

December 2022

The Periodical

Parsons House on Eagle Run | 14325 Eagle Run Dr, Omaha, NE 68164 | 402-498-9554

Celebrating December

**National Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day**
December 7

National Cocoa Day
December 13

National Cupcake Day
December 15

Hanukkah
December 18–26

Christmas
December 25

New Year's Eve
December 31

Can you believe it is December already? The thick of the holiday season is here and the New Year is knocking on the door. While some of us in the Midwest may not enjoy the weather change that comes along with this season, there is no denying that the “magical” mystique of the holiday spirit is quite special.

Parsons House has transformed into a “winter wonderland” with all the beautiful decorations. The glow of lights and shine of the ornaments brings a special joy throughout the community. The soft sound of classic Christmas music is icing on the cake.

2022 was an exciting time here at Parsons House. The construction came to an end, and now everyone can enjoy the amazing new additions. We have been making new memories throughout Parsons House and we are excited to make even more in the future. From all of us at Parsons House, we want to wish you and your families a Happy Holiday season.



Still Living in Infamy



U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.” 81 years later, we still remember the attack on Pearl Harbor and pause to honor all who were lost.

Pearl Harbor is a U.S. naval base located near Honolulu, Hawaii. It was home to the bulk of the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet, hundreds of airplanes, and thousands of soldiers. American intelligence officials never expected Japanese forces to start a war with the United States with an attack on Hawaii, 4,000 miles away. For this reason, Pearl Harbor was left largely undefended on December 7, 1941. As a target, Pearl Harbor was too good of an opportunity for the Japanese to ignore.

In an audacious sneak attack, without any declaration of war, Japanese forces began their assault on Pearl Harbor at around 8 a.m. At 8:10, a 1,800-pound bomb fell through the deck of the battleship USS *Arizona* and struck an ammunition store, resulting in a massive explosion and killing thousands. After two hours of fighting, 20 American ships (including every battleship in Pearl Harbor) were crippled; 300 airplanes were destroyed; 2,403 sailors, soldiers, and civilians were killed; and a thousand more were wounded.

Luckily—amazingly—the Pacific Fleet was left intact. Despite losing its powerful battleships, the Fleet’s aircraft carriers had been off base during the attack and were safe. Pearl Harbor’s vital infrastructure, including repair shops, oil storage depots, shipyards, and submarine docks, had been largely untouched. The U.S. Navy would be able to rebuild itself for a sustained war effort.

The day following the attack, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. And though history remembers America and its Allies as the brave victors of a long and bloody world war, scars of that war remain. Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is a time to reflect on all that was lost and a celebration of the freedoms that were won.

Make It Count

Every year from December 14–January 5, the National Audubon Society conducts its Christmas Bird Count (CBC). During these few weeks, volunteer birders count and record bird species in an effort to monitor the health and status of bird populations across North America. Bird counts accumulate over the decades, offering scientists long-term perspectives on the continent’s bird populations.

Audubon’s CBC grew out of the Christmas “Side Hunts” of the late 19th century, when hunters would compete to bring in the largest pile of birds and animals. In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman proposed a new tradition, a “Christmas Bird Census,” where people would count birds instead of hunting them. These days it’s easier than ever to join a CBC. Registration for birders begins in November, with counts starting on December 14. If you choose to participate, you could join a tradition that is over a century old.

Plunge in Head-First



One of December’s strangest holidays falls on December 18. It’s Wear a Plunger on Your Head Day. An internet search will tell you that an ex-bounty hunter named Vern Halsey might be the only person in the world who celebrates this holiday along with his pet

Komodo dragon Felix, of course. If you’d like to keep Vern and Felix company this December 18, here’s a tip: Make sure you wear the correct type of plunger on your head. Plungers often come in two designs. Those that narrow at the bottom are specifically designed to fit into a toilet and are called flange plungers, while plungers designed for the sink and shower are flat and are known as cup plungers. If you’re keen on celebrating, a new, clean, store-bought cup plunger is the way to go. Happy Wear a Plunger on Your Head Day!

DECEMBER RECIPE



Frosted Cranberry Drop Cookies

Prep: 25 min. Bake: 15 min./batch + cooling
Makes about 5 dozen

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 2-1/2 cups chopped fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

frosting:

- 1/3 cup butter
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 to 4 tablespoons hot water

Go Big or Go Home

The first Saturday of December is Global Fat Bike Day, a day to get out and ride your fat tire. A fat bike (also known as a fatbike, fat tire, fat-tire bike, or snow bike) is an off-road bicycle equipped with oversized tires that are often anywhere from 3.5–5 inches wide. Why ride a bike with fat tires? Because these bikes allow riders to cycle over challenging terrains, such as sand, bogs, mud, and snow. Wider tires distribute a rider's weight over a larger surface area, providing increased traction. Fat bikes are the answer for riders interested in cycling year-round in inclement weather.

The fat bike was invented in the 1980s by Frenchman Jean Naud for cycling through the deserts of Africa. In the early 1990s, two Alaskans developed a fat bike for use on Alaska's Iditarod Trail Invitational, a winter ultramarathon with cycling, running, and skiing. Today, fat bikes are found in almost every bike shop. They are no longer confined to extreme terrain but are equally at home on city streets thanks to smooth tires with shallow treads.

Directions

1. In a bowl, cream butter and sugars. Add milk, egg and orange juice; mix well. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in cranberries and nuts.
2. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased **baking sheets**. Bake at 350° until golden brown, 12-15 minutes. Cool on wire racks.
3. For frosting, heat the butter in a saucepan over low heat until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Cool for 2 minutes; transfer to a small bowl. Add sugar and vanilla. Beat in water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until frosting reaches desired consistency. Frost the cookies.



Chasing Tradition

At precisely 8:15 p.m. on December 5, the eve of St. Nicholas Day, all the lights in the Swiss hamlet of Küssnacht are turned off, plunging the village along Lake Lucerne into darkness. So begins the *Klausjagen*, or “Santa Chase,” one of Europe’s most impressive St. Nicholas Day traditions.

Thousands of spectators line the cobbled street that has wended its way through town since the medieval era. Suddenly, explosions as loud as gunshots pierce the darkness. Spectators shrink back from the street, fearing that they may be struck by the long sheep whips wielded by the men leading the procession.



The cracking whips passing through the pitch announce the arrival of the magnificent, glowing *iffelen*. These are massive cardboard hats, some over six feet tall, worn by robed dancers. The *iffelen* are shaped like bishops’ miters. They have been painstakingly cut and colored with tissue paper, showcasing intricate patterns that mimic beautiful stained-glass windows. The most elaborate easily take 500 hours to complete. As if this spectacle isn’t magnificent enough, the spectators hold their breath and await the arrival of Santa Claus.

Santa, or St. Nicholas, arrives with a cacophony of clanking cowbells, tooting cow horns, and a band that plays the “Santa song,” a melody of only six notes, repeated over and over again. Santa may be the star of the show, but he is not alone. *Schmutzli* walks by his side, a sinister figure robed in black who carries a broom of twigs, traditionally for whipping children who have been bad all year. This *Schmutzli*, luckily, is more benevolent, and he hands out pastries along the parade route.

This ancient procession owes its origins to pagan winter rites where loud noises were used to scare away evil spirits. Over the centuries, Christian and pagan traditions blended to create the famous *Klausjagen* procession that attracts thousands of spectators today.

December Birthdays

In astrology, those born from December 1–21 are Archers of Sagittarius. These Archers are philosophical seekers of knowledge who love traveling to new places to absorb new cultures. Those born from December 22–31 are Capricorn’s Goats. Patience, perseverance, and dedication help Goats climb to the highest of heights. Their drive to the top makes them excellent partners and collaborators.

Josephine K. 12/26
Jean J. 12/21
Marlys W. 12/9
Dick P. 12/25
Eugene C. 12/19
Jeanette M. 12/27
Margaret M. 12/28
Robert L. 12/30
Demla F. 12/2
Phylis J. 12/16
Joyce D. 12/14
Carol B. 12/20
Earl M. 12/9
Thelma W. 12/6

WHEELS GO ROUND AND ROUND



Just a reminder that transportation requests must be submitted by Friday Noon the week prior to your appointment to your transportation company.

If you cancel your appointment or it is rescheduled, you need to let transportation know so we get your travel arrangements changed.

We have been paying a lot of cancelled appointments and I don’t want to get to the point where we must pass those non-notification of cancellation fees on to residents.