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*Appalachian South Folklife Center*

# Holiday Newsletter 2020

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## THE VIEW FROM THE MOUNTAIN

As 2020 comes to a close we are once again reflecting on the year. This year brought many struggles and issues for people of all demographics.

No one can say they were completely unaffected by global events and emotional stress that this year has brought. But still we persevere and make do and hope that we can make a difference to someone somewhere.

The hardest part of 2020 for us has been being unable to help homeowners in our area. Our Summer work camp program brings joy to not only our campers and homeowners, but to us as well. It has been strange, to say the least, to have had such a quiet and seemingly uneventful year. However, the connections made and bonds strengthened in times of struggle have been invaluable.

Our friends may be 6+ feet away (or 100s of miles) but we can still care and support each other.

We want to thank everyone who has stuck with us, helped support us, and carry hope with us for brighter times ahead.

In honor of our friends and loved ones all over the globe, this season's Holiday Newsletter is a simple collection of writings, music, recipes, and art we hope will bring you some warmth this winter.



*Wishing everyone a safe and  
Happy Holiday Season,  
Tim & Crystal*

## A GHOST TALE

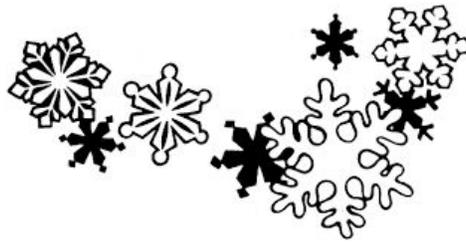
Visiting homes where our groups might eventually lend a hand is a big part of our job at the Folklife Center. Greg and I meet a lot of people. Sometimes there are interesting tangles that make you think very hard. We have met many, many good people who are not living in good situations.

We went to a home where a young parent was struggling with (among other things) a dilapidated floor – missing in many places where they had to pack down dirt to keep it from spreading. We were asked if we could please help soon, because the town of Exville in Mersumleigh county (story true, names change to the ridiculous to prevent speculation) had condemned the property, and the family would have nowhere to go.

The first thought was: “How horrible for a government to behave that way!!” But on closer examination, it seemed that the political entity had little choice, because there was a citizen complaint. That citizen complaint could be traced to an argumentative neighbor who was hoping to acquire the property. Said citizen was just as impoverished as the person we were visiting. The town and county had no choice by law but to follow up on complaints. A town that does not take complaints seriously is not a good thing, and complaints cannot be sorted into nice vs naughty even if Santa Claus is coming to town. But then again, it seems like some compassion on the part of the officials might be able to develop some more helpful policy. And it seems like the neighbor was selfish.

So, giving it some thought, I realized that the enemy here was not the town / county. And really, the neighbor was suffering too, needing more space. All were desperate for better living conditions. We also at ASFC can be accused of not helping, if only because we have limitations on when we can work and how many workers we have.

One side would admonish these poor people for going after each other. The other would point to lack of compassion in a government that cares more about property than people. Sides will be taken. Votes will be cast. Problems will not be solved and things will not get better.



What I have to say about that is this: Going after each other as enemies is not going to result in improving society. One side or the other (not really Political Parties at this level of government, but you can take that away from this essay, if you wish) is not going to fix anything. Actually this kind of ad hominem debate is just going to add another layer of dysfunction. Taking sides and digging in against others makes just about everything worse. The enemy is much less tangible. Ghosts.

Like the ghosts in Dickens' A Christmas Carol the accusation

comes from the intangible realm. The enemy is not the people on the other side of a given question. The bad ghosts that inhabit rich, poor, invested, ignored, concerned and unconcerned, believers and non-believers alike are “apparitions” like ignorance, want, greed and apathy. It is failure to take the time to listen, and lack of empathy that bring them to life indiscriminately. Without our help, these apparitions don't exist in any form.

Sloughing off responsibility for doing our part is easy when the “other guy” is to blame and we ourselves are not. Whether the bad guy in the above situation is the governing agency, or the ornery, suffering neighbor is a moot point. Yes! They are both guilty. But also, they each have a point. There has to be a way to remove bad buildings for the greater lifestyle of the town. Yes, people often legitimately need more room than they can afford. Yes! They also can be mean. The individual in question is suffering. They town already has plenty. All of those points are well-taken. And all are haunted by myopia, insouciance and lack of empathy. Ghosts are hard to name, and harder still to catch because only we make them real.

Our wish for this season of retrospection and new beginnings is that we see the good in each other, and watch for the common pitfalls of the intangible but universal hauntings. May we have empathy in our hearts for everyone.

-Tim Mainland



## Folklife Family Recipes

### Savory Sweet Potato Patties

submitted by Briddy Blankenship

#### Directions

1. Boil potatoes and mash them
2. Allow potatoes time to cool and transfer them into a mixing bowl
3. Make a well in the middle of the potatoes
4. Add egg in the well and whisk it
5. Add flour in the well and combine it with egg. Then add spices and mix everything together.
6. Add garlic and onion to bowl and mix well.
7. Place mixture in the fridge for about 30 minutes to cool. This will help the ingredients bind together better.
8. Prepare a pan on your stove top. Medium high heat. Cover the bottom of the pan with veggie oil and 2 tbsp of butter. Do not add too much oil to the pan or the cakes will fall apart. You want just enough to cover the bottom of the pan and no more.
9. Retrieve your mixture from the fridge. You will want to spoon about a quarter cup of the mixture into the preheated pan. (However many your pan will hold. Mine does about four at a time. You do not want to crowd them.)
10. Allow the first side to become crispy (2-3 minutes) then flip. Use your spatula to gently press down on the patties to flatten them slightly. Cook on the other side for another 2-3 minutes.
11. Once both sides are nice and crispy, transfer the patties over to a plate covered with a paper towel to rest for a few minutes. Enjoy!

#### Ingredients

- 2 lg sweet potatoes
- 1 sm/md red onion (minced)
- 5 garlic cloves  
(crush with knife and mince)
- 1 egg
- 1 cup flour
- vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp ground sage
- 2 tsp ground turmeric



## Folklife Family Recipes

### Three Bean Salad

submitted by Jim Campbell

#### Ingredients

- 1 can kidney beans
- 1 can black beans
- 1 can garbanzo beans  
(or 1 bag french cut green beans)
- 1 bottle zesty italian or red viniagrette dressing
- 1 box elbow macaroni
- 1 container grated dry parmesan cheese

#### Directions

1. Boil macaroni per instructions on box until tender. Strain and rinse with cold water
2. (if using frozen green beans, thaw but do not cook)
3. Add macaroni, beans, and dressing into an adequate container.
3. Add parmesan to taste.
4. Cover and refrigerate before serving



## Folklife Family Recipes

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees (f)
2. Mix all ingredients (except salt) together in a bowl
3. Using a large spoon scoop dough onto cookie sheet
4. Using a fork press the cookies lightly in a criss-cross pattern  
you can also use a potato masher or meat tenderizer to press the cookies
5. Lightly sprinkle sea salt onto each cookie
5. Bake at 350 degrees (f) for 8-10 mins
6. Let cool on pan for a few minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.

## Crazy Easy Peanut Butter Cookies

submitted by Crystal Lynne

### Ingredients

- 2 cups creamy peanut butter  
(for chunky cookies sub  
1 cup chunky peanut butter)
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup flax seed (optional)
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- sea salt (optional)



## Folklife Family Recipes

from the Appalachian Folklife  
Recipes Collection

### Sassafras Tea

Put a handful of bark from a scrubbed sassafras root into an enameled kettle. Add a bit more water than you want tea. Boil until it is a red color. Sweeten to taste with honey and serve hot or cold. Sassafras roots can be reused several times.

### Hot Mulled Cider

Boil 5 minutes:

- 1 QT apple cider
- 2 whole allspice
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 stick cinnamon

add 1/4 brown sugar and boil an additional 5 mins





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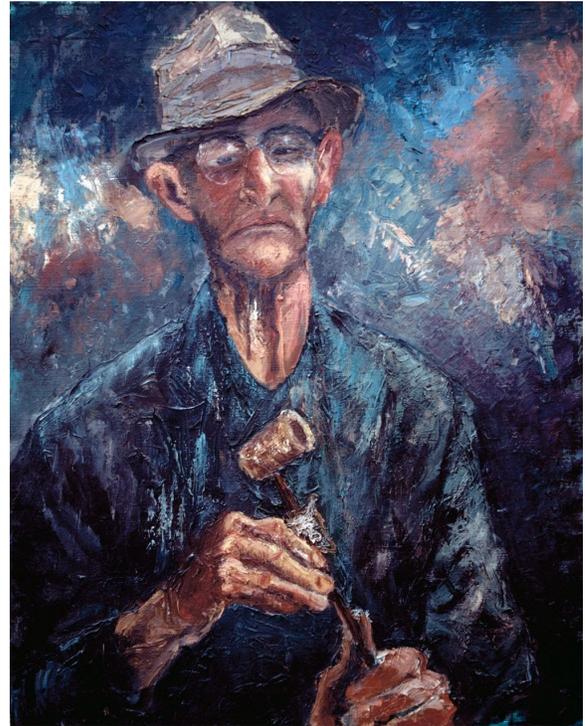
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# Art & Poetry

All things in this creation exist within you,  
and all things in you exist in creation;  
there is no border between you and  
the closest things,  
and there is no distance between  
you and the farthest things,  
and all things,  
from the lowest to the loftiest,  
from the smallest to the greatest,  
are within you as equal things.  
In one atom are found all the  
elements of the earth;  
in one motion of the mind are found  
the motions of all the laws of  
existence;  
in one drop of water are found the  
secrets of all the endless oceans;  
in one aspect of *you* are found all  
the aspects of *existence*.

-from *Secrets of the Heart*, by Khalil Gibran  
*A Treasury of Khalil Gibran*, Citadel Press, 1947



Deep, deep down in living  
Is something I desire,  
Deep in ages smoldering,  
An ever living fire.

Surging human passion  
That I cannot define.  
I feel it in the masses,  
Mysterious... divine.

Deep, deep down in living  
These mighty breakers  
roll.  
The spell of living people  
Has clutches on my soul.

-*Deep, Deep down in Living*, by  
Don West  
*No Lonesome Road: Selected Prose and  
Poems*, University of Illinois, 2004

(paintings by Connie West)



Happy Holidays Folks!

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