

GREEN TREE TIMES

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The Holiday Season is Filled with Festivities for Everyone



Having fun making holiday cookies!

December seems to arrive the minute you blink after Thanksgiving dinner and will be over just as fast, as well. It will be a whirlwind of sparkling lights, fun activities, cooking, shopping, visiting, some expected chaos, love, laughs and very little sleep. Try to enjoy the little moments throughout the month to slow it down a bit.

Whether it's Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa or something else, the festive season is in full swing and Pittsburgh has something for everyone!

Last month, I mentioned the biggies: Downtown's Light up Night, Downtown Holiday Shopping, PPG Ice Rink and Tree, Gingerbread House Displays and more! Things will be bustling there throughout the month.

Downtown is certainly not the only place to find a celebration and fun!

Holiday lights are everywhere. You can just opt to drive around the neighborhoods and find some amazing decorations or you can head to one of the hotspots for viewing the twinkling displays.

Take a short drive to the Christmas Light Up Celebration in Clinton and enjoy a one mile drive through lights display. Info at findlay.pa.us.

Enjoy a mile long walk of beautiful lights and a festive experience at Pittsburgh Botanic Garden's Dazzling Nights throughout December starting at 5 p.m.



Neighborhood holiday lights

Overly's Country Christmas in Westmoreland County, features a brightly decorated walk-around Christmas village with old fashioned treats. You can also sit around a campfire and sing carols, take a horse and carriage ride, check out the model train display, and more. Info at overlys.com.

Kennywood Park Holiday Lights is back! It will be opened weekends in December. There will be a Gingerbread Junction area in addition to the spectacular light displays, musical entertainment and even some rides.

A little further away is a drive through lights display at Olgebay's Festival of Lights near Wheeling. It is open daily throughout the holiday season.

The Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium are celebrating the season with Wild Illuminations: A Holiday Lantern Experience throughout December from 5:30 - 10 p.m. This magical winter wonderland includes silk lanterns and a million twinkling lights. Info at pittsburghzoo.org.



Wild Illuminations at the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium.

~photo courtesy Pittsburgh Zoo

This year, The O'Reilly Theater will become a winter wonderland with the Pittsburgh Public Theater's Festival of Trees. They will be on display throughout the run of *A Christmas Story: The Play*.

The Clayton Holiday Tours will be given throughout December. The Frick Family home will be beautifully decorated for the holidays as it was in the Gilded Age. Info at thefrickpittsburgh.org.

The Nationality Rooms at the Cathedral of Learning are decorated in holiday style and open for the 34th Nationality and Intercultural Exchange Programs Holiday Open House on Dec. 7, 12 - 4 p.m. This event will feature traditional crafts, cultural demonstrations, world and holiday music, and St. Nicholas will make a presentation. Info at nationalityrooms.pitt.edu.

Most neighborhoods and boroughs will be having a celebration during the festive season.

Crafton will be having Gingerbread House Making on Sat., Dec. 6 at the Crafton Library followed by Celebration of Lights at the Crafton Park from 4-8 p.m. featuring music, a holiday market, refreshments, and holiday fun!

Home for the Holidays in Dormont on Potomac Ave., will be held on Dec. 6, 10 - 2 p.m. and will start with a Holiday Parade. Event will feature vendors, music, activities, Santa, cocoa, and much more!

Carnegie celebrates the season with Carols & Lights on Fri., Dec. 5, 6 - 8 p.m. with the lighting of the tree, pictures with Santa, ornament making, hot cocoa and fun! Info at carnegieborough.com.

The Scott Twp. Tree Lighting event will be held Dec. 6 at 4:30 - 7 p.m. at Scott Park. Enjoy holiday music, food truck, hot cocoa, cookies, crafts, the Grinch and Santa. Info at scott-twp.com.

You can celebrate the season without ever leaving home. Try decorating your own gingerbread house. That's an activity for all ages. Bake some delicious cookies. Use the sea-



Try building a gingerbread house.

son as an excuse to make your favorites. Scroll through your TV apps and channels to find the perfect holiday movie to watch while you enjoy your favorite snack and drink. Try video calling a faraway friend or relative.

If you feel like bundling up and heading outside, go build a snowman. It can be a tiny one! Take a walk without any pressure to do anything but stroll.

This is also the season of giving to those who need help. Find ways to donate or volunteer this December! Often, giving brings you more joy than receiving!

Happy Holidays!

MUSINGS... BE A RIVER OF ENCOURAGEMENT



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*.

“A word of encouragement is a true gift, for it plants a seed in the heart of another.”
~ Simone Weil

Sometimes the smallest kindness becomes the turning point in a person's day - or even their life. Encouragement is one of those subtle forces that carries profound strength.

Story

I was at a low point in my life. Twenty-one years old, married with a baby, living with another couple. My husband and I had just agreed to separate. I remember walking through the house in a fog of fear and uncertainty. My friend Marcie - the other woman living there, who was blind -"felt" my despair as I passed. She spoke to me softly, "Don't forget that you are strong."

Her words landed with astonishing force. She saw me—not just my situation, but my strength—and in that moment, she reminded me who I was. I can still hear her voice, and I've called on that memory many times in the sixty years since.

Encouragement

Encouragement is one of the quietest yet most transformative forces in human life. It asks little of us - just a few sincere words, a moment of attention, the willingness to see someone's potential - but its effects can ripple outward like a river nourishing everything it touches. To become a river of encouragement is to make that gifting a way of life.

At its core, encouragement is the act of seeing others with eyes of possibility. It requires us to look beyond someone's present struggle and glimpse what is possible for them. When we speak to another's strong qualities, we awaken them—often at moments when they cannot see those qualities in themselves.

A river does not discriminate; it flows freely, offering life wherever it passes. In the same way, encouragement can become our daily habit. We can offer it to the stressed cashier, the friend doubting her abilities, the co-worker quietly doing their best, or even the stranger who crosses our path.

Story

Mara was a young teacher in her first year of work. Every afternoon she stayed late, overwhelmed by lesson planning and feeling like she wasn't reaching her students. One evening, an older custodian named Joe noticed her sitting alone in the classroom, head in hands. He paused at the door and said gently, "You know, I've seen a lot of teachers come and go. You're one of the ones the kids talk about. They feel safe with you. Don't give up—you've got what

it takes." Mara later said that sentence changed everything. It didn't erase her challenges, but it breathed courage into her. She kept going, grew steadily, and eventually became the teacher her students never forgot. One brief moment of encouragement shifted the whole course of her journey.

A River of Encouragement

Encouragement is not flattery. It does not pretend things are easy. It says, "I see how hard you're trying," or "Let me remind you of who you are." These simple phrases can steady another person's heart like a hand on the shoulder.

To be a river of encouragement is to let kindness flow through us continually, not in dramatic gestures but in steady currents of support, affirmation, and presence. We may never know the full impact of our words - but rivers seldom see the forests they nourish. It is enough to flow, to give, and to trust that our encouragement will help life grow wherever it is needed most.

COACHING QUESTIONS/TIPS:

1. Who can you encourage today?
2. Tomorrow?
3. The next day?

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

Sign up now for the annual **Gingerbread House Making Event** at the **Crafton Public Library**, 140 Bradford Ave. in Crafton. Event is Sat., Dec. 6 at 9 a.m. Sign your child up in advance and pay the \$5 fee at the library desk before Dec. 3. All children must be accompanied by an adult (free). No walk-ins day of event. Light refreshments, picture with Santa and Mrs. Claus from 1-3 p.m. A \$10 donation would be appreciated ! Celebration of Lights starts at 6 p.m. at Crafton Park. See Santa, some wintry characters, entertainment, and free hot dogs and snacks!

NOTE: See the front cover story about neighborhood festivities throughout December.

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Green Tree Rotary Annual Food Drive



The Green Tree Rotary had another successful Food Drive!
~photo courtesy Green Tree Rotary

The Annual Green Tree Rotary Food Drive was very successful again this year. Residents of Green Tree even seemed to donate more this year, including cash and checks totaling \$560. Rotarians drove around Green Tree with Rotary signs on their cars, picking up the bags and boxes of food, which was then taken to the Unity Presbyterian Food Bank on Greentree Road.

The mood was festive and some residents were waiting outside to donate their goods and thank the Rotarians. Barb Bennett, the food drive organizer, started off the morning with a tailgate of drinks, and a delicious array of donuts.

Members of Unity Presbyterian Church met the cars as teams returned to the church with their carloads of food. They were delighted with the amount of food collected. The church members were filling the shelves of the food bank in anticipation of the increase of people in need this year ... and just in time to ensure that everyone had ample food for Thanksgiving.

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The Fishin' Hole



by Sam Hall

The Holiday Season is upon us. We here at the Fishin' Hole hope that you get to spend some quality time with your loved ones over the next several weeks, enjoy! We also hope that you get to spend some quality time on the water as well.

This month I want to make a confession. I am a creature of habit. I love my routines, and that includes fishing. I like my bait the same, I like my spot the same and I definitely do not vary from that very often. Truth be told, I am as regular as the electric bill on Neville Island where I buy my bait every Saturday morning. I am not exaggerating to say, we are talking about 48 of the 52 Saturdays in a year, I am there at seven in the morning when the bait shop opens. No fewer than 40 of those Saturday mornings end with me in the same spot on the Ohio River. So, when I say I like my routine, I am being honest.

One Saturday this November there were three anglers in my spot on the river when I arrived. I was perplexed, but undaunted. I decided in the spur of the moment to try a different spot. Now, the change wasn't drastic. I stayed on the Ohio

but, I ventured to the other side and about six miles northwest of my usual place. I was walking to the water and doing my level best to stay positive in my approach but honestly I was a little irked by the change. I was even more irked when after a half an hour, I still hadn't gotten a bite. Ever the seeker though, I kept at it, changing depths and walking above and below the mouth of a stream that was pouring into the river. Finally, after an hour plus of being skunked, I found the fish, and I must tell you the feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment from doing so was really invigorating. I was so empowered by that, I tried an entirely different spot the following week. This time I didn't mind the first forty-five minutes of not catching fish. Instead, I stepped up to the challenge of finding out where they were and how they wanted to see the bait, and enjoyed it. Once again, I was met with a very rewarding morning. I am not suggesting I will do this every week from now on. Certainly, I will fall back into my routines. It is just what I do. I am just offering this story as a reminder to you that trying something new, while it may bring some frustrating moments, can also be a great way to renew your love for our sport. It can be a new spot or, a new bait, or targeting a new species. All of these things can keep you fresh and engaged as an angler. This policy might even apply to other things in my life. I am giving new thoughts to what I like on my pizza and how I like my coffee in the morning. Just kidding! Neither of those things is ever going to change, and Saturday morning I will be on Neville Island at seven in the morning if you need me.

Steelhead season is officially in full swing up north and the walleye

bite is on in our rivers, and streams, as we hit December. If you like trout fishing, many of our local lakes have recently received a stocking from the Pennsylvania Fish and Game Commission. Speaking of the Fish and Boat Commission, you can now purchase your 2026 fishing license at pa.gov/agencies/fishandboat. If you have a special angler in your life you can give the gift of a voucher for an annual fishing license for them this Christmas.

A cold snap is predicted to be headed our way and, if that sticks around, there might be a chance for hard-water fishing later in the month. If you decide you are interested in doing something like that, make sure

that you make safety your number one priority when venturing out onto the ice. "First ice" is often very productive, but it is always very dangerous. Use extreme caution and keep those lines tight. Send your pictures and stories to samdhall@comcast.net. Next month I will have some details about ice fishing safety you can keep in your vest. Happy Holidays!



Scan to watch my fishing videos



A beautiful walleye from my "different" spot.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Ask a Librarian!

Check out the many programs for all ages offered at most libraries!

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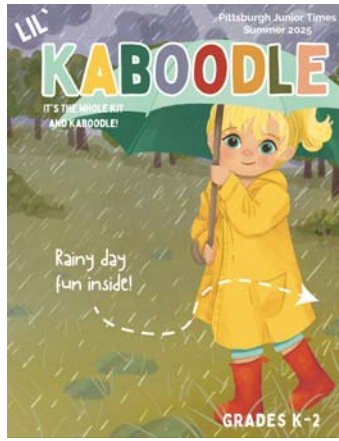
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BIG KIT

Pittsburgh Junior Times
Summer 2023

Check out the
fun inside

GRADES 3 - 5



A vibrant winter scene with children playing in the snow. A girl in an orange coat and yellow hat runs towards the left. A boy in a pink coat and red hat runs towards the right. A boy in a brown coat and grey hat runs towards the right. A snowman stands in the center, wearing a black top hat and a red scarf. A dog is running in the background. Snow-covered trees and houses are visible in the background.

[illegible]

or email: pittsburghjuniortimes@comcast.net



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55 Forsythe Road, Pittsburgh 15220
Off Greentree Road in Scott Twp.
ststephenpittsburgh.org
412-279-5868
Pastor Maurice C. Frontz III, STS
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Anthony and Lydia Streets
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412-279-5030
carnegiechristianchurch@gmail.com

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St. Philip Church, 50 W. Crafton Ave.
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412-922-6300
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412-279-3223
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Rev. Dr. Colleen F. Molinaro
www.carnegiepresby.org

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APR - Annual Percentage Rate. Terms & conditions apply. Loans subject to credit review & approval. Must be a SWCFCU Member to qualify. Promotional discount will only be from 25-1.00% APR off an approved Car Signature or Shares Secured Loans only. Discount amount determined by random selection made by the applicant at the time of loan signing. This discount cannot be combined with any other loan promotion. One pick per loan & must be used on the loan application submitted at time of pick.

213 Pine Street, Carnegie, PA 15106 | 412-276-5379

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