

DELMARVA ALMANAC

December 2009

Between The Shore Lines

Celebrate The Season Outside

I suppose people on the Eastern Shore celebrate the holiday season like most places in America. But, I can't help wanting to put aside all the hustle and bustle of shopping and social events and celebrate the Delmarva winter landscape.

Even when it is raining – which it often does this time of year, it is still a really good time to get out for a walk in our neighborhood or a local park. Though the days may be shorter, we won't feel our coldest weather here until January and February.

Since ancient times, people around the world have chosen not to mourn the longest night of the year - but rejoice the coming of the light, knowing that the days now will begin to get longer again. I am always moved by the knowledge that during this time of year all over the world people of are praying and singing songs of peace.

Our sometimes stark – but always beautiful countryside also moves me. It seems to call us to a simpler way of celebrating the holidays. There are plenty of festive reds and greens in our landscape. Yet, the Eastern Shore's natural color scheme in December can best be described in shades of brown, blue, and grey. Bare branches create elegant silhouettes against the sky. Misty mornings on the water can be a transforming experience of that peace which the whole world is seeking.

No matter where you are be sure and take time during this very hectic season to go outside and appreciate the greatest gift we have besides each other: this beautiful place we live in. And, may those moments of natural peace inspire us to have a more peaceful and joyful New Year.

Delmarva History This Month

December 6, 1632 - Capt. David Pieterse DeVries arrived at the Dutch whaling colony Swanendael, in present day Lewes, and found it destroyed.

December 24, 1673 - Lord Baltimore's soldiers from nearby Maryland raided and burned buildings in Whorekill, Delaware.

December 7, 1787 - Delegates meeting at a tavern in Dover signed documents making Delaware the first state to ratify the US Constitution.

December 3 1847 - Eastern Shore native Frederick Douglass began publishing the anti-slavery newspaper The North Star.

December 4, 1882 - The Bark Maddalena Secondo was stranded at Cedar Island, Virginia. The boat's drunken crew had to be forced to shore by the local lifesaving station keeper John B. Wheaton and his crew.

December 6, 1884 - The schooner Margaret A. May was wrecked at North Beach, Maryland, when a gale pushed the ship beyond the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

December 27, 1884 - The Norwegian Bark Lena, broke apart after hitting the shoals off Hog Island Station, Virginia taking the lives of eight men.

December 14, 1905 - A schooner, the Pendleton Sisters wrecked at Metomkin Island, Virginia during a Nor'Easter.

December 6, 1920 - A fire destroyed a substantial section of the business district of Lewes, Delaware.

December 4, 1931 - A mob lynched African American, Matthew Williams, on the courthouse lawn in Salisbury, Maryland.

December 8, 1963 - Lightning caused the crash of a jet airliner killing 81 persons at Elkton, Maryland.

December 1968 - The first Holly Run to Tangier Island was made by Cambridge, Maryland, pilot Ed Nabb. He brought holly for the Swain Memorial Methodist Church and the New Testament Church. Now several planes come every year with holly and Santa too.

December 9, 1983 - Chesapeake Bay Agreement to improve water quality and living resources of Bay signed by Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, District of Columbia, Chesapeake Bay Commission, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The agreement was updated again on December 14, 1987.

The Garden Of Good Living
Summer Travel Inspires Winter Garden Dreams
by Pat Hendrickson

I love to take 'field trips' throughout the year

It's a good excuse to get away, but also frees the mind to gather new ideas on technique and design. It's a great time to rejuvenate and relax or meet and talk with people that have the same interests and plenty of information to pass along.

In June of last year, my sister and I took a trip to Monkton, Maryland to visit Ladew Topiary Gardens. When choosing our destination, we agree that our garden visits be equidistant between me and my sister, and that it be within three hours of home.

Topiary is not what I consider to be even close to within my reach of abilities, but I was not disappointed. Although topiary is beautifully present throughout the property, it is not overwhelmingly the star of the show.

If you visit the website at <http://www.ladewgardens.com>, you will learn that Ladew is a 250 acre property once owned by Harvey S. Ladew, a self-taught gardener. Built on 22 of those acres are 15 'thematic garden rooms' and a 1.5 mile trail through a prairie-like terrain full of nature's wild flowers. It could take an entire day or a few hours for you to taste the fullness of art and nature Ladew has to offer.

The obvious topiary begins at the entrance with a fox chase and a small, informal herb garden. The not-so-obvious topiary is shown in the hedges and foundation plantings throughout the remaining acreage. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Visit the Garden of Good Living web page to see pictures of her trip:

<http://delmarva-almanac.com/index.php/site/garden/>

Rhythms' & Tides

Don't Let The Weather Keep You Indoors

Recent storms have done a lot of damage especially to the dunes on Assateague and in our ocean resort towns. Roads were flooded and trees came down in the wind. But that's not keeping people from fishing the surf or heading out into local waters in search of big rock fish which are running in earnest. Rifle season for deer continues during the first two weeks of this the month, and duck hunting really begins to take off.

Though there are fewer sunny days, that's no excuse to stay indoors. Recently on some pretty gray days I say some terrific birds. Though it's a little gruesome this young bald eagle eating a fox was spotted in Dagsboro recently. He was hanging out with several other eagles who would not sit still for a group portrait.

Other predator birds like this hawk seem a bit easier to see now that most of the leaves have fallen. Also in the bare branches you can see flickers and yellow bellied sap suckers. On the water there is plenty to see. This loon was spotted in the bay off Isle of Wight. This king fisher lives in one of my favorite birding spots on Turville Creek. He usually starts scolding me as soon as I arrive, but after several attempts I finally got an OK picture of him recently.

If it looks like it is only a good day for ducks it's probably a good day to see some ducks. They are not only for the hunters. The many different ducks are starting to arrive including this common merganser and these black ducks. More will follow in the next several weeks in many shapes and colors.

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise at the beginning of the month: 7:03am

Sunset at the beginning of the month: 4:36pm

Sunrise at the end of the month: 7:06am

Sunset at the end of the month: 4:44pm

Moon Phases

December 2 - Full Moon

December 16 - New Moon

December 31 - Full Moon (Blue Moon) There will be a partial lunar eclipse in the Eastern Hemisphere, which will not be visible on Delmarva.

Names for this month's full moon - Cold Moon, Oak Moon, Wolf Moon, Long Night's Moon, Aerra Geola (Month Before Yule), Heilagmanoth (Holy Month), Big Winter Moon

Other Sky Events

December 6-19 - Geminids Meteor shower expected peak on the 13th-14th

December 17-25 - Ursid Meteor showers expected peak on the 22nd

December 21 - Winter Solstice - First day of winter. The sun will be at its lowest point in the sky making this the shortest day of the year.

Celestial Navigation

by Valerie Morrissey

This month we have a Blue Moon on New Year's Eve. What is a Blue Moon? Traditionally, a Blue Moon is the second full moon in a calendar month, and occurs approximately every 2.5 years. Actually there is nothing astrologically significant about it. There have been recorded random events of the moon appearing to be blue because of smoke or volcanic ash in the atmosphere. It has an old fashioned sentimental meaning, and has nothing do with the color blue. The phrase, "once in a blue moon" means for most people, practically impossible, occasionally or rarely. With that in mind, I suggest that this New Year's Eve, something wonderful and once thought impossible could happen to those who have faith in their hopes and dreams. With God, all things are possible!

This month's birthday is Sagittarius. Known as the Archer, he is half man, half horse. The man half is high-minded, intelligent, wise and sometimes deeply religious. The horse half is rambunctious, competitive, loves to show off and be the center of attention. Sag people pursue their education, even if circumstances prohibit it. They go to college, master one or several subjects and have an inquiring mind. If they can't attend, then they read a lot and, in this modern era, surf the internet. They are often found at sports venues, in the entertainment industry and in politics.

This fire sign is masculine and ruled by Jupiter. Sag loves to eat and drink, play sports, gamble, flirt, and much of it to excess. They are out to have a good time every chance they get. Everyone likes having a Sag around, he is cheerful, optimistic and has a great sense of humor. He makes a good stand-up comedian, as well as teacher or professor. You won't fall asleep during his lectures.

Since Sagittarius is a religious sign, you will also find him in the ministry, attending services or studying philosophy or mysticism. Even if he doesn't go to church or temple, he will explore spirituality at some time in his life. This sign also loves to travel. They like to camp out, go to the shore and take vacations abroad. They are good at playing cards and games. They like challenging sports like car racing, surfing, hang gliding, skiing, mountain climbing. With Sagittarius there is never a dull moment.

Aries (Born between March 21 - April 19)

Read about Capricorn. The celestial events in that sign will have some effect on your professional life. In some way, you might get publicity whether you want it or not. Your employer or CEO might be in the news, if not you. If you are invited to holiday functions, be sure to go, and do some networking. It will be a hectic month, but Aries likes the excitement. Write everything down so you don't miss anything important.

Taurus (Born between April 20 - May 19)

It may be time for you to hibernate. You want to stay in, entertain just a few close friends, enjoy a drink by the fire. You also may want to work on renovations, and something at home may need repairs or a coat of paint. There could be some disturbing revelations in your career, upheaval in company management for example. Keep a low profile, but watch what is going on all around you, and do your homework.

Gemini (Born between May 20 - June 20)

If you have children, they will be a greater responsibility, due to Saturn. Young adults may become new parents. Leisure time is limited now. You may be more serious and reserved with your affections, or you may meet an older partner with these qualities. On a brighter note, note the Full Moon on the 2nd, and New

Moon on the 16th. These could be romantic days for both married and single folks, who will meet new partners.

Cancer (Born between June 21 - July 22)

With all the planetary activity in Capricorn, some Moonchildren will see changes or situations in their marriages. You will have to iron out some control issues. But it could be a favorable time. If single you could meet potential partners who are charismatic, older and more worldly, and you could marry or make a commitment now. New Year's Eve, with a Full Blue Moon, could be a very interesting and romantic time!

Leo (Born between July 23 - August 21)

Your energies are highly concentrated due to Mars going retrograde. You are driven and easily excited. You have a short fuse this month. Activities slow down so you can make revisions. Plans could change. Make sure you have a project to throw yourself into, something you can work hard at to use up all this crazy energy. Focus and be patient. Theatre, winter sports, children's activities and large scale art projects are favored.

Virgo (Born between August 22 - September 22)

Because of all the stuff in Capricorn, you should have a busy social life now. Holiday parties, children's activities and school functions, all recreational pursuits are highlighted. If you haven't had free time to relax and have fun, you will have it now. On New Year's Eve you may meet new friends and lovers, and network with new groups. Your responsibilities seem to take care of themselves, so don't worry about a thing.

Libra (Born between September 23 - October 22)

You might run into roadblocks or delays in some of your activities, but it's for a good reason, so be patient. Much of what happens this month will be centered around your home life. Spend Christmas at home, have an open house. It will be a success. Old friends and distant relatives may come back into your life. You could purchase new furniture and appliances, but shop carefully. Don't be extravagant, but buy for quality.

Scorpio (Born between October 23 - November 21)

Read about Leo, with retrograde Mars. This will apply to your career, and any efforts going forward. You might have to deal with troublemakers. A project is put on hold. Keep a cool head, and use the waiting time to rework your strategies. You will note that higher ups not playing by the book might get caught. Make sure you aren't one of them. At the Winter Solstice, an interesting revelation could appear. Pay attention.

Sagittarius (Born between November 22 - December 21)

Venus flies in from the 1st to the 24th. Now you should get your ideas on paper and start creative projects. Paint, go to museums, plan trips. If you need advice, loans or moral support, you'll get it this month. Everyone is in your corner now. This is a romantic time for you, you can meet new people, any time all month. Also, shopping bargains come your way. Buy new clothes, get beauty treatments, go for a spa weekend.

Capricorn (Born between December 22 - January 20)

This sign is in the spotlight for several reasons. First, there is a parade of planets marching in now, Mercury, Venus and the Sun, so all kinds of things could take shape. Communications and social activities are favored, and in general you will be in a cheery holiday mood. The Winter Solstice on the 21st is a special time of the year, with the shortest day and longest night. The Sun will join Pluto on the 24th, so there could be a battle of wills, a bid for power, or a transformational event of some kind. The month will wind up with a Blue Moon on New Year's Eve. It could be very romantic. You should make plans to wine and dine your beloved, and single Goats could meet someone new, so get out and find a party! Happy New Year!

Aquarius (Born between January 21 - February 19)

Mars stalled in Leo could make things touchy in relationships. You may have to assert your independence. Make sure you are honest and straightforward with your spouse whatever the issues are. On the day of the Winter Solstice, the 21st, Jupiter and Neptune reunite in exact conjunction so you could receive some extraordinary vision or inspiration. Back off and meditate, clear your mind so you can better see the solution. Put the Aquarian art of detachment to good use.

Pisces (Born between February 20 - March 20)

Uranus is still hanging out here, but not causing any problems. Pisces folks should listen to their intuition, follow hunches and look for hidden opportunities. Many have found themselves acting on impulse and feeling restless, but this could be to your advantage. Learn about new technologies. Write down your ideas no matter how silly they sound. Piscean intuition and Uranian ingenuity could create something big!

Holidays & Observances This Month

December 1 - World AIDS Day

December 2 - International Abolition of Slavery Day

December 5 - Mindfulness Day (Zen Buddhist)

December 5 - International Volunteers Day

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day

December 10 - Human Rights Day

December 12-19 - Chanukah (Judaism)

December 15 - Bill of Rights Day

December 21 - Winter Solstice - First Day of Winter

December 25 - Christmas Day (Christian)

December 26 -31 – Kwanzaa (Multi-Cultural)

December 27 - Ashura (Islam)

December 31 - New Year's Eve

This is: Universal Human Rights Month

This Month's Flower - Narcissus

This Month's Birthstone - Turquoise, Blue Zircon

There is much to do to celebrate the holiday season on Delmarva. Check out the Out & about Calendar for an extensive listing:

http://delmarva-almanac.com/index.php/site/calendarcategories/category/holidays_observances/

We at Delmarva Almanac wish you happy holidays and a peaceful New Year!

Be sure to visit Delmarva Almanac online for an extensive community calendar which covers the entire peninsula, tide tables, original photography and much more: [Delmarva-almanac.com](http://delmarva-almanac.com)

Resources for some of the information contained in this publication include:

<http://archives.delaware.gov>

<http://www.earthcalendar.net>

<http://edsitement.neh.gov>

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.e-referencedesk.com>

<http://www.historiclewes.org>

<http://www.holidaysmart.com>

<http://www.msa.md.gov>

<http://www.loc.gov>

<http://www.noaa.gov>

<http://www.ocmuseum.org/>

<http://www.skyandtelescope.com>

<http://www.seasky.org>

<http://www.vahistorical.org>

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