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Storefront Story Walk kicks off downtown



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SEE WALK ON PAGE 2



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Walk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

lies to share the magic of reading and the downtown storefront story walk is the perfect opportunity to bring a love of reading and practice literacy skills while supporting downtown Anderson. After you finish the

story, visit Carolina Wren Park for Holiday Ice, take pictures by the Christmas tree, or visit one of the local businesses that have copies of The Magic Snowflake available for purchase.

Visit the Anderson Main Library for a special scavenger hunt based on the book, then check out The Magic Snowflake or explore additional books that are perfect for the holidays. Complete the scavenger hunt and become entered into a drawing for a copy

of the book and other fun prizes. Children can also pick up a Take'n Make snowflake ornament kit, and adults can pick up a Take 'n Make craft kit to create a winter evening scene.

This unique event is presented by the City of Anderson in partnership with the Anderson County Library System, with a dramatic podcast by Market Theatre.

For more information, visit www.anderson-library.org/storywalk.

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We need a little Christmas

If you've spent any time in the car this week, you've noticed a change in your radio options. FM stations are transitioning to their holiday music formats, and new satellite channels are coming online every day to ring in the season. That doesn't mean, though, that all Christmas music is appropriate for 2020. Consider the following favorites:

"I'll be Home for Christmas." If I have to walk through a germ-invested airport to get there, I probably won't be.

"All I Want for Christmas Is You." Whoever you are, I'm sure you're a catch, but all I want for Christmas this year is a vaccine.

"I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus." Violates the social distancing guidelines.

"The Little Drummer Boy." I'm working from home today, so take that rum pum-pum pum outside!

But I have heard one song that sums up 2020 perfectly: "We Need a Little Christmas."

You probably know it, but you may not know its origin. It was written for the 1966 Broadway musical "Mame," the story of a wealthy eccentric woman who, without warning, becomes the guardian of her orphaned nephew. Their lives are further complicated when the stock market crash of 1929 depletes her wealth. So, with no money and no prospects, what does Auntie Mame instruct her unpaid household

staff to do in the middle of November?

Haul out the holly, put up the tree, and fill up the stockings.

We hear you, Auntie Mame. The world has needed a little Christmas since March 1st. And I don't mean the busy, chaotic, expensive part of Christmas. I mean the trappings of Christmas that we store in our attics and in our hearts, the things from Christmas Past that remind us that there will



Kim von Keller

be a Christmas Future. And in case you need help figuring out what those things are, the lyrics of "We Need a Little Christmas" are like a guide to throwing off the doldrums of COVID and donning the warmth of the season:

"Put up the brightest string of lights." Or inflatables. Or cutouts. A month or so ago, I was driving through Pelzer when I saw a home that was decorated with all of these things and more. It was the most festive, beautiful thing I had ever seen, and I was still smiling when I got to Williamston. When it comes to outdoor decorating this year, I say that wretched excess is barely enough. Please extend my apologies to your HOA board.

"Carols at the Spinnet." You may not be able to gather all of your friends around the piano this year, but you can gather your household and carol in your community. Singing from the front lawn as your neighbors stand in their doorways is a DHEC-approved way to spread some Christmas cheer, even if your vocal range is more Will Ferrell than Mariah Carey.

"Slice up the fruitcake." True story: My sister was once in an Anderson Community Theater production of "Mame," and she had to learn "We Need a Little Christmas." No matter how hard she tried, she always sang, "Throw up the fruitcake." So if you're a fellow fruitcake hater, feel free to substitute. Snickerdoodles always deliver that Christmas feeling. Shortbread does, too, along with thumbprint cookies and spritz and those peanut butter cookies that you crown with a Hershey's Kiss while they're still warm from the oven. And don't worry about calories. You can walk them off as you stroll through your neighborhood, singing and admiring those lights and cut-outs and inflatables.

As we approach December 25th, I hope you find what you need this Christmas. It might be as small as a song, a cookie, or a candle in your window. These things carried Auntie Mame through the Great Depression, and they might just carry us to a brighter day as well.

ASK AN ANIMAL SCIENTIST

HOW DO SNAILS BREATHE?

BY DR. KELLY DIAMOND KOLEHMAINEN

Well, it depends on what kind of snail we are talking about. While we might be most familiar with land snails, the first snails lived in the ocean. Over a long LONG time, snails adapted to life on land and in fresh water.

Most snails breathe through

comb-shaped gills called ctenidia that are covered by their shell.

In land snails these gills are reduced and snails mainly breathe through their thin skin and through the respiratory cavity in their shell. To breathe in and out, land snails can make this chamber bigger to suck air in or smaller to push air out. The opening to this



respiratory chamber is called the pneumostome.

One group of marine slugs have taken skin breathing to the next level. Nudibranchs have lost

their shells and their ctenidia and instead developed protrusions of skin that are used for breathing. In fact the name Nudibranch means "nude gill" because their gills are not hidden by their shell. These breathing skin flaps are way prettier than what you might think, in fact nudibranchs are arguably some of the most beautiful sea creatures.

To learn more check out the snail page at molluscat.com.

Want to ask a question? Email AskAnAnimalScientist@gmail.com.

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LADY WITH THE LIPSTICK

BY ANN BAILES

Everybody notices male cardinals. It's true that their scarlet-red color is beautiful, especially against a cloudy and somewhat dreary winter sky. Images of them grace kitchen towels, sheets, and other linens. They're seen on coffee mugs and refrigerator magnets. Males are bright and brilliant and distinctive.

However, though the female cardinal may not be as prominent, she has her own significant beauty. She reminds me of a gracious lady who might not be out front being flashy or using up the fashion oxygen, but who remains a little more in the

background. And after awhile, people begin to notice her. Then they look at that gracious lady and think "Wow, she is lovelier than I realized."

The female cardinal is that lovely lady. Most of her feathers are shades of honey tan. But she's sophisticated and she is accessorized. Her wings and tail complement the honey color



with a shade of warm red, not as bright as the male's, but still a nice garnet color. She has just enough of that same red in her crest that she looks like she's sporting a jaunty hat - obviously one with a feather in it. And unlike many birds, she doesn't change into duller hues for the winter, but keeps her attractive warm colors year round.

The outstanding feature of the female cardinal is, in my opinion, not her coloration or her feather accessories. It's her short, thick beak, which is unusually colored for a bird. Most birds' beaks are grey, tan, or black; however, this lady's is a beautiful shade of cherry-orange

that complements the red in her wings and tail perfectly. She looks like she's gotten into a tube of that old Tangee lipstick that old-timers will remember. That is how she gets her moniker "Lady with the Lipstick." And since she lives in our area, can't you just hear her Southern mama saying "Shugah, wouldn't you feel bettah

with a little lipstick on?"

Now the male cardinal has a reddish beak also. But since he is the same brilliant shade all over, his beak doesn't stand out like the female's does. Hers is the crowning touch on her fashionable suit of feathered finery.

This couple steps out together and is seen as a pair year-round. They're more noticeable in the winter because so many other birds have migrated away, and because with the leaves

gone from the trees they provide a sharp contrast to the dull branches and ground. And they are especially stunning when seen against the rare snowfalls that we get here in South Carolina.

So, as you get dressed up for holiday parties and events, remember that you have an elegant counterpart in the bird world around us. I present to you Mr. Cardinal, and his Lady with the Lipstick!

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YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

My year-end wish for you!

I try to make a habit of telling people thank you. And to take a moment to truly appreciate those who are in my life. This includes you, my loyal readers. Thank you for reading my column. To those who have responded with thoughtful feedback, be assured it is greatly appreciated.

Like no other in recent memory, this has been a year to appreciate life as a precious gift. I think you would agree our challenge is to remain hopeful for the future and sincerely grateful for what we have. Counting our blessings may sound quaint, but it remains a sound way for us to maintain our balance and, frankly, protect our emotional health. I have read that a key to happiness and emotional well-being is to believe that next year will be better than the last. I embrace this, and I hope you will too. At Grand Oaks Dental we have had a busy and very productive year as our practice continues to expand -- offering our patients and our community...more.

I reference our membership in the

American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine. So many health issues that can impact our health – particularly in this challenging time – can be traced to poor sleep habits. For example, chronically sleep-deprived people feel lonelier and less inclined to be around or engage with others. In fact, well-rested people often feel lonely after a brief



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

encounter with a sleep-deprived

person. This shows a two-way relationship between sleep loss and social isolation, suggesting a “loneliness epidemic” may be occurring.

Our practice is also a member of the American Academy for Oral Systemic Health, an organization focused on expanding awareness of the relationship between

oral health and whole-body health. As a dental professional today I feel it is incumbent upon me to bring a total wellness perspective to our patient family – one that transcends traditional dental care. We are moving now into a time of coordinated care that includes both dental and medical professionals.

But, in the present circumstances, what about our emotional well-being? Each of us can practice the tested and proven: (1) Keep moving. It is one of the best ways you can improve your mental health. A simple walk around the block can make a big difference; (2) Eat well; (3) Get enough sleep; (4) Practice gratitude. It can help you change the way you view things. And, lastly, when you feel stressed reach out to a friend or family member. Get your thoughts and feelings out in the open instead of keeping them bottled up inside. There is a saying I like: “Let our resolution be this: We will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word.”

- Goran Persson. Thank you, again, dear readers. If you have questions, please call. Think of us as your hometown resource for guidance and support.

Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.

For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to www.grandoaksdental.com or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.

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Anderson's skyscraper

BY RICH OTTER

The Great Depression was not generally acknowledged until 1929 but in Anderson the early to mid-1920s already had all the elements of a depression. Financial difficulties embraced tax collection and meeting government operating expenses. The continued function of the County Home was in jeopardy and the chain gang operations were on the brink of being turned over to the state. The county was also hosting claims of embezzlement, theft, waste, extravagance and mismanagement.

Local political situations were in turmoil and newspapers were in an uproar. Community leaders desperately sought a solution to the economic dilemma through development of Anderson's commercial infrastructure.

In 1924 the very complexion of the downtown and its historical aspects took central stage. Local businessmen sought progress through the construction of the

Calhoun Hotel and the possibility of a downtown "skyscraper." An act was passed to permit the Chamber of Commerce to construct a nine story office building on the public square across from the site of what is now referred to as the Old Courthouse on the property where the new Courthouse is situated. The building was to house the Chamber of Commerce, county offices and businesses.

The building would be on the Plaza. All of the monuments would be removed including the revered Old Reformer cannon, Confederate Monument and William Whitner would not now be checking his watch while patiently waiting for street lamps to turn on.

State Senator Rufus Fant, Jr. stood in favor of the Chamber program and in opposition to action proposed by the then current House delegation to rescind a long-term lease for the project granted by the previous delegation. The disagreement stalled the passage of any

supply bill for the county. The local newspaper lamented: "Although ground is as yet unbroken for the undertaking, the office building stands like a giant boulder between the lower Delegation and Senator Fant. Once it is moved aside other legislation will pass through."

The newspaper argued: "Other county affairs that demand urgent action at the hands of the representatives are waiting their turn while the squabble goes on." The county supply bill remained incomplete.

The proposed measure for the 1925 supply bill by the House members provided that no building would be erected on the Plaza or Public Square nor shall any monument be removed therefrom without written consent of a majority of the legislative delegation of Anderson County. Senator Fant said that when the supply bill would come before the Senate he would strike the section that would exclude the structure on the Plaza.

Delegation member Asa Hall,



Where is the skyscraper?

taking the offensive, put in the appropriations bill a provision for funds to improve the Plaza and provided that no monuments could be removed from the Plaza. Senator Fant countered that he would put in a motion to strike the addition and it would be sent back to the House.

After the matter finally reached the Senate it was sent to a free conference and there a compromise was finally reached. It permitted the supply bill to be passed but with the reservation that the building could be built on the Plaza. The agreement permitted the appropriation bill to be passed as otherwise

presented. As with many political compromises, it resulted with an emphatic yes and an emphatic no.

The local newspaper then announced the skyscraper could be legally built "if it is so desired." After all of the conflict was that a hint the business leaders were losing resolve?

As a casual observer of the downtown may have noticed, there does not seem to be a nine story skyscraper in the center of the Plaza. With the looming Great Depression the issue quietly faded away. Certainly the complexion of the downtown would be much different today if the project had gone forward.

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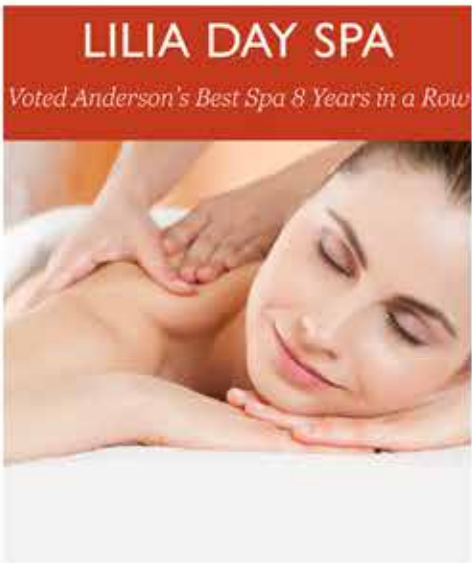
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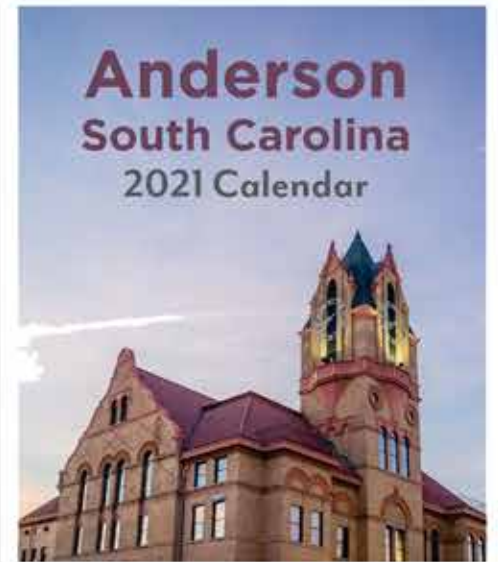
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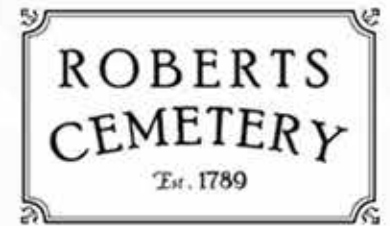
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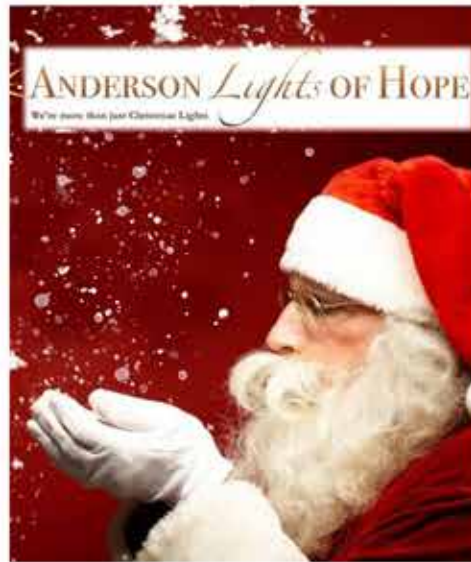
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There are decades when nothing happens

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Vladimir Lenin

I wouldn't often quote one who led the Bolshevik Revolution. He is the only Russian who has stood the test of time. His body is still in a glass sarcophagus in Red Square in Moscow attesting to how he still is revered by most Russians.



Jim Fraser

When I stood at the lectern at the first Touchdown Club meeting of the year (9-25-20),

I told the 40-45 members and area coaches there at Tuckers and 1,200 more streaming. I said something like this, "I am truly ready for some football and good times. 2020 has been a tough year thus far. I've fallen four times

resulting in both hips being broken, 3 brain scans and X-rays plus the loss of my lovely wife Joyce of 61 ½ years. I'm ready for some good things to happen".

However 2020 started out grimly and I fear will get grimmer. We started with the assassination of the Iranian General, and their subsequent attacks on our missile bases located in the area. Remember nobody has fired upon us in a long time. Follow that with the contentions impeachment of the president in which both sides seem to have lost. Then we had the deadly coronavirus that wafted out of China and put most humans under lockdown. The death toll became staggering, and I am told will get much, much worse. The merry month of May saw the horrendous death of a black man by a clueless white cop that has set race relations back by decades. The protests that ensued were hijacked by some looters and criminals that have caused lawlessness and out-

rage in some of our cities. Nature entered the fray with tornados, wildfires and hurricanes. If that does not make you believe in climate change, must be the start of Armageddon. Coupled with the millions who were without work forcing hunger and eviction, depression and anxiety seems to rule the land.

Can things get worse? I fear they can. Never in my 88 years have I seen the country so disjointed as I was not around when a fire-brand congressman said, "You dare not make war on cotton, sir, cotton is king." You know the rest of that story.

We are facing a contentious election that seems to challenge the most fundamental bedrock of a democracy - the peaceful transfer of power.

We are in the midst of a landmark Supreme Court appointment that will probably stifle liberal voices for years. And to this an erosion of years of racial integration. And to

those the conviction that both Democrats and Republicans think that if you differ with them you're a demon from hell itself and should be treated accordingly.

On top of this, the pandemic continues to rage. Seems to me, good folks, it's time to adhere to this biblical invitation. "If my people, who are called by my name will pray and humble themselves and seek my face, then will I hear from heaven and will ease their sufferings and heal their land."

Jim Fraser was the athletic director and head football coach at T.L. Hanna High School from 1968-1985. He was also a full time member of the faculty who taught U.S. History.



Music roundup

It's really the end of the year. I thought it would be a good idea to just go over some things. What did and didn't happen in 2020 and what may or may not happen in 2021.



Justin Tyme

Let's talk about what didn't happen. At the start of the year it was

confirmed that The Pussycat Dolls had reunited and had released a brand new track called "React": By March they were set to embark on their first world wide tour in ten years. But that was halted before they got to perform their first venue. I'm hoping that in 2021 things return to normal. I mean they look great after all this time but let's face it, the clock is ticking and surely their dance moves aren't easy. A new rapper emerged from Houston Texas and quickly became the biggest breakout star of the year. Megan The Stallion was set to also go on tour, but her only performance came in the summer when she made her first appearance on SNL. It seemed like I was playing a new track from her every single week, sometimes three or four of them. I'm excit-

ed to see her hit the road when the pandemic allows. And then there's Rihanna. She promised us in January of 2019 a new album which never came. As recently as August she was dropping hints and guaranteed her 9th album was coming before the new year. I believed her. I mean there was really nothing else for her to do while in quarantine. Is it really that hard to give us new music RiRi? I'm hoping that by the time this article goes to print, Rihanna has left me new music in my stocking. But I'm not optimistic.

It's hard to stay positive during these crazy times, but I learned during the pandemic to always look for the silver lining. Staying positive and hopeful makes things much better.. It's ironic for me to be a Negative Nancy while discussing new music from Rihanna, but here's the thing. We've heard this song and seen this dance before. Exactly one year ago. But like George W. Bush once said... "fool me once, shame on — shame on you. Fool me — uhh. If you fool me once you can't get fooled again."

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and look forward to a better 2021.

Justin Tyme can be heard on HOT 98.1 on Saturdays and Sundays.

I had walked many times with my mother to Saylor's One Stop from our house on Beatty Square, crossing what was then a two lane 28 by-pass, to get a loaf of bread or some milk. I'd roam the candy aisle while she grabbed her items and I'd usually get a handful of bazoooka bubble gum or a sugar daddy if I was lucky.



Neal Parnell

On this particular mid-morning my mom said that she was going next door to see a neighbor and would be back in a few minutes. "I'll be right back, watch your sisters, and don't leave this yard". I had a quarter that was burning a hole in my pocket, and I told my sisters I was going to get us some candy. Gail, my eldest sister says, "You heard what Mama said, "Don't leave the yard". I said, "I'll run and be back in five minutes". I got the, "Im telling face" from her, but took off like the Flash toward Saylor's. In two minutes I was standing on the corner of West Market and 28 by-pass, looking across at Saylor's. I looked both ways, all clear, and dashed across the hi-way, straight to the candy. I grabbed three

Look both ways



pixie-stix, three boxes of atomic fireballs, and a sugar-daddy. I paid with my quarter, got a nickel back, a little bag for my booty, and I was out. A Pepsi truck was just parking on the corner of the lot. I ran to the corner to cross. I could see to my right, but the Pepsi truck was blocking my view to the left. Using my seven years of logic I assumed that if nothing was coming one way, there must be nothing coming the other. The Flash made it two steps into the hi-way when...BLAM!! I'd been laid out and rolled over by a green Ford pick-up that was slowing for the red light. Miraculously I got up and made it to the other side still holding the bag of candy. I was dazed and remember two men grabbing me lying me down on the sidewalk,

but I struggled up saying, "I'm okay, gotta' get home".

I saw my mom heading into the front door, so I quickly limped into the backdoor just in time to hide the candy when I heard, "What happened to you?" Of course I said, "I fell down". She saw that my arms were scraped, my jeans were torn, and snatched the bulge from my back pocket. She was about to lower the boom on me when the doorbell rang. "Is this where the little boy lives that got ran over by the truck?" My Dad was called, and I was once again loaded into the station wagon. All I remember about the overnight hospital stay was that I could only have bland tea. I never saw my candy bag again, but now I look both ways before even crossing a one way street.

THE GARDEN SHOP

Lots of surprises



**SUSAN
TEMPLE**
master
gardener

When I was a kid, lots of surprises were always on my Christmas wish lists to Santa. In full disclosure, Santa Claus didn't come to our house. Sanny Claus did. I'm sure the latest in Barbie clothes and accessories were at the top of the lists. Anyway, I got a very pleasant surprise coming down the driveway last week. Beautiful fall color from a Trident maple behind the garage. Maybe I just noticed it because the tree is now taller than the garage. Maybe it is having a good year. I recall it being mostly yellow in the past. Lower leaves fell several weeks ago but those left in the top portion were a fiery orange. This, behind the silver roof, really stood out.

If you love fall colors of maple trees but don't have the space, Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*) may be a good choice. It will grow

to about 25 feet tall and wide. Mine is 14 years old. It came from the plant sale at South Carolina Botanical Gardens. Their description was "though uncommon in gardens, the rich-green, rather ivy-like, 3-lobed leaves of this somewhat bushy tree make it well worth planting". I chose trident maple to give shade on the screen porch because I didn't want a large tree growing that close to the house. By maple standards, it's a moderate grower. Most maples are considered fast growing. The tree doesn't shade the whole porch but does block the hottest afternoon sun. It took about 8-10 years before providing some shade. It was a seven-gallon tree and would have grown faster if watered and given a bit of fertilizer.

Another nice thing about trident maple is the bark. It's a light gray color and flakes. Fallen leaves don't bother me. I only rake a few areas and let the rest be. Free mulch, organic matter, and weed suppression from fallen leaves suits me. Trident's leaves are small so that may be another benefit if your garden is not let leaves be type. It is considered a long living tree, up to 150 years possibly. Full sun is best for fall color.

A sycamore tree was planted further away



Trident maple



Trident maple bark

from the house to provide shade on the screen porch. It has grown very fast and is quite tall. So far branches are not widespread enough to give shade on the porch. Someday maybe. Sycamore is one of my favorite trees because of the beautiful bark. I wish I could say I planned this but it's luck. Trident's bark color is complimentary to shades of tan in the sycamore bark. Sycamore leaves are quite large.

The lawnmower has to be raised as high as it will go and I still have to go over them at least twice to cut them up. The lawnmower just pushes them along. Both of these trees are inside the fence so this maintenance is done to keep things conducive for my faithful four legged companion. Another advantage of trident maple is the roots do not grow on top of the ground, unlike those of the sycamore tree.

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NIBBLE & SIP

Take your Christmas movie viewing to next-level comfort

I always look forward to a Nibble and Sip. As I've written before, something small and delicious on a Friday afternoon is a great way to end the work week and usher in the week-



Kim von Keller

end. This time of year, though, I like to save our treat until after dinner, especially if we're snuggled up on the sofa, watching a Christmas movie. So whether your favorite is "It's a Wonderful Life," "Love, Actually," or "Die Hard," make it even more festive with Spiked Hot Chocolate and Danish Wedding Cookies.

Spiked Hot Chocolate starts with your own homemade mix, and you can customize it by adding an ounce of your favorite liqueur; coffee, cinnamon, peppermint, Irish cream, or raspberry pair beautifully with chocolate. And there's nothing better to pair with a warm and creamy drink than a buttery, crumbly cookie.



Also called a Mexican Wedding Cookie, the Danish Wedding Cookie has only a handful of ingredients. It is easy to prepare and will be ready before George loses the money, Natalie curses in front of the Prime Minister, or John infiltrates Nakatomi Tower.

Spiked Hot Chocolate
3 1/2 c. sugar

2 1/4 c. unsweetened cocoa powder (I like the Ghirardelli.)
1 T. salt
Whole milk to serve
1 oz. of your favorite liqueur
Sweetened whipped cream, to serve

Whisk sugar, cocoa powder, and salt until thoroughly mixed and store in an airtight container. For each serving, measure 2 T. of the cocoa mix into a mug. In a small saucepan, bring 1 c. whole milk to a simmer. Slowly pour over the cocoa mix in the mug, stirring until combined. Stir in 1 oz. of your favorite liqueur and top with sweetened whipped cream. Serves one.

Danish Wedding Cookies
2 sticks unsalted butter
1/2 cup powdered sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup blanched almonds, finely ground
2 1/4 cups all purpose flour
An additional 1 1/2 c. sifted powdered sugar in a shallow bowl to finish
Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, beat together the butter, sugar, vanilla extract, almond extract, and salt. Beat in the ground almonds and the all-purpose flour. Using a cookie scoop, scoop 1-inch pieces of dough and roll into balls. Place the balls on the prepared baking sheets, leaving 1 inch between each.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until the tops are set and the edges are golden. Allow the cookies to cool for 5 minutes. Transfer them, a few at a time, to the bowl, rolling them in the powdered sugar to coat, then transfer them to a rack to cool. When the cookies are cool, roll them in the sugar again to thoroughly coat. Makes 4 dozen.

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Traditions

When you hear the word “tradition,” what do you think of? I think of summer beach trips, Saturday mornings eating pancakes at Cracker Barrel, listening to Kenny G and decorating our Christmas tree, family movie nights by the fire, nighttime devotions with Poppie, the family homework table, eating Sunday lunches at Mema’s with my 7 cousins, and spending summers at my Mamma’s house on Elm Street. Though many of these things may seem ordinary to you, they are everything but ordinary to me. They are traditions. Traditions that have built me into the person I am today. Traditions that inspire me to provide the same heart-warming experiences for my own two children.

Choosing to focus on experiences, living in anticipation of exciting plans, and gathering stories and memories can have a profound impact on how much we enjoy life. This time of year is full of traditions. It’s the perfect time to continue old traditions or even to start new traditions with your family and friends. Luckily, your home offers many opportunities for you and your family to take part in a new and exciting adventure together.



Katie Laughridge

Read a different Christmas book every night during the month of December.

Snuggle up on the couch with a blanket, a cup of hot cocoa, and watch a new Christmas movie together. (The Christmas Chronicles on Netflix is a new family favorite!)

Decorate your Christmas tree together as a family. Talk about the ornaments you hang up and what they mean to you. Do they tell a story? Did you get them from somewhere special? Play “I Spy” as your children look for ornaments to give you to hang up (ex: I spy something red and sparkly in the shape of a star!). You could even create some new ornaments together!

Allow your children to make cards for each family member and/or wrap presents in brown Kraft wrapping paper and let them decorate the paper with pictures or decorations. This activity will make them feel a part of the gift-giving.

Help your children make homemade gifts for family members—showing them that the best gifts are from the heart.

Sing popular Christmas songs together. Teach them some of your favorite Christmas songs. Go caroling around your neighborhood.

Make Christmas cookies to deliver to your close neighbors.

Write letters to Santa to mail to the North Pole and/or to leave by the fireplace Christmas Eve.

Traditions are not only meaningful to children, but to us as well. They create a sense of belonging and anticipation for the future. They give children something to talk about, something to write about, and something to hold close to their hearts for years to come.

Here’s to making some new traditions this year!

Party dress season

Christmas is fast approaching. Even though our parties will be a little less than extravagant and on a much smaller scale and less crowded than last year, we can still dress the part and be as festive as ever.



Kristine March

I love a good party dress. Mini dresses with balloon sleeves are back. Think eighties prom but with a way more flattering approach. Satin flowy maxi dresses are big and oh, so gorgeous for a Christmas party. Try a salmon color or beige or go bold and try a hot pink or purple. You will be the bell of the ball.

Fit and flare dresses are beautiful on everyone. They’re also comfortable and fun to dance the night away in. Try a floral pattern. Black and white always looks like a tasteful color combination. Ribbed backless midi dresses make a statement while

still pulling of that smart sophisticated vibe and a plunging neckline gives you a sexy look but you’re not trying too hard. You can never go wrong with a little black dress.

Add some great jewelry and accessories and you’re good to go. Over the knee boots are big this year and really pull off the look. Plus, they’re much more comfortable than a pointy heel. Anything goes. A long sleeve ruffled sweater dress makes a statement. Also try a high neck smock dress in a daring color. Pop on a red matte lip and pretty bronzed cheeks with big curly hair for that wow factor.

Show up in style and really take it all in. This has been one of the most complicated years for me. I think everyone else would agree that we all need to unwind and enjoy a special night with family and friends. No matter what you wear or show up in, remember that kindness always matters and by making everybody feel like a somebody, well, that’s always in style. Make the sidewalk your runway. Happy party dress season y’all.



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