

Free Public Library of Monroe Township

Out and About

A Community Newsletter

January 2024

Your guide to
what's going on in
Williamstown and
the surrounding
area!

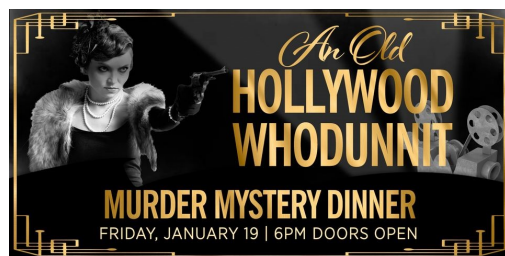
An Old Hollywood Whodunit at Scotland Run

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Sip & Cake Event | 2 |
| Laser Rock Shows | 2 |
| Cookie Class | 2 |
| Collingswood Gala | 3 |
| Fire & Ice Festival | 3 |
| Alpaca Tour | 3 |
| What's Onstage | 4 |
| What's Onscreen | 5 |
| What's To Read | 6 |

With classic mysteries having a moment, murder mystery dinners have become all the rage. Scotland Run Country Club on Fries Mill Road is presenting a terrific one on Friday, January 19th at 6 PM—themed to Old Hollywood!

The setting: the Hollywood estate of Sir Warren Peace (look, *I* didn't make the name up, don't blame me). It's just your basic lavish Hollywood dinner party...until guests start turning up dead! Now, it's up to the guests (that means you) to search for clues and gather information to find out which of the cast is the killer...before said killer strikes again. All while enjoying some of Scotland Run's best cuisine!



Tickets are \$85 and will include dinner and the show. You'll get a choice of different entrees, such as prime rib or seared salmon.

There's also entertainment such as live music, a cash bar, and of course you're encouraged to dress in your best—more so if you've got some vintage 1920s attire.

You can order tickets by searching for the event's page on Eventbrite. For more info, call Scotland Run at 856-863-3737. Come and enjoy an evening of great food, laughs, and thrills...and exercise those little grey cells while you're at it!

Special Points of Interest:

- *Snowball Gala in Collingswood*
- *Fire & Ice Festival in Mount Holly*
- *Monty Python's Spamalot comes to Haddonfield*
- *Mean Girls: The Musical on the big screen*
- *Pixar's Soul comes to theaters after a Disney Plus run*
- *Novels on the British royal family*

Paint & Sip at Autumn Lake Winery

For all you crafty people out there (and there seem to be quite a few), Autumn Lake, in association with Paint-a-Treasure Studio in Haddon Heights, is holding a Paint & Sip event on Tuesday, Jan. 16th at 6 PM.

The event takes place at the winery. You'll get a choice of two 3-D wooden winter-themed signs to paint. The fee is \$39 and includes all materials and a complimentary glass of Autumn Lake wine (more for sale, of course).

To order tickets, visit autumnlakewinery.com.



Sip & Cake Workshop at Sugared in Clarksboro

Want to learn the finer points of cake decorating? Sugared by Sha, a bakery and dessert lounge in Clarksboro, is hosting a Sip & Cake workshop on Saturday, January 27th, at 6:00 PM.

The event costs \$68 per person (no guests or sharing allowed) and will include all materials—the six-inch cake, the buttercream icing, and the decorating implements such as piping bags and tips. The theme of the cake will be “cozy winter sweater”—in short, piping that looks like the ribbing of a cable-knit sweater.

There will be music for the event, and complimentary nibbles. You can also purchase items from Sugared’s bakery menu to snack on. Outside food is not permitted, but it is a BYOB. (For this reason, the event is restricted to age 21 and up.)

Sugared by Sha is located at 141 Berkley Road in Clarksboro. For more information or to register, you can visit sugaredbysha.com or call 856-543-5100.

It’ll be a great evening of cake decorating, treats, and good company—and this isn’t the only great event that Sugared hosts, so keep an eye out!



Winter Laser Rock Shows at Edelman Planetarium

Each season, Rowan University’s Edelman Planetarium features laser shows set to classic rock music, and this winter (from January through March 31st) has three good ones.



On Fridays, you can check out Pink Floyd’s *Dark Side Of The Moon* album (which just turned fifty) with laser images (at 7:30 every Friday until 3/31). At 8:30, there’s the Laser Taylor Swift show.

On Saturdays at 7:30, there’s Laser Michael Jackson with its dazzling laser-light tribute to the King of Pop.

Tickets are \$5 for children, seniors, and Rowan students, and \$8 for adults. It’s recommended to order them in advance at sites.rowan.edu/planetarium. Come and enjoy some jaw-dropping laser images set to some of pop music’s greatest hits!

Build a Snowman Cookie Class in Washington Township

“Do you want to build a snowman?” Whether or not there’s any actual snow, you can...and get a treat out of it too. Platinum House of Sweets in Washington Township is holding a Build a Snowman Cookie Class on Saturday, Jan. 20th, at 3 PM.

The event is sponsored by Glory Cookies LLC, a local cookie-class company. The fee is \$65 per person, which includes the cookie and all materials. You’ll get a lesson on how to make the right kind of royal icing (the kind that dries into a candy-like shell), decorating techniques, and the right kind of tools to use for cookie decorating. When you’re done, you’ll have an adorable snowman cookie that’s almost too pretty to eat! (Almost.)



The class is open to ages 8 and up. No sharing—everyone must have their own ticket. Platinum House of Sweets is located at 7A Shoppers Lane in Washington Township.

To order tickets, visit glorycookiesj.com/cookie-classes.

Snowball Gala in Collingswood

Want to spend an evening dancing and having fun in your best clothes? Collingswood is holding its Snowball Gala on Saturday, January 27th, from 7 PM to 11:30 PM.



The event, which takes place at Collingswood's Grand Ballroom at 315 White Horse Pike, will benefit the purchase of all-accessible play-ground equipment.

Black tie is optional, but you're encouraged to dress in your best. The evening will include light fare (hors d'oeuvres and such), a ticket for two free drinks, live music, and dancing. There's also a cash bar available.

Tickets are \$100 per person. To order them, visit popupgala.ticketleap.com/collingswood-snowball-gala-2024. If you're

interested in sponsoring, email lferguson@collingswood.com.

Enjoy a wonderful evening of food, drink, and dancing—while benefiting a cause that will allow children to be able to play and develop self-esteem, whatever their level of ability.

Fire & Ice Festival in Mount Holly

Ice sculptures and chili...what could be a better way to enjoy a cold winter day? Mount Holly is holding its annual (well, in theory) Fire and Ice Festival on Saturday, January 27th, from 10 AM to 4 PM.



In 2021 and 2022, the festival was canceled (due to Covid and a blizzard, respectively). However, in 2023 it returned in full force, and the momentum's going strong for the 2024 festival.

The event will feature ice sculptures of all kinds to admire (like the Baby Yoda one you see on your left, from a past festival) as well as ice sculpting demonstrations. There will also be a chili cook-off, with prizes for the best chilis in the area. To top it off, there will be live entertainment, vendors, and more!

The festival takes place in downtown Mount Holly. To find out more, to apply as a vendor, or to register for the chili cook-off, visit fireandicefestival.com.

This is one of South Jersey's best winter traditions, so be sure to enjoy it!

Unexpected Farm Alpaca Hot Chocolate Tour

The aptly-named Unexpected Farm in Newfield has a sweet and fuzzy surprise for ages 5 and up. The Alpaca Hot Chocolate Farm Tour will take place on Saturday, Jan. 6th from 1 PM to 3 PM.

The tour costs \$20 per person and includes a hot chocolate bar, crafts, and a visit with the alpacas. You'll be able to feed your fuzzy friends and take a photo with them. There are also s'more kits available for purchase.

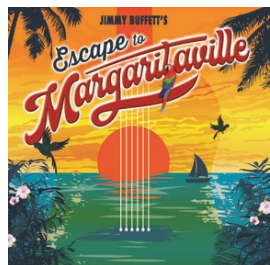
To register or to find out other dates on which the tour will be held, email unexpectedfarmnj@gmail.com or call/text 609-501-6108.





All The World's A Stage...

With January's cold weather setting in, what better way to warm up than to escape to the tropics...and the laid-back summery tunes of Jimmy Buffett? *Escape to Margaritaville*, a jukebox musical built around the late great Jimmy's music, plays at Williamstown's Grand Theatre from Jan. 25th to Feb. 10th!



Tully Mars is a lounge singer at Margaritaville, a third-rate Caribbean hotel. With his ragtag found family of beachcombers and fellow employees, he has an easy if rather aimless life, with no romantic commitments. That all changes when Rachel, a would-be scientist, arrives with her friend Tammy, who's engaged to a jerk. As Tully and Rachel get closer, Tully has to face the fact that he's falling for a woman for the first time in his life, and get over his fears of change. Meanwhile, bartender Brick and Tammy are falling for each other, which means Tammy has to face the truth about her shallow fiancé. With all these complications, and a volcano threatening the resort, how will things turn out?

To order tickets, visit roadcompany.com...and enjoy the breath of summer in the dead of winter. (Just remember... "it's five o'clock somewhere!")

Monty Python and the Holy Grail was the British comedy troupe's masterpiece...which came to Broadway in 2004. Now, *Spamalot* is onstage at Haddonfield Plays and Players from Jan. 19th to Feb. 3rd!

This wonderful, witty musical (with a score by Python's own Eric Idle) follows the plot of the film, with a few surprises thrown in. King Arthur is searching for knights to populate his Round Table, and a cause to occupy them. When God Himself tasks them with finding the Holy Grail, the Lady of the Lake (who made Arthur the king when she gifted him with the sword Excalibur) aids them as they set off. Will Sir Robin refrain from bravely running away? Will Sir Lancelot embrace his true fabulousness? Will the knights evade the peril of the French taunters and the sinister Knights Who Say Ni? (Ni!!!) And what about Sir-Not-Appearing-In-This-Show? With a little Broadway musical magic and all your favorite Python bits (though, unfortunately, not the witch-burning scene—there was to have been a song but it was cut), it's easy to look on the bright side of life!



Tickets are available at www.haddonfieldplayers.com. So get ready for an evening of laughs...just remember that the last laugh is on you!!!

"Impossible...for a plain yellow pumpkin to become a golden carriage..." The world's most beloved fairy tale gets a new musical treatment with Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, onstage at Pitman's Broadway Theatre from Jan. 12th to Feb. 4th!



The famed Broadway duo adapted the fairy tale for television in 1957, with Julie Andrews in the title role. It had two other television adaptations in 1965 with Lesley Ann Warren and in 1997 with Brandy and Whitney Houston. Now, this new version (which had a Broadway run in 2013) provides a whole new script. Ella, treated as a servant by her cruel stepmother and vain stepsisters, can find refuge only in dreams and her friendship with a young revolutionary and an old woman. Meanwhile, the orphaned Prince Christopher is under the influence of his greedy prime minister...but a chance meeting with Ella begins to open his eyes to the injustice in his kingdom. When the old woman reveals herself as Ella's fairy godmother, Ella sees her chance for a new life...and a new direction for the kingdom.

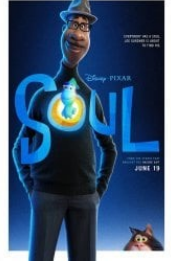
The score includes all of the classic songs from the original, with four others from the R & H catalog (including one that didn't make the final cut of *South Pacific*). Visit thebroadwaytheatre.org for tickets. And remember...

"impossible things are happening every day!"

What's New Onscreen!

Pixar's *Soul* landed directly on Disney Plus due to the pandemic, but it's finally getting the theatrical run it deserves, beginning Jan. 12th.

Joe Gardner (voice of Jamie Foxx), a part-time middle-school music teacher in NYC, has harbored lifelong dreams of being a full-time jazz pianist. When an opportunity comes up to audition for famed jazz musician Dorothea Williams, he's overjoyed to get the job—only to be critically injured in an accident moments later. As his body lies comatose in the hospital, his soul ascends to the afterlife...but Joe, not wanting to go before his life's purpose is fulfilled, manages to sneak away into "The Great Before", where new souls are awaiting their journey to Earth. There, he meets 22 (voice of Tina Fey), a soul who hasn't been assigned yet because she hasn't found her "spark", or guiding principle, yet. When the two manage to make it to Earth, 22 ends up in Joe's body—while Joe ends up in a cat! From there, with the help of another soul who guides lost souls, Joe must find his way back to his own body and his own life...and, in the process, confront the question of what, exactly, one's "life's purpose" is.



This inventive and engrossing animated flick tackles some deep and thought-provoking ideas in an entertaining and heartwarming way...in short, par for the course for Pixar.

The movie *Mean Girls* has been a teen-flick classic since 2004, becoming a Broadway musical in 2017 (with a script by Tina Fey). Now, the musical comes to the screen starting Jan. 12th.



Cady Heron (Angourie Rice) is starting at a new high school in Illinois after being homeschooled in Africa most of her life. However, she soon finds out that her schoolmates aren't very accepting of those who are different, and sets out to be accepted in one of the school's cliques. The highest of the high is "The Plastics", the clique presided over by queen bee Regina George (Renee Rapp). Regina and her cohorts keep on top of the social order by tearing others down, and Cady, in her drive for acceptance (especially from Regina's dreamy ex Aaron), changes her personality and appearance. But when she ends up in the queen bee position, she earns Regina's ire...and must face the question, along with all the other Plastics, of whether shallow popularity is worth the loss of one's best self.

With a charming score and a witty script, this musical remake of one of the best teen movies of the 2000s combines questions of self-acceptance, empathy, and tolerance with great entertainment.

As the world hovers on the brink of war, a rowing team must band together and overcome their own conflicts in order to represent their country at an Olympics held in hostile territory. That's what happens in *The Boys In The Boat*, which came out Dec. 25th.

Directed by George Clooney and based on the nonfiction bestseller of the same name by Daniel James Brown, the movie takes place as America is shaping up to enter the 1936 Summer Olympics, which are to be held in Berlin. The University of Washington men's rowing team is determined to make a good showing in what is proving to be a hostile country, with the growing Nazi menace to contend with. The odd one out among the mostly upper-crust team is Joe Rantz (Callum Turner), who's come from a harsh, poverty-stricken background and needs this opportunity to get a college education and a shot at a better life. With Joe's feelings of inadequacy causing him to be out of step with his teammates, can the team learn to work as a functioning unit and go for Olympic gold?



This inspiring sports film, based on an equally inspiring true story, is a perfect heartwarmer for a cold January.



The Biblio-Files

Rule Britannia!

With the coronation of King Charles fairly recent (and The Crown going into its last season), it's a great time to read some recent novels about the House of Windsor.

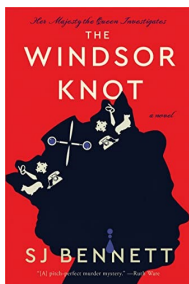
The notorious Edward VIII, who abdicated the throne to marry Wallis Simpson, was known to be childless. But was he? That's the intriguing question that underpins Christine Wells' *The Royal Windsor Secret*.

Cleo Davenport, supposedly an orphan, has grown up in Cairo, Egypt, under her adoptive mother's care. She's had a happy enough youth, especially with her growing friendship with Scottish ex-pat Brodie. But as she grows to womanhood, strange rumors about her reach her ears...that she is actually the illegitimate daughter of the Prince of Wales. As circumstances force her back to London at the age of seventeen, she tries to forge an identity for herself outside the constrictions of womanhood in the 1930s, wanting to design jewelry. She also embarks on a quest to find out the truth about her history, which leads her to a French courtesan Edward was involved with before he met Wallis. With war now on the horizon, Cleo's own feelings for Brodie developing into something more, and the scandalous Mrs. Simpson in the background, what will it mean for Cleo going forward?



This fascinating "what-if" shines a new light on a controversial (if short-lived) monarch through the eyes of a captivating heroine.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was a remarkable woman...but what if she was also a detective when she wasn't dispensing her royal duties? SJ Bennett, in *The Windsor Knot* (published in 2020), explores this idea.



Ever since she was Princess Lilibet, Elizabeth the Second has solved mysteries on the QT. Now, with her 90th birthday approaching, a thorny problem presents itself at Windsor Castle. One of the royal guests, a Russian pianist, has been found strangled in one of the bedrooms. Though it looks like an accidental death by autoerotic asphyxiation, MI5 thinks foul play might have been involved...but the conclusions they come to don't jibe with Her Majesty's own instincts on the matter. She enlists the help of her assistant private secretary Rozie Oshodi to make inquiries in secret, all the while discharging her royal duties as normal. Together, they must find out the truth and see that justice is done...but there may be a far more sinister conspiracy beneath it all.

With witty dialogue (especially between Lilibet and Prince Philip) and an intriguing puzzle to solve, this series opener gives us Her Late Majesty as a shrewd and compassionate detective, who manages to pull off the near-impossible task of untangling mysteries in complete secrecy.

Wendy Holden has written many well-received historical novels about the royal family and the House of Windsor. In her latest, *The Princess*, she retells the life of one of its most beloved, controversial, and tragic members: Princess Diana.

Diana Spencer is the privileged daughter of the Earl of Spencer and his wife...but her sheltered childhood is shattered with her parents' bitter divorce. With her parents wrapped up in their own problems, she is deprived of love at a time when she needs it most, and takes refuge in the romantic fantasies her step-grandmother Barbara Cartland writes. Like the heroines in these novels, she dreams of a Prince Charming...a fantasy that seems to be coming true when Prince Charles shows an interest in her. Little does she know that it's not a love match...Charles has simply been pressured into selecting a "suitable" woman (read: a virgin) in place of Camilla Parker-Bowles, the unsuitable woman he really loves. When her romantic illusions are shattered by the reality of the nature of her marriage, it's up to her to forge a path forward...even if it damages the monarchy.



With her usual talent and insight into the royal family, Wendy Holden gives us a gripping narrative that illuminates the factors that shaped Diana and drove her into the decisions she made...for good or ill.