

# GREEN TREE TIMES

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## The Bird's Nest in the Christmas Tree



Check for any bird's nests before you load your Christmas tree.

When New York's annual Christmas tree arrived at Rockefeller Center last month, a tiny stowaway was aboard. A Saw-whet owl, the smallest species of owl in the United States, had inadvertently made the trip to the Big Apple. Like many holiday travelers, she arrived a little disheveled, dehydrated and hungry. Fortunately for the little owl, she was treated for several days at a wildlife rehabilitation facility. After being cleared by an avian veterinarian, she (named Rockefeller, "Rocky") was driven back to her home area in upstate New York and was successfully released into the wild.

Bird nests have a long tradition as ornamentation in Christmas trees. There is a lot of symbolism in the European decorations that we use for the holidays that we might not even be aware of. "Bird nests are symbols of home, they represent the love, commitment and effort it takes to build a happy home. They are also good luck symbols. Legend has it that prosperity will come to any home that finds a bird's nest nestled among the branches of the family Christmas tree," says Inge-Glas, from [mygrowingtradition.com/blog](http://mygrowingtradition.com/blog). The article also states that the legend's origins come from Iceland, Sweden, and Germany. There are many versions of the legend but the "prosperity" mentioned also includes "health, happiness, friendship, and good luck." It appears that our little birdy friends do not really sleep in the nest, the nest is to keep the eggs and chicks confined and safe, sort of like a little playpen. Symbolically, nests are home to new life.

The Audubon Society has long been known as a repository for bird life and remarkable photography. A good article recommended is "Small Miracles: The Wonder of Birds/ Nests" by Sharon Beals, with many lovely photographs. So, just like the famous Christmas Tree pickle ornament, we should be sure to have at least one bird's nest on our tree. Turns out the bird is the number one figural

Christmas ornament. There are beautiful blown-glass European ornaments with feathered tails or one might choose more natural bird ornaments made of natural materials, like wood shavings or carved wood. The bird nest, with perhaps a few faux eggs and a bird, would be deftly placed towards the edge of the branches. After my own mother passed, a life-long bird enthusiast, I gave my sisters and our children each two Christmas tree ornaments, a red Cardinal and a yellow Goldfinch, to remember her by.

Once the tree is up and ready, we still need to keep the family busy as they wait for Santa, right? A good activity that will help the local outdoor bird population... and perhaps supply you with a real nest for next year's tree... is to make some food cookies for the birdies.

The suet and seed "cookies" could be hung off an Evergreen wreath or on a tree near the house. Choose a location where the family can see the new feeding station for when the birds come to dine. We know Cardinals abound all winter in Pittsburgh so we can expect them for sure. Cardinals are often the first to feed in the morning and the last to leave in the evening.

Following is a recipe using cookie cutters and a suet base. Put a jute or twine string through the cutter before filling. Use 1 cup each lard (the clear kind), peanut

butter, all purpose flour, plus 3 cups cornmeal. Melt the lard and peanut butter slowly till liquid, stirring well, then add the cornmeal and flour. This will help the cookie crumble. Add in cracked sunflower seeds, unsalted crushed peanuts, cracked corn, oats and/or berries. Use a spoon with help from your fingers to put the mix into the cookie cutters and place overnight in the 'frig. \*DO NOT use bacon drippings due to ingredients which can harm birds.

Wishing you all a very healthy, happy holiday season!



Thankfully, "Rocky" made it safely home after his difficult trip.

~photo courtesy of Ravensbeard Wildlife Center

## Shopping Locally is Now More Crucial Than Ever



The importance of shopping locally has been emphasized with increasing urgency in recent years. Events like Small Business Saturday

and Plaid Friday have brought some much-needed attention to the importance of shopping local, which is even more crucial now as so many small

businesses try to survive the pandemic.

A poll from the trade group the National Federation of Independent Business reported that about half of all the businesses in the survey reported a 25 percent drop in sales since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, and roughly one in five businesses have seen sales decline by more than 50 percent. If the economic climate does not radically improve, 20 percent of small businesses won't survive.

According to NBC News, small businesses employ 60 million people in the United States, almost half of the nation's private-sector employees. In addition, small businesses generate tax revenues that help communi-

ties by funding schools, maintaining parks and contributing to public safety programs. However, based on research from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, even before COVID-19 spread across the world, only 20 percent of healthy small businesses had sufficient cash reserves to continue to operate if they experienced a revenue loss for two months. Some have been shuttered for much longer.

Individuals looking for everything from clothing to home improvement services to office supplies can look to small businesses to fill those needs.

Look for small businesses for any and all of your shopping needs. Many items sold by big box retailers also

(continued on back page)



# MUSINGS...Big Thanks for Small Things



*Editor's Note: Sharon Eakes is a personal and executive coach, who is a regular columnist for our paper as well as for the Huffington Post. She is the author of Fresh Views on Resilient Living. She may be reached by calling 412-741-1709 or email Sharon@hopellc.com.*

*Sharon and Nancy Smyth, her business partner in Two Wise Women, together published, "Chocolate or Lunch, How Choices Impact Relationships." If you have tense relationships, this book is for you. Both books are available through Amazon.*

*Enjoy the little things in life because one day you'll look back and realize they were the big things.*

Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Thanksgiving is one day for giving thanks. But in these fraught times, one day is not enough. Many people are feeling pandemic fatigue, loneliness, itchiness to get back to some semblance of regular life. Since that day seems slow in coming, how can we survive and even thrive in the meantime?

Being thankful for little, ordinary things may be the answer. Day after day after day.

Today, I am thankful for:

- The taste and texture of a Baked Apple Chip on my tongue
- The healed papercut on my pinky.
- The bright dance of a red maple leaf blowing in the wind
- The kindness of a neighbor who returned my recycling bin to my backyard
- The warmth of my house when it is raining and the wind is howling outside
- Reading a great book, Flying Lead Change by Kelly Wendorf
- A virtual visit with my dear friend Susan
- The view of the Ohio River out my window
- The comfort of a familiar prayer

- My good health and energy
- Calls from my far-away children

I look at that list and think: OH, what bounty!

Gratitude for small things brings us right to the present moment. The past may be unresolved, the future murky, but here, now, right at this moment, I am having an absolutely delicious cup of coffee. Continuing to notice and feel thankful for very small things fills me up. The practice keeps me from feeling lonely or bored or angry.

To help jumpstart your list, I'm including a fabulous recipe for Easy Baked Apple Chips at the end of this article.

## COACHING TIPS/QUESTIONS:

1. What one small thing are you thankful for right now?
2. And what else?
3. And what else?
4. And what else?
5. Bake some apple chips and be thankful for their crunchy good taste.
6. Make it a habit to be grateful for small things every day.
7. Realize that small things are big things.



## Easy Baked Apple Chips

(serves 2)

2 Gala apples (I've also made them with Fujis and Honey Crisps....all are yum)

Dash of nutmeg (optional)

## Directions:

Preheat the oven to 225 degrees F. Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Cut out the core and slice the apples as *thinly as you can*.

Set the slices on the baking sheet. Bake in the oven for 1 hour; flip them over; bake for another hour.

Before serving let them cool and consider a sprinkle of nutmeg

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# The Fishin' Hole



Sam Hall

The final month of what almost all of us would describe as the most bizarre year of our lives is here. I don't know what 2021 holds for any of us but for me it represents hope. Hope for a vaccine, and hope for a future that will allow us to return to time with our loved ones and waking up everyday without worrying about the entire world.

We start the December 2020 Fishin' Hole as we start nearly every December Fishin' hole with an update on everybody's favorite December fishing place, the Lake Erie tributaries. A couple great friends of the Fishin' Hole got the chance to head up to Erie just this past week. Normally, I give you tips about going there that include me rambling on and on about hook size and water clarity and drift. I am so glad someone like Pastor Dave Carver of First United Presbyterian Church of Crafton Heights (CHUP.org) has boiled down all my nonsense into a user-friendly version as he describes his trip with 12 year old Henry Simcox of Crafton Heights.

"Henry and I have been talking about trying to get into some of these beautiful steelhead for a long time, and so when the schools were closed for the day after Thanksgiving, we took advantage of that time and a favorable weather forecast to drive

up to Erie County to look for some steelhead. It was not promising at first, because the water in the creeks was high and muddy AND because it seemed like everyone had the same idea. The first hole we stopped in was crowded with people, but not with steelhead. We drove past other areas that were overrun with fishermen. Finally, we found our way to a few secluded holes where the water was a little clearer and the fishing pressure was a lot less. We used egg sacks and skein to land about a dozen "chromers" that weighed between 4 and 8 pounds each. Because the fish have such good eyesight, we had to use very small hooks (size 16!) and 4 pound test line. Needless to say, we broke off a few throughout the course of the day as well. The day was almost a complete success – the only negative thing is that near the end of the day, one of us (not Henry!) fell into the creek and filled his waders with cold water! Can't wait for the next opportunity!"

So, Pastor Dave and Henry really executed perfectly all things we talk about here when we talk about Erie,



Pastor Dave and Henry with a beautiful steelhead  
~photo courtesy of Dave Carver

flexibility and a willingness to explore and adjust to ever-changing and, at times, very challenging conditions. What we have never mentioned is the importance of bringing a full set of dry clothes along on your trip, in case you trip!!! We are so glad they had a great time and were willing to share that time with us!

Don't forget the state is currently selling the 2021 fishing licences and permits on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat commission website. Do your purchasing online and save the PDF in case you lose your license in the field.

Closer to home, the walleye bite is in full swing on the local rivers, minnow-tipped jigs are producing nice fish on the Allegheny, the Mon, and the Ohio. Warm sunny days will still fire up some small mouth bass in the local streams.

Keep your favorite angler in mind when you are doing your online Christmas shopping this month and keep yourself and your family safe and close this holiday season. Keep those lines tight and keep those stories and pictures coming to [samdhall@comcast.net](mailto:samdhall@comcast.net) See you in 2021!

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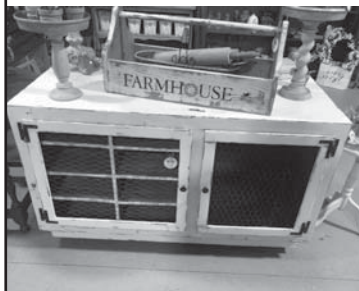
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## Congratulations to Roberta Kozel of Salon Iaomo



Roberta Kozel, owner and stylist, of Salon Iaomo, was awarded as a new Master's Certified Member of the American Hair Loss Council. She was one of 30 people in the United States awarded this certification.

The prestigious American Hair Loss Council's Master's Certification is a program whereby members accrue credit for educational experience, professional work experience and participation in American Hair Loss Council activities.

This certification was created to publicly and officially recognize the efforts of individuals who are highly competent and respected, knowledgeable professionals and authorities in their field.

Applicants must be a member of the American Hair Loss Council for a minimum of two consecutive years before applying to the program. Each AHLC Master's Certification is valid for five years and is renewable.

*(See ad on back page.)*

## Shop Local Businesses

*(continued from front page)*

are sold by small businesses. When the options are the same or similar, purchase from a small business instead of its big box competitor.

Readily provide recommendations of small businesses with which you have done business with your friends and family. Too often people are quick to complain about places that have failed them, but those same people don't think to say kind words about companies that went above and beyond. Share great experiences on social media or through word of mouth.

Talk to small businesses owners first if you have an issue. It's tempting to go directly to social media to complain about something, but such complaints can have a dire impact. Always take issues to the manager or business owner first to see if a resolution can be reached. A manager may not be aware of an issue at all. Give small businesses a chance to make it right before taking things public.

If you own a small business, rely on other small businesses to fulfill your needs. Order supplies from fellow small business owners, seek the help of local financial advisors and tax professionals and use local suppliers and delivery personnel.

Small businesses have experienced unprecedented setbacks due to COVID-19. Your first priority is of course your safety, and all businesses have COVID-19 guidelines that they should be following in terms of store capacity for shoppers and mask wearing by employees and customers. If they are practicing the safety protocols, then you can feel pretty safe to be doing in person shopping, so try to shop small and local, if possible.

Some may even offer curbside service. Try calling in advance to see what each individual place is doing for online or phone ordering. By supporting small businesses, communities can help them regain stable footing.

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# Fun and Games for Kids



## Holiday Riddle Fun!

- What kind of party does a snowman throw?
- What did Santa need when he sprained his ankle?
- What is wrong with these letters: "abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy"
- What does December have that all of the other months do not have?
- What do you call Santa on the beach?
- What do monkeys sing at Christmas?
- Where does Santa put his suit after Christmas?
- Why did Santa get a ticket on Christmas Eve?
- How many presents can Santa fit in an empty sack?
- How do you scare a snowman?

Find the 8 differences between the pictures below.

(Answers on back page)



## Solve the Rebus Puzzles

All One One One One  
One All All All All

LO  $\frac{\text{head}}{\text{heels}}$  VE

**CHRISTMAS**

3s5a1f9e8t2y6

(difficult one above - good luck!)

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Sunday Live Stream  
Worship at 9:45 am  
Go to: [mtpisgahgreentree.com](http://mtpisgahgreentree.com)  
Joyful Journey Preschool  
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## Saint Stephen Lutheran Church

55 Forsythe Road, Pittsburgh 15220  
Off Greentree Road in Scott Twp.  
[ststephenpittsburgh.org](http://ststephenpittsburgh.org)  
412-279-5868  
Pastor Maurice C. Frontz III, STS  
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## All Saints Polish National Catholic Church

500 Fifth Street, Carnegie  
412-276-2462 Fax: 412-276-9677  
[www.allsaintspnccpa.org](http://www.allsaintspnccpa.org)  
[all.saints.pnc.church@verizon.net](mailto:all.saints.pnc.church@verizon.net)  
Very Rev. Richard Seiler, Jr. Pastor  
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## Crafton United Presbyterian Church

80 Bradford Avenue  
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Sundays at on Facebook  
Pastor Diane Flynn  
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## Bible Baptist Church

412 Old Washington Pike  
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Rev. Phil Golden Jr., Pastor

## Carnegie Presbyterian Church

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## First Christian Church at Carnegie

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[carnegiechristianchurch@gmail.com](mailto:carnegiechristianchurch@gmail.com)

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Rev. Shawn Markarkey, Pastor

## Hawthorne Avenue Presbyterian Church

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## 1<sup>st</sup> United Presbyterian Church of Crafton Heights

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## Saint Philip Parish

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## St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church

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## United Presbyterian Church in Ingram

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Rev. Wayne D. Meyer

## Church of the Nativity (Episcopal)

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## Carnegie Primitive Methodist Church

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## Church of the Atonement (Episcopal)

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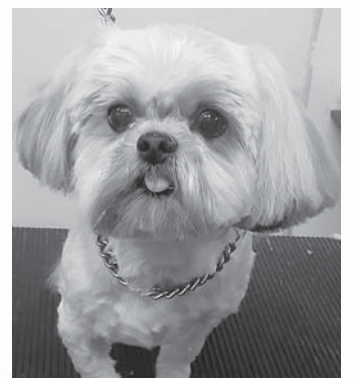
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 anymore.  
 Only one, after that it isn't empty  
 Zone.  
 He left his sled in the Snow Parking  
 In the CLAUS-et  
 Jungle Bells, Jungle Bells...  
 Sandy Claus (or, on vacation) haha

The letter D  
 There's Noel  
 A candy cane  
 A Snow Ball  
 Riddle Fun:

ear  
 scarf fringe  
 glove  
 piece flying snow  
 pants buckle  
 shadow  
 bottom pine tree  
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