

Dickens of a Christmas 2016 Schedule of Events

Ebensburg's Dickens of a Christmas is a family-oriented Christmas celebration based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Many vendors and other participants are clad in period costumes. Let us be your host as you enjoy this old-fashioned Christmas weekend.

Come enjoy vendors and crafters hawking Christmas wares, wassailing in quaint neighborhoods, ice carving, breakfast with Santa, antique shopping, musical recitals, a Christmas Parade, Children's events, a live nativity, Dickens Dessert Theater, sleigh and carriage rides, old English prison tour and holiday productions by Cresson Lake Playhouse and Mount Aloysius College!

This is truly a joyous way to bring in the holiday season, of which Mr. Dickens would surely approve!

Friday, December 2nd

Courthouse Office Decorating Contest

Friday morning; Cambria County Courthouse, 200 South Center Street



The decorating contest at the courthouse is a tradition wherein the interior doors and county row offices are decorated for the holiday season. Winners will be announced during the courthouse tree lighting ceremony. The courthouse is open to visitors all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday and is a stop that the entire family will enjoy.

County employees are encouraged to wear period costume to work on Friday.

Gingerbread Contest for Kids

Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Cambria County Historical Society,
615 North Center Street

The entire community is invited to participate in our gingerbread contest, sponsored by the Cambria County Historical Society. While the contest is for entrants age 18 and under, everyone is welcome to display their own gingerbread masterpiece! The structure of the entry may be made of non-edible materials but all visible surfaces must be edible. Prizes will be awarded for most representative of the HOLIDAYS, most ARTISTIC, most representative of CAMBRIA COUNTY HISTORY, and Best of Show.



Entries must be dropped off at the Historical Society between 10am and 4pm on Tuesday, November 29th through Thursday, December 1st. NO ENTRIES will be accepted on Friday. Call 472-6674 if you have any questions about the dates and times for drop-off.

Join the fun and start your own Christmas tradition! Visit the gingerbread display all day Friday, during the Open House on Friday from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, during the Open House on Saturday from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm, and throughout the holiday season.

Tree Lighting & Wassailing

Friday, Noon; Cambria County Courthouse, 200 South Center Street

Join the Cambria County Commissioners and county employees as they bring in the Christmas season at the courthouse with the lighting of the 30' tall Christmas tree, positioned in the rotunda of the courthouse. The historic stained glass dome above the rotunda displays the Cambria County seal, and allows sunlight to fill the rotunda. County employees surround the open rotunda on three levels to sing Christmas carols.



Wassailing is the custom of going door-to-door singing carols with a wooden wassail bowl, in hopes of gifts of food and drink. Each region in England had its own traditional "wassailing songs." These songs all had the same theme: to bid good health to neighbors, friends, "kin and kinsfolk," and all the cows, horses, dogs, and apple trees within the village bounds. All the best for a Joyous and Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!

Light-Up Ceremony

Friday, 6:00 p.m.; Kimball Park



This traditional opening of Ebensburg's Christmas season is made bigger and better for the Dickens celebration. Enjoy a holiday performance of Christmas carols. The Mayor will proclaim the official opening of Ebensburg's "Dickens of a Christmas". Those attending will be invited to sing Christmas carols. Warm up with hot chocolate and enjoy a tasty treat. Immediately following the Light-Up Ceremony, stroll to your choice of holiday events, all in downtown Ebensburg. Choose to enjoy the Cresson Lake production at the courthouse, the Open House at the Historical Society, catch the showing of "Elf" at the YPCC, join carolers about town or just enjoy a stroll through downtown to see a wonderful holiday light display. Don't go home without seeing the burning cressets in Penn Eben Park and walking through the 12 Days of Christmas display in Veterans Park.

Dickens of a Christmas Kick-Off Party

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Pages & Light, 128 W. High Street

Start "Dickens of a Christmas" off with Pages & Light. Enjoy the music of Apache Moon while sipping wassell! Apache Moon is an acoustic singing duo that layers vocal harmonies over two guitars. They play covers of songs from the '60s and '70s, and they also some of their own.

Open House at the Cambria County Historical Society

Friday, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 pm; Historical Society, 615 North Center Street

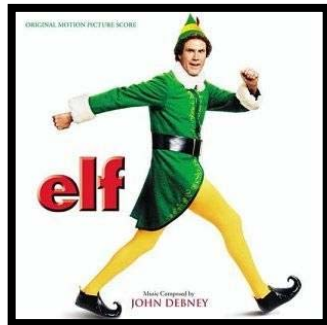
Join us for our annual open house in the holly-decked halls of the A.W. Buck House, home of the Cambria County Historical Society. Refreshments, tours and more. Our Christmas tree in the library is always a holiday delight.

The A.W. Buck House was built in 1890 (only 20 years after Dickens' death) in the Victorian Queen Anne Style. The house belonged to a well-known local banker, and more recently served as a convent until the Society acquired it in 1991. There is no charge for this event.



Family Christmas Movie "Elf"

Friday, Doors open at 6:30 p.m., movie starts at 7:00 p.m.;
Young Peoples Community Center (YPCC), 300 Prave Street



Something the whole family will enjoy - bring the kids for a showing of the movie "Elf" for our first family movie night at the YPCC! Popcorn will be available and admission is just \$1 per person, or free with a toy donation.

Buddy (Will Ferrell) was accidentally transported to the North Pole as a toddler and raised to adulthood among Santa's elves. Unable to shake the feeling that he doesn't fit in, the adult Buddy travels to New York, in full elf uniform, in search of his real father. As it happens, this is Walter Hobbs (James Caan), a cynical businessman. After a DNA test proves this, Walter reluctantly attempts to start a relationship with the childlike Buddy with increasingly chaotic results.

Cresson Lake Playhouse Holiday Production of "A Cresson Cabaret"

Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Cambria County Courthouse, 200 South Center Street

As part of Ebensburg's "Dickens of a Christmas" celebration, Cresson Lake will be "singing in the holidays" with a program of Christmas music performed by some of the best vocalists in the region. We're also including a sing-along of carols with the entire audience.



Performances are Friday, December 2nd at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday December 3rd at 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. in the beautifully restored Courtroom #1 at the Cambria County Courthouse, 200 S. Center Street in Ebensburg. Tickets are only \$10 and will be available through www.cressonlake.com and at the door.

Winter Wonderland Holiday Light Display

Experience Ebensburg's small town charm during this holiday weekend. Stroll the streets of downtown Ebensburg after dark and enjoy a dazzling display of white lights. The holiday wreaths around the Victorian streetlights, the lights that illuminate every tree along the downtown streets, and the holiday displays in store windows makes Downtown Ebensburg truly magical. Be sure to visit Kimball Park, Penn Eben Park and Veterans' Park at night for an outstanding holiday light display. Homes are adorned with lights and Christmas greenery. Throughout Ebensburg, smiles are bigger and arms open even wider at Christmas! If we're fortunate, a blanket of white snow will add the final touch.



Saturday, December 3rd

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, 8:00 a.m.; Young Peoples Community Center (YPCC), 300 Prave Street



Making a special pre-Christmas journey direct from the North Pole, Father Christmas (Santa) is inviting kids and their families to a breakfast exclusively at the YPCC! Come join Father Christmas and the Ebensburg Woman's Club in celebrating the holidays. To help pay for the extra hay required by Santa's reindeer to make this special trip, admission will be \$10.00 per person; \$5 for children under 10; and free for children under 3. The cost includes a full breakfast, a holiday craft, story time, and a photo with Santa. Pre-registration is strongly recommended. Please call 263-5254 with questions or to register.

Indoor Craft Fairs

Saturday, 8:00 a.m. at Holy Name Church, Dauntless Fire Station and VFW

Visit our holiday craft fair at THREE locations as you begin your Christmas shopping. Over 100 costumed vendors on hand to peddle their wares and serve their fare. Exhibitors will display a wide variety of hand-crafted items such as clothing, home decor, baked goods, spices, wood crafts, metal sculptures, art decor, and numerous other unique products. Our craft shows focus on hand-made original crafts and products, and will grow to be the region's largest craft show! This event is just what Santa ordered; an enjoyable, affordable place to unwind with friends and family.

The craft fair at Holy Name Church boasts 50 vendors and is open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is also a bake sale and food booth. The craft fair at Dauntless Fire Station, and right across the street at the VFW, are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



A Dickens of a Downtown

All day Saturday in Historic Downtown Ebensburg

The streets of historic Downtown Ebensburg will come alive with the Christmas spirit. Wander into a local restaurant or pub for food and ale, or shop for antiques and collectibles. Check out the ice carvings during the morning in Penn Eben Park. You will have the pleasure of walking tree-lined streets outlined by Victorian lampposts and resting on a Victorian park bench. It's a day right out of "Currier & Ives" in Downtown Ebensburg!



Enjoy the cressets in Penn Eben Park, filled with wood and set aflame. A “cresset” is a basket of fire. They were kept continuously alight and placed at the focal point of a community. Around it people gathered for their meetings and social discourse. From it they took fire to light and heat their own homes. Ebensburg’s cressets are hand-made based on 18th century originals.

Ice Sculptures

Saturday, 9:00 a.m.; In Penn Eben Park

An outstanding display of carved ice sculptures will be located in Penn Eben Park. Come and watch the talented ice carving team sculpt seasonal images! During Dickens of a Christmas, ice is just the tip of the iceberg.

Snow, Ice and Christmas often go together. The reason that we think of Snow and Ice at Christmas is attributed to the Victorians! It was the Victorians who gave us our “traditional” Christmas in Europe and the United States. At the start of the Victorian era (1837), Britain was in a mini ice age that was from about 1550 to 1850. During this time, in London, a winter fair was held on the frozen River Thames.



When Charles Dickens was a child, Britain had very heavy snowfalls around Christmas, so when he wrote *A Christmas Carol* he put lots of snow and ice in it! He also put snow at Christmas in some of his other books like *The Pickwick Papers*. Charles Dickens' books were very popular (and still are!) so when the Victorians read the books, they thought of snow and Christmas together!

Global Fat Bike Race & Patio Party

Saturday, 9:00 a.m.; Pour on Center, 102 South Center Street

Join fellow bicyclists for a race from Ebensburg to Nanty Glo and back along the Ghost Town Trail. Registration begins at 9 a.m. at Pour on Center. The race begins at 10 o'clock at the trailhead. Following the race, return to Pour on Center for a patio party with ten different breweries. Cost is \$20/rider. Sponsored by Pour on Center and City Cycle.



Model Railroad Display

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.; First United Church of Christ

Visit the First United Church of Christ on East High Street and view a model railroad display.



Model railroading has become an integral part of Christmas in America. Ironically, it is undeniable how much Dickens abhorred the rail system and the impending industrial revolution that was to sweep England (and the world) in the mid-nineteenth century. Dickens writes of railways as though they were the epitome of gloom and doom, catastrophic, as demonstrated in *Dombey and Son*. Charles Dickens seems to be mourning the death of a different life, one he will never return to. Dickens was using the railway and the death of a particular lifestyle as a metaphor for the death of young Paul Dombey.

Charles Dickens is mentioned in most books that were written on the history of the British Rail system, which is indicative of the fact that

Dickens' critique of the railways and the industrial revolution must have reached far beyond the pages of *Dombey and Son*.

There is no charge for this event.

Rotary Club Hot Chocolate Booth

Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Penn Eben Park

The Ebensburg Rotary Club will be giving out FREE hot chocolate in Penn Eben Park. Stop by on your way to see Santa Claus!

Vendor Fair and Basket Raffle

Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; First United Church of Christ, 217 East High Street

Find your favorite direct sales vendors like Lularoe, Norwex, Scentsy, Tastefully Simple, Origami Owl, Tupperware and many more at the First United Church Christ vendor fair!

Christmas Parade

Saturday, 11:00 a.m.; Downtown Ebensburg

The Ebensburg Christmas Parade is a grand tradition! The theme for this year's parade and other events is "A Christmas Carol". The parade begins at the middle school, proceeds down North Center Street, turns right onto West High Street and finally north on Julian Street. The center of town is your best seat! The parade will include holiday floats, local civic organizations and churches, fire equipment, dancers, marching bands, and more. As always, a very special guest from the North Pole will signal the end of the parade and the beginning of the holiday season! Residents and visitors are encouraged to dress in Dickens-style costume for the parade and their afternoon in Downtown Ebensburg!



Children's Treats & Photos

Saturday, immediately following parade; Penn Eben Park



As soon as his duties with the Christmas Parade are discharged, Santa Claus will visit the gazebo in Penn Eben Park. There he will distribute free Christmas treats to all good little urchins (compliments of Central Cambria Lions Club)! Photos with Santa are also free, compliments of Claire Therese Photography! Stay warm with a free cup of hot chocolate provided by the Ebensburg Rotary Club.

Live Nativity & Inside Nativity Festival Displays with light refreshments

Saturday, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Ebensburg United Methodist Church – 100 E. Highland Avenue

In this busy holiday season, take some time to pause and remember the story of *Jesus' birth* by stopping by our *Live Nativity Journey*. Let the Story speak for itself as members of the church portray this ancient story in simplicity and beauty as it continues to bring hope and light into our dark world. Don't let the *rush of Christmas* push out the true reason for our celebration. After your journey, please join us in our Fellowship Hall for light refreshments and tour our church family's Nativity Festival displays. A sight for all to see and enjoy this wonderful season.

Old English Prison Tour

Saturday, Noon – 4:00 p.m.; Former Cambria County Prison

The English practiced a peculiar form of punishment for someone who could not pay their bills – a special prison where the offender was incarcerated indefinitely until his creditors were satisfied. The fact that a person in prison was unable to work to earn the money necessary to repay the debt did not enter into their logic. Debtors often died in these prisons due to the terrible living conditions.



Dickens' father was constantly in debt, and in 1824 he was imprisoned in Marshalsea debtor's prison. Charles Dickens was forced to leave school at the age of 12. It was his personal experience of factory work and the living conditions of the poor that inspired Dickens to frequently write of workhouses and prisons. For example, in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens describes Fagin crossing "a gloomy passage lighted by a few dim lamps, into the interior of the prison". In *A Visit To Newgate*, he refers to "the tortuous and intricate windings" of the prison. Dickens was a true champion of the poor, and repeatedly pointed out the atrocities of the system

through his novels.

The former Cambria County Jail was built in 1872, approximately 50 years after Dickens' father served his sentence, and two years after Dickens' death. While certainly not festive, many visitors will enjoy the opportunity to inspect the 19th century lockup. Distasteful and uncomfortable circumstances were common in Dickens' writings. Of his masterpiece, *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens said, "I have endeavored in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it." Stop by and visit Cambria County's version of "Newgate", London's infamous prison.

Remember when the charity fundraisers came to Scrooge's office looking for a handout for the needy and Scrooge responded gruffly, "Are there no prisons... and the Union workhouses, are they still in operation?"

Admission for this event is free. This will be the last year for the prison tour, as the building will soon be developed for another use.

Sleigh and Carriage Rides

Saturday, Noon – 4:00 p.m.; Downtown

Experience an old-fashioned horse-drawn sleigh ride or carriage ride through charming Ebensburg. Your ride will take you over the meadow, through the woods to grandmother's house. Let our holiday sleigh take you back to yesteryear and become a part of your family tradition. You and your whole family will enjoy this nostalgic ride. Carriage & sleigh rides are only five crown (\$5.00) per person.



Betsy Pike's Students String Recital

Saturday, 12:30 p.m.; First United Church of Christ, 217 East High Street

Visit this old Historic Welsh Independent Church established in 1797 – The first church in Cambria County. Experience the past in style as you celebrate our "Dickens of a Christmas" concert featuring your favorite Christmas songs. Betsy Pike's students will perform a string recital at 12:30 p.m., followed by the Adult and Children's Choir, Bell Choir and La Bella Musica performing favorite Christmas music at 2:00 p.m. Come early - the kids won't want to miss the model train display in the church basement.

Open House at the Cambria County Historical Society

Saturday, 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 pm; Historical Society, 615 North Center Street



Join us for our annual open house in the holly-decked halls of the A.W. Buck House, home of the Cambria County Historical Society. Refreshments, tours and more. Our Christmas tree in the library is always a holiday delight.

The A.W. Buck House was built in 1890 (only 20 years after Dickens' death) in the Victorian Queen Anne Style. The house belonged to a well-known local banker, and more recently served as a convent until the Society acquired it in 1991. There is no charge for this event.



Courthouse Decorating Display

Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m. & 6 to 9 p.m.;
Cambria County Courthouse, 200 South Center Street

County employees do a terrific job of decorating the courthouse row offices for the holiday season. The courthouse is open to visitors all day Saturday and Sunday and is a stop that the entire family will enjoy. The Cambria County Courthouse was originally constructed in 1880, a decade after Dickens' death. Major additions were made to the building in the early 20th century. It stands today in its original splendor as an example of Victorian Second Empire architecture.

Christmas Recital

Saturday, 2:00 p.m.; First United Church of Christ, 217 E. High Street

The annual Christmas Recital at First United Church is a Dickens highlight each and every year. This year's performance will include the Adult and Children's Choir, Bell Choir and La Bella Musica performing favorite Christmas music.



Cresson Lake Playhouse Holiday Production of "A Christmas Cabaret"

Saturday, 2:00 p.m.; Cambria County Courthouse, 200 South Center Street

As part of Ebensburg's "Dickens of a Christmas" celebration, Cresson Lake will be "singing in the holidays" with a program of Christmas music performed by some of the best vocalists in the region. We're also including a sing-along of carols with the entire audience.



Performances are Friday, December 2 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday December 3 at 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. in the beautifully restored Courtroom #1 at the Cambria County Courthouse, 200 S. Center Street in Ebensburg. Tickets are only \$10 and will be available through www.cressonlake.com and at the door.

Christmas Activities for the Kids

Saturday, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Young Peoples Community Center (YPCC), 300 Prave Street

Come by the Young Peoples Community Center for some Merry Christmas party games. The YPCC is the place for great Christmas games, ideal for all ages. In order to cover costs of materials, all events at the YPCC have a \$2.00 fee per child ages 4 and up; children 3 and under are free

Pipe Organ Christmas Recital

Saturday, 3:30 p.m.; Ebensburg Presbyterian Church, 200 North Center Street

The Ebensburg Presbyterian Church will be hosting the first Pipe Organ Christmas. The recital will feature various arrangements of favorite Christmas hymns and hymns chosen by the audience. Free and open to the public, but donations towards the restoration fund of the historic organ are appreciated. Light refreshments will be served.

A Madrigal Christmas Story Dinner Theatre

Saturday, 6:30 p.m.; Mount Aloysius, Bertschi Center, 7373 Admiral Peary Highway, Cresson

Our Royal Lorde and Ladye hereby invite you to experience with us 46 years of friendship through laughter and song. Join your fellow revelers in the hall for a toast to the Mount Aloysius College Madrigal Feaste. From the first flurry of their majesty's performers, musicians, singers, dancers, and fools, 'til the music warmly closes the evening, we will recall the memories and the friendships this grand event has produced. Start your Christmas Season with a heart full of love and laughter.

Enjoy this interactive dinner theatre with a five-course meal announced by fanfare and accompanied by song, stories and festivities! Individual reservations are \$42 per person. Senior citizen reservations are \$35 per person (age 62 and older). Costumes encouraged ~ Tables seat six (6) ~ Not appropriate for children under 8 years of age. To purchase tickets, choose a date above or call the Office of Institutional Advancement at 814-886-6396. Seating is limited and table assignments are based upon date of paid reservation.



Bonfire & Sled Riding

Saturday, 7:00 p.m.; Cambria County Fairgrounds (west gate)

Huddle up to a "Dickens of a Bonfire" at the Cambria County Fairgrounds. Bring your lawn chairs, friends and family and something warm to drink as you celebrate the season. Weather permitting; the fairgrounds will be open for sled riding all weekend long!



Cresson Lake Playhouse Holiday Production of "A Christmas Cabaret"

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200 S. Center Street in Ebensburg. Tickets are only \$10 and will be available through www.cressonlake.com and at the door.

Winter Wonderland Light Display

Saturday, All Evening, Downtown Ebensburg

Sunday, December 4th

Ice Sculptures

Sunday, all day; Penn Eben Park

An outstanding display of carved ice sculptures will be located in Penn Eben Park. During Dickens of a Christmas, ice is just the tip of the iceberg.



Veteran's Support Breakfast

Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Ebensburg VFW Post 4963

Open to the public! Come out and enjoy breakfast while supporting your local veterans at the Ebensburg VFW Post 4963. Breakfast will include your choice of pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage and home fries. Cost is TBD.

Crystal Holiday Open House

Sunday, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Ebensburg Municipal Building Community Room, 300 West High Street

Cash and carry style open house, featuring handmade Swarovski crystal jewelry including necklaces, bracelets and earrings. All are welcome!

A Madrigal Christmas Story Dinner Theatre

Saturday, 4:30 p.m.; Mount Aloysius, Bertschi Center, 7373 Admiral Peary Highway, Cresson

Our Royal Lorde and Ladye hereby invite you to experience with us 46 years of friendship through laughter and song. Join your fellow revelers in the hall for a toast to the Mount Aloysius College Madrigal Feaste. From the first flurry of their majesty's performers, musicians, singers, dancers, and fools, 'til the music warmly closes the evening, we will recall the memories and the friendships this grand event has produced. Start your Christmas Season with a heart full of love and laughter.

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Dickens Dessert Theater – *The Christmas Guest*

Sunday, 6:30 p.m.; Grace Church Ebensburg, 223 N. West Street

We are familiar with Leo Tolstoy's famous story "The Christmas Guest." We've made it our own by setting the story to a Victorian theme. We invite you to join us for the drama called **The Christmas Guest** at Grace Church, 223 N. West St. in Ebensburg on Sunday night Dec 4th at 6:30 pm. It is sure to be a "Dickens of a Night". Guests will be served a variety of homemade desserts and drinks during intermission. The cost for the theater presentation and the dessert is \$5 per person. You can send your reservation with a check to Grace Church Dessert Theater, 223 N. West St, Ebensburg, PA 15931 or you stop at the church any Wednesday evening from 6:30 – 8 pm. Seating is limited to the first 100 people. Call 814-419-8138 or e-mail gracechurchofebensburg@yahoo.com.



“...and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!”

Charles Dickens

