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CYPRESS park

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CYPRESS PARK

Christmas in Ethiopia! DECEMBER OBSERVANCES

By Yibrah Weldu, A Cypress Park Resident

Ethiopia, an ancient country in East Africa, has many unique historical, cultural and natural heritages that it is so proud of. Historical obelisks, rock hewn churches and ancient mosques, source of the Blue Nile, origin of coffee, unique alphabet, home to Ark of the Covenant, rare animals and plants, but most importantly the diversity of its people that embellishes its social structure like no other. As the only African nation to emerge victorious in pushing back colonial invaders and safeguard its independence, it embodies a cultural mosaic that remained true to its original identity.

One such tradition that dates back to its roots is the celebration of Christmas and other Christian holidays. Majority of Christians in Ethiopia follow the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. Millions others are Evangelical Christians and Catholics. Since the country uses the old Julian calendar for all its religious and other official purposes, Christmas is celebrated not on 25th of December as in most of the rest of the world, but on the 7th of January, which in the Ethiopian calendar will be on December 29, 2008 this year.

Following overnight masses at the various domination churches, the celebrations start early in the morning on Christmas day (known with different local names such as 'gena' in Amharic, 'lidet' in Tigrigna,... etc.). It's the time when families get to visit each other and celebrate together. It is also time for people to dress up in their traditional hand-made cotton costumes with various religious and non-religious design themes. Spicy stews of beef, lamb, chicken and vegetables are served with soft honeycombed bread known as 'injera'. Traditional coffee ceremony where fresh grains are roasted, ground and boiled right in front of the guests are served with small, decorated clay cups. One coffee ceremony includes three rounds of servings with all its aroma, while everyone is chatting and laughing with the spirit of the holiday. Traditional and holiday-toned music is also part of the mix.

In some rural parts of the country, young boys and their elders play an Ethiopian version of hockey out in the fields during the Christmas season also known as 'yegena chewata'. In other parts, they would go around to families and friends' homes and wish them a blessed holiday while collecting different gifts.

Overall, Christmas in Ethiopia is a time to pray and enjoy age-old but fun traditional festivities.

- December 1st is World AIDS Day, which commemorates those who have died of AIDS, and to support the need for a continued commitment to all those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- December 3rd is International Day of Persons with Disabilities, is a United Nations accredited day that aims to promote an understanding of people with disability and encourage support for their worthiness, rights, and happiness.
- December 5th is Ashura, the 10th day of the first month on the Islamic calendar. A'ashura was an ancient Judaic feast day of celebration and atonement. Commemoration of Ashura is a respectful and mournful occasion for both Shi'as and Sunni Muslims, and especially for Shi'as, a particularly intense period of grief and mourning.
- December 6th (sunset) - December 14th (sunset) is Hanukkah (Chanukah). Known as the Festival of Lights, it is an eight-day Jewish holiday remembering the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. It is observed by the daily lighting of a candle on a Menorah, one is lit on the first night, two on the second night, until all eight candles are lit on the eighth night.
- December 8th is Bodhi Day (Rohatsu), a holiday observed by Buddhists to commemorate Gautama's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India. To the Buddhist it is a day of remembrance and meditation.
- December 8th is also the Feast of the Immaculate Conception celebrated by the Roman Catholics to commemorate the Virgin Mary's conception as being without sin and therefore faultless.
- December 10th is International Human Rights Day, established by the United Nations in 1948 it observes the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is normally marked both by high-level political conferences and meetings, cultural events and exhibitions dealing with human rights issues, and the five-yearly United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights and Nobel Peace Prize are awarded.
- December 12th is Feast Day at Our Lady of Guadalupe. This day observe the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.
- December 13th is St. Lucia's Day. In 304 A.D., in Sweden, St Lucia

(Continued on Page 3)

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EMERGENCY	911
Fire/Ambulance.....	911
Officer.....	911
Poison Control.....	800-222-1222
Cy-Fair Medical Clinic (24 Hour)	281-890-4285
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NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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Post Office.....	281-858-9021

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NEWSLETTER INFO

PUBLISHER

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HOLIDAY ETIQUETTE DON'TS

1. DON'T forget to ask your guests about their food preferences and dietary restrictions. Serve at least one dish they can eat.
2. DON'T forget as a hostess, to match the food served in line with the attire on your invitation.
3. DON'T bring an additional uninvited guest to a party unless you've cleared it with the hostess.
4. DON'T have your phone out constantly interact with real-life humans.
5. DON'T appear featherbrained, participate.
6. DON'T leave guests to awkwardly mingle at the party, introduce them.
7. DON'T double dip, even if it's with family members.
8. DON'T apologize continuously if someone gets you a gift and you're empty handed. "Just say thank you and appreciate the gift."
9. DON'T let the party extend if you're hosting, and DON'T be the guest that overstays one's welcome.
10. DON'T be a yes-person when it comes to having friends or family stay at your place over the holidays. If you don't have the accommodations tell them.
11. DON'T cry over spilled wine. Enjoy the gathering and the festivities, and be glad that holiday stress comes only once a year!



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(Continued from Cover)

a young Christian girl was martyred, for her faith. In Rome, she secretly brought food to persecuted Christians. She wore candles on her head so she had the freedom to carry things. Her stories were told by the Monks who brought Christmas to Sweden.

- December 16-24 is Las Posadas, a nine-day celebration in Mexico celebrating the trials Mary and Joseph encountered during their journey to Bethlehem.
- December 22nd is the Winter Solstice/ Yule. For Pagans and Wiccans, it's the shortest day of the year focusing on rebirth, renewal, and new beginnings as the sun makes its way back to the earth. A solstice is an astronomical event happening twice each year when the Sun reaches its highest position in the sky.
- December 25th is Christmas, the day that non Orthodox Christians celebrate Jesus's birth.
- December 26 – January 1 is Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to honor universal African-American heritage. Observed by lighting candles to represent each of the holiday's seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. Feasting, and gift giving is also part of the Kwanzaa celebration.

- December 28th Holy Innocents Day Christian day of solemn memory of male children killed by King Herod in the attempt to destroy Jesus.
- December 31st: Watch Night (Christian) occasion to thank God for bringing people safely through another year
- December 31st: Omisoka in Japanese it's the final day of the old year and the ushering of the New Year. Families clean their homes, eat toshi-koshi buckwheat noodles in the hope that one's life will be prolonged as long as these noodles. As midnight approaches, Shinto temples around the country begin ringing out the old year by sounding the temple bell 108 times. In Japan, it is celebrated quietly; you don't even notice that a new year has started.



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HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

1. Test all smoke alarms, make certain they are working. Promptly replace the batteries, or smoke alarm.
2. Always try to buy electrical equipment that displays the Underwriting Laboratories (UL).
3. Send all warranties and product registration forms to the manufacturers in order to be notified promptly in the event of a product recall.
4. Make certain your natural tree holds plenty of water for hydration.
5. Choose an artificial tree that is tested and labeled as fire resistant.
6. Light-Emitting Diode (LED) is more costly but they use less energy and run cooler than an incandescent light.
7. Your tree should be placed at least 3 feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces and heaters.
8. Never put Christmas tree lights, metal hooks, ornaments, and other small mouth-sized decorations near the ground or on lower limbs.
9. Always unplug your decorations by using the gripping area. When you pull the cord you can damage the wire and present a shock or fire hazard.
10. Turn off all indoor and outdoor lightings before leaving the house or going to bed.
11. Electrical decorations should be stored in a dry area not accessible by children or pets.
12. Please cook the fried turkey completely away from the porch and out of the garage.



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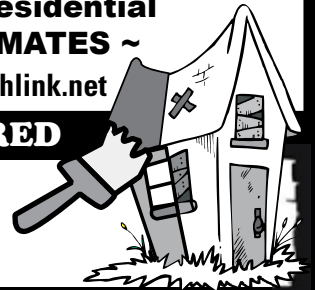
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CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. In which country is St. Nick called Sinterklaas?
2. Which English leader prohibited the singing of Christmas songs?
3. 'Who' catches the Grinch red handed stealing Christmas presents?
4. In which country does an ugly old witch named Bafana deliver presents on the 6th of December?
5. When exactly is 'The Twelfth Night'?
6. According to CBS, which 1964 animated story is the longest running holiday special in TV history?
7. What does the word Bethlehem mean?
8. Advent candles are a popular Christmas tradition in many cultures. What does the word advent mean?
9. Thousands of what marched on London from Norfolk just prior to Christmas each year in Victorian times.
10. Which Christmas treat was first used to keep noisy children quiet during the church service?
11. In Sweden, a common Christmas decoration is the Julbuk, a small figurine of a goat. Of what material is it usually made?
12. All through the Christmas season in old England, "lambswool" could be found in the houses of the well-to-do. What was it?
13. In Victorian times, most Londoners would have been familiar with the "goose club". What was it?

Answers:

1. Holland
2. Oliver Cromwell
3. Cindy Lou Who
4. Italy
5. The Evening of the 5th of January
6. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
7. House of meat (Arabic) or House of bread (Hebraic)
8. Arrival
9. Turkeys and Geese (The turkeys wore little leather boots, the geese just had their feet tarred)
10. Candy Cane
11. Straw
12. A brew of hot ale with roast apples floating in it
13. A method of saving to buy a goose for Christmas

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1. What techniques do you use for calming down your patients who have a fight-or flight reaction to the sights, sounds, and smells of a dental office?

My favorite technique for calming down a nervous patient is communication. Most people get nervous or stressed because they don't know what to expect or what is coming. I've found that if I calmly explain to them exactly what I'm going to do and show them that I have no intention of hurting them, it puts most of their fears to rest. We also let our patients watch movies to take their minds off of what we're doing to help keep them calm and relaxed.

2. How can patients who fear root canal or wisdom tooth extractions better prepare them for the procedures?

I think the most important thing is to ask questions. Most of the time people have fears because they don't really know what is going on and their imagination is getting the best of them. A good dentist can fully answer all questions and quickly diffuse a stressful and fearful situation.

3. What is oral cancer?

Oral cancer is any type of cancer or tumor origination in the mouth or surrounding areas. In most cases it is caused by tobacco use. It's important to have your dentist to exam regularly to check the oral cavity to ensure that any suspicious areas are ok.

4. What causes periodontal or gum disease? How can it be prevented?

Gum disease is an extremely common oral condition. It is caused by the presence of plaque and tartar below the gum line. It is treatable in most cases by getting a deep gum cleaning. The best way to prevent gum disease is to brush and floss daily and to see your dentist for regular check-ups.

5. What ingredients in green tea shows as a promising treatment for bad breath?

Green tea has specific antioxidants called polyphenols. These polyphenols stop the growth of certain bacteria. These same bacteria are the main cause of tooth decay and halitosis, so drinking green tea daily helps reduce bad breath and cavities.

6. Does eating hamburgers and steak worsen the smell of your breath?

Eating certain foods doesn't necessarily worsen the smell of your breath, as long as you're brushing and flossing daily. Any food left in the mouth, not being cleaned properly and cause bad breath so it's very important to brush and floss daily.

*Coming next month Ask an Insurance Agent.

If you have any questions you would like to ask an insurance agent please submit them to Pakamafula@gmail.com.

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Please review your HOA Community Covenants & Restrictions via Crest-Management.com for adherence.

Section 6: Disposal of Trash

Trash should be placed in sanitary refuse containers constructed of metal, plastic or masonry material with tight fitting sanitary covers or lids and placed in an area adequately screened by planting or fencing.

Section 12: Decorations

Customary seasonal decorations for holidays are permitted without approval by the Architectural Control Committee but must be removed within thirty days after the holiday passes.

*The 2016 Annual Assessment payment is due in full by January 1, 2016 and is considered past due if not paid by January 31, 2016.

It is payable by mail to Cypress Landing Park HOA or online at crest-management.com.

We are collecting non-perishable items, canned goods, and blankets through December 17th to give to those less fortunate than us and for making a difference in their lives.

Drop off boxes are located at 20118 Towering Cypress Drive.

Enjoy the blessings of this Holiday Season!

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Brazil: Feliz Natal e Prospero Ano Novo

China: Kung His Hsin Nienbing Chu Shen Tan Sheng

Mandarin: Dan Kuai Le

China: Gun Tso Sun Tan'Gung Haw Sun Sing Dan Fai

Cantonese: Lok

Czech: Prejeme Vam Vesele Vanoce a stastny Novy Rok

Filipinos: Maligayang Pasko

French: Joyeux Noël

German: Froehliche Weihnachten

Hawaiian: Mele Kalikimaka

Hindi: Bada Din Mubarak Ho

Irish: Nollaig Shona Dhuit

Italian: Buon Natale or Buone Feste Natalizie

Japanese: Shinnen omedeto Kurisumasu Omedeto

Korean: Sung Tan Chuk Ha

Polish: Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia

Spanish: Feliz Navidad

Vietnamese: Chuc Mung Giang Sinh

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