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*Have a Very
Merry Christmas and
A Happy and Prosperous
New Year
From Village Publications*



"The Christmas Tree Ship" Docks in Chicago Again This Year On December 3rd.

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter, Mackinaw, sailed into Navy Pier this year carrying 1,500 Christmas trees to continue the tradition by reenacting the voyage of a Great Lakes schooner, Rouse Simmons, the "Original Christmas Tree Ship", captained by Herman Schuenemann, which sank in 1912 in route to Chicago. Each year the arriving trees are distributed to organizations which provide them to the Families in need throughout the Chicagoland area.



Christmas Trees and Holiday Displays in Pappas' Office



Nearly 90 Christmas trees and religious displays that show Chicagoland's great ethnic diversity are on display in the office of Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas.

Pappas said she is proud that this is the 12th year of "Christmas Trees from Around the World," the display of trees decorated by members of ethnic communities to show their cultural heritage, and of other religious and cultural traditions.

The display can be seen through the Christmas and New Year's period, to January 4, 2016, in Room 112 of the Cook County Building, 118 N. Clark St., Chicago.

The three-foot-high Christmas trees stand on counters in the Treasurer's Office, with a Christian Nativity scene and other cultural displays: African American Kwanzaa Kinara, Hindu Prayer Thali, Jewish Menorah and Muslim Ramadan Mubarak.

While American trees usually carry ornaments, tinsel and lights, these Christmas trees were decorated with animals, flowers, fruit, balls, candles, plates, boats, stars, flags dolls and other items showing cultural variety.

"Ours is one of the most diverse regions in the country, and these trees and cultural displays show it in heart-warming fashion," Pappas said. The countries and traditions represent include:

African American, Albania, Assyrian, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Barbie, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Canada-Quebec, Carpatho-Rusyn, China, Colombia, Cornwall, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala.

Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India Catholic, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mexico, Native American, Nepal, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United States, Uruguay, Vietnam, Wales.

ST. THECLA CHURCH

6725 West Devon Avenue, Chicago (773) 792-3077



Confessions:

- Saturdays 4:00pm - 4:45pm
- Sunday, Dec. 20th
11:30 - 3:00pm

Spowiedz:

- Niedziela (po polsku)
11:00 do 11:25am
- W niedziale 20 grudnia,
spowiedz po polsku od
11:30 - 3:00pm

**Christmas Eve Family Mass
at 4:00pm**

**Christmas Eve Solemn Night Mass at
10:00pm**

**Christmas Morning Masses
in English: 8:00 & 10:00am
in Polish: 11:30am**

**Solemnity of Mary New Year's Eve
Mass: 5pm**

**Solemnity of Mary New Year's Day
Mass in English: 8am & 10am
in Polish: 11:30am**

WINTER

BEGINS DECEMBER 21ST

Carter-Westminster United Presbyterian Church

4950 West Pratt, Skokie, Illinois • 847-673-4441

Christmas Eve Services

Join us for a time of fellowship, eggnog, coffee and refreshments at 4 pm followed by our Christmas Eve Vesper Services at 5 pm.

All Are Welcome!



St. Paul Lutheran Church

Christmas Eve Worship Services December 24

Holy Communion at all Services
7:00PM - Candlelight Service
11:00PM Candlelight Service

Christmas Day Worship December 25

10:00AM Service - Holy Communion

5650 N. Canfield Avenue, Chicago (Norwood Park)
708/867-5044



Community First Medical Center Jan. Health Events For Area Residents

Community First Medical Center, 5645 West Addison Street, Chicago, will offer the following health events in January.

A free grief support group for adult's, ages 18 and over who are dealing with the loss of a loved one will meet Tuesdays, January 5, 12, 19 from

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Enrollment is limited. Call 773-282-7000, Extension 3200 to reserve your space.

A free Healthy Aging Program will be held Friday, January 8, from 1:00 -2:30 p.m. This program is for individuals aged 55 and older and consists of social time, health topics and guests lectures. Kristen Debits, R.N., will discuss stroke, signs, symptoms and risk factors. Registration is not required.

Are you feeling dizzy and/or off balance? Community First Medical Center will host a free lecture Thursday, January 14, from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Mark Greco, a physical therapist who specializes in treating dizziness and balance disorders will discuss how balance disorders are diagnosed and treatment options available to prevent falls and increase independence. Refreshments will be served. Advanced registration is required by calling 1-844-236-CFMC (1-844-236-2362).

Free blood pressure screenings will be offered Thursday, January 21, from 9:00-10:00 a.m., in the hospital's main lobby. A health care professional will perform screenings and answer questions about blood pressure readings. Registration is not required.

The Arthritis Support Group will meet Thursday, January 28, from 1:00- 2:30 p.m. This session is free. Registration is not required.

There will be a thyroid screening, a blood draw for TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), Thursday, January 28, from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. There is a \$10 fee. Neither fasting nor preparations are needed. Advanced registration is required by calling 1-844-236-CFMC (1-844-236-2362). Results will be mailed.

Local Volunteers Deliver the Goods Intentional Acts of Kindness Making Niles Township Stronger

The Niles Township Board recently presented awards to three local volunteers that have been quietly helping our Food Pantry by collecting left-over produce from the Sunday morning Skokie Farmers Market and transporting it back to the Township Pantry. On the surface this may not sound remarkable, but early on, Rose Hanks



Back L-R: Assessor Scott Bagnall, Trustees Donald Gelfund, Mark Collins, Tony Lundin. Front L-R: Clerk Charles Levy, Supervisor Marilyn D. Glazer, Rose Hanks, Roblyn Antenor, Dave Hoffman.

and Roblyn Antenor carried picnic coolers and pulled wheel carts to make the trip. These high school students have donated portions of their weekend hours for years, to give back to their community.

As farmers began generously donating more produce and the workload grew, Morton Grove resident Dave Hoffman was recruited by Trustee Mark Collins to drive his truck and eliminate the walking trips. Trustee Collins stated, "My vehicle wasn't enough, I was looking for volunteers and Dave stepped up. There was even a time when Dave couldn't be there, and he dropped the truck keys in my hand. This is the type of trust and commitment we have in Niles Township...it's how we get things done."

Niles Township Supervisor Marilyn D. Glazer added, "I am reenergized with hope when I see these volunteers give so selflessly to help fellow community members in need."

Since 1850, Niles Township Government has been dedicated to improving life for its residents. Niles Township is located in the northeast corner of Cook County. With a population of over 105,000, the Township includes the Villages of Skokie, Lincolnwood and Golf, and sections of Morton Grove, Niles and Glenview.



Norwood Crossing Employees and Visitors Donate Goods to Abused Women and Children

Residents of Norwood Crossing gather toys and health and beauty aids that were donated by Norwood Crossing employees and visitors and place them into a miniature sleigh for delivery to Connections for Abused Women and their Children (CAWC) in Chicago in time for Christmas festivities. From left are residents Hazel Fabian, Norwood Crossing Chaplain Dale Tippett, Jim Gianforte, and Vera Simonis. CAWC provides shelter, counseling advocacy and education to hundreds of victims of domestic violence throughout the year. The local gift drive has been an annual tradition at Norwood Crossing, 6016-20 N. Nina Ave. in Chicago, for more than 10 years.

Happy Holidays From All Of Us To All Of You!



Join Our Community!

**Call our toll free number
to find a physician or register
for an event.**

**1-844-236-CFMC
(1-844-236-2362) toll free**



Community First Medical Center

5645 W. Addison Street | Chicago IL 60634
1-773-282-7000 | www.cfmedicalcenter.com

We're Hiring! Go To Our Website www.cfmedicalcenter.com for Career Opportunities

Chicago Public Library Partners With The National Veterans Art Museum To Offer Above And Beyond, The 58,000 Dog Tag Art Installation By Veteran Artists At Harold Washington Library Center

Through an extraordinary effort to understand combat through the eyes of those who experienced it, Chicago Public Library and the National Veterans Art Museum partner to present, Above and Beyond, the 58,000 dog tag art installation created by Veteran Artists, a very important art exhibition reflecting on the meaning and consequences of the Vietnam War. Above and Beyond features over 58,000 dog tags representing U.S. military personnel who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. Above and Beyond will be featured as an extended exhibition, opening on February 20, 2016 and continuing through April 15, 2020, at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St. The Above and Beyond exhibition is made possible through private and public grant donations to the National Veterans Art Museum, and administered through the Chicago Public Library Foundation.

Do You Know About the Skokie TeenLink Program?

The Skokie TeenLink program is a database collection of Skokie teens who are available to do outside yard work, including snow shoveling, which is provided to Skokie residents upon request. Many residents who request the TeenLink list are unable to do physical work themselves, unable to afford the cost of a professional contractor on a regular basis or only need assistance during one season. The TeenLink list provides contact information for Skokie teens including the name and address of the teen, days of availability, type of work they are willing to do and their expected rate of pay. Residents can receive the list by mail or email.

This program becomes very popular and sought after during the snow season. It's always best to receive the TeenLink list early in the year and contact the teen before needing assistance.

The resident is responsible for contacting the teen and for making financial and scheduling arrangements.

Do you know a Skokie resident who may benefit from the TeenLink list? Please contact the Village Manager's Office at 847/933-8257 for more information. Skokie teens can also complete an application to be added to the TeenLink program by contacting the Village Manager's Office or visiting www.skokie.org to download an application.

Honor Flight Chicago – “Operation Locate A Hero” - 2016 Season Planning Underway

Honor Flight Chicago (HFC), part of the National Honor Flight Network, was founded to recognize our Veterans – most specifically our WWII Veterans with a day of Honor, Remembrance, and Celebration from a proud and grateful Nation. HFC is currently working on the 2016 season flight schedule - with projected monthly flights from Chicago Midway to Washington, DC to visit their WWII Memorial. The trip is provided at (no) cost to the Veteran.

There are approximately (21,000) WWII Veterans remaining in the Chicago area – which HFC is requesting assistance from the public to help locate these WWII Heroes.

For more information please contact Jac Charlier at jac.charlier@gmail.com or visit (www.honorflightchicago.org)

Honor Flight Chicago is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the mission of flying our World War II veterans to Washington DC to see the WWII Memorial built in their honor.

Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance Holiday Coat Drive And Veteran's Suit Drive For Those In Need!

We have two PDNA Events to help those in need this Holiday season. All it takes is for you to go in your closet and help. In addition to our Annual PDNA Coat Drive, we are partnering with Volunteers of America Illinois & The Women's Park Advisory Council to host a Veteran's SUIT DRIVE.

Annual Coat Drive

The annual PDNA Sponsored Coat Drive will collect any used or new coats, gloves, scarves, hats, and boots of all sizes for kids and adults.

The donated clothing will then go straight to the needy through established outreach programs at both St. James Catholic Church (at 2907 Wabash) and 2nd Presbyterian Church (at 1936 S. Michigan Avenue.)

Veterans' Coat Drive

Veteran's Suit Drive - ' Homeless Veteran'...Two words that should not be said together. Go into your closet and help veterans in need this Christmas and help our in-need veterans dress for success! This Christmas Season, the Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance is partnering with Volunteers of America Illinois to help homeless & disadvantaged Veterans seeking employment get a boost of self-confidence during this South Loop Suit Drive.

In support of Volunteers of America's Illinois various transitional housing & veteran's homeless reintegration programs, the PDNA is hosting & accepting donations of gently used or new suits, and business professional clothes of all sizes, including males and females

Volunteers of America Illinois has built two Veterans transitional and homeless housing facilities in Chicago, Hope Manor Apartments and Hope Manor II. The suits & business clothing will be going to the Veterans that the VOA serves through their True North Project.

<http://www.voaindinois.org/the-true-north-project-for-veterans>.

The True North Project reaches out to Veterans wherever they are in their journey towards healing and stability and offers a full continuum of supportive services and interventions that are individually tailored to meet the unique needs of each Veteran.

If you would be willing to volunteer to be a collection coordinator of suits for your building during the holidays, send us an email to mailto:pdna.chicago@gmail.com

Above and Beyond was commissioned by the National Veterans Art Museum and created by U.S. Military Veterans (and artists) Rick Steinbock, Ned Broderick, Joe Fornelli, and Mike Helbing. The exhibit is comprised of hand-stamped replicated dog tags of every U.S. military member killed in service to their country in Vietnam. The dog tags are suspended from the ceiling of an open 13 ft. X 34 ft. installation, making the impact of combat visible to all.

In October 1981, a group of Vietnam War veterans put together an exhibition of artwork based on their war experiences. The success of the show led to the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Art Group. Fifteen years later, with a building donated, the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum was launched. In 2003, the museum began accepting work by veterans of all conflicts and, in 2010, changes its name to the National Veterans Art Museum (NVAM). While the NVAM is one of the only museums in the world to collect and exhibit artwork exclusively created by veterans in a permanent exhibition, it also provides important programming for veterans, their families, and the community. For more information about the National Veterans Art Museum, visit www.nvam.org, or call (312) 326-0270.

Mayor Emanuel Statement On Fire Fighter Dan Capuano

Chicago has lost one of its bravest in Dan Capuano. As a 15-year veteran of the Chicago Fire Department, Dan spent his career putting the safety of others ahead of his own. He made the ultimate sacrifice so Chicago's residents could be safe. For that, there are no words that can truly express our sorrow for his loss nor our gratitude for his service and sacrifice to the City of Chicago. The thoughts and prayers of a grateful city are with Dan, his family, and his fellow firefighters at this difficult time.

Helping Hurting Hearts 3

If you are a parent like us who has a child (of any age), who is terminally ill and need support; we are here for you! Please join us on Tuesday, December 8th at 7:00pm-8:00pm at the generous Niles Library; 6960 Oakton Street; Niles IL 60714. The Library has given us the 3rd floor meeting room for the months of December, January, and February. We will meet on the 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of these months at 7:00pm-8:00pm. These meetings are free!

Please call Susan with any questions at 312-388-0543, or email me at helpinghurtinghearts3@gmail.com

Thank you!



Resurrection Entrance Exam And Shadow Days

Entrance Exam - Saturday, January 9, 2016

Resurrection College Prep High School invites eighth grade girls to take the Class of 2020 Entrance Exam on Saturday, January 9, 2016 from 7:45 am to noon. No pre-registration is necessary – students should bring #2 pencils and a \$25 testing fee. Water and snacks will be provided to testers. Calculators are not permitted. Students must test at Resurrection to be eligible for the Block Scholarship for Top Testers and other scholarships opportunities at Resurrection College Prep. Information regarding limited accommodations on the Entrance Exam may be requested by Tuesday, January 5 by contacting Registrar Mary Kaye Ulczak at mulczak@reshs.org or 773.775.6616.

Parents are welcome to attend an optional Parent Information Session at Resurrection at 8 am on the day of the Entrance Exam. Parents can learn about the curriculum and programs at Resurrection, including AP and college credit classes, technology initiatives, the advantages of single gender education and the unique Resurrection Practicum Job Shadowing Program. Information will also be presented about athletics, tuition assistance and scholarship opportunities. Shadow Days are available for girls to spend the day at Resurrection to experience the school first-hand. Select days remain for eighth grade girls to spend the day at Resurrection to shadow a current student.

7th Grade “Experience Res” Day - Friday, February 12, 2016

Seventh grade girls are invited to a special “Experience Res” Day on Friday, February 12, 2016. As seventh graders rotate through the nine academic areas at Resurrection, students meet with teachers, learn about the curriculum, the block schedule, clubs and activities and get a taste of life at Resurrection. Registration and additional information is available on the Resurrection website at www.reshs.org or by contacting Nancy O'Leary at noleary@reshs.org or 773.775.6616 Ext 129.

Resurrection College Prep High School, located at 7500 West Talcott Avenue in Chicago, is the largest all girls' Catholic, Christian college preparatory high school for young women on the north side of Chicago. Since its founding in 1922, Resurrection has graduated over 14,000 alumnae. For more information about Resurrection College Prep High School, call 773.775.6616 Ext 129 or visit www.reshs.org.

How to Book a Free AFSP IL Speaker

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Illinois Chapter speakers are available to speak for free thanks to the generosity of our walkers, donors, and volunteers. To request a free AFSP Illinois volunteer speaker at your company, organization, club, religious center, meeting or other group complete the simple form at www.AFSPILSpeaker.org. For free AFSP materials and resources thanks to the generosity of Walkers like you go to www.AFSPMaterials.org. To donate to support AFSP go to www.Chicagowalk.org.

If you are in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at:

1-800-273-TALK • 1-800-273-8255

Illinois Fire Safety Alliance Offers Fire & Burn Safety Tips For Holiday Season

As Illinois residents prepare their homes for the holiday season, the nonprofit Illinois Fire Safety Alliance (IFSA) advises them to be aware of and avoid potential fire and burn hazards. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that Christmas Day and Christmas Eve are respectively second and third only to Thanksgiving for home cooking fires. Also, candle and decoration fires peak in December.

“Unfortunately, fire and burn prevention measures are often overlooked during the holiday season as families have their minds on the celebrations themselves, but statistics prove that we should be even more attentive to fire safety during this time,” says IFSA Executive Director Philip Zaleski.

Cooking Safety

Cooking is the leading cause of home structure fires and injuries. It is also the third leading cause of home fire deaths.

- Do not cook when tired or leave cooking unattended.
- Unplug appliances in case of a fire.
- Do not use water to put out grease fires.
- Prevent scald burns to children by turning pot handles inward on the stovetop; create a three-foot, child-free zone around the stove.
- Push the test buttons on your smoke alarms to make sure they are properly working.
- Do not use turkey fryers indoors; consider purchasing a turkey cooking appliance that does not use oil, as oil splashes and spills cause serious burn injuries.

Candle, Decoration & Lighting Safety

Nearly half of all holiday decoration fires occur because decorations are placed too close to a heat source. Two of every five home decoration fires are started by candles, which most commonly occur on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

- Never leave candles unattended.
- Place candles on flat, heat-resistant surfaces at least one foot away from anything that can burn.

- Battery-operated flameless candles are better alternatives to traditional candles.
- Keep decorations clear from heat sources and be sure they are flame resistant or flame retardant.

Although Christmas tree fires are not quite as common, they tend to be very serious when they do occur. On average, one of every 40 reported home structure Christmas tree fires resulted in a death. Electrical problems accounted for one of every three home Christmas tree fires.

- Choose live trees that are fresh and green with needles that are difficult to remove.
- Keep live trees well watered and away from heat sources that can dry them out.
- Live trees should be disposed of shortly after Christmas.
- Tree lights should be turned off overnight and when residents leave home.

Electrical failures or malfunctions were factors in nearly two-thirds of fires involving holiday or decorative lights.

- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so cords are not damaged.
- Check if lights are intended for indoor or outdoor use and use appropriately.
- Outdoor lights should be plugged into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected outlet.
- When choosing lighting and electrical components, be sure they are UL listed to limit risks.
- Do not overload electrical outlets/extension cords; electrical components can overheat and ignite.
- Replace or repair damaged cords.
- Avoid placing extension cords across doorways or under carpets.
- Call a qualified electrician if outlets or switches are warm and if there are frequently blown fuses or tripping circuits.

“Illinois residents can better enjoy the holidays, knowing they have taken the proper steps to prevent fires in their homes,” adds Zaleski. “The Illinois Fire Safety Alliance wishes everyone a happy and fire-safe holiday season.”

Chicago Winter Parking Ban Now In Effect, 3AM to 7AM, Until April 1, 2016

Chicago's Winter Overnight Parking Ban for 107 miles of the city's most critical arterial streets resumed December 1 at 3AM. This seasonal ban in effect every year between December 1st and April 1st, and between the hours of 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. Yet in spite of permanent signage with posted calendar dates along the impacted streets, two related press conferences and heavy media coverage for the past two weeks warning of the resumption of the ban and the leafleting last weekend of vehicles parked along the ban route, some 215 vehicles still parked in violation of this seasonal ban and were ticketed, towed and impounded.

When motorists violate this ban and leave their cars parked on these routes they prevent the street from getting fully plowed and salted when it snows. This reduces the streets capacity during a storm to handle critical traffic. As heavy snow falls it gets pushed against these vehicles by passing plows causing a buildup that further restricts the street lanes.

The permanent signage that marks the 107 miles of the Winter Overnight Parking Ban is often posted next to signs for the 2-inch snow parking ban which can be activated along 500 miles of arterial streets. Both posted restrictions mark Chicago's "Snow Route System," which was created as a result of response to massive snow storms, including the Great Blizzard of '67, which halted traffic citywide."

Ignoring the Winter Overnight Parking Ban can result in a \$150 towing fee (minimum), a ticket and a daily storage fee that increases over time.

The other pertinent ban that can be activated during a heavy snow at any time of the year is the 2" Inch Snow Ban. This restriction is technically in effect all year round, but realistically only a factor in the winter months. The 2" Inch Snow Ban is not activated often, but motorists that violate it when it is active face ticketing and relocation to a nearby site. Motorists need to watch for and obey both restrictions.

New Table Talks Bring Diverse Evanstonians Together

The City of Evanston's Human Relations Commission is organizing a series of community dinners where residents can discuss topics of community importance, and share their experiences and ideas. These "Table Talk" dinners will be held in the homes of Evanston residents and the conversation will be facilitated by a City staff member.

The goal of this free program is to build relationships among diverse groups of residents who have not previously met.

The first Table Talk will take place on Monday, January 18, 2016, which is the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Residents are invited to sign up to host or attend a dinner by contacting Oscar Murillo at <mailto:omurillo@cityofevanston.org?subject=Table%20Talks> or 847-448-8103.

Payment Holiday For Skokie Swift Commuters Concludes December 31

Effective January 1, 2016, commuters who park at the Dempster-Skokie CTA Station are reminded to pay the daily parking fee. The daily rates remain the same and payment terminals located inside the train station accept coins, paper bills and credit/debit card payments.

Commuters are reminded to remember the space number where they park, enter that space number into one of the three payment terminals located in the station, insert payment and take a receipt. If a receipt is not printed, the transaction did not process. Payment receipts should be kept as proof of payment, but will not need to be displayed in vehicles.

In addition, an application from Passport Parking is available for making mobile payments by phone or tablet. Passport Parking charges a 37-cent fee per transaction for mobile payments.

Additional details and payment instructions are available on the Village's website, www.skokie.org. For more information, contact Assistant to the Village Manager Peter Vadopalas at 847/933-8258.

Phone For Legal Advice At No Cost

The Chicago Bar Association (CBA) Lawyer Referral Service hosts Call-A-Lawyer on the third Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Volunteer attorneys will give free legal advice over the phone to Chicagoland residents who call (312) 554-2001.

Attorneys will be available to answer general questions on a variety of legal issues including (but not limited to) bankruptcy, domestic relations, immigration, personal injury and Social Security. Callers can explain their situations to attorneys who will suggest self-help strategies to resolve their legal issues. If callers need further legal services, they will be advised to see their attorney or to contact the CBA Lawyer Referral Service.

The CBA Lawyer Referral Service is one of few bar associations in the country to meet the American Bar Association Standards for lawyer referral and approved to use its logo and slogan, "The Right Call for the Right Lawyer™." For referral to an experienced attorney, the public can contact the CBA Lawyer Referral Service at 312-554-2001 during business hours or through the Web site at www.chicagobar.org.

Edison Park Post 541 Of The American Legion



Edison Park Post 541 of the American Legion will be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at the Edison Park Field House, 6755 N. Northwest Hwy, Chicago, IL 60631. The meeting will start at 7:30 P.M. and is open to all Veterans who served in any branch of the United States military services during the armed conflicts listed below.

We are also forming a Sons of the American Legion Squadron. The requirement for becoming a member is:

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion and such males descendants of veterans who died in service during WWI - WWII - Korean War - the Vietnam War - Lebanon Grenada - Panama and the Persian Gulf War, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article 1 of the National Constitution of the The American Legion or who died subsequent to their Honorable Discharge from such Service shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of the American Legion.

Visit our website at <http://amerlegion541.wix.com/americanlegion541>

OUR VILLAGE & STREET LEVEL

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Holiday Traditions

Christmas Around the World

(excerpts taken from the World Book, 1999 Edition)

Christmas is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. No one knows the exact date of Christ's birth, but most Christians observe Christmas on December 25. On this day, many go to church, where they take part in special religious services. During the Christmas season, they also exchange gifts and decorate their homes with holly, mistletoe, and Christmas trees. The word Christmas comes from Cristes mæsse, an early English phrase that means Mass of Christ.

The word Xmas is sometimes used instead of Christmas. This tradition began in the early Christian church. In Greek, X is the first letter of Christ's name. It was frequently used as a holy symbol.

Many people attend church services on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning. Churches are decorated with evergreen branches, red poinsettias, and scenes of the Nativity. Churchgoers listen to readings from the Bible and join in singing Christmas carols.

Christmas is the happiest and busiest time of the year for millions of Christians throughout the world. People of different countries celebrate the holiday in various ways, depending on national and local customs.

In the United States and Canada, people decorate their homes with Christmas trees, wreaths, and ornaments. City streets sparkle with colored lights, and the sound of bells and Christmas carols fills the air.

A traditional Christmas dinner includes stuffed turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, and a variety of other dishes. Some families have ham or roast goose instead of turkey. Favorite desserts include mince pie or pumpkin pie, plum pudding, and fruitcake. Eggnog is a popular Christmas beverage in many homes.

In some parts of the United States and Canada, various ethnic groups observe Christmas customs of their ancestors. For example, Spanish traditions are popular in the Southwestern United States. Many families in the province of Quebec follow French customs. Some black Americans combine Christmas with Kwanzaa, an Afro-American holiday. Kwanzaa lasts seven days, from December 26 through January 1. Each day, families light a candle symbolizing one of seven principles, including creativity, faith, and unity.

The cultural celebrations of Christmas are as varied as the groups themselves. The following is a sampling of those traditions.

In the British Isles. On Christmas Eve, children hang up stockings for Father Christmas, the British version of Santa Claus, to fill with presents. On the afternoon of Christmas Day, most British families watch their monarch give a special Christmas message on television. In England, dinner on Christmas Day features roast turkey and dessert of mince pie and plum pudding.

Visitors sing carols in return for a drink from the wassail bowl. The bowl contains hot punch made from ale, apples, eggs, sugar, and spices. The word wassail comes from Was Haile, an old Saxon greeting that means "Be Healthy."

In Ireland, people put a lighted candle in their window on Christmas Eve as a sign of welcome to Mary and Joseph.

Most Scottish families decorate a Christmas tree and sing carols, but most hold their main celebrations on New Year's Day.

In France, children put their shoes in front of the fireplace so Pere Noel (Father Christmas) can fill them with gifts. Many families attend midnight Mass and then have a festive supper called Le reveillon. Large numbers of French families also decorate their homes with small Nativity scenes. In these scenes, clay figures called santons (little saints) portray the story of Jesus' birth.

In Germany, Saint Nicholas visits children's homes on St. Nicholas Eve, December 5, and delivers candy and other sweets to be opened on December 6, St. Nicholas Day. Most German families have a Christmas tree that they decorate with lights, tinsel, and ornaments. Spicy cakes called lebkuchen are made in various shapes and used as decorations.

The "Christmas Tree" dates back to medieval times in Germany and was introduced in America by the German immigrants who settled here. Most countries now have some form of the tree as wreaths or boughs, decorated with red and green. Evergreens symbolize the strength of life over the forces of winter. Each culture has its own decorating techniques, but a star at the top of the tree is a constant, representing the Star of Bethlehem which led the magi to the Christ Child.

The *Christkindl* (Christ Child) Market first originated in Nuremberg, Germany, and



has become a popular tradition in many parts of the world during the weeks before Christmas. People of all nationalities buy their special holiday gifts, decorations and foods. The Market is held outdoors and is a festive gathering place for sharing good times, music and togetherness.

In Spain, people dance and sing in the streets after midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Most Spanish homes and churches display a miniature Nativity scene called a Nacimiento. During the evening of January 5, children put their shoes on a balcony or near a window. The next day is Epiphany, the last day of the Christmas season. It celebrates the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. According to legend, the Wise Men arrive during the night before Epiphany and fill the children's shoes with small gifts.

In the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, according to legend, Saint Nicholas gives presents to children on St. Nicholas Eve, December 5, which they open on December 6, St. Nicholas Day. Wearing a red robe, he arrives on a boat from Spain and rides down the streets on a white horse. His servant, Swarte Piet (Black Pete), accompanies him. Saint Nicholas goes down the chimney of each house and leaves gifts in shoes that the children have put by the fireplace.

In Italy, most homes and churches have a presepio (Nativity scene). On Christmas Eve, the family prays while the mother places a figure of the Bambino (Christ child) in the manger. Many Italians serve eels and other fish dishes for dinner on Christmas Eve. They also bake a Christmas bread called Panettone, which contains raisins and candied fruit. Italian children receive gifts from La Befana, a kindly old witch, on the eve of Epiphany.

In Poland, people attend Pasterka (Shepherd's Mass) at midnight on Christmas Eve. Many Polish families follow the Christmas tradition of breaking an oplatek, a thin wafer made of wheat flour and water. Nativity scenes are stamped on the oplatek. The head of the family holds the wafer, and each person breaks off a small piece and eats it. The Christmas Eve meal features fish, sauerkraut, potato pancakes, and beet soup.

In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, Christmas dinner includes rice pudding, called julgrot, which has an almond in it. According to tradition, whoever gets the almond will have good luck throughout the new year.

In some countries, especially Britain, France and the Scandinavian nations, many families burned a Yule log at Christmastime. The log was a large piece of a tree trunk, and people kept an unburned part of it to light the next year's log. Early Europeans believed the unburned wood had magic powers. It was thought that bad luck would follow if the Yule log fire went out.

In Latin America, the nine days before Christmas have special importance in Mexico. These days are called posadas, which means inns or lodgings. On each day, Mexicans reenact Mary and Joseph's search for lodgings on the first Christmas Eve. After each posada ceremony, Mexicans feast and celebrate. Children enjoy trying to break the piñata, a brightly decorated paper or clay figure containing candy and small gifts.

In Asia there are relatively small numbers of Christians, and so Christmas is not widely celebrated there, but in the Philippines people attend Misas de Gallo (Masses of the Cock), which are celebrated early each morning the nine days before Christmas. On Christmas Eve, Filipinos parade through the streets carrying colorful star-shaped lanterns called parols. These lanterns are also displayed in the windows of most homes.

On Christmas Eve, Christians from throughout the world gather for midnight Mass in Bethlehem, the town near Jerusalem where Jesus was born. They kneel to kiss the silver star that is set in the ground at the spot where Jesus' birth is believed to have taken place.

The traditional colors of Christmas are green and red. Green represents the continuance of life through the winter and the Christian belief in eternal life through Christ. Red symbolizes the blood that Jesus shed at His Crucifixion. Christmas decorations that feature these colors include the Christmas tree, the Christmas wreath, holly, and mistletoe.

The first Christmas card, was created in 1843 by John Calcott Horsley, an English illustrator. It featured a drawing of a family enjoying Christmas together. Smaller drawings on the card showed people helping the needy. About 1,000 copies of Horsley's card were sold. Today, of course, millions of people send greetings to family and friends by way of Christmas and Seasons Greetings cards sent through the mail.

No matter how one celebrates Christmas, it is a time of year when we feel charity toward our fellow man. The spirit of the season has always evoked joy, peace and good will.



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Traditional Greek Christmas



On Christmas Eve, the children go from house to house to sing Christmas carols. They knock on the door and when the host/hostess opens, they ask: "May we sing?" They have to ask because if there is a recent death in the family, they are not allowed to sing. When the host/hostess answer "go ahead, sing" they begin. In Greece, the Christmas liturgy is done on Christmas Eve around midnight. When the liturgy is over and the parishioners return home, many families eat chicken soup with egg and lemon (avgolemono), Christmas bread, and pastries, such as kourapiedes and melomakarona. The traditional Christmas dinner is stuffed turkey. In Greece they do not exchange gifts Christmas day but New Year's Day. Christmas cards are not exchanged between members of the same family living together nor among friends who live near enough to be wished in person; instead cards are only sent to those friends and relatives who live far away. As elsewhere, the Christmas tree is a recent innovation and formerly (and indeed still on some islands today) a Christmas ship was decorated and had the place of the tree. Traditional Greek Christmas.

The Christbread is blended with special attention and patience, by the housewives, during Christmas Eve. This bread is blessed because it will bring strength to the family.

On Christmas day, during lunch, the father makes the sign of the cross over the Christ bread and after cutting it, gives a piece of cake to each person. This procedure is a revival of the Eucharist. The custom of the Christ bread is kept alive in few regions of Greece, especially in Crete. This custom has deep roots, and is considered to be an exclusive Christian custom.

Greeks place much emphasis on the first day of the New Year; They believe that if the first person they see on New Year's Day is a good person, they will have a good year. In contrast, if the first person they see is not a good person, then the year will not be as good.

In addition, Greeks also pay much attention to who will come to their house that day; therefore, many times they invite people they care for ahead of time to come, so that they can be the first people to come to the house. Also, they pay attention to how their New Year's Day weather is; if



it is good weather, and then the following day will be good. In contrast, if it is cloudy on New Year's Day, then it will be a heavy winter. Many games that test one's luck are played on this day as well; whoever wins is going to be the luckiest during the year.

The cake that is eaten on New Year's Day is called the "Vasilopita," and contains a hidden coin or trinket which gives good luck to the receiver. It is made of a variety of doughs, depending on regional and family tradition, including tsoureki. On New Year's Day families cut the Vasilopita to bless the house and bring good luck for the new year. A coin is wrapped and hidden in the bread by slipping it into the dough be-

fore baking. A piece of cake is sliced for each member of the family and any visitors present at the time, in order of age. Slices are also cut for various other people or groups, depending on local and family tradition.

None of the annual customs is continued so infrangibly by the Greeks (all over the world), and has not so deep roots through the years, as the New Year's cake. Because always, the hidden coin represents the fluke of luck, which shows the fortunate of the New Year.

Truly, Greeks, as members of a family, a fellowship or a society or organized people, do not celebrate the coming of the New Year without the cutting of the Vasilopita. In the collective conscience of our nation, the vasilopita, sweet or salty, with sugar or meat, refers to a new year's symbol with great attributes, not only revelational, but also determinative for the luck of the people, the animals and the possessions of the Greek family.

Best wishes, and Happy Holidays.
("Kales Giortes")

By Eleni Andritsakis



A German Christmas



I was born in Germany, 1935. During the second world war, my father was drafted as a soldier, and my mother raised us children as best she could. But all our Christmases were wonderful. On Christmas Eve, we had a nice dinner of potato salad and Frikadellen. Frikadellen are hamburgers without the buns.

We drank punch without alcohol. After dinner, we all went to church later in the evening. I always loved to walk to church and sing the old German Christmas songs. I still love to sing them today. Later, as we children were sleeping, my mother decorated the small Christmas tree that we had brought

home a few days before from the nearby forest. On Christmas morning, my mother lit the candles with a match, and called us to come into the kitchen. Oh we were so happy to see the candles burning. For my sister, my brother and me, there was a decorated plate full of candies, chocolate, marzipan, cookies and fruits. We children painted pictures for our mother and made ornaments for her. My mother baked all cookies by herself, and we were invited to help her. I always volunteered to lick the baking utensils clean. We did pray a lot so that my father would come home soon and join us for Christmas. My mother was a tailor, and she made clothing every year for us for Christmas. I remember getting a pair of roller skates one year. As I tried them on, I ran into the Christmas tree and it tipped over because I could not stop early enough. That was after the candles were extinguished, but several glass ornaments got broken. One year I got a box full of metal pieces. I could build wagons, houses and many other things with tiny screws. One year my brother and I received a train set, which we had to share. The train ran on 220 volt, and often we received electrical

shocks by touching the tracks. We kept that train set for many years. We did not have a TV then, so my family did a lot of singing at Christmas time. My mother played a Mondolin and she accompanied us. We told many stories too, and read books. It was especially nice when we put more firewood in our stove and we could see the top glowing red hot. We could put apples on top of the stove and bake them. They tasted very good. When the kitchen light was turned off, it was always a cozy atmosphere on winter nights. When it was time to go to bed, my mother always had a brick heated up inside the stove. Each of us got a hot brick wrapped in a towel and we used it to warm our feet under the thick cold feather comforter.

My Christmases now are shared with my wife, children and grandchildren in the suburbs of Chicago, but the memories of those far away days are still as vivid as my Mother's smile and the happiness she brought to us through her caring and efforts in the not-so-daisy times.

From my family to yours, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
Gerhard Pils

Letters to Santa:
Res students helped raise over \$11,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation by participating in the Macy's annual "Letters to Santa" campaign in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Macy's donates \$1 to the Make A Wish Foundation for each handwritten "letter to Santa" they receive. For the past several years Resurrection students have participated in this effort.




Breakfast with Santa:
The Resurrection Alumnae Association hosted its annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 12th. The morning featured breakfast, photos with Santa, crafts, face-painting and entertainment by the Resurrection music students and a drama presentation by the Resurrection drama department.



History of the Christkind

The Christkind, a fairy-like being, dressed in gold and white robes with a crown upon her golden locks, is the namesake of the Christkindlmarket Chicago. Christkind folklore dates back to the 1500s and stems from traditional customs: parades during the holiday season were guided by one "grand" angel, the Christkind. Since then, and still today, she is the bearer of gifts to most children in German speaking countries, much like Santa Claus is in the United States. Traditionally, gifts are exchanged December 24th and delivered by the Christkind, who leaves gifts under the Christmas tree and disappears before the children can catch a glimpse of her.

For further information on the Christkindlmarket and the Christkind herself, please visit the official Christkindlmarket website at www.christkindlmarket.com or call us at (312) 494-2175.



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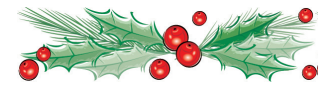
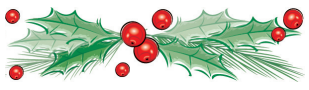
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“My Favorite Christmas Story”

from Rev. Francis S. Rog, C.R.

Let me share with you, my greatest Christmas story. As often as I reflect on it... I have reason to ask myself... who, what and where? Wally was nine years old and in the second grade, though he should have been in the fourth. He was big and clumsy, slow in movement and mind, but well liked by the other children in class, all of whom were smaller than he. At times the boys did have trouble hiding their irritation when the uncoordinated Wally would ask to play ball with them. He would stand by – not sulking, but HOPING – always a helpful boy, willing and smiling, the natural protector of any child he felt was being mistreated.

As Christmas time approached, plans were made for the annual school pageant. Children were being assigned their parts – angels, shepherds, wisemen, Mary, Joseph. Wally stood by EXPECTANTLY –

then suddenly his joy knew no bounds, for he heard the teacher say, “Wally, I want you to be the innkeeper.” (Not many lines to learn, she reasons – and his size would make his refusal of lodging to Joseph more forceful). Little did the teacher dream the lesson that such a tender hearted boy would teach to all who would attend that program!

Then came rehearsals – the cloaks and manger, beards, crowns, halos and a stage full of squeaky voices. Most caught up in the magic of the night was Wally. He would stand in the wings, watch the performance with fascination; his teacher had to make sure he did not wander on-stage before this cue.

Finally came the long awaited night, and Wally stood holding a lantern by the door of the inn, watching as the children who portrayed Mary and Joseph came near him. “What do you want?” Wally

asked with a brusque gesture. “We seek lodging.” “Seek it elsewhere – the inn is filled.”

“Sir, we have asked everywhere in vain. We have traveled far and are very weary.” “There is no room in this inn for you.” Wally looked properly stern.

“Please, innkeeper, this is my wife. She is heavy with child and needs a place to rest. Surely you must have some small corner for her. She’s so tired.”

Now, for the first time, the innkeeper relaxed his stiff stance and looked down at Mary. With that there was a LONG PAUSE – the audience became a bit tense: “No, begone!” the prompter whispered in the wings. “No, begone!” Wally repeated automatically.

Joseph sadly placed his arms around Mary, and Mary laid her head upon her husband’s shoulder, and the two of them started to move away. The innkeeper,

however, did not return inside his inn. Wally stood there in the doorway, watching the forlorn couple. His mouth was open, his brow creased with concern, his eyes filling unmistakably with tears.

And suddenly this Christmas pageant became different from all others.

“Don’t go, Joseph.” Wally called out. “Bring Mary back.” And Wally’s face grew into a bright smile. “YOU CAN HAVE MY ROOM!”

A burst of laughter – then silence – then tears flowed freely as the message came through to the listeners. Wally, the boy considered “slow,” had made room for Jesus. He could not turn Mary and Joseph away – God’s only begotten Son would be welcomed by him! His tender heart had made room for the Savior.

Have you made room for Him, Who loved you so much to even die on the cross?

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Submitted by Dennis Bratcher

The Twelve Days of Christmas is probably the most misunderstood part of the church year among Christians who are not part of liturgical church traditions. Contrary to much popular belief, these are not the twelve days before Christmas, but in most of the Western Church are the twelve days from Christmas until the beginning of Epiphany (January 6th; the 12 days count from December 25th until January 5th). In some traditions, the first day of Christmas begins on the evening of December 25th with the following day considered the First Day of Christmas (December 26th). In these traditions, the twelve days begin December 26 and include Epiphany on January 6.

The origin and counting of the Twelve Days is complicated, and is related to differences in calendars, church traditions, and ways to observe this holy day in various cultures. In the Western church, Epiphany is usually celebrated as the time the Wise Men or Magi arrived to present gifts to the young Jesus (Matt. 2:1-12). Traditionally there were three Magi, probably from the fact of three gifts, even though the biblical narrative never says how many Magi came. In some cultures, especially Hispanic and Latin American culture, January 6th is observed as Three Kings Day, or simply the Day of the Kings (Span: la Fiesta de Reyes, el Dia de los Tres Reyes, or el Dia de los Reyes Magos; Dutch: Driekoningendag). Even though December 25th is celebrated as Christmas in these cultures, January 6th is often the day for giving gifts. In some places it is traditional to give Christmas gifts for each of the Twelve Days of Christmas. Since Eastern Orthodox traditions use a different religious calendar, they celebrate Christmas on January 7th and observe Epiphany or Theophany on January 19th.

By the 16th century, some European and Scandinavian cultures had combined the Twelve Days of Christmas with (sometimes pagan) festivals celebrating the changing of the year. These were usually associated with driving away evil spirits for the start of the new year. The Twelfth Night is January 5th, the last day of the Christmas Season before Epiphany (January 6th). In some church traditions, January 5th is considered the eleventh Day of Christmas, while the evening of January 5th is still counted as the Twelfth Night, the beginning of the Twelfth day of Christmas the following day. Twelfth Night often included feasting along with the removal of Christmas decorations. Many European celebrations of Twelfth Night included a King’s Cake, remembering the visit of the Three Magi, and ale or wine (a King’s Cake is part of the observance of Mardi Gras in French Catholic culture of the Southern USA). In some cultures, the King’s Cake was part of the celebration of the day of Epiphany.

The popular song “The Twelve Days of Christmas” is usually seen as simply a nonsense song for children with secular origins. However, some have suggested that it is a song of Christian instruction, perhaps dating to the 16th century religious wars in England, with hidden references to the basic teachings of the Christian Faith. They contend that it was a mnemonic device to teach the catechism to youngsters. The “true love” mentioned in the song is not an earthly suitor, but refers to God Himself. The “me” who receives the presents refers to every baptized person who is part of the Christian Faith. Each of the “days” represents some aspect of the Christian Faith that was important for children to learn.

However, many have questioned the historical accuracy of this origin of the song The Twelve Days of Christmas. While some have trying to debunk this as an “urban myth” out of personal agendas, others have tried to deal with this account of the song’s origin in the name of historical accuracy (see Snopes on The 12 Days of Christmas). There is little “hard” evidence available either way. Some church historians affirm this account as basically accurate, while others point out apparent historical and logical discrepancies.

However, we need to acknowledge that the “evidence” on both sides is mostly in logical deduction and probabilities. Lack of positive evidence does not automatically provide negative evidence. One internet site devoted to debunking hoaxes

and legends says that, “there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the song ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’ was created or used as a secret means of preserving tenets of the Catholic faith, or that this claim is anything but a fanciful modern day speculation. . . .” What is omitted is that there is no “substantive evidence” that will disprove it either.

It is certainly possible, in fact probable, that this view of the song is legendary or anecdotal. Without corroboration and in the absence of “substantive evidence,” we probably should not take rigid positions on either side and turn the song into a crusade for personal opinions. That would do more to violate the spirit of Christmas than the song is worth. So, for the sake of historical accuracy, we need to acknowledge the likelihood that the song had secular origins.

However, on another level, this should not prevent us from using the song in celebration of Christmas. Many of the symbols of Christianity were not originally religious, including even the present date of Christmas, but were appropriated from contemporary culture by the Christian Faith as vehicles of worship and proclamation. Perhaps, when all is said and done, historical accuracy is not really the point. Perhaps more important is that Christians can celebrate their rich heritage, and God’s grace, through one more avenue this Christmas. Now, when they hear what they once thought was only a secular “nonsense song,” they will be reminded in one more way of the grace of God working in transforming ways in their lives and in our world. After all, is that not the meaning of Christmas anyway?

- On the 1st day of Christmas my true love gave to me... A Partridge in a Pear Tree*
- On the 2nd day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Two Turtle Doves*
- On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Three French Hens*
- On the 4th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Four Calling Birds*
- On the 5th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Five Gold Rings*
- On the 6th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Six Geese A-laying*
- On the 7th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Seven Swans A-swimming*
- On the 8th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Eight Maids A-milking*
- On the 9th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Nine Ladies Dancing*
- On the 10th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Ten Lords A-leaping*
- On the 11th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Eleven Pipers Piping*
- On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me... Twelve Drummers Drumming*



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Music For Christmas

Mildred L. Jarrell

Let us have music for Christmas ... Sing out the carols of old, Rejoice in the birth of the Christ Child, The most wonderful story e'er told.

Sing with a heart filled with gladness And love for the Heavenly King ... Lift up your voice with song and praise Until the rafters ring.

Let us have music for Christmas In the glow of candlelight, Mingled with snow and mistletoe And shepherds that watch by night.

Sing of the star and wise men, too, And angels watching above ... Bring once again to the homes of men The give of wondrous love.

Let us have music for Christmas ... Sound the trumpet of joy and rebirth; Let each of us try, with a song in our hearts, To bring peace to men on earth.

Both Songs Submitted by Maria Bappert

The Music of Christmas

Author unknown

The music of Christmas is not just confined To piano or trumpets or drums ... It's heard in the laughter and pattering footsteps of children when Santa Claus comes. It echoes in all of the "oohs" and the "aaahs" At the sight of a brightly lit tree ... The clinking of glasses and talk 'round the Table combine in a sweet symphony ... The music of Christmas resounds in the joy All loving hearts willingly share, And we are the instruments playing together To spread Christmas cheer everywhere

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A HEALTHY NEW YEAR FROM THE EVANSTON/SKOKIE VALLEY METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES- GIVING HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY TO FAMILIES

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The Kiwanis of Ravenswood Wishes Everyone A Happy Holiday Season

Wishing you the gift of faith, The blessing of hope and the Peace of God's love at Christmas and always. HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

The Kiwanis Club of Ravenswood meets every 2nd & 4th Thursday (with some exceptions) at the Hilltop Restaurant, NW corner of California & Foster Avenues, Chicago. Plenty of FREE PARKING is available in the lot west of the restaurant, on the north side. To confirm the meeting dates please call Maria Bappert at 773-728-8127. Thank you.



The ManKind Project December 7, 2014 Edited. Make sure your holiday to-do list puts the important things first! :) Submitted by Laurie A. Holiday to do list. 1. Buy BE Presents 2. Wrap Gifts Someone in a Hug 3. Send Gifts Peace 4. Donate Shop for Food 5. Make Cookies LOVE 6. BE the lights

SKOKIE THEATRE NOTHING COMPARES TO THE THRILL OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7924 Lincoln Ave, Downtown Skokie SkokieTheatre.org 847-677-7761

Skokie Idol Begins January 16

By Wayne Mell, Artistic Director

It all starts on January 16. MadKap Productions is thrilled to begin the SKOKIE IDOL 2016 competition. With all of the considerable local talent we're surrounded by, we're sure it's going to be an exciting contest.

Contestants will compete in one of three divisions based on age: Grades 4 - 8, High School Students, and Adults. People with bring in their very best songs and can be accompanied by a karaoke tracks on a CD, the piano at the theatre, another musical instrument they bring in, or they may even sing a Capella.

On January 16, the top eleven contestants in each division will be selected to return for weekly sing-offs.

Weekly sing-offs will be held from 1:00 to 5:00 on Saturday afternoons in February and March and will be open to the public. Each week, the audience will help the judges select the contestants in each category that move on to the next week. The last three contestants in each division will move on to the finals.

The final round for the Junior Division will be held on Friday, April 8, 2016 at 7:30 pm. The final round for the High School and Adult divisions will be held on Saturday, April 16 at 7:30 pm. The finals will consist of 3 songs to be sung by each contestant with a special guest accompanist. The winner of the finals from each category will win the GRAND PRIZE, and the prizes are outstanding.

First up, each of the grand prize winners will team up for an All-star solo concert at Wednesdays On The Green on July 6, 2016 in Downtown Skokie. They will also receive a three song studio recording session from Top Note Music Academy, and a \$100 cash prize provided by MadKap Productions.

The contest will be held at the Skokie Theatre, 7924 Lincoln Ave in Downtown Skokie. There is a \$35 registration fee, with a \$10 discount for residents of Skokie, Morton Grove, Niles and Lincolnwood.

Judges include MadKap Executive Director Wendy Kaplan, Myrna Petlicki from the Skokie Review, Carla Gordon from the Chicago Cabaret Professionals, and local musicians and performers including Charlene Brooks and Daryl Nitz.

For complete contest rules and registration, please visit SkokieTheatre.org or call the Skokie Idol Hotline at 847-677-7761 ext. 4.



High School student Hannah Williams performing at Skokie Idol 2015.

"A Theater Review"

"White Christmas"

Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane Road, Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Reviewed by Richard A. Eisenhardt

If you're looking for a holiday treat then this will be your show. William Osetek has an incredible cast of twenty-five performers. This show offers music and lyrics by Irving Berlin and has a book by David Ives and Paul Blake. The show runs two and a half hours under musical director Roberta Duchak and the choreography is by the toe-tapping Matt Crowley.

The show offers many young talented performers along with veterans like Dale Benson, Alene Robertson, Don Forston, Sean Allan Krill, and Matt Rafferty. The show features sixteen songs.

You'll come out singing such songs as "Happy Holidays;" of course the title tune "White Christmas," "Blue Skies," "How Deep is the Ocean," "I Love a Piano," and "Count Your Blessings," among many others.

Sean Allan Krill is the best Bob Wallace, a role Bing Crosby did first with Fred Astaire and then with Danny Kaye. The role of Phil Davis is in the hands of the dynamic dancer Matt Rafferty whose tap number is incredible.

Don Forston is General Henry Waverly and Dale Benson will have you rolling in the aisles as Ezekiel Foster. Alene Robertson is funny and belts out her songs as Martha Watson. The roles of the Haynes sisters in the last movie were played by Rosemary Clooney and Vera Ellen. For this production they are played by Gina Milo and Erica Stephan.

The story is about two army buddies who become Broadway stars. We find that Phil takes Bob to a night club act that features Betty and Judy. Phil and Judy hit it off while Bob and Betty at first have problems. They all end up in Vermont and Bob and Phil decide to help their old Commanding General who is having problems to save his struggling winter resort. They decide to stage a musical revue.

Do they end up saving the lodge? Do the four become romantic with each other? See it to get your answers.

The show is a great replacement for Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Come in good voice as there is a sing-a-long in the end.

"White Christmas" runs through January 3rd. For show days, show times and reservations call 630-530-0111. You can also go online at www.drurylane.com for information and tickets. Tickets are \$50 - \$65. Valet and free parking are available and the theatre is wheelchair accessible.

--Four Stars--

New Year Brings Resolutions...and More



Chester M. Przybylo

The coming of the New Year presents an opportunity to reflect on the past year, and reorganize our priorities and goals. One important resolution is protecting our assets and our families through estate planning. The process to achieve this goal is discussed in this article.

At the start of a New Year we are each given an opportunity to reflect on the past year's ups and downs and gain a new perspective for the coming year. We look back at the good times: the holidays, vacations, birthday parties, and births of new children and grandchildren. We look back at the challenging times: the economic stresses, illnesses, and other hardships. As we reflect, we have an opportunity to reorganize our priorities and goals.

As we reassess our lives, we plan for the future, beginning with a fresh set of resolutions. We may plan to get fit and lose a few pounds. One way we can gain control (especially in these uncertain economic times) is to make sure our estate planning is in order. We do these things not just for ourselves, but for those we love and who are ultimately impacted the most by our planning.

Estate planning is one of the easier things to check off your list of resolutions. First, find a qualified estate planning attorney to consult.

The consultation is painless. You will discuss your family and your goals. Then the attorney will suggest a course of action which will likely include these basic documents:

- Property Power of Attorney. This allows someone appointed by you, your "agent," to make decisions for you during your incapacity.
- Health Care Power of Attorney. Allows your agent to make health care decisions for you when you are unable to make them for yourself.
- HIPAA Power. Allows your agent to gain access to health information. Without this, a hospital could refuse to release any information -- even your presence in the hospital.
- Living Trust. This is the engine of your estate plan. You transfer the bulk of your assets to this Trust. It allows for management during your life, including when you are incapacitated. It provides for distribution in the desired way after you are gone. It allows you to avoid the probate process.
- Last Will. This takes any assets accidentally omitted from your Trust and moves them to the Trust after your passing.

Getting your estate planning in order is an easy task. Starting with this simple task will give you the courage and motivation to move on to other resolutions - like losing those extra pounds that crept on over the holidays.

Happy Holidays from Chester M. Przybylo and his Staff.

Chester M. Przybylo is a founding member of the prestigious American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys, a nationally acclaimed organization whose members are dedicated to the highest standards of estate planning and elder law. His Chicago-based firm, Chester M. Przybylo and Associates, has served its clients for over 45 years. Visit the firm website for helpful information on estate planning: www.PlanOurEstate.com, or call 773-631-7100 for an appointment.



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The Twelve Sites Of Social Security

by **Andrew Salata, Social Security Administration**

Familiar carols are a part of the season. This song is so popular that holiday revelers clamored for it again. It's "The Twelve Sites of Social Security," inspired by the popular traditional holiday song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," — a holiday favorite since 1780.

For the first site of Social Security, we give to you: our home page, www.socialsecurity.gov. It's the place to go for all things Social Security. Everything you could want — from online services and benefit screening tools to publications and frequently asked questions — you can find easily on this site.

For the second site of Social Security, we give to you: answers to all of your Social Security related questions at our Frequently Asked Questions page at www.socialsecurity.gov/faq.

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For the eighth site of Social Security, we give to you: Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs. You can learn more and apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

For the ninth site of Social Security, we give to you: our convenient publication library with online booklets and pamphlets on numerous subjects, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.

For the tenth site of Social Security, we give to you: services for people who are currently receiving benefits, such as the ability to replace your Medicare card, get or change a password, request a proof of income letter, or check your Social Security information or benefits. You can do these and other things at www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/getservices-change.htm.

For the eleventh site of Social Security, we give to you: a way to get your Social Security forms online, at www.socialsecurity.gov/forms.

On the twelfth site of Social Security (and we saved the best for last): open your own personal my Social Security account, which will enable you to verify your earnings, get future benefit estimates, obtain benefit verification letters, update your Social Security information, and more at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

And a partridge in a pear tree. Find it all (except the partridge and pear tree) at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Holiday Toy Giveaway For Cook County Foster Youth

He may get a gift. She may visit with her mom or dad. But this holiday, more than 5,900 children will be in foster care in Cook County...their permanent home deemed inappropriate or not yet identified.

In an effort to bring some joy into the lives of some of the area's neglected children, The Toy Industry Foundation, a non-profit organization that distributes toys to children, has generously committed to donating approximately 750 new toys to the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Cook County, an organization dedicated to giving a voice to abused and neglected children and ensuring that children live in safe, permanent homes. Many of the toys will be gift-wrapped by volunteers from Akerman's Chicago office.

"CASA of Cook County will be distributing these toys in the Atrium of the Cook County Juvenile Center on December 17th and 18th to the families served by CASA and Cook County's Child Protection Division," said Mark Dinglasan, executive director of the organization.

With more than 5,900 cases in its foster care system, Cook County has the highest need for special advocates. Currently, CASA of Cook County can support around 400 foster child cases per year. Along with the multitude of toys, The Toy Industry Foundation will also donate \$10,000 to support CASA of Cook County's child advocacy program.

"The \$10,000 donation from the Toy Industry Foundation will allow us to support volunteer advocates for an additional 10-12 children who might otherwise have fallen through the cracks in the system," said Dinglasan.

For almost 30 years, CASA of Cook County has been training volunteers to stand up for abused and neglected children in an overwhelmed and extremely under-resourced foster care system. CASA's vision is to, one day, provide one volunteer for every child or set of siblings in Cook County's foster care system.

The Toy Industry Foundation is dedicated to bringing smiles to the faces of children in foster care and living on U.S. military bases, as well as those facing poverty, neglect, illness, abuse, and other forms of adversity. Last year alone through its program The Toy Bank, the Toy Industry Foundation provided toys valued at \$18.9 million to nearly 5 million underserved children worldwide.

Keeping Your Home Safe For Your Pets During The Holidays

by Peter S. Sakas, DVM

Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center, 7278 N. Milwaukee, Niles
(Cont'd from last edition)

Be cautious with any bones provided to your pet. Sharp bones, especially from chicken or turkey, may become lodged in the mouth or throat of your pet. If the bones move further into the digestive tract, there is a risk that the bones could perforate the stomach or intestines. This situation may require surgical removal and if they do not receive veterinary attention, they may die. Provide your pet with commercial chew toys to avoid any potential problems. Chocolate - Providing a piece of chocolate to a pet may seem like an act of kindness but there is a risk that this treat could have serious consequences.

Chocolate may be fatal to your pet, especially dogs, because they are sensitive to theobromine, a compound in chocolate. It may cause vomiting, diarrhea, heart irregularities, muscle tremors, seizures and coma, sometimes with fatal results. Cats are rarely poisoned due to their more 'discriminating' habits. Keep those chocolate goodies out of the reach of your dog. If your dog accidentally eats some chocolate, seek veterinary care immediately.

The Christmas Tree

Decorations go up once a year and for a brief period of time. Your pets will be very interested in new and unusual objects scattered around the house believing that these are special 'toys' for their own use. Often these playthings end up lodged in the intestinal tract causing a blockage. Many dangers lurk on the Christmas tree. Overzealous dogs or cats have felled numerous wonderfully decorated trees. Support the tree securely with a sturdy stand and wires.

The Tree -There are several factors to consider with the tree. The trunk of a live tree is often coated with chemicals, such as fertilizer or insecticide. When the tree is placed in the stand and watered, the chemicals from the trunk contaminate the water. If your bird, dog or cat drinks it, they may become sick. The needles begin to fall out as the tree ages and dries. The needles are not poisonous but are very sharp, can puncture the skin and produce abscesses. If your pet tries to eat them, the needles can cut the tongue, lips and gums. If swallowed they are relatively undigestible and can actually pierce the lining of the stomach and intestines or cause a blockage.

The branches from artificial trees can be easily pulled out. The artificial needles can be sharp and are always non-digestible. If you pet chews on the branches, they might take in some of the needles. Just like the needles from the live tree, they can cause gastrointestinal problems such as bleeding and blockage.

Lights -The lights pose many dangers. They often get very hot after being on for a while and could burn your pet if they are touched. For some strange reason pets seem attracted to wires and like to chew on them. So keep a watch on your pets for this type of activity and check the lower strings of lights for evidence of chewing. You might want to 'pet proof' the tree by keeping objects, such as lights and ornaments, at heights that your pets cannot reach. If you want lights all over the tree, then string them on the lower branches, but place them away from the tip of the branches. The pets will have a more difficult time reaching them if they are placed on the inner portion of the branches.

Electrical Cords -Electrical cords often seem delectable to many pets, especially cats and young puppies. Chewed cords can cause severe burns and sometimes fatal, electrical shocks. If your pet seems overly interested in electrical cords, string or tape them in a position that is inaccessible to your pet. If that does not work you can cover the cords with hot pepper sauce or use bitter tasting commercial products sold in most pet stores.

Ornaments -Avoid using glass ornaments around pets. They are fragile, break easily and the shattered pieces are sharp. If any of the pieces are swallowed, the glass can puncture the intestines, which could lead to peritonitis and possibly death. Ornament hooks are also very sharp. They can be picked up and swallowed, resulting in gastrointestinal problems such as obstructions and punctures.

Village Cooking Corner

Enjoy these great ideas for your Holiday entertaining. Don't forget to begin the New Year by partaking of a bit of Pickled Herring. It will bring you good luck!!

Water Chestnut Hors d'oeuvres

Soak drained, whole water chestnuts in soy sauce 1/2 hour. Roll in sugar. Cut strips of bacon lengthwise, and crosswise wrap bacon around chestnuts, securing with toothpicks. Bake: 400 20 minutes. Drain Grease and Bake again: 350 5 minutes.
From the Kitchen of Laurel Atkeisson

Mini Cannoli Dessert

20 cannolis
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 ounce vanilla extract
1/2 cup chocolate chips
20 mini cannoli shells (find in any Italian store)

2 pounds Sorrento ricotta cheese
2 ounces white crème de cocoa liqueur
6 ounces cool whip
1 cup crushed pistachio

In a bowl, mix together 2 pounds Sorrento ricotta cheese, 1/2 ounce granulated sugar, 2 ounces white crème de cocoa liqueur and 1 ounce vanilla extract, mix for 2-3 minutes. Add 6 ounces cool whip and 1/2 cup chocolate chips, mix until equally combined. Fill mini cannoli shells. Finish by sprinkling crushed pistachio on each end of the cannolis.

Submitted by Vincas Italian Restaurant, Harwood Heights

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