

The Herald-Star

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(740) 283-4711

John Hale
Publisher

Ross Gallabrese
Executive Editor

Our opinion

Keep a wary eye for deer on roads

Drivers need to be careful this time of the year to avoid deer crashes.

Know, though, that the odds are against you if you are driving in the Tri-State Area.

The odds of a West Virginia resident having an insurance claim because of a deer or animal collision is 1 in 37. In Pennsylvania, that number is 1 in 54 and Ohio it is 1 in 95. The Mountain State leads the country for the 14th year in a row in the odds of a deer or animal crash, according to the annual report compiled by State Farm Insurance. Pennsylvania comes in fifth and Ohio is 22nd.

October, November and December are the worst months for deer crashes because of the mating season. Overall, drivers in the U.S. have a 1 in 116 chance of colliding with an animal. For the period running from July 1, 2020, through June 30, there were more than 2.1 million animal collision insurance claims — with 1.4 million of those claims involving deer.

Officials with Ohio State Highway Patrol reported that since 2016, there have been 100,672 deer-related crashes in the state. Of those crashes, 27 resulted in fatal injuries with 28 people killed. The patrol added 47 percent of those crashes happened in October, November and December.

During that period, the patrol said there were 873 deer-involved crashes in Columbiana County, 480 in Belmont County, 292 in Jefferson County, 166 in Harrison County and 121 in Carroll County.

And, the Pennsylvania State Police reported that in 2020, there were 5,581

deer-related crashes that resulted in 1,028 injuries and four fatalities across the Keystone State.

Drivers need to be alert for deer especially at dawn and after sunset, the highest risk times for deer-vehicle collisions.

Drive with extreme caution when traveling through deer-crossing zones, in areas known to have a large deer population and in areas where roads divide agricultural fields from wooded areas.

Deer at this time of the year seldom run alone. Seeing one deer most likely means there are others nearby.

If a deer crosses the road in front of your vehicle, chances are another will try to follow.

When driving at night, use high-beam headlights when there is no oncoming traffic. High beams will better illuminate the eyes of deer standing on or near the roadway.

If a deer is seen on or near the road, slow down and blow your horn with one long blast to try to scare the deer away.

Don't swerve your vehicle to avoid striking a deer.

It is actually better to hit the deer while maintaining full control of the vehicle than trying to swerve out of the way. The Ohio State Highway Patrol notes more people are injured in wrecks because the driver tried to avoid the deer and ended up hitting another vehicle or going off the road into a ditch or a tree.

If you are involved in a deer crash, pull off to the side of the road and call law enforcement. Don't approach the deer if it is still in the road.

Be alert during deer season.

Call your congressman

Ohio House

U.S. Rep. Bill Johnson, 6th District, 1710 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; telephone (202) 225-5705

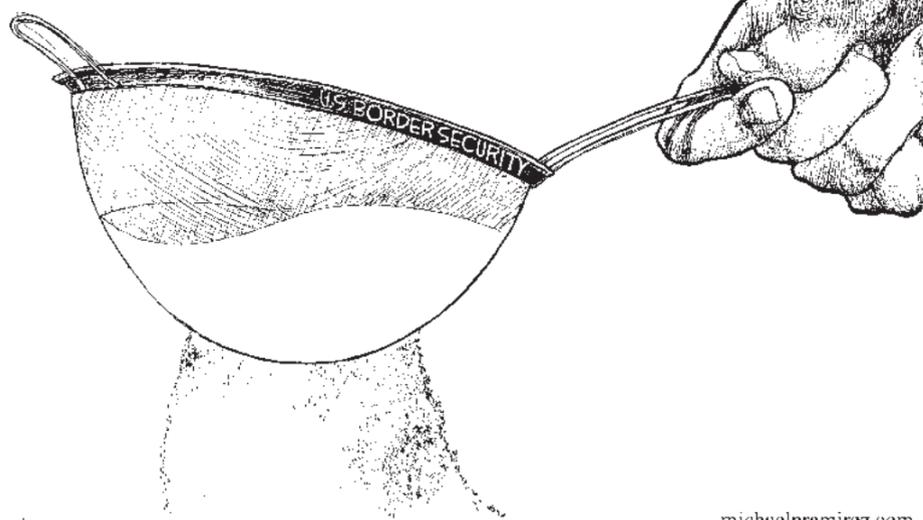
Ohio Senators

Sen. Sherrod Brown, 713 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; telephone (202) 224-2315

Sen. Rob Portman, 448 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; telephone (202) 224-3353

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Celebrating our area

William O. Packer, his wife, Marty, and their family still find the work they do on the farm and orchard they operate in Harrisville rewarding.

"We are very blessed and we do enjoy it," Marty said Tuesday. "Some of our family members — not the ones who live locally — but some members of our family ask why are we still doing this. You're supposed to be retired, they say. You could be in Florida, you could be wherever you want."

The "this" she was referring to is Packer's Orchard, which remains a thriving business that attracts customers from around the region during harvest time, and her comments came just a few moments after she, her husband and their family business had been named the conservation cooperator of the year.

"I definitely appreciate this — I did not expect it," Bill Packer explained to those who had gathered in the JeffCo Event Center off John Scott Highway for the 77th-annual meeting of the Jefferson Soil and Water District.

"We do it because we enjoy doing it," he continued. "We enjoy the people, and we enjoy helping people out, and if they ask questions, we try to give them an answer — hopefully, it's the right one."

The Packer family has operated their farm for more than a century, and Bill and Marty represent the third generation. It is, as Jodee Verhovec, the district's treasurer, described in introducing the award recipients, an example of a place that has stood the test of time, a place that brings together old and new friends.

Their farm, Verhovec added, has been a passion for generations, and their care for it has provided a benefit not just to the land, but to friends, neighbors and countless others. They always have been willing to share their knowledge of orchard management, cider production and other details of the operation, she added.

Bill Packer, in fact, served as a board supervisor for the district and as an area director for the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts from 1979 through 1984.

It was a selection that fits



ROSS GALLABRESE

perfectly with the mission of the soil and water district, which was organized in 1944 to offer boots-on-the-ground assistance to local landowners, Mark Nelson, board chair, said.

"The district began working with the agricultural community to conserve the county's soil and water resources," said Irene Moore, the district's administrator. "Local farmers took responsibility to lead the Jefferson district programs and were elected to serve. As the county's land uses changed, the district's programs had to be enhanced. We are very fortunate that our traditional partners have maintained their support for our programs."

Also recognized was Marc Maragos of the Jefferson County General Health District, who received the distinguished service award.

Maragos and the district have been working together for the past 10 years on a countywide program that helps to improve water quality and public health, said Ken Perkins, the board's vice chair.

Going by the name of the Home Sewage Treatment System Repair and Replacement Program, it gives income-eligible county residents an opportunity to receive funding assistance for the repair or replacement of existing failing home septic systems that are causing impairment to groundwater, creeks and streams in the county's watersheds. It is funded through the federal Water Pollution Control Loan Fund and administered by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The soil and water conservation district administers the program elements, Perkins

explained, and the health department handles the technical aspects.

"This is truly a partnership," Maragos said after accepting the award. "I could not do what I do without the staff — the staff is great to work with. Teamwork is what we strive for."

Verhovec, who is retiring after 15 years on the board, also was recognized, while Shawn Dougherty was officially certified as this winner of this fall's supervisor election. Amy O'Donnell was honored as the winner in the History: Then and Now and Fall in Love with Jefferson County categories in the photo contest, while her son, John, was first in the Focus on Details category. Photo winners were chosen by a vote of those who attended the dinner.

It was an evening that included a chance to browse through displays detailing a great deal of the work being done around the county and to enjoy food from several local small restaurants — including A Touch of Elegance Bakery, Def Louie's Sandwich Shop, Iggy's Pizza and Pasta, Naples Spaghetti House, Pastaio Cucina Rustica Italiana and Toni Filippi — and served by members of the Windy Ridge 4-H Club.

It was a chance to learn more about the district's work to save the habitat of the Eastern Hellbender, and to receive an invitation from Nelson to visit Branagan, the district's living example.

In short, the reception was a chance to show, once again, that there are a lot of good things happening in our area, and another reminder that it can be a very good place to live, of the need to protect our environment and of the importance of having others in our lives.

"Bill said this is exactly where I want to be. I retired so we could do this full time, and this is what we want to do," Marty Packer explained. "We don't want to be in Florida — we want to be here with all of our family and friends."

(Gallabrese, a resident of Steubenville, is executive editor of the Herald-Star and The Weirton Daily Times)

Guest column

You can help make giving an annual tradition

As a young adult, I would help my grandmother, Elizabeth Doughty, with a charitable project. She was a member of the Wheeling Hospital auxiliary, and the group would spend the entire year sewing hand-made pillows to be given out to people who were hospitalized on Christmas Eve.

When I was home from college during the holiday break or even a few years after that, I would help her and the other auxiliary members transport the pillows from the storage area of the hospital to then deliver them to patients. It wasn't a big commitment for me, but it was something that she asked me to do for several years. She always made it seem as if they wouldn't be able to do it without me.

I didn't give this request much thought at the time, but today in my role as a philanthropic adviser at the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley, I think about it often. Of course, she needed extra hands to get the pillows



SUSIE NELSON

delivered, but I think she was also trying to instill in me the importance of thinking of others who are less fortunate.

Anyone who has to spend the night in the hospital on Christmas Eve is certainly deserving of a little comfort and the knowledge that someone cares.

Another annual tradition was "adopting" a family in need during Christmas and shopping for their presents. This was something we found

to be fun and fulfilling as a family. My mother would look for families that had children close to our ages so my sister and I could help with the shopping.

We would then deliver the gifts to the local Salvation Army who took it from there. We never knew who exactly we were helping, but that didn't matter. The activity helped us get into the Christmas spirit.

Every day we are faced with opportunities to help others in need. Whether it is by volunteering for a local nonprofit organization doing good work or by making a donation, these acts are something that make you feel like you have helped to make life better for someone else.

When the time comes to consider charitable giving, I am reminded of these little things that my family taught me. I am sure you have examples of these family traditions of charitable giving that can help guide you in your philan-

thropy. Many people carry on those giving traditions with funds at the Community Foundation so that the organizations they give to during their lifetime can continue to receive support after they have passed on.

This week marks National Community Foundation Week. There are more than 750 community foundations across the country, and each one serves a defined geographic region. The Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley serves Jefferson, Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzell, Tyler and Belmont Counties in the Upper Ohio Valley region. Our work gives us the opportunity to learn what other charitable traditions exist among local families.

As we enter the season of giving, I encourage you to

think about how you can contribute, whether it's through a one-time gift to a local nonprofit organization or by establishing a fund that could also memorialize someone special who inspired your giving spirit. I can assure you, the needs in our region are great and your gift would be appreciated.

If you would be interested in discussing how your assets can continue to support the giving traditions you care about, please reach out to us at the Community Foundation. This is what we do best. You can reach me or Dick Musgrave, director of development, at (304) 242-3144, or you can visit cfov.org.

(Nelson is the executive director of the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley.)



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