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STARLIGHT AND SNOWFLAKES

Gazing up at the night sky during a clear, crisp winter night is an awe-inspiring experience. If you are lucky enough to be in an open, and very rural area where there is little or no light "pollution" from nearby communities, you can get rare views of the night sky. Learning about the constellations and how to recognize them is a fun pastime for old and young alike. I know that when I look up and see all the stars and planets twinkling in the vast darkness, I am struck with wonder and feel a connection to the universe. Seeing a meteor streak across the sky is a treat and I absolutely love to see the full moon, especially on a very clear night when there are moon shadows. Winter is the best time, in my opinion, for stargazing. The night sky seems brighter and clearer and the backdrop of the snow creates even more mystique.

According to the Farmers' Almanac, Winter is the time of year that some of the largest constellations, such as Orion and Gemini are more visible. It is also a better time due to the fact that the Northern Hemisphere is not facing the bright center of the Milky Way as it is in the Summer months. This means there is not as much brightness in the inner galaxy, making the sky appear much darker and therefore, better for viewing. Whatever the "scientific" reason is for the seemingly better views of the galaxy in the Winter, it is a magical sight and something everyone should take the time to experience!

You don't need a high powered, fancy telescope to enjoy this pastime. Just a warm coat, something for you to lie down on, and the willingness to brave the cold, night air! If you happen to see a few snowflakes while gazing at the sky, then you will be treated to a magical show for sure!

Our area offers many places that are perfect for stargazing. Open spaces flanked with high mountains help to shield the sky above from the light pollution making the sky darker for the optimum scenario. The topography in our area, along with the lack of larger cities creates these ideal conditions! Inside this edition, I have a feature article on Cherry Springs State Park which is a Dark Sky Preserve. Check it out and hopefully you will get out to stargaze among the snowflakes in the Winter skies!

HUMOR ME!



FACEBOOK PAGES TO CHECK OUT:

Pine Creek Rail Trail
all things nature
Hiking & Backpacking PA
Snakes of Central PA
Friends of Benezette
Vacation homes and cabins of Davis
Real Estate

SPOTLIGHT ON STATE PARKS!

This issue, I am featuring CHERRY SPRINGS STATE PARK

This state park is truly one of a kind and a true treasure in our state. This is one of the



few Dark Sky preservation areas in the country and offers exceptional views of the Milky Way Galaxy. Naturally, stargazing is the major attraction at this park and there is an Astronomy Field available complete with concrete telescope pads located randomly across the field. In addition, there are 4 small observatories that can be rented. Cherry Springs State Park attained Gold Level International Dark Sky Park certification from the International Dark Sky Assoc. in 2008 making it the 2nd such park in the world! This park serves as a reminder of the importance of quality outdoor lighting to observe the wonders of the night sky and environment. There are Stargazing programs and parties throughout the year. The park also offers picnic grounds and rustic campsites. You can make reservations by calling 814-435-5010 or online at www.visitPAparks.com. There is also a fund you can contribute to that is used to enhance the stargazing & astronomy education and experience. Forms & envelopes for donations are located at the registration kiosks or visit www.csspdarkskyfund.org How lucky are we to have this national treasure in our own backyard?!

Information provided by DCNR Cherry Springs State Park pamphlet

MENU IDEA AND RECIPES: Crock pot comfort meal (use up that leftover ham)

Split Pea & Ham soup

16 oz. pkg dried green split peas rinsed 2 cups fully cooked, cubed ham 1 large onion, chopped 1 cup chopped carrots 1/2 tsp. dried rosemary 1/2 tsp. dried thyme 32 oz. chicken broth 2 cups water

Put everything in a crock pot, cover and cook on low for at least 8 hours

Old-Fashioned Applesauce Cake

1 (18 oz) box spice cake mix 3 eggs 1 1/4 Cup applesauce 1/3 Cup oil 1 cup chopped pecans



With mixer, combine cake mix, eggs, applesauce, and oil. Beat at medium speed 2 min. Stir in pecans Pour into greased, floured 9X13" baking pan. bake at 350 degrees for 40 min. Test with toothpick & cool. Frost with vanilla frosting & sprinkle w/ cinnamon.



HOT BISCUITS
TOSSED SALAD



PROTECTING VACANT CABINS DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

ARTICLE BY: Greg Hancock of Hancock Home Inspections

Entering a vacant home or cabin to conduct an inspection can reveal a disaster. Frozen or broken pipes, heating systems not operational, etc. As a Realtor specializing in vacation homes and cabins, it is common to have listings that are vacant during the winter months. Here are some reminders of the dangers lurking in a home or cabin sitting vacant and a few tips to avoid disasters:

- 1. Maintain heat in a vacant home or cabin at 55 60 degrees, NOT 45 50. Lower temps allow cold pockets to be created which can lead to broken pipe runs.
- 2. Open cabinet doors where plumbing exists to allow heat flow into these areas
- 3. Shut off and drain any outside spigots or water line runs to items outside the home
- 4. Ensure that heating systems have ample oil or propane. This item is frequently overlooked and it is best to be on an automatic fill program so you don't have to think about it.
- 5. If you shut off power to a hot water heater, make sure it is drained completely.
- 6. Unless the home is professionally winterized, it is not a bad idea to pour RV type anti-freeze down each plumbing fixture to prevent traps from freezing.
- 7. Unless water filling is needed for the main heat source, such as a boiler, it is best to shut the main water off. Then if you do have a break, water will not continue to run and create a disaster!
- 8. If heating is electric baseboard, be sure no flammable items such as drapes are touching these units.
- 9. Air conditioning units should be covered and protected. Interior duct work runs should be closed unless used for heat distribution. This prevents heat loss throughout the ductwork.
- 10. All crawlspace vents and hatchways should be now closed to avoid the entrance of cold air. This is a key area for frozen pipes to occur.
- 11. Open closet doors to allow heat flow and to prevent mold in these areas.
- 12. If oil and gas heating units have not been serviced in the past 12 months, do so. Many units can cut out for a variety of reasons if not properly maintained.
- 13. When very frigid temps arrive, it would be good to check the cabin or have someone who lives nearby check on it for you.
- 14. Heat pump systems that have been previously set in the AC mode should now be set in the heat mode.
- 15. Open dishwashers to allow heat flow in and around the unit.
- 16. Security lighting on timers is also highly recommended. This deters break-ins.
- "Closing up the cabin" for the year is a process and if done right will ensure no disasters will be found in the Spring when you are ready to come back and relax!

JOIN US IN PRESERVING OUR BEAUTIFUL AREA: PINE CREEK PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

(Preserving the rural and natural resources of the Pine Creek Valley is our motto)
PCPA is a non-profit organization whose interest is preserving the natural and rural character of Pine
Creek Valley by facilitating various preservation measures through direct intercession or interaction with
planning, regulating or governing agencies and other conservation organizations.



Some of the typical projects and activities are promotion of anti-littering campaigns, recycling activities, litter and dump-site cleanups and acid mine drainage remediation; Promotion and support of oversight regulations of the Natural Gas Industry activities; Promote and support the implementation of the "Pine Creek Valley Management Plans"; Promote and support the implementation of the Pine Creek Watershed Rivers Conservation Plans"; Promote and support the implementation of "Pine Creek COG's PA Wilds Initiative".

PCPA is also affiliated with the Pine Creek Council of Governments, Pine Creek Rail Trail Advisory Committee and Pine Creek Watershed Council. Members are welcome to attend and participate in meetings and the annual picnic. Meetings are held the 3rd Mondays April through October at the DCNR building in Waterville. Go to www.pinecreekpcpa.org for yearly membership options. Email pinecreekpcpa@gmail.com Won't you join us?

Let's work together in preserving our beautiful Pine Creek Valley for generations to come! We have to stay active and on top of things to keep our area pristine! We are better together and we DO have a strong voice. Membership fees are as low as \$5.00 per year.



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I love to help make people's dreams come true!

LISA'S LISTINGS

SEE PICTURES & MORE INFO ON THESE PROPERTIES AND MORE AT www.RecreationalPropertiesPennsylvania.com

Haneyville- Like brand new 2014 Dutchmen camper on a permanent site (although can be moved) Year-round access. Shed, mower and camper has 2 slide outs. Covered front porch. Yearly fee on leased lot includes sewer, water and garbage. Affordable for a Summer spot in the mountains or hunters. State lands right across the road! ONLY \$23,500 **Cammal** - Beautiful lot with an old trailer. Take it away and build your cabin nestled among the trees. Rail Trail close. 30K **Westport** - Shintown Vista land for sale. 27 acre lot/ 23 acre lot/ and 320 acre lot. Wooded and very secluded.

Lock Haven - Neighborhood lot for sale to build your home. Near Piper airport. Nice place to put a home and retire.

English Center - Beautiful 5 bedroom cottage on LITTLE PINE CREEK! Only \$84,900

Oregon Hill - Convert this beautiful, 3500 sq. foot church to suit your needs. Great location and perfect for a group lodge or vacation home! 2 acres. ONLY \$140,000

Waterville - Beautiful 12.22 acres across the stream from Waterville with PINE CREEK FRONTAGE! Build your cabin over there and see things from a whole different perspective. Electric is available. \$150,900

Renovo - Here is an opportunity to own a beautiful, turn of the century home! Own 1/2 a block with this spacious 6 bedroom, 3 bath property. In-ground pool. Make it into a PA Wilds gateway B&B! \$210,000

Liberty - A serene country road leads you to this nice home on 6 acres! 4 BD/2 Bath, pastoral views & more! \$214,900 **Westport -** Log cabin on 11 very secluded acres! Solar & generator. Immaculate 4 BD/2 Bath built in 2014. \$249,900 **Jersey Shore -** Spacious vacation home on 1.5 acres with PINE CREEK FRONTAGE! So many features! Motivated! **Slate Run -** PINE CREEK FRONTAGE & OUT OF FLOOD! BORDERS RAIL TRAIL. 2 dwellings on nearly 3 acres. 5 bedroom farmhouse and a 3 bay garage with upstairs 2 bedroom apartment. \$525,000

Haneyville - Upscale log home that BORDERS STATE LANDS! Huge! 7 BD/3 Bath on 2.62 acres. \$525,000 **Kettle Creek -** Land bordering Kettle Creek State Park. Over 80 acres, wooded and approx. 1/4 mile of trout stream.

See Ya' up the Creek!

Don't forget to sign up to be in my exclusive E-group! Don't miss new listings and great deals! Email me or visit my site to sign up! You will love the updates! I promise!

