

Old-Fashioned Christmas

Thursday, December 12, 2024

Bigger and better

Old-Fashioned Christmas grows while keeping small-town spirit

For the last 30 years, Springtownians have gathered at the town Square, under its crown jewel, the Tabernacle, every second Saturday in December to celebrate the Christmas season as a community. This year, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14., this timeless event is bigger and better than ever before.

For 25 years, this event was known as Christmas on the Square, and it continues to be hosted by the City of Springtown to blend Yuletide and community spirit as a gift to the community. In 2019, the city's newly formed events committee, following direction from the City Council, worked to vastly expand and improve the event. While many mainstay traditions — such as free photos with Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, performances from local entertainers, and vendors selling all kinds of wares — remained, the city's goal was to elevate the event to a higher level and provide even more holiday fun for its residents.

That year, the event was renamed Old-Fashioned Christmas, to highlight the community's traditional small-town values and establish a warm and charming atmosphere in which families and friends could celebrate

the Christmas season in a variety of ways.

The second Saturday in December each year is the annual festival which now includes even more vendors, children's activities, Christmas-themed contests and much more.

Organizers are very excited to bring back the ice-skating feature for the second year. Based on last year's experience, Old-Fashioned Christmas does not require appointments this year. The children's area will include ice skating, a 16-foot double slide, an alpine inflatable bounce house specifically for younger children (toddlers), a petting zoo, coloring contest, cookie giveaway, arts and crafts, face-painting and alpaca petting. The event anticipates having nearly 100 vendors for last-minute Christmas shopping opportunities. Plus, a new feature will be available from the night of the parade daily until the new year — the gazebo at Optimist Park will be decorated and free to use as a backdrop for family Christmas photos.

For more information about the 2024 Old-Fashioned Christmas, visit cityofspringtown.com/city-services/city-events/ofc2024/.



Santa Claus takes a picture with 9-month-old Emberlee Davis and multiple other children during Old-Fashioned Christmas Dec. 9, 2023 in the Springtown Square.

MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Old-Fashioned Christmas

Saturday, December 14, 2024 10-3 pm

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Fun ways to make Christmas Eve even more special for kids

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Parents know that nothing quite matches the excitement young children feel on Christmas Eve. On the day before Christmas, youngsters anxiously anticipate the arrival of Santa Claus that evening, and are perhaps even more excited by the prospects of the following morning, when they'll race into the living room and discover all that the jolly old elf left behind.

Christmas Eve seems to have some built-in magical components, but there are a handful of ways parents can make the day even more spe-

cial for children.

- Track the big guy's movements online. The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), has tracked Santa's Christmas Eve flight for more than 60 years. Beginning on Christmas Eve, families can track Santa's movements across the globe at Noradsanta.org. Kids can visit the site to see where Santa is at any given moment on Christmas Eve, growing more excited as the big fella gets closer and closer to their own region.
- Create a Christmas Eve craft. Gather children and

their cousins and/or friends to create a special Christmas Eve craft or decoration that can be displayed next year. This is a great way to channel youngsters' nervous Christmas Eve energy into something productive, and it can make for a great tradition families can continue even after kids are grown.

- Watch a favorite Christmas movie. Hollywood has never shied away from holiday fare, so there's no shortage of festive films to enjoy with youngsters on Christmas Eve. Enjoy a classic like the 1947 film "Miracle on 34th Street" starring Natalie Wood as the adorable "Susan Walker"



Christmas Eve seems to have some built-in magical components, but there are a handful of ways parents can make the day even more special for children.

- and Edmund Gwenn as "Kris Kringle," or go with something more recent, such as "The Grinch," the 2018 adaptation of the Dr. Seuss book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.
- Take a nighttime stroll or drive to see the lights.

Lighting displays are another component that makes the holiday season so special. After Christmas Eve dinner, take a stroll through your neighborhood to see the lighting displays or climb into the car to take in a different neighborhood's offerings

if you're already familiar with those in your own neck of the woods.

Christmas Eve is a magical day for youngsters and their parents. Some simple ideas can make the day even more meaningful for children and their families.

Classic holiday films the whole family can enjoy

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Celebrants owe the joy of the holiday season to various components. Decor and gift-giving go a long way toward making December a joyous time of year. Holiday films also do their part to make the

season so special.

Many people have their own favorite holiday films, and the following are some that can engage viewers who are young or simply young at heart.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

Released in 1983, this

warmly nostalgic, humorous film is a perennial favorite among families. It follows the story of Ralphie, who has his heart set on a very specific Christmas present: a Red Rider BB gun. Amidst wintry exploits and family drama, the true spirit of Christmas

manages to shine through in this beloved film. Some of the subject matter can be off-color, and there are some bullying scenes. So this is a movie best watched with children who are mature enough to make it through without being scared.

LITTLE WOMEN

Based on the Louisa May Alcott novel of the same name, the 1994 telling of this classic follows the March sisters, who confront financial difficulties, romance and family tragedies in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts. While it's not a traditional Christmas movie, the importance of spending time with family around Christmastime is a core theme in this coming-of-age tale.

KLAUS

Perhaps not as well-known as other animated holiday flicks, "Klaus," released in

2019, has a personality all its own. Postman Jesper, who is not making the grade at the postal academy, is sent to work in a frozen town in the North, where he discovers a reclusive toy maker named Klaus. The unlikely duo ultimately team up to make and deliver toys and bring smiles to children's faces.

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS

Starring the irreplaceable Judy Garland, this movie musical focuses on four sisters who are awaiting the 1904 World's Fair in their hometown, but learn that their father has accepted a new job and the family must move to New York beforehand. A Christmas miracle occurs and all is right in the end. Garland sings a memorable version of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" in the film, solidifying this as a holiday classic. "The Santa Clause"

This Disney film came out in 1994 and remains a family


favorite. When divorced dad Scott (Tim Allen) accidentally kills a man in a Santa suit, he magically becomes the next Santa. He must learn to cope with the ways the transformation to the man in red interrupts his normal life, eventually giving over to the magic of Christmas.

EMMET OTTER'S JUG-BAND CHRISTMAS



Though this 1977 Jim Henson production is a television special and not a full-length feature film, Generation X likely remembers the heartfelt tale of a poor otter family who sacrifice prized possessions to have what's needed to enter a talent contest. The goal is to win the prize money to buy special Christmas presents. Audiences get to enjoy narration by Kermit the Frog.

Films are a popular component that help to make the holiday season so special.






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Real or artificial?

The Christmas tree debate continues

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

People are passionate about the things they love. Through the years there have been many debates over a wide range of topics, from which cola brand to back to which book/movie character was more deserving of a lead character's heart.

The holiday season features a classic example of taking sides. The debate surrounding artificial Christmas trees and their natural alternatives will pick back up this holiday season. As with any debate, there are two sides to every story. Those on the fence as to whether to go real

or fake this year can consider these pros and cons of each.

REAL TREE

Pros: One of the biggest advantages of a real tree is its pleasing aroma. The fresh pine smell of a natural tree can trigger memories of Christmases gone by and make a home feel cozy and holiday-ready. It takes many years for a Christmas tree to grow large enough to be harvested, and as it grows it provides a habitat for animals and benefits the planet by absorbing carbon and providing oxygen, according to Megan Quinn, coordinator of conservation biology at the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

When trees are cut down, two or three may be planted in their place. Buying a real tree from a business nearby also supports the local economy.

Cons: Real trees can be messy and require upkeep like daily watering. Cutting down a tree oneself and bringing it home can help guarantee freshness, but there is really no way to know when trees at Christmas tree lots were cut down. This means that needles can begin falling the moment the tree is placed in the living room. Another thing to note is that live trees can't be placed just anywhere. They shouldn't be next to fireplaces or heat

sources, where they can dry out prematurely and pose a fire risk. A real tree also might have unwelcome bugs or animals hiding within its branches. According to Penn State Extension, anything from spotted lanternflies to spiders to aphids to bark beetles or lice may be on a real tree.

ARTIFICIAL TREE

Pros: Artificial trees can be convenient because they are easy to assemble, disassemble and store. Plus, you don't have to venture out each year to get one. Unlike real trees, artificial trees do not require watering or vacuuming to manage fallen needles. Since

artificial trees can be reused for numerous seasons, they may be more cost-effective than real trees. Artificial trees can last anywhere from six to 10 years, but that life span depends on the quality of the tree and how well it is maintained. Artificial trees also guarantee a uniform, pleasing look year after year.

Cons: Artificial trees are made from polyvinyl chloride and other plastics, and environmentalists attest that those ingredients make them bad for the environment.

According to an assessment study of artificial versus natural trees published in 2009 by Ellipso, a Montreal-based

sustainable development consulting firm, an artificial tree emits 8.1 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year, compared to 3.1 kilograms of carbon dioxide emitted by a real tree in a given year. In addition, the chemicals used in manufacture may have adverse effects on human health and often are non-recyclable. Artificial trees also take up room in homes year-round since they need to be stored. Plus, they don't emit a pleasing aroma.

The debate over a real or artificial Christmas tree is sure to rage on year after year, so it's up to holiday celebrants to make their pick.

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Old Fashioned Christmas PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

10:30 am	All City Choir
11:00 am	SHS Showstoppers
11:15 am	SMS Showstoppers
11:30 am	Mini Showstoppers
11:45 am	Pee Wee Dancers
12:15 pm	6th Grade
12:30 pm	SHS Choirs
1:00 pm	Klassy Kloggers



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Klassy Kloggers director Shirley Anderson leads the Klassy Kloggers, including Jewelletta Stovall and Susie Cordell, in dances in the Springtown Tabernacle during Old-Fashioned Christmas last weekend.

How some popular holiday traditions got their start

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Will you be baking gingerbread or hanging stockings by the fireplace this holiday season? Perhaps you'll be lighting the menorah or playing a game of dreidel? The holidays are steeped in tradition, some of which are older than celebrants may realize.

Individuals gather during the holidays and participate in various traditions that have withstood the test of time. Most people engage in these traditions or recognize symbols automatically, but it can be interesting to learn how these traditions came to be.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The British traditions of wassailing and mumming and the Slavic tradition of koliada were some of the precursors to more modern caroling. People would go door-to-door and recite poetry or sing with the hope of bringing about good fortune or influencing a future harvest, according to Rutgers University. Carolers spread hope and good tidings through song during a time of year when sunlight was limited.

CHRISTMAS TREES

Pagans once displayed evergreen branches as a reminder that spring would come again, while Romans placed them around temples to honor Saturn, the god of agriculture. Eventually the evergreen was used in conjunction with Christian Christmas celebrations. In the sixteenth century, German Christians put trees inside their homes as symbols of everlasting life.

SANTA CLAUS

Children who celebrate Christmas eagerly await the arrival of a jolly sort who goes by the name of Santa Claus. His origin story stretches back to the third century, when Saint Nicholas became the patron saint of children. Saint Nicholas was a monk in what is modern-day Turkey. It is said that he traveled helping the poor and the sick. History.com says he is believed to have saved three impoverished sisters from slavery by providing them with a dowry so they could be married, and he also provided gifts to children.

MENORAH

The menorah is a multi-

branched candelabra used in Jewish religious rituals. The menorah is first mentioned in the book of Exodus when the design of the lamp was revealed to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. Many menorahs are seven-branched, but during Chanukah, an eight-branched menorah is used. The Chanukah menorah is modeled after the Tabernacle menorah that corresponds to the eight-day festival. It was used to celebrate the rededication of the Second Temple. The available oil supply was supposed to light the menorah for just one day, but the candles actually burned for eight.

MISTLETOE

Kissing under the mistletoe is a holiday season tradition that can lead to some red faces when couples are caught beneath the plant. Norse mythology paved the way for kissing under the mistletoe. Legend has it the gods used mistletoe to resurrect Odin's son, Baldur, from the dead. Baldur's mother, Frigg, the goddess of love, made the plant a symbol of love and vowed to kiss anyone who passed under it. Mistletoe



The Bûche de Noël is a traditional Christmas cake that is especially popular in France.

blooms under cold conditions, which is how it became associated with the holiday season.

YULE LOG

Yule logs were once part of winter solstice celebrations to bring good luck and fortune, but America is where a

yule log really caught on as a holiday tradition. In 1966, the WPIX television station in New York City aired a continuous loop of a fireplace burning for three hours with holiday songs playing. It became an annual tradition, says History.com. Some people even serve a cake that looks like a yule

log. The Bûche de Noël is a traditional Christmas cake that is especially popular in France.

Holiday traditions continue in full force. Traditions are an endearing component of celebrations and help to unite people from all backgrounds during this special time of year.

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