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Saying Farewell to the Past and Embracing the Future



Ring in the New Year with confetti, fun and celebration!

I woke up today, January 1, and the newspaper was finished and ready to be sent to the printer and I thought - no. I don't like the cover article. It was about resolutions and bettering yourself and your life, which are all great things but I just felt like it's too much pressure.

Starting a new year is a very cool thing! It's an illusion that you can close a book on one year and open a fresh new book on the new year. Life just isn't compartmentalized like that although we seem to like to celebrate that way.

It hit me when I sent a Happy New Year text to my friend Ann in California. I then realized and said, "Wait! You are still in 2024!" We had a laugh as she said, "Yes, but I watched the ball drop in New York so I'm good and off to bed early!"

Time passes by in seconds, then minutes, then hours, then days, then weeks, then months, then years, then decades, then centuries...

Today is actually the first day of the 2025th year. When we celebrate, we are both saying "YAY!" to the completion of the prior year and to the start of the new year! Weird concept, I think!

Our lives are an accumulation of all of our past experiences, good and

bad. We never get a clean slate as if things never happened BUT we don't have to carry it all with us. Pick what you want to keep in the forefront of your life and let the rest ride in the back!

In the United States, we all do a combination of many different traditions that most of us are familiar with such as celebrating with fireworks, noise makers, food, champagne, music, friends, family - anything goes!

In honor of celebrating the start of a new year and the departure of the past year, I thought I'd take a look at some unique traditions that may be new to us.

An interesting Irish tradition is to open the back door of the house just before midnight to *let the old year out* and open the front door to both *let the new year in* and to also greet the neighbors with a Happy New Year wish as they are opening their doors too.

A fun German tradition with a twist is German bakeries make an extra large amount of Berliner Pfannkuchen (jelly-filled doughnuts) for New Year's Eve but as a joke, they randomly fill some of them with mustard and onions instead. There are some that may be unpleasantly surprised when they take a bite.

A special Mexican New Year's Eve tradition is to eat bunuelos, a crispy fritter dessert that is drizzled with sweet syrup. They must be served on a ceramic dish. After eating the bunuelos, people make a wish, then smash the ceramic dish on the floor to bring good luck in the new year.

If in Italy on New Year's Eve, watch your head! The tradition of throwing old pots, clothes and even furniture out the window, literally, to let go of the past unhappiness and to prepare for the future is still practiced by some but most have left that tradition behind. It's still a great story!

Another fun Italian tradition is to wear red underwear on New Year's Eve to bring luck, love and fertility in the year ahead.

A French tradition that is specific to the town of Viella is to invite locals to participate in a night time grape harvest, *les vandanges de la Saint-Sylvestre*. The harvest takes place after Mass at a local church and then they all walk together into the vineyard holding torches. This began because of an early frost one year which delayed harvesting. This ended up producing exceptional wine, so the tradition has remained.



Grape Harvest in Viella.
~photo courtesy Plaimont

An old tradition of northern England known as 'first-footing' is one that is still practiced in some areas. It states that the first visitor to step foot into the house after midnight on New Year's Eve affects the family's fortune. The ideal is a tall, dark, handsome male stranger with the right type of feet. There are different outcomes depending on who steps across first. An example would be if they had flat feet that would be bad luck.

Taking a polar bear swim and plunging into freezing cold waters is a New Year's tradition in Canada. This tradition is now all over the world but one of the originating places was Vancouver in the early 1900s.



The Polar Bear Plunge in Vancouver
~photo courtesy Samuel Rendon

Wearing white on New Year's Eve is a Brazilian Tradition. It symbolizes peace and harmony.

In Spain, there is a tradition known as Twelve Grapes. At the stroke of midnight, you eat one grape and then another at each chime. It's believed to bring good luck for each month of the coming year.

There are so many more traditions from all over the world, that I barely scratched the surface.

It seems there is a common theme of trying to get that clean slate and usher in luck, prosperity, good health, love and all good things!

As far as resolutions go, today or any day can be the time to make a commitment to changing or adding something to your life. Just be your best you, whenever you can! That's all anyone can ask of themselves or others!

Happy New Year! Now, I'm off to have some cabbage, pork and black eyed peas in hopes of bringing some luck in 2025!



MUSINGS...HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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.

"The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak."
~Hans Hofmann

New Year's Resolutions? I gave those up a while ago. Like many people, I found that most of mine fizzled out before January was over. Instead, I've embraced a simpler approach: choosing one word to guide my year.

This single word becomes my focus—a lens through which I see and live into the year.

2024 in Review: Choices

In 2024, my word was Choices. I thought I understood the concept, but focusing on it revealed just how many decisions I make every single day. The biggest insights came from the choices not to do certain things:

I chose not to retell stories I've shared too many times.

I chose not to immerse myself in the political fray, even in a highly charged year.

I chose not to make impulse purchases, instead waiting 24 hours before deciding.

I chose to say "no" to things that didn't serve me—like social obligations I didn't enjoy or unnecessary appointments in bad weather.

These small but intentional decisions gave me a profound sense of freedom. I realized how often I'd been on autopilot. The result? I felt freer, lighter, and more expansive.

Looking Ahead: 2025 - Savor

My word for 2025 is Savor.

The dictionary defines savor as "to enjoy something deeply and appreciate it fully." That's exactly what I want for the year ahead: to slow down, be present, and truly relish the richness of life.

This year, I plan to savor:

Moments: The fleeting ones that often go unnoticed.

Relationships: Deepening connections with loved ones.

Nature: The beauty of the changing seasons.

Food and drink: Not just eating but truly tasting.

Books: Immersing myself in stories and ideas.

My healthy body: Appreciating what it allows me to do every day.

I'm excited to see how this practice unfolds and will check back next year to share the journey.

And You?

What about you? If you're ready to try this practice, here are some coaching tips to get started:

1. Choose Your Word: Sit quietly and reflect on what you want to focus on in 2025. Let the right word bubble up—it can shape your entire year.

2. Make It Visible: Write your word on sticky notes and place them where you'll see them often: your computer, bathroom mirror, or bedside table.

3. Reflect Monthly: Keep a journal and take a few minutes each month to explore how your word is showing up in your life.

4. Share Your Experience: I'd love to hear how this practice works for you!

Here's to a year of savoring every moment. Happy New Year!

Note from the Publisher: If you enjoy reading Musings, Sharon has gathered them together in a book, titled "Fresh Views on Resilient Living." It would make a great holiday gift! It's available on Amazon or you can scan the QR code to go to the link.



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Community News and Events

Auditions will be held on Sat., Jan. 11 for the children's play **The Little Mermaid** at the studios of the **Carnegie Performing Arts Center**, 500 Chestnut Street in Carnegie. All parts are available, ages 5 – 18 audition at 2 p.m. Performances will be at the Andrew Carnegie Music Hall in Carnegie during the month of Feb.. Rehearsals will take place on Saturday afternoons. For more information please call 412-279-8887 or access the web site at www.carnegieperformingartscenter.com.

The **Association of University People (AUP)** invites singles 50+, who are 4-year college graduates, to join them for activities and to meet new people. Activities include monthly dinners, social gatherings, book club, meeting up at local wineries, and day trips.

Those interested can attend three activities as guests before joining. To obtain more information about AUP or become an AUP member, call and leave a message at 412-353-9088 or email Aupsingles@gmail.com

At their meeting on Dec.19, **Green Tree Rotary** honored two **Paul Harris Fellows for Service Above Self** to the residents of Green Tree.

Among other things, **Michael Wheeler**, of Coldwell Banker Realty, has helped with the club's fundraising; and has publicized their events for the past 12 years. **Dan Gall**, a long-time member of the American Legion, is part of an honor guard at the Cemetary of the Alleghenies; and over the summer months, works to keep the local Farmers' Market going.

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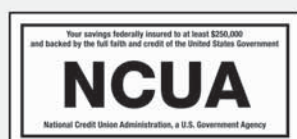
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The Fishin' Hole



by Sam Hall

It's time to buy your 2025 fishing license. You can buy it online and save an electronic version in case it gets lost or destroyed by standing in the pouring rain. Oh, it happens. The link to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission website where you can get your license and any additional stamps you might be interested is www.pa.gov/agencies/fishandboat.html.

Winter is here, but ice fishing is not. Ice is very scarce on our local fisheries and certainly there is no safe ice in the very near future. Temperatures as we go to the printing deadline on this fishing hole are in the mid-fifties with some sixties in the ten

day forecast. Open water it is and will be for a while. The good news is, the open water is there with walleye biting and some fisheries with nice, newly stocked trout for anglers.

The even better news, if you are like me and detest winter, is that we are now under 100 days away from the Opening Day of Trout season in Pennsylvania. Trout season will open statewide on April 5th, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. Let the countdown begin! I'm not even a huge trout guy but that date still stands significant as the true start of spring time fishing as far as the Fishin' Hole is concerned.

The reports from up north in Erie are great right now after a very dry fall that slowed Steelhead fishing to begin the season. Water conditions have been nearly perfect for the fish to get into the tributaries and spread around so if you have been waiting, your time is now. The single most important thing you can perfect for Steelhead fishing is your drift. Because the water is so clear in most of the tributaries you can see the fish, that also means the fish can see you and all the other anglers as well. There

are nearly as many anglers as there are fish in Erie. That makes the fish skittish. That skittishness makes the fish very picky about what they will eat. If your bait, be it a single egg, egg sac, or an Emerald minnow, doesn't look to be moving very naturally along with the current most Steelhead will quickly lose interest in it, and even purposely avoid it. Whatever bait you choose to use, you have to work with the weight on your line to help that bait travel through the stream as if it were not attached to anything at all. The way to do that is by keenly observing your drift and adjusting your weight and that weight's distance from your bait. I have seen so many people in Erie frustrated, watching people around them catch fish, while they are being shut out using the exact same bait in almost the exact same place. It is the drift that is the difference. It takes time and effort to figure that out, but once you master it, you will see the difference.

If you are fishing closer to home I will give you my hottest tip right now for the rivers and streams around

Pittsburgh. It's the floating jig head. Cold water temps have the fish in deeper pockets and they are down low, a floating jig head that just lifts your bait off of the bottom will put it right where the eyes and mouth of the fish are, try bright colors in murky discolored water and neutral colors in clear water.

Keep those lines tight and send your pictures and stories to samdhall@comcast.net.



Smallmouth bass caught with floating jig head. ~photo courtesy of Sam Hall

Free Throw Championship!

All boys and girls ages 9 through 14 are invited!



The Knights of Columbus St. Raphael the Archangel Council #11143 Free Throw Competition will be held on Sunday, February 2, at the Green Tree Borough Municipal Gym at 10 West Manilla Ave., 15220 at 2 p.m.

There will be awards for each age group. No pre-registration necessary. No Cost.

Proof of age is required at the time of competition (birth certificate preferable).

Any Questions? Call Bill O'Connor at 412-716-5577.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Ask a Librarian!

Most libraries throughout the area are offering daily activities for all ages. Some activities are in person and some are still remote. Check with the library near you for the details.

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greentreepubliclibrary.org, 412-921-9292

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(Answers on back page)



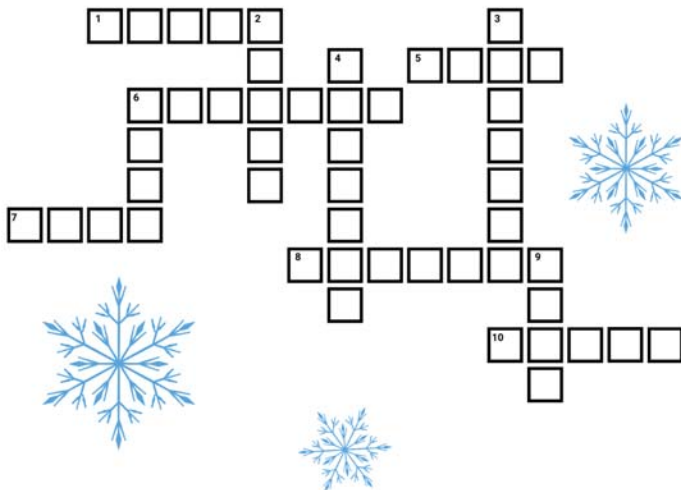
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Check out the newest
Big Kit Lil' Kaboodle issue!



Read the clues below and fill in the grid.



ACROSS

- Shoes for snowy or rainy days.
- A type of tree that stays green.
- Warm clothing for the upper body.
- The opposite of warm.
- Warm gloves for hands.
- Related to very cold regions.

DOWN

- Cloth worn around the neck.
- A figure made by stacking snowballs.
- A black and white bird that can't fly.
- A small vehicle for sliding on snow.
- Frozen water that falls from the sky.



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2025

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Pastor Maurice C. Frontz III, STS
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Teaching From God's Word
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Minister Robert W. Hale,
412-279-5030
carnegiechristianchurch@gmail.com

Saint Philip Parish

St. Philip Church, 50 W. Crafton Ave.
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Ascension Church, 114 Berry St.
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412-922-6300
Rev. James R. Torquato, Pastor
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www.carnegiepresby.org

Bible Baptist Church

412 Old Washington Pike
Carnegie, PA 15106
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bbcpittsburgh.com
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- Crossword Puzzle:**
- ACROSS**
- 1. boots
 - 2. scarf
 - 3. snowman
 - 4. penguin
 - 6. sweater
 - 7. cold
 - 8. mittens
 - 10. polar
- DOWN**
- 1. snow
 - 2. sled
 - 3. snowman
 - 4. penguin
 - 6. sweater
 - 7. cold
 - 8. mittens
 - 10. polar

Ten Differences:

- girl's scarf
- button on snowman
- missing ball
- snowman arm
- missing person in back
- missing tree
- chimney missing
- ear muff missing
- missing middle window
- missing window up high

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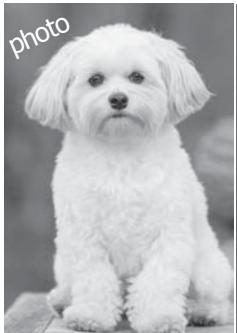
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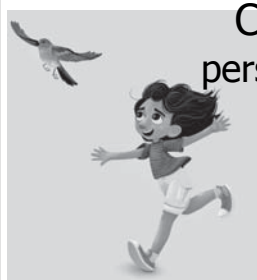


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