

The Woodlands

December 2004

Holidays Around The World

Holiday season has begun. Shopping malls are decorated with huge Christmas trees and wreaths. Homes up and down every street are adorned in festive lights. The media and retail industries won't let you forget that Santa Claus is coming to town—but we must not forget the many other cultural/religious holidays that are celebrated this time of the year.

Ramadan

One of the first celebrations to take place this time of the year has just come to a close. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. It is during this month that Muslims observe the Fast of Ramadan. For the entire month, Muslims fast during the daylight hours and eat small meals in the evening. Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on their faith and spend less time on the concerns of everyday life.

Ramadan ends with the Festival of Eid al-Fitr, which occurred November 14th. During the Festival of Breaking the Fast, people dress in their finest clothes, homes are adorned with lights, gifts are exchanged and friends and family gather together for festive celebrations.

Saint Nicholas Day: December 6

Saint Nicholas was at one time Bishop of Myra, a town in Asia

Minor (now known as Turkey). He is supposed to have died on December 6, which is why his feast

and presentation of the Four Noble Truth's. From that point forward, Siddhartha was referred to

"rededication" in Hebrew. It commemorates an event that occurred 23 centuries ago marking the survival of Judaism.

For eight days, the menorah is lit to remember an ancient miracle in which one day's worth of oil burned for eight days in their temple. Also in the evenings, families gather to share games, songs, readings and gift giving. It is tradition to eat fried foods on Hanukkah because of the significance of oil to the holiday. Children often play the dreidel game with spinning tops. On each of the four sides of the dreidel there is one of four Hebrew letters that stand for "Great Miracle Happened There."



is celebrated that day. Saint Nicholas is the patron Saint of children. Many Europeans still celebrate Saint Nicholas on December 6th with gifts left in children's shoes (the origin of the American Christmas stockings). After several decades, Christian society found it more appropriate to bring this "children's festival" closer to that of the infant Jesus. Thus, Saint Nicholas began making his rounds of Christian families during the night of December 24th.

Bodhi Day:

December 8

Bodhi Day, according to Mahayana tradition, is the date of Siddhartha Gautama's realization

as the Buddha, "the enlightened one."

Hanukkah:

December 8-15

Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration that begins on the 25th day of the Jewish calendar month of Kislev. This year Hanukkah will be celebrated from sundown on December 7 through sundown on December 15.

Often called "The Festival of Lights," Hanukkah means

Guadalupe Day:

December 12

Guadalupe Day is the most important religious holiday in Mexico. It derived from a young man named Juan Diego who saw the Virgin Mary on a hill and asked him to build a shrine there.

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Community News

Valle Verde's "Phantom of the Playground" Ends Successfully

By Karen Worthington

Valle Verde's Annual Fall Carnival, "Phantom of the Playground," was a huge success this year as families showed their overwhelming support by attending the carnival and spook house on an especially soggy October day. Over 60 gift baskets were offered by silent auction, 45 donations

were drawn for the 4th grade raffle, 23 awesome pumpkins were raffled, and 150 cakes were won at the cake walk. The rainy weather did offer everyone the opportunity, however, to gather more in the center circle and classroom pod areas for lunch meal combos, Halloween music and carnival games.

All in all, the carnival raised over \$18,000 for Valle Verde which translates into much needed funding for instructional assistants and computer aids. Thank you to all Woodlands and Valle Verde families who helped to make the fall carnival a reality and who came out to show your Viking spirit by enjoying the day with us!

Notes From The Woodlands

The new board for our Woodlands Association is on track and we trust our efforts will be more and more visible over time. We thank you for all the feedback on our projects and feedback on the newsletter improvements. Shawn Rizzo is of course looking for continuing feedback for newsletter content. I would like to publicly commend Shawn on the great new look and feel of this publication.

During the next months you will continue to see the brief profiles of each of your Woodlands board members. We'll also repeat individual profiles we have already published over the past year. Also in next month's newsletter we will run the fireplace safety article again. As I walk the dog up on the ridge I am already catching wind of our collective fireplaces in use.

As everyone knows, we are actually well into the 2004 holiday season and I was reminded by several folk to tell everyone the obvious... make this a safe and a happy season and a joyful year end. For those of you that will travel, please be sure to let your neighbors know where you will be and when you will return. We can and will watch over each other. Be safe.

Sincerely,
James Tilley

Holidays Around the World - *Continued from page 1...*

St. Lucia Day:
December 13

St. Lucia was a young Christian girl who was killed by Roman soldiers about fifteen hundred years ago for refusing to give up her religion. St. Lucia Day is celebrated in Sweden and Italy.

Las Posadas:
December 16—24

Las Posadas (Spanish for "the inn") is a traditional Mexican festival which re-enacts Joseph's search for a room at the inn.

Tohji-taisai:
December 21

Tohji-taisai, the Grand Ceremony of the December Solstice, celebrates the joy of the ending of the yin period of the sun, and the beginning of the yang period. The sun is of central importance in Japan.

Dongji: December 22

Dongji is the time of year when Koreans mark the winter solstice as "A-Se" or little New Year's Day.

Christmas:
December 25

Christmas is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Some Christians celebrate Advent, which is a four week period before December 25th when they prepare for the coming of Christmas. Advent means "a coming" and refers to the coming of Jesus on Christmas Day.

On December 25th, many Christians attend church services. Many people decorate trees, hang wreaths and holly. Families celebrate Christmas with gift giving and festive gatherings. The word Christmas comes from Cristes maesse which means "Mass of Christ."

Kwanzaa:

December 26 - Jan. 1

Kwanzaa is celebrated by many North Americans of West African descent in recognition of their African heritage. The candles of a seven branched candelabrum representing attributes such as unity, self determination, responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith are successively lit over the seven days of the festival.

Boxing Day:
December 26

Boxing Day is related to an old custom of giving money and gifts to the poor. The exact origin is unknown, but may have originated from priests who opened their church's alms (charity boxes) and gave to the poor the day after Christmas. Boxing Day is celebrated in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Woodlands Board of Directors

James Tilley, President
Bruce Katz, Vice President
Bill Swanson, Vice President
Betty Maire, Secretary/Treasurer
Ed Wohlers, Special Projects
Steve Elster, Special Projects
Shawn Rizzo, Editor

There will not be a meeting in January

Board Member Profile: Shawn Rizzo

I was born and raised in Austin, Texas. I attended St. Edward's University in Austin and received a BA in Communications with a specialization in Media Production. After college, I was in advertising sales, then moved into technology sales. I am currently a stay at home mom of two wonderful girls; six year old Bayleigh who attends Valle Verde and one year old Jolie.

My husband Joe's career has moved us from Texas to California twice. In 2000, we relocated with Electronic Arts and lived in Belmont for a year. This time we chose Walnut Creek and are extremely happy with our decision.

Only weeks after moving to the Woodlands in July, I was looking over the newsletter and read that the Woodlands Association was in need of someone to take over the newsletter. Having been the Editor of my college newspaper, I knew the neighborhood newsletter would be a lot of fun for me. I have met lots of new people and learned a lot about my new community by volunteering for the Woodlands Association. I look forward to facilitating the growth of the Woodlands Newsletter and being an integral part of the community.



Woodlands Youth

Letter's To Santa



Dear Santa,

Can you get me an American Girl Doll? I have been playing soccer, and being a good girl. I want a game boy like my brother has. I want some more games Santa, little cards. I want an American Girl Jogger stroller. I would like a watermellon purse. I would like a coloring book with a huge pack of crayons. I would be happy with any girl toys you want to get me.

My mom would like to have a day off, My Dad would like computer presents, my sister Ashley would like some money, my brother Alex would like more video games.

Please bring me candy in my stocking.

I will leave cookies and milk for you and carrots for the reindeer.

I love you Santa. Love Alyssa Merenkov



Dear Santa,

I wanted to tell you that last year, you dropped a sleigh bell in our fireplace. Would you like it back? I will leave it next to the cookies in case you need it. Thank you for the toys last year. I would love some lipgloss and a Barbie laptop. I don't think a horse will fit in your sleigh, but I would love one.

I miss my Grandmas that went to Heaven and wanted to know if you could bring them a present in Heaven, and say, "Hi" to them for me? Fly safely and I hope the reindeer are doing good! I will turn seven in January.

Love,

Megan Nethercutt

Dear Santa,

How's Rudolph? Are you doing good? I turned four this year. May you please bring me a bag full of donuts, and the stuffed donkey from Shrek?

When I come to the mall to see you, I will take a picture with you and give you my list. I like your reindeer so much.

Love,

Will Nethercutt

Dear Santa

I want conair's quick bead and life sized doll and it can be a person I like. And I want a tiger like Lucy.

My daddy wants a toy lightning truck and jolie would like a toy.

I am leaving you chocolate chip cookies. I will probably make them.

Love Bayleigh Rizzo

dear santa:

i am sure you know i have been a good girl this year, and my little sister too. i wish for a karaoke machine, a disney piano book, and a princess and the pauper doll.

since my sister does not know how to write, please send her some nice presents too.

love

allison

and

isabella

bertolozzi

walnut creek, ca



**Track Santa
on
Christmas
Eve!!**

Parent Conferences

Don't forget!

December 6, 7, 9, and 10 are Parent Conference days. Kindergarten is dismissed at 11:10 & 12:55. Grades 1-5 out at 1:25pm.

December 13, 14, 16, and 17 Parent Conference days. Kindergarten is dismissed at 11:10 & 12:55. Grades 1-5 out at 1:25pm.

Note: Wednesday is a normal day for K's and grades 1-5 are out at 2:05pm.

Events

12/9—12/11: Boys Basketball Tournament

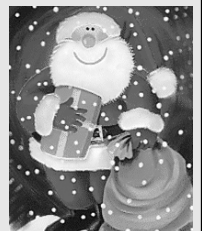
12/9: Instrumental Music Concert
7pm Little Theater

12/14, 12/16, 12/17: Girls Basketball Tournament

12/14: Winter Concert II
7pm Little Theater

12/16: Vocal Music Concert
7pm Little Theater

Since 1998, Norad has been tracking Santa's whereabouts for children across the world on Christmas Eve.







Starting on November 25th you can visit the Norad website for photos of Santa, Christmas music and much more!

www.noradsanta.org

Community Happenings

December 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Broadway Plaza Parade of Lights 6-9pm	3	4
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> V V = Valle Verde FH = Foothill NG = Northgate </div>						
5	6	7	8 	9 NG: Instrumental Music Concert 7pm	10	11
		Broadway Plaza Menorah Lighting 6pm				
12	13	14 NG: Girls Basketball Tournament & Winter Concert II 7pm	15 WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER DEADLINE!!! 	16 NG: Vocal Music Concert 7pm	17	18
		Broadway Plaza Menorah Lighting 6pm		NG: Girls Basketball Tournament		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 
Winter Break—NO SCHOOL!						
26	27	28	29	30	31 	
Winter Break—NO SCHOOL!						

Please submit any events you would like to see on January's calendar to shawn@rizzos.net or 465-4464 by December 15th

Want Ads

Services

Painting Contractor: *Area Specialist* LCG Painting/
 Removal of acoustical ceilings and retexturing.
 (Cal Lic #765438) For all your painting needs.
 Specializing in interiors, exteriors and decks.
 Quality workmanship. Affordable rates. Satisfac-
 tion guaranteed. Many area referrals. Bonded
 and insured. Call **Larry 676-1693**



Want someone to hang your Christmas lights for you? I am an experienced local teen who would love to hang them for you. I will help you with a design if you don't have one. Ref Available. Reasonable prices!! **Isaac 938-2899**



Handyman: Quality work. Versatile—almost any standard job or unusual problem. Electrical, plumbing, carpentry, linoleum, tile, windows, and doors. Honest and have references.
Paul 676-6607



Color Coatings Painting:
 Lic 740315 Repaint Specialist. Interiors & Exteriors. Acoustic Ceiling removal & texturing. FAST, CLEAN & NEAT. References, satisfaction guaranteed. Free estimates.
935-7593



Need a Babysitter? I'm 12 years old, a 7th grader at Foot-hill Middle School and am Red Cross Babysitting Certified. Call if you'd like to set up a time to meet. No job too small.
Nicola Benaderet 925-280-2554

Piano Lessons: Local music instructor is offering piano lessons. Ages 8 & up. B.A. Piano. Your home or mine. Please call **Ms. Trudy Steinman 925-429-1805**.
 References available from Woodlands.



All Bay Builders: 25 yrs exp., Lic 644085, Work-ers Comp, BBB and references. Specializing in addition and remodeling. www.all-bay-builders.com.
 Email AllBayBuilders@yahoo.com. **John 925-784-4606**



For Sale

Sewing Machine: Sears Kenmore model 385, center needle low bar sewing machine. New condition—only used a few times. Originally paid \$325. If interested, please call to come look at it. **Claire Redden 935-7233**

Wanted

Assistant—Senior Welcome—Assembly of Parts for Air Mattresses, Product Literature Folders, Light Packaging, UPS Shipping Labels, etc... Monday-Friday, 12:30—4:30 pm. **Phone: 939-5785**

Found

FOUND: Black leather key chain holder containing hearing aid batteries and nitroglycerin pills. Item was found in the Spook House at the Valle Verde Halloween Carnival. Please call to claim **280-8825**.

**Call Shawn Rizzo @ 465-4464
 or email shawn@rizzos.net
 to place your ad**

Happy Holidays



Around the World!

CAUTION

**Please check
 business references
 and licenses**

Woodlands Advertising Rates

Business & Miscellaneous Want Ads:

\$5.00/Month—Woodlands Residents

\$10.00/Month—Non-Woodlands Residents

Full Page Flyer Ads:

Please submit only ONE copy of your flyer

Full Page, 1-sided flyer, white paper.....\$80.00

Full Page, 2-sided flyer, white paper.....125.00

Full Page, 1-sided flyer, colored paper.....85.00

Full Page, 2-sided flyer, colored paper....130.00

**All advertising must be submitted
 by the 15th of each month**

