



# THE MT LAUREL CONNECTION

A newsletter for and about the Town of Mt Laurel

DECEMBER 2014 / JANUARY 2015



*HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
MT LAUREL*



## CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING IN BRYSON SQUARE

Residents are invited to the annual Mt Laurel Christmas Tree Lighting on Sunday, December 7 at 5:30 p.m. at Bryson Square. Santa will arrive to greet everyone and stay for photo ops on the sleigh. Come join us for caroling and fun. Also, the Mt Laurel Library will be open from 5:30–7:00 p.m. for refreshments and an opportunity to make a holiday craft. We hope to have face painting available, too.



## SPECIAL VISITORS ARE EXPECTED AT MT LAUREL LIBRARY IN DECEMBER

Come by often to see what's happening around the bookshelves! They will be on the move creating scenes and clues from books. See if you can guess the titles. The elves also may be getting into some trouble with Chrissie and Sara! See details on page 7 of this newsletter.

## SANTA DRIVE-BY

Santa's traditional drive-by in Mt Laurel is scheduled for Saturday, December 20, at 2:50 p.m.



## MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN MANAGER



This autumn Mt Laurel seemed to be extra beautiful! Every street I turn onto holds a picture-perfect postcard scene. The annual 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! The town will surely be aglow with lights on porches and trees in the windows. I would like to say thank you to all the folks in town for organizing the wreath fluffing and reviving. We are so blessed and thankful for each and 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. Construction is at an all-time high since the 2007 crash in home sales. We look forward to seeing your new neighbors settle into our beautiful town.

I am wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous New Year!

*John O. Freeman, Sr.*

*Vice President & General Manager, EBSCO Development Company*

## IN REMEMBRANCE



We express our deepest sympathy to the family of Mt Laurel resident Peter Thomas Hodo who passed away on October 19. He was the 21-year-old son of Cindy and Pete Hodo of 24 Nolen Street. Thomas was born in West Point, MS, on July 21, 1993, and was a recent graduate of Oak Hill Academy through the Mississippi State University High School Independent Study program.

Thomas was a young man who loved his friends and had a passion for cars and was an entrepreneur who was just beginning his journey. Thomas was a member of Cahaba Heights United Methodist Church in Vestavia Hills, AL and a lifelong member of First United Methodist Church of West Point, MS. In addition to a memorial service at the First

United Methodist Church in West Point, an outdoor Life Celebration Service was held at Mt Laurel's Spoonwood Lake on October 21.

Thomas had a good heart and he loved to help others. The family requests random acts of kindness in his honor. Memorials may be given to the charity of your choice, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama or Sally Kate Winters Family Services in West Point, MS.

*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  
Home Delivery Vicki Balogh, Lana Johnson, Chris Ladshaw, Nancy Ladshaw*

FESTIVE FALL IN MT LAUREL



Mt Laurel's Fall Festival, decorated houses and yards, and even stormy weather on Halloween night made the town a special place in October.



Congratulations to the winners of Mt Laurel's annual Scarecrow Contest! Pictured left to right: Hilltop Montessori School, first place; the Mt Laurel Garden Group, second place; and Lucky Dog Grooming and Boutique, third place.



Pictured left: Trick or Treaters, Alex and Allie Chenault, Maggie and Claire McCoy and Gabby Gonzalez. Center: Lucy Summers. Right: Cindy and Jack Prickett, along with their helpers, serve a Halloween feast to neighbors.



**SAFETY PROGRAM FOR MT LAUREL KIDS**

A group of residents is forming a committee to help create awareness of the number of children living and playing in the Town of Mt Laurel. In an effort to help people remember to slow down and watch for kids playing, the committee, with support from the Mt Laurel office, is ordering "Children Playing" sandwich board signs for any resident who would like to put one out when children are playing in the alleys and common areas. Anyone interested in receiving a sign or submitting ideas to the committee should email Cindy Prickett at [ccpjrp@aol.com](mailto:ccpjrp@aol.com).

**MT LAUREL RESIDENT TO APPEAR IN THE "WOODLAWN" MOVIE**

Mt Laurel resident Julia Gigis is going to be in the movies! She was chosen as an "extra" in the upcoming film, *Woodlawn*, which is being filmed in the Birmingham area. The movie tells the true story of two Birmingham rival high school football teams, Woodlawn and Banks, that played a game in the 1970s in front of the largest crowd that has ever attended a high school football game in the city. The attendance was over 40,000 at Birmingham's Legion Field. *Woodlawn* tells about a spiritual awakening that captures the heart of nearly every player on the Woodlawn team and its coach Tandy Gerelds.



**GOLF CART REGISTRATION**

The Town of Mt Laurel now requires that golf carts used by residents must be registered and have a sticker for identification. Golf cart owners should come by the sales office as soon as possible to register and receive a sticker for their vehicles. The new registration requirement is necessary to keep Spoonwood Lake a private park for use by residents only.



*A reminder: No all-terrain vehicles, motorized go-carts or gasoline powered golf carts are allowed in Mt Laurel. Residents must be at least 14 years old to drive a golf cart in Mt Laurel.*



**GINGERBREAD HOUSE MARATHON**

The Jackson and Kahl families had their Aunt Susan Tawfik and cousin (Andrea Serio) fly in for a fun weekend of Halloween festivities and their annual gingerbread house marathon. Cathrene and Alli's aunt has been making custom ginger bread houses for years, and now travels to Pennsylvania, Maryland and Alabama to make these decadent creations with her great nieces and nephews ahead of the Christmas season. Preparation begins days ahead of time when all the ingredients are gathered and the gingerbread is carefully baked and cut out according to Aunt Sue's custom pattern. The houses are then placed on Styrofoam bases and the creative process begins! Dozens of candies and cookies are laid out and the children begin decorating. Each year the houses and surrounding 'yards' look different, and the families never follow a plan going into the decorating session. This year's highlights included a candy car in the front yard of the Kahl gingerbread house and a candy garden with a gingerbread dog at the Jackson's place! One thing is for sure--this is a SWEET family tradition!

**NEXTDOOR/MT LAUREL**

Over 100 Mt Laurel residents have joined a new free neighborhood website called Nextdoor, which is a social networking service for neighborhoods in the U.S. Any resident may post to it to communicate with neighbors, ask questions, sell items, post pet information, obtain safety and security suggestions, and read recommendations for services. Free Android and iPhone apps are also available. Further information is available at [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) or call Syd Spain at 907-7518.



**CCR QUICK GUIDE IS NOW AVAILABLE**

A new guide that provides a quick and easy reference for the most common areas of concern regarding the Mt Laurel Covenants, Codes and Restrictions is now available in the Mt Laurel Office.



## AROUND TOWN AND BEYOND



### IMPROMPTU VETERANS DAY PARADE

A group of Mt Laurel children decorated boxes and had their own "Veterans Day Box Parade" around the neighborhood on their day off from school. Taking part in the parade were, **Leah and Ava McCatha, Reaves and Evie Childress; Kate and Cole Wilson; Noah McCutchen, Barrett Booth, Campbell, Law and Luke Carbonie; Emma Anderson, and Joss, Lissy, and Anna Michael O'Kelley.**



### NEW ARRIVAL

**Larry and Karen Salter** recently welcomed their sixth grandchild, **Blair Loren Ferguson**, who weighed six pounds, 15 ounces. Blair has three older brothers, **Nick, Chris and Nate.**



### FAMILY VACATION

The **Karrs** and the **Ladshaws**, along with their extended family vacationed in Seaside in November. Pictured left to right: **Jane Posey, Chris Ladshaw, Jesse Williams** holding **Karr, Malinda Karr, Sheila Smith, Nancy Ladshaw, and Chad Williams** in the back.



### JACKSON HOLE

Following a week in Seattle celebrating the September 6 wedding of Susan's son **Alexander** to **Erin Brady**, **Susan and Stan Bradley** spent a week at Spotted Horse Ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.



### TENNIS CHAMPS

**Mark and Laura Partain** both were on the winning teams for the 2014 State Tennis Championships. **Mark's** team won the Men's 5.5 Doubles Combo and **Laura's** team won the Ladies 6.5 Combo Doubles Championship. Their teams are headed to Mobile for the Sectional Tournament in March.



**Cathy Murphy** spent a week in the Carmel/Monterey area of California traveling with friends. She is pictured at the 18th hole at Pebble Beach Golf Course.

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

## MT LAUREL GARDEN GROUP

Rip Weaver, former landscape architect for the Town of Mt Laurel, will speak at the December 2 meeting of the Garden Group about his design ideas for the arboretum and common areas of the neighborhood. The meeting is at 7:00 p.m. in the Mt Laurel Library. The public is invited.



For the January meeting, Patrick Daniel, former land manager of the Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, will give a program on wildflowers and native plants at 10:00 a.m. at the Mt Laurel Library Community Room.

The Garden Group is open to all Mt Laurel residents interested in learning more about landscaping with native plants. The meetings are usually on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. Contact chairperson Cathy Murphy at [Cathlounmur@aol.com](mailto:Cathlounmur@aol.com) for more information on upcoming meetings.

Pictured left: *Several Garden Group members show off the fall grapevine wreaths they created at the group's November meeting.*

## MT LAUREL BOOK CLUB NEWS



The Mt Laurel Book Club meets the first Thursday evening of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Mt Laurel Library. Anyone who loves to read and enjoys book discussions is invited to attend. For more information, contact Sara McCutchen at the library at 991-1660.

### READING LIST

- December 4 *The Hare with Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Waal
- January 8 *Lucky Us* by Amy Bloom
- February 5 *The Dovekeepers* by Alice Hoffman
- March 5 *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri
- April 2 *An Unnecessary Woman* by Rabih Alameddine



### AUTHOR VISIT AND BOOK SIGNING

Mt Laurel Book Club member Andrea Miles will speak and sign copies of her recently published book, *Trespassers* at the library on Monday, January 12 at 6:00 p.m.

## MT LAUREL LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM



The Mt Laurel Library's Community Room is a special place for many different purposes. On an ordinary day, the room serves as an extra reading area, and its tables are perfect for using the wi-fi with laptops, writing or reading the Wall Street Journal and other newspapers and magazines offered by the library. The room also houses the Friends of the Mt Laurel Library used book sale area and items for sale, such as book bags and library shirts.

The room may be rented for meetings and small gatherings. Folding chairs are available for use in a classroom style arrangement, and the tables may be moved aside. A flat screen TV is mounted on the wall and may be used for presentations. Contact Chrissie or Sara at the library for details and scheduling.

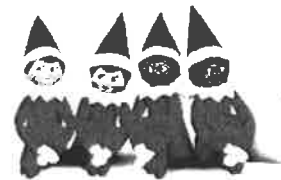
## CLASSIC CARS IN MT LAUREL

Mt Laurel streets were filled with nostalgia when the Classic Car Show arrived in September. Proceeds from the show benefited the Wounded Warrior Project. Jeff Breeden coordinated the show.



## TOWNHOUSE TEA SHOPPE EXTENDED HOURS

Due to popular requests, the TownHouse Tea Shoppe will open two Sundays during the holiday season: December 7 and 14 from 12:30-3:30. The Tea Shoppe will be closed the week of Christmas.



## THE ELVES ON A SHELF ARE COMING TO THE LIBRARY!

Beginning December 1, the "Elves On A Shelf" are coming to Mt Laurel Library and creating a scene from a book or a clue to a book that children can use to guess the title of the book. For example, they may be eating green eggs and ham. Each child who guesses correctly will have his or her name placed in a drawing to win an elf. There will be a winner each week. Watch out because the elves may get into mischief, and remember to never touch an elf!

## LIBRARY HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

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

## CRAFTY SATURDAY CHIA PINE CONE TREE



Children of all ages are invited to drop by the library for Crafty Saturday between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on December 13 to make a Chia Christmas tree.

## LADIES LUNCH

Mt Laurel Ladies Lunch will not meet in December. The next lunch will be Wednesday, January 28, at 11:30 a.m. at Stone's Throw Bar and Grill. All ladies are invited to meet with the group on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Stone's Throw. No reservation is necessary.

## PICKLEBALL COURT

We will soon be able to play Pickleball, the fastest growing sport in the USA. Mr Freeman has given us the go ahead to outline a Pickleball court in the basketball area (Don't worry, it won't interfere with basketball play). See what Pickleball is about, Google Pickleball-NBC news or Pickleball CBS News. Neill Beavers has more information (205-578-7202 or [NeillBeavers@gmail.com](mailto:NeillBeavers@gmail.com)).

## SAVE THESE DATES

December 2	Garden Group
December 4	Book Club
December 5	Storytime at the Library
December 7	Tree Lighting at Bryson Square
December 7	Treats in the Library
December 13	Crafty Saturday at the Library
December 19	Storytime at the Library

January 6	Garden Group
January 8	Book Club
January 10	Crafty Saturday at the Library
January 12	Book Signing at the Library
January 16	Storytime at the Library
January 28	Ladies Lunch

Sippin' Seniors meet every Monday morning at 9 a.m. at the library unless otherwise announced.

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



## 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, contributed by Jill Walton. Jill is a Mt Laurel resident and holds the Master Gardener Certification.*

### WINTRY THOUGHTS OF HEARTH AND GARDEN

*"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark on a sentimental journey and enjoy every idle hour."  
--John Boswell*

It may not seem there are many idle hours at this time of year—at least not until we reach the New Year, but whether you can take the time during the holidays or in the quieter hours of January, there are ways to share moments with each other while staying in touch with nature, no matter how frostily the winds blow.

Gathering around the hearth at the holidays rarely includes a real Yule log these days, but perhaps you could still incorporate some of the aspects of this tradition that was meant to bring good luck for the coming year, while honoring nature's gifts. One of the nice aspects that sometimes went along with this colossal log burning through the 12 Days of Christmas was that no unnecessary work would take place in or around the home as long as the log burned because the holiday season should be a time of reflection and taking a break from daily labors. Even if we could all make an effort to incorporate a full 12 hours of rest and simple merriment for a day of the season, we'd be likely to enjoy the holidays much more peacefully.



You could spend some of that time putting together nice gifts for friends and neighbors as an ode to the Yule log, too. Use a nice cut log as a base and tie on a bundle of fragrant and attractive garden and woodland items, like sprigs of thyme and holly, bay leaves, a cinnamon stick and pine cones. Festively tie it all together with a natural burlap ribbon or jute twine and add a note of good wishes for the coming year.

Other projects you could do, especially with children, to keep you feeling connected to nature during cold days stuck inside could include forcing bulbs or making treats for the birds. It's easy and rewarding to force bulbs like Amaryllis and paperwhites, and while you might be pushing your luck to have them blooming by the holidays if just planting now, you will enjoy them just as much as they brighten your home into January and February. These bulbs can be planted in soil or pebbles, or even rooted in just water if you use the right containers. You can find bulbs and even complete kits in many home supply centers and garden shops.



It's a great time of year to offer special treats for the birds visiting your yard, and there are many simple recipes you can find on birding websites. One of the easiest is to mix together one cup of chunky peanut butter, one cup of suet or solid vegetable shortening (you might want to melt over low heat first), three cups of coarsely ground cornmeal, and some good quality birdseed. You could make it extra special by adding dried fruit or unsalted peanuts, too. Once you've combined everything, you can smush it into pinecones and tie to trees or simply shape it to fit into old suet containers, or even fill emptied out orange or grapefruit halves. You can put these in the freezer to harden and then hang in trees or place in feeders where you can watch the birds enjoy your gifts.



There are a couple of different Audubon Society-connected bird counts coming up in December and January in which you can participate, too, without even having to leave your living room. The 115<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count will begin on December 14 and run to January 5, and the Great Backyard Bird Count will be February 13-16. You can find out more at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

*In whatever fashion you celebrate the season, we wish you quiet moments of awareness of the natural beauty that surrounds us here in our town.*