

e-notebook

The who, what, when, where @ OCC



Week of December 19, 2011 Read current and back editions at <http://www.ocean.edu/news/enotebook.htm>



HOLIDAY EDITION

I don't know if you've been naughty or nice (*although I have a feeling that many of you may have been naughty*), but either way, you deserve to be treated to the annual super-spectacular holiday edition of *e-notebook*! Enjoy the stories, recipes, and of course, all our regular columns.



TRADITIONS

Each time I run this article, it evokes a lot of positive responses. Originally written in 1990 and updated in 2007, I updated this article again in 2010 because a lot had changed. Well, I thought it would be nice to re-run it with a little more updating ... because a whole year has passed and I thought it could be tweaked ... again. I hope you enjoy this latest rendition.

"Traditions" by RoseAnn D'Urso

Traditions. Thanksgiving traditions. Christmas traditions. Holiday traditions. Do you have any? My family sure does ... or did. Every year, while my parents were still around to aggravate me (and vice versa), I insisted on having my mother's special mashed sweet potatoes with apple sauce. I can see the casserole coming out of the oven...the top browned with apple sauce and cinnamon sugar. A taste sensation! I have tried to duplicate the recipe, and it tastes pretty darn good, if I do say so myself ... but my mother had a special touch.

Last year, however, there were no sweet potatoes with applesauce ... my niece Cassie went sugar-free ... but that's OK.

Every year, there was also my home-made, from scratch stuffing; made out-of-the-bird, but every bit as delicious. Today, 20 plus years later, Stove Top is about all I can muster ... but I still love it!

However, last year, we went gluten-free for my niece Gina ... so there was no Stove Top ... but that's OK.



In years gone by, besides the usual Butterball for Thanksgiving and lasagna and ham for Christmas, we also had antipasto (it's an Italian thing), salad, chicken soup with tiny meatballs and escarole (a.k.a. Italian Wedding Soup), peas with onions, glazed carrots, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, Italian bread (better not forget this or my father would hit the roof!), pumpkin pie (I made one every year for my mother; she was the only person who ate it), apple pie, cookies, brownies, assorted roasted nuts (an Italian tradition), fruits, and probably a half dozen more things that my mother insisted on making.

Did I mention that last year, we went gluten-free and sugar-free ... and oh yes, dairy-free for the lactose intolerant and casein sensitive and vegan-minded folk. But that's OK.



However, absolutely no Thanksgiving meal ... or Christmas meal ... or any other holiday meal ... or any other meal for that matter ... would be complete without the traditional "yell-fest" (better known in most households as a fight). However, in our home, it was not a fight. We just happened to speak very loudly. VERY LOUDLY! (Oh, who am I kidding, they were fights.) When my grandfather was alive, he'd get upset, stand up, and pound his fist on the table. (It's an Italian thing.) Then we'd eat dessert.

Now come on, admit it. Unless your names are Ward and June, or perhaps Barbie and Ken, your family too has noisy confrontations around the cornucopia, Christmas tree, or Menorah. What will the fight (oops, I mean discussion) be about this year? Taxes. Football. Politics. Taxes. Football. Politics. Taxes. Football. Politics. And of course, the ever popular "When I was young..." My parents used to tell us they had to walk 15 city blocks in the snow plus take a bus and a subway just to get school ... and they didn't even have a TV or telephone! Today, I tell my nieces that we didn't have computers, we had to hand write our research papers ... and we had black and white TV, and the telephones had rotary dials! Then I notice that my nieces are texting and I have to repeat myself ... am I getting old?

But, whatever the topic was, I was always sure to get a headache and then breathe a sigh of relief when everyone went home. My mother and I would look at each other and vow that next year, we were going out to eat. But we never did. A few years ago, I hosted Christmas and vowed I would never do it again. Ever hear of the saying, "never say never"? Guess what, I've offered to cook for Christmas each year since.



When my mother passed in 2001, my father and I started to spend Thanksgiving and Christmas with my brother and his family. I have fond memories of my father and me fighting all the way there in the car. The last time my father and I drove to my brother's, we were fighting as usual – he didn't like the toll booth I chose. I like going to booths with a toll collector, he wanted me to go to the booth where you close your eyes, throw in the exact change, and hope you didn't miss. Well, there we were waiting in the line with the toll collector, yelling at each other so loudly that the person in the car in front of us heard ... and in the spirit of the holiday, he paid our toll. Taken aback, my father

and I drove the rest of the way in silence. That was the last Thanksgiving my father and I spent together – he passed away four weeks later on my birthday.

With the passing of my father in 2006, there haven't been any fights at the dinner table or in the car. In 2010, menus began to feature new items, new faces have appeared at the dinner table, and holiday gatherings have more or less evolved. I guess that's how new traditions are made. And that's OK.

With the passing of my mother in 2001, there weren't sweet potatoes with applesauce or homemade stuffing for many years. That is until summer 2011. While I didn't teach my gluten-free niece how to make stuffing, I did teach her how to make sweet potatoes with applesauce ... peas with onions ... glazed carrots ... and my version of steak pizzaiola. That's how traditions get passed on ... and that's how the dearly departed live on ... not just in our memories but through our food, customs, stories, and traditions.

Time moves on and traditions change ... but people and memories become far more important than which toll booth you choose, or what's on the menu, or whether or not the house is clean or impeccably decorated. And that's just as it should be.

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HOLIDAY NEWS

Great Gift Ideas!

The **Bookstore** has a beautiful selection of Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa gifts ... plus, baby and kids' clothes, including Christmas baby!! **Now through December 22**, faculty and staff receive **25% plus 10% off** their purchase. Employee ID is required at the time of purchase.



Holiday Safety Notice

To help assure a safe and happy holiday, please follow these Holiday safety precautions while on campus. 1) Natural trees, wreaths, branches, etc. are prohibited. 2) Displays should not obstruct exits or exit signs, fire extinguishers, pull stations, or electrical panels. 3) Egress/corridor widths must be maintained. 4) Unplug decorative lights at night or when the area is unoccupied. 5) Only low-temperature mini-lights are permitted and must be UL-approved. 6) Electric lights on metallic trees are not permitted. 6) Use of extension cords is discouraged. If they cannot be avoided, cords must bear the UL-approved label and be of adequate wire gauge for the intended use. Do not use frayed or broken cords!! 7) Electrical cords must not be run beneath rugs or across work surfaces, and must not become trip hazards. 8) Candles, oil lamps, incense, or other open flame items are not allowed. 9) Please remove all trees and decorations before leaving campus for the holidays. **REMEMBER:** The Dover Township Bureau of Fire Safety will cite any display that does not meet the above requirements!! **NOTE:** If a fire occurs, immediately call ext. 2200 to report fire location. Sound the building alarms. Evacuate the area and close doors as you leave.



Master Calendar Rings in the New Year!

The **Ocean County Master Gardener 2012 Calendars** are available! These popular calendars feature monthly gardening and environmental tips – best of all, the tips are very specific to Ocean County soils and gardening conditions! Info: Mary Judge, mjudge@ocean.edu or ext. 2982 – a free copy will be sent to you via inter-office mail.



Holiday Schedule

The College will be **CLOSED** for the **HOLIDAY: Friday, December 23, 2011 through Monday, January 2, 2012**. The campus will reopen on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.



Holiday Timesheet/Payroll Schedule

To allow employees to be paid before the winter break, the timesheet/payroll schedule will be adjusted. The pay date of December 30 will be moved to December 23. Payroll will accept timesheets beginning Friday, December 16. Timesheets **must be received no later than 10:00 a.m.**

Monday, December 19. Hourly employee timesheets should report normal hours for December 10-23. Non-benefit employees (reservists, students, etc.) should report hours worked through December 16 only. Overtime worked December 17-23 will be processed in the next pay on January 13. For pay day January 13, timesheets **must be submitted no later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 09.** (*Hand-deliver timesheets and do not use interoffice mail. Timesheets not received on time will not be processed until the following pay cycle. Payroll will not be able to make exceptions.*)

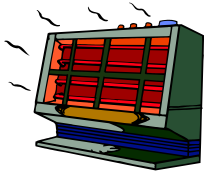
Supervisors: Report any non-routine employee absences to Karen Blyskal, via email, no later than December 16. Non-routine absences include extended sick leave, disability, resignation, etc. If wages are incorrectly paid near the end of the calendar year, it will have an impact on the employee's 2011 W-2. **Questions:** Call Payroll at ext. 2060, 2059, 2356; or Financial Aid, ext. 2320, for College Work Study issues.



BREAKING NEWS

VALIC Financial Advisor on Campus

Christopher J. Carrozza, CPA, will be in Human Resources on Thursday, **January 26** to meet with employees to discuss individual pension allocations, enrollment information, and changes to contributions. Whether or not you are currently a VALIC participant, if you would like to meet with Chris, please contact him at 800-892-5558, ext. 87325, or chris.carrozza@valic.com to schedule an appointment. If you are not available to meet with Chris on January 26, he will be happy to make alternative arrangements.



Portable Heater Guidelines

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that every year space heaters are associated with more than 25,000 fires and 300 fatalities. Additionally, in some areas on campus, space heaters can overburden an electrical circuit and cause breakers to trip! If you must use a portable space heater on campus, please follow these guidelines: 1) Space heaters must be approved and tagged by the Facilities Department prior to plug in. Use the work order process to schedule an inspection. 2) Space heaters must be kept at least three feet away (or greater if specified by manufacturer) from any combustible materials such as files, curtains, and trash cans. 3) Nothing can be placed on top of or touching a space heater. 4) Space heaters must be turned off and unplugged when the area being used is not occupied. 5) Space heaters must be plugged into a wall receptacle when in use (no extension cords) and the cord must not be run under carpet or create a tripping hazard. 6) Facilities reserves the right to remove any space heater that may create a dangerous condition or overburden the circuitry. Info: Jule Raichle, ext. 2441.



Paycheck Conversion

OCC is in the process of converting Payroll from ADP to Datatel, which will result in significant annual savings. Datatel is can now provide the services we receive from ADP including electronic delivery of advices and W-2s. **NOTE:** There are some important dates/information all employees need to know.

You will receive your **2011 W-2** from ADP in the same fashion as last year (both paper and on-line). The **ADP I-Pay** system will be **available** to you online **until June 2012**. Before June 2012, you may wish to print historical information from the I-Pay system and keep it for your records.

Payroll will be processed via **Datatel** beginning with the **first pay in January, 2012**. The timekeeping process currently used (time clock, timesheet, time exception report, etc.) will not change.

There may be some **differences** in how the two systems **calculate tax withholdings** therefore you may notice a difference in your pay check. We anticipate that the calculation difference will be minimal for most employees.

If you wish to change your withholding, you may complete a W4 form and submit it to Payroll.

Credit union payroll deductions will no longer be processed. Banks today offer an automatic transfer service so you can direct deposit your check and you can arrange for your bank to make an automatic transfer to your credit union account.

Information regarding how to login and use the Datatel online system for Payroll information will be distributed before the first payroll in January 2012.

HOLIDAY POEM

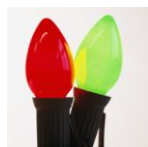
“ ‘Twas the Week Before Winter Break” by RoseAnn D’Urso

‘Twas the week before winter break and all over the campus
Folks were hustling and bustling and making a ruckus.
The students were cramming for last minute tests
Just waiting to party on their month-long recess.



Administrators, professors, and supportive staff too
Sat planning and scheming on what they would do.
When suddenly the campus lit up like Broadway
A short, skinny Santa was pulling a green sleigh!

“Hey everyone, listen, now where’s the good cheer?”
Santa said, waiting, just listening to hear.
“Take a minute, slow down, relax, stop the band
“Smile, say howdy, and offer your hand.
“Presents are nice and parties are fun
“But the holidays are over before they’re begun!”



The campus activity stopped on a dime
Was everyone so busy, they had forgotten the time?
With good cheer and laughter they wished each other well.
Hey, who was that skinny Santa?
I know, but I won’t tell.

Santa packed up the little green sleigh
And up it went, up, up, and away!
Then Santa was heard as the sleigh flew out of sight...

“See you all in 2012! Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and all that jazz.”*
(Now, you really didn’t think that it was all going to rhyme...did you?)



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CAMPUS BRIEFS

Be Part of the Faculty & Staff Variety/Talent Show!

Don’t delay ... just a few spots remain! Sign-up for the **Faculty & Staff Variety-Talent Show** on Friday, **March 30** at 7:00 p.m. Are you a dancer, ventriloquist, magician, unicyclist, comedian, juggler, impersonator, acoustic musician (piano, guitar, saxophone, violin, etc.), singer (soloist, duo, trio, quartet), dramatic or poetry reader, etc? There are no judges, just a chance to show your stuff! To participate, email your name and talent (acts must be two to four minutes maximum length) to the Variety-Talent Show Committee Chair, Cheryl Rundle Borowski, papbcrb@comcast.net no later than **January 31**.



Weekly Cafeteria Menus

Weekly menu specials are posted at <http://www.ocean.edu/cruiser.htm>, just click on **OCC Cafeteria Weekly Menu**. Food services can be reached at ext. 2255 or foodservice@ocean.edu. Enjoy!



Board Clips

Current and back editions of Board Clips are posted on the web and can be accessed by clicking http://www.ocean.edu/news/Board_Clips.htm.



TRIPPING WITH CPE

All Ages Can Enjoy Unique Bus Excursions

Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Cost includes bus/lavatory, lunch/dinner as noted, trip leader, tour, and gratuity. Seating is limited. Info: Continuing Education, ext. 404.

TRIP	DAY	DATE	COST
Philadelphia Flower Show & Lunch on the Moshulu	Mon	March 5	\$139
Philadelphia Museum of Art & Lunch	Thurs	April 19	\$139
Cape May: Birding Cruise, Estate Tour, & Lunch	Thurs	May 3	\$119
Four-Day Boston Getaway	Mon-Thur	May 21-24	\$699-\$869



To Your Health

Protect Yourself & Others from the Flu

The Centers for Disease Control has targeted college students as a high risk for spreading the flu. Since we are in close contact with students, consult your health care provider to decide if you should be vaccinated. **Reminder:** Flu can be easily spread! 1) Wash hands often with soap/water or use alcohol-based hand cleaners. 2) When coughing/sneezing, cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or your elbow/sleeve. Immediately throw tissue in garbage and wash hands. 3) Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth – these are entry points for the virus. **Flu Symptoms:** sore throat, fever, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, diarrhea, and vomiting. **What to Do:** If you're feeling ill, call your doctor and stay home with any flu-like illness for at least 24 hours **after** there is **no longer** a fever or signs of a fever. **Info:** Visit the State of New Jersey Health page www.state.nj.gov/health for up-to-date information.



Natural Antibiotics

Winter is here and with it comes the flu ... colds ... sinus infections ... bronchitis ... strep throat ... and a host of other “nasty bugs.” Be prepared to fight back! The following natural antibiotics and antivirals can help you get well. **Note:** Be certain to check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any natural remedy. **Caution:** Not all natural remedies are created equal ... some products may not even contain the herb noted on the bottle!! Be certain to use only reputable companies to make sure that you’re really getting what you pay for.

Cinnamon & Honey – Use on a daily basis to help protect against bacteria and viruses, including coughs, colds, sinus infections, bladder infections, and more.

Echinacea – Use to fight bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Do not take more than 10 days. If you have an autoimmune disorder, consult your physician before starting Echinacea.

Eucalyptus – Even the makers of Vick’s VapoRub know about this natural remedy ... it’s the ingredient that suppresses coughs and decongests sinuses.

Garlic – Not only does it keep away vampires, this natural antibiotic, antifungal, and antiviral contains “allicin,” which is similar to “penicillin.” During World War II, it was known as “Russian penicillin” since it was so effective at treating wound infections.

Olive Leaf Extract – As an antibiotic and antiviral, it is said to fight almost any type of infection including fungi and parasites. Try it to treat flu, colds, sinusitis, and more.

Oregano Oil – This is the “King of Natural Antibiotics.” It kills pneumococcus, staphylococcus, streptococcus, and enterococcus, among other bacteria.

For more information visit the following websites:

<http://www.amazingherbs.com/>

<http://www.refreshingnews9.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.totalhealthbreakthroughs.com/2009/03/mother-natures-natural-germ-fighters/>



WHAT’S HAPPENING!?

Student Life Activities – Info: ext. 348

ATTRACTION	TICKETS	INFO / RESTRICTIONS	COST
Marquee Cinema	Discount	any day, movie out 14 days	\$8.00
Regal Cinema	Super Saver	any day, any movie	\$7.50
AMC Cinema	Gold	any day, any movie	\$7.50
AMC Cinema	Silver	any day, movie out 10 days	\$6.00



Arts & Community Center Theater – Box Office: ext. 500

SERIES	SHOW	TIME	DAY	DATE	COST
MidWeek Jazz	The Midiri Brothers	8:00 p.m.	Wed	Jan 11	\$15-\$18
	Geoff Gallante Trio	8:00 p.m.	Wed	Feb 8	\$15-\$18
	Fete Manouche Returns	8:00 p.m.	Wed	Mar 7	\$15-\$18
Premier Performance	Recuerdos de Espana	2:00 p.m.	Sun	Jan 29	\$25-\$28



Planetarium

Adults	\$10 Regular Show	\$14 Laser Show
Seniors 60+ / OCC Rewards Card	\$ 8 Regular Show	\$12 Laser Show
Children (12 & under)	\$ 7 Regular Show	\$10 Laser Show
OCC Students with ID	\$ 7 Regular Show	\$10 Laser Show

The Planetarium is CLOSED on 12/24, 12/25, 12/27, 12/28, 12/29, 12/31, & 1/1.
 The Planetarium is OPEN thru December 23 & on 12/26 & 12/30 – check schedule for show times.
 Please check the Planetarium webpage for updated info & the January show schedule.
<http://www.ocean.edu/campus/planetarium/index.htm>

NOW THRU DECEMBER 23

WINTER SHOWS

The Stars from My Backyard

DAY	TIME
Sat /Sun	11:30 a.m.

Wonders of the Holiday Sky

Fri	7:00 p.m.
Sat /Sun	1:00 p.m.

Season of Light

Fri	8:15 p.m.
Sat /Sun	2:30 p.m.
Sat	8:15 p.m.

Laser Holiday

Sat	7:00 p.m.
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DECEMBER 26 ONLY

WINTER SHOW

The Stars from My Backyard

DAY	TIME
Mon	11:30 a.m.

DECEMBER 30 ONLY

DAY/EVE HOLIDAY SHOWS

The Stars from My Backyard

DAY	TIME
Fri	11:30 a.m.

Wonders of the Holiday Sky

Fri	1:00/7:00 p.m.
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Season of Light

Fri	2:30/8:15 p.m.
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Laser Holiday

Fri	4:00 p.m.
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Laser X: Alternative eXperience

Fri	9:30 p.m.
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Holiday Cheer

Santa Chick says: “Chirp, chirp! Keep reading for lots of holiday fun and oodles of tasty recipes – some old favorites and others destined to become new favorites! These recipes are sure to make your holiday table sparkle. Check out our special gluten-free, dairy-free, low-fat, and vegetarian recipes!”



TRUE E-NOTEBOOK BIOGRAPHY



This is the true story of Rudy the artiodactyla. You never heard of him!? Come on, you don't know that famous genus *rengifer* from the *cervidae* family? He still doesn't ring a Christmas bell? Oh, yeh, I forgot. You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen; Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen...those other every day, run-of-the-mill flying genus *rengifer* But do you know the story of the most famous flying genus *rengifer* of all?! His name is Rudolph.



Rudolph is a red nose reindeer, whose remarkable life story was told in a song made popular by Gene Autry in 1949. Rudy, as his close, personal friends call him, was born in 1939 after he was conceived by Montgomery Ward department store. So inspiring was this little flying reindeer's story, it was made into a television special in 1964. However, due to his work schedule with Santa, an animated character was recruited to portray this legend on the small screen.



Rudy's remarkable life includes both joyous and sad moments. Most notably, he had to suffer the cruel mockery and rejection of his peers due to his so-called "non-conformity." Run out of Christmas Town, Rudy endured the long, harsh North Pole winter only to see his true doe love, Clarice, be deer-napped by The Bumble (a.k.a. the Abominable Snowman of the North). But by that time, Rudy was a plucky little reindeer that had grown into a strong and resourceful buck. He set out to save Clarice and the others who were taken captive by The Bumble.



Although Rudy is credited with saving Christmas Town from The Bumble, Rudy's humility shines through as he is quick to point out that his friends, Hermey – a misfit elf and self-proclaimed dentist, along with Yukon Cornelius – a prospector, were both instrumental in defeating The Bumble. As a matter of fact, Hermey and Yukon rehabilitated The Bumble, teaching him how to place the star atop Santa's massive Christmas tree, which is rumored to be way bigger than the tree at Rockefeller Center.

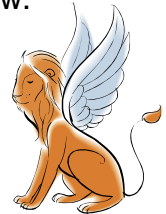


Rudy then went on to save Christmas itself, when a dense fog prohibited Santa from making his midnight rounds one year. Records are rather sketchy as to which year this actually happened, but everybody from Christmas Town backs up the story with eye-witness testimony, including Sam the Snowman (who looks uncannily like Burl Ives). With his usual aplomb, Rudy took charge, led the way, and lit the path for the other "normal" flying reindeer that just couldn't cut it (the dense fog, that is). It seems that Rudy's "non-conformity" came in handy and nobody seemed to mind that his nose glowed!!



As a young buck, Rudy lacked adequate support from his parents – although no doubt his mother loved him. A stern, but well-meaning, father, Donner, tried to force his young buck to conform to the crowd by insisting Rudy wear a prosthetic nose. His father’s position as one of Santa’s top stags, coupled with his embarrassment over his young buck’s “non-conformity,” set the stage for Rudy’s wandering through the snow.

Rudy, however, credits his emotional strength to the lessons he learned at the foot of King Moonracer from the Island of Misfit Toys. So indebted was Rudy for having received wise counsel from the king that he kept his promise to return to the island and give every toy (with a “non-conformity”) a home.



After his heroic deeds, everybody loved Rudy and he took his proper place in childhood history. Rudy retired in 2001 and lives in Palm Springs, Florida, with Clarice and their toy Bird Fish.

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HOLIDAY SING-A-LONG

Is This “The Christmas Song” Song? by RoseAnn D’Urso

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire
The IRS will be nipping at your nose.
You’ve overspent on credit again
The bank is likely to foreclose.

Everybody loves a Turkey and a VCR
A new compact disc is a must.
Mall Santas are taking over the world
Eat one more cookie and you’ll bust.



You know the Visa bill is on its way
It’s loaded lots of surcharges for each day.
And every mom and dad are gonna cry
When junior tries to make little sister fly.



And so I’m offering this special thought
To simple folks and those with clout.
Have fun and celebrate, but please don’t forget
Spending money isn’t what Christmas is all about!

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HOLIDAY RECIPES

ALL NEW! Stuffed Mushrooms (Kathy Caro)



Ingredients:

Pam (vegetable spray)	½ cup chopped walnuts
¼ stick butter	¼ cup Italian flavored breadcrumbs
½ cup chopped onions, frozen or fresh	2 boxes of white whole mushrooms/ remove stems and chop stems only
1 tsp season salt	

Method: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 13 x 9 glass Pyrex casserole dish with vegetable spray. Melt butter in a medium skillet on medium heat. Add chopped onions and chopped mushroom stems; sauté, on lower heat, until soft and wilted (about 10 minutes). Add season salt and walnuts; sauté (5 minutes). Add breadcrumbs to thicken mixture; add a little more, if necessary. Place mushroom caps in baking dish. Fill each mushroom cap with mixture. Bake 25 minutes or until mushrooms are brown and thoroughly heated.

All New! Elvis's Sweet Potatoes (Barbara Caldwell)

Ingredients:

2 large yams	2 apples
1/4 cup packed brown sugar	1 tsp cornstarch
1/8 tsp ground cloves	½ cup orange juice
2 tbsp chopped pecans or walnuts	



Method: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large saucepan, filled with water, boil yams unpeeled for approx. 30 minutes or until tender but still firm. Remove yams from water and set aside to cool slightly. When yams are cool enough to handle, peel and slice them crosswise approx. ¼ inch thick. Core and slice the apples the same thickness. In a shallow baking dish, overlap apples and yam slices. In a saucepan, combine sugar, cornstarch, cloves, and orange juice. Cook over low heat, stirring until sugar has dissolved and sauce thickens. Pour sauce over apples and yams. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake for 20 minutes or until apples and yams are tender. Note: This recipe can be doubled.

All New! Aunt Irma's Squash (Kaaren Finberg)

Ingredients:

Butternut Squash	Spiral of Maple Syrup	French Fried
2 Ginger Snaps	2 tbsp Apricot Jelly	Onion Rings



Method:

Peel, dice, cook, and mash butternut squash. Spread out in an even layer in bottom of baking dish. Crush two ginger snap cookies and sprinkle over the top. Take maple syrup and pour on top in a spiral motion from one end of casserole to the other – one spiral should do it. Spread two tablespoons of apricot jelly over top. Sprinkle French Fried Onion Rings on top. Cook covered until bubbly at 350 degrees. Best made one day ahead.

Brunch

Christmas Soufflé

Put it together the day or night before and bake it in the morning!

Ingredients:

8-10 slices of cubed bread (use sliced bread or Italian/French for a crunchy soufflé)	2 cups milk
6-8 eggs slightly beaten	4 tbsp melted butter or margarine
	2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese
	1 tbsp vanilla



Method: Spray large casserole pan with vegetable spray. Mix all ingredients together adding bread last. Refrigerate covered overnight. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour or until top is golden.

Appetizers

Cheese Ring

Ingredients:

1 tube / 8 crescent rolls		¼ cup confectioner's sugar
small pkg cream cheese		milk
1 can cherry pie filling		granulated sugar

Method: 1) Lightly grease a 9-inch pie pan. 2) Put the crescent rolls flat in a circle with the wide part in the middle. 3) Spoon on 1 tablespoon of cream cheese mixed with 1/4 cup of confectioner's sugar and 1 tablespoon of cherries. 4) Fold over until each roll is filled. 5) Wipe milk on top and sprinkle granulated sugar on top. 6) Bake for about 20 minutes on 375. Enjoy!!

Supreme Crab Dip

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese		2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley, optional
1 cup mayonnaise		1 lb crabmeat, check for shells/cartilage
2 tbsp. finely chopped pimiento		20 crackers
8 crushed no-salt saltine crackers		toast points or sliced country bread
2 tsp. seafood seasoning, (Old Bay)		

Method: 1) Place oven rack in center of oven and heat oven to 350 degrees. 2) In large bowl, combine cheese, mayonnaise, pimientos, crackers, seafood seasoning, and parsley. 3) Mix until well combined. 4) Carefully fold in crabmeat and gently mix just until crab is coated. 5) Spoon mixture into a medium gratin or casserole dish and bake for 20 minutes or until the cheese has melted. 6) Serve immediately with a butter knife for spreading the dip on the toast points or sliced country bread.

Pepperoni Loaf

Ingredients:

1 lb. pizza dough (homemade, Italian bakery, or grocery store frozen food department)	2 eggs, beaten 1 stick pepperoni 8 oz. mozzarella cheese 4 oz. Muenster cheese	oregano black pepper salt
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Method: Cut pepperoni, mozzarella, and Muenster cheese into small (bite size) pieces. In small bowl, beat eggs, set aside. Roll out pizza dough into a large circle. Spread $\frac{3}{4}$ of egg mixture evenly over dough. Sprinkle on oregano, black pepper, and salt. Arrange evenly on dough pepperoni, mozzarella, and Muenster cheese pieces. With hands, roll dough into a log, flatten top slightly. Spread remaining egg on top of loaf, sealing edges as you work. Sprinkle top of loaf with oregano and pinch of pepper. Place loaf on large cookie sheet. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 20-30 minutes or until top is browned. Remove from oven, let stand 5 minutes and cut. Serve alone as an appetizer or as a main dish with a spinach salad and sangria.

Main Course

Pumpkin Casserole (Debbie & Chuck Robinson)

Ingredients:

1 baking pumpkin, 10" diameter (size of a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ qt. casserole dish)	2 tsp. dried basil
2 cups cooked brown rice	1 tsp. oregano
2 cups canned or cooked kidney beans, drained and rinsed	2 sliced tomatoes or 1 can diced tomatoes, drained
1 chopped onion	1 can corn, drained
3 cloves minced garlic	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated low fat cheddar cheese



Method: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut lid in top of pumpkin and scoop out seeds. Mix together rice, beans, onion, garlic, and seasoning and put into pumpkin; layer in corn then tomatoes. Put pumpkin lid on, place in baking dish with one inch water, and bake at 400 degrees for one hour. Remove lid and top with cheese. Replace lid and bake another $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, until pumpkin is tender. Serve out of pumpkin shell; be sure to serve some cooked pumpkin with each serving.



Grilled Salmon

Ingredients:

1 cup Sun-Dried Tomatoes in oil	1 Salmon filet (2 lb.) 1 inch thick
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Method: Put salmon on a long sheet of aluminum foil that can be wrapped up to fully cover the fish. Pour sun dried tomatoes in oil over salmon to marinate for a little while. Wrap salmon with tomatoes and oil on it in the aluminum foil. Grill for 10 - 20 minutes or until salmon flakes easily with fork.

Side Dishes

Berry Mallow Yam Bake

This family favorite can be made with regular flour and oats, or gluten-free products can be substituted and it still tastes great!



Ingredients:

½ cup flour	1/3 cup butter
½ cup brown sugar	2 – 17 oz. cans yams
½ cup old-fashioned oats	2 cups fresh cranberries
1 tsp. cinnamon	1 ½ cups mini-marshmallows

Method: 1) Combine flour, brown sugar, oats, and cinnamon. Add butter, cut into pieces, mixing until it looks like coarse crumbs. 2) In a large bowl, toss yams, cranberries, and 1 cup of crumb mixture. Place yams in a buttered 1 ½ quart casserole dish and sprinkle with remaining crumbs. 3) Bake at 350°F for 35 minutes. 4) Top with marshmallows and broil until browned.

Gluten-free Stuffing (www.celiac.com)

Ingredients:

5-6 cups gluten-free bread (2 loaves) cut into one-inch cubes, toasted & cooled	1 tablespoon fresh sage, finely chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil	1-2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, finely chopped
3 cups celery, chopped	1-2 cups gluten-free chicken broth
1 large yellow onion, chopped	1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, finely chopped	1 teaspoon salt
	1/2 teaspoon pepper

Method: 1) Sauté onion and celery in olive oil on medium-low heat until translucent. 2) Stir in rosemary, sage, and thyme; sauté another 1-2 minutes. 3) Bring chicken stock to boil. 4) Place egg yolk in a medium-size bowl. Slowly spoon 2-3 ounces of chicken stock into egg yolk while whisking mixture (blending a small amount of stock into the egg first will prevent scrambled eggs). Then add remainder of chicken stock to egg mixture. 5) Add cooled celery, onion, and herbs into stock/egg mixture. 6) Toss bread cubes into mixture and coat thoroughly. 7) Add salt and pepper and toss. 8) Place mixture into greased 3-quart casserole dish and cover with aluminum foil. 9) Place in 400°F oven for 40-50 minutes. Insert toothpick into stuffing, if it comes out clean, the stuffing is done. If not, bake until the toothpick comes out clean. Note: To cook stuffing inside turkey, add only 1 cup of chicken broth.

Pineapple Delight (Brenda Russotti)

Ingredients:

Canned pineapple rings in their own juice
(10 slices per can)
1 box Jell-O (any flavor)

1 container Cool Whip
1 box pistachio instant pudding
colored sprinkles (optional)



Method: 1) Open pineapple can on one side only – drain out juice thoroughly, leaving rings in can. 2) Prepare Jell-O and spoon liquid into pineapple can, which serves as the mold. 3) Put can on top shelf of refrigerator to mold. Refrigerate until Jell-O molds (usually overnight). DO NOT PUT CANS IN THE DOOR. 4) When ready to serve, put can on a platter (opened side down), open up other end of can, using top of can to push pineapple slices through. Arrange slices on platter. 5) Mix box of pistachio instant pudding with Cool Whip, and put in a separate bowl or serving dish. (Serve pineapple and cool whip in separate platter and bowl so everyone can serve themselves.) (Optional) – sprinkle pineapple slices and/or pudding with colored sprinkles, or any other sprinkle you like. TIP – At the holidays, I make one can each of red and green Jell-O. ENJOY!!!!!!!!!!



Dessert

Rice Krispie Treats

A new twist on an old favorite!

Ingredients:

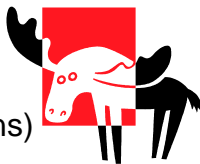
chocolate of your choice Rice Krispies peanut butter (optional)

Method: In the microwave, melt as much chocolate as you like and every 1-2 minutes stir to see if it is melted. Once melted, stir in enough Rice Krispies to soak up the chocolate. Spoon in peanut butter (optional). Mix to coat well. Spoon mixture on wax paper and freeze for a few minutes. Cut and enjoy.

Chocolate Mousse Crunch Cake

Ingredients:

12 oz. container Cool Whip
2 pkgs. chocolate mousse
(follow package directions)



8 oz. crushed Heath bars
1 round chocolate cake slit in half
(store bought or make your own)

Method: Add to the bowl 1/3 of chocolate mousse. Add 1/3 Cool Whip. Place ½ round layer chocolate cake on top. Add 1/3 mousse. Add 1/3 Cool Whip. Add 4 oz. crushed Heath bars. Place ½ round layer chocolate cake on top. Add 1/3 mousse. Add 1/3 Cool Whip. Add 4 oz. crushed Heath bars.

Sweet Potato Pie (Sandy Broughton)

Ingredients:

2 regular pie crusts (not deep dish)	1 stick salted butter ½ cup Half 'n' Half	1 tbsp. vanilla extract 2 cups sugar (to taste)
6 medium sweet potatoes	1 tsp. cinnamon	2 large eggs

Method: 1) Boil potatoes with skin on. Make sure they are very soft and able to stick a fork through them easily. 2) Peel potatoes while hot and add butter. Stir around until the butter is melted. 3) Add remaining ingredients in the order above. Mix using an electric mixer for about two minutes. 4) Depending on size of potatoes, you may have to add more half 'n' half and/or sugar. 5) Pour mixture into pie shells and bake for 45 minutes on 350 degrees. HINT: Put empty pie crusts in oven and let cook for a few minutes before filling them. This ensures that the bottom of the crust is not wet and mushy.

Holiday Sweet Potato Pie (Jan Kirsten)

Ingredients:

¾ lb. sweet potato, peeled and diced	2 tbsp. brown sugar
1 (9 inch) refrigerated pie crust	¾ tsp. ground cinnamon
¾ cup evaporated skim milk	1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg
2 egg whites	1/8 tsp. ground cloves
¼ cup white sugar	¼ cup halved cranberries (optional)



Method: 1) Place sweet potato in saucepan with just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook until fork tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and mash with a fork or potato masher. 2) Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). 3) Divide the pie crust into 24 small balls. Press them into the cups of two 12 cup mini muffin pans to make tartlet shells. Set aside. 4) Spoon sweet potato into blender or food processor, and add evaporated milk, egg whites, white sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Puree until smooth. 5) Spoon about 1 tablespoon of mixture into each tart shell. 6) Bake for 10 minutes in preheated oven, or until a toothpick inserted into one of the tarts comes out clean. 7) Cool in pans over a wire rack. 8) Garnish each tart with a cranberry half before serving.

Mud Pie

Ingredients:

16 oz. package Oreo cookies	8 oz. cream cheese
2 small boxes vanilla instant pudding	1 stick butter
16 oz. Cool Whip	



Method: 1) Crush 1/2 of the Oreos and put in bottom of large bowl OR a 9 X 13 Pyrex dish OR use a trifle bowl and prepare multiple layers. 2) Mix vanilla pudding and let sit in separate bowl in refrigerator. 3) Mix Cool Whip, butter, and cream cheese to a smooth consistency. 4) Add pudding. 5) Put all ingredients on top of crushed Oreos. 6) Put rest of crushed Oreos on top. 7) Top with gummies, if desired.



“Low Fat” Cheese Cake

This recipe is “so yummy,” no one will know you used low-fat ingredients!

Ingredients:

3 large packages non-fat cream cheese (approx. 1 ½ lbs total)	4 large eggs
¾ cup sugar (or ¼ cup Equal)	16 oz. non-fat sour cream
	1 tsp. vanilla

Method: Butter spring pan. In a bowl, blend cream cheese, sugar, and eggs until smooth (using a food processor is easiest). Add sour cream and vanilla and beat for 5 minutes until smooth (do not under beat). Pour batter and bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. (If you touch the center lightly, it should not be liquid.) Turn oven off. Leave door closed with cake still in oven for 1 hour. Refrigerate. Serve plain or top with your favorite low-fat fruit pie filling.

Optional Crust: If you like a bottom crust, crumble plain graham crackers, chopped walnuts, and chopped chocolate chip morsels (mix in food processor). Melt a stick of low-fat margarine. Mix together. Put in bottom of spring pan and pat down tightly. Pour liquid cheese cake mixture over top of crust and bake as directed above.

Holiday Apple Crisp (Jan Kirsten)

Sugar Syrup:

1 ½ cups water	½ stick butter, melted	½ tsp. nutmeg
¾ cup (packed) light brown sugar	2 tbsp. flour	½ tsp. salt
	1 tsp. cinnamon	



Apples: 2 ½ lbs apples, cored, cut into wedges

Crumb Topping:

¾ cup (packed) light brown sugar	¼ tsp. nutmeg	1 stick butter (room temperature), cut into small pieces
¼ tsp. cinnamon	1 ½ cups flour	
	1 ½ cups oatmeal	

Method: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. First: In a bowl, combine 1 ½ cups water, ¾ cup brown sugar, ½ stick melted butter, 2 tbsp. flour, 1 tsp. cinnamon, ½ tsp. nutmeg, and ½ tsp salt, blend with a whisk until smooth. Second: Put apples in a 9 x 2 glass baking dish. Pour the sugar water mixture over the apples. Mix well. Third: In a clean bowl, combine ¾ cup brown sugar, ¼ tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp. nutmeg, 1 ½ cups four, 1 ½ cups oatmeal, and 1 stick butter. Using your fingers, work the mixture together until it’s coarse and crumb-like. Sprinkle crumb topping over apples. Bake for 1 hour or until apples are tender and crust is golden. Remove from oven and cool slightly. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream!

Flan with Caramel Syrup (Maria Galindo)

Flan:

6 whole eggs	1 can condensed milk
2 eggs whites	1 tbsp. vanilla extract
1 can evaporated milk	¼ tsp. of salt
1 can whole milk (use evaporated milk can for measurement)	½ cup of sugar



Caramel Syrup: 1 cup of sugar 1 tbsp. of water

Method: 1) First, make the caramel syrup: Over stove top add sugar and water and shake and tilt pan over medium/low heat until sugar is caramelized/light brown color. Pour into a 9" or 10" oven dish and tilt the dish so all sides are covered. The caramel will harden and crack. 2) Second, mix all ingredients for the flan: Blend with a mixer and pour into the caramel oven dish. Take oven dish and set it into a larger pan filled with water to come ¾ of the way (like a boiler pan). Cook in preheated oven at 350 degrees for approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours. You can tell it's done if a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. 3) Third, Let it cool down... you can let it get cold completely or refrigerate overnight. Before turning over flan into a serving dish, loosen custard edges with a knife. The flan will slowly slip free and the caramel syrup flow out.

Dairy Free Pumpkin Pie (www.healthdiaries.com)

Ingredients:

¾ cup granulated sugar	2 large eggs
1 tsp ground cinnamon	1 can 15 oz pumpkin puree
½ tsp salt	1 can coconut milk
½ tsp ground ginger	1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
¼ tsp ground cloves	



Method: 1) Preheat oven to 425 degrees. 2) Beat eggs in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin, sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger, and cloves. Gradually add coconut milk while stirring. 3) Pour into pie shell. Bake for 15 minutes at 425 degrees, then lower temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. 4) Cool on wire rack for 2 hours.

YOU CAN QUOTE ME



"I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying, toys not included."
Bernard Manning

"I played Santa Claus many times, and if you don't believe it, check out the divorce settlements awarded my wives."
Groucho Marx

HOW'D IT ALL START?

In the December 1995 edition of the *OCC Notebook*, the histories of Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, and New Year's were printed with submissions from staff members. Four years ago, I incorporated more info. These have become a holiday favorite!



In the Jewish faith, **Hanukkah** (dedication) is considered to be a minor holiday. Its roots are documented in an event that happened over [2,400] years ago – the victory of the Jewish people over their Syrian oppressors. It is thought to be the first battle waged for religious liberty.

Antiochus Epiphanes decided to destroy the Jewish faith. He prohibited the people from observing holy days, plundered the temple, tore down the altars, placed statues of Greek gods in the temple, and ordered the Jews to bow down to these idols. A long war began between the Jews, armed with nothing more than sticks, and the superior forces of the Syrian army. Three years after the temple had been defiled; the Jewish warriors drove the Syrian forces out of Palestine. The Jews entered the temple and rededicated it to God.

The legend of the flask of oil found in the temple is significant to the Hanukkah celebration. Tradition says that oil was needed to light the menorah, but only one tiny flask could be found in the temple – not even enough to last for one day. Miraculously, the flames burned for eight days! The military success and the rededication of the temple are the basis of Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights.



The holiday celebration [which lasts eight days] includes the lighting of the menorah, which is made up of eight candles representing the eight days of the holiday. Each night, a new candle is added to the menorah from right to left, and the candles are then lit from left to right. Traditional dinners include the very special tasty treat of potato pancakes. After dinner, on each of the eight nights, gifts are exchanged [contributions are also made to the poor]. Children and adults join in the game of dreidle, which dates back to ancient days when the Jews were forbidden to practice their religion. When they met to pray, they pretended they were playing with the dreidle or top. Each side of the top has a Hebrew letter printed on it: “Gimmel” means take all, “Hey” stands for half, “Nun” means nothing, and “Shin” means to put in. However, when the first letters of each of the Hebrew words (Nin, Gimmel, Hey, and Shin) are put together, they actually mean, “a great miracle happened here.”

(paraphrased, Carson-Dellosa Publ. CD-6970)

[The traditional colors of Hanukkah include blue and white, representing the Israeli flag, and gold. The Biblical account of Hanukkah is told in the two books of Maccabees. These books were taken from the Greek translation of Hebrew Scripture and are included in the deuterocanon of the Catholic and Orthodox churches' Old Testament. They are not found in the Hebrew Canon or in most Protestant Bibles.]



Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Most Christians observe Christmas on December 25. The word comes from *Cristes maesse*, an early English phrase that means *Mass of Christ*. The popularity of Christmas grew until the Reformation in the 1500's. During [this time, Protestants] began to consider Christmas a pagan celebration because it included nonreligious customs. During the

1600's, Christmas was outlawed in England and in parts of the English colonies in America. The old customs of feasting and decorating, however, reappeared and blended with the more Christian aspects of the celebration.

[The season begins with four-weeks of preparation.] Advent means “a coming” and refers to the coming of Jesus. Four candles, one for each Sunday of Advent, are placed among the branches [of advent wreaths]. On the first Sunday, the family lights one candle and joins in prayer. They repeat this ceremony on each Sunday of Advent, lighting one additional candle each time. The season reaches a climax [when Catholics celebrate] midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. [Additional Masses and other Christian services are also celebrated on Christmas Day.] The season ends on Epiphany, January 6. In Western churches, Epiphany celebrates the coming of the Wise Men. Among Eastern Christians, this day celebrates Jesus’ baptism. Epiphany falls on the 12th day after Christmas. The song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" refers to these 12 days.



[Many traditions surround Christmas. The crèche, also known as the Nativity includes Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the Three Wise Men, angels, shepherds, and animals. St. Francis is said to have begun this custom. The Christmas tree was developed from the "Paradise Tree," an evergreen decorated with apples used in a popular play about Adam and

Eve held on December 24. By 1605, Germans decorated their homes with evergreens. [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. A star is mounted on top of many Christmas trees and other Christmas displays. It represents the star that led the Wise Men to the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Wreaths symbolize the strength of life overcoming the forces of winter. Holly’s needlelike points of the leaves resemble the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when He was crucified. Mistletoe is an evergreen plant with dark leaves and shiny white berries. In many countries, a person standing under a sprig of mistletoe may be kissed.

A long time ago, a [Catholic] bishop named Nicholas lived in what is now the country of Turkey; he often helped children who were in need. Many years after his death, Nicholas became the patron saint of children. Today, the date of his death, December 6, is an important date in some countries in Europe. On the night before, children put out their shoes and hang up their stockings. Early next morning, they rush to see what gifts St. Nicholas left them. Dutch settlers in America continued to celebrate this feast day. Their name for Saint Nicholas was Sinterklaas. And in English, this became Santa Claus.

(paraphrased, Holidays Around the World [bracketed info added])



Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday based on the traditional festival of the harvest of the first crops. It begins on December 26 and lasts for seven days. The word Kwanzaa comes from a phrase which means *first fruits* in Swahili. [Kwanzaa is not a religious, political or patriotic event, but it is a time for black families to gather together and celebrate their rich African heritage.]

The holiday was developed in 1966 in the United States by [Dr.] Maulana Karenga, a professor of Pan-African studies and black cultural leader. [He felt that it was important for African-Americans to build stronger family and community ties. One of the ways to accomplish this was to set aside a particular time of the year for families to gather together and thank God for the good life that they inherited.]



[Kwanzaa] combines traditional African practices with African-American aspirations and ideals. The holiday centers on the Nguzo Saba, seven principles of black culture that were developed by Karenga. These principles are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work - working with and helping each other) and responsibility, Ujamaa (cooperative economics [or sharing]), Nia [having a purpose or setting goals], Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith [and believing]). [He decided that one principle would be celebrated each day.] In the evening, family members light one of the seven candles in a *kinara* (candleholder) and discuss the principle for the day. Members of many families exchange gifts, some of which are homemade. Near the end of the holiday, the community gathers for a feast called *karamu*. A typical karamu features traditional African food, ceremonies honoring the ancestors, assessments of the old year and commitments for the new, performances, music, and dancing.

[The symbols of the holiday include a mat, generally made of straw, and a unity cup for the family or group. An ear of corn is given to each child. The candle holder represents African ancestors who have died and the seven candles symbolize the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The candles are lit alternately, one at a time, from left to right on each of the seven days. The colors of black, red, and green are very significant and are used in the “bendara” or African-American flag. Green represents the green hills of Africa and the hopes and dreams of African-American children. Black stands for the people. Red is for the struggles of black people everywhere.]

(paraphrased, Holidays Around the World and [Carson-Dellosa Publ. CD-697])



Celebrating the continuity of life, as evidenced in seasonal changes, is an important rite of passage in the Chinese way of life. **Lunar New Year**, or “Yuan Tan” (wahn tahn), which has been celebrated for [over] five thousand years, is the most festive and important of the Chinese holidays. Yuan Tan may occur as early as January 21 and as late as February 21.

Many Chinese believe there is a god for everything (house, bed, kitchen, etc.). Careful preparations are made for the celebration; nothing should spoil the entrance of the new year or cause bad luck to fall upon the family. Meatless meals are served and offerings are made to the household gods. New clothes are sewn or purchased. Everything is made ready in advance because the shops and markets will be closed during the five-

day celebration. All food is prepared ahead of time; food can be heated but not cooked.

Businessmen finish their accounts and thank the gods for a prosperous year. Customers pay off debts. Quarrels are forgiven and harsh words are forbidden. Everyone wants to start the new year with a clean slate. A special feast of sweets is prepared to bid farewell to "Tsao-Chun" the Kitchen God. On New Year's Eve, offerings of incense are made to the gods. Everyone stays up all night listening to the fireworks that are used to scare away the evil spirits.



The first day of the Lunar New Year is a family day. Ancestors must be honored. Knives / scissors are put away so no one will cut the good luck for the coming year. Everyone wears new clothes. On the second day, husbands / children go with the wife to her parents' to celebrate. Boys and girls receive small red envelopes with money from their parents and grandparents. Both the third and fourth days of the new year are for welcoming friends, acquaintances, and even strangers. The fifth day is for visiting those who live far away. Life returns to normal: food can be cooked and people go back to work.

About ten days later, with the first full moon (the signal of the arrival of spring), the Lunar New Year ends with the Lantern Festival, which lasts about three days. Lanterns are made from silk, papier-mâché and glass, and are formed into shapes to look like fish, dragons, and animals. They hang from the tops of door-ways, shops, temples, and homes. The highlight of the evening is the Dragon Dance. This fanciful creature, made out of papier-mâché and cloth, can be as long as a passenger train car and is manipulated by as many as 50 men and boys. (paraphrased, Carson-Dellosa Publ. CD-697)



New Year's Eve falls on December 31, the day before the first day of the calendar year. In the United States, Canada, England, and many other countries around the world, New Year's Eve is a festive occasion marked by boisterous celebrations to welcome the new year. At midnight, bells ring, sirens sound, firecrackers explode, and everyone shouts, "Happy New Year!" People drink a toast to the new year and sing "Auld Lang Syne."



People around the world celebrate the new year on different dates. The early Roman calendar used March 1. [In 46 A.D., the Julian calendar established January 1 as the beginning of the year in Rome.] During the Middle Ages, most European countries used March 25, a Christian holiday called Annunciation Day, to start the year. By 1600, many Western nations had adopted a revised calendar called the Gregorian calendar. This calendar, the one used today, restored January 1 as New Year's Day. Great Britain and its colonies in America adopted it in 1752. [In Japan, it is believed that the good or bad fortune met with during the first few days of the new year may be taken as representative of the fortune for the entire coming year.]

(paraphrased, Holidays Around the World [bracketed info added])



DECORATING TIPS

Deck the Halls

Kathleen Malone from Health Services just loves to decorate for Christmas!! Here are a few of her tips. Happy decorating!

- ✦ Hang holiday magnets all around a metal front door.
- ✦ Use an extra tree skirt as a tablecloth for a round kitchen table.
- ✦ Christmas stockings hung on door handles are a fun festive way to decorate.
- ✦ Drape lights over the fireplace mantel and on top of the wall unit / china cabinet.
- ✦ Scatter glass vase fillers on a table / fireplace mantel or put them in a pretty bowl.
- ✦ Fill a pretty bowl with unique and colorful ornaments; it makes a great centerpiece.
- ✦ Attach bows to every candlestick and picture frame in the house. This is an easy way to decorate and to spread a specific color or theme throughout the house.
- ✦ Take down hanging pictures, wrap them in coordinating Christmas paper then add bows and ribbons for a festive touch. Do the same thing to photo, CD, and DVD boxes so they look like presents.
- ✦ Each Christmas, Kathleen buys a new ornament dated with the year. "It is a treat to myself and will be a part of my ornament collection every year to bring me joy."



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