Theater, tours and Festival of Lights make county’s holiday season sparkle

Theater, music, a festival focused on animals, and colonial houses in their holiday dress for annual tours are all on the Cumberland County agenda this season along with the traditional parades and tree lighting events.

**Festival of Lights**

The Bridgeton Department of Recreation kicks off the celebrations with its annual **Festival of Lights** at the Cohanzick Zoo on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 6 and 7, from 4 to 8 p.m. The theme is "Magic of the Holidays."

Recreation Department Director Melissa Hemple said, “The Festival is a way to start the holiday season as a community. There will be food and craft vendors, train rides and a musical light show among thousands of lights. The event is free but donations are always accepted.”

A gift drive for the animals at the zoo is also under way. Consult the web site for ideas such as Kong toys for the fox/porcupine tree and dried and fresh figs for the primate tree.

**Full Schedule at Levoy**

The **Levoy Theater** in Millville offers a full schedule of holiday-themed attractions for December. For country music fans, “A Bluegrass Christmas” by Bridgeton native Daniel Boner will be presented on Friday, Dec. 6, at 7:30 p.m. Since 2000, he has made his home in Johnson City, Tenn., where he directs a program in Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music Studies at East Tennessee State University. The performance features the ETSU Bluegrass Pride Band. Tickets are $22.50.

On Saturday morning, Dec. 7, at 11 a.m., an ani-

(Continued on page 2)
Jewish heritage celebrated in exhibit

The rich Jewish heritage of Cumberland County is being celebrated in an exhibition entitled “History of Jewish Life in Cumberland County,” which began November 5 in Vineland and will conclude on December 4 in Millville.

The exhibition highlights the communities of Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland and is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties. It moved on November 24 to the Millville Historical Society, 200 E. Main St, Millville, where it will be until December 4.

The exhibition consists of displays with narratives of Jewish history of Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland. Historical photographs as well as artifacts and memorabilia will recall Jewish activity in Cumberland County—organizations, religious life, and Jewish leadership. “Cumberland County is abundant with Jewish history and lore,” said Steven Schimmel, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation, said. “It’s a story that goes back a century and a half and traces the story of the Jews coming to this area to escape the Russian pogroms and later the terror of Nazism. It’s a story of how these people contributed to the growth of a nationally-recognized poultry industry here, as well as other businesses and industries. It’s also a story of how they established a thriving religious and cultural life.”

For more information, including exhibit venue hours, contact the Federation at (856) 696-4445 or act@jewish-cumberland.org.

County celebrates holidays in style

(Continued from page 1)

December menu, “It’s A Wonderful Life” on Friday, Dec. 20, at 8 p.m. and “Miracle on 34th Street” on Saturday, Dec. 21 at 8 p.m. Both shows will include sing-alongs. Tickets are $10.

Mauricetown House Tour

The historic village of Mauricetown will conduct its 29th annual Christmas Candelight House Tour on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 4 to 8 p.m. Twenty-one stops are included in the itinerary, with a free shuttle bus available, said Walt Birbeck, a trustee for the Mauricetown Historical Society.

The Historical Society campus at 1229 Front St. will be open, including the 1864 Compton House mansion, newly refurbished 1840 Dutch frame working man’s home and working cookhouse with a circa 1880 cast iron stove. There will be a holiday choir performance at the Methodist Church from 6:30 to 8 p.m., and the Loyalty Circle of the Church will serve a Yuletide Supper at the Fire Hall from 3 to 7 p.m. for an additional charge.

Tickets are $15, and all proceeds benefit the Historical Society. For information, visit www.mauricetownhistoricalsociety.org or call 856-785-1137 or 856-785-1372.

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