

THE

MT LAUREL



CHRONICLE

Volume No. 3 Issue 3

A Traditional Community in Concert with Nature

October/December 2005



Santa Came to Town!

On Saturday, November 19, 2005, Santa Claus came to Mt Laurel! Children anxiously waited to have a chance to tell Santa what their wishes were for Christmas. The weather was perfect for Santa's visit as the blustery wind blew from the North!

The main street of Mt Laurel was sectioned off from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. for vendors exhibiting crafts for the holidays, organic produce from GrowAlabama, and fun activities for the children. The businesses of Mt Laurel were open for business as people came out to shop on the weekend before Thanksgiving.



Goodbye to 2005

During this last quarter of 2005, we have watched as another seasonal change has taken place with the leaves on the trees changing to breathtakingly beautiful shades of yellow, gold and red as the winds brought in cooler days and nights. As we settle in to our winter season, may we all be enveloped by love and care and may we continue to be compassionate and thoughtful toward each and every living thing upon the earth and in the universe.

Alabama State Wildflower – Oakleaf Hydrangea

The following is an excerpt from The Code of Alabama, Title 1, Chapter 2, Section 1-2-11(b): The oak-leaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia* Bartr., is hereby designated and named as the official state wildflower of Alabama.

Each resident of Mt Laurel is provided with a copy of the Town of Mt Laurel Residential Landscape Regulations, which lists the plants approved for use in the front and side yards visible from the public way. In each issue of The Mt Laurel Chronicle, at least one of the approved plants for landscaping in Mt Laurel will be featured and a description of the plan will be given along with care instructions. In this issue, the featured approved plant is the oak-leaf hydrangea (*hydrangea quercifolia*).

Have you watched what happens? What a show! In the early spring, new growth emerges on the branches of the oakleaf hydrangea and quickly becomes lush, thick fans of green leaves, followed in late spring by huge creamy white flower clusters which last for months, changing from white to light pink, to rose, to tan as the flowers linger on the branches throughout the winter. Not to be outdone, the leaves turn a rich



wine color as Fall settles in and the leaves will hang on until the last months of the year.

This easy to grow native plant is disease and insect free, drought tolerant and heavy blooming even in the shade. You should purchase the hydrangea when the plant is in flower to be certain of the variety and flower form you are purchasing. Plant only if you are certain that the cold weather fairies are in the North. Ideally, plant in well-drained, acid soil. The plant can get root rot if it stands in soggy soil even for short periods of time. Rarely needs pruning, but if you

wish to prune the plant, do so after it flowers, usually before August before the plant sets its bloom buds for the next year. All dead wood should be removed every year. To fertilize or not to fertilize? The consensus is it is better to err on the side of too little fertilizer than too much. Apply a slow release, balanced fertilizer (10-10-10) once or twice a year, in May and/or August.

Lunch anyone? The birds and small mammals benefit by eating the seeds of the oakleaf hydrangea. Oh, the name! It is called the oakleaf hydrangea because the leaves are shaped like oak leaves.



Alabama State Game Bird – Wild Turkey

The wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) was adopted as the Alabama official state game bird by Act No. 80-734 of the Alabama Legislature, effective September 6, 1980.

If you listen to stories told by people who were around when the development of Mt Laurel began, you will hear them tell of flocks of more than fifty wild turkeys seen in the fields around and on the property which is now Mt Laurel. This majestic bird has been described as crafty, wary and difficult to hunt. Researchers attribute the turkey's ability to acquire such descriptions because of the turkey's astute instincts, eyesight, hearing and its very suspicious nature. Many say one of the only ways you will get close to a wild turkey is if you learn the different calls of the turkey – putting, purring, yelping, clucking and gobbling. Of

course, these are names given by men to the language of the turkeys. Interested in learning the language? Check out this website, <http://www.nwtf.org/>.

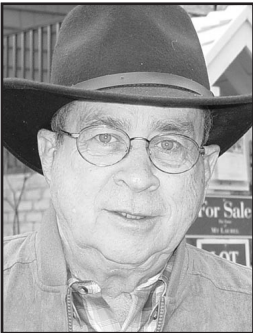


The wild turkey was used by the Native Americans for food, apparel and artifacts. In addition to arrow fletching, upright turkey-tail headdress, single wing and tail feather decorations, ceremonial fans and other items, turkey feathers were also woven together into capes and mantles. To enjoy a Native American legend told by the Apache tribe about the

turkey, go to http://www.firstpeople.us/FP_HtmlLegends/Why_The_Turkey_Gobbles-Cherokee.html

After the Europeans came, wild turkeys were hunted year-round for food and the habitat of the wild turkey was destroyed by clearing of hardwood forests for farms, dwellings and villages. As a result, the wild turkey populations were severely diminished. By the 1990's, restoration efforts showed results of turkeys living in 49 of the 50 states (excepting Alaska).

You don't have to worry about the food supply for the wild turkey in our area of Shelby County. Turkeys like nuts, berries, green vegetation, and bugs. The wooded natural areas of Mt Laurel have everything a wild turkey could ask for!



John O. Freeman Sr.

Mr. Freeman's Corner

My thanks to our residents who are participating in the Mt Laurel Homeowners Association (MLHOA) Committees which have been established to encourage residents to participate fully in the continuous pursuit of making Mt Laurel the Town

that it was designed to become. During this quarter, we have established the following committees: Spoonwood Lake Committee, Public Ways Committee, Pet Committee, Library Committee, Events Committee, Abbott Square & Burnham Woods Committee, Olmsted Park Committee, with subcommittees: Tot Lot, Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts; Bryson Square & Arboretum Committee, Botanical Conservancy Committee and Security Committee. Committee meetings will be open to all residents and written reports of the meetings are to be provided by the Chairman of the respective Committee to your MLHOA representatives, Scott Stone and Ward Tishler, with a copy to me. The intent of the Committees is to make recommendations to the MLHOA which are consistent with the Town of Mt Laurel Codes, Covenants and Restrictions and Landscape Regulations. The Board of The MLHOA will consider the recommendations and reports of actions taken by the Board of MLHOA will be disseminated to residents by my office.

We are sure you have noticed the clearing for roads into Phase IIIB, which will house 138 lots for homes. A park will center around a rock formation at the top of the development of Phase IIIB, which we know you will find very interesting!

Our parks have been tended for winter care and it is in the plans to begin the development of the tennis courts in early spring of 2006. Happy New Year and we look forward to 2006 at Mt Laurel!

Hilltop on the Green Auction

Hilltop Montessori School held the 4th annual Hilltop on the Green auction fundraiser at The Standard Bistro Restaurant in the Town of Mt Laurel on the evening of November 5, 2005, chaired by Michele Scott, Director of Hilltop, Rita Smith, Vice President of the Board of Directors of Hilltop, and Debbie Shunnarah, parent of a Hilltop student. Guests were treated to an eloquent dinner prepared by Alan Martin, Manager and Executive Chef of The Standard Bistro Restaurant, and musical entertainment by well-known jazz musician, Cleve Eaton.



A key event of the evening was the presentation of The Elton B. Stephens, Jr. Environmental Award, which is given to an individual who is committed to environmental issues in Birmingham, Alabama. Last year, Elton B. Stephens, Jr. was honored for his commitment to Hilltop's LEED certified green school. The award has been named in Stephens' honor and a recipient will be chosen each year. This year, the recipient is Rip Weaver, landscape architect for The Town of Mt Laurel, who is a person dedicated to use and preservation of natural resources. The award was presented by John O. Freeman Sr., General Manager of Mt Laurel.

Auctioneer Jack Granger conducted the live and silent auction to raise funds for Hilltop Montessori School. Hilltop was the first Alabama school registered with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system, developed to distinguish and promote sustainability. LEED-certified buildings make use of the latest technology and techniques, resulting in buildings that are healthy, competitively priced for construction and much more cost effective to operate over the lifetime of the building.

The green vision of Hilltop has been a combined effort of community members, teachers, parents, administration and even students. "Most importantly, we hope our children will take with them an understanding of these issues that will guide them in the decisions they make as adults," said Hilltop Board member, Rita Smith. For more information on Hilltop Montessori School, visit www.hilltopmontessori.com.

2005 Fall Festival at Mt Laurel



Saturday, October 8, 2005 - Cool temperatures brought out neighbors in long sleeves, some even in jackets as the Fall Festival began with vendors lining the streets of Mt Laurel. Music filled the clean, crisp air as Suzy and Kenny Spencer played their instruments throughout the day. Mt Laurel Avenue, Main Street and a section of Olmsted Street played host to craftsmen and craftswomen who exhibited incredible homemade products. Festival attendees were able to purchase fresh vegetables and goods for the last time of the 2005 season from several of the farmers who had come to Mt Laurel on Saturday mornings during the summer for the Mt

Laurel Farmers Market. Did you see the pumpkins being sold this year?

People were artistically building pumpkin pyramids on the sidewalks!

Children scampered between moonwalks, hayrides, Sparkles the Clown and many other interesting exhibits, amazed at the variety of experiences to be enjoyed. The Town of Mt Laurel businesses were open, offering their special ambiances to the Festival. The Town is expanding with new and exciting ventures. Visitors to Mt Laurel were also able to tour the homes which were open during the Fall Parade of Homes sponsored by the Birmingham Realtors Association.



If you weren't able to attend, you missed out on the first exciting event of the last quarter of the year of 2005 at Mt Laurel.

Stitch & What!

Colors, soft fabrics, knitting, friends, conversation – what great therapy! Well, knitting is the rage and it's happening at Mt Laurel. Guys, Russell Crowe is in the ranks! Come on down. Thanks to the diligent efforts of April Mraz, a number of residents of Mt Laurel took knitting classes. Following the completion of the classes, a group began to meet at The Corner Café on Tuesday nights for sessions from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. Conversation topics, some cannot be repeated! OK, well, here are a few – fun dances, exotic drinks, that English

boy, oh yes, and knitting techniques. You don't even have to knit! If you would just feel ridiculous sitting there with nothing in your hands, just bring knitting needles and sit there and pretend. 8 p.m. always rolls around too quickly and it's



time to call it an evening. Thanks, April, for another activity which is evidence of the spirit of the Town of Mt Laurel!

Burnham Street

Burnham Street in Mt Laurel is named after the famous landscape architect, Daniel Burnham. One famous quote attributed to him is: "Make no little plans. They have no magic to strike man's blood and probably will themselves not be realized."



In 1909, Burnham, along with Edward H. Bennett, began work on the first comprehensive plan for the controlled growth of an American city, Chicago, Illinois, with a declaration that every citizen should be within walking distance of a park. It is clear to see that the plan of Mt Laurel has been influenced by Daniel Burnham. The next time you walk by a Burnham Street sign, you may want to pause and think about the man who made big plans which continue to influence developments like Mt Laurel. How far are you from a park? Certainly within walking distance.

Travel To and Fro

To hear Vicky Balogh talk about it, you must travel to Croatia! She and a friend since childhood take a trip each year and this year, during October, they flew to Venice and cruised on a Windstar motored-sail-yacht from Venice to Malta, and various ports between. According to Vicki, her favorite port was Croatia. The people are friendly and accommodating. Since the war in the 1990s, the people of Croatia have successfully restored many of the historical sites, such as the walled city of Dubrovnik. As you walk the streets, this small country will grab your heart with its beauty. Vicky and her friend are already trying to decide where their Windstar pampered travels will take them next year!

Mallory Carrington traveled to Chicago, Illinois, to run in the Chicago Marathon on October 9, 2005! During Mallory's training for the race, she got news worthy of an early celebration – another little Carrington is on the way! To protect her little one, Mallory decided to run a 1/2 Marathon – 13.1 miles – her race results: 2:02:58! She reports: Felt

great; hard to stop at 13.1 miles; beautiful city; most memorable thing: 3 full days of uninterrupted sleep and no schedule to keep (other than race day)!

George Meighen decided on the spur-of-the-moment to visit Canada during the early part of October. He reports: Proceeded up the St. Lawrence River for a couple of days in and around historic Quebec. Going in the wrong direction of a recommended walking tour, climbed steep embankments of Quebec to the Plains of Abraham which, in reality, was probably a less vigorous route than followed in 1759 by the British Major General James Wolfe on the eve of his attack of the French forces. Beautiful weather! Impressive farm communities up and down the St. Lawrence River. Dining was super in every locale – veal, lamb, prime rib, desserts! Language was not a problem as it is amazing what pointing your finger and saying, "Merci" will produce! However, do not insert Canadian \$2.00 coins in parking meters! They are the same size as a U.S. \$.50 piece. Thanks, George. Word to the wise if you travel to Canada!

Salter – Ferguson Wedding



Carmen Salter and Brian Ferguson were married at 6:00 p.m. on May 28, 2005, at Reid Chapel, Samford University. Reception followed at The Club. Carmen and Brian are members of Double Oak Community Church in Mt Laurel and the pastor, Randy Overstreet, performed a beautiful wedding ceremony. Carmen is the daughter of Karen and Larry Salter of 45 Burnham Street, Mt Laurel, and the sister of Casey and Garrett Salter. The newlyweds plan to establish a home at Mt Laurel.

The Town
of
MT LAUREL
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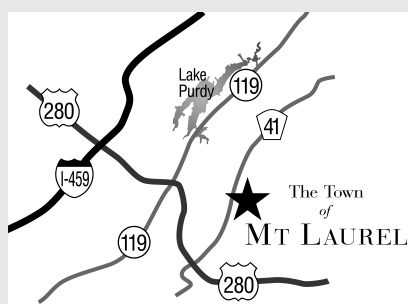
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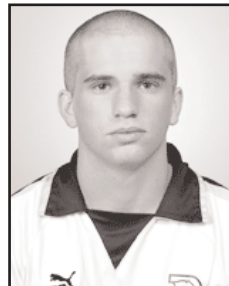
Mt Laurel's Annual Old-fashioned Halloween Carnival

On Saturday, October 29, 2005, the Mt Laurel Annual Old-fashioned Halloween Carnival was held at Abbott Square Park beginning at 4 p.m. with the sun beaming through the trees as children and adults dressed in costumes arrived to play games, to participate in arts and crafts, to have their faces painted and to enjoy the goodies prepared for the Carnival. Elmo, Cinderella's fairy godmother, a Woodland elf and so many other wonderful characters showed up to share in the excitement and fun of the Carnival. With the sun setting, the crowd gathered to be entertained with the showing of the movies, "Charlie Brown's Great Pumpkin" and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory". When the movies ended, the cool night air swirled around the residents as they left the outdoor movie theater to head home in the dark! Did



everyone arrive home safely? No tragedies reported. Until next year, may the residents of Mt Laurel be protected and sheltered at Mt Laurel!

Pihakis Scores for BSC!



Nick Pihakis, a freshman at Birmingham Southern College, scored a goal in the second half of the final home game of the Birmingham Southern Panthers Soccer Team on November 1, 2005, locking down a victory against Lipscomb University. The Panthers ended the regular season with a record of 11-4-1. Nick is the son of Suzanne and Nicholas Pihakis of Mt Laurel. Way to go, Nick!

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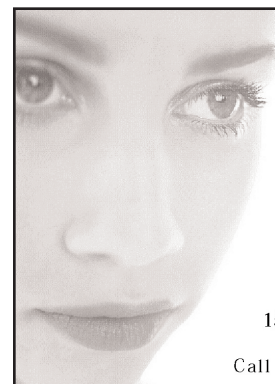
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Happy Holidays

Autumn Vegetable Gratin

1 to 2 russet potatoes	pinch nutmeg, grated
1 rutabaga	1 Tbl. butter
1 to 2 sweet potatoes	1 1/2 cups parmesan
1 1/2 cups milk	cheese, grated
(or heavy cream)	salt and pepper
1 clove garlic	2 sprigs of thyme

Crush garlic clove. Rub garlic on sides and bottom of casserole dish. Peel root vegetables and slice thin. Rub butter on sides and bottom of casserole dish. Add nutmeg to milk (or cream). Layer sliced rutabaga on bottom of baking dish. Pour some milk (or cream) over rutabaga to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Repeat process with sweet potatoes. Spread half of grated cheese over sweet potatoes. Layer russet potatoes; add milk (or cream). Season with salt and pepper. For the top layer, alternate root vegetables, add the remaining milk (or cream), season with salt and pepper, top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350°F until golden brown. Reduce heat to 300°F and cook until milk (or cream) has reduced and vegetables are tender. Let stand for 20 minutes. Garnish with pickled thyme.

*Courtesy of Alan Martin, Executive Chef
Standard Bistro*

Hot Chocolate

6 T. unsweetened cocoa
pinch of cinnamon powder (optional)
6 T. sugar
1/2 t. vanilla (or more)
pinch of salt
whipped cream
2 1/2 c. milk
orange zest
2 1/2 c. light cream

Mix cocoa, salt and sugar. Add milk. Heat to dissolve. Add light cream, cinnamon, vanilla. Heat to just under boiling. Mix very well and pour into warm mug. Top with whipped cream, cocoa powder, and fine orange zest.

*Courtesy of Mrs. Laura Bush
The White House
www.whitehouse.gov*

Sour Cream Coconut Cake

1 Box Duncan Hines Butter Recipe
Yellow Cake Mix
8 oz. sour cream
1 c. sugar (KB)
1 1/2 sugar (MP)
2 c. sugar (BS)
2 packages of frozen coconut (12 oz. each) (KB)
12 oz. or two 7 oz. bags of fresh coconut (MP)
12 oz. frozen coconut, thawed (BS)
1 carton of Cool Whip (8 oz.) (KB)
1 large container of Cool Whip (MP)
1 1/2 c. whipped cream (Cool Whip works great!) (BS)

Cook cake according to directions. Cool completely and split layers horizontally, making 4 layers. Mix sour cream and sugar together with 1 package of coconut. Refrigerate for at least 30 mins. Spread mixture between all layers, saving 1 c. of mixture for icing. Fold Cool Whip into remaining mixture. Ice cake with mixture. Sprinkle second package of coconut on cake. Seal cake tightly and refrigerate for three days before cutting.

Three ladies submitted a recipe for coconut cake, and unbeknownst to them, they each submitted the same recipe, with only slight variations! Thank you, Kelly Burley (KB), Melody Pak (MP) and Betty Swann (BS)! This must be a winner!