

# Puppy Tails

MIALIE T. SZYMANSKI | CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

*As the moon goes to bed, the sun comes up  
And here we meet a sleepy pup,  
Who was walking through G-ville one bright sunny day,  
Then saw The Villager and decided to stay.*

The fur on the back of his neck stood on end and a shiver went down from the top of the floppy-eared puppy's spine. His nose prickled and the tip of his front paws suddenly went all tingly. Yep. It was COLD! Doodle Dog quickly stepped back, out of the way of the door as the wind blew it shut. He'd only been in the doorway for a second but Doodle Dog shook all over to get warm again. There was no doubt about it – winter was right around the corner!

There wasn't any snow on the ground yet, but Doodle Dog knew that Christmas would be here soon. He tightened his scarf even tighter around him, making sure the middle wrapped around his nose, took a deep breath to breathe in the warm fabric that smelled a bit like vanilla from the candles scenting up the office and a bit like his favorite chewy treats, and dove out the door the moment it opened again before he could change his mind. Scampering down the street as fast as he could to stay warm, he ducked into the sunken stoop areas in front of store entrances for a few seconds when the wind was too nippy to keep going. Maybe the weather would be a smidge warmer by time Doodle Dog got where he was going. As the floppy-eared puppy ducked back out onto the sidewalk, an extra brisk gust of wind caught him right between the eyes. Okay, maybe it wouldn't be any warmer, but a little dog could hope!

Soon enough, Doodle Dog made it to the park and was happy to find that the trees surrounding the grassy area cut down the wind's harshness and provided a bit of shelter for those townspeople that had gathered there. They were unpacking boxes of brightly colored balls that looked like the ones Doodle Dog liked to chase in the summer, but the floppy-eared puppy knew these weren't for playing after in the park. The shiny spheres, along with many other beautiful decorations being pulled out of the boxes, would soon be floating on the branches of a giant evergreen tree in the middle of the park, overgrown dots of brilliant hues among the greenery.

Doodle Dog didn't want to be in the way, so he stood back and watched as the volunteers dumped out long strings and longer strings of lights with tiny bulbs and not-so-tiny bulbs. The light string seemed to go on and on, like the colorful scarves out of a magician's sleeve that just keep going and going. Another box that was being emptied contained one giant ball of lights, all tangled up and intertwined. Doodle Dog was glad he didn't have to untie all that. His paws would just get stuck in the middle of that mess for sure! As Doodle Dog watched the boxes being emptied, each one revealed something different, something new and exciting from the last box. Glittering icicles, cartoonish candy canes, ornaments round and square and large and small, and ropes of pinecone garlands joined the light strings which were now untangled by careful hands. Working quickly to stay warm, the smaller volunteers ran back and forth from the piles of holiday bits and pieces and gently carried an armful at a time, stretching up as far as they could to hand the items off to the bigger volunteers perched on the higher rungs of sturdy ladders. A sparkly star, white as winter's snow, was waiting to go up one of the ladders for a finishing touch.

Every box's contents had been sorted, untangled, and spread out near the tree so that the decorating process would be quite easy, and it looked like everyone was having fun. Some townspeople were standing by with their cameras. Perhaps one of those photos would wind up on a Christmas card! And some townspeople were setting up a table with hot cocoa and cookies for everyone to enjoy when the tree trimming was done.

As Doodle Dog watched, one of the smaller, very shiny spheres somewhere in the middle of the tree fell off its branch and tumbled to the ground. No one noticed it as they were all busy with their tasks, but Doodle Dog watched as it landed on the soft dirt. Luckily it didn't break, and as it continued to roll, the floppy-eared puppy decided to follow it to see where it would wind up. There, just a few yards away from the giant tree, was a cute little tree just a bit taller than Doodle Dog. The shiny sapphire ball rolled right up to the base of this little tree and stopped where the trunk met the ground. No one was decorating this little tree and Doodle Dog didn't want it to be lonely! He looked back at everyone having fun surrounding the giant evergreen and noticed that there was a small box that hadn't been unpacked. It had somehow been missed! Sticking out of the top of the box, Doodle Dog could see more shiny spheres glistening like fresh ice on a pond, and the floppy-eared puppy nudged the box so it would tip over and spill out everything that was inside. There were no strings of lights – thank goodness! – but it was filled with plenty of beautiful decorations to make the little tree sparkle too.

Doodle Dog set to work, looping a lush garland of pinecones around the little tree and then gently placing the dots of colorful ornaments one at a time throughout its tiny branches. The last one to go up, right near the top, was the one that had rolled from the other tree. Soon Doodle Dog could smell not only vanilla and chewy treats in his nose, but cinnamon cocoa and the scent of snow wafting through the air. And then a single snowflake floated down from the sky and landed on the very tip of his tiny Christmas tree, making it sparkle just like a star.

## Editorially Speaking...

submitted by JAG Art 1 student, Nate Pinson



## What's Cookin'

SUGAR COOKIES YIELDS: 5 DOZEN COOKIES

1 cup (2 sticks) butter (no substitutions), softened  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 large egg  
1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
3 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
Frosting (optional)  
Coarse sugar crystals, silver dragees, holiday decors (optional decorations)

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. In large bowl, with mixer on low speed, beat butter and sugar until blended. Increase speed to high; beat until light and creamy. On low speed, beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in flour, baking powder and salt until blended.

2. Divide dough into 4 equal pieces; flatten each piece into a disk. Wrap each disk with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour or until dough is firm enough to roll. (Or place dough in freezer 30 minutes.)

3. On a lightly floured surface with a floured rolling pin, roll 1 piece of dough 1/8 inch thick. With floured 3-inch to 4-inch cookie cutters, cut dough into as many cookies as possible; wrap and refrigerate trimmings. Place cookies, 1 inch apart, on ungreased large cookie sheet.

4. Bake cookies 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Transfer cookies to wire rack to cool. Repeat with remaining dough and trimmings.

5. When cookies are cool, decorate with frosting if you like; use along with sugars and candies to decorate cookies. Set cookies aside to allow frosting to dry completely, about 1 hour. Store in tightly covered container (with waxed paper between layers if decorated) at room temperature up to 2 weeks, or in freezer up to 3 months.

*If you have a recipe you would like to share with our readers submit it to the Villager. Send your recipe via email to [business@weeklyvillager.com](mailto:business@weeklyvillager.com) or by mail to The Villager, 8454 Windham Street, Garrettsville, OH 44231*

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## Notes from the vineyard

AMANDA CONKOL | COLUMNIST

If you've been following my column for the past couple of years you know that I am adamant about shopping on Black Friday. It's the one day a year that I can convince my husband to go shopping with me. Part of that promise is it is the only time he needs hit the stores for Christmas gifts.

So in tradition, my husband and I ventured out on Thanksgiving to get everyone's gifts. While we waited two hours in line for the "must have" deal, we reviewed our Christmas list one more time to make sure we knew what we were getting everyone. Most of our friends are winos like us so it makes the list much easier to handle – especially with some new wine items that have hit the market.

To help you with your shopping I have split the list across two weeks! Here are some of my favorite gifts for 2012 for the wine lovers in your life.

10. Cork Cages – Need a place to save some of your favorite corks? Or just want to see how many corks you can collect in a year? There are a variety of Cork Cages that will store your corks in a cool decorative spot.

9. Wine Tasting Party set – this is one of my favorite gifts because it comes with a "classier" brown paper bag to hide the wines during the tasting, a series of wine tasting note cards and a scoring sheet to see which guest guessed the most wines correctly.

8. Wine Lover's Picnic Pack – depending how fancy you want to get, you can start with a picnic carrier that will carry two wine glasses, a bottle chiller and a corkscrew. Or if you wanted to have something not solely focused on wine, you can get a carrier that has plates, napkins and silverware.

7. Steady Sticks – if your recipient is always enjoying wine outside on the lawn or hanging out at Blossom Music Center and is annoyed by the wine spilling over onto the lawn, these sticks can be placed in the ground and can hold either wine glasses or wine bottles to prevent further spillage.

6. Wine pairing towels – for the wino that is always in the kitchen experimenting with new foods – the red and white wine pairing kitchen towels will quickly help them pick out a wine with their latest dish.

Be sure to grab the paper next week for the top five wine gifts!

No matter what type of gift you get, make sure you include a bottle of your favorite wine. And while you are out shopping for wine – make sure to treat yourself to a bottle too! Happy shopping!

*Amanda is the Co-Owner of Candlelight Winery located at 11325 Center Road, Garrettsville. For more information on other winery topics, please visit [www.candlelightwinery.com](http://www.candlelightwinery.com)*



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## BY THE NUMBERS

Invest • Insure • Retire

1. FEW FOLKS EQUAL BIG BUCKS - 5% of the US population accounts for 49.5% of all health care expenditures. 10% of the population accounts for 65.2% of all health care expenditures (source: National Institute for Health Care Management).

2. TELL CONGRESS - 47% of 1,038 Americans surveyed in July 2012 said the most important investment decision they had made during their adult life was to "live within my means" (source: PNC Financial Services Group).

3. EXPORTS - For the first 9 months of 2012, the USA exported \$220 billion of goods and services to Canada, +10% more than the \$200 billion exported to the 27 nations of the European Union (source: Department of Commerce).

4. STUBBORN - 34% of 1,009 Americans surveyed in the week after the 11/06/12 election believe that neither political party will compromise before year-end in their debate on avoiding the "fiscal cliff" (source: Gallup).

5. LOANS - 90% of US banks that tightened their underwriting