

DELMARVA ALMANAC

January 9, 2009

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Delmarva Almanac. I am Dana Kester- McCabe. The mission of this publication is to celebrate life on Delmarva, to connect us to the natural world around us, our heritage, and to each other. Future editions will come out during the first week of each month.

Between The Shorelines

Delmarva History This Month

January 4, 1650 - Henry Norwood and eleven others were left ashore near Fenwick Island, Delaware, by the sailing vessel *The Virginia Merchant*
January 1, 1808 - Importation of Slaves into America is banned by the US Constitution
January 7, 1789 - George Washington was elected as the first President
January 7, 1883 - The Albert Dailey Smith wrecked off Smith Island Station, Virginia
January 10, 1883 - The Sallie W. Kaye wrecked off of Ocean City, Maryland
January 28, 1915 - US Coast Guard created

Holidays & Observances This Month:

January 1st - New Year's Day - World Peace Day
January 4th - World Braille Day
January 5th - Twelfth Night of Christmas (Christian)
January 6th - Epiphany (Christian)
January 7th - Ashoura (Muslim) & Orthodox Christmas (Christian)
January 8th - Elvis Presley's Birthday
January 11th - International Thank You Day
January 14th - Orthodox New Year (Christian) & US Constitution Ratification Day
January 16th - Religious Freedom Day
January 19th - Martin Luther King Day
January 20th - Inauguration Day

New Beginnings

Mild winter weather on Delmarva means that there is comparatively little snow here. It is none the less a starkly beautiful time. Our landscape begins the year dressed mostly in grey's and browns. Believe it or not January is a great time to visit the beaches along the Atlantic coast.

Though the temperatures can be in the 30's or lower, I have often found myself all alone on the beach early in the month with clear 60 degree weather; perfect conditions for walking by the surf. The beach is a great antidote to the stress of the just past holiday season. Even when the conditions outside are harsh, the chill makes you feel alive and the sound of the waves have healing effect.

Delmarva has historically been somewhat sheltered from the turmoil of the world beyond our shores. But today we are – for better or worse – as connected to the rest of humanity as anyone. History proves this over and over again. Just as the past is full of stories of deception and cruelty so it is filled with stories of integrity and kindness.

In January 1650 a group of English émigrés headed for Virginia learned these lessons here on the beaches of Delmarva. They had been left ashore near present day Fenwick Island, Delaware, during a mutiny on the sailing vessel *The Virginia Merchant*. Their Atlantic crossing had taken months longer than planned because of stormy weather. The ship had been damaged to the point of being almost unseaworthy and they were just about out of rations.

Abandoned by the ship's crew, a landing party led by one Henry Norwood, survived two weeks of winter storms on the beach, resorting to the most desperate measures to find food. Several people perished.

Their fortunes finally improved when they were sheltered by local native peoples who nursed them and then escorted them safely to nearby British settlements. They were of the tribe that has come to be

known as the Assateague. They not only supplied physical comfort but tried to make the weary travelers smile and cheer up despite a language barrier.

Norwood and his friends dreamt of a new beginning. Despite their traumatic start they now were on their way because of the kindness of these strangers. Clearly the Eastern Shore tradition of optimism and hospitality we enjoy today began long before the arrival of Europeans.

The house I live in was built by another set of optimists. Newly married in 1861 the young Thomas and Sarah Moore began a home even though the Civil War had begun. Life goes on even when things may look bad.

Today, we may be in a difficult season with a bad economy, corrupt politicians, and a nation at war. But, just as we know in the coldest days of January that there will be a Spring thaw, history teaches us that if we work together and have patience we will see better days ahead.

Here's hoping, that in the future, this year will be remembered as a time when things began to improve. We have an historic new US administration led by our President Mr. Barak Obama and Delmarva's own Joe Biden as Vice President. Here's to new beginnings and a terrific new year.

The Garden Of Good Living

Though you might think things look dreary at this time of year, all we need to do is look around to see subtle beauty of the winter landscape. We can see the simple elegance of winter buds and even the charm of weeds covered in frost. Just outside our window right now the finches at the feeder are adorable in their winter coats.

<p><u>Some Wildlife You Can Typically See This Month</u> Finches, Juncos, & Chickadees on feeders Snow Geese, Grackles & Starlings in fields</p>
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Meanwhile we don't have to just dream about gardening in the spring.

According to professional gardener Pat Hendrickson January is a good time to do the following:

1. Clean up and sharpen your tools – spray with water and dry thoroughly, oil moving parts, sharpen pruners, blades and shovels
2. Compost all winter long to have nice soil in the Spring – Dig a trench for winter composting and then use the trench to plant in the Spring with a favorite vegetable crop.
3. Plant bulbs - if the ground is not frozen, it's not too late to plant most kinds of bulbs
4. Order seeds for starting in February and bulbs for the Spring
5. Provide water and food for birds. Read about winter feeding at Wild Birds Unlimited:
www.wbu.com/education/winterbirdfeeding.html
6. Build bird boxes. Get free plans at Shaw Creek Bird Supply:
www.shawcreekbirdsupply.com/nest_box_plans.htm

When ordering keep in mind these plants if you'd like to add winter interest to your garden

* [Christmas Fern *Polystichum acrostichoides*](#)

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/hardyferns/polystichum_acrostichoides.html

* [American Wintergreen *Gaultheria procumbens*](#)

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/groundcover/gaultheria_procumbens.html

* [Green and Gold *Chrysogonum virginianum*](#)

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/groundcover/chrysogonum_virginianum.html

* [Winterberry Holly *Ilex verticillata*](#)

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/trees-new/ilex_verticillata.html

[Hellebore *Helleborus orientalis*](#)

<http://www.floridata.com/ref/H/hellebor.cfm>

*Species native to the Mid Atlantic region.

Rhythms & Tides

Fishing & Hunting Report

Deer season finishes up in Maryland during January. The hardest fishermen and women continue to find a bountiful harvest on Delmarva's waters during January. According to fishing expert Dale Timmons, you can find white and yellow perch in the rivers and brackish waters of the northern Chesapeake region as well as in places out of the wind along the Pocomoke River and Pitts Creek, where a few crappie can also be found. And for the toughest anglers, rock fish (striped bass) can also be caught in the Atlantic surf on those few warm days.

The night sky on Delmarva has less light pollution than most populated areas so taking an evening stroll can provide excellent viewing.

Sunrise & Sunset

During January the sun will rise at a little after 7:30AM and set just before 5:00PM.

Moon Phases

First Quarter January 4 - 11:55AM
Full Moon January 11 - 3:27AM
Last Quarter January 18 - 2:46AM
New Moon January 26 - 7:55AM

Other Sky Events

January 3 - Quadrantid Meteor Shower
January 4 Earth at Perihelion (closest to Sun) about 147.1 million kilometers.
January 7 Moon near the Pleiades at 19h UT (evening sky).
January 10 Moon at perigee (closest to Earth)
January 26 - Annular Solar Eclipse - Unfortunately not visible from Delmarva

Celestial Navigation

Horoscopes are a traditional feature in many almanacs for the audience's entertainment and "navigation" through life's waters. This original column is written by Valerie Morrissey a summer visitor to Delmarva. January birthdays include those born under the signs of Capricorn and Aquarius. Read about your sign found among the rest of the signs of the zodiac.

Capricorn (*Born between December 22 - January 20*)

Big doings! Mars and Pluto are here, and Jupiter about to depart ... Mercury backing up here (retrograde) on January 21. So much going on for Cappies, where do I start?... Most of you are loaded with energy and drive, possibly too much. Decide what your priorities are and stick to them. A great deal can be accomplished now, if you stay calm and focused. Be respectful to the boss but don't let him/her push you around.

Aquarius (*Born between January 21 - February 19*)

Jupiter enters here on January 5 for a year. Neptune here also. Mercury here retrograde on January 12. New Moon on the 26th. You guys will get a lot of attention in the next few months. Your health is very good, or it will improve. Keep your eyes open for opportunities. If you have wanted a change, it's bound to happen this year.

Pisces (*Born between February 20 - March 20*)

Venus enters on January 4. Uranus here. Fishies could have a fling in the next few weeks, if you are open to it. This is a great time for rest and relaxation, trips to the spa, new hairstyles, some funky additions to the wardrobe. Join a yoga class or go to a karaoke club. Do nice things for yourself. You're probably overdue for a little break.

Aries (*Born between March 21 - April 19*)

Career activities might heat up this month if they haven't already. You probably have had urges to take over or make a change, and this month you will be more determined than ever. Apply for a new job or promotion at this time. If you aren't particularly aggressive, then there may be changes around you that will affect your situation. Power plays and assorted pushy people abound.

Taurus (Born between April 20 - May 19)

With Venus in the house of friendships, you should have a busy social life. If not, then it's time to make plans and get together with old friends. You will get calls and invitations. Also if there is any bad blood then it's a good time to talk things over and resolve disagreements. A friendship could progress into a love affair.

Gemini (Born between May 20 - June 20)

Towards the month's end you may have to work on your finances, especially those which include a partner or involve investments. Get organized, educate yourself but of course, don't make any drastic decisions at this time. At the new moon on the 26th, start new projects, sign up for classes, open savings accounts or plan a vacation.

Cancer (Born between June 21 - July 22)

Full Moon on the 11th. Some Cancers will get promotions, or see a project come to fulfillment. You are working very hard, so watch your health, get enough rest. New relationships are possible with powerful or dynamic people. A golden opportunity might come your way. Don't over spend or over commit but this could be an interesting period!

Leo (Born between July 23 - August 21)

For some of you, a good time to get married or start a business partnership, around the New Moon of the 26th. Some might even marry on a sudden impulse. You may make new contacts while traveling or attending school. Eccentric people may come into your life. Make sure you have all the facts and do background checks in business affairs.

Virgo (Born between August 22 - September 22)

Saturn retrograde (moving backwards) here all month. Virgos have just gone through a pretty heavy year in some way. Some have to care for an invalid family member, or had a setback in their plans. Some have more responsibilities at work. Saturn does that to people- stops you in your tracks so you can learn something, such as patience and endurance. Use this period to review your life and don't get discouraged.

Libra (Born between September 23 - October 22)

Jupiter and Neptune in your house of love affairs could put you in an adventurous mood. Great, but not if you are already hitched, so be careful. There could be concerts, parties and other entertainments. This is favorable for children's activities, as well as new babies arriving. This is a perfect time to conceive for those trying to start a family.

Scorpio (Born between October 23 - November 21)

There could be some excitement in the romance dept. Somebody tall, dark and handsome could fly into your life and right back out again. Don't expect too much but enjoy the ride. Scorpions could go back to school now and brush up on communications technology. The Full Moon on the 11th is a good time for a short vacation.

Sagittarius (Born between November 22 - December 21)

Archers could also go back to school, but mostly to broaden their academic horizons. You may want to explore new fields with an eventual change of career direction in mind. Money matters need attention now. Get good professional advice on investments before you act, and don't be tempted to buy any expensive toys!