THE LINK

Feb 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN HOMESTEADERS ASSOCIATION

Editor—Marti Szczur

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW!

Oimelc: The Promise of Springtime at the Waxing of the Moon

by Joan Stemmler

In Wintergreen this year we saw the first quarter moon on February 2, a time the Celts would know as mid-winter, the dark time. Late in January or early in February the first quarter of the waxing moon accompanied by Venus appears in the south in the evening sky. For the Celts of old it marked the beginning of the bright period of the lunar month. The alternation of the brightness of the period around the full moon signaled by the first quarter and the darkness around the time of the new moon was equated by the Celts with the brightness of the solar half year around the summer solstice and the darkness of the other half of the year around the winter solstice.

Up here on the mountain, we seem closer to the seasons and the sun and the moon. This year, I am continuing an earlier project of recording the Upper Shamokin Gorge Trail (USGT) in pictures and words on the occasion of the solstices, equinoxes and the halfway mark of the 2nd day of February, May, August and November, recording the passage of the natural year every 45 or so days. Unwittingly, it turns out that by using those halfway markers I am using a system rooted in the Celtic lunar calendar.* Right now, we are near the day the Celts celebrated as Oimelc, the promise of spring, the middle of winter when the first quarter of the moon waxes.

The name Oimelc may derive from "sheep's milk". It marks the time when lambing and calving took place. The Feast of Fires was a purifying ritual of the cattle and sheep before they were sent out to pasture in the higher fields. In folk-lore, it was associated with the Celtic goddesses. Assimilated by Christianity early in the first millennium, February 1st became St. Bridget's Day on the church's calendar, replacing the festival.

My Irish forebearers, warmed by the Gulf Stream and some 16° to the north and 70° to the east of Virginia, were out having a party this time long ago, fires brightening the long northern night of Ireland. On my hike taking pictures of the USGT on February 2nd, I saw no promises of spring: in fact it started to snow. Nonetheless, I can, like the Celts, watch two moons grow full and wane, and know that in 45 more days, spring plants will leaf out, the bloodroots, round yellow violets and wood anemones will bloom and the service berries will blow white in the woods. Cheers! Sha'inte!

** Like other early cultures, among them the Hebrew, Indian and Muslim, the Celts followed a lunar calendar. Different from the solar based Roman calendar, the Celts used a 5 year calendar of 29 or 30 days in a month with 354 days in a year. The addition of two extra months, or intercalations, at the beginning and in the middle of a 5 year cycle, resulted in a lunar calendar with 62 lunations that approximated closely 5 solar years. The two extra months were named CIALLOS. In a 30 year period, the two calendars were only 1.645 days out of alignment. A first century B.C., bronze tablet, the Coligny Calendar, discovered in France in the late 19th century, preserves much of this information. Thanks to CAERAUS-TRALIS.com/ that provided almost all my information.*

Got a Business/Service to Recommend for our Wintergreen Directory?

It's time to update the Wintergreen Member Phone Directory for 2009. Have you worked with any businesses or service providers that you'd like to see advertised in our 2009 directory? If so, we'd like to include them in our mailing to prospective advertisers.

Please provide the following information: Service/Product; Business Name; Contact; Address; Phone Number; and Email Address.

Send this information to Gloria Beddow at 1526 Monocan Drive, Nellysford, VA 22958 or by email to gbeddow@verizon.net by February 28, 2009.

Uh, Oh!

THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST 'LINK'…

… if you haven't paid your 2009 annual MHA dues. Use the form on the back page to send in with your dues. Also, please use this form to update any name/address information, **particularly email addresses**, so we can keep you posted on mountain news.

Need another incentive? New directory is coming out in July 2009 and will only will be sent to members who've paid their dues.

2009 MHA BOARD

Horace Brady	325-7930
President	bradywareagle@aol.com
Steve Martianella	325-2281
VP/Membership Chair	smsales1@aol.com
Ray Allen	325-7834
Secretary	raygnav@aol.com
Allan Blum	325-9133
Treasurer	allan_blum@yahoo.com
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Stu Harvey	325-7171
Member	stuartharvey@alum.mit.edu
Marti Szczur	325-7164
LINK Editor/Member	szczumar@aol.com

President's Corner

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!

First of all I want to express my thanks to Stu Harvey for providing his experience and leadership for the last several years as your President. He will stay on the Board as a Director until the end of this year, and it will be of tremendous value to me.

Last Fall your Board met and decided to change a few Social Events and, as Stu said in the last issue of the Link, "to spread the wealth" and responsibility for these events beyond the Social Committee. We have done this by asking Sharon Kincel and Joyce Claman to host the Bingo Party again; Millie Steele to host a New Party called "The RED Party" more details on Page 6 and future emails. Also, Shirley Thomas is our New Social Events Coordinator and has put together all of the new social events, plus has gotten new members to be in charge.

We are all looking forward to some fun and exciting events. So please get involved! There is plenty to do and many opportunities for everyone. Lets have a great year!!

To ensure that you continue to get the Link and or Party notices, please send your new address to Membership Chair/ Vice President Steve Marianella at smsales1@aol.com. Also, send all RSVPs to John Armel, RR1, Box 650, Roseland, VA. 22967 or 434-325-6772 or jlatwg@aol.com.

Regards,

Horace Brady, MHA President

Join these Mountain Activities ...

Mahjong meets Mondays at 10:00 am. Contact: Susan Capell on 361-2435.

Saturday Evening Bridge meets the second or third Saturday of the month, at 7:30 pm. Contact: Kate McIntire on 325-7073.

Mountain Women meetings are held the second Friday of each month at 10:00 am. Roadrunners are welcome! Contact: Martha Misker on 325-7585.

The Mountain Women Gardeners meet every third Friday at various member's homes. Contact: Vera Jones on 325-9256.

The Mountain Women Book Group meets the Monday after the Mountain Women meeting. Contact: Barbara Porter on 325-7314.

The Mountain Women Craft Group meets on the 4th Friday of each month. Contact: Sarah Scott on 325-7375.

Book Clubs: Two book clubs meet each month on Tues evenings. Contacts: Arlo Croxall on 361-0045 or Elaine Davis on 361-1936.

Scrapbook Group meets the third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm. Contact Barbara Marker on 325-7339 or tbmarker@aol.com

Editor's Note

Brisk out this morning. Ah, it feels good … that's what attracts us mountain folk to the top, n'est pas? You skiers are acting happier these days. Forecasters say we'll get a tease of spring temperatures for a few days in mid-February. A tease is okay, but we still need some more snow and cold to strengthen our mountain character and spirit.

I sometimes get asked by low-landers and urban dwellers "How can you live on the mountain? What do you all do up there in the winter?" Silly question … but how to respond? Let's see — breathe fresh, crisp air; exercise down slopes for some; hikes in the woods with vista rewards for others; workout at the spa; admire a sunset; book read by a roaring fire; splurge with a massage; wine and dine with friends; think and dream; shop over the Web; entertain family and friends; hug a dog and pat a cat; stare at the night stars; attend a nature lecture; absorb a concert; write or craft or cook or paint or phone or telecommute; enjoy living and be incredibly thankful that we "discovered" Wintergreen mountain.

Marti Szczur, LINK Editor

2009

Mountain Homesteaders Activities

Feb 7th — Winter BINGO Party

March 7th — **Red Party (see Page 6)**

June 6th —Shrimp Fest

July 4th — Independence Day Cookout

August 8th — Italian Dinner

Sept. 12th — Lobster Fest

Sept. 26th—Oktoberfest

Dec. 11th — Annual Holiday Gala
(at Veritas Winery)

Note: Details about events will be sent by email and posted at Mailbox Kiosk.

Hooray … first decent snowfall of 2009 fell during first week of February! View is of Three Ridges from Blackrock Circle.

Secrets from a Chef's Recipe File

Baked Oatmeal ala Wintergreen

Serves 4-6

Chef Ellen English (Rosa-Ellen@verizon.net, 325-2012)

This baked oatmeal makes for good and hearty "carb loading" fare before skiing and can be made ahead so it's great for company.

Ingredients

- 2 cups quick oats (uncooked)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 egg
- 1 cup half and half
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- ½ tsp vanilla extract (may also do a little almond extract if using almonds)
- ½ cup dried fruit (cranberries, apricots-sliced, raisins) or diced fresh fruit like apple, pear or banana
- ½ cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans or almonds)
- Maple syrup

Method

- Combine dry ingredients in a medium bowl, mix in egg & milk,
- Stir in butter, vanilla, nuts and fruit just until well combined
- Spread into 8x8 pan coated with non-stick spray
- Bake at 350 degrees 30-35 min

Tip: Make the day before, cover and refrigerate, bake fresh the next morning.

Great with maple syrup drizzled over!

Recognition for Wintergreen Performing Arts

by Larry Alan Smith, Artistic and Executive Director

It has been a good couple of months at WPA! We found out that *Symphony*, the magazine of the League of American Orchestras, will be including us in an article in their May-June issue. We also learned that a Wintergreen Resort/WPA three-day arts package was selected by the Virginia Tourism Corporation to be a part of its **Live Passionately** campaign celebrating the 40th anniversary of *Virginia is for Lovers*. Visit www.virginia.org/40/ for more details.

And . . . in December, the following e-mail message arrived:

"We are pleased to inform you that Wintergreen Performing Arts has been selected by Virginians for the Arts (VFTA) as an excellent model to demonstrate ways arts are building communities in Virginia. As you may know, VFTA Foundation is documenting these stories for its Arts Build Communities project to help generate awareness among legislators, local economic development officials, chambers of commerce, and others who participate in funding decisions for the arts and the Virginia Commission for the Arts. The information may also be shared by VFTA with the general public through media campaigns, VFTA's website and other channels."

The page (see next column) was created by VFTA, and it now appears on their website (www.vaforarts.org). Special thanks must go to the many Wintergreen volunteers and contributors who make it possible for WPA to fulfill its mission. WPA's selection honors your commitment to the arts.

WINTERGREEN PERFORMING ARTS
Building Communities

THE ARTS BUILD COMMUNITIES
WWW.VAFORARTS.ORG

WINTERGREEN PERFORMING ARTS FACTS

GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS SERVED
The Counties of Nelson, Albemarle, Augusta and Amherst, as well as the Mid-Atlantic Region as a whole during the four weeks of the Wintergreen Summer Music Festival

POPULATION SERVED
Approximately 210,000 regional residents:
- 20% African American
- 70% Caucasian
- 4% Asian American
- 5% Latino/Hispanic
- 1% Not Applicable

ATTENDANCE (FY 2007-08)
Approximately 10,500 annual attendees

CONTACT INFO
Wintergreen Performing Arts
www.wintergreenperformingarts.org
(434) 325-8292

"The Wintergreen Summer Music Festival certainly has Central Virginia buzzing in July. Wonderful symphony orchestra and chamber concerts, Sunday morning coffee concerts, plays, lectures and all of this with the surrounding scenery of the Blue Ridge Mountains."
Don,
2008 Summer Music Festival Patron

". . . of all the jazz club and jazz presentations we have attended through the years, that Friday night in the tent was the most spectacular one ever!" *Dan, Patron*

Located in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, Wintergreen Performing Arts, Inc. (WPA) is a non-profit organization that produces a high-quality summer music festival featuring symphonic and chamber concerts, as well as other performing arts programs throughout the year. Founded in 1995 as an arts council, WPA has grown from providing programs in private homes to more than 175 public performances ranging from concerts by the entire Wintergreen Festival Orchestra to plays, films, seminars, and other adjunct offerings.

WPA is committed to education and to building multiple communities by providing diverse programming featuring music and the other performing arts.

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY IMPACT
- Partnership with Nelson County Public Schools for a variety of programs during the academic year;
- Daily seminars for adult learners during the Music Festival;
- Four-week Wintergreen Summer Music Academy for talented young musicians from across the country; and
- Frequent programming for children.

Wintergreen Performing Arts delivers an immeasurable richness to the lives of its participants, thus improving the community's overall quality of life. It also creates jobs, and generates revenue and tax dollars that sustain its communities. Consider the following economic impact data:

ECONOMIC IMPACT (FY 2007-08)
(total industry impact of organizations & audiences)
- Total Expenditures: $909,170
- Full-time Equivalent Jobs: 26.3
- Local Taxes & Fees Generated: $36,470
- State Taxes & Fees Generated: $40,322

As these numbers reveal, the value of the arts to building — and sustaining — Virginia's communities cannot be overemphasized.

"The summer music festival at Wintergreen was more wonderful than we could have imagined. A year ago, we blocked our calendars for the month of July in order to take in as much of the festival as possible ... The cooking classes were a great addition. We loved getting to know some of the musicians. The academy students added a new dimension for us . . . what a bunch of talented young people. And finally the music . . . it was just fabulous . . . each concert was better than the one before."
Jan,
2008 Summer Music Festival Patron

VFTA/VFTA Foundation 1 E. Cary Street Richmond, VA 23219 804.644.2787
Wintergreen Performing Arts is a grant recipient of the Virginia Commission for the Arts.
"Arts Build Communities" is a project of Virginians for the Arts Foundation and is supported in part by a grant from Altria.

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday

March 28, 2009

A Casino Night Fundraiser for

Wintergreen Performing Arts

Dear Friends:

Where do you plan to be on Saturday evening, March 28th? I hope you will be joining in the fun at Wintergreen Resort's Mountain Inn.

WPA invites you to come to "Smokey Joe's Café" at the Pair-o-Dice Hotel.

Click here to read about the event.

In order to purchase your tickets . . .

Website: www.wintergreenperformingarts.org
Phone: (434) 325-8292

WINTERGREEN POLICE FOIL BURGLARS

by *Steve Southworth, Investigations Sergeant, Wintergreen Police Department*

The phone rings at 3:30 A.M., and I awake in a daze. The dispatcher says "Steve, there is a burglary in progress on the mountain, one officer and two deputies are in route, and I need you to respond pronto". I dress like superman in a phone booth, exit the house and into my police cruiser, cut on the blue lights and onward I go. Needless to say, my thoughts were rushing; so was my heartbeat. I arrive on the scene, and I am told by the first responding officer that the unknown suspect(s) had fled prior to his arrival. How could that be, I thought, the patrol officer was on the scene within two minutes of being dispatched. Now the crime scene processing begins, with no immediate suspect information nor leads available. This is how most burglary investigations start off, and as experienced police officers know, the first 24-48 hours is a crucial time in developing valuable leads.

Next, the unexpected and rarity happens. The officers happened upon persons of interest in the area, within the first half-hour of receiving the burglary call. Call it fate, good fortune or sound police work; it doesn't matter, we just went with it. I will call it plain bad luck for the persons of interest, for they chose a day when every single Wintergreen police officer and dispatcher would be marking on-duty within a few hours. This was December 12, 2008, and the police department had its annual kick-off meeting for ski-season. Multiple additional officers responded to the White Oak area of Wintergreen Mountain, where the burglary occurred. Every officer had there individual roles consisting of: interviewing potential victims, witnesses and suspects; crime scene and evidence processing; and tracking, searching and canvassing the neighborhood. By early afternoon, five additional house burglaries were discovered by the officers, and in days to follow, two more. Fortunately, no one was at home during the invasions.

At the first day's end, arrests were made and the first six burglaries were solved. In addition, evidence was sought linking at least one of the suspect's to over a dozen other serious property crimes in counties between here and Roanoke. All in all, it was a good day for those who serve and protect. Although initially tragic for the victims, a peace of mind comes with the perpetrators being caught, and personal property being recovered.

Every officer who responded to the burglary/crime scenes put in endless hours on December 12th. We were exhausted to say the least. A certain pride was in the air. Yes, we were pleased in catching the suspects, but it goes much deeper than that. It was the pride of teamwork by every officer graciously accepting their roles, and defining a successful moment in time. Our community was safer, and everyone could rest more comfortably.

[Editor Note: Thanks, Wintergreen police!]

Rodes Farm Stables Foundation Update

Rodes Farm Stables Foundation, Inc. was established in response the announcement early last year that WPI intended to discontinue equestrian activities and possibly sell the stables, surrounding pastures, and meadows. Since the Foundation was created in July, 2008, nearly 100 of our Wintergreen and Nelson County neighbors – individuals, families, and businesses – have joined as members to support three principal goals: 1) assure that the stables and pastures will be preserved as open space; 2) provide for continued public use of the property for equine and related activities; and 3) improve the quality and range of those activities. November gave us a wonderful sense of how much the community supported those goals when hundreds of individuals joined with local restaurants to participate in our successful "Taste of Nelson" fundraiser at Lake Monocan.

At the Foundation's urging, WPI agreed that it would continue boarding operations at least until March, 2009. In the interim, the Foundation submitted to WPI and WPOA a proposal under which it would undertake responsibility for the repair, maintenance, and improvement of the dedicated riding trials. It also submitted to WPI a proposal under which the Foundation, should it be necessary, would lease the property, employ professional management, initiate necessary improvements to the barn, riding ring and pastures, and gradually introduce and expand equine activities as resources became available.

Those proposals were effectively "on hold" while WPI obtained an appraisal of the property; however, the appraisal has now been completed and discussions between WPI and the Foundation are expected to begin in the very near future.

Our sincere thanks go to all who have joined or otherwise provided financial support to these early efforts of the Foundation. We hope to have real progress to report soon.

For information concerning membership, volunteer opportunities, or other ways to support the Foundation, please call us at 361-1130, contact any of our officers (Phil Chabot, Elaine Weems, Hilary Day), or visit our web site: www.RFSFoundation.org.

NEED A CURE FOR THOSE WINTER BLAHS?

Come to the Mountain Homesteaders

RED PARTY

Everything will be RED

Food, Wine and YOU!

(We are asking Everyone to Wear RED)

WHEN: Saturday, March 7th, 5:30 PM

WHERE: Trillium House

$10 Per Person (Make Checks Payable to MHA)

RSVP: By February 27th

to

John Armel, Rt 1, Box 650, Roseland 22967

or 325.6772 or jlatwg@aol.com

The Wintergreen Nature Foundation

TWNF UPDATE

It is official: this year's golf tournament was one of the most successful in recent years! Many thanks to all of you who supported the fundraiser as volunteers, participants, sponsors and Silent Auction donors/purchasers. Plan to join us again in 2009; the event will be held on September 25.

The New Year offers many opportunities for enjoying, and for learning more about, our environment. Back again is the popular **Winter Lecture Series** on **1/17, 2/27, and 3/14** focusing, this year, on our natural resources and sustainable energy. If you have not attended the series previously, why not do so now!

The **Spring Wildflower Symposium** is always a big hit: both educational and enjoyable; it will be held on **May 15-17**.The following weekend, **May 23-24**, will be the **native plant sale**. These plants have been grown by volunteers from our Wintergreen family and are hardy and appropriate for this environment (and offered at reasonable prices!).

For children the week of **July 20-24** promises much fun in a learning experience at **Summer Nature Camp**.

And, in between, there are many opportunities for hikes on our wonderful trail system (guided or otherwise). Be adventurous and explore a trail new to you!

More activities abound! If you do not have a calendar of events or have need of further information, call TWNF at 325-7451.

Like Maple Syrup? Check out this trip …

March 21st
9 am 51st Annual Highland Maple Festival

Take a step back in time to Highland County, "Virginia's Switzerland." Travel back roads and mountain byways to the annual Highland Maple Festival. Each year, thousands of visitors are drawn to this unspoiled, rural region of Virginia to celebrate the "opening" of the trees and observe the process of maple syrup-making. We'll take a sugar camp tour, check out local artisans, eat yummy food and spend the day outside. Bring bag lunch or money for lunch and dinner. $30 members/$35 non-members. Please make a reservation by March 18th.

TWNF 2009 Winter Lecture Series

LIVING WITH THE PLANET

This year's topic was prompted by the need to understand our dynamic planet and the changes that lie ahead. We truly live in an exciting time when the adaptability and ingenuity of man will take center stage as we rise to challenges that may affect both the way we live and in some cases where we choose to live. Join us for an exciting look at our continent, and our region and learn what you can do to better live within our natural resources while supporting sustainable energy.

TWNF Winter Lectures take place at the Rockfish Valley Community Center. Plan to attend the 2nd and 3rd lectures!

Individual lectures: $15 members/non-members

- **What Might the Future Hold?** Meteorologist, Jeff Halverson looks to the future and what we can learn from the 2008 hurricane season as he discusses tropical tempests, ocean temperature and global warming.
  Friday, February 27th at 7pm

- **Alternative Energy—**Each panelist will introduce participants to their research in a mini lecture format. A group discussion prompted by comments and questions from the audience will follow.
  Saturday, March 14th at 7pm

  - *Joel Darmstadter, Senior Fellow researcher, Washington DC Resources for the Future.* Joel will share an overview of his global and national research on alternative energy resources.

  - *Dr David Hagen, Museum Scientist for Physical Sciences, Science Museum of Virginia.* David will discuss his work with new educational exhibits at the Science Museum of Virginia directed at understanding alternative energy resources.

  - *Patrick Farley, AIA/LEED, Energy and Environmental Progress, Designer of alternative energy and environmental systems for homes and businesses.* Patrick will showcase several of his many unique designs that have been successful in daily living.

  - *Rick Reynolds, Wildlife Biologist, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.* Rick will discuss the potential conflicts between wind farms and wildlife as he shares his study results on the Highland County wind generating project.

For details about this program and to register, go to the website:

http://www.twnf.org

Mountain Crafters

First of a series of articles about interest groups which meet on a regular basis at Wintergreen.

by Kathy Knowles

The fire is crackling and the mingled aromas of mulled cider and fresh muffins are wafting through the house. Sarah and Vera conspire over a complicated knitting project while Gloria and Kate patiently piece intricate quilts and Kathy creates tote bags on her sewing machine. Pat hems a pair of pants and Joan replaces buttons on a beloved old sweater. Welcome to Crafters meeting!

Once a month, mountain crafters gather in each other's homes to visit, to share their current projects and to get advice from each other on the challenges of creating beautiful and useful handcrafted clothing and art. We have observed a pair of knitted socks create an intricate pattern seemingly all by themselves as they are worked on four needles by Vera, a skilled knitter. Carolyn makes complicated embroidery knots magically become sheep grazing in a field as she needlepoints her way across her canvas. Barbara takes vacation photos then trims, composes, enhances and somehow makes a stack of pictures become the story of a family's memorable vacation. But that's next month's column…..the Scrapbook Group meets separately from Crafters, on a different day at a different time but with the same agenda: to create something beautiful and meaningful with their imaginations and their hands.

Quilter Kate Allenbach

Two of our mountain crafters, Gloria Daly and Kate Allenbach, are gifted quilters. With the discerning eyes of the artist, these crafters choose fabric and thread in complicated and creative combinations and then begin the process of cutting, piecing, sewing and quilting the tiny snippets together into beautiful works of art. The vision requires patience and a steady hand as the scraps of fabric are intricately stitched together into a finished product that is without doubt "more than the sum of its parts!" It is always exciting to see what Kate and Gloria are creating at Crafters meetings. Kate's talent for combining fabrics of different colors, hues, patterns, tones and textures is evident in her complex, often nature-derived creations. Kate says that when she gets a vision of her project, she becomes so excited about the fabrics, the pattern, the combinations and even the tools she uses in her quilting that she has a hard time getting to sleep as her plans develop. Gloria says that choosing fabric is complicated and time-consuming, because the combinations are endless and often the softer-hued, more muted back of a piece of fabric works better than the brighter, "right" side in a quilt project. Gloria was working on a piece at one Crafters meeting using golden threads to highlight the detail in fall leaves. Our star quilters always have a surprise to share!

Crafters meet at members' homes on the fourth Friday of every month, and all are welcome. Even if you are "between projects" or just have a pair of pants to hem or a stack of envelopes to address, you are always welcome at Crafters meetings.

Call Sarah Scott (325-7375) or Kathy Knowles (325-6444) to have your name added to the e-mail list; notifications about meeting locations are sent to all members prior to each meeting. Welcome, all Mountain Crafters!

BEAR SMART COUNCIL NEWS

The Bear Smart Council has been very busy. We have completed a bear conservation assessment of conditions here at Wintergreen. Recommendations have been developed in cooperation with Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and presented by the Council to WPOA, WPI and The Wintergreen Nature Foundation. The recommendations have been very well received by the Boards of these groups, and you can expect to see signs, publicity about the Bear Smart program, bear proof garbage containers at public sites and other measures in the upcoming months.

MT HOMESTEADERS AND THE VALLEY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS have an important proactive role to play in the effort to keep our special bears WILD. The Council is asking everyone to become Bear Smart and thus prevent the tragic events of the last two years that have resulted in the loss of so many bears at Wintergreen.

The Bear Smart Council wishes to thank the Boards of WPOA, WPI, TWNF, Mt. Homesteaders, the Valley Association and all those in leadership positions for their enthusiastic support.

Being Bear Smart means:

- Compliance with new bird-feeding guidelines which means refraining from feeding birds from April 1-December 1
- Removing any outside garbage cans that are not bear-proof
- Monitoring garbage collection sites to make sure they are locked.
- Monitoring construction dumpsters in your neighborhood and reporting bear activity around them to WPOA.
- Reporting bear sightings to the Wintergreen Police Department so we can begin to collect information on the number of bears at Wintergreen.
- Reporting any bear incursions into homes or cars immediately to the Wintergreen Police Department.
- Encouraging you neighbors to become familiar with the Bear Smart Program and to support our efforts.

Epicurious Group treat the Mountain Women to a Holiday Brunch

The Mountain Women held their second annual holiday brunch in December at the Trillium House, enjoying good food and good company. The festive decorations were provided by the MW Steering Committee, with assistance from decorator extraordinaire, Pat Thompson. The seasonal meal was planned and provided by the Epicurious Group. Attendees enjoyed shopping at the Nature Foundation's Gift Shoppe and contributed to a cash gift to the Monticello Area Community Action Agency.

One of the 2008 WPA Opportunity Ball auction events was a December Christmas Luncheon and tree cutting at the **Skylark Farm** off the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Vera Jones supervises, and with Christmas spirit in the air, John Coy helps Chuck Jones drag it and load it onto the car.

The **Wintergreen Women's Book Club** meets monthly (see list on Page 3 for group information) at one of the member's houses. Sure, there is serious discussions about the books, but refreshments are critical to profound musing and provocative opinion.

Participants of the 2009 Wounded Warriors Weekend. Thanks to the many Wintergreen residents, who volunteer by making yellow ribbons and helping at this event. Check out article about it at dcski.com.

Useless Snow Facts

- The *Guinness Book of Records* lists the largest snowflakeat 15 inches across, a record held in Keogh, Montana, USA, since 1887. It was described by witnesses as "larger than a milk pan."
- Chionophobia is a fear of snow.
- The world's largest snowman was actually a snowwoman. Residents of Bethel, Maine built the 122 ft giant in 2008, giving her 30 ft spruce trees for arms and skis for eyelashes.
- Around 12 per cent of the Earth's land surface is covered in permanent snow and ice.
- Japanese scientists have developed a snow-eating robot, fitted with GPS, which shovels snow from the drive and compacts it into ice bricks.
- Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is the only permanent snowcap within sight of the equator.
- There is NOT a law of nature that prohibits 2 snowflakes from being identical.
- At the center of each snowflake is a speck of dust, volcanic ash or particle from outer space. Temperature, humidity and wind determine the shape each crystal takes as water vapor freezes on it.
- The most snow in the USA usually falls on Valdez, Alaska. It receives an average of 326 inches of it per year.
- Snow is technically a mineral, like iron and salt.

Wildlife Center of Virginia Announces Spring Open Houses

The Wildlife Center of Virginia, the nation's leading teaching and research hospital for native wildlife, has scheduled five open houses for Spring 2009. These are rare opportunities to see the inner workings of the nation's premier wildlife hospital, as well as meet some of the wildlife that serve as the Center's education ambassadors.

Open Houses are held on Sundays, March 1, 15, 29, April 5 and 19th. One hour sessions are at 12:30pm, 2pm, and 3:30pm.

There is no charge to participate in an open house; however, reservations are required [call 540.942.9453 or email us at wildlife@wildlifecenter.org]. A limited number of spaces are available for each session.

Save the Dates: June 13 and 14 for the **Annual Mountain VS Valley Golf Shootout.**

Contact Steve Marianella smsales1@aol.com or Ken Nelson, jzzman434@aol.com to sign up.

Photo is of Steve and Ken, last year's champion captains.

THE LINK

Mountain Homesteaders Assn.
Route 1, Box 508
Roseland, VA 22967

2009 RENEWAL DUES

2009 WINTERGREEN MOUNTAIN HOMESTEADERS ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & DIRECTORY INFORMATION

FAMILY NAME _____ **FIRST NAMES** _____

NEW_____ **RENEWAL** _____

WG 911 ADDRESS _____ **WG PHONE** _____

HOME / MAILING ADDRESS _____

_____

HOME PHONE ( )_____ **FAX NUMBER** ( )_____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

_____ **Do not include our email in the directory**

_____ **Continue to send paper copy of LINK newsletter to my postal address***

_____ **If you live at Wintergreen part of the year, but also have another primary mailing address, check here and provide us with a calendar and 2nd address.**

Please complete the above and return with a check for $20 for one year to:

Membership Chair, Wintergreen Mountain Homesteaders Association
Rt. 1, Box 508, Roseland, VA 22967

*** The LINK will be sent electronically to email address above. Saves money/time on printing, postage, labeling, sorting.**