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Treasures on the tree

BY ANN BAILES

Everybody has special stories to tell about the memorable ornaments on their Christmas tree, and our tree is full of such ornaments and stories also. And we have two new hand-blown glass balls this year that will be special for years to come. Here's why:

On our trip to Arizona last fall, I realized that an old friend (and distant cousin), Holly, lived in a town we would be passing through on the way to the Grand Canyon. So I found her number and called to see if we could stop by the next day. She was glad to get my call, and suggested we come by her husband's and her glass-blowing studio. They are artisans, I discovered, who create such beautiful work that some of their pieces are sold at Grand Canyon gift shops.

I hadn't seen Holly in over 40 years, and our paths have completely diverged. But, like most good friendships, we just picked up where we left off. The sentiments of friendship and love remain even if there are large gaps in the sequence and details of our lives. We met her husband, George, and watched him as he inserted blowpipes into lumps of melted glass into a 2000 degree furnace, twirling them to create the beginnings of works of art.

Then they suggested to Mike: "Would you like to try?" They picked out red and white colored glass powders to add to the molten lump. At the right temperature George removed the pipe and its glob from the furnace. Mike sat on a stool and blew into the pipe - and the molten glass formed a bubble. Oops - the glob fell to one side and created a flat place. George "rescued" it and re-heated it in the hot furnace. Then Mike continued blowing as Holly rotated the pipe to keep the ornament globe-shaped.

After the piece was completed, with only that one little flat place on one side, George removed it from the pipe, and formed a small loop at the top for inserting a yarn loop or hook. Then Holly put it in storage to slowly cool, and said they would mail it to us later on.



A few weeks ago, a box arrived at our house containing not one but two lovely matching glass balls. George had insisted on making a second ornament for me, to match the one Mike made.

So I have a reconnection with an old friend, and we have two beautiful new hand-

blown glass ornaments on our tree that we will appreciate and enjoy for many years. And oh, that flat side? Hidden against the trunk. It looks perfect.

Merry Christmas, and may each of you enjoy the treasures on your tree that tell the story of your life!

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My first Christmas tree in three years

BY JANA MACKIN

This holiday season, I peer through the grimy window of old age to recall a child who loved Christmas with all her heart, and fought tooth and nail to keep the spirit alive despite the mad rush to grow up. How gleefully we trade innocence for mortality and sadness in the Faustian bargain to become an adult. If we had known what awaited us would we have so quickly swapped the simple ornaments of joy for the rubbish baubles of money, success and me, me, me? Think how we decorated fake trees, shopped till we dropped, and asked Alexa to play “Ho Ho Hos” yet still felt empty inside. In memory’s fog, I see the vague outline of a small child looking up to a tin-foil star but oh how vivid my anger when I recall that school yard brat who pompously opined, “There is no Santa Claus!” One can see him now some Scrooge working in an apothecary of doom, gloating how the Pandemic and its four horsemen—lockdowns, vaccines, blood clots, and death crushed the spirit of Christmas into bone fragments and dust.

As I child, I lived the California dream on a ranch near the Wine Country in old California before the soulless, overpriced carpetbaggers and their woke, money grubbing minions Californicated the Golden State. Each year, our family celebrated all things Christmas with the joy, passion and gratitude that only comes from those like my parents who survived such adversity as the Depression; happy to see better days; Whether finding the perfect tree, decorating the house, setting out cookies and milk for Santa, our family’s Christmas was an unabashed expression of unqualified love. During the Depression, Mom grew up wearing a flour sack for a dress, and Dad weathered blizzards to gather frozen pheasants for food. They understood the magic of the season of love and light. Each year, I baked persimmon cookies, magic cookie bars, and home-made jelly the color of champagne flecked with golden spice. “Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.” I believed with all my heart.

Of my life book-ended by childhood and old age, I have little to say as it fades in the

gray matter of my brain. It was a good life. However, what I failed to see was how a great evil crept into the world during those intervening decades when the sun shone less bright, the stars dimmed, and the skies dulled, permeated by festering rot, perversion and pestilent violence that delighted in today’s unspeakable depravity, fentanyl overdoses, shyster corruption and a banshee din that drowns out such salutations as “God rest ye merry, gentlemen.”

Then came the Pandemic. For three years, I didn’t celebrate Christmas in the face of the worst bio-weapon virus and vaccine ever wreaked upon mankind. This was a man-made holocaust the likes that made the final solution look like child’s play. What magnitude of utter malice and evil that con-fected this pestilence with its hydra headed onslaught against the very soul of man defies comprehension but demands Nuremberg justice. My anger, outrage and pain pushed me to say “NO!” I refused to be guinea pig, victim or slave despite the rampant ostracism, demonization, pain and exile. The un-vaxed might has well rung leper bells for all the stigma.

As time went on, my Christmas died a long and painful death with no hospice in sight, or so I thought until I hurried by a tree lot a couple weeks ago. I suddenly stopped, smelling the scent of freshly cut pine. Then I really looked at the trees, and saw how their outlines resembled prayer like Hindu Namaskar, palms placed together upwards as a gesture of recognition. It was then I realized no puppet master could ever really kill my Christmas. Only I through the power of choice could perpetrate such a heinous crime, promising never to let evil have power over me again. I bought a tabletop tree and went to the Dollar Store to buy Christmas regalia of ornaments, decorations and lights. While I still can’t see my family this year, I rejoice in that little tree and how I rescued my Christmas from under that toxic, steaming manure pile of Goebbels gobshite, hate and fear porn.

So, to my fellow man, I wish you a “Merry Christmas.” And to the New World Order, I say “Go Pound Sand!”

Dominion Senior Living
of Anderson
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A lifetime love of babies

One September day in 1997, Crystal Hawkins walked through the door of Kids Stuff Academy at 117 Midtown Road as a prospective employee. She began working right away in the infant room taking care of six babies at a time.

Fast forward twenty-five years, Crystal is still at Kids Stuff Academy and still works in the very same room with the infants. Kids Stuff Academy is blessed having a person of this caliber of love and passion for teaching in the infant room for these past 25 years.

Today, the ratio is 5 to 1 in the infant room. Her sister, Amy, is in the adjoining room with the other five infants. And Amy has been working at Kids Stuff Academy for 12 years. This dynamic team has these babies covered with 37 years of combined experience allowing all infants to meet their developmental milestones, enhance their gross motor skills and gain the love of books. Each and every day these ladies provide above quality care for each infant.

Crystal is there Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. till 3 p.m. When she first started working, her own children, ages 3 and 7 came along with her. She now has 3 grandsons who attend KSA. She took care of each of them when

they were in the infant room. Needless to say, the babies are her specialty.

"My husband also plays an important part in my journey. He has encouraged me, guided me and most of all has been my support during the past 25 years in this career," exclaims Crystal.

"My husband also plays an important part in my journey. He has encouraged me, guided me and most of all has been my support during the past 25 years in this career."

— Crystal Hawkins

The infant room is dimly lit with soft music playing while two babies are asleep, one is happy and smiling from his crib and Crystal was feeding the other baby. She says that the babies will adjust to the sound of soft music and low voices and be able to sleep. Her gentle nature and calm voice along with her consistency make the babies feel warm, safe and loved.

The Director, Ruth Cardona, says in all the years she has been at this location, Crystal has rarely missed a day of work. She says the staff is like family and they are all happy being at work together each day.

There are 3 Kids Stuff Academies now, owned and operated by Marilyn Nelson. One is in Clemson, the other two are in Anderson. She also owns Anderson Prep Preschool on Commonwealth Lane in Anderson. You can feel the love she has for all the children in these schools, a major ingredient of her success.



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515B Camson Rd, Anderson 7:00AM-5:45PM

700 College Avenue, Clemson 7:00AM-5:30 PM

www.KidsStuffAcademy.us

DEAR SANTA

Dear Santa, I know you're super busy. Heaven knows, you have approximately 1.9 billion children in the world to worry about. But I wanted to bring a few kids to your attention. If you have time.

First off, please help Sophie (13), who is losing her hearing. Right now, her mother is taking her to UF Health



Sean Dietrich

Shands Hospital, in Gainesville, Florida. And everyone is worried.

Sophie's mother is Deaf, and uses Cochlear implants. The deafness is a genetic issue, and

now Sophie is going through hearing problems. Sophie's mother writes:

"Would you please pray that doctors can stop Sophie's hearing loss and even restore what's been lost?"

If anyone can help her, you can, Santa. And when you're finished helping her, please help Jayden (15).

Jayden's lungs are giving him problems. The doctors aren't giving him a good prognosis. In fact, they're giving him bad news.

"I just want to be a normal kid," he writes to me. "I just want to breathe normal again."

Visit Jayden, will you Santa? Give him special attention. And if you have time after that, please help Kirsten (12). Kirsten's mother has never married, Santa, because her mother has been taking care of Kirsten's ailing grandmother for many years.

"After my grandma's stroke, my mom and me moved into the house, and my mom dropped out of college, and all she does is take care of Grandma."

Kirsten's mother has accompanied her grandmother for every bathroom break, administered every shower, and tucked her mother into bed every night.

As a result, Kirsten's mom has never lived a life of her own.

"Please pray for my mom to have a good Christmas, she deserves it."

So if you're reading this, Santa, help her. And when you're through helping Kirsten's mom, please send some love to my friend Mason.

Mason is 24, living in Hoboken, New Jersey. He might not be a kid, Santa, but he is going to ask a young woman to marry him, but he is nervous because this woman has three children. Mason is afraid that he won't be up to the challenge of raising three kids.

"I love them," writes Mason, "but I'm so young, and I'm scared. I don't want to be a bad dad."

So help Mason, Santa. Give him a Christmas miracle. Then, fly over to California and help Stuart and Carly.

Stuart and Carly have a newborn child who is blind. The child's name is Cory. The young parents are both very excited about being parents, Santa, but they are also frightened that they are not going to be able to do what it takes to help their little Cory through life.

"I will do anything for my baby," says Carly. "But I just don't know if I'm qualified to be a mother. I am terrified."

If anyone can help them, you can, Santa. Give them hope. Give them a sign. I don't care what you do, just help them know they aren't alone.

Then, zip over to the Midwest and help Kendra (11), the young woman in Kansas City. She is going to be placed in a foster home this week, maybe even adopted, Santa. And she is frightened.

"What if they don't like me?" Kendra writes. "What if they don't want me?"

And help Briget, who is getting married tonight, as I write this. She is the recipient of a recent heart transplant, Santa. The mother of Briget's deceased donor is going to be at the wedding service, sitting in the front row. The older woman will be watching her late son's heart walk down the aisle.

It will be a bittersweet ceremony, laced with earth-shaking emotions. Give them all something wonderful tonight, Santa. Make their wedding a true success. Help them find joy. Help them feel a powerful love.

In fact, help us all, Santa. Help us humans to see that Christmas isn't about cheap presents and layaway plans and flat-screen TVs and truly crappy Hallmark Channel movies.

Christmas, no matter what anyone says, is about Advent. And Advent is really just a Latin word for "Adventus," which means "arrival." The arrival of God on Earth. Meaning: God gives a dang about you.

You matter to the universe. You matter to God. Yes, you. You don't have to do anything special to win Heaven's love. You don't have to pray a magic prayer. You don't have to do a magic tap dance. You don't have to be accepted into any special club. You're already his favorite human being. God is already your biggest fan.

Santa already knows this to be true. I hope, someday, you will know it, too.

So good luck at your doctor appointment, Sophie.



AnMed Cancer Center awarded breast center accreditation

BY EMMY MONROE

The National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC), a quality program administered by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) has granted accredited status to the AnMed Cancer Center. As a NAPBC accredited center, AnMed is committed to maintaining levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive, patient-centered, multidisciplinary care resulting in high-quality care for patients with breast disease.

Patients can be confident that their breast care team includes health care professionals from a variety of disciplines who are committed to working together to provide the best care available through their entire course of treatment. Patients receiving care at a NAPBC-accredited center also have access to information on clinical trials and new treatment options, genetic counseling, and patient-centered services including psychosocial support, rehabilitation services, and survivorship care.

"If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with breast disease, you will have many important decisions to make. However, there is one thing you will not have to worry about—where to find the best possible treatment. That's because the best breast care is available right here at this NAPBC accredited breast center," said Rhonda Ballew, oncology research manager at the AnMed Cancer Center.

Accreditation by the NAPBC is granted only to those programs that are committed to providing the best possible care to patients with breast cancer. Patients receiving care at this NAPBC-accredited center have access to comprehensive care, including a full range of state-of-the-art services; a multidisciplinary team approach to coordinate the best treatment options; information about ongoing clinical trials and new treatment options.

For Polly Morgan, care from the AnMed Cancer Center came at just the right time. After a routine mammogram came back with mixed results in early November 2022, she received news that she needed a breast biopsy. At her biopsy was where she met nurse Ann Cothran, also a breast cancer survivor. Ann's kind words of encouragement and comfort made Polly feel like she was not alone in the very uncertain journey she was about to embark upon.

"From the moment my care began at AnMed, it has been nonstop. I could not have had anyone better by my side during this scary time. Ann was right there with me the entire time and told me everything to expect, because she had done it herself, so that I was not nervous," says Morgan.

From there, Morgan saw Melissa Haynie, breast health nurse navigator at the AnMed Cancer Center. "Hearing the words invasive breast cancer is hard to understand and even more difficult to process," Morgan says. "Melissa explained everything I needed to know and answered any question I had."

In fact, Haynie went out of her way to inform Morgan of her pathology results before Thanksgiving so that Morgan would not have to worry about the unknown at the holidays. "She calmly and confidently told me my diagnosis and immediately helped walk me through my next steps which allowed me to enjoy Thanksgiving with my family knowing that I had the AnMed team alongside me," says Morgan.

"From our mammography department to our treatment teams, our goal at the AnMed Cancer Center is to provide patients with high quality, timely care and treat each individual with kindness and compassion," says Haynie. "Obtaining NAPBC accreditation is an honor we are very proud of and it shows our community our commitment to excellence in breast cancer care."

Morgan was grateful that such a prestigious and accredited breast center was in her own backyard. "I was so worried that I would have to drive to Greenville or Atlanta for my care and be away from my family," she said. "We are not Anderson natives, so when I found out that I could have all my treatment in Anderson it was amazing news for which we were so grateful."

"As one of only three NAPBC accredited breast centers in the Upstate, we are thrilled to have earned such a prestigious designation. Our team has worked diligently over the past few years in preparation for this accreditation. We are extremely proud to have this breast center accreditation highlighting our commitment to providing exceptional patient care and quality excellence for our deserving community," said Samantha Carter, assistant vice president of oncology services.

Turn heads with your holiday hair



Christmas is almost here and it's time to get all gussied up and ready for the holiday parties, social gatherings and events. When it comes to hairstyles, there are endless and easy tutorials on how to do really cute updos, curls or adding a beautiful accessory to your hair. If you are going to a black-tie



Kristine March

event, try adding a pearl headband. It gives you an instant polished, effortless approach and it would look good on anyone. You could add a red lip and a simple little black dress and you are ready to go. A company called Soho Style makes a gorgeous version and at only \$15, and you will be the belle of the ball. The Beach Waver hot hair tool is really fabulous. It basically curls your hair for you and is a rotating curling iron. It



makes the perfect curl and gives you bouncy lasting beautiful hair. A really great style that you can do that is fairly simple would be a curly ponytail with a big red bow. Add some texture spray and even some hair extensions to give you that sixties mod look.

You can also do a half updo style a la Bridgett Bardot. If you have bangs, I think that trend is the perfect look for a party. Did you know that they even make

fake bangs now? I would actually try them because I do not do well with real cut bangs. They look really natural and you have no idea that they're faux. A lot of celebrities on the red carpet do it. It's a secret to the stars. And hey, you can take them out at the end of the night and never have to really worry about styling them in real life. If you don't like a bow, you can always add a ribbon to finish off the look.

Braids and twists are always pretty. All you need are a lot of bobby pins and some pretty bejeweled hair accessories. Add Moroccan Oil voluminous hair-spray and it will hold through the evening. Speaking of hairspray, they make a really cool glitter hair-spray that adds beautiful subtle bits of reflection to the hair and makes it shiny. Eva NYC makes a silver glitter one and it would look stunning for an evening soiree.

Lastly, if you're daring add a holiday hair comb. Etsy makes really gorgeous ones with faux berries and holly that you can just clip into your hair and it will give you that on-the-spot Christmas Queen look. I think it would be really fun. They have fake frosted, cranberries and beautiful jewels and beads added to the comb. There are fantastic ideas on Pinterest for all of these looks. See what style best suits you and remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters. Happy holidays to all!

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THE GARDEN SHOP

Joys of winter



**SUSAN
TEMPLE**
master
gardener

After the recent monsoon passed, it was time to check on the newly planted bulbs of fall daffodils (*Sternbergia*) and snowdrops (*Galanthus*). Mama and I had ordered from two different catalogs to see if there was enough of a difference to determine future orders. Yes there is, not huge, but enough. McClure and Zimmerman won. The bulbs were slightly better, they shipped sooner, and we were very pleasantly surprised with 6 free allium bulbs as a thank you. McClure and Zimmerman was a bit more expensive but what we got was worth the difference. All the bulbs were firm and had not started sprouting like with the other order. I may have to wait another year for them to bloom though. Other clumps of snowdrops are in full bloom now. It seems early, even for them. The new patches were planted right beside the sidewalk to enjoy them close up. The older patches of

snowdrops are in the middle of the garden and it can be easy to miss them unless walking through the garden. They're short little guys. That adds to part of the pleasant surprise of winter though.

A shrub that brings pleasure this time of year is possumhaw holly (*Ilex decidua*). Blue jays seem to all but fight over it. Other birds enjoy it too but blue jays look so pretty perched on branches covered with possumhaw's red berries. This native is good for lots of songbirds. When in bloom, bees and butterflies enjoy the flowers. The name comes from possums, which enjoy the berries too supposedly. Possumhaw is deciduous, which makes the berries stand out too. Growing to possibly 15 feet tall and wide, it needs a little space. Limbing it up can give it the look of a small tree. When mine was young, the wind caused it to grow a little lopsided. I've tried over the years to straighten it up but finally said heck with it. It is limbed up enough to cut grass under it. Bark is pretty shades of gray and brown. Deer pass it by.

Possumhaw will grow in damp, shady places but is very drought tolerant as well and does fine in full sun. A male pollinator is needed to produce good crops of berries. Mine



Possumhaw holly in winter

may be pollinated by Southern Gentlemen that was planted to pollinate winterberry hol-

lies (*Ilex verticillata*). Otherwise, it has plenty of berries every year on its own. According to NC State Extension's website, some flowers are perfect, meaning no pollinator is needed. A bit of botany – perfect flowers have stamens and pistils. Male part is stamen and female is pistil. To further complicate, dioecious plants need a male pollinator. No to be confused with deciduous. Whew! However, if there are hollies in your yard, or neighbor's yard, there will probably be pollination going on naturally. No need to bother planting a male to ensure berries on possumhaw.

I have no idea of the variety of this possumhaw. A Warren's Red is planted along the edge of the woods with winterberry hollies. It has grown much faster, and better, than the other possumhaw. Warren's Red is bigger too, growing to about 20 feet tall. It's rather slender though at this point. Warren's Red is supposed to have very heavy fruit set too. I would tend to agree with this so far. It's been in the ground about 10 years and has grown great. I've been slowly limbing Warren's Red up too to be able to walk under it. So far, it is making a very nice show in the shady area and anchors the end of the winterberry hedge quite nicely. Deer leave it alone too.

DON'T WALK, RUN INTO THE NEW YEAR!



**MARY-
CATHERINE
McCLAIN
RINER**

Running, jogging, and walking improve physical, emotional, and mental health. Consider it as an opportunity to experience emotions in motion. Running also presents an opportunity to challenge, stretch, and grow the individual mindset while making a commitment to achieve a personal goal.

Riner Counseling, LLC will be hosting the first annual Emotion in Motion Mental Health run on May 6, 2023. This event will be held at Conestee Park 840 Mauldin Road, Greenville, SC 29605. This course consists of approximately 400 acres of beautiful natural habitat across the Reedy River—6 miles south of downtown Greenville, SC.

This annual run will serve to unite our community and provide an opportunity to acknowledge the ways in which mental health

have impacted our lives and the lives of those we care about and love. It provides a SAFE opportunity to spread awareness and break the stigma of seeking mental health treatment while simultaneously choosing kindness, respect, acceptance, health, and love.

We hope to begin raising money for different organizations across our community while also raising awareness and overall education about the emotional wellness of our community. This year, we will be donating all proceeds to the Meyer Center, KIND of the Upstate, and FAVOR Upstate.

Start training now! Begin your commitment to yourself. Hope to see everyone there! The race sign up link is: <https://runsignup.com/Race/SC/Greenville/MentalHealth5kRunWalk>

Also, if you have an interest in helping to sponsor the event, please reach out and we can discuss the various options and needs!

Mary-Catherine McClain Riner, Ph.D., Ed.S, M.S., is a Licensed Psychologist with Riner Counseling, LLC. Visit www.rinercounseling.com or call 864-608-0446.



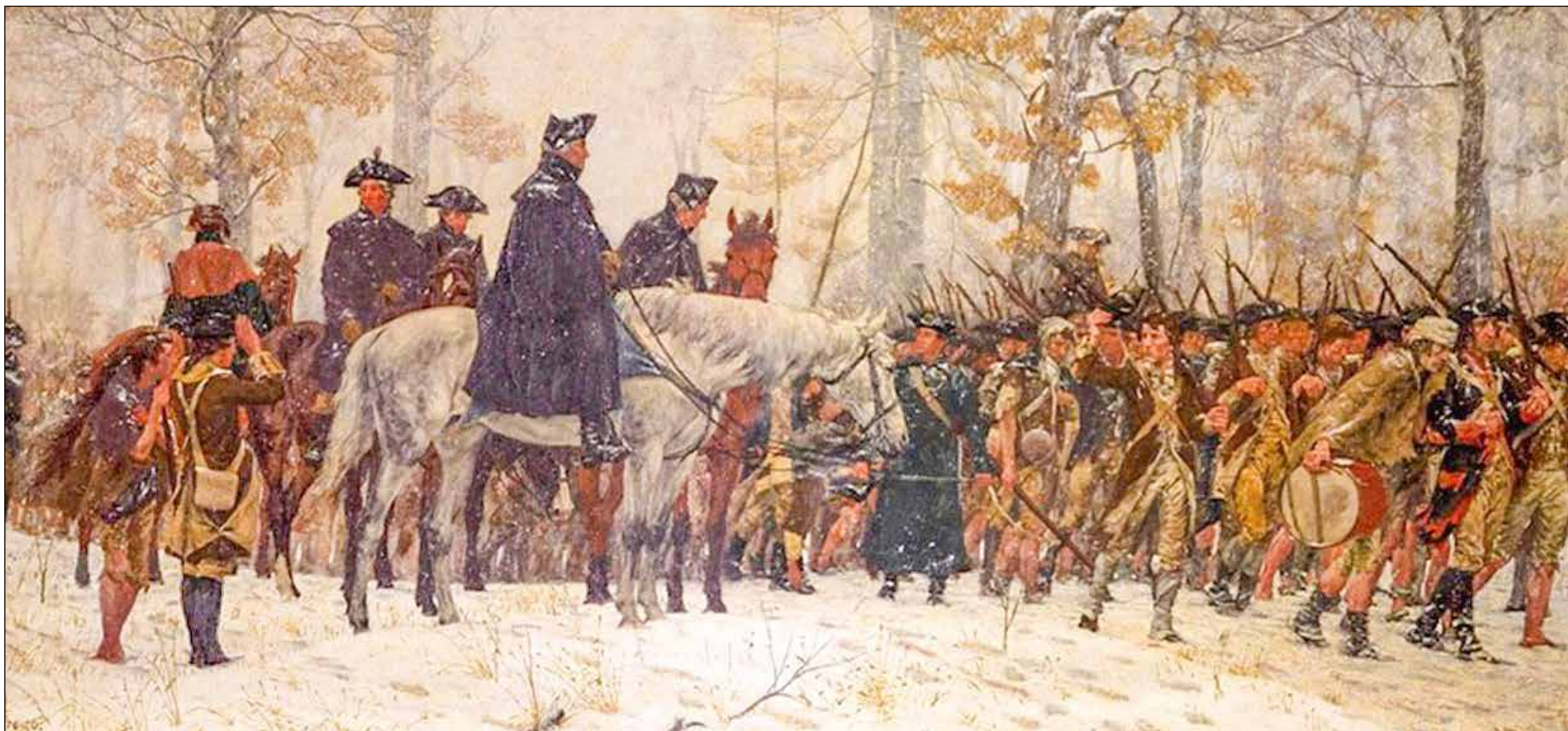
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March to Valley Forge, Wm. Trego

CHRISTMAS AT VALLEY FORGE

BY RICH OTTER

On December 19, 1777, just in time for Christmas, George Washington brought 12,000 soldiers and 400 women and children to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, only 18 miles from Philadelphia, later known as the City of Brotherly Love, but then controlled by very unfriendly British soldiers.

The property was chosen based on its high terrain and it was near the Schuylkill River for transportation of supplies. The elevation allowed them to protect the surrounding countryside.

It was lovely land but lacked accommodations that would have to be constructed by the weary soldiers. They built up to 2,000 log cabins fourteen to sixteen feet long in parallel lines. A bridge was built across the Schuylkill River as well as a couple of miles of fortifications to protect them from the red coats and their Indian allies. Some of the soldiers specifically were assigned to guarding against Indians but some Indians served with the Continentals, primarily as scouts.

A severe issue was faced in not having provisions or supplies, and the weather was nasty. A white Christmas was not exactly a joyous prospect. It did not promise to be a particularly merry one.



Valley Forge Barracks

The work of clearing the land and building the log cabins and facilities helped the soldiers keep warm and a Prussian officer, Baron von Steuben, put them through training exercises which were necessary as they were not a trained army but they had seen action. Although they were just an army of farmers and merchants they had already been relatively successful persevering with determination and fueled by their hate of the British.

In addition to their other

activities, remaining so close to the opposing forces required the Continental army to be acutely aware of security including guarding against spies. That proximity, however, was not particularly appealing or safe for the British either.

It is reported that during their roughly six month stay at Valley Forge well over 1,000 men died from disease, mostly from influenza, typhus, typhoid and dysentery. Supplies were difficult to obtain and there arose problems of contam-

inated meat as well as not having enough water for consumption or cleanliness. There was no systematic trash and refuse collection.

As time went on, instead of diminishing, the number of men increased from the 12,000 in December to almost 20,000 in late spring — undoubtedly they joined after planting crops.

The women helped with cooking, nursing, sewing and similar domestic services. Some were undoubtedly used as spies. They

could get in and out of Philadelphia with less question.

Opinions differ as to the general conditions and morale of the men. Some descriptions speak to starvation and the miseries of the cold. Others paint a picture of understandable weariness at the time of arrival after the battles that had been fought but of high morale, the biggest problem being from lack of needed food and other supplies as well as disease. It was reported, however, that except during the month of February the men received an average of a half-pound of meat per day.

One of the greatest shortages seemed to have been that of shoes and clothing. The procurement of supplies was difficult but actively pursued, including, where possible, helping themselves to those intended for the Brits.

The rigorous training undoubtedly increased optimism as did the influx of more men. Then the British vacated Philadelphia and headed to defend New York. In June George Washington's refreshed army followed in hot pursuit.

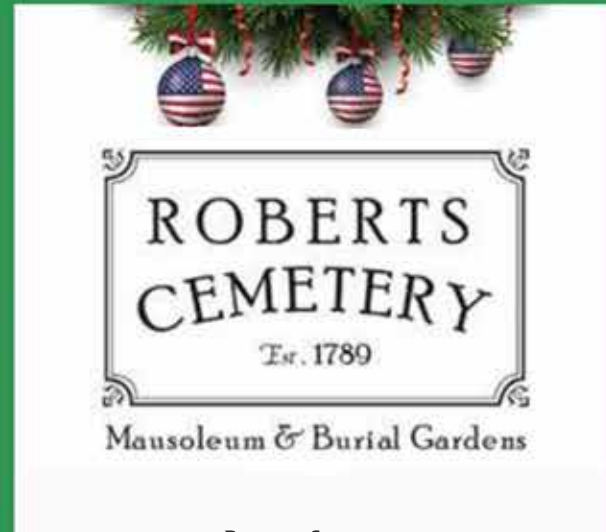
It was the third winter of the war and the war lasted a total of eight and a half years, but they had emerged from Valley Forge confident and as a far better trained and coordinated army.



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NIBBLE & SIP

Bubbling your way to a happy New Year

Can you really ring in the New Year without bubbles? Sparkling beverages are like liquid exclamation points, honoring the past while joyfully, hopefully welcoming the future. There are so many bubbly beverages to choose from, though, so I wanted



Kim von Keller

to offer a few suggestions. I'll be sure to raise a glass to all of you on New Year's Eve with this toast: May the best of your past be the worst of your future! Happy New Year!

Brachetto d'Acqui is a style of red sparkling wine from the Piedmont region of Italy. With its flavors of crushed berries, it is the perfect companion to chocolate desserts, and its low alcohol content means that you can still enjoy a

glass after a long night of celebrating. My favorite is Rosa Regale by Banfi. You'll find it in most wine stores and some supermarkets for around \$20.

If you're like me, all you really want at the end of a New Year's Eve celebration is a sip or two, so it seems a shame to open an entire bottle that will only be flat the next day. Sofia Blanc de Blancs, made by Francis Ford Coppola Winery to honor the legendary director's only daughter, is a California sparkling wine with flavors of apple, pear, and peach. It is a light, refreshing sparkling wine that is sold by the bottle, but my favorite way to buy it is in a package of four single-serve cans. And FYI, if you don't feel like dirtying another glass, each can comes with its own sippy straw. Around \$20 for a four-pack.

After my husband and I were finished with school and had big-boy/big-girl jobs, the first bottle

of sparkling wine we bought was from Schramsberg Winery in Calistoga, California. We didn't know anything about it, but friends who were a couple of years ahead of us in adulthood recommended it, and we continue to buy their sparkling wines for special occasions. The Schramsberg Blanc de Noirs ("white from black") is a white sparkling wine made from the red pinot noir grape. It has a lovely acidity, and a recent vintage should run around \$40.

But don't think that a sparkler has to be alcoholic. In addition to the sparkling apple cider or white grape juice that you traditionally find in supermarkets, be on the lookout for Italian or French sodas. These are usually available in citrus flavors such as lemon, grapefruit, and blood orange, as well as elderflower and peach. These are so delicious, you'll never miss the alcohol. Look for them at amazon.com.




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CHRISTMAS IMPOSSIBLE

Christmas morning, 1969.
I was 14 and unfortunately for me, getting a bit too old to receive toys from Santa Claus. I took notice of last year's presents that consisted of what I began to call the four S's of bad gifts ... socks, shirts, sweaters, and shoes. The unraveling of a kid's Christmas happens in just a few Yuletide mornings. I expected and always received a 10-pack of white socks from that frugal aunt that we all have, but for my 13th Christmas I



Neal Parnell

got the socks and a new addition from my grandmother, a shirt. It was the beginning of the end for me.
Christmas 14 brought all four S's wrapped neatly in front of me, and I knew the toy-joy was over. A Timex watch from my mother and a pen and mechanical pencil set from my grandfather sealed my no-toy fate.
There was only one present left, and I could think of only one thing inside of that wrapped box that could take away any Christmas fun that may be left ... underwear.
I tore the wrapping off my last present and my Christmas spirits were lifted once again. It was a brand new realistic tape recorder, just like the one I'd recently seen self-destruct on the Mission Impossible television show. I could hear the intro music from that show playing in my head, and then the famous lines, "Good morning Mr. Phelps, your mission, should you decide to accept it..."



This was not a toy, but you couldn't tell that from the beaming of my face. It had a microphone with a long cord and two extra reels of tape. I plugged in my first piece of high-fidelity, solid-state technology and pressed the "Play and Record" buttons at the same time, and said, "Good morning Mr. Phelps". I rewound the tape and pushed the "play" button.
It was the first time I'd heard my voice, and I now understood why I would not be the next Walter Cronkite.
The wrapping papers were discarded and we all got dressed for the annual gathering at grandmother's house. I'd

brought my new recorder and set about an impossible mission to secretly record the Christmas dinner. I hid my machine under a large buffet and wound the microphone cord to the top, where I placed it out of sight. I started recording and walked away.
After the Christmas meal, I remembered my recorder was still on. The reel was spinning and the tape had run out. Later, back at home, I couldn't figure out how to get the tape threaded back through the machine to rewind, so I asked my dad for help. He instructed me on how to get the tape on the reel and rewind it.

I was about to grab my recorder and leave the room when he pushed "PLAY". We heard pots clanking and dishes rattling and a football announcer in the background. Suddenly someone was near the microphone and we heard, "Those Parnell kids sure are wild heathens". Then a female voice says, "Santa Claus must be out of coal this year".

My dad's face turned as red as Rudolph's nose, and I swear steam was exiting his ears as he yelled, "Heathens, I'll show them a heathen!" I spent Christmas night in my room with the four S's thinking about my failed impossible mission. I didn't recognize the voices on the recording, but Dad must have, and I'm sure he used the audio ammo to his advantage.

I never used the extra reels of tape for spying again. What was on the rest of that Christmas dinner reel is a mystery to me, but I think it must have self-destructed.

You make it feel like Christmas

For those of us who celebrate Christmas, our celebrations are as different as our fingerprints. One of my friends prepares an opulent Feast of the Seven Fishes, while another takes her family to Waffle House after the gifts have been opened. Some people load their trees with family ornaments, while others decorate minimally with balls and garlands of complementary colors. When I was growing up, one of our traditions was that we had to wait for my dad to vacuum the carpet in our family room before we could peek in our stockings. (It was a dog hair thing.) But there is one thing that we're all looking for, whether our gatherings are small or large, elaborate or modest, allergenic or not:



Kim von Keller

That Christmas "feeling."
It's what we mean when we say things like, "It just doesn't feel like Christmas yet."
But what feelings are we looking for? We often associate the holidays with love, joy, gratitude, generosity, anticipation, and surprise, but if we have to experience them all at once to feel Christmas-y, we might as well turn off "Elf," switch over to "Yellowstone," and rip December 25th from the calendar.

I've been waiting for those feelings myself, as 2022 hasn't exactly been a red-letter year at the von Keller household. I won't bore you with the details; I'll save them for January when the chaos dies down and you'd relish a little boredom. Suffice it to say, though, that we were in need of some holiday joy, so on November 30, we flew to London. What a place to visit in December! Harrods, the iconic department store, is covered in so many lights you can probably see it from space. Across the city, there are outdoor Christmas markets where you can buy small gifts and delicious hot food and mulled wine. Carolers in Victorian costumes are a common sight. On the street corners, you'll find vendors selling chestnuts – wait for it – roasting on an open fire. Throw in Father Christmas, and you've got the perfect setting for a Hallmark holiday movie. It was a glorious, much-needed vacation.

But did it give us that Christmas feeling? No, it did not. What finally put us in the Christmas mood was right in our own neighborhood.

When we returned home, a couple from down the street called and invited us for a simple midweek dinner. Against a background of quiet Christmas carols, we talked and laughed and told funny travel stories. It was cold and dark outside, but inside glowed with the warmth of communion with dear friends.

We're lucky, I know. Some folks find themselves alone during the holidays, making it more difficult to find that Christmas feeling. But if there's one thing the von Kellers have learned this year, it is that it is okay to ask for something you need. We've also learned to be on the lookout for others who might need something too. You can make someone else feel like it's Christmas, and so can I.

As 2023 winds down, I hope you'll be able to hold onto – and share – those feelings of love, joy, gratitude, generosity, anticipation, and surprise throughout 2023. I wish you all the merriest of Christmases and a healthy, happy, and bountiful New Year.





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Friday, December 9 th	5pm – 9pm	Saturday, December 24 th	Closed
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Sunday, December 11 th	2pm – 6pm	Thursday, December 29 th	5pm – 9pm
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Out with the old, in with the new

There is something exciting about celebrating a new year. It gives us an opportunity gather with friends and family to celebrate the previous year while also anticipating a new year and the adventures to come. Now that I have three children of my own, I'm always looking for new ideas to make New Year's Eve



Katie Laughridge

fun for our family. Below you will find a few ideas I've gathered. I hope you and your family have fun ringing in the New Year together! I'm sure looking forward to it!

- ♦ Cook something together. Make dinner together, or a snack or treat later on in the evening.

- ♦ Make and decorate paper plate shakers to use at midnight.

- ♦ Play spoons (Directions can be found on gamerules.com). For extra fun, place the spoons across the room from where you're playing so you have to run to get them. Also, instead of the last person getting "out" each round, just have them earn a letter and let everyone continue to play until someone has all the letters in the word "spoons".

- ♦ Set some resolutions! Talk about what went well last year and what goals everyone wants to set for this year.

- ♦ Play "Two Resolutions and a Lie." Have each family member take a turn telling everyone else two real resolutions and one pretend one, then guess which one is the lie.

- ♦ Play balloon ball. Set up a "net" using a piece of crepe paper across the room and hit the balloon back and forth with paper plate paddles.

- ♦ Throw a pamper party! Paint nails, fix



hair, or apply temporary tattoos.

- ♦ Play charades. Act out phrases having to do with the New Year, or play the game "Guesstures." (can be found on Amazon or at your local retail stores)

- ♦ Be silly and have a family dance party!
- ♦ Make embellished sunglasses using glitter, feathers, etc. then have a fashion show or photo shoot.

- ♦ Write a family bucket list for the coming year.

- ♦ Play "rescue the kids." Place a few Sour Patch kids at the bottom of a pie plate, then cover them with whipped cream. Make one for each person, then compete to see who can rescue the kids first without using hands. (I'm definitely trying this one!)

Happy New Year!! Here's to making memories!

WHO DO YOU THINK DESERVES ANDERSON FIVE'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI HONORS?

At graduation ceremonies held in June 2021, Anderson School District Five began what will be a yearly tradition of honoring former graduates. Every year, a graduate from each high school will be selected from nominations; someone who makes us all proud with their contributions to our community and their profession while always maintaining high standards in personal integrity and character.

Anderson School District Five has graduated many deserving young men and women who have gone on to make their school, district, and hometown proud, and looks forward to many more years of bestowing this honor on its alumni.

Mayor Terence Roberts was selected as Westside High School's Distinguished Alumni recipient for 2021. Mr. Roberts was in the Westside class of '78.

Mr. Alphonso "Jody" Norris III was selected as Westside High School's Distinguished Alumni recipient for 2022. Mr. Norris was in the class of 1981.

Mr. Chadwick Boseman was selected as T. L. Hanna's Distinguished Alumni recipient for 2021. Mr. Boseman was in Hanna's class of '95.

Mr. Johnny Tucker was selected as T. L. Hanna's Distinguished Alumni recipient for 2022. Mr. Tucker was in Hanna's class of 1969.

If you know someone who deserves this honor, fill out a nomination form found on the district website. A winner who attended Reed Street will receive the award at Westside's graduation ceremonies. A winner who attended Boys or Girls High School will receive the award at TL Hanna graduation ceremonies.

Who do you think deserves the Anderson Five's Distinguished Alumni Award?



Nominate Now!

www.anderson5.net

Community Involvement Anderson School District 5

FROM THE SHELF

My Lady Jane by the, uh, Lady Janes...

In my mad dash to complete my reading challenge prompts, I read *My Lady Jane* by Cynthia Hand, Jodi Meadows, and Brodi Ashton, or as they collectively call themselves, The Lady Janes. *My Lady Jane* is a reread for me (more than twice too) and it never disappoints. I selected it because I had a prompt saying “a book by more than one author,” and another prompt saying “a family member’s favorite book.”

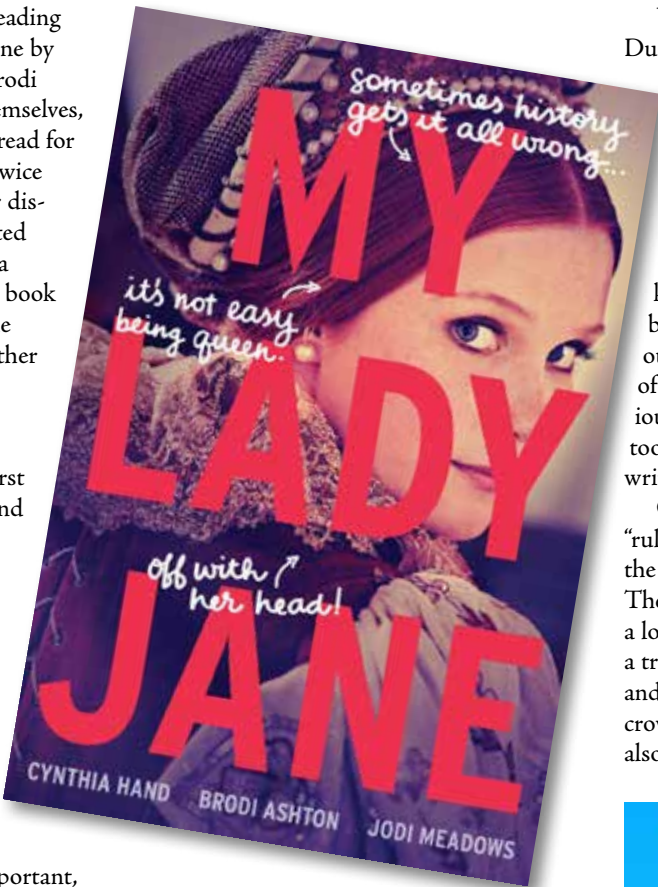


Sara Leady

Check on that first one, and a bit of a stretch on the second as I don’t know that my mom would say it’s her absolute favorite, but it is definitely up there, and she also has reread it more than once.

My Lady Jane is the kickoff to our author trio’s first series, The Lady Janes. Each installment follows a different famous “Jane” in history or literature, and gives what our authors call, “the absolutely true story” of what happened. *My Lady Jane* follows the lesser known, but important, (brief) life of Lady Jane Grey, the Queen of England for a very solid nine days, before ‘Bloody Mary,’ uh, bloodied the history books.

To put the history in context, this is right around the time of the Protestants versus the Catholics, but in our story it’s Eðians (pronounced like ethians) versus Verities, or those who can shift into animals and those who hate them for this (awesome) ability. For further context, Henry VIII is an Eðian, more specifically he shifts into a lion and bites



people’s literal heads off when they make him mad (much better than your average beheading). The Eðian status is a big part of our story, not just because it lays out the “us versus them” component of England’s real history, but our various cast of characters shift into various animals (whether they want to or not), which explains the very obvious truth of what really happened in history (like the real reason Henry VIII was so beheading happy).

We open with Jane’s betrothal to Gifford Dudley (Lord Guildford Dudley) so that someone sympathetic to Eðians remains on the throne in an attempt to keep the peace. Unbeknownst to Jane, Gifford is “cursed” as an Eðian because he spends his days as a horse, and nights as a man. The reveal of this leads to an entire diatribe of the best horse puns known to man. Have I mentioned this book is hilarious? No? This book is hilarious. I promise you will laugh out loud. I’ve often described the writing as three hilarious good friends got together, drank way too much wine, and had way too much fun writing a book.

Our basic timeline is the lead up to Jane’s “rule,” Mary taking over, and then ending with the rule of ‘Bessie,’ aka Queen Elizabeth I. There’s hilarity within the unfolding drama, a lot less deaths than the history books, and a trip to France to see Mary Queen of Scots and to gather an army for Jane to retake the crown. I’d like to give more details, BUT I also don’t necessarily trust myself to not spoil

too much. I will say there’s lots of puns, a sassy Scottish fox, a royal skunk, an appearance of Shakespeare himself (the real one—none of this debated identity nonsense), and some romance.

My Lady Jane starts the series on famous Janes, but also has a sort of sequel with the start of the Maries series that focuses on famous Marys. *My Contrary Mary* revisits the world of the Eðians and Mary Queen of Scots. Seriously so good. The other Janes that are in the series are Jane Eyre (*My Plain Jane* which is fortunately way less romantically creepy in this version) and Calamity Jane (*My Calamity Jane*, a western with werewolves). The Maries thus far have been Mary Queen of Scots (*My Contrary Mary*) and *My Imaginary Mary* (Mary Shelley and Frankenstein). Finishing out the Maries will be *My Salty Mary*, but we don’t yet have confirmation on which famous Mary it follows (much to my salty feelings). If you like history, hilarity, and just a wonderful fun read, I would definitely recommend any and all of these, but maybe especially *My Lady Jane*.



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Hanna boys keep momentum going

BY BRU NIMMONS

ANDERSON — Off to a great start to the 2022-2023 basketball season, the T.L. Hanna Yellow Jackets boys' basketball team kept their momentum going over the last two weeks as they went 3-1 against solid competition.

Opening up their recent slate of games, the Yellow Jackets travelled to Powdersville to take on the Patriots. The Patriots, ranked among the best 3A programs in the state, proved to be no match as Hanna took them down in 74-57 win.

The Yellow Jackets fell behind early in the contest, before scoring more than 15 straight points. Up big in the second quarter, the Jackets lead continued to grow as senior forward Adarius Armstrong hit three three-pointers to give the Jackets a huge advantage that they carried the rest of the way. Armstrong led Hanna with 22 points

and six rebounds, while junior forwards Jaquarius Patterson and Jake Lamie were followed behind with 16 and 13 points respectively.

Following the win, the Jackets went on the road once again to face off with the Wren Hurricanes. Like Powdersville, the Hurricanes were ranked among the best 10 3A teams in the state, but it didn't matter as the Jackets took home a 72-58 win.

The Yellow Jackets came out of the locker room hot hitting five three-pointers in the opening quarter to build a lead over Wren and never looked back

as they pulled out the big win. Patterson had a huge game in the win putting up 24 points and eight boards, while senior guard Anthony Edwards was solid as well scoring 13 points.



Facing their biggest challenge of the stretch, the Yellow Jackets hosted Dorman in their next game on Dec. 15. The Cavaliers, ranked second in 5A, had already given Hanna one loss on the year and managed

to down them once again in a 72-45 win. Dorman dominated from the start and outscored Hanna in three of four quarters of play with the Yellow Jackets shooting

just 31 percent from the floor.

Patterson once again put on a solid performance for Hanna scoring 17 points and securing eight rebounds, while Javeyn Martin scored 13 points.

In their final game of the period, the Jackets hosted Patriots hoping to get back on track after the loss. Hanna did just that, as they cruised to a 68-61 win over the Patriots.

A close battle in the first half, the Yellow Jackets turned on the jets in the third quarter to take a commanding lead before a solid fourth from the Patriots made things close again. Armstrong had another strong day for the Jackets with 14 points and seven rebounds, while seniors Jamir Hogan and Andrew Hollis each scored nine.

The Yellow Jackets will hope to keep their winning ways going as they play in the Brookland Cayce Round Ball Classic over Christmas break.

WESTSIDE RAMS

Ram girls bounce back after tough losses

BY BRU NIMMONS

ANDERSON — Coming off back to back 4A state championships and an undefeated season to boot, the Westside Rams girls' basketball squad was always going to have trouble living up to the performance of those title teams. However, despite some early season losses, the Rams still seem to be a strong enough threat again as they sit at 8-3 on the season including a 3-2 stretch over the last two weeks.

Westside began their most recent stretch of games on the road with a 51-30 win against the Powdersville Patriots. In control for most of the way, the Rams still saw a battle from the Patriots before the vaunted Rams defense held them to 0 points in the final quarter.

Junior guard Ahrianna Scott led the way for the Rams scoring 22 points and hitting four three-pointers, while freshman wing Gervonna Williams filled up the stat sheet with eight

points, eight boards, six steals and three blocks.

Coming off the win, the Rams returned home to take on the Daniel Lions at home. Trailing 21-18 at the half, the Rams held Daniel to 8 points in the second half quarter as they battled back to win, 42-29.

Scott proved to be a high-quality scorer again hitting four more three-pointers and finishing the night with 19 points. The Rams also got another strong freshman performance from forward Makyhia Paul as she put up six points, nine rebounds, three steals and two blocks.



The following week, the Rams went back on the road to Oconee County to take on the Seneca Bobcats. After a

tight first quarter, Westside used 14-5 run in the second to pull ahead and not look back in 49-39 win.

For the third straight game, Scott hit four three-pointers and led the team with 16 points. Paul and junior guard Kiarra

Gregory were close behind with 11 and 12 points respectively.

In their next contest, the Rams returned home to face another Oconee County opponent, the West-Oak Warriors. In a stunning upset, the

Warriors completely controlled the contest, holding the Rams to single-digit scoring in three of the four quarter in a 45-30 win.

Shooting just 25 percent from the field, Paul was the only Ram player to even hit double digits scoring as she put up 10 points.

Hoping to get back on track, The Rams hosted the Greer Yellow Jackets. Westside jumped out to a 12-point lead at the half, but a 16-6 run in the third for Greer erased the deficit and allowed the Yellow Jackets to come back and win, 50-45.

Scott once again proved to be the main scoring threat for the Rams hitting five three-pointers and scoring 17 points, while Gregory had a solid outing with eight points, five rebounds and five assists.

Having dropped two straight, the Rams will need to get back on track in the coming weeks as they head into Christmas break.