



# THE MT LAUREL CONNECTION

A newsletter for and about the Town of Mt Laurel

DECEMBER 2013/JANUARY 2014

HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
MT LAUREL



## CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING IN BRYSON SQUARE

Residents are invited to the annual Mt Laurel Christmas Tree Lighting on Sunday, December 1 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Bryson Square. Santa will be on the sleigh for photo ops with children and families.

Town merchants and the Mt Laurel Library will host open houses, and a few of the farmers will be there with winter veggies. Come for a fun evening with carolers and hot chocolate, too!



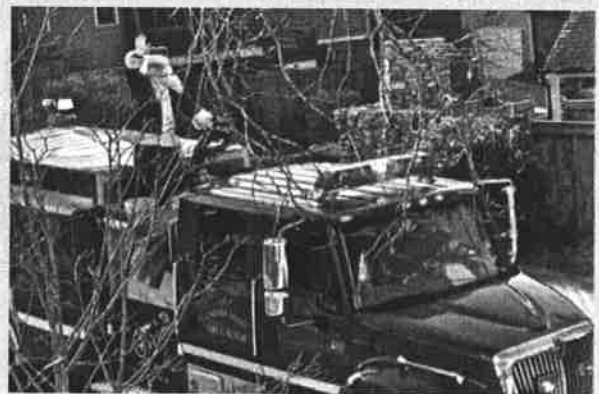
## SANTA AND ME AT THE TEA PARTY CASTLE

The Tea Party Castle will host "Santa and Me Teas" throughout December for girls age four years and older. The event includes light sandwiches and a visit with Santa. The girls will also have their hair done and wear a gown from the castle's party collection. A costumed singing princess will be the hostess, and she and her maidens will perform during the party. Call 529-0081 for more information and reservations.



## SANTA DRIVE-BY

Santa's traditional drive-by in Mt Laurel is scheduled for Saturday, December 21. The time will be announced soon at [www.cahabavalleyfire.com](http://www.cahabavalleyfire.com).



## MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Wasn't autumn in Mt Laurel extra beautiful? Every street I turned onto held a picture-perfect postcard scene. The Harvest Festival was a success with over 150 vendors and thousands of visitors attending the event. I'm looking forward to the holiday season with the lighting of the tree and the wreaths going up, another magical time of the year in Mt Laurel! I would like to say thank you to all the folks who worked on decorating the tree, lampposts, and sleigh. We are so blessed and thankful for every one of our residents. You all do your part to make this community run smoothly. Please consider patronizing our town businesses when shopping for the holidays. Without all of our special shops in Mt Laurel, we'd be just another neighborhood.



We currently have six new homes under construction and we look forward to seeing our new neighbors settle into our beautiful town. I am happy to say we have taken several new reservations on lots for future construction. What a blessing to see our town grow.

There have been a number of questions lately regarding the Covenants, Codes and Restrictions of Mt Laurel, so I would like to address those here.

EBSCO started planning this Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) some 15 years ago. They hired Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company who designed Seaside and Alys Beach in Florida along with many more TNDs. They are probably the largest TND planners in the United States. At that time they went to a great effort in establishing the Covenants, Codes, and Restrictions (CCRs) and the Design Code Book. These were adopted by the founders in order to maintain the aesthetics and lasting quality of Mt Laurel, as well as to ensure long-term viability of the community. I'm sure that most of our residents have read the CCRs and know what the rules and regulations are. The design covenants are subject to change as time passes and if deemed appropriate. This does not mean we do not listen to the thoughts of many, including our professional advisors, our residents and our company personnel. It does mean the decision is ours, and we will continue to be the party making them.

Over the years, with EBSCO's approval, very few changes have been made to these CCRs. Some of these changes are the following:

- (a) We amended the Rules & Regulations to allow bird feeders and birdhouses in the front of homes.
- (b) Allowed children's toys and bicycles to be left in the yard as long as they are not on the sidewalks.
- (c) Put in an opinion in 2006 to modify the Rules & Regulations to clarify banners and flags.
- (d) Another opinion was added in 2007 to allow certain storm doors.

When we receive a complaint regarding Rules & Regulations not being followed, the following procedures are in place.

- (a) We check out the complaint to make sure we have the correct home address.
- (b) Check to see that the complaint conforms to the CCRs of what is not allowed.
- (c) Get the correct e-mail address.
- (d) E-mail the resident and wait for a response. If there is no response, we check to make sure we have the correct address and send by certified mail a warning letter that they have a certain number of days to comply. This depends on the violation.
- (e) If they still do not comply, our attorney writes them a letter to tell them they will be charged with the costs that we incur. Normally, it does not get this far but that is the procedure.

There have also been questions raised about Phase IIIB that some of the homes look different than homes in Phases I and II. They do look different. However they are designed and reviewed to meet the Design Code Book requirements. The plans are approved by Shelby County Planning Commission and are reviewed by the Architectural Review Board. The plans are then submitted to a registered architect to make sure that plans meet the requirements of the Design Code Book. We still love the trees and save as many as possible.

So far this year EBSCO

- (a) has contributed over \$48,000 to the Homeowners Association to supplement the shortfall.
- (b) donated three parcels of land for additional playground for the Mt Laurel Elementary School.
- (c) donated the land that the new library is to be built on.
- (d) will build the new library without any profit to EBSCO.
- (e) cleaned the sidewalks.
- (f) made improvements to the lake by shocking it and installing bream feeders.

*It is our continuous goal to make Mt Laurel one of the finest communities where we can live, work and play. I am wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!*

John O. Freeman, Sr.  
Vice President & General Manager  
EBSCO Development Company

## MT LAUREL LIBRARY FRIENDS ARE NOW PROPERTY OWNERS!

### EBSCO OFFICIALLY DONATES THE PROPERTY FOR THE LIBRARY TO THE "FRIENDS"

After years of fundraising, the Friends of Mt Laurel Library's dream of constructing a permanent library building is about to become a reality. A major step toward this dream came in late October when John Freeman awarded the deed to the property to the Friends board of directors and North Shelby Library. The land for the library is a generous gift to the Friends and the community from EBSCO.

When the newsletter went to press, the county building permit was still pending, but construction is expected to begin in the next few weeks with completion in early spring. Fundraising will continue to complete construction and furnish the library.

### LIBRARY BRICK SALES WILL CONTINUE AS CONSTRUCTION BEGINS


Sales of commemorative bricks for the new library's entryway will continue as construction begins. There are still some spaces available for new orders. Order forms are available at the library on Olmsted Street or at [www.mtlaurellibrary.org](http://www.mtlaurellibrary.org). Gift cards are available with purchase. The 4x8 inch brick with three lines of engraving is \$100. The 8x8 inch brick with six lines of engraving is \$250. Purchases are tax deductible. Contact [mtlaurellibraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:mtlaurellibraryfriends@gmail.com) for more information.

### FLOOR PLAN ON DISPLAY

The floor plan for the new building, which will be built between the grocery and Double Oak Community Church, is posted at the current library. Donor forms and brick order forms are available at the library and at [www.mtlaurellibrary.org](http://www.mtlaurellibrary.org). For more information or questions, email [mtlaurellibraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:mtlaurellibraryfriends@gmail.com).



*Pictured: John Freeman presents the deed to the library site to Kay Kelley of the North Shelby Library Board of Directors, and Ann Price, John Floyd and Ward Tishler of the Friends of Mt Laurel Library Board.*



Pay a lasting tribute to family or friends by buying an engraved brick to be placed at the entryway of the Mt Laurel Public Library.

Gift cards are available with purchase.

*Season's Greetings*

Give a gift that will last a lifetime.

To celebrate this holiday season,  
Buy a brick, leave a legacy, build a library.

### HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP FINISH AND FURNISH THE MT LAUREL LIBRARY

Make a tax-deductible donation in any amount. Those giving \$500 or more will be recognized as the "Circle of Friends" contributors on the wall of the community room in the new library. However, any contribution is appreciated.

Purchase a commemorative brick to honor your family or a loved one as a lasting tribute to be placed at the library's entryway or walk. Bricks are \$100 for three lines of text, and \$250 for six lines of text. (Also tax deductible.)

Select an item from the library's wish list (coming soon) that you would like to purchase for the library.

# MT LAUREL HARVEST FESTIVAL 2013

PHOTOS BY JIMMY SUMMERS



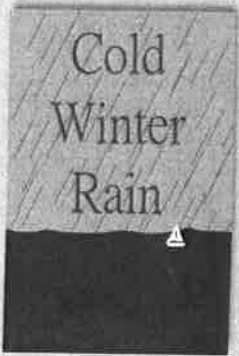
## SCARECROW CONTEST WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED

The main entrance to Mt Laurel was full of unusual creatures for several weeks in October making a festive entryway to this year's Harvest Festival. Prizes were awarded for creativity, and the first prize went to Stone's Throw Bar and Grill. The Mt Laurel Library with its construction guy and the Garden Group with its garden workers tied for second place, and Gigi's Children and the Benelli Family tied for third. Dr. Scott Russell was designated a winner for the most humorous for his furloughed scarecrow.





## MT LAUREL RESIDENT PUBLISHES HIS FIRST NOVEL *COLD WINTER RAIN*



Congratulations to Mt Laurel resident Steve Gregory on the publication of his first novel! *Cold Winter Rain* is the debut of Slate, a detective who shares Steve's legal and aviation background, as well as his love of Alabama's Gulf Coast.

Unlike Steve, Slate is driven by terrible losses, seeking resolution and order by solving dangerous puzzles in the cases he accepts. Much of the action in the novel occurs in familiar Birmingham settings. If you've read Robert Parker or John D. MacDonald, you will be on familiar ground as well. Kirkus Reviews said of *Cold Winter Rain*: "Gregory's prose is solid, and he vividly describes both the exterior Southern landscape and the insular, interior spaces Slate inhabits."

### ABOUT STEVE

Steve was born in a cotton-mill town in north Georgia. His parents moved to the family farm when he was nine. Steve earned a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Alabama in the early 1980s. After that he worked as a stockbroker for a few years, then earned a J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law and practiced law for more than 20 years. As a lawyer, Steve defended a couple of clients facing capital murder charges. He finds writing about murder much less stressful.



Steve lives on Mt Laurel Avenue with his wife, Jan, who is his editor, and son, Sam. Sam, a student at Birmingham Southern, designed the book's cover.

## SPOONWOOD LAKE UPDATE



Two Moultrie Feedcaster fish feeders have been installed at the lake to provide a supplemental food source for the blue gill. One is on the dam, and the other on the rock pile by the boat launch. These were donated by Moultrie, one of EBSCO's holdings.

A healthier bluegill population improves bluegill catch rates and increases their size. This provides an appetizing menu for the largemouth bass.

Southeastern Pond Management conducted their annual electrofishing analysis in October and recommended that grass carp be stocked to assist in weed control. This is currently being considered by EBSCO.

Additional results from the fishing analysis indicated an abundance of largemouth bass less than 15" long and recommended we take out 350 pounds a year of fish this size or smaller. That means we all need to go fishing for the sake of the community, according to Chad Eiler, co-chairman of the lake committee.



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH APP

For nearly 50 years, the National Neighborhood Watch Program has been the premier crime prevention initiative in the US, helping citizens to serve as additional "eyes and ears" for law enforcement. Now for the first time, Neighborhood Watch is introducing a mobile phone app for the iPhone.

The app has dynamic reporting capabilities including options to add photos and text to reports from volunteers, or from citizens who want to report anonymously. Linked to a proprietary database of law enforcement agencies from throughout the country, the Neighborhood Watch App enables citizens to report crimes, suspicious activities and community disorder. The app also offers mini training videos, and the expert section allows users to query national crime prevention experts on topics of interest.

When downloading the app, program in the Shelby County sheriff's office non-emergency phone number 669-4181 to report suspicious activities, persons or vehicles.

Got News?

Send news and photos to  
[mtlaurelnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mtlaurelnewsletter@gmail.com)

# AROUND TOWN AND BEYOND



## NEW ARRIVALS IN MT LAUREL

Mt Laurel has two new tiny residents. **Olive Annette Arvin** (pictured left) was born October 17 weighing five pounds and four ounces and was 18.5 inches long. Proud parents are Nich and Kristie Arvin and proud grandmother is Mary Peters Knoechel.



**Karr Tyler Williams** (pictured right) arrived November 1 weighing five pounds and eight ounces. Proud parents are Jesse (Karr) and Chad Williams. Also living in Mt Laurel are grandparents Malinda and Billy Karr and Jane Williams; great grandmother Chris Ladshaw, and great aunt Nancy Ladshaw.



**Lily Moore** recently performed in the Ballet Magnificat! Snow Queen at Samford University. Lily is in first grade and auditioned for the part through Briarwood Ballet.

**Chris Benelli** of Burnham Street and son-in-law of Mike and Becky Davis, returned to Mt Laurel in early November after touring the USA with The Waterboys. Chris is pictured second from the left.



**Cherie Stine** and **April Mraz** were recently in Hong Kong with the Tech Candy Chinese factory coordinator, Sunny Wang. All were there to attend the Hong Kong Electronics Show.



**Alastair Harris** and his Bamalax Lacrosse U11 team won the Turkey Shootout in Georgia.



**Elvis** has moved to the park! Thanks to **Don Lipscomb** for sharing him with the neighborhood children and furry friends at the Dog Park. By the way, Elvis is available for photo ops!

## PHARMSOUTH MOVED TO 34 MANNING PLACE

PharmSouth has a new home at 34 Manning Place, next door to Area 41 Pizza. In addition to the full-service pharmacy and a selection of gift items, PharmSouth owners and Mt Laurel residents, Jeremy and Angie Johnsey have added a wellness center, which is housed on the second floor of their new location. The center offers yoga classes, massage therapy, EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), hypnotherapy, and nutritional and herbal counseling. Services may be booked online at [www.pharmsouth.com](http://www.pharmsouth.com). *Pictured below are the first floor pharmacy and the upstairs Yoga studio.*



### LIBRARY HOLIDAY HOURS

The Mt Laurel Library will be closed December 24 and 25 and December 31 and January 1 for the holidays.



## SAVE THESE DATES

December 1	Tree Lighting/Open House
December 3	Garden Group
December 4	Storytime at the Library
December 5	Book Club
December 14	Crafty Saturday at the Library
December 18	Storytime at the Library
December 18	Ladies Lunch
January TBA	Book Club
January 7	Garden Group
January 8	Storytime at the Library
January 18	Crafty Saturday at the Library
January 22	Ladies Lunch
January 22	Storytime at the Library

## YOU'RE INVITED

Mondays	9:00 a.m.	Sippin' Seniors
First Tuesdays	10:00 a.m.	Garden Group
First Thursdays	7:00 p.m.	Book Club
Fourth Wednesdays		Ladies Lunch
Saturday mornings		Round Robin Tennis

*To receive email reminders of activities, join the Mt Laurel Google Group. Contact the Mt Laurel Sales Office for more information on joining.*

## LADIES LUNCH

All ladies in Mt Laurel are invited to meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 18, at Stone's Throw Bar and Grill. No reservation is necessary. Note: the date is earlier than usual due to the Christmas holiday.



The January Ladies Lunch will be back to the regular schedule of meeting the fourth Wednesday of the month at Stone's Throw.

## GARDEN GROUP

The Mt Laurel Garden Group will meet on Tuesday, December 3 at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Anne Sturm at 18 Nolen Street for a plant party. Members are asked to bring a living indoor plant to cheer up the winter and clean the inside air.

The January 7 meeting will be a presentation by the Shelby County Extension service on invasive plants.

*The Mt Laurel Connection is published every other month to provide frequent communication about the Town of Mt Laurel and its residents and to foster a strong sense of community. Residents are invited to send information, news and suggestions for articles to [mtlaurelnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mtlaurelnewsletter@gmail.com) or call Ann Price at 981-9772.*

*Editor Ann Price Contributor and Copy Editor Jill Walton Photography Kristie Arvin, Ann Price Home Delivery Vicki Balogh, Lana Johnson, Chris Ladshaw, Nancy Ladshaw*



## IN CONCERT WITH NATURE

*"In Concert with Nature" is a regular newsletter section that features topics about the landscape and design concept of Mt Laurel and also items of seasonal interest for homeowners. This month's feature is written by Mt Laurel resident Jill Walton. Jill holds a Master Gardener Certification.*

### THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

Let's face it, there are a lot of us who love just about all things British, but while you're waiting for the next season of *Downton Abbey* to start, enjoying high tea right down the street at the TownHouse Tea Shoppe, and planning to decorate for the holidays with one of those charming Victorian kissing balls filled with mistletoe, holly and ivy, there's something you should keep in mind. When it comes to lovely green weavable vines and red berry studded hollies to keep in your landscape for enjoying year round and for use at the holidays, "English" should be avoided at all costs.

English ivy and English holly trees are invasive and destructive to our woodlands. In fact, English ivy has been designated a noxious weed in some states because of its negative impact on native plant species and wildlife. It has no natural means of being kept in check and will create "ivy deserts" where all other vegetation has been choked out. Even trees can be killed off by English ivy, as it can climb into a tree's canopy, adding weight and making it more susceptible to wind damage or disease because of a lack of airflow. English ivy does not provide a significant source of food for native wildlife, but it does offer a preferred habitat for rats.



English hollies, like other invasive trees, are difficult to rid yourself of without using chemicals. They can reproduce vegetatively with low hanging tree branches taking root and spreading. While in some areas, the English holly might not act as aggressively as in others, it's not as hardy a choice as American holly and is likely to be affected by a whole host of pests and diseases.

There's no need for a case of the bah humbugs though, you don't have to give up on your dreams of wreaths and mantle decorations that feature berries and greenery from your own backyard. There are plenty of alternative native choices.



Left to right: wild ginger, Virginia creeper, crossvine

When it comes to options for filling the spots where an English ivy might go, you need to think about what you are looking for—a groundcover or a vine. Some native choices in terms of woody vines include, crossvine, Swamp Jessamine, trumpet honeysuckle, or Virginia creeper. If a ground cover is really what you had in mind, you might like wild ginger or mock strawberry.

While looking for hollies, consider the American holly, which grows slowly but can reach up to 40-50 feet, or the yaupon holly, which is more of a large shrub/small tree. Another nice option for incredibly beautiful berries without the leaves is the deciduous possumhaw, another small tree. When it comes to these hollies,



Left to right: American holly, possumhaw

you should keep in mind that they are dioecious plants, which means they produce a male plant or a female plant. You will need to have at least one male plant, but the female plants will be the berry producers.

You can easily create holiday masterpieces with the native offerings around Mt Laurel. So, get out and take a hike in the brisk air and see what you can find this holiday season. Then here's to enjoying a nice hot toddy or some good, hot English breakfast tea and scones as you put together your all-American native decorations.