Winter Season

As we enter December, the days grow shorter and temperatures fall. It’s a great time to hunker-down under a warm blanket, with a cup of hot cocoa and a good book all the while wishing away the bad weather and hoping for spring, but the winter has its own specialness and offers opportunities not available in other seasons.

Even in the cold, families all around Carroll County have a myriad of fun activities to participate in. The county’s Recreation and Parks Department has lots of fun things for the kid in all of us to do from outdoor activities like bird or nature walks to indoor fun like craft or cake making. More events are listed at the end of this newsletter.

The Carroll County Farm Museum also has some wonderful events this month – Join the staff for the holiday house tour “Vintage Christmas Keepsakes” from December 1st through December 21st 9am to 4pm daily.

Visit with Santa from 10am to 1pm on Fridays and on weekends from 1pm to 4pm.

Holiday tea will be served on Wednesday, December 3rd and 10th from 11am to 2pm and Saturday, December 6th and 13th at 11am. The cost for the tea is $20 per person.

Wagon rides through the grounds are also available and the Gift Shop is open from 11am to 4pm Thursday through Sunday.

With all the hustle and bustle of the season, take a moment for yourself and your family and enjoy one or more of these wonderful events this holiday season.

Tree Lighting

The 60th Board of Carroll County Commissioners will be hosting the annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony on Monday, December 8.

The festivities will begin at 5pm with an introduction by the 60th Board of County Commissioners.

Lovely, seasonal music will be provided by The Francis Scott Key Chamber Choir and refreshments will be served by Gypsy’s Tea Room.

Bring the whole family and enjoy this wonderful annual event. It’s a great way to ring in the holidays!

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Carroll County

a great place to live, a great place to work, a great place to play!
Credit Rating and Bond Sales Went Well!

They say the proof is in the pudding. This year Carroll County was proven once again to be a model jurisdiction for fiscal responsibility and sound budget management practices.

In October a group of Carroll County elected officials and upper management personnel embarked on the annual trip to New York, NY to make the county’s credit rating presentations to top rating agencies Moody’s, Standard and Poor’s, and Fitch Ratings. For the 2nd year in a row both S&P and Fitch rated Carroll County’s credit as AAA. Moody’s scored Carroll as an Aa1.

This makes Carroll a consistent top performer in terms of credit worthiness and allows the county to sell bonds at very competitive interest costs, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in the process. The county’s strict and consistent budgeting practices along with extensive efforts made to attract high quality businesses with high paying jobs to the area contribute to this success.

Immediately following the rating process Carroll County Government sold approximately $73.5M dollars of general obligation bonds. A portion of the proceeds allowed the county to retire $58.5M dollars of older, higher interest rate bonds, saving approximately $4.365M dollars in future debt service payments. 8 bidders competed for the county’s bonds despite each of them offering less than 2.36% interest. The winning bidder was Citigroup Global Markets, Inc. at a True Interest Cost of 2.23%.

Carroll County Government thanks its top-notch financial management and budgeting staff for their efforts. Proper oversight of taxpayer dollars is a top priority in Carroll County, and a point of pride among citizens and county employees alike. All are to be congratulated on this continued success.

Meetings: Unless noted otherwise, meetings will be held in the County Office Building at 225 North Center Street, Westminster. All times are subject to change. Check the County’s website or call 410-386-2040 as the date approaches to confirm date and time of the meeting. Please follow this link to see all upcoming meetings. http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/commiss/calendar/Calendar.pdf.
Bus Trip

ICE at the Gaylord
Friday, December 5
Join us for “Frosty the Snowman” evening. Included is dinner at the Pienza Italian Market in the atrium of the hotel, accompanied by a visit to ICE! (winter “parkas” to wear over your coat are provided). Included are roundtrip motor coach transportation, driver’s gratuity, dinner, and the admission to ICE! (All Ages) Departs from CCFM
TIME: 3-10pm FEE: $100

“BIG APPLE” ONE DAY BUS TRIP
Saturday, December 6
Enjoy a day on your own in the Big Apple! The bus will drop you off at Bryant Park. The day is yours to plan. Fee includes roundtrip motor coach transportation and driver’s gratuity. (All Ages) Departs from CCOB
TIME: 7am-11pm FEE: $65

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA
Saturday, December 13, 6:30am–4:30pm
Join us as we volunteer assisting with the placing of wreaths on the graves at Arlington Cemetery. After the completion of the project, the bus will take us to Union Station for lunch on your own. (All Ages) Departs from CCOB (+lunch on your own)
TIME: 6:30am – 4:30pm FEE: $35

Bear Branch Nature Center Programs

PLANETARIUM SHOW
Saturday, December 6
Following the indoor show, you are invited outside for a “Star Party” to observe the nighttime sights. Dress for the weather. Bring your own telescope or look through one of ours! 8–Adult
TIME: 7:30-8:30pm FEE: $5 person

JUNIOR EXPLORERS
Thursday, December 11
Through hikes and activities you can learn all about the natural world just outside your door. Children should be mature enough to attend the program on their own. 6–8 years
TIME: 1-2:30pm FEE: $7 child

BEAR CUBS CLUB
Thursday, December 11
Your child will learn about the natural world through hikes, games and stories. No tag-alongs please, parent participation is needed. TIME: 10-11am FEE: $5 child AGE: 3-6 years

NATURE CENTER DECORATING
Saturday, December 13
Help Bear Branch get ready for the winter season! Using natural and recycled materials, help to make various decorations. You can even make one or two to take home for your own décor! Youth 6+ TIME: 2-4pm FEE: $5 child

Piney Run Nature Center Programs

NATURE & ME
Tuesdays, 12/2, 1/6 & 2/3, 11–11:45am OR Fridays, 12/5, 1/9 & 2/6, 11–11:45am
Children should bring along mom, dad, a grandparent or other adult, and dress for the weather. Learn about nature through outdoor and indoor activities, crafts, songs and stories. AGE: 4–6 years FEE: $18 child (3 sessions)

OUTDOOR RANGERS
Tuesdays 12/2, 1/6 & 2/3, 1–2:30pm
Children learn about nature through a short lesson and a hike outdoors, so be sure to dress for the weather. AGE: 6–10 years FEE: $20 child (3 sessions)

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!
Friday, December 5, 4:30–5:30pm
Gather your phone, camera, etc., tools needed during this feather, scaly, slimy photo shoot. We will provide the critters, with a few stories about them. AGE: 7–13 years FEE: $5 child

WHERE HAVE ALL THE CRITTERS GONE?
Monday, December 8, 10–11am
Following a short discussion, we will hike outside to look for hibernation spots and finish with a craft to take home. Be sure to dress for the weather. AGE: 3–5 years FEE: $6 child

DREIDEL, DREIDEL, DREIDEL, I MADE IT OUT OF...a milk carton?!
Tuesday, December 16, 10–11am
While families everywhere begin to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah, why not adorn your table with a dreidel made from recycled material. They are similar to tops but are created for

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the purpose of playing a traditional Jewish game. 
AGE: 3–5 years FEE: $6 child

HOORAY FOR WINTER!
Thursday, December 18, 10–11am
Let’s celebrate the beginning of winter by making a cake – a winter food cake for the birds that is. AGE: 3–5 years FEE: $6 child

MORNING BIRD WALK
Thursday, December 18, 8:30–9:30am
Venture outside and join Dave Harvey of the Carroll County Bird Club for a morning bird walk. Dress for the weather since walks occur rain or shine. Meet at the front door of the Nature Center. AGE: 10–Adult FEE: $5 person

Piney Run Volunteer Opportunities

Front Desk Volunteers Age: adult
Interested in volunteering for the Nature Center front desk? Answer the phones, take program registrations, answer nature questions, and sell items from the Nature Shop. No experience necessary, positive attitude and love of nature preferred.

Piney Run Events

Holiday Craft Workshops
SAPLINGS (12 & under): Saturday, December 6, 10am–12pm
AGE 13-ADULT: Saturday, December 13, 10am-12pm & 1-3pm
(registration is required). Enjoy holiday music and hot cider while creating natural holiday decorations to bring spirit into your home. Potluck lunch will be shared 12-1pm—signups will be taken upon registration for the workshop. Nature Center will be open 12-4 on Dec 13 for all your holiday shopping needs.

Therapeutic Recreation Programs

HOLIDAY WORKSHOP
Saturday, December 13, 12–2pm
Looking for that special gift to give a special someone? Share a gift in time for the holidays the old fashioned way - make it and take it. We bet you are very crafty! AGE: 8–Adult FEE: $20

JINGLE BELL HOP
Friday, December 12, 7–9pm
Gather your friends for a fun-filled evening of holiday music, crafts and snacks. Dance to the music of a DJ. If you require individual assistance, they must also register—fee is per person. Pre-Registration is REQUIRED by all so please call our office, use the website or mail in your registrations timely, this helps us to plan well for the evening with supplies/snacks! AGE: Adults FEE: $5 per person

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to Veterans Administration medical facilities in the region completely free of charge. The shuttle offers pick-up at convenient locations in Carroll County and will provide a free ride to a caregiver of the veteran’s choice.

Finally, links to the various government, non-profit, and private entities that provide services to veterans are included. It’s a long list and will be updated on a regular basis. The site will act as a complimentary service to keep veterans informed and engaged, allowing them to access the information they need privately and confidentially.

Carroll County is committed to serving those who put themselves in harm’s way to protect all Americans. Carrollveterans.com is one more tool offered to help them obtain the benefits they have earned. To speak to one of the Veterans Services Officers, please call (410) 386-3800. For more information about the free shuttle program please call Robert Joy at (410) 386-3366.

Stay in contact with County Government
County Government wants to connect with you. By following Carroll County through one of these outlets, you will know what’s happening in your county office building. Follow us on:
Twitter - @CarrollCoMd
Website - http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg
Flickr – http://www.flickr.com/photos/carrollcountygov/
YouTube http://www.youtube.com/user/CarrollCountyGov
“Like us on Facebook” with this link - http://www.facebook.com/pages/Carroll-County-Government-Maryland/242700532491347

Carroll County Commissioners
District 1 - Commissioner Stephen Wantz
District 2 - Commissioner Richard Weaver
District 3 - Commissioner Dennis E. Frazier
District 4 - Commissioner Richard Rothschild
District 5 - Commissioner Doug Howard

CARROLL COUNTY
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