

THE COMMUNICATOR

Phone: (336) 835-2511

Email: wifm@wifmradio.com

Since January 1990

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December 2024

Elkin Welcomes The Holidays

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Elkin, and events are filling up our calendar.

"Light Up Elkin" begins at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6. Each year a new area in downtown is chosen to light up, Santa arrives, and there's a full evening until 9 p.m. for holiday shopping, hayrides, train rides, dancing, live music in retail shops, holiday market vendors set up in various locations, a "sweet tooth zone" and food trucks, live nativity scene, nonprofits' fundraisers, and so much more.

Elkin Public Library will host early-bird "Light Up Elkin" activities for kids after 3:30 p.m. Elkin Masonic Lodge, 114 W. Market, will offer a country ham and egg supper — proceeds go to Masonic charities — from 5 to 8 p.m. Lords & Ladies of Lights and holiday characters will roam downtown.

Santa will arrive for the lighting ceremony at 6 p.m. across the street from 222 E. Main St. and later the jolly old elf will hang out at the Three Trails Center. Foothills Art Center will have its Merry Makers Market in The Wisdom Table, 101 E. Main. The Holly Jolly Marketplace, a fundraiser for Scout Pack & Troop 568, will be open late at 102 E. Market.

Additional parking will be provided with hayride transportation from nearby schools to downtown. For more information about those and other activities, visit ExploreElkin.com, LightUpElkin.com, or the Light Up Night event page on Facebook.

On Sunday, Dec. 8, at 3 p.m., the Yadkin Valley Christmas Parade steps off, rain or shine. The theme is "Santa's Workshop." The parade starts at 200 S. Bridge St. in Jonesville and ends at Elkin High School. Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Jonesville, and Historic Elkin are the organizers and sponsors. Monday, Dec. 2, is the deadline for parade entries, so call Quinn Wilkins at the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce, 336-526-1111, or email info@yadkinvalley.org.

Holly Jolly Marketplace

Just in time for Christmas shopping, the Holly Jolly Marketplace opened in the former Habitat building at 102 E. Market St. in Elkin. 100.9 WIFM Radio joined its grand opening and ribbon-cutting

celebration presented by the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce on Nov. 15.

The Holly Jolly Marketplace is a fundraiser for Scout Pack & Troop 658 sponsored by Cool Springs Youth Association. For Christmas shoppers the Holly Jolly Marketplace brings together a suite of sweets (honey, stick candy, pecan logs, fruit cakes, Happy Home Flavorings), savorys such as country ham and cheeses, and gift items including baskets, ornaments and much more — all under one roof!

The Holly Jolly Marketplace in Elkin features famed Dewey's Bakery from Winston-Salem with its Moravian cookies, Moravian sugar cakes, classic cheddar cheese straws, 20-ounce Cake Cups, and oatmeal sandwich cookies.

Also featured is Hobe's Country Ham from North Wilkesboro and its selection of country ham center cuts, biscuit cuts, and gift boxes, plus ready-for-the-pot pintos, black-eyed peas, and more. Ashe County Cheese from West Jefferson is offering cheese spreads, cheese curds, and cheese blocks. Also look for products from Linney's Mill in Union Grove and The Dutch Kettle in Hamptonville.

The Holly Jolly Marketplace is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. For more information, visit its Facebook page.

Concerts In Elkin And Mount Airy

Local choral ensemble VOCE will present its annual Christmas concert in both Mount Airy and Elkin. The singers will perform at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 2, at First Baptist Church, 714 N. Main St. in Mount Airy. The following Monday, Dec. 9, VOCE will take the stage at 7 p.m. in First Baptist Church Elkin, 110 Gwyn Ave.

Created in 2022 by the late Sandy Beam, a beloved music teacher in Mount Airy, VOCE (pronounced VOH-chay) is an ensemble of about 30 singers of all ages selected by audition. With accompanying musicians they rehearse weekly on Monday evenings to prepare for their free public concerts. VOCE is a qualified 501(c3) nonprofit organization supported by donations.

For more information about VOCE, visit its website at VOCEMtAiry.org.

Christmas Arts & Crafts Show

Visitors to the Alleghany Arts & Crafts Show at the Alleghany County Fairgrounds in Sparta will discover unique, mountain-made handcrafted gifts, jewelry, decor items, and more — just in time for Christmas! The exhibition is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 7. Admission is free.

This juried show is your chance to find special, one-of-a-kind items crafted by local artisans and perfect for unique holiday gifts or treats for yourself. From exquisite jewelry to cozy textiles and delicious food items, there are items for everyone and fun for the whole family.

The fairgrounds' location is 1375 U.S. 21 in Sparta. The show is inside the Emerson Black Building. For more information, visit the website at www.alleghanyartsandcrafts.com.

Grand Old Christmas Show

The Grand Ol' Christmas Show is coming to Wilkesboro. It's a live, one-of-a-kind musical variety show bringing all-time favorite Christmas classics and original sketch comedy antics to theaters across America. Originated by The Grand Ol' Production Company, it's produced by Will Hearn.

The show is a tribute to American Christmas traditions, but will entertain young to old.

The Grand Ol' Christmas Show comes to the stage at The Walker Center, 292 First Citizens Bank Lane in Wilkesboro, at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 19. Ticket prices are \$35 to \$45. For more information visit the website at www.walkercenteronline.org/season-shows.

Half Mile Of Christmas Cheer

The Mount Airy Appearance Commission will present the fifth annual Half Mile of Christmas Cheer & Tree Lighting Ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 5. Visitors are invited to stroll along Main Street from 6 to 7 p.m. and enjoy performances from diverse groups of singers and other musicians. At 7 p.m. the Mount Airy High School Marching Band will lead the way to City Hall for the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. The event is free and open to the public. For more information and updates visit Downtown Mount Airy's events page on Facebook.

Jolly Jamboree In Boonville

The Town of Boonville will present its Jolly Jamboree on Dec. 6 and 7. There will be a Christmas tree decorating contest on Friday and the town's Christmas Tree & Nativity Scene Lighting Ceremony will begin at 6:30 p.m. On Saturday a vendor market opens at 10 a.m. The annual Twilight Christmas Parade starts at 4 p.m.

Christmas In The Commons

The Town of Wilkesboro invites you to join the crowds who will usher in the holiday season on Saturday, Dec. 7, with Christmas in the Commons, a festive celebration from 3:30 to 8 p.m. in Historic Downtown Wilkesboro.

The Wilkes County Christmas Parade starting at 3:30 p.m. will wind through the downtown district. Little Mountain Railroad will offer train rides around The Commons for the littles and there will be other activities for children. Food trucks on hand will include Wingz On Wheels, The Hotdog BOY, Wutyasay, Winner's Circle BBQ, La Esquina, and Cowlick.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will make a special visit from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The lighting of the town's official Christmas tree at 7 p.m. in Heritage Square, 100 E. Main St., will include a welcome from Dale Isom and members of the Historic Downtown Wilkesboro Merchants Association.

Admission to all activities is free. For additional information, you may contact Wilkesboro Town Hall at 336-838-3951 or go to facebook.com/HistoricDowntownWilkesboro.

Pilot Mountain Christmas Parade

Pilot Mountain's annual Downtown Christmas Parade and the annual tree-lighting ceremony will be on Saturday, Dec. 7.

The tree-lighting program will start at 5:30 p.m. outside Town Hall, 124 W. Main St. The North Carolina Honors Chorus members and alumni will perform special carols. Winners of a downtown window decorating contest will be announced.

Pilot Mountain's 54th annual Christmas parade follows the tree-lighting ceremony. Beginning at 6 p.m. there will be dancing, horses, cheerleaders, a marching band, traditional favorites like floats, tractors, cars, public safety vehicles, and more! The line-up begins at 4 p.m. in East Surry High's parking lot. The parade on Main Street goes from East Surry High School to Academy Street.

Pilot Mountain Rescue and EMS Squad 86 hosts the parade. To register an entry or find more information, visit the website at pilotmtnrescue.org/parade. Registration closes on Wednesday, Dec. 4.

Yadkinville Tree Lighting, Parade

Yadkinville's annual Christmas Tree Lighting will be at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6, in the Yadkinville Community Park. The Forbush Middle School Ensemble will perform. Refreshments will be served.

Yadkinville's Christmas Parade begins at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, in downtown Yadkinville. Groups interested in joining the parade should contact the Yadkinville Fire Department at 336-679-8691 for information and instructions.

Time To Give A Kid A Christmas

Since 1993, the charitable foundation now named Sheriff Atkinson's Give A Kid A Christmas Inc. has been on a noble and notable mission in Surry County: "To make sure that every child has an adequate supply of food to get them through the school Christmas break, to ensure that each child has appropriate clothing to get them through the winter, and that each child can choose some toy or other item that they would like to have for Christmas. We believe that every boy and girl in Surry County deserves to experience the joy and exhilaration of a happy Christmas morning with a full belly and warm clothes."

This significant yuletide initiative, founded by then-officer (later Sheriff) Graham Atkinson, brought together the Surry County Sheriff's Department and Surry County Schools in a cooperative effort to make Christmas happier for children in disadvantaged families. Dozens of volunteers also contribute their hours: many will pack food boxes starting at 8 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, in Surry Central High School. Then on Dec. 10, volunteers will shop at Walmart in Mount Airy for toys and gifts for the county's youngsters.

Atkinson has stated, "It's kind of like a triangle. You have the sheriff's office providing the resources and manpower, the school system providing the names on the list and people to do shopping, and then the community is the base of the triangle — it is the community that holds it all up."

Give A Kid A Christmas spends an average of about \$200 per child — well over \$100,000 annually. Financial support comes from private donors, businesses, and civic and church groups. In addition, a telethon last year raised more than \$45,000. This year's telethon on Dec. 2 will feature videos from local people showing off their talents — artists, singers, dancers, musicians, poets, comedians, chefs, "and even martial artists," according to Sheriff Steve C. Hiatt.

"What started as a modest effort has grown into a powerful tradition," Sheriff Hiatt observed. "The public's support means the world to these children. It fills their hearts with hope and happiness." This year's Give A Kid A Christmas goals are to deliver food boxes to more than 400 families and to provide toys and other gifts for upwards of 450 children.

Sheriff Atkinson's Give A Kid A Christmas Inc. is a qualified nonprofit organization and donations may be tax deductible. A donor may send a check to Give A Kid A Christmas at P.O. Box 827, Dobson, NC, 27017. Contributions also can be made online via PayPal to paypal.me/giveakidachristmas or by Venmo to sheriffsgiveakidachristmas@gmail.com.

Because the needs in Surry County will exceed \$100,000, we ask you with servants' hearts to give

until it feels good. God loves cheerful givers, and with His encouragement we'll find the ways to fulfill the hopes of those challenged. Please remember to eagerly send cash, volunteer on Dec. 7 and 10, and pray for the means to fund our most worthy cause. Happy people seek and find ways to serve God, families, friends and worthy causes. Be that person who wants and needs to help and give.

A Servant's Heart

A favorite Christmas gift was Charles Stanley's CD series on "Servanthood." Dr. Stanley shared his requirements for true service that pleases God. Several keys are:

1. Be humble and meek.
2. Volunteer without being asked.
3. Never criticize those not serving.
4. Never compare one ministry with others'.
5. Serve without expectation of return.
6. Be willing to be served.
7. Serve those who reject us.
8. We will be Blessed.

Word Match Game

Match the word with its definition

- | | | |
|------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1. dross | _____ | A. nearsightedness |
| 2. trifle | _____ | B. safe place |
| 3. dregs | _____ | C. comfort |
| 4. rubbish | _____ | D. a part of |
| 5. leverage | _____ | E. dessert |
| 6. culture | _____ | F. goodwill |
| 7. zoning | _____ | G. wrestler's hold |
| 8. consensus | _____ | H. quiet and gentle |
| 9. haven | _____ | I. overwhelmed |
| 10. solace | _____ | J. remnants |
| 11. spud | _____ | K. waste |
| 12. stupendous | _____ | L. customs |
| 13. meek | _____ | M. worthless |
| 14. obstreperous | _____ | N. clever plan |
| 15. enclave | _____ | O. regulations |
| 16. boggled | _____ | P. tuber |
| 17. grace | _____ | Q. agreement |
| 18. maneuver | _____ | R. advantage |
| 19. myopia | _____ | S. amazing |
| 20. hammer lock | _____ | T. unruly |

See answers on Page 7.

A Healing Trail For Elkin

The Elkin Valley Trails Association, in collaboration with Hugh Chatham Health, is excited to announce development of a "Healing Trail" in Elkin. The serene, nature-inspired walking path will provide a respite and peaceful retreat for patients, caregivers, staff, and the community. The three-quarters-mile path will wind around the picturesque lake at Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital.

The Healing Trail will feature:

- A stunning Moon Gate entrance crafted from elegant stone, symbolizing a gateway to tranquility.
- Meditative coves where walkers can pause, reflect, and reconnect with nature.
- Benches placed along the way, providing spots to rest and take in the beauty of the surrounding landscape.

This trail is designed to help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and alleviate anxiety — healing the body and mind through the power of nature. It will serve as an invaluable resource for those in need of a moment of peace, whether they are patients in recovery, family members offering support, hospital staff in need of a break, or members of the community seeking a quiet walk and tranquility.

The Elkin Valley Trails Association is inviting donations and sponsorships for the meditative coves and benches along the trail. Each sponsorship is an opportunity to honor a loved one or contribute to the well-being of others. Any and every donation, large or small, will help build this pathway for healing and peace.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, make a donation, or become involved in the project, visit the elkinvalleytrails.org website or contact bob.hillyer@elkinvalleytrails.org or Hugh Chatham Health.

The Chatham Legacy

The Chatham Manufacturing Co. led by Dick and Hugh Chatham created a legacy of profound benevolence and charity. Every Christmas it sent a cash donation to each minister whose church's members served the company.

In 1970 the Chatham leaders saw the need to build a new hospital in Elkin. Fred Norman was chosen to lead the fundraising campaign. At its initial meeting he received a check from Chatham Manufacturing for \$32,000 (\$100 for each employee) and the deed for 109 acres of land on which Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital sits today.

Friend Howard Reynolds received a \$300 check on May 28, 1968, "to assist with work on the Little Elkin Baptist Church." That's the equivalent of \$2,700 in today's dollars. The envelope was mailed to Mr. Reynolds at Route 1, Ronda, N.C. — there was no ZIP Code — and bore a 6-cent stamp.

Bundle Up Exceeds Goal

We salute the Mount Airy City Schools students, teachers, other staff, and community supporters who together exceeded the fundraising goals of their initial campaign to help five Buncombe County schools recover from Hurricane Helene.

B.H. Tharrington Primary, J.J. Jones Intermediate, Mount Airy Middle School, and Mount Airy High School started "Bundle Up For Buncombe" to raise \$30,000 and buy warm, school-logoed hoodies for approximately 2,000 students at Black Mountain Primary, Black Mountain Elementary, and Charles D. Owen High School in Black Mountain and W.D. Williams Elementary and C.D. Owen Middle School in Swannanoa. Peggy Long at MACS said the total donations will approach or possibly exceed \$33,000. Any money in excess of what's needed to buy the hoodies will go to Buncombe County Schools for purchasing supplies.

Cold weather arrives earlier in the mountains, where Helene's damage included widespread power outages, so Buncombe County Schools officials put a priority on providing warm clothing for all students. Approached by Mount Airy City Schools, Pine State Marketing in Mount Airy agreed to provide hoodies with each Buncombe school's logo and school colors at cost, about \$13 each.

For updates on recovery efforts at Buncombe County Schools, visit BuncombeSchools.org.

MerleFest 2025 Tickets On Sale

Looking for a unique Christmas present? Gift a day or three to MerleFest 2025. Tickets for the event April 24-27 in Wilkesboro are on sale now.

Organizers have announced the initial lineup. MerleFest 2025, sponsored by Window World, will welcome The Avett Brothers, Bonnie Raitt, The Dead South, Watchhouse, Wyatt Flores, The War And Treaty, The SteelDrivers, Sam Bush, Asleep at the Wheel, The Lil Smokies, Brent Cobb, Tony Trischka's Earl Jam, Alison Brown, Della Mae, Peter Rowan, Scythian, Donna the Buffalo, Jim Lauderdale, Kruger Brothers, TopHouse, Big Richard, John R. Miller, Woody Platt and the Bluegrass Gentlemen, John McEuen & The Circle Band, The Waybacks, Andy May, Banknotes, The Barefoot Movement, Carol Mallett Rifkin, Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer with Chao Tian From China to Appalachia, Charles Welch, Damn Tall Buildings, East Nash Grass, the InterACTIVE Theater of Jef, Jack Lawrence, Jeff Little Trio, Joe Smothers, Josh Goforth, Laura Boosinger, The Local Boys, Mark Bumgarner, Mattie Schell, Mitch Greenhill & Mitch's Kitchen, Muireann Bradley, Paul McDonald, Pete & Joan Wernick, Presley Barker, the Rev. Robert Jones, Roy Booker Binder, Wayne Henderson, and more. For additional information visit MerleFest.org.

Christmas Holiday House Tour In Mount Airy

The Mount Airy Restoration Foundation will host its 36th annual Christmas Holiday House Tour on Dec. 7-8. This is a self-guided tour of the historic William Alfred Moore House and eight additional houses, most of them in or close to the Historic Downtown District. Foundation President Brian McPeak says, "For many people, this tour is a tradition that jumpstarts the Christmas season."

The tour runs continuously from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday and visitors may drop in at will and in no particular order at locations they wish to see. Advance tickets cost \$20 at the Mount Airy Visitors Center, 200 N. Main St. The number of tickets is limited, but some be available on the weekend for \$25.

Proceeds from the Holiday House Tour help the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation maintain the William Alfred Moore House and grounds and support restoration and tourism in Mount Airy. For more information and details, visit TheMooreHouse-MtAiry.com

Sites on this year's tour are:

- **The William Alfred Moore House, 200 Moore Ave.** Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 and owned since 1992 by the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation, the William Alfred Moore House is the oldest known remaining residential building (built circa 1860) within the city of Mount Airy. The house exhibits a combination of Victorian and Italianate stylistic features and on the interior, Greek Revival features. It sits on about four acres of wooded and landscaped land adjacent to downtown Mount Airy.

- **The Gertrude Smith House, 708 N. Main St.** This home built in 1908 also is on the National Register of Historical Homes. This Victorian-Colonial Revival home contains period antique furnishings and artwork collected by Gertrude from around the world. The house is operated by the Gilmer-Smith Foundation. The staff surprises and delights Tour of Homes guests with their decorations and collections of items such as teacups and nutcrackers.

- **The Edwards Franklin House, 4132 Haystack Road.** Also on the National Register of Historic Places, this home was built in 1799 by Gideon Edwards and later occupied by congressional representative Meshack Franklin. The Surry County Historical Society purchased the house in 1973 and performed extensive renovations. For the Holiday House Tour, the Historical Society uses antiques, live greenery, homemade ornaments, and candles to decorate the home in period style. Volunteers on site will describe the home's history to visitors.

- **Grace Moravian Church, 1401 N. Main.** This beautiful, granite church is a part of the Taylor Park

Historic District. Built between 1925 and 1926, it has grown over the years: a new Sunday school building added in 1955, a second Christian education wing with fellowship hall in 1967. The church will be decorated with greenery, Moravian stars, poinsettias and numerous handmade and historically significant ornaments.

- **615 N. Main St.** Formerly known as "The Dr. Robert E. Smith House" and "The Blue House," this in its past has been a dental office, residential apartments, an art gallery, and a visitors center and exhibit space for memorabilia associated with the famous Siamese Twins. Now it has undergone a comprehensive, two-years-long renovation and reconstruction by homeowners Scott and Melody Lewis Coble. The home will be decorated as they normally decorate for this family's Christmas: a simple, thoughtful, family-friendly home.

- **625 N. Main St.** Built in the early 1900s, this Colonial Revival house has been known as the Harry Galloway home or the Lovill house. Homeowners Benjamin and Kendra Griffin moved to Mount Airy in 2022 and loved the charm of Main Street and the proximity to the downtown's many shops and restaurants. After renovation, the home retains original features such as 11-foot ceilings, a curved stairwell, much of the original woodwork and fireplace mantels, and stained-glass features in the dining room and front door. The front porch remains true to the original home.

- **116 Yukon Trail.** This is a new but old log cabin. Tony and Deena Martin wanted to build something near their primary home as a separate place to relax and entertain, and also for family to come and visit and possibly stay overnight. Local builders Lee and Judy Mills completed the cabin in 2023. It incorporates 100-year old logs and some old construction techniques. A rock fireplace has hand-chiseled stonework. Hardwood floors and antique barn doors are used throughout. Antique furnishings found in the cabin include a doorknob from the Old Beulah School, a nod to the Martins' school days.

- **400 W. Pine St.** The James A. Hadley house, built in 1894-1900, is one of the finest examples of Queen Anne Style architecture in the United States and the first house in Mount Airy built with local granite. Across its 4,500 square feet is an abundance of stained-glass windows (most original), marble columns, wainscoting, vintage light fixtures, stained-glass transom windows, and gorgeous woodwork. Challie and Catherine Minton purchased it and opened their house for the Tour in 2023.

- **424 Spring St.** This is a beautiful granite home built in 1938 on a corner lot in a key residential area of downtown Mount Airy. It features wide double gables with accented timbers and a large front porch.

Preparation

For one Christmas, dear friend Page Moir of Salem, Va., gifted me a copy of Kevin Eastman's "Why The Best Are The Best." A former coach of the Boston Celtics, he shared 25 "power words" that define leadership, competence, and humility. More importantly, Eastman's book teaches us how to be great teachers of life's values.

Included in his list are:

Truth	Sacrifice	Passion
Respect	Preparation	Belief
Urgency	Curiosity	Trust
Choices	Courage	Humility

For example, preparation is vital to winning and success. It is the time we spend getting ready to compete. Eric Logan, who helped Oprah to stardom, said, "I work an hour preparing for each 10 minutes I will be speaking." NBA Hall of Famer Ray Allen made sure he was there before he got there.

High school friend Mike Cooke, who led the Mount Airy Granite Bears to a 25-0 season and the N.C. state basketball championship in 1960, practiced every day of the year to rise to the top.

Every team member had a key to Coach Sam Moir's gym and we were expected to prepare to win. We also had great players. Cooke was our state's MVP and Tom Childress the best point guard.

Back to preparation. I've found that the best sales presentations are those that answer the most questions, rather than leaving unanswered questions for which we had to promise, "I'll have to get back to you later with the answer." We must strive with effective preparation to be there before we get there. Have answers prepared, not excuses.

Speaking Of Books

"Distilled Wisdom," Alfred Armand Montapert's ageless "encyclopedia of wisdom in condensed form," contains nearly 50 quotes about books and readers. Here are a few:

- Books are treasures.
- When I get some money, I buy a book.
- Books are lighthouses.
- Books have master instruction.
- Leaders are readers.
- The choice of books is a serious duty.
- The Bible is the most-read book.

Did You Know?

The song "Mary Did You Know?" written by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene is one of the best musical gifts of the season. Hundreds of artists from different genres, folk and country to gospel and opera, have covered "Mary Did You Know?" in their own styles. Among our favorites are versions by country music's Kathy Mattea and Wynonna

Judd with the late Kenny Rogers, gospel singer Vickie Winans and the Gaither Vocal Band, North Carolina's own pop artist Clay Aiken, R&B and soul singer Cee Lo Green, and the a cappella group Pentatonix.

New listeners seem to "discover" the song each year even though it's been around for decades. Here are its lyrics written by Lowry in 1984:

Mary Did You Know?

Mary did you know that your baby boy
Will one day walk on water?
Mary did you know that your baby boy
Will save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered
Will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will calm a storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God.

Oh, Mary did you know, ooh...
The blind will see, the deaf will hear,
The dead will live again.
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak,
The praises of the lamb.

Mary did you know that your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation?
Mary did you know that your baby boy
Will one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy
Is Heaven's perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding
Is the great I am.

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Send A Message

In the early 2000s, York Oil/Neighbors sponsored a Surry County High School Christmas Basketball Tournament. East, Central and North Surry high schools and Mount Airy City participated.

In a hotly contested boys' game between North Surry and Mount Airy, a North player was called for an intentional foul. Although the player was not ejected, Head Coach Chris Butler sat his star player on the bench. With two minutes to go in the game and North behind by two points, the crowd started a chant to reinsert the star player at the crucial moment. The coach stuck to his guns and North won the game with the star player on the bench. I'll always treasure the example set by Coach Butler who also served North Surry as Athletics Director.

A Famed Editorial For Christmas

Our friend and the editor of *The Communicator*, Steve Welker of Mount Airy, has been a reporter and editor for nearly 60 years. At every newspaper and publication where he worked at Christmastime, he reprinted the most-famous newspaper editorial of all time. It's an inspired piece, written gently and affectionately by a man who had been a war correspondent and had plenty of reasons to be hard-bitten and cynical.

The background to the story is that a little girl in 1897 asked her father if Santa Claus was real, and he suggested she ask *The New York Sun*, a widely read newspaper. The *Sun's* editor gave Virginia's letter to Francis Pharcellus Church, a staff writer who penned this editorial in reply.

Steve also shares two facts many people don't know: "It wasn't printed at Christmas; it came out in September. And although he speaks beautifully to children, Church had no children of his own."

Here it is, a holiday gift to you, our readers:

Yes, Virginia, There Is A Santa Claus

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of *The Sun*:

Dear Editor—

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

(signed) Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas

eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Bobby Harold

A favorite photograph in my archives is Bobby Harold receiving the Mount Airy Salvation Army's first-place award for non-profit team fundraising during its 2005 Christmas Bell-Ringing Kettle Campaign at Walmart. Bobby, leading the Surry Shrine Club, championed our fundraising effort.

Any initiative led by Bobby Harold was reliably a winner. For the Christmas Kettle effort, Bobby spent hours calling colleagues to remind the Surry Shrine Club members when to arrive for bellringing at Walmart. I always looked forward to his call in early December; our day was usually the Saturday before Christmas Eve. We stood faithfully by the Salvation Army sign, ringing our bells on hour-long shifts between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Being the top club by bringing in the most money was the goal. Being recognized at the Salvation Army's annual dinner at Cross Creek Country Club was paramount.

Bobby passed away in 2013, but his legacy is unmatched. One of his favorite charitable initiatives, the annual Woltz-Harold Golf Tournament to benefit the Surry Community College Foundation, has continued to grow every year. Its widespread appeal continues to speak to his selfless devotion to provide scholarships for worthy, striving students.

Word Match Answers

From Page 3

- | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. M | 5. R | 9. B | 13. H | 17. F |
| 2. E | 6. L | 10. C | 14. T | 18. N |
| 3. J | 7. O | 11. P | 15. D | 19. A |
| 4. K | 8. Q | 12. S | 16. I | 20. G |

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“and He will be called,
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”
Isaiah 9:6
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!

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