

*Christmas
At
The Greenbrier*



America is Streaming.™



OLD WHITE #1 TEE BOX





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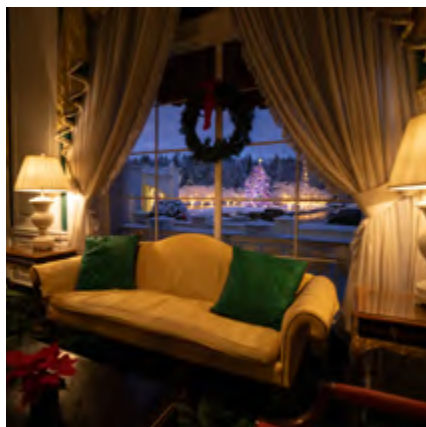
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Any day is a good day to visit The Greenbrier, as there's always something exciting happening at America's Resort. The calendar is filled with unique happenings throughout the year. Take a look at just some of the one-of-a-kind opportunities coming up in 2022 and 2023 at The Greenbrier.



YOGA POWER RETREAT

NOVEMBER 11-13

Yoga Power, LLC invites you to The Greenbrier for a weekend of relaxation and rejuvenation. Along with beginner yoga, power yoga, yin yoga, meditation and aerial yoga, the schedule will include evening events, such as glow yoga.



THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

NOVEMBER 23-27

The Greenbrier has been bringing families together for more than a century, and there's no better time to gather the entire group at America's Resort than Thanksgiving Weekend. Enjoy amazing buffets and family activities then kick off the Christmas season with the first tree lighting of the year.



WEEKENDS WITH SANTA

DECEMBER 2-3, 9-10, 16-17

Enjoy the twinkle in your child's eyes as the jolly old elf himself takes a break from his Christmas preparations to spend some quality time with your loved ones at America's Resort. From story time to breakfast in the Main Dining Room and, of course, those cherished photos that will live on for years to come, your Weekend with Santa will be filled with holiday memories you won't soon forget.

CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 23-28

Celebrate Christmas the old-fashioned way with hot chocolate, carols, incredible cuisine and family. From sleigh rides in the snow and ice skating in the shadow of the picturesque resort to the Ugly Sweater and Whoville Dinners and a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, there's no place as magical as Christmas at The Greenbrier.



NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

DECEMBER 29 - JANUARY 1

Say goodbye to 2022 and hello to 2023 in style with a celebration to remember at The Greenbrier. Guests have been toasting the New Year at America's Resort for more than 200 years! This New Year's celebration promises to be a special one as The Greenbrier presents a unique collection of events for various ages to help make memories that will fill the year ahead.



EASTER

APRIL 7-10

The Greenbrier's resident bunny, Greenious H. Brier, brings an Easter basket overflowing with activities and entertainment for children and adults. From cookie decorating to an incredible Easter feast, this Easter weekend will become part of your family's cherished memories for years to come.



THE GREENBRIER CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

MAY 5-7

One of the premier automotive events on the East Coast returns for a weekend celebration of the automobile. The schedule includes drives, seminars, Cars & Cocktails and a charity dinner. It all culminates with the Sunday Concours, when 100 of the world's finest collector cars will be judged in front of the iconic backdrop of the resort's Front Entrance. Learn more at GreenbrierConcours.com



Remembering Carleton Varney

by Cam Huffman

For more than 60 years, The Greenbrier's iconic look was the responsibility of one man, internationally known interior designer Carleton Varney, who passed away in Palm Beach Gardens in July.

Varney first visited America's Resort with his mentor, Dorothy Draper, in 1961, and when he took over Dorothy Draper & Company later that decade, the task of decorating every inch of America's Resort, which Draper first redesigned in 1946, came with it.

Through the changing styles of the '70s, '80s and '90s, and then into a new century, the relationship between The Greenbrier and Varney remained in place. It continued even when CSX relinquished its ownership of the resort for the first time in 99 years in 2009, when the new owners, the Justice family, embraced Varney's design and his legacy at the resort.

"The fact that The Greenbrier has gone through many changes and even different owners, but he's still here, speaks volumes," said Merriweather Franklin, The Greenbrier's Interior Design Project Manager, who worked for Varney prior to being hired by The Greenbrier. "I think that the look is so iconic, and he didn't just have one look. He could do different styles and mix and match different things. He looked at every room and asked, 'How can we make it better, and how can we make it more Draper?'

"It was the shades on the lamps, the napkin colors, the flowers on the table, the music."

"He became the personality that came with the spaces," agreed Rudy Saunders, Interior Designer at Dorothy Draper & Company. "He created not only the room and the menus, but he would promote it and be there. It was the whole package of what he thought made a place special."

"He blended contemporary with traditional, and it was that mix that kept him fresh and unique. He always gave Mrs. Draper the credit that she created the look. He obviously carried the torch for over 60 years, but he also amplified it. He was always looking at what he could do to go further."

Whether it was a hotel like The Greenbrier, or many of the others Varney played a part in decorating, or a private client, when Carleton Varney was hired to be part of the project, he was much more than simply a decorator.

"He would come blowing in with the silk scarf billowing, the red socks shining and running around everywhere," said Saunders. "He was the whole energetic punch."







Franklin remembers first meeting Varney at The Greenbrier when she was about 10 years old. Varney had been a great friend of Franklin's maternal grandmother, and he would tell a young Franklin stories about taking her grandmother dancing at The Greenbrier's Old White Club.

"He always loved kids," said Franklin. "Even last year when he was here, he would keep the ice cream cards to give out to the kids that were guests here. He was like a big kid himself with how he dreamed and how he used colors. He always said that he didn't want to grow up. As a kid, it was definitely fun knowing him. He was always kind of magical."

Franklin later ran into Varney at the opening of The Casino Club at The Greenbrier in 2010, and six years later when she moved to West Virginia, she called his office looking for an interview. There were no positions available at first, but a few months later Varney ended an interview with Franklin with "When can you start?" and her career began.

"Destiny had a huge part in everything in his life," said Franklin.

Saunders' Varney story is similar, though it didn't start with the family connection. He grew up visiting the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, another property decorated by Varney, and fell in love with his style.

"My family would be out swimming, and I would be following the housekeepers so I could peek in guest rooms," Saunders remembered. "I began writing him letters, and he always responded with such encouraging messages."

His first face-to-face meeting with Varney came at the Cincinnati Antiques Festival during Saunders' sopho-

more year of high school. His birthday present was to hear Mr. Varney speak at the festival, and a year later he attended the "High Style of Dorothy Draper Weekend" at The Greenbrier, where he had a chance to listen to Varney discuss his design of the new Casino Club at The Greenbrier.

From there, Saunders became a self-proclaimed "fan boy," and he eventually landed an internship in the Palm Beach offices of Dorothy Draper & Company.

"He was such a big believer in destiny and that everything happened for a reason," said Saunders. "So, I feel like it was very much that."

Both longtime fans had an opportunity to see a new side of Varney as direct employees, but it did nothing to diminish their perception of the larger-than-life decorator.

"He was always dreaming, and he was so confident," said Franklin. "When he was with a client, it was, 'This is how it's going to be. This is what it's going to look like.' If you were the client, you trusted him because he was so confident. I think as a decorator, you have to be that way."

"His mind was fascinating," added Saunders. "He could remember every room in the hotel, but also multiple hotels and private clients. He would remember what lamp was in what room. That level of detail was amazing. He was that way with people, too. He always remembered everyone's children and what was happening in their lives. His mind was just incredible."

"You had to go a mile a minute to try to keep up with him. He had so much energy and passion for it."

Varney spent his entire career attempting to honor the legacy of his mentor, Dorothy Draper, and run a compa-





ny that would make her proud. But he didn't succeed for more than six decades without some of his own twists.

"It was always about inventing himself and creating who he was going to be," said Saunders. "He was very humble, but he could sell his ideas and people believed in him."

Both Saunders and Franklin pointed to The Greenbrier's Clock Lobby as a prime example. Draper established the area as a central meeting place and painted the walls blue. Varney took it to the next level by adding white stripes.

"He was always thinking and looking, and he attracted such fun people," said Saunders.

That included celebrities and even presidents. On Varney's client list were Joan Crawford, Judy Garland and Ethel Merman, and he was a White House decorating consultant during the administration of President Jimmy Carter. He later decorated the Carter family home.

"He would look back a lot to his childhood growing up in Nahant on the Massachusetts coast," said Saunders. "He loved a pine paneled room and more of a cottage or colonial look. I think that impacted him and is a big reason why President and Mrs. Carter engaged him to work for them. He added that to the Draper look and created that balance."

Varney was admired worldwide for his influential design, but for those who knew him best, it was his personality that won't be forgotten.

"He gave the best life advice," said Franklin. "He was more than a mentor or a boss. He was like a best friend and a family member."

"He treated everyone the same, and he never met any strangers," added Saunders. "Everyone had a wonderful experience with him, and I think that will be important to his legacy."

"He was my role model. So, getting to be with him was just a pinch me moment. Just the little things of being with him were so much fun."

Whether it was witnessing the reaction of a new employee at The Candy Maker at The Greenbrier when Varney walked in the back and pocketed some chocolates or the faces of unsuspecting guests when he knocked on the door to show off a room he had decorated to a friend and suddenly burst into song, both Franklin and Saunders have indelible memories of a decorating icon, and they believe it's now their responsibility to make sure his legacy lives on for future generations.

"He was such a cheerleader for Dorothy Draper and promoted her style," said Saunders. "I think that will be the goal for all of us to do the same for him. How can we keep sharing him with the world?"

Perhaps Greenbrier President Jill Justice said it best in her statement upon Varney's recent passing.

"Carleton loved The Greenbrier, and we loved him equally," the statement read. "He lived a life filled with color and cheer, and the best way to honor his legacy is for all of us to do the same."

THE GREENBRIER TR

"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much."



THROUGH THE YEARS



Christmas At The





The Greenbrier

by Cam Huffman





Whether it's tuning into "It's a Wonderful Life" on Christmas Eve or watching "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" a few days after Thanksgiving, movies are a major part of Christmas traditions in homes across the United States and beyond. The Greenbrier is hopeful that a new Christmas feature, "Christmas at The Greenbrier," will become a holiday favorite to those who know and love America's Resort, as well as those seeing it for the first time on their living room televisions.



Produced by FOX Nation, "Christmas at The Greenbrier" will air for the first time on FOX News Media's streaming service on Thanksgiving. It stars Alicia Willis as Abby, The Greenbrier's Director of Public Relations, and Josh Murray as Ben, a former professional football quarterback. Abby's son, Carter, is played by Hudson Berry, and the film includes a special cameo appearance from former Virginia Tech football coach Frank Beamer, as well as West Virginia Governor Jim Justice's beloved pet, Babydog.

The storyline follows a complicated relationship between Abby and Ben, who meet up at The Greenbrier during the holidays after having not seen each other in years. It features many of the favorite sights and sounds of Christmas at America's Resort, including sleigh riding, tree lightings, cookie decorating, and a grand Christmas Eve Ball inside the Cameo Ballroom.



The idea of FOX Nation producing a Christmas movie at The Greenbrier began last fall when Jennifer Phillips, Director, Development and Production, FOX Nation contacted The Greenbrier's Director of Public Relations, Cam Huffman about the possibility.

"It was a spontaneous trip with my old college roommate to visit The Greenbrier, as I have heard nothing but wonderful reviews," said Phillips. "The minute we arrived, I knew this trip happened for a reason bigger than rest and relaxation. The beauty within every detail spoke to me and I couldn't help but picture this as the backdrop for a holiday movie."

"We were thrilled with the idea," said Huffman. "Christmas is a magical time at The Greenbrier, and we knew it would look amazing on camera. We already had a great relationship with Jennifer, who is a big fan of the resort, and we knew she would make it a priority to properly represent The Green-

brier brand and the incredible Christmas celebration that we enjoy each year.”

Huffman and Phillips shared ideas for months, including a meeting during Phillips’ family visit to The Greenbrier for New Year’s, and in early March, Phillips had the approval of the FOX News Media executives to move forward with the project.

With the approvals in place, it was time for a storyline. Ideas were pitched back and forth with Huffman, Phillips and Stan Spry, who would be the movie’s producer. There were thoughts of portraying a member of The Greenbrier culinary team as a featured character and other possibilities, but eventually the storyline involving a former football player rose to the top. It fit perfectly with The Greenbrier’s state-of-the-art Sports Performance Center, which has hosted NFL Training Camps for the New Orleans Saints and Houston Texans, as well as private workouts for top athletes.

“It made perfect sense,” said Huffman. “From golf and tennis to outdoor pursuits, sports are a huge part of what happens at The Greenbrier and are a central aspect of the lives of our owners, the Justice Family. Being able to showcase Christmas and the incredible Sports Performance Center at the same time was exciting.”

By April 1, a first draft of the script was complete. Huffman offered up changes to properly reflect the spirit of Christmas at The Greenbrier and The Greenbrier brand, while Phillips and Spry used decades of experience in the movie industry to make adjustments that brought added excitement to the film. Soon, the script was complete.

By mid-June, things were moving quickly. Phillips and Spry came on property to scout locations for filming and work through some of the logistical questions that came from trying to film a feature production during a busy summer season at the resort.

That trip is also when Stacey Miller began to become a central part of the operation. Miller was assigned as the Event Service Manager for the project, meaning she would oversee all the logistics from The Greenbrier side. She met with Spry to review a list of questions, and a plan began to take shape.

“It was absolute enthusiasm and excitement for



the hotel,” said Miller of her initial impressions. “I am not the only one who would say that working at this resort, you never know what you’re going to encounter. That’s what I love about working at The Greenbrier. It’s so much fun.”

A month later, production began. Members of the Cartel Entertainment crew, the production company led by Spry, began arriving just after the Fourth of July holiday for pre-production. They settled on a schedule, met with Miller about how to overcome various challenges and Miller went through the décor required to transform The Greenbrier into a winter wonderland in the middle of July.

“It was deciding what areas we wanted to decorate first, what areas had a main impact on the film but won’t impact our everyday guests,” Miller explained of the process. “We wanted to make the hotel extremely beautiful for the film, but also try to let our daily guests enjoy a summer vacation while they were here.”

Filming officially began the morning of July 18, and The Greenbrier began celebrating Christmas in July with signs throughout the property informing guests of what was taking place. “It’s Christmas in July at America’s Resort!” the signs read. “The Greenbrier is currently in the process of filming a movie highlighting the magic of the Christmas season at America’s Resort. Details will be announced soon, but please enjoy an early preview of the holiday season as we work to complete this project.”

Excited guests took pictures with the decorations and stood behind the cameras to witness the filming, which lasted two full weeks, with 12-hour days the norm. Several were overnight shoots, allowing the crew to film without as much of an interruption to guests.

A typical day, Miller explained, began with roll call and hair and makeup. When everyone was ready to go, a first run through of the scene was completed with the lead actors and actresses. Extras were then brought onto the scene, and after a rehearsal with the extras and lead roles together, the actual scene was recorded. Two or three takes were always completed, sometimes more as the director searched for the perfect shot.

“I have a new appreciation when I watch a movie now, because I know how much attention to detail goes into making a scene,” said Miller. “Having been





through this process and knowing how much work goes into it, my mind just continues to work when I watch a movie. I'm constantly thinking about how they did things. I know when the credits roll on a movie and there's five different individuals who have a similar title, each one of them is dedicated to a specific part and without that one person, it wouldn't work."

Locations around the resort that were featured in the shoots included the Culinary Arts Center, various retail outlets, the lobbies, Cameo Ballroom, the Christmas Shop at the Depot, the Candy Maker, a Greenbrier Sporting Club home, Colonnade Estate Home, the Main Dining Room, the Ice-Skating Rink and, of course, the Sports Performance Center.



Many were adorned with new decorations that The Greenbrier had purchased for the 2022 Christmas season before the movie had even been suggested. Miller worked with Melinda Workman, the lead designer for Gillespie's Flowers and Productions, to get everything completed. The Greenbrier's upholstery team hung the garland, the electricians strung the lights and the labor pool moved all the necessary elements into place.

There was also a need for a human presence that couldn't be faked, so The Greenbrier sent out an email to its entire database and posted messages on social media to find extras to be included in various movie scenes. Excited friends of The Greenbrier turned out in huge numbers to be a part of this exciting project.



One of those extras was The Greenbrier Escape Rooms and Bunker Tour Manager Deanna Hylton. "I am so excited that I had the opportunity to be a part of (the movie)," said Hylton, who will appear in the Christmas Ball scene near the end of the movie. "Being an extra was an experience like no other."

Hylton explained that the evening started with an inspection of her formal dress to make sure it fit with the scene. She arrived at 6:30 p.m., and by 8:30 she was on the scene and ready to go. Each section of the scene was filmed at least 10 times, and Hylton said it was a challenge to try to do the same thing each time through.

"You have to remember what you were doing each time and do it the same way – walking, drinking, dancing, socializing, etc." she explained. "The hardest part for me was pantomiming. They wanted me

to act like I was speaking, but have no sound come out. If you know me, then you know I got in trouble! I have realized that I cannot open my mouth and have no sound come out”.

“I really enjoyed meeting the film crew, cast and extras. By the end of the scene, I was tired, hot, and my feet and legs ached. It was a long night, but I am so happy that I was able to experience it.”

Decorations and background actors weren’t the only necessary additions to bring the movie to life. Depicting December at America’s Resort in the middle of the summer required snow, and for that, the crew covered different parts of The Greenbrier with a material similar to what is found inside fire extinguishers to give the illusion of snow on the ground. Outdoor scenes required those on camera to wear sweatshirts, knit caps and other winter accessories as temperatures inched toward 90 degrees.

The process wasn’t always an easy one, but the final product is one all agree will highlight a magical time of year at a one-of-a-kind location. “I’m extremely excited,” said Miller. “I believe in our brand and our property. When you see The Greenbrier on film, it is absolutely amazing. I can’t wait to share that with the world.”

“It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I’m extremely grateful that I got to be a part of it. I learned so many things, and it could only happen here at The Greenbrier.”

“Christmas at The Greenbrier” will be released this Thanksgiving on the FOX Nation platform, and it will also be shown inside The Greenbrier Theatre and on the in-room televisions throughout America’s Resort during the holiday season.

“The décor and staff are one of a kind and the rich history unmatched,” said Phillips. “You have not experienced a Christmas like one at The Greenbrier and I’m ecstatic to have the opportunity to work with FOX Nation and bring it all to life.”



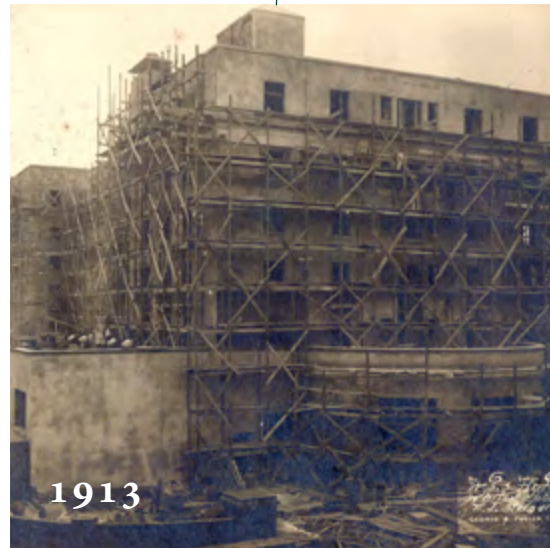


A TIMELINE OF A

1912 - BATH WING UNDER CONSTRUCTION



1930 - THE GREENBRIER NEARLY DOUBLED IN SIZE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NORTH WING.



1913 - GREENBRIER HOTEL UNDER CONSTRUCTION.



1930's - REPAIRS AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOTEL.

AMERICA'S RESORT

1930's - REPAIRS AND UPDATES TAKING PLACE AT THE PARADISE COTTAGES IN THE 1930'S.



1960 - CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUNKER, THE WORKERS THAT WERE WORKING ON THIS PROJECT WERE HIRED BY C&O RAILROAD SO THEY WOULD NOT QUESTION THE PROJECT.



UPDATES OF THE FRONT



1946 - CONSTRUCTION INSIDE THE HOTEL DURING THE REDECORATION BY DOROTHY DRAPER.

A TIMELINE OF A

1964 – PAINTERS AND MASONS WORKING DILIGENTLY TO COMPLETE RENOVATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL TWELVE COLUMNS OF THE SPRINGHOUSE.



1975 – CONSTRUCTION OF COLONIAL HALL.



1963 – RENOVATIONS OF SOUTH CAROLINA F COTTAGE.



1974 – BUILDING COLONIAL HALL ADDITION TO THE HOTEL.

AMERICA'S RESORT

OF THE INTERIORS OF

2015 – CONSTRUCTION OF THE GREENBRIER CHAPEL THAT HAS HOSTED MANY WEDDINGS COMPLETED.



2010- BUILDING THE CASINO FOR GUESTS TO ENJOY.



2015- CREEKSIDE TENNIS COURTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

SALT RISING BREAD



A unique Appalachian tradition that was nearly lost is being revived inside The Greenbrier's legendary kitchens, and it's a unique taste that few have experienced but almost all who have remember fondly.

The origin of salt rising bread is largely unknown. It's believed that it was started by pioneer women who had flour but no yeast and were desperate to find a way to make bread with what was available. The authors of the book, "Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition" researched the topic extensively, and the earliest recipe they could find came from West Virginia in 1778 – ironically, the same year that the first visitors came to The Greenbrier to "take the waters" of the natural springs.

Whatever its origins, salt rising – or salt-risen as some call it – became popular in the Appalachian Mountains. The dense white bread with a distinctive flavor – leavened by naturally occurring bacteria, instead of yeast – doesn't really match its name. It's made from a starter consisting of water or milk, as well as corn, potatoes or wheat, along with other minor ingredients. The bread contains little, if any, salt.

"I think people automatically think that it's going to be salty bread," said Bryan Skelding, Executive Chef at The Greenbrier. "But it's not. "What comes to mind for me is parmesan. It's a little bit funkier, but it does have that same nuance. If you stick your nose into a wheel of parmesan, that's probably the closest. It's not like stinky socks, blue cheese type smell. It has a great flavor."

A Wisconsin native, Skelding knew nothing about the bread until he moved to West Virginia to work at The Greenbrier. Even then, he only heard a few mentions of the bread and had never sampled the Appalachian delicacy.

That's when Samantha (Sam) Band came into the picture. Before coming to work at America's Resort, Band, a native of Cameron, West Virginia, had worked at Rising Creek Bakery in Mount Morris, Pennsylvania. The small bakery, just miles from the West Virginia border, specialized in none other than salt rising bread. "I had no idea what it was," said Band. "I started out just watching, and then I went right into the position as a baker."



Band soon learned the art of the bread from the bakery's owner, Genevieve (Jenny) Bardwell, who is passionate about the bread and one of the co-authors of the "Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition" book.

"It was something that I was really good at, so I got really passionate about it," said Band. "When I first started making it, I thought it smelled so bad, because it has such a distinct scent. But the first time I tasted it on a breakfast sandwich, I can still remember the flavor. Everything about it was really good."

On a trip back to her hometown, Band told her grandparents about this "new" bread she had discovered. She was surprised to learn that they knew all about it, and they quickly requested some loaves to sample. She was amazed with how they were almost immediately transported back in time. "It reminds me of the scene from 'Ratatouille,' where the guy tastes the ratatouille for the first time and it puts him right back to his childhood home," said Band. "That's how the older generation feels a lot of times. They talk about how they haven't tasted it since they were 7 years old at their grandma's house."

While at the bakery, Band said it was a common occurrence to receive a phone call from any part of the country from a customer who was thrilled to discover a bakery making a childhood favorite.

One call that is particularly vivid in her mind came from a woman in North Carolina who had enjoyed the bread during her youth spent in West Virginia. As the conversation continued, Band learned that the customer had actually grown up in the same hometown, Cameron, and a building that was once owned by the customer's grandparents is owned by Band's grandparents today. "The bread brought us together," said Band. "I'm sure the moment she tasted it, it took her right back to her childhood there in Cameron."

After nearly three years at the bakery, Band made the decision to come to The Greenbrier to continue developing her culinary career. She began in the pastry shop, before transitioning into her current role as a Line Cook in the Main Dining Room. Her husband, Caleb, is a chef at The Greenbrier, as well, and it was actually a conversation he was having with one of the chefs about his wife's ability to make the bread that eventually landed with Chef Skelding.

"I had never met anyone who knew how to bake it," said Skelding. "It was just some of that kitchen banter." Skelding soon sampled the bread and was impressed by the taste, as well as Band's knowledge and passion for the bread. It didn't take long before he decided it should be somewhere on the menu in one of The Greenbrier's dining outlets.





"When I see a culinarian get excited about something, to me that's a no-brainer," Skelding explained. "Food that contains love always tastes better." He was also excited about some of the bread's history being rooted in the area that surrounds The Greenbrier. "The regional stuff is huge," he said. "It doesn't always make sense in every outlet, but focusing on it when we can is big. It's great to keep recipes and traditions alive and well."

At the bakery in Pennsylvania, Band often made as many as 200 loaves in a single day, so she was more than ready to produce the mass quantities of the bread necessary to fill the needs of the guests at America's Resort. "It's about timing your starters," said Band. "If you start two starters at 3:00 in the afternoon, then you have to start your others at like 4:30. That way they're not all ready at once. If they're ready at once, then you're rushing to get everything done."

The next key is keeping the bread at the correct temperature throughout the process. "Anything between 106 and 113 degrees Fahrenheit is where you want it," Band explained. "When you put milk into the starter, you heat it to 165. The moment you heat it, you put it right into a water bath that's kept at 110. When I proof the bread, it fluctuates between 107 and 112. As long as it stays between those numbers, it has a higher chance of being successful."

From collapsed starters to incorrect temperatures, the process can be a tricky one. "Grandma didn't have thermometers and proof boxes," said Skelding. "She had a fireplace and trial and error. She had to find the right spot at the right time of day."

Those intricacies, as well as the time involved, may explain why fewer and fewer individuals know how to make the bread, but Band is thrilled to be one of the few keeping the bread alive. "I think people don't want to take the time to learn an old tradition," she said. "I get to be the one in my generation to bring it back. I want to teach as many people as I can to keep the tradition alive."

The bread has found its way to the Farm to Table Dinner Series at the Greenbrier Creekside Gardens outdoor dining venue that opened on the banks of Howard's Creek in 2021 – where it is grilled over an open flame – and it is also part of the bread service at Sam Snead's, served with seasonal jams, avocado basil dip and cultured butter.

There could be additional uses for the bread in the future, including sandwiches like the ones served at Rising Creek Bakery, but both Skelding and Band agree that simple is best when it comes to sampling the bread for the first time. "I like it with just butter," said Skelding. "You get all the flavor of the bread and are able to understand why it is so unique."

The People Who Create Memorable Experiences

by: Cam Huffman

Whether it's gliding gracefully across the ice to the sounds of "Winter Wonderland" with twinkling lights above, listening to the jingling bells as a horse drawn sleigh traverses across a snow-covered golf course or sitting by a roaring fire while The Greenbrier Springhouse Entertainers perform "Silent Night," Christmas at The Greenbrier is a magical experience. From food to décor, programming, traditions and an overwhelming sense of home, the Christmas season at America's Resort brings in visitors from across the country – many year after year.

The process of transforming The Greenbrier into a fairytale Christmas, doesn't happen by accident. Team Members in every department have specific roles in assuring that every aspect of the holiday experience exceeds the expectations of each guest that steps through the iconic doors of the resort's front entrance. Let's meet a few of those individuals that transform holiday dreams into reality.







Joyce Cruse – Retail

If you're looking for Christmas 12 months a year, The Christmas Shop at the Depot is your spot. The former train depot, across the street from the Main Entrance, is filled with specialty handmade ornaments, home décor, figurines and much more to bring the spirit of Christmas into your home any time of year.

Joyce Cruse is the retail buyer for the store, and she is serious about filling the store with items that can't be found anywhere and making the interior visually pleasing to every guest who comes through its doors.

"We love to hear guests say how beautiful the shop is," said Cruse. "I am trying to wow the guests and make them glad that they took the time to come into the shop. We love to give them new ideas for their trees and home."

While a few of the most popular items remain in the store year after year, most of the inventory is completely new each year. Cruse makes a four-day trip to Atlanta Market each January or March, and she orders enough Christmas décor to fill the store for an entire year. When the new décor arrives, she begins the transformation of the shop, and by late-October or early-November, nearly everything is new.

"I try to find different, unusual things that you don't see everywhere," said Cruse. She's also looking for the six or more Christmas trees that bring the shop to life. "The first day, I basically just look around and come up with ideas for themes," she explained of the process. "Then I start putting my themes together. I shop three or four different vendors for one theme to put my own stamp on it." Sometimes the inspiration can be as simple as a beautifully colored ribbon that inspires a tree with those colors. Other time is a particular Christmas character or a holiday memory.

This year, Cruse will design a "Snowman and Friends" tree, along with "Nutcracker," "Cardinal," "Grinch," "Toyland" and "Gingerbread" trees. She always does a "Nativity" tree and a "Nature" tree.

"I'm really excited about the 'Gingerbread' tree this year," said Cruse. "It will be very colorful with many different candies."

Other exciting additions for this Christmas include a new Greenbrier exclusive Byers' Choice Santa, one of several she has created with the company over the years. She's also excited about a new line called "Heartfully Yours," created by Christopher Radko, which has had its line of ornaments featured at The Christmas Shop at the Depot for years. Though The Christmas Shop remains busy all year, September through November are always its busiest months, as guests begin to plan their decorations for the upcoming holidays.



Jean Francois Suteau – Pastry

Each Christmas the Lower Lobby at The Greenbrier is filled with the smell of chocolate as Executive Pastry Chef Jean Francois Suteau and his team create a 15-foot-wide holiday display made exclusively of chocolate. Three pastry chefs spend more than two months sculpting 1,000 pounds of dark chocolate into a festive scene that includes all the favorite images of Christmas, with a few new twists each year. The entire display is 100 percent edible, and the overall theme varies from year to year.

Suteau, who was a finalist in Food Network's "Best Baker in America," several years ago, enjoys crafting the incredible creation each year and loves to see the reactions of guests when they see the display for the first time.

"Most people can't believe it's made of chocolate," said the award-winning pastry chef. "A lot of people walk by it and just think it's some type of Christmas decoration you can buy. Those who do realize it are amazed, and they ask a lot of questions." Moving the pieces of the display from the chocolate shop into the Lower Lobby, Suteau explained, is the most difficult part of the process. "Every year, something breaks," he said with a chuckle. But the freedom to show his team's creativity to the thousands of guests who pass by the display each year is what makes the project, now in its eighth Christmas, worthwhile.



Stacey Miller – Special Events

When it comes to Special Events at The Greenbrier, Stacey Miller is out in front of every one of them, from the planning to the execution. No event is more special than Christmas, and Miller's fingerprints can be found all over the resort during the Christmas season.

Miller said the planning for the Christmas season starts the day after the previous Christmas season comes to a close. Along with Holly Gillespie, Melinda Workman and the staff at Gillespie's Flowers and Productions, Miller sits down and reviews the year gone by and the year ahead. From the activities for families to the resort's décor and even the food served at the banquets, everything is discussed in this brainstorming session.

"We put a lot of thought into it," said Miller. "We think about the families that come here every year as a tradition and new families that we hope to incorporate. We talk about everything, from the books that will be read during Weekends with Santa to what the cookies are going to look like. A lot of attention to detail goes into this." It's a delicate balance of keeping traditions in place, while also keeping the programming fresh each year. "We do stay true to the traditions of Christmas here at The Greenbrier," Miller explained. "But we always like to add in an extra something special. It could be a new theme of a tree in the Upper Lobby or a new idea for one of our dinners."

While planning takes place throughout the year, the rush takes place in November, when Miller and others begin to decorate The Greenbrier for the holiday season. It takes about three weeks to complete the entire process, which involves Miller, Gillespie, Workman, the upholstery team, the electricians, the labor team and many more. "It's such a huge operation," said Miller. "Without one hand, the other wouldn't work. It takes so many different departments to make it happen."

Hundreds of trees fill nearly every spot in The Greenbrier's 11,000 acres, and each one takes a team. The labor team puts the trees in place, the electricians come behind them and decorate with lights and Miller and her crew finish up the trees with decorations, making sure everything is placed in the perfect spot. The same is true for the garland that can be found throughout the hotel. It's put in place by the upholsters, before the electricians come through with lights. Miller and her crew come last and fluff the garland, making sure every strand has the perfect look.

"The most rewarding part to me is when you're sitting in a room coming up with an idea, and you're thinking, 'Wow, wonder if our families will enjoy this or if they'll pick up on that,'" said Miller. "When I see families walking into a ballroom for the first time and their faces light up, that's what makes me happy."



David Cook – Electricians

It isn't Christmas without thousands of twinkling lights, and David Cook and his team of electricians have a big job during the holiday season.

It begins with the giant tree at the Front Entrance, which is adorned with 22,000 lights. After the tree is put in place with a crane, it takes a team of four electricians four solid days to get the tree completely decorated, using a 135-foot articulating lift. Power is pulled from the casino to create the magical display. When that tree is complete, they move to the North Entrance, where it takes the same crew of four two days to finish the smaller tree with 18,000 lights.

Then there's the giant wreath that took its spot at the Front Entrance in 2020. It weighs 760 pounds and has to be put in place with a crane before it is illuminated. Somewhere between 12-16 "whimsical" light displays, hundreds of smaller trees and the porches of more than 100 cottages are also decorated by the electricians before it's all complete. The process starts in late October and is finished by the end of Thanksgiving week.

"The best way to experience it is to come see it for yourself," said Cook. "It really is impressive, and the tree lighting experience (every Saturday between Thanksgiving and Christmas) is definitely the best time."



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BEHIND THE CURTAINS OF: THE UPPER LOBBY

- The unique color that adorns the walls is Jefferson Blue, available from the Dorothy Draper Paint Collection by Fine Paints of Europe.
- The fabric covering the sofas is Fazenda Lilly, which Dorothy Draper designed for the space. It contains all the colors that are showcased at The Greenbrier.
- The two kidney sofas are original pieces from Dorothy Draper's first redecoration and are reupholstered regularly.
- The George Washington painting above the fireplace is a replica of Gilbert Stuart work by his daughter, Ann Stuart.
- The lamps by the fireplace and the gold leaf lamps are all original.
- The center table was designed by Dorothy Draper at the New York City office.
- Guests have been served afternoon tea since 1917 and we serve 80,640 cups per year.
- There are nine different seating areas for guests to enjoy during their visit to the Upper Lobby.
- Black and green damask screens ground the space and add depth.
- The overscale urn at the middle of the archway draws one's eye and was placed there by Dorothy Draper. She believed that the space needed a focal point.
- The black and white marble checkerboard floor was added by Mrs. Draper and is one of her signature styles.





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