

# Letters To The Editor

## How Christmas Has Changed!

To The Editor:  
Now that Christmas is coming, I sit here in my recliner chair in my retirement home, thinking how different my children's, grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's Christmas is compared to my own early, happy Christmases years ago. I reflect back on what Christmas was like then. Christmas Eve was our big meal, roast duck and everything on the table was home-grown and home-canned. We got our gifts Christmas Eve, an orange and one popcorn ball and we looked forward to that treat. On Christmas Day everyone rested, and ate leftovers from the Christmas Eve meal. We all knew it was "Jesus' birthday." That was the reason for the season. We kids sang "Happy Birthday Jesus" throughout the day.

Mother baked cookies for the month before Christmas. During baking times, the children only got to eat the busted and burnt cookies. On Christmas, a large, several gallon tin lard can was brought out of the closet to be opened up. Throughout the day we were allowed to eat all the cookies we wanted. This was a treat we all looked forward to, but mother would not bake another cookie until these cookies were gone. This sometimes was not until February; they got dry. We had to dunk them into milk or the adults' coffee.

Christmas night was a night that we looked forward to; a church service was held in our Danian Lutheran Church in Western Iowa. We travelled in a wagon in which the wheels were removed and replaced with sleigh runners under the wagon bed. Kerosene lanterns were hung on each side of the wagon to light the way. My father would stop the team of horses on the road in front of the church. Eldest son would take one lantern and carry it ahead of the family so they could see the way to the church. All men would take their team of horses to the church barn, which was a long shed with horse stalls, and tie their team in a stall. They would cover them with a blanket and place hay in the manger to calm them down during the service. All lanterns were blown out before entering the church.

There was no electricity in the church back then, but lanterns hung from the ceilings. They had glass bowls to change the color of the kerosene, strips of red or green crepe paper were dropped in the bowl. We all thought the red and green bowls were beautiful. In our wagons we had straw on the bottom with a quilt laid over. When straw worked out, a bit always did get on our clothes. As the families entered the church and walked down the

aisle, straw would sprinkle on the floor. The pastors would sweep straw out of the church the next morning.

Boys, 12 years and older, sat with men on the right side, women and small children sat on the left. A Christmas tree was always tied to the ceiling, because it was very tall and stood in a tub of water. Every family made decorations for the tree, including children, which everyone enjoyed immensely. We strung popcorn and small Red Haul popcorn strings and they were wrapped around the tree. Candles were set in holders and were snapped onto the branches of the pine tree. One man was responsible to hold a long, thin pole with a lit candle on the end in which he lit all candles on the tree. Oh, how beautiful it was to see! My father always had three pails of water sitting around the tree, he held a long, thin pole with a towel wrapped around the end. When a candle started to tilt during the service, father would dip the end of the pole into the water, squeeze the towel slightly and lift up the pole to extinguish that particular candle.

After the church service, the men would light up their lanterns to prepare to get their hitches to their wagon sleighs. The small children would call out the names of family teams coming. We would try to be ready so we would not hold up the teams waiting. Lanterns were hung on each side of the wagons, a beautiful sight in the darkness of the night, you could see them shining. Teams reached a mile long on the road. One family would start singing a hymn and all others would join in - oh, it was beautiful!

We didn't run horses like you see on Christmas cards, we wanted the singing and Christmas to last. When we got home the eldest son would take the lantern to light the way to the house so we could follow. He then would light the lamps. My father would take the lantern to light the barn while he unharnessed the team of horses. He would remove the bride to replace it with a halter. Carefully, he would wipe all the sweat off them with a towel, brush them thoroughly, and cover them with a blanket. If not he would return to the house to read until he was able to remove the blanket. I remember in the early 1920s, times got better, my brother got a mouth harp for Christmas and I got a rag doll made from my father's work sock, with a painted face on it. What a big treat! But through it all we knew it was Jesus' birthday. That was the whole reason for the season.

Beulah Cole, age 91  
Three Springs



Glenn Sipes bagged this nice 175-pound 9-point with a Winchester Model 70 caliber .270 while hunting with his family the first Tuesday of deer season.

## One More Nice Buck For 87-Year-Old Dad

To The Editor:  
Now almost 87 years old and not able to get around like he use to, Dad still loves to hunt. After not getting a buck for several years, Dad made the comment on the first day of deer season that he sure would like to get one more nice buck.

After lunch the next day, on Tuesday, my son, Shawn, and I decided to go and check on Dad. When we got close to where he was, we heard him yell. We saw him with his buck. He said, "It's a dream come true!"

Dad has been hunting a long time, more than 75 years, and has taken several nice bucks. He has a lot of good hunting memories with some of his well-remembered friends, like Jim "Pat" Mellott and brother Raymond Sipes. He still tells us how they used to hunt in the old days when all they had were shotguns and slugs. He remembers when some of his fellow hunters in the gang got their first deer rifles. He says they would shoot a two-gallon oil can for practice and if they hit it that was good enough to go hunting.

He tells other stories about hunting in the Meadow Grounds area long before the lake was put in. They would park along Licking Creek or even walk from home up over Scrub Ridge Mountain and into the Meadow Grounds. If they got a deer, they had to drag it the whole way home. Hunting sure has changed in the last 50 years. Most hunters now only walk a short distance from where they park their vehicle.

Just proves you can still get a nice buck at any age, you just have to know how.

Many thanks to Dad for the times we have shared together and all he has taught my brother, Donnie, and me over the years.

Mark Sipes  
McConnellsburg



## GREETINGS OF THE SEASON

We Wish You  
A Merry  
Christmas  
And  
A Happy,  
Healthy and  
Prosperous  
New Year!

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## Red Cross

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taking time to help others by coming to donate blood on Christmas Eve, we're offering all presenting donors a \$5 gift card."

As of Monday morning, the 100-county region has less than a one-day supply of Type O negative blood, and a two-day or less supply of A negative and B negative blood.

The following Greater Alleghenies Region blood drives will feature the \$5 gift card promotion:

Wednesday, December 24, 2008

Bedford, Pa. - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Heartland Hall, 5564 Business 220.

Johnstown, Pa. - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., John P. Murtha Donor Pavilion, 250 Jari Dr.

Hagerstown, Md. - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Washington County Chapter, American Red Cross, 1131 Conrad Court.

Huntingdon, Pa. - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Huntingdon Fire Co. #1,

1305 Westington Street.

Martinsburg, W.Va. - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church, 200 West King Street.

Maugansville, Md. - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Maugansville Ruritans, 18007 Maugans Avenue.

Mount Union, Pa. - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 15 West Shirley Street.

State College, Pa. - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Red Cross Donor Center, 135 South Pugh Street.

Winchester, Va. - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., War Memorial Building, 1001 East Cork Street.

Each of the region's 18 donor centers also feature special raffles or giveaways during December. For additional information, visit the "Current Campaign" section of <http://www.redcrosslife.org/>.

Individuals age 17 or older, who weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. In Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, 16-year-olds may donate blood with parental consent. Those with specific eligibility questions should contact the Nursing Collections

office at 800-542-5663. Most donors are eligible to give blood every 56 days. There are different eligibility criteria for double red cell donation.

Donation appointments may be scheduled at many Red Cross blood drives.

To schedule a blood donation appointment where available, call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543).

Platelet donations must be scheduled in advance by calling (800)-542-5663, ext. 2637.

The Greater Alleghenies Region directly serves hospitals, patients and donors in a 100-county area in Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, with more than five-dozen blood products and related services, and also supports blood needs experienced by patients elsewhere in hospitals served through Red Cross Blood Services.

Route 45.  
Williamsport, Md. - 1 to 7 p.m., American Legion, 400 American Legion Avenue.

Tuesday, December 30, 2008  
Altoona, PA. - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., United Veterans' Association Club, 1809 Union Avenue.

Johnstown, Pa. - Noon to 5 p.m., Our Mother of Sorrows Church, School, 430 Tioga Street.

Lewistown, Pa. - Noon to 6 p.m., Lewistown Moose Family Center #143, 80 Brady Lane.

Martinsburg, Pa. - 12:30 to 6 p.m., Homewood Retreat, 430 South Market Street.

The vo-tech van will be utilized for both FFA conferences at a rate of \$50 per trip, and all expenses related to the college fair will be paid by the Southern Alleghenies Tech Prep Consortium Grant.

Executive Director Cheatle is scheduled to attend the National Conference on Education on February 17-22 in San Francisco, Calif. All costs will be paid by Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11, which received a recommendation on Cheatle's attendance by vo-tech Superintendent of Record Dr. Merrill Arnold.

## Paula Deen

From Page One

Westside Avenue.  
Nanty Glo, Pa. - Noon to 6 p.m., St. Mary's Church, 1020 Caroline Street.  
Shepherdstown, W.Va. - 2 to 7 p.m., Shepherdstown Firehall,

## Vo-Tech

From Page One

and nurse-aide training assistant clinical instructor.

Furthermore, Mellott will be attending the Nurse-Aide Training-Teaching The Educator scheduled for Harrisburg Area Community College between March 16-19. Costs include mileage, a \$200 registration fee and lodging as previously budgeted.

The following field trips were also approved as presented:

- Skills USA students to Dis-

trict 7 competition on January 19 at the Altoona Career and Technical Center. Snow date is February 6. Transportation cost for the event has been estimated at \$90.

- McConnellsburg High School FFA to the ACES Conference in Harrisburg on February 21-22

- McConnellsburg High School FFA to Grantsville, Pa., for the State Leaders Conference on March 14-17

- Vo-tech students to a consortium-wide career and college fair at Bedford's Heartland Hall on February 23-26.

## Weather

From Page One

into the night sky in hopes of capturing a glimpse of Santa's sleigh and eight tiny reindeer amongst a light snowfall will likely be disappointed this year as having a white Christmas is definitely doubtful. Christmas Day will see temperatures hitting approximately 42 degrees with mostly cloudy skies. Rain will fall throughout the evening hours, causing a decrease in temperature to 33 degrees.

Temperatures are typical for Fulton County, according to Accuweather reports, whose local historical records show a normal high of 40°F in December, normal low of 25 degrees and an average of 32 degrees.

The National Weather Service confirms reports there is little chance of the white stuff Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or the remainder of the work week. Since rain and strong winds seem to be plaguing the area, causing frequent school delays

and icy patches of roadway, officials working from the McConnellsburg maintenance shed of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation remain busy monitoring both the local weather conditions and 736 snow lane miles.

Fulton County, which falls under PennDOT District 9, receives a winter service allotment of \$447,000 from the state as well as a salt capacity of 4,500 tons and 11,000 tons of anti-skid. The county's complement of 21 trucks, six loaders and one anti-icing unit also has 22,500 gallons of anti-ice at its disposal.

Historically, more salt was used in county in 2007-08 than in the last 10 years. A total of 4,963 tons of salt were used last winter. The second highest amount of salt usage occurred in 1998-99 with 4,821 tons. In comparison, PennDOT officials elaborated anti-skid was a hot commodity in 1998-99 and 2002-03 with 11,972 and 10,611 respective tons spread locally.

In conjunction with their services guide, PennDOT also

reminds residents to turn on their headlights during bouts of inclement weather and utilize flashers when coming upon an accident or encountering others travelling at slow speeds.

"Be patient. Adjust your speed according to the road conditions. Remember, stopping distance is much greater on ice," stated PennDOT. "Follow snow removal equipment from a safe distance. During anti-icing operations, the spray can smear windshields - stay back at least 100 feet. Do not pass snowplows and remain at least six car lengths behind them."

Additional tips include avoid sudden, hard braking; do not abandon your vehicle; give yourself extra time for travel; and most importantly, wear your seat belt.

For the most up-to-date weather conditions please visit PennDOT on the Internet at [www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us) and click on Traveler Information. Interstate roadway conditions can be obtained on state highways by calling PennDOT at 1-888-783-6783.

## Open Records

From Page One

adopted a policy for managing its records and briefed employees on how to handle records requests.

No one is predicting a flawless implementation.

"There's going to be confusion at the beginning ... from citizens, from public officials and from members of the media," said Terry Mutchler, the lawyer and former reporter Gov. Ed Rendell appointed to a six-year term as director of the open-records office.

Many observers predict a spike in records requests - and appeals to Mutchler's office - in early 2009 as Pennsylvanians test their access under the new law. That will likely be followed by a

gradual return to a more normal pace.

"After five years, we'll forget it was ever such a big deal," said Emily Leader, a lawyer for the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, which speaks for the state's 501 school districts.

"I think people will find less resistance" from officials, said Craig Staudenmaier, a Harrisburg lawyer who represented The Associated Press, The Patriot-News and WTAE in a successful 19-month legal battle with the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency to gain access to records of junkets for its board members.

Mutchler, who is in the process of hiring six staff lawyers to help her handle an expected deluge of appeals early next year, has been working with associations representing county commissioners, township supervisors and school boards. Since June, she has participated in more than 70 workshops around the state to help them prepare.


At some of those sessions, questions from the audience revealed concerns about certain issues - particularly the status of e-mails.

The new law defines a record as "information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, that documents a transaction or activity of an agency." That includes not only e-mails, but audio recordings, photos and even films.

"Here's the e-mail training," Mutchler told a Pennsylvania School Boards Association workshop in October. "If you don't want to read it on Page One, don't put it in e-mail. If you're sending an e-mail, envision it on letterhead."

**The News will print early next week due to the New Year holiday.**

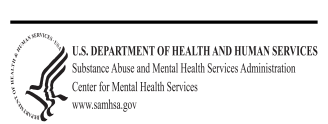
**Advertisers, correspondents and readers are reminded to submit items for publication in the January 1, 2009 issue of the paper by noon on Monday, December 29.**



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