



# LANDINGS AT Weyers Cave

20 Landings Lane • Weyers Cave, VA 24486 • (540) 234-8899

## DECEMBER 2019



## NOTES & NEWS

### Boost Brainpower With Cinnamon

Bolster your brain function with cinnamon. A number of studies show that inhaling the fragrance of the spice, consuming it in food and chewing cinnamon-flavored gum resulted in better scores on memory tests and improved cognitive function.

### In the Bag

Brown paper bags can easily be repurposed as filler material. Put a few bags through a paper shredder, and use the shreds as filler for gifts or in a package you're going to mail. Shredded paper also provides protection for fragile items in storage.

### Happiness Helper: Get Creative

Whether putting together a holiday craft, making music or baking cookies, engaging in creative activities can help you feel happier. And those feelings of well-being last long after you've taken part in the activity. Psychologists studying the effect say you can gain this feel-good benefit from an artistic pursuit no matter your skill level or talent for it.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 3 Things You Need To Know

Buying gifts for any occasion can be tricky. Here are a few gift-giving tips to help.

1) Include a gift receipt, especially with higher-priced items. This gives the recipient more flexibility to make an exchange if necessary.

2) Gift cards are fine, but include a note explaining why you thought the gift card was a perfect choice for the recipient.

3) You don't need to match spending. People may spend less or more than you did for them, but that's OK. It really is the thought that counts, not the dollar amount that went into the gift.

### Winter Arrives

Winter officially begins with the solstice on Saturday, Dec. 21. The winter solstice is the day with the fewest hours of sunlight in the whole year. Winter continues for three months, until the first day of spring on March 19, 2020.

### Get Fit Tip

Turn a comedy movie marathon or binge-watching session into a heart-healthy workout. According to medical research, laughter has the same effect on your blood vessels as aerobic exercise, increasing circulation by up to 20%. Making time to laugh every day can result in lower cholesterol and a reduced risk of heart disease.

### Did You Know?

Pink peppercorns are technically not peppercorns at all. They come from a tree called the Peruvian pepper tree and are more closely related to cashews and other types of tree nuts.

### Choir Camaraderie

Singing in a choir can do more than just showcase your vocal skills. Studies show that singing in a group has a range of social benefits, from sparking new friendships to promoting a feeling of togetherness.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### Sip Ginger Tea

Drinking ginger tea can warm you up on a chilly day, and nutrients in the spice have been shown to boost the immune system, helping to ward off cold and flu viruses.

### In the Kitchen: Cookie Exchange

Make your chocolate chip cookies stand out from all the other holiday treats with one tiny addition. Sprinkle a little flake salt on top of the freshly baked cookies to enhance the flavor of the chocolate.

# TRIVIA WHIZ



## Peppermint, Please

In candy, coffee and cosmetics, peppermint is the scent of the season.

- Peppermint is a perennial herb that grows to a height of about 3 feet. It has green leaves and light purple flowers.
- The plant grows throughout North America, Asia and Europe. The U.S. produces about 70% of the global peppermint crop.
- The herb has been used in cooking and herbal medicine for thousands of years. The Romans believed peppermint could boost intelligence and cure the hiccups.
- Research shows the scent of peppermint helps stimulate brain waves, improve concentration and reduce fatigue.
- Peppermint oil can soothe dry skin and is a common ingredient in lotions and lip balms.
- The fresh herb can be used in a variety of recipes for salads, desserts and beverages.
- Drinking peppermint tea is a popular remedy for relieving headaches and cold/flu symptoms.
- About 1.2 billion candy canes are made every year in the U.S., with 90% of them sold during November and December.
- The peppermint mocha at Starbucks is the coffee chain's No. 1 holiday drink, and is available year-round due to customer demand.
- Dec. 3 is National Peppermint Latte Day. You can mimic the flavor at home by adding milk or cream to black coffee and stirring it with a candy cane.



## Welcome Home for Winter

Winter is on the way, and it's time to make your home feel warm, cozy and inviting. Prepare your space for the season by incorporating rich textures, natural elements, touches of greenery and a bit of shine.

*Door decorations.* All it takes is a wreath or door hanging to make your home look ready for the season. A grapevine wreath embellished with pinecones, fresh greenery, and a few white flowers makes a versatile

piece you can display all winter long.

*Seasonal centerpiece.* Start with a container such as a silver bowl, a wooden tray or a glass jar. Arrange your choice of natural elements, such as pinecones, evergreen clippings, holly berries and birch branches. Add sparkle with a string of miniature white lights.

*Cozy covers.* Texture helps create warmth, both physically and visually. Drape a faux fur blanket over a chair. Place a sheepskin rug on the floor, or toss one over an ottoman. Store your cozy throws in a large rattan basket; the natural brown tone will add another warm element to the room.

*The finishing touch.* Tuck in a few wintry items here and there, such as bottlebrush trees, battery-operated tea lights, and figurines of woodland critters. Use plaid fabrics to make your home feel fun and festive. A bowl of cinnamon or pine potpourri is a fragrant addition.

## Simmer and Savor

A steamy bowl of homemade soup can warm up a winter evening. With the convenience of a slow cooker, you can let your meal simmer for hours, so it's ready to enjoy when you get home after a busy day.

From baked potato soup and corn chowder to beef stew and chicken tortilla soup, the internet is an endless source of recipes to suit a variety of cuisines and preferences.

If your mornings are hectic, choose a recipe you can prepare the night before. Chop the vegetables, measure and add the liquids, grains and seasonings, then refrigerate. You may need to increase the cooking time for the meal if you go this route, since the ingredients will be chilled.

Most soups and stews need three to four hours on the high setting or six to eight hours on low. Every slow cooker is different, so be prepared to adjust the timing slightly. A smaller slow

cooker will heat more quickly, which may result in a reduced cook time. A larger appliance will cook more slowly.

Another advantage of slow cooker soups is that you can often freeze the leftovers. Make a double batch so you have enough to store in the freezer for a future meal. Chili, vegetable soup and stew are good candidates for the freezer. Creamy soups and those with pasta can be frozen, but the texture may be affected.



# WIT & WISDOM



## Apple-Cranberry Cobbler

### Ingredients:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 5 apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 container (10.2 ounces) refrigerated homestyle biscuits, quartered
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons sparkling sugar

### Directions:

Heat oven to 375° F.

Prepare pie pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In large bowl, mix apple slices, cranberries, lemon juice and vanilla extract.

In small bowl, whisk sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. Stir into fruit mixture.

Spoon mixture into prepared pan. Cover with foil. Bake on cookie sheet 40 to 45 minutes. Remove from oven.

Toss biscuits in melted butter. Distribute cut biscuits over fruit. Sprinkle biscuits with sparkling sugar.

Return to oven and bake 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven.

Let cool 15 minutes before serving.

*Find more recipes at*  
[www.Culinary.net](http://www.Culinary.net).



## Have an Eco-Friendly Holiday

Be kind to the Earth this holiday season by taking steps to keep your celebrations eco-friendly.

*Go green with greetings.* If you are sending out cards or including them with gifts, choose ones made from recycled paper. Recycle or repurpose the cards you receive.

*Be a smart shopper.* Take along reusable bags when you hit the stores, and travel via public transportation or carpool to reduce pollution and energy consumption. Choose gifts that will stand the test of time. Cheaper, less durable products wear out quickly, creating waste.

*Wrap with care.* See how creative you can be when it comes to wrapping presents. Use newspaper, magazine pages or maps as wrapping paper. Place gifts in cloth bags that recipients can reuse themselves. Save bows, ribbons, bags and wrapping paper to use next year.

*Make mealtime meaningful.* Choose organic foods for gatherings. Set the table with cloth napkins and reusable, not disposable, plates and glasses. Share leftovers with family and friends.

*Save energy.* Turn off decorative lights when you're not home and before going to bed. If lights or other decorations need batteries, choose rechargeable ones. If you will be traveling and away from home for more than a day, turn down your thermostat and put lights on timers.

**Be kind to the Earth  
this holiday season**

“He who marvels at the beauty of the world in summer will find equal cause for wonder and admiration in winter.”

—**John Burroughs**

“Always be on the lookout for the presence of wonder.”

—**E.B. White**

“Recapture the childlike feelings of wide-eyed excitement, spontaneous appreciation, cutting loose, and being full of awe and wonder at this magnificent universe.”

—**Wayne Dyer**

“Life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale.”

—**Hans Christian Andersen**

“Life has loveliness to sell, all beautiful and splendid things, blue waves whitened on a cliff, soaring fire that sways and sings, and children’s faces looking up, holding wonder like a cup.”

—**Sara Teasdale**

“It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the Earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility.”

—**Rachel Carson**

“There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination, and wonder.”

—**Ronald Reagan**

“The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.”





—**Huston Smith**

“The dignity of the artist lies in his duty of keeping awake the sense of wonder in the world.”

—**G.K. Chesterton**



## December 2019

| Sunday | Monday  | Tuesday | Wednesday   | Thursday | Friday  | Saturday |
|--------|---|---------|---|----------|---|----------|
| 1      | 2   | 3       | 4   | 5        | 6   | 7        |
| 8      | 9   | 10      | 11  | 12       | 13<br> | 14       |
| 15     | 16<br> | 17      | 18  | 19       | 20  | 21       |
| 22     | 23  | 24      | 25<br>Christmas   | 26       | 27  | 28       |
| 29     | 30  | 31      |  <h1>DECEMBER</h1>  |          |   |          |

## "This Month In History" DECEMBER

**1913:** Created as a new game to entertain readers, the first crossword puzzle is published in the Sunday edition of the New York World newspaper.

**1925:** The world's first motel opens in San Luis Obispo, Calif. It charged \$1.50–\$3 a day.

**1947:** A snowstorm hits the Northeast, burying New York City in more than 25 inches of snow in less than 24 hours.

**1955:** Rosa Parks is arrested after refusing to give up her seat on a public bus in Montgomery, Ala. Her actions helped spark the civil rights movement.

**1979:** The first Susan B. Anthony dollar coins are minted. This marked the first time a woman appeared on a circulating U.S. coin.

**1987:** Ron Hextall of the Philadelphia Flyers becomes the first NHL goalie to shoot and score a goal.

**2006:** Legendary blues musician B.B. King is awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

**2018:** Tom Brady, quarterback of the New England Patriots, breaks the record for most touchdown passes in NFL history, with 580.