

PASTIMES

A LITTLE JOY AROUND THE TOWN



HAZEL SWEITZER

Here come the holidays! And that means family, friends, food, gifts, and fun. Or does it? I know all of you humans are sad about the pandemic and how it will affect your holiday

plans, I don't blame you. The fewer people, the fewer chances food will fall to the floor during a Thanksgiving or Christmas feast. It is important to remember although this year may be different, there is always a chance for joy. My human Tom is making a list of people who

could use a little joy this year. He even has a group of children from A Place to Be Music Therapy Center participating in phone calls to people who might feel lonely or isolated this holiday season.

I have to be honest. I have

noticed that people look a little stressed and distant as I walk around town. It is always refreshing when someone stops to talk to Tom and pet me, but recently it seems like a lot of humans carry a worried look on their face. I think Tom is right by spreading Joy to people who

need it because recently, I have seen other dogs in town that could use a little pick me up. Who can't use a little extra love from someone? A little Joy.

This holiday season, make a list of people who could use a card or a phone call from you. I know mailing letters is out of date, but out of all years, maybe this year is the right time to sit down and write someone you love a long letter. It shows you have taken the time and the letter's details show you have thought about them. Everyone, even dogs, deserves to end this year with a good feeling. If anything, this pandemic has shown us that we need each other more than objects, and little things mean more than ever before. I miss people just like you do, and I know there are some months to go yet before we can proceed to a more typical lifestyle. Still, hopefully, from this whole experience, you have found a more profound sense of appreciation and gratitude.

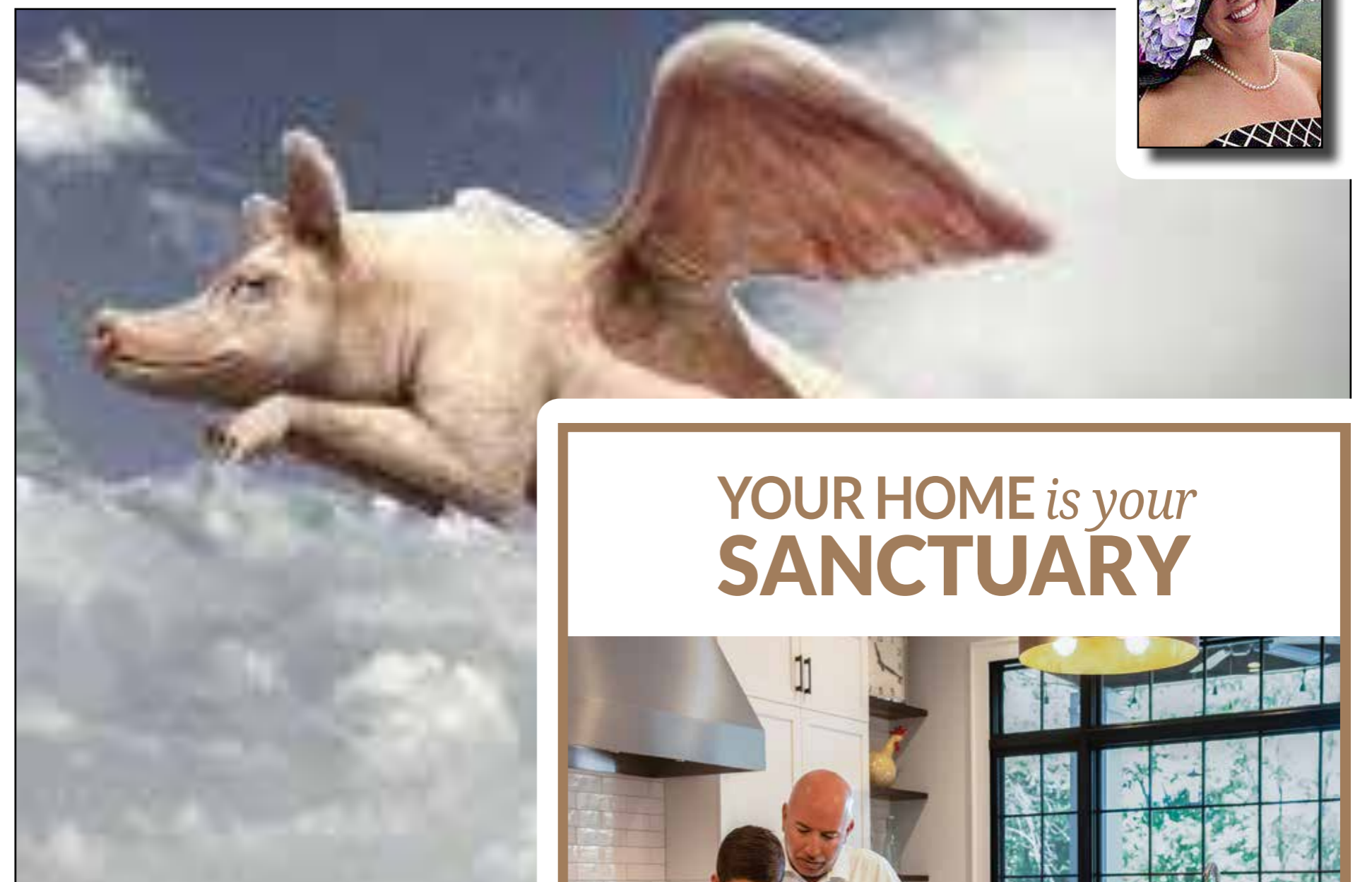
I hope to see you around town, and be sure to smile behind your mask. People can tell if your smiling, and everyone needs a smile now and again. Happy Holidays and be good to yourself and others. The most significant gift you can give someone this season is not just a dog bone, but the gift of your heart and mind thinking about them and reaching out!

Have a great end of 2020!!



PIGS CAN FLY

SINCERELY ME



BRANDY GREENWELL

I have the most amazing horse ever to walk the face of the earth, and my connection and bond with her are like those found in a little girl's dreams. I imported both of her parents from Ireland and bred, foaled, and know every ear flick she has ever made from the second she graced the planet. I started calling her Pig or Pighorse, not because she is a grey who prefers living her best life with mud ground into her face, but rather the reaction and dance when she tasted her first Saratoga Peppermint Pig, which was given to us as a Christmas 2009 gift. Her expression of pure, sugar-coated bliss, along with the gratitude dance she choreographed after that, left marks on both of us for different reasons beyond tasty treats.

Many seasons ago, my Pighorse and I came to a terrifying coop while hunting with Middleburg Hunt. I will fully own that it was terrifying to me, not Pig, as she would jump a barn on fire if I asked her. You see, I am more of a Chicken than a Pig when it comes to jumping and has been since I was in Pigtails and jodhpurs. In the short moments approaching this Chicken eating coop, I looked for any way out of jumping when a friend behind me encouraged me by simply saying, "KICK ON." I did, and my Pighorse and I sailed in harmony

over one of my biggest fears. My encouraging friend caught up to me at speed and said, "Brandy, Pigs do fly." And yes, they can.

As the Holiday spirit is beginning to buzz, I am reminded of the Peppermint Pig tale and find it worthy for many reasons in the challenging 2020 environment.

The online product description: "This 'Peppermint Pig' as aptly it was named, was cast of hard candy, similar in fashion to candy cane and festive pink in color. And while the Pig is honored in Victorian holiday tradition as a symbol of good health, happiness and prosperity, these special 'Peppermint Pigs', unique to Saratoga Springs, came to represent much more. They proudly stood for an old-fashioned Yuletide itself-a wonderful time when red-cheeked children laughed and rode old wooden sleds over fresh snow, when church bells pealed and warm memories were shared by a gathering of family and friends. After the holiday dinner, the Pigs were broken and shared by all in the hopes of good fortune for the coming year."

Why are these Pig-ramblings newsworthy? Very only, we as a country need to remember to love like a child, share more peppermint-flavored gratitude, and trust that if you believe, Pigs can fly. I wish you a healthy, blessed, and loving Holiday Season.



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