



# OUR VILLAGE



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Volume XII

P.O. Box 31391,  
Chicago, IL 60631

[www.OurVillageChicago.com](http://www.OurVillageChicago.com)

Phone: 847/675-6127

Issue 22

Fax: 847/679-8851 December 19, 2008

## Mayor Daley's Holiday Sports Festival, December 27-29

*Question: What can you do with the kids after Christmas? They're done playing with the new presents and they have boundless energy that would best be expended at an indoor playground that is a million square feet of fun?*

**Answer: Mayor Daley's Holiday Sports Festival, December 27-29 at McCormick Place**

The Mayor's Office of Special Events & Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois present Mayor Daley's Holiday Sports Festival, so save the date, it's FREE and begins Saturday, December 27 through Monday, December 29 at McCormick Place in Halls A & B (2301 S. Martin Luther King Drive).

Admission to the biggest indoor gym and interactive zones is FREE. Discounted parking in Lot A -\$9. Activities take place daily, 10am - 4pm. Interactive zones include trampolines, golf, climbing walls, football, chess, obstacle course, tot's zone, bowling, table tennis, inflatable tumbling, tennis, badminton, boxing, a pitching zone, fishing ponds, footbag, giant slide, 40-Yard dash, skateboarding area, wrestling, and open courts for volleyball and basketball.

Other areas of fun include performances from Radio Disney, a variety of entertainers on the Halftime Stage, an area devoted to the 2016 Olympics and Paralympic Games, the Chicago Sky, The Harlem Globetrotters and a basketball and chess tournament featuring Chicago Public School children.

There are fitness areas and the brand new Chill Out Zone with games, reading and block building for a little quiet time.

For complete information, go to [www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents](http://www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents).

## SEASON'S GREETINGS



*From the Staff of  
Village Publications*

### REVISED HOURS FOR THE McCORMICK TRIBUNE ICE RINK IN MILLENNIUM PARK FOR THE HOLIDAYS AND THE NEW YEAR

Skate into the New Year at the McCormick Tribune Ice Rink in Millennium Park! The season continues through March 15, 2009 (weather permitting), with new hours as follows beginning Monday, January 5, 2009:

Mondays-Thursdays: 12 pm - 9 pm

Fridays: 12 pm - 10 pm

Saturdays, Sundays: 10 am - 10 pm

The Ice Rink will be open from 10 am-10 pm through January 4, with REVISED holiday hours on December 24 from 10 am-6 pm; December 25 from 10 am-4 pm and on December 31 from 10 am-8 pm.

Skating in Millennium Park is free and open to the public. Skate rental is available for \$10. The ice rink is located on Michigan Avenue between Washington and Madison Streets.

For more information about Millennium Park, visit [www.millenniumpark.org](http://www.millenniumpark.org), or call 312.742.1168.



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## Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center Offers January Health Programs

Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center, 5645 W. Addison St., Chicago, will offer the following health events in January.

The **Diabetes Support Group** will meet Tuesday, January 6, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., in the second floor Community Education Room. These free sessions are tailored for adults who have Type 2 diabetes and focus on the emotional side of diabetes, allowing participants to share coping strategies, feelings and problems in living with diabetes. For further information about the Diabetes Support Group, call certified diabetes educator Kathy Byrne-Bellavia, R.N., at 773-794-8329.

Start the New Year with recipes that taste great and make you look and feel better. There's nothing to lose except excess fat and calories! Come to a special cooking demonstration and tasting titled "**Cooking Light and Loving It**" on Wednesday, January 7, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Join Executive Chef John Marc Albanese, trained at New York's Culinary Institute of America, who will prepare and provide recipes for these culinary creations: smoked salmon cakes with cucumber-tomato relish, sautéed pork medallions with savoy cabbage and Mexican corn salad, and chocolate crepes with fresh berry coulis. There is a \$5 fee to cover food sampling, payable at the door. Advance registration is required by calling 877-RES-INFO (877-737-4636).

A free **Healthy Aging Program** will be held Friday, January 9, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., in the seventh floor Centennial Conference Center A. This program for seniors aged 55 and older consists of social time, health topics and voluntary armchair exercises. Registration is not required.

The **Arthritis Support Group** will meet Thursday, January 22, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., in the seventh floor Centennial Conference Center B. These free sessions aim to provide mutual support and education. Registration is not required.

"**Living a Healthier Lifestyle**" is a program to help heart patients and people concerned about cardiac health develop a healthy lifestyle. Sessions are part of the hospital's cardiopulmonary rehabilitation program. A cardiac stress test, lipid profile, risk factor analysis and diet counseling are required to participate. To learn more or schedule an appointment, call the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation staff at 773-794-8420.

Free parking is available in the hospital's parking facility on Addison Street. Resurrection Health Care is a not-for-profit Catholic organization sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the Sisters of the Resurrection.

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**American Legion Edison Park Post #541 members would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.**

We also want to thank you for your support at our Edison Park flea market in August. Not only for your purchases but also those that brought donated items to be sold. We also want to thank those that attended the various events:

- Monument Park rededication, your attendance was inspiring.
- Hines Hosp. extended care Bingo.
- Supporting our annual Poppy donations.



THANK YOU  
American Legion  
Edison Park Post #541 Members

**ONAHAN SCHOOL STUDENTS  
BRIGHTEN HOLIDAY SEASON OF  
NORWOOD CROSSING RESIDENTS  
WITH CARDMAKING**



Nearly a dozen students from Onahan School visited Norwood Crossing, 6016-20 N. Nina Ave. in Chicago, recently to interview and make Christmas cards with residents on the fourth floor of the Nursing Building. The students, accompanied by seventh and eighth grade teacher Marianne Patten, are among many that will arrive from local church organizations and schools during the Holiday Season to make crafts, sing and bake Christmas cookies. Here, two of the students proudly admire the Christmas card, decorated with ribbons and beads, which they and resident Barbara Strumberger created. Norwood Crossing looks forward to the interaction of young people with residents throughout the year but especially at this time as it brings back memories of their childhood and the family activities that made the holiday season special in their lives.

**St. Thecla Music Director,  
Celebrates 60th Anniversary**

Robert Shack has served our Parish Family for 60 wonderful music-filled years! His talents have been heard at our children's weddings, family funerals and every other Parish celebration here at St. Thecla. He has taught our children and our children's children piano lessons for over 60 years.

Bob, his late wife Ann, and his family has been a wonderful and inspirational asset to this parish. We congratulate Bob on this extraordinary anniversary.

St. Thecla Church at 6725 W. Devon, Chicago, will be celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving, for Bob Shack, on December 27, 2008 at 5:00pm. There will be a reception immediately following this Mass in Falcon Hall. All are welcome.

**Midnight Madness Celebration**

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# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

## Christmas Tree Care

Just because we do not sell any Christmas trees or poinsettias at Urhausen Greenhouses, as we are already growing our annuals and perennials for next spring and summer, we still receive and answer many questions about Christmas trees. As with everything in horticulture and floriculture, freshness is of the utmost importance. How “fresh” the tree which you purchase will determine how well it will look and how long it will last.

What does one mean by “fresh?” The freshness of a Christmas tree is determined by the length of time since the tree was cut and your purchase. When you purchase your tree it should look healthy and green, and few dead or brown needles should be visible. The needles should not be stiff and hard, but rather flexible and soft. It is a red flag if the needles fall off as you touch them.

Once a fresh Christmas tree is procured, keeping it fresh will depend on how much care the tree receives. Upon purchase, a fresh cut about one inch above the old base on the bottom of the tree should be made. Then the tree should be placed in a bucket of water. Make sure it is a rather large bucket as a tree may absorb almost a gallon of water the first day. Make sure you monitor the water level several times on that first day. At this time of the year you may read or hear about all kinds of additives to place in the water to preserve freshness. Most horticultural experts advocate the use of pure tap water and disavow the benefits of the so called additives.

The key to the freshness of your tree is to keep it watered and not let it dry out. The added benefit of doing this is that a well watered tree will not be a fire hazard. Use common sense when locating your tree. Don't place it near a source of heat, like a fireplace, stove, or a hot air duct. These measures promote safety and preserve freshness.

The information in this article is correct, however as a fellow consumer of Christmas trees it is becoming more and more difficult to find a fresh tree. Many years I have purchased a tree and followed all these guidelines only to be met with frustration. One sign that you have a stale tree is when the tree will not absorb any water after you place it in the bucket of water. Another is when the needles drop only a few days after the tree is placed inside your home. So, I guess it is important to ask the merchants selling trees when the trees were cut.



From all of us at Urhausen Greenhouses we wish everyone a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

*Urhausen Greenhouses, Inc. is located at 6973 N. East Prairie Road in Lincolnwood. Phone: 847-675-1573, [www.urhausengreenhouses.com](http://www.urhausengreenhouses.com)*

## 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 maesse*, 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.

*continued on next page...*

## Urban Wildlife Coalition Winter Wildlife Wonderland

Though the weather outside is frightful, and much of our urban wildlife has high-tailed it for warmer climes, hardy creatures are still abundant. Here are a few tips for attracting winter wildlife to your backyard:

Plant a winter cover crop like winter wheat. It will enrich the soil and provide food for birds, rabbits, and squirrels.

Shrubs and taller evergreens provide shelter and food for urban wildlife.

Help animals break the ice. When winter water supplies freeze up, animals can use your help staying hydrated. Chop ice in birdfeeders and puddles. Better yet, invest in a heated birdbath.

If you use a birdfeeder, be sure to refill it regularly.

Position birdhouses and feeders away from cold north winds. Consider placing them in a sunny spot or near a natural windbreak like bushes or trees.

Cover window wells so visiting animals do not get stuck (skunks are notoriously poor climbers).

Be kind to your pets this winter, too. Most traditional ice-melters hurt animal paws. De-ice your sidewalk with pet-friendly salt available at many hardware stores or just use sand. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.

Urban Wildlife Coalition is a community-based organization founded to help preserve our treasured urban wildlife. For more information about urban animals and tips for living in harmony with them, visit [www.urbanwildlifecoalition.org](http://www.urbanwildlifecoalition.org). Questions? Call 773-545-8136 or e-mail us at [urbanwildlifecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:urbanwildlifecoalition@gmail.com).

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# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

continued from previous page...

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.

continued on page 7...

## ST. THECLA CHURCH

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

### Liturgy of the Hours

Sunday, December 21, 4:00pm

### Christmas Schedule

Christmas Eve, Wednesday,  
December 24

4:00pm Family Christmas Mass  
Children's Choir

10:00pm (Pasterka) Christmas Eve Mass  
in Polish - Carols begin at 9:30pm

Traditional Midnight Mass-  
Carols begin at 11:30pm

Christmas Day, Thursday,  
December 25

8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am, and 12:30pm  
(in Polish)

St. Stephen's Day, Friday,  
December 26

7:00pm Mass in Polish

Mary, Mother of God,  
January 1, 2009

(Holy Day of Obligation)

December 31 - 5:00pm Mass of  
Anticipation  
January 1 - 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am,  
and 12:30pm (in Polish)



## St. Richard's Episcopal Church

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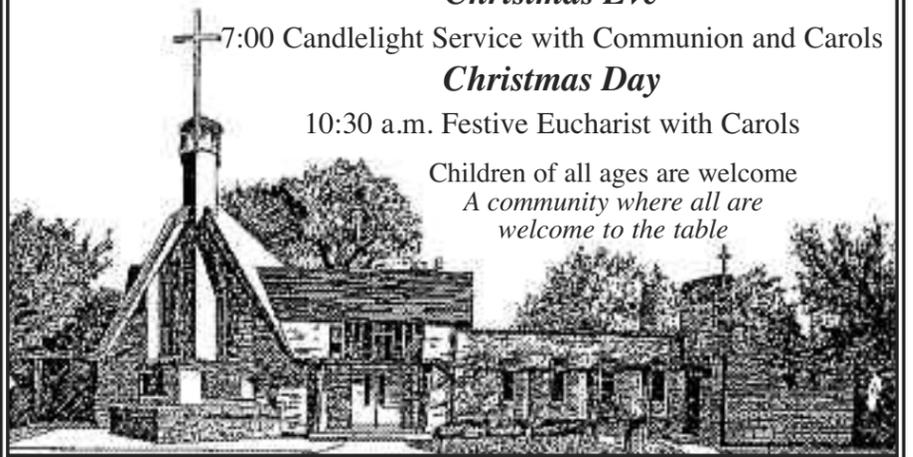
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### Christmas Day

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### Christmas Eve Worship Services:

Wednesday December 24

5:00 pm Family Candlelight Service

7:00 pm Candlelight Service - Holy Communion

11:00 pm Candlelight Service - Holy Communion

### Christmas Day Worship:

Thursday December 25

10:00 am Service - Holy Communion

### New Years Eve Service:

7:00 pm Holy Communion

Visitors Welcome

# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

## 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 tsourekki. On New Year's Day families cut the Vassilopita 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 before 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



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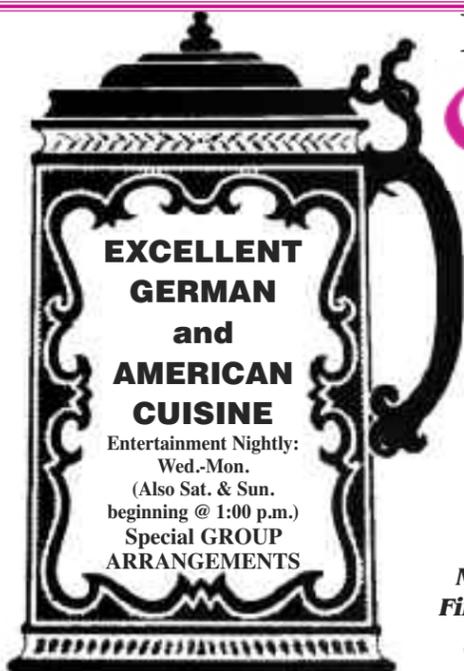
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# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

continued from page 5...

**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 opiatek, a thin wafer made of wheat flour and water. Nativity scenes are stamped on the opiatek. 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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# 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 Mandolin 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

## "A Theatre Review"

### *"Meet Me In St. Louis"* Drury Lane Theatre at the Water Tower 175 East Chestnut St. Chicago, IL

Reviewed by Richard Allen Eisenhardt

The holidays have arrived with productions of "A Christmas Carol," "It's A Wonderful Life," "The Christmas Schooner," "The Radio City Christmas Show," and at the Drury Lane Water Tower "Meet Me In St. Louis," thanks to Kyle De Santis, William Osetek and the first rate direction of Jim Corti. Corti has a great future and will be directing the annual "Snow Queen" at the Victory Gardens Biograph Theatre next.

St. Louis is based on stories by Sally Benson that has a book for the stage version by Hugh Wheeler with songs by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane. Tammy Mader has handled the choreography.

The show features familiar songs such as "Meet Me In St. Louis," "Trolley Song," "Boy Next Door," and "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" along with several others.

The cast features Megan Long as Esther, Cory Goodrich and Michael Gerhart are a perfect match as the parents of five. They are incredible actors and singers. Richard Henzel is the Grandfather, Emily Leahy is Tootie the role that Margaret O'Brien played in the movie. Rose the older sister is played by Dara Cameron, the brother Lon is played by Stephen Schelhardt and veteran actress Susan Hart has the role of the Irish Cook. Justin Berkubien and Brandon Dahlquist have the roles of Esther and Rose's suitors, two very talented performers.

The story takes place at the turn of the century and the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The father wants to move the family to New York and the family isn't happy about it. If you haven't seen the movie see the show as it is perfect entertainment for families. "St. Louis" runs through January 4. For performance dates, show times and reservations call 312-642-2006. Tickets are \$50-\$60.

### *"The Other Cinderella"* Black Ensemble Theatre, 4520 North Beacon St. Chicago, Illinois

By Richard Allen Eisenhardt

If you attend a production of the Black Ensemble Theatre in the Uptown area you always find the evening inventive, informative and musically first rate. Many of the shows are based on the lives of black performers that white audiences are familiar with such as Sammy Davis Jr., Nat King Cole, Dionne Warwick, Mahalia Jackson, Sarah Vaughn and the list goes on. Many of these bios get extended by popular demand. "The other Cinderella" has been reincarnated several times and this modern day version is perfect for the holidays.

One again the show is being revived, produced, written and directed by the Black Ensemble's founder and artistic director Jackie Taylor.

Jimmy Tillman is the theatre's musical director and its drummer in the show's five piece band.

Melanie McCullough is perfectly cast as Cinderella and she sings like a lark. Other standouts are Dawn Mitchell as the Fairy Godmother and Rhonda Preston as the stepmother.

This is more a contemporary version of the fairytale as this Cinderella was born in the projects but is transferred to being beautiful.

"The Other Cinderella" was first done in 1976. The show runs through December 28. Show time is 8:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 3:00 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$45. For reservations call 773-769-4451.

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# Best Friends/Companion Pets

## Santa Paws

By Bosley

Recently I have discovered that many of you don't know the story of Santa Paws, Santa Clause's dog. Everyone knows about his reindeer, so why not his canine friend? So, I am taking this opportunity to share Paws' story.



Once upon a paw, it was a cold and snowy Christmas Eve and Santa Clause was busy making his usual deliveries. As he stopped to check his list he heard a small cry. Santa went to investigate and discovered a tiny white ball of curly fur; it was a poodle puppy. Santa picked up the puppy and instantly saw the mischievous twinkle in the puppy's eyes. Not wanting to leave the poor creature, Santa took him along on his sleigh. Santa quickly discovered that there was something special about this puppy, the spirit and magic of Christmas seemed to be alive in this pup's eye. This pup should have been afraid and concerned, but instead sat upon Santa's sleigh as if he was meant to be there. Santa realized that this puppy was to remain by his side.

Santa often observed the bonds of people and their dogs, after all dogs are man's best friend. So, he decided to let him come home with him and Mrs. Clause. As the puppy, now named Paws because of his big feet, grew it was obvious to all that met him that he was special. He possessed the ability to make people smile and laugh, there was never a creature that he didn't like or who didn't like Paws. Paws seemed to carry that magic of Christmas with him throughout the year! With that magic came the ability to communicate freely with both animals and people.

As time passed, so did the demands for Santa. He was beginning to wonder how he could possibly keep track of all the good or bad children in the world. Seeing Santa's distress got Paws thinking, and then he came up with an idea. However, Paws was uncertain about how to approach Santa. You see, Paws was considered the happy-go-lucky clown of the North Pole and wasn't sure if his idea was even good enough to tell. Mrs. Clause noticed that Paws seemed concerned about something. Paws then told her that he might have an idea to help Santa, but wasn't sure how to tell him. Mrs. Clause then reminded Paws that everyone's ideas are important and should be shared, those ideas may not be used exactly but we can always build upon them. With new confidence Paws set out to find Santa.

Paws' idea for helping Santa was very simple, he told Santa that they could get the other dogs of the world to help keep an eye on the children in their lives. Santa was thrilled with the new idea and added that we should also ask the cats, birds, snakes, hamsters, and all creatures that have children around to watch them and report back to Santa. Santa was very proud of Paws and put him in charge of communicating with all the pets in the world. Those pets started calling him Santa Paws, the Santa of the animal kingdom! These pets don't just work for Santa, but are rewarded on Christmas day along with the good children.

Santa Paws had helped Santa and to this day continues to be along side his favorite person and help communicate with all pets. So, on Christmas Eve when you hear Santa's bells listen closely because you might hear the howling of Santa Paws. Also, remember to reward your favorite pet because they have been keeping an eye on you all year and they report directly to Santa Paws! Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy Howlidays!

Submitted by Bosley's mom, Nicole Carfora, CMG, owner of Canine Corral.

## Keeping Your Home Safe for Your Pets during the Holidays

(continued from last issue)

Be cautious with 'edible' type ornaments. Sometimes the store-bought varieties may not be edible and contain hardening agents/preservatives that could be toxic. If you make your own edible ornaments, your pet may try to eat them. They may knock over the tree trying to get a string of homemade popcorn or a gingerbread ornament.

The safest ornaments are one-piece, non-breakable and made of non-toxic material. They should be too big to swallow. Also, have them out of the reach of curious beaks, mouths and paws.

**Tinsel** -One of the most dangerous materials to put on a Christmas tree is tinsel. Animals are attracted to its bright finish and flexibility. Cats are especially attracted to tinsel and if you have a cat, it is recommended that you do not use tinsel on your tree. If your pet eats tinsel, there is a good chance that it will become wrapped around the tongue. As the pet struggles to remove it, the tinsel gets stretched out and wraps even tighter. It can cut sensitive tissues in the mouth and stop the circulation of blood to the tongue. If a strand is swallowed it can bunch up and block the intestine. If this occurs, surgery is usually required to remove it. The best advice is, if you have pets, do not place tinsel on your tree. You may lose the aesthetics of the icicle effect, but your pets will be much safer.

### Holiday Decorations/Packages

Many people place decorations throughout the house including lights, evergreen branches, holiday knickknacks and other assorted objects to provide a festive environment. We have discussed some of these dangers previously. Lit candles can burn a curious pet or could be knocked over and start a fire. Centerpieces of dangling streamers and feather fronds are enticing to the curious pet. If chewed and swallowed, these materials can cause an intestinal blockage. Icicles and tinsel draped on a mantle are as dangerous as tinsel on a tree. Monitor your pets and watch out for any evidence of chewing on these objects.

Wrapped presents can pose a hazard to pets. They are attracted to the decorative bows, ribbons and other frills placed on the packages. If your pet would chew and swallow these materials, there is a risk of intestinal blockage. Food packages wrapped as gifts and left under a tree can entice a hungry animal. With their keen sense of smell they can sniff these out and decide to have a feast. Exercise caution with these types of presents around pets, especially dogs.

### Poisonous Plants

Many homes are decorated each year during the holiday season with poinsettias and mistletoe. These plants do represent the season; unfortunately they are toxic for our pets and represent a problem for curious dogs, cats and birds. Poinsettias produce a milky sap that is irritating to the skin and eyes on contact and to the gastrointestinal tract if eaten. It may cause irritation and blistering of the mucous membranes of the mouth and stomach. Intake of large amounts of mistletoe may cause nausea, vomiting and gastroenteritis. Make sure that these plants are kept out of the reach of your pets. If you do catch your pet eating a poinsettia or a few loose mistletoe berries, seek veterinary care immediately.

(conclusion next issue)

by Peter S. Sakas, DVM

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# Powers of Attorney – May Not Be Enough



Chester M. Przybylo

A power of attorney is a way to delegate your decision-making authority to someone else. People often ask “My daughter has my power of attorney, is that all she needs?” While powers of attorney can be useful under some circumstances, people think they are of broader effectiveness than they are.

First off, a power of attorney is only effective so long as the person granting the power, otherwise known as the “principal,” is alive. For example, if you appoint your daughter as agent under a power of attorney, and you die,

her authority dies with you. If she were to go to the bank and attempt to use the power of attorney to withdraw funds, they would tell her it is no longer valid. Basically, at your death, it ceased to be worth more than the paper on which it was written.

Even while the principal is alive, a power of attorney may not be the most effective way to delegate powers. For example, some title companies will not insure title on real estate when title is transferred pursuant to a power of attorney drawn up more than eighteen months before the transfer.

So, if a power of attorney may not be enough, what is the answer? A revocable living trust offers the solution. With a revocable living trust, you transfer your assets to the trust and you serve as the manager, or “trustee,” of the trust during your life. At your death or incapacity, the person whom you have selected steps in to make decisions for you. Your successor trustee simply presents the physician statement of your incapacity and thereby gains the ability to manage the assets in the trust. If the vacation home needs to be sold to pay for health care, he or she would have the authority to do so, even if the trust were done years before the incapacity.

The trust has the added benefit of avoiding probate, the legal process by which assets in a decedent’s name are re-titled after death. A trust may also provide a very flexible way to accomplish your wishes regarding distribution of the assets you placed in the trust. For example, if you want your assets held for your spouse and kids and then distributed out only after the youngest has graduated from college or reached age 25, it can do that.

Regardless of your wishes, a trust can help you achieve your goals. A qualified estate-planning attorney who focuses his or her practice in that area can help you tailor an estate plan to ensure that your person of choice has the means to make decisions on your behalf.

*Chester M. Przybylo is a member of the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys and has been engaged in the practice of law for the last 40 years. For more information or to attend an upcoming seminar, call (773) 631-2525.*

# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

*The eight days of Chanukah begins Sunday night December 21 and ends Sunday night December 28.*

## Illuminate the World

Excerpt of a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe,  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, recalls the victory – more than 2100 years ago – of a militarily weak but spiritually strong Jewish people over the mighty forces of a ruthless enemy that had overrun the Holy Land and threatened to engulf the land and its people in darkness.

The miraculous victory – culminating with the dedication of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem and the rekindling of the Menorah which had been desecrated and extinguished by the enemy – has been celebrated annually ever since during these eight days of Chanukah, especially by lighting the Chanukah menorah, also as a symbol and message of the triumph of freedom over oppression, of spirit over matter, of light over darkness.

It is a timely and reassuring message, for the forces of darkness are ever present. Moreover, the danger does not come exclusively from outside; it often lurks close to home, in the form of insidious erosion of time-honored values and principles that are at the foundation of any decent human society. Needless to say, darkness is not chased away by brooms and sticks, but by illumination. Our sages said, “A little light expels a lot of darkness.”

The Chanukah lights remind us in a most obvious way that illumination begins at home, within oneself and one’s family, by increasing and intensifying the light of Torah and Mitzvos in the everyday experience, even as the Chanukah lights are kindled in growing numbers from day to day. But though it begins at home, it does not stop there, such is the nature of light that when one kindles the Chanukah lights are expressly meant to illuminate the “outside,” symbolically alluding to the duty to bring light also to those who, for one reason or another, still walk in darkness.

What is true of the individual is true of a nation, especially this great United States, united under G-d, and generously blessed by G-d with material as well as spiritual riches. It is surely the duty and privilege of this Nation to promote all the forces of light both at home and abroad, and in a steadily growing measure.

Let us pray that the message of the Chanukah lights will illuminate the everyday life of everyone personally, and of the society at large, for a brighter life in every respect, both materially and spiritually.

More information about Chanukah and our Chanukah events can be found at our website [www.SkokieChabad.org](http://www.SkokieChabad.org) and [www.SkokieChabad.org/Chanukah](http://www.SkokieChabad.org/Chanukah).



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# HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING



The holiday season is here, and with it brings a time for gatherings with family, friends and co-workers to celebrate the times. Even with the strain of a belt tightening economy, it's important to keep spirits high by enjoying a classic holiday party. Whether it be your year to host the family get together or your job to plan the annual office party, being prepared is crucial. To help you get everything together, we've teamed up with Vince's Italian Restaurant in Harwood Heights to put together a few helpful ideas to get you ready.

The first thing you'll have to decide is where to have the party. Hosting the party at home or at the office can save some money but tends to take more time and effort to prepare for. In addition to this, it also comes with the added cost of purchasing tableware necessities, decorations, and of course the dreaded after party cleanup.

Restaurants with banquet rooms book up fast around this time, but allow the freedom of simply picking a menu and sending out the invitations. Booking at a restaurant can greatly reduce the amount of work you have to do and will include all the amenities such as having a bar, private room and of course your own wait staff.

Another option is to find and prepare a location for the party and have a restaurant cater food to you. While you'll still have to put in a bit of effort to prepare, at least the food is taken care of!

When deciding what kind of food to dish up, keep in mind that you may be serving people with many different tastes. Always be prepared with dishes to accommodate vegetarians as well as those with food allergies such as a gluten intolerance, this way nobody feels left out. Still not sure what to serve? Vince's Italian Restaurant head Chef Martino has provided a few recipes for dishes that are always crowd pleasers.

## Fresh Tomato Basil Sauce

serves 10 people

- Two (2) 12 ounce cans of whole peeled tomatoes in juice
- 3 ounces extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1 ounce chopped fresh basil

In a large pan, heat 3 ounces of extra virgin olive oil. After heated, add 1 cup of onions, cook until golden brown. Cut tomatoes from two (2) 12 ounce cans of whole peeled tomatoes and add to pan, cook for 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper to your liking. Add 1 ounce chopped fresh basil and cook until tomatoes are completely soft. Serve with your favorite pasta.

\*For a gluten free dish, try using a whole wheat gluten free pasta.

## Chicken Risotto

serves 10 people

- 1 cup sliced portobello mushrooms
- 2 pounds boneless chicken breast
- 1 cup sweet vadalia onions
- 6 cloves minced garlic
- ½ cup sundried tomatoes
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups Arborio rice

Cut chicken breasts into 1 inch strips. In a large frying pan, sautee chicken strips for about 4 minutes. Add 1 cup sweet vadalia onions and

cook until onions are golden brown. Add minced garlic, sliced portobello mushrooms and sundried tomatoes, cook 2-3 minutes. Add 2 cups Arborio rice and 2 cups of chicken broth, cook for 5 minutes. Add broccoli florets, cook until rice is tender. Add salt and pepper to your liking.

## Mini Cannoli Dessert

- 20 cannolis
- 2 pounds Sorrento ricotta cheese
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 ounces white crème de cocoa liqueor
- 1 ounce vanilla extract
- 6 ounces cool whip
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup chrused pistachio
- 20 mini cannoli shells (find in any italian store)

In a bowl, mix together 2 pounds Sorrento ricotta cheese, ½ ounce granulated sugar, 2 ounces white crème de cocoa liqueor and 1 ounce vanilla extract, mix for 2-3 minutes. Add 6 ounces cool whip and ½ cup chocolate chips, mix until equally combined. Fill mini cannoli shells. Finish by sprinkling crushed pistachio on each end of the cannolis.

## Italian Sorbeto Punch

- 2 cans frozen cranberry juice
- 1 can frozen orange juice
- 16 ounces ginger ale
- 16 ounces lemon lime soda
- 6 scoops rainbow sorbeto (sherbert ice cream)
- 1 whole orange
- 1 can sliced pineapple

Mix all liquids together and stir thoroughly, add 6 scoops rainbow sorbeto and let float, top with sliced oranges and pineapples for garnish.

\*for alcoholic punch, add gin or vodka to your liking.

Vinces Italian Restaurant is located at 4747 N. Harlem Ave. in Harwood Heights; (708) 867-7770; [www.vincesonharlem.com](http://www.vincesonharlem.com).



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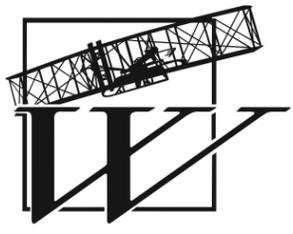
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