupcakes are on the menu

Cupcakes are handheld treats that can make any celebration even more spectacular. If guests expect the standard flavors of chocolate, vanilla or even red velvet, change things up with a sunny surprise: lemon!

Enjoy this recipe for “Lemon Drizzle Cupcakes” from “Jane’s Patisserie” (Sourcebooks) by Jane Dunn. Anything with sweet drizzle is a hit, and these cupcakes deliver plenty of lemony flavor in every bite.

Note: Imperial measurements were approximated from the metric and may not be exact. Using a food scale set to grams and weighing ingredients will produce the most authentic version of this recipe.

Lemon Drizzle Cupcakes

Makes 12

Cupcakes:

150 grams (1/2 cup) butter or baking spread
150 grams (1/2 cup) caster sugar
3 eggs
150 grams (1 cup) self-raising flour
Zest of 1 lemon

Drizzle:

Juice of 2 lemons
75 grams (5-1/2 tablespoons) caster sugar
Lemon Buttercream:
150 grams (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature
300 grams (2 1/4 cups) icing sugar
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Sprinkles
Lemon zest

Preheat the oven to 180 C (350 F) and get 12 cupcake cases (liners) ready. Beat the butter with the sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, self-raising flour and lemon zest and mix until combined.



Deep-Dish Peanut Butter Pie

Yield: One, 9-inch pie
1 (3.4-ounce) box instant vanilla pudding
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup milk
1 cup crunchy peanut butter (use smooth, if preferred)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 pinch salt
10 to 12 Biscoff® cookies, graham crackers, or crunch peanut butter cookies
4 tablespoons butter, melted
1-1/2 cups heavy whipping cream
3 tablespoons confectioners’ sugar

Whip the pudding mix with the cream and milk in a large mixing bowl, then add the peanut butter, vanilla, and salt. Continue mixing until it’s light and thick, roughly 2 to 3 minutes.

Crush the cookies in a bowl or Ziploc® bag and mix with the melted butter.

Press into the pie dish, then spoon the filling into the dish.

Whip the heavy whipping cream in the work bowl of your stand mixer, (with a hand mixer, or by hand in a mixing bowl) and confectioners’ sugar. Top the filling with the whipped cream.

Refrigerate at least 4 hours, but overnight is best. Serve and enjoy.

Individuals who want a new pie to add to their recipe collections, need look no further than this recipe for “Deep-Dish Peanut Butter Pie” from “Butter, Flour, Sugar, Joy” (Sourcebooks) by Danielle Kartes.



Spoon the mix evenly into the cupcake cases (liners) and bake for 18 to 22 minutes until they are baked through and springy to the touch.

Mix together the lemon juice and sugar for the drizzle in a bowl. Once the cupcakes are out of the oven, carefully spoon the drizzle over the cupcakes, then leave them to cool fully on a wire rack while you make the buttercream.

Beat the butter until smooth; this can take a couple of minutes. Add the icing sugar in two batches, beating well after each addition, then add the lemon juice and beat again.

Pipe or spread the buttercream onto your cupcakes, then sprinkle each one with some sprinkles and lemon zest.



Merry Christmas!

May your spirits be lifted at this special time of year, and may you enjoy much good fortune in the year ahead.

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and a Happy New Year!

Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a Christmas that is merry and bright. May the spirit of Christmas bring you comfort, peace, and happiness.

From John Robinson and the Yancey County Clerk’s office





No-bake cookies make dessert a breeze

Thanks to their portability and diverse flavor profiles, cookies remain a favorite treat to enjoy at home or bring to parties at others’ homes.

Cookies also frequently are go-to offerings at bake sales and school functions.

Although cookies are relatively easy to make, people sometimes find the end products does not turn out as expected.

No-bakecookies,including this recipe for “Peanut Butter No-Bake Cookies” courtesy of “Live Well, Bake Cookies” (Rock Point) by Danielle Rye, are a perfect workaroud for those who have previously had mixed results when baking cookies.

Peanut Butter No-Bake Cookies

Makes 32 to 34 cookies
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon-size pieces
1-3/4 cups granulated sugar
1/2 cup whole milk
3/4 cup creamy peanut butter
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Hot Chocolate Float

Serves 4
2 cups milk
8 ounces semisweet chocolate
2 tablespoons superfine sugar
8 scoops coconut ice cream
8 scoops semisweet chocolate ice cream
Whipped cream, to decorate

Pour the milk into a saucepan. Break the chocolate into pieces and add to the saucepan with the sugar. Stir over low heat until the chocolate has melted, the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is smooth. Remove the saucepan from the heat.

Put 1 scoop of coconut

3-1/4 cups quick-cooking oats

Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats and set aside.

Place the unsalted butter, granulated sugar and milk in a saucepan and heat over medium heat, making sure to stir often until the butter is melted and the ingredients are well combined. Bring the mixture to a rolling boil and allow to boil for 1 minute without stirring.

Remove from the heat, and stir in the peanut butter and vanilla extract until fully combined. Stir in the quick oats and mix until all the oats are coated with the mixture.

Using a 1 1/2-tablespoon cookie scoop, drop scoops of the mixture onto the prepared baking sheets, and gently press them down to flatten them slightly. Allow to cool for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until the cookies have firmed up. The cookies will continue to firm up the longer they cool.

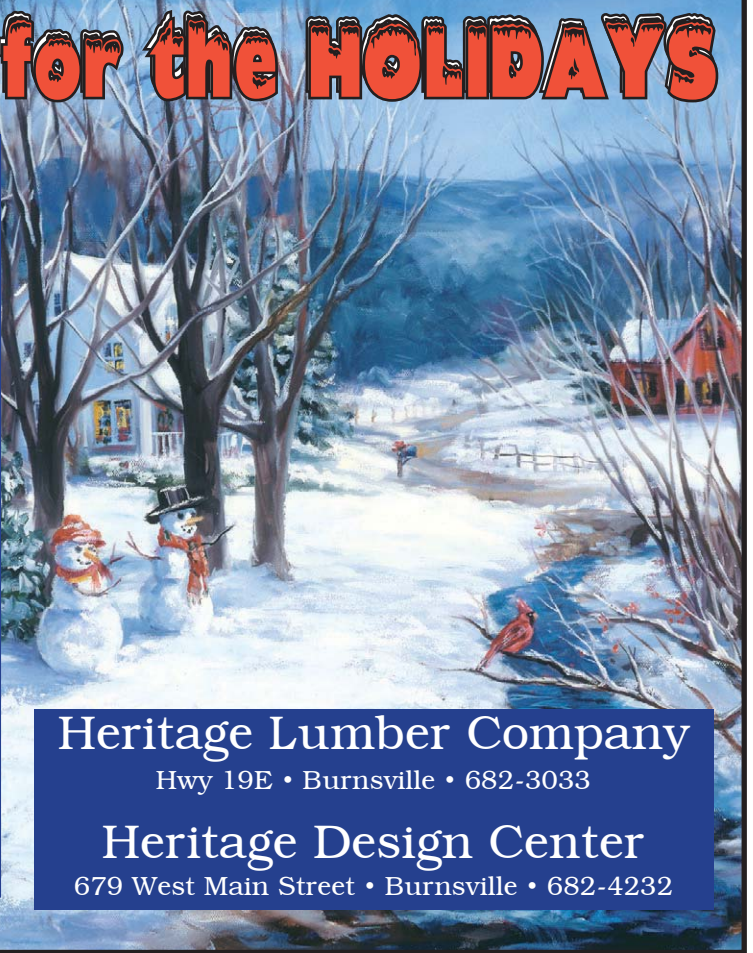
5. Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

ice cream into each of 4 heat-proof glasses, top with a scoop of chocolate ice cream, then repeat the layers.

Pour the chocolate flavored milk into the glasses, top with whipped cream, and serve immediately.

For this “Hot Chocolate Float” from “Chocolate: Over 100 Temptingly-Tasty Dishes” (Love Food) by the Love Food editors, coconut- and chocolate-flavored scoops of ice cream bob and melt in creamy hot chocolate.

Feel free to use your favorite flavors of ice cream to make this recipe your own



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Set the tone for a holiday party with this beloved seasonal beverage

Holiday season celebrations have a reputation for being especially jovial. The spirit of the season undoubtedly has something to do with that, as people from all faiths and backgrounds tend to have an extra hop in their step and a slightly wider smile on their faces each December.

Holiday hosts also do

much to promote the festive spirit of the season. Hosts often go to great lengths to ensure holiday guests enjoy their visits, and that even extends to the food and drinks they serve the people they welcome into their homes.

Many celebrants would insist no holiday season get-together is complete without

eggnog, a classic beverage that’s most popular in December. This holiday season, hosts can treat their guests to this recipe for “Eggnog” courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Eggnog
Makes 2 Servings
2 ounces brandy or cognac
2 ounces dark rum, plus more

for sugar rim
1 cup eggnog, prepared
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon light brown sugar
2 sticks cinnamon, for garnish (optional)
2 pods star anise, for garnish (optional)
Shortbread or gingerbread cookies, for garnish (optional)

In a cocktail shaker with ice, add the brandy, rum and eggnog together, cover and shake.

Add the nutmeg, cinnamon and sugar to a small plate and stir around to combine. Wet the rims of 2 glasses with rum. Roll the rims of the glasses in the spices to coat.

Strain the eggnog mixture into the two glasses. Garnish with cinnamon sticks, star anise pods and festive shortbread cookies, if desired.

Whiskey-Apple Cider Punch

Serves 10
1 cup frozen cranberries, thawed
1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 cup water, divided
3 cups bourbon
1-1/2 cups fresh lemon juice (from 14 lemons)
3/4 cup honey
1 24.5-ounce bottle sparkling apple cider, chilled
1 Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced (optional)

Combine thawed frozen cranberries, light brown sugar, and 1/4 cup water in a food processor; process until cranberries are roughly chopped and sugar has almost dissolved, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a large bowl. Add bourbon, fresh lemon juice, honey, and remaining 1/4 cup water; stir until well combined and sugar is dissolved. Pour mixture through a fine wire-mesh strainer into a 3- to 4-quart pitcher, discarding solids.

Chill at least 1 hour or up to 8 hours. Just before serving, gently stir in sparkling apple cider. Pour into glasses and, if desired, garnish with Granny Smith apple slices.

If you don’t want to worry about having enough supplies on hand for a bevy of different cocktails, have a big-batch punch at the ready for guests. There are many variations, but this recipe for “Whiskey-Apple Cider Punch” can appeal to the masses. It evokes those fall flavors that signal football season, and it works well with many comfort foods. Try it, courtesy of Southern Living Test Kitchen.



Gustave Flaubert’s French Hot Toddy

Serves 1
4 ounces apple cider
2 ounces calvados
2 ounces apricot brandy
2 ounces heavy cream
Ground cinnamon for garnishing

In a small saucepan, heat apple cider until warm. Remove from heat. Add calvados and apricot brandy, stirring to combine. Pour into a heatproof glass. Pouring in a circular motion, slowly add cream, allowing it to settle on top. Garnish with the cinnamon.

Many people insist a hot toddy can help soothe the throat, open the nose and help a person get rest. There are various iterations of a hot toddy, but author Gustave Flaubert’s “French Hot Toddy” delivers flavors that pair nicely with holiday events. It’s so delicious that it can be served at any holiday gathering, or just to feel better if the common cold is an unwanted visitor. Enjoy Flaubert’s take, courtesy of “How to Drink Like a Writer” (Apollo Publishers) by Margaret Kaplan.



Celebrate a time-honored cocktail

A Bloody Mary is a popular cocktail. Some rely on a Bloody Mary as a hangover cure, and others enjoy it as a treat with brunch. Some say the drink was named after a server, Mary, at The Bucket of Blood in Chicago, while others insist Queen Mary Tudor of England is its namesake.

A Bloody Mary gets its “bloody” moniker from the vibrant red color of the tomato juice in the drink.

Try this recipe, courtesy of “How to Drink Like a Writer: Recipes for the Cocktails and Libations that Inspired 100 Literary Greats” (Apollo Publishers) by Margaret Kaplan.

Raymond Carver’s “Heart Starter” Bloody Mary

(Serves 8)
4 cups tomato juice
1/2 cup dill pickle juice
1/4 cup lemon juice, freshly squeezed
1 tablespoon grated horseradish
2 teaspoons Tabasco sauce
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 cups vodka
Celery stalks for garnishing

Blackberry Crunch Muffins

Serves 12
2-1/4 cups self-rising flour
1 cup white sugar
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup canola oil
2 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla
3/4 cup full-fat buttermilk
1-1/2 cups fresh or frozen blackberries
Zest of 1 lime

Crunch topping
1/2 cup white sugar
1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
1/2 cup self-rising flour
1/2 cup quick-cook oats
1/4 cup sweetened shredded coconut
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
5 tablespoons butter, at room temperature
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
Glaze
2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
Juice of 1 lime

Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease or line a 12-hole muffin tin.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the flour and sugars. Add the oil, eggs, vanilla, and buttermilk, and stir to combine.

In a small bowl, toss the blackberries with 1 tablespoon flour, then add the berries and zest to the batter and lightly fold them in.

Place the crunch topping ingredients in a bowl and mix with a fork until large crumbles form.

Divide the batter evenly into the muffin tin, and sprinkle tops with crunch mixture.

Bake for 22 to 28 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Remove from oven and place on a cooling rack. Place the glaze ingredients in a bowl and whisk until combined. Drizzle over cooled muffins.

Muffins can be prepared in advance and are easy to enjoy in hand for breakfast. “Blackberry Crunch Muffins” marry coffee cake and muffin elements and tart berries for something that is equal parts breakfast and dessert. Try this recipe, courtesy of “Lord Honey Traditional Southern Recipes with a Country Bling Twist” (Pelican Publishing) by Chef Jason Smith.



Lemon wedges for garnishing

In a large pitcher, mix together tomato juice, pickle juice, lemon juice, horseradish, Tabasco, Worcestershire, salt, pepper, celery seeds, and cayenne pepper. Cover and chill in refrigerator overnight.

In the morning (or whenever it is you wake up), locate your phone, keys, dignity, and pants. Next, find the vodka (if you have any left), and pour it into the tomato juice mixture. Stir. Pour into a highball or collins glass filled with ice and garnish with celery, a lemon wedge, and a cocktail shrimp.

Shortbread Dips

Makes a dozen
10-1/2 ounces soft butter
4-1/2 ounces golden caster sugar
10-1/2 ounces plain flour [all-purpose]
1-3/4 ounces corn flour [cornstarch]
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
5 ounces dark chocolate
5 ounces white chocolate
2 tablespoons chopped pistachios
2 tablespoons freeze-dried raspberries

Preheat the oven to 340 F. Grease an 8-inch square baking tin and line the base and sides with baking parchment.

Cream the butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy.

Add in both the flours plus the sea salt and stir until it begins to come together, though take care not to overwork the dough. Bring the dough together with your hands and press the mixture into the prepared tin. Flatten the surface of the shortbread with the back of a spoon and use a fork to prick marks along the length of the fingers.

Bake for 45 minutes until pale golden. Remove from the oven and, with a knife, mark lines where you are going to cut the shortbread. Leave to cool in the tin.

Melt the dark and white chocolate separately in heat-proof bowls set over a pan of gently simmering water. Take each of your shortbread fingers and use a teaspoon to coat one-third with the chocolate. Sprinkle pistachios or freeze-dried raspberries over the chocolate end and allow to set. Serve with a hot cuppa, or they will keep in an airtight container for up to four days.

St. Patrick’s Day idea: Use green sprinkles in lieu of raspberries on the ends of the other biscuits for some extra green flare. Serve with Irish coffee or hot chocolate spiked with Irish Cream liqueur.

Note: Caster sugar is finely ground granulated sugar. Its texture falls between granulated sugar and confectioner’s sugar. If you can’t find caster sugar, use a spice grinder to grind granulated sugar up to a finer texture.

Shortbread is commonly eaten in Ireland and in neighboring Scotland, where this recipe originated. Try this recipe for “Shortbread Dips” from “The Hebridean Baker” (Sourcebooks) by Coinneach MacLeod.

Merry Christmas!

Happy New Year!

Dr. Thuc Moore, OD
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Secrets to a great grilled cheese

Grilled cheese is an ideal comfort food. It’s crispy, buttery and full of warm and gooey cheese. Many people grow up enjoying grilled cheese as children, and then continue digging in to this delight as they get older.

While grilled cheese may seem like simple fare, there are some techniques to make it even more delicious. This includes strategies to make it golden brown with perfectly melted cheese.

When preparing grilled cheese, you do not want to rush the process and end up with burnt bread. Try placing the grilled cheese in a cold pan and then letting everything heat up together slowly over medium-low heat. This ensures the heat is evenly distributed and the cheese will melt as the bread develops its golden color.

Aim for optimal coverage of butter or mayonnaise. Yes, you read that correctly. Some culinary experts, like the ones at Bon Appétit, recommend using mayo in lieu of butter to spread on the bread because it has a higher smoke point and is less likely to burn while cooking. Be sure to spread your butter or mayo all over to the edges of the bread for optimal coverage and flavor.

Next, select a good quality cheese that melts well. Some are better than others in this department. They include colby, havarti, swiss, monterey jack, muenster, American, smoked gouda, and cheddar.

Then work with a recipe that will elevate the grilled cheese even further, such as “Smoked Gouda and Roasted Red Pepper Grilled Cheese,” courtesy of the Food Network Kitchen.

Smoked Gouda and Roasted Red Pepper Grilled Cheese

Yield: 4 servings
8 1/3- to 1/2-inch-thick slices Pullman bread

Bread Stuffing With Vegetables

Makes 8 servings
Non-stick cooking spray, for the pan
3 tablespoons cooking oil
4 stalks celery, washed, trimmed and chopped
2 medium onions, peeled and chopped
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
4 cups dried whole grain bread cubes
1 tablespoon dried sage leaves, crushed
1 teaspoon marjoram
1/2 cup low-sodium turkey or chicken broth
Salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat a 9 x 13-inch pan or casserole dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Heat cooking oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add celery, onions and carrots. Sauté until tender crisp, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute longer.

Place cubed bread in a large bowl. Sprinkle with dried sage and marjoram, tossing to distribute spices. Add sautéed vegetables to the bread mixture and drizzle mixture with broth, stirring to distribute.

Transfer stuffing to prepared pan, season with salt and pepper and cover with aluminum foil. Bake for about 30 minutes or until heated through.

Serve. Preparation time: 20 minutes. Cooking time: 40 minutes. Total time: 1 hour.

As families prepare to gather around the dinner table this holiday season, celebrants can find a place for this “Bread Stuffing With Vegetables” courtesy of Lines+Angles.

4 ounces smoked gouda, very thinly sliced with a cheese slicer
4 slices muenster cheese (about 4 ounces)
1 medium jarred roasted red pepper, drained, dried and thinly sliced
2 cups baby arugula
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

Lay out 4 slices of the bread on a work surface. Layer each with some of the smoked gouda, 1 slice of the muenster, a thin layer of sliced red pepper (about 2 tablespoons), 1/2 cup of the baby arugula, and another layer of smoked gouda. Close the sandwiches with the remaining bread. Thinly and evenly spread the butter on both sides of the bread using 1-1/2 tablespoons of the butter for each sandwich.

Place 2 sandwiches into a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cover the skillet with a lid and cook until the bread is evenly golden brown, about 2 minutes. Flip, cover again and cook until the bread is golden brown and the cheese is visibly melted, about 2 minutes more. Repeat with the remaining sandwiches.



Helen Wallerstein’s Potato Latkes

Yield: 24 latkes
5 medium russet potatoes, peeled
1 medium onion, grated (use a large one if you like a strong onion flavor)
4 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup matzo meal
1 to 2 teaspoons salt
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup vegetable oil for frying

In a food processor using the metal blade, or using a box grater, finely grate the potatoes. Place them in a colander and squeeze out all the liquid. Grate the onion, using the food processor pulse feature to capture any small chunks. Stir the onions, eggs, matzo meal, salt, and pepper into the potato mixture.

Heat 1/2 inch of oil in a nonstick skillet over medium heat until very hot (a drop of water should dance in the pan). To test the seasonings before frying the entire batch (you wouldn’t want to taste the raw potato and egg mixture), drop one tablespoon of the mixture into the hot oil, fry for several minutes on each side and drain on a paper towel. Taste the latke and add more salt or pepper if needed. Now you are ready to make the rest. Drop a generous tablespoon of latke batter into the skillet and flatten the pancake with the back of a spatula. Turn the latkes over when the underside is nicely brown, about 3 to 5 minutes. Fry until golden on both sides. Drain on waiting paper towels.

Repeat this process, adding more oil to the pan and a touch more matzo meal to the mixture if needed to absorb the excess liquid that will collect in the bowl. Serve hot.

Served warm and crispy, latkes are something no one wants to miss. Preparing and serving latkes in small batches can showcase them at their best. Try this recipe for “Helen Wallerstein’s Potato Latkes” from “Food, Hope & Resilience: Authentic Recipes and Remarkable Stories from Holocaust Survivors” (American Palate) by June Hersh.

Something unique for the holiday

When planning menus this holiday season, home cooks can consider this recipe for “Smoked Salmon Rolls With



Stuffin’ Muffins

Makes 1 dozen
1 pound breakfast sausage
2 medium onions, diced
2 cups diced fresh baby portobello mushrooms
1/2 cup butter
8 cups crumbled cornbread
Salt and ground black pepper to taste
1 tablespoon dried rubbed sage
1 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 cup shaved or grated parmesan cheese
2 eggs
1-1/4 cups chicken or veggie broth or stock

Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter a 12-hole muffin tin.

In a large skillet, crumble the sausage and cook until halfway done. Add the onions, mushrooms and butter. Cook until tender.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the crumbled cornbread and the sausage mixture. Add salt and pepper. Add the sage, onion powder, parmesan cheese, eggs, and broth. Mix with hands until all ingredients are moist but hold together.

Using a 3-ounce ice cream scoop, place 12 balls into the prepared muffin tin and pat tops flat. Bake for 30 minutes.

Though stuffing is sometimes cooked inside the turkey, while others prefer to prepare it in a casserole dish. There’s no shortage of ways to prepare stuffing, and adventurous types might enjoy this recipe for “Stuffin’ Muffins” courtesy of “Lord Honey Traditional Southern Recipes With a Country Bling Twist” (Pelican Publishing) by Chef Jason Smith. In this recipe, stuffing is baked in muffin tins for the perfect portion you can sink your teeth right into.

Pecan-Cherry Bread Stuffing

Makes 8 servings
1 loaf crusty white or wheat bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus extra for baking dish
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and diced
2 large celery stalks, rinsed, trimmed and diced
4 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
1 cup packed dried tart cherries
1 cup roughly chopped toasted pecans
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves
1 tablespoon crushed fennel seed
Coarse salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup fresh chopped parsley
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth

Preheat oven to 400 F. Position oven racks in the middle and lower third of the oven. Arrange bread in a single layer on two rimmed baking sheets. Toast until dry and golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool.

Lightly butter a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. In a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion, celery and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until onion and celery are softened, about 7 minutes. Add cherries, pecans, sage, and fennel seed; cook, stirring for 1 minute. Transfer to a large bowl and season with salt and pepper.

Add parsley, eggs and bread to the cherry mixture; stir to combine. Add broth in two additions, stirring until absorbed. Season generously with salt and pepper; transfer stuffing to butter baking dish. Bake on middle rack until the top is deep golden brown, about 25 to 30 minutes. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving.

Stuffing is a dish many celebrants can’t wait to see on the holiday dinner table. Try “Pecan-Cherry Bread Stuffing” from Lines+Angles.

Fresh Cheese for Christmas” from Lines+Angles. Whether served on a tray as hosts walk around a holiday party or as an appetizer during a sit-down meal, these salmon rolls are sure to be a hit among friends and family.

Smoked Salmon Rolls With Fresh Cheese for Christmas

Makes 8 servings
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 medium eggs
1 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons butter, melted
2 to 3 tablespoons canola oil, for frying
1 cup low-fat cream cheese, softened
1 cup ricotta cheese
1 small bunch dill, finely chopped, plus extra
2 to 3 tablespoons hot water, plus extra as needed
1-3/4 cups smoked salmon slices
1/2 lemon, juiced

Blend together the flour, eggs, milk, salt, butter, and dill in a food processor until smooth. Pour into a jug.

Heat a little oil in a non-stick frying or crepe pan set over medium heat until hot. Add a small ladle of batter to the pan and tilt with a circular motion so that the batter coats the surface evenly.

Cook for 1 to 2 minutes until golden underneath. Flip and cook for a further minute or so. Remove to a plate and repeat the process using a little more oil for each crepe.

Beat cream cheese and ricotta cheese with dill and 2 to 3 tablespoons hot water in a bowl until creamy and spreadable, adding more water as needed. Season to taste with salt.

Spread over cooked pancakes and top with smoked salmon slices. Drizzle with lemon juice. Roll up into cigar shapes and cut into bite-size pieces. Serve with a dill garnish.





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A Time to Say **Thanks**

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Merry Christmas!

May the spirit of the season lead you to peace, joy and contentment. Thank you for making 2024 a wonderful year for us. We greatly appreciate your visits and your friendship.

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Merry Christmas!

In the air there’s a feeling of Christmas and we hope it fills your heart and soul with enough warmth, cheer and contentment to last all year! Thanks for putting the merry in our Christmas and for filling our year with so much joy and so many great memories. Serving you has been our pleasure and we look forward to the coming year. We wish you and your family -- health, happiness and all the best this season and always!

~ Pat, Anna, Katie, Kayti

The Gift of *Together*ness



*We're so very grateful for the opportunity
to spend this special season with all of you!*

*Thank you for filling our year with friendship and
fond memories. We really do appreciate your loyal
support, and we wish you and your loved ones the
best of everything this Christmas season and always.*



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