



Decking The Halls - Nature's Way

Boxerwood held its annual wreath-making workshop at the nature center this past Sunday. Fresh-cut greens from Boxerwood's woodland garden were made available for workshop participants to make their own wreaths and Boxerwood's horticulturalist Faith Vosburgh (pictured at left) provided instruction. Boxerwood's next holiday themed event – the Gifts of Nature Family Workshop – takes place this Saturday, Dec. 10, from 1 to 5 p.m. (Joann Ware photos)



'Dawn Of Infamy' Program Thursday

Area Residents Invited To Join Veterans At VMI

Dec. 8, 1941, brought the "dawn" after the "date which will live in infamy," as President Franklin D. Roosevelt so famously announced after Pearl Harbor, when calling on Congress for a declaration of war on Japan.

Today marks the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and tomorrow the anniversary of Roosevelt's speech as America entered World War II.

In Virginia, a program called "Dawn of Infamy: America Goes to War" signals the beginning of a series of commemorative efforts centered on the tragedies and triumphs of both World War II and World War I.

From 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. this Thursday, Dec. 8, the commemorative program in Richmond will be live-streamed at Gillis Hall in Virginia Military Institute's Center for Leadership and Ethics. This local gathering is free of charge and no reservations are required.

The ceremonies in the capital will open at 9:15 with a performance by the VMI band, preceding a parade of World War II veterans. Remarks from elected officials and military dignitaries will be followed by a keynote address by Pulitzer-Prize winning military writer Rick Atkinson. Atkinson is best known for his New York Times bestseller "Liberation Trilogy," a narrative history of America's role in the liberation of Europe during World War II.

Veterans who have registered their attendance at these kickoff events will receive a commemorative medallion. Among those who will be attending the Lexington event will be a number of World War II veterans currently living at Kendal of Lexington.

The Lexington event has been organized with the goal

of providing meaningful community, connections and re-connections among attendees, while also establishing resources to connect those people with organizations that can preserve their witness for future generations, said Eric Wilson, executive director of the Rockbridge Historical Society. This initiative is being co-sponsored by the newly formed Lexington Commemoration Commission for World War I and World War II, and hosted at Gillis Theater by the George C. Marshall Foundation.

The LCC is an affiliate of the statewide commission, whose rollout is timed to mark the centennial of Virginia soldiers, most specifically, as they joined the global campaigns of 1917 in World War I. Events are projected through 2020, the 75th anniversary of the Second World War's close.

In coming years, the Marshall Foundation's running "Legacy Series" will continue to address themes and histories that were central to those campaigns, as well as the organization and leadership engineered by General Marshall not only between the wars, but in the wake of World War II. Notably, May 2017 brings the 70th anniversary of the "Marshall Plan Speech," when the general articulated a vision for international economic and political support.

A more intimate goal of these statewide events and the collaboration of various commissions is to bridge these broadly known histories with the grain of local and individual experience, said Wilson.

As an example, in recent weeks, the Rockbridge Historical Society secured a bequest that included the Purple Heart, Silver Star and official papers of Rockbridge native and 1943 Sicily Campaign veteran Eugene Kyle Sweet, donated by his descendants in Buena Vista.

RHS and the LCC have also been fortunate, said Wilson, to share in running conversations with and written



PRESIDENT Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers his Dec. 8, 1941, message to Congress as he asks for a declaration of war against Japan, the day after the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. The photo is being used as part of the publicity for the statewide "Dawn of Infamy" program that kicks off tomorrow in Richmond. Thursday's event will be live-streamed at Gillis Hall at VMI.

reflections of John Gunn, professor emeritus of economics at Washington and Lee. Called up with several classmates from the W&L class of 1943, Gunn has documented his fighting in the 84th Infantry Division on the Western Front as it crossed the Rhine during the final "Push to Berlin." Among those stories is an account of how Gunn and a surgeon identified a German spy immobilized on the operating table, with identification and interrogation then immediately begun by a young counter-intelligence officer named Henry Kissinger.

"Stories like this are not only remarkable in their grand scope," said Wilson. "They are also arresting tools in spotlighting the everyday efforts of young men and women who served country and cause, a number of whom are still alive today to share those stories in person. We want to connect that legacy across generations. And to do so effectively, it's vital to work personally, and to partner across our community, in order credit this service, sacrifice, and sage advice, whether through their own oral histories, family papers or artifacts."

Wilson said that Kendal alone is home to no less than 25 World War II veterans who served in the Army, Navy and Marines, along with women in the Navy's nursing corps and WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).

Buses and personal travel assistance from Kendal staff have been marshaled to enable those even in assisted living and the Borden Health Center to attend the Lexington event Thursday and be recognized.

Gunn has been working to organize his fellow residents in the Kendal community for this event and to begin connecting the surviving veterans - and their spouses and children - with the Lexington Commemoration Commission and the Rockbridge Historical Society. All such opportunities would look to credit veterans' service, sacrifice and legacy through oral histories, family papers and artifacts.

Brad Hastings, chair of the Lexington Commemoration Committee, said, "The sacrifices made by our veterans are difficult to imagine and deserve our thanks and recognition. Their loved ones back home also endured hard-

ships and our committee will work to raise awareness of these men and women who live amongst us. During the few months our committee has been working, I have been amazed by the stories of our local veterans. Our mission is to honor these men and women, educate today's youth of their courage and sacrifice, and engage the community in commemoration efforts."

Area residents are encouraged to notify the LCC if they are interested in discussing some of the preservation strategies. They include repositories and museums such as the Rockbridge Historical Society, the statewide archives of the Virginia Historical Society, the national George C. Marshall Museum and Library, and W&L and VMI.

For more information on the Lexington Commemoration Committee, contact Hastings at brad.hastings@sigmanu.org or 460-3063. For questions about accessibility at Thursday's event, contact Jeffrey Kozak, Marshall Foundation librarian and LCC member, at jkozak@marshallfoundation.org or 463-7103.

FALLING SPRING

Bette King, 463-463-5617

Virginia Military Institute donated fresh-cut flowers and poinsettias from the Ring Figure ceremony to be placed in Falling Spring Presbyterian Church this past week.

A meeting of the congregation was held before worship to elect Anne Herring, Henry Reiff and James Staton as elders and William Emore and Phillip Arthur as trustees for the class of 2019 and Anita Davis as trustee for the class of 2017 to fill the vacant spot. They will be installed on Dec. 11 during worship service.

The food pantry is asking for monetary contributions for Christmas hams.

Caleb and Mattie Robinson, Brooke Eichelberger and Anita Davis lit the second candle of Advent, "The Bethlehem Candle." They also continued the journey to the manger by placing the sheep in the shepherd in the nativity scene.

The Presbyterian Women will make their monthly mission visit to Western State on Dec. 10. This will also be their Christmas visit. Anyone wishing to contribute to this cause can contact Marie Alford or Marjorie Austin.

This is the last week for Bible study. It will resume in March.

The youths of the church will perform their Christmas play during worship service on Dec. 11. The Falling Spring choir will have a hymn sing at Kendal at 3 p.m.

Church members Bub Mohler and Jessie Kennedy are in the hospital.

The Christmas candlelight service with communion will be at 4 p.m. Dec. 24. The Christmas joy offering will be received at this service and during worship service on Dec. 25.

Phillip Arthur is celebrating a birthday this week.