

## A Tough Nut to Crack

December brings many beloved holiday traditions, but one soars above the rest. No, not flying reindeer, but the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Tchaikovsky's classic ballet *The Nutcracker* has become a holiday staple all around the world, despite not mentioning the nativity story or Santa Claus.

It was not Tchaikovsky's idea to write *The Nutcracker*. After enjoying success with his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1890, Tchaikovsky was asked to compose a ballet for the Imperial Theatre. Tchaikovsky turned to his friend and collaborator Marius Pepita, who suggested they write a ballet based on the fairy tale *The Story of a Nutcracker*, by the French writer Alexandre Dumas. Dumas himself had "borrowed" the story from the German writer E.T.A. Hoffman, who wrote *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* in 1816. In the 1800s, nutcrackers were common decorations in German households, revered as symbols of good luck. While composing in France, Tchaikovsky discovered a new instrument, the *celesta*. He decided to feature its wonderful sound in his new ballet. Before the ballet premiered, a short concert of the musical suite was played in St. Petersburg. Every number was given an encore. Tchaikovsky knew the music was good, but he worried about the performance.

Tchaikovsky was right to worry. Critics did not like *The Nutcracker* when it premiered at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia, on December 18, 1892. One particularly harsh review read, "*The Nutcracker* cannot in any event be called a ballet." For decades, only the first half of the ballet, featuring the battle between the soldiers and the rat king, was performed. But in 1944, the San Francisco Ballet, led by William Christensen, staged the entire ballet, and it became an instant holiday hit. Nutcrackers suddenly became cherished holiday decorations. By the 1960s, dance companies all across America were performing *The Nutcracker* as an annual December tradition. For many children, *The Nutcracker* remains their first and best exposure to ballet and classical music.

## Important Telephone Numbers

Office Hours – Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:30pm  
 Saturday & Sunday 9:00am-5:00pm  
 Office 916-929-3966 Fax 916-929-3627  
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 Van/Transportation Cell 916-468-3091  
**After Hours Cell 916-468-3092**  
 Dining Room 916-921-5998  
 Police Non-Emergency 916-264-5471  
**Adult Protective Services 916-874-9377**  
 Emergency & Fire 911  
 Comcast Cable 1-800-266-2278  
 AT&T 1-800-310-2355  
 Paratransit 916-429-2744  
 Yellow Cab 916-444-2222  
 Beauty Salon Jane Ma 916-223-9658  
 Wednesday-Friday  
 Clean Touch Dry Cleaning 916-366-6666  
 Pick-up & drop-off Monday & Thursday

## Shut the Front Door

In the early stages of our "shut-down" with the Coronavirus, we were very concerned about residents leaving their apartment doors open. It has always been asked for all residents to keep their doors closed and locked.

With the Coronavirus on the rise, again, it's more important than ever that everyone keep your doors closed at all times. It's not even a good idea to keep them ajar or cracked.

Please do your part; please make sure your apartment doors are closed all the time. This is the safest way to help keep the spread of this virus at bay. And when you answer your door, please wear a mask! Thank you!



# CAMPUS COMMONS

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## Christine's Comments

I can hardly believe it's time again to put up the tree, string the lights and drink some eggnog. Who knows, maybe this year we will all drink a double!?

Much has been asked of us this past year. Most things we would never have imagined; social distancing, going long stretches without visiting our family or friends, wearing masks, the constant use of hand sanitizer and hugs. I think I've missed the hugs most of all. The amazing news is that we, as a community, have risen to the challenge, *day after day*. It hasn't been easy, but we did it together.

This year may seem like a non-traditional holiday season, but it doesn't have to be less meaningful. Due to social distancing we can fall back on some time-tested traditions such as handwritten letters inside of holiday cards or a long phone call to catch up with family and friends. It's also a great time to reflect on the people who have impacted our lives throughout the year.

I would like to give a very special "thank you" to our amazing Campus Commons Team, including our dining and kitchen staff, for all their hard work this year. We've definitely faced challenges and might have even shed a few tears. Words can't describe how much each of you mean to me and how much I appreciate your unique qualities and the passion you bring with you each and every day.

I also want to say "thank you" to each Campus Commons resident/friend. You make our entire team better people by sharing your lives with us. Your kindness and laughter have made all the difference this year and I hope you know how truly remarkable you all are. You are appreciated!

This holiday season I hope each of you make the time to let someone know how much they mean to you. We never know how much we impact one another with just a simple gesture. I wish you all health and happiness.

## Team Campus

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## Holiday Trivia

1. Including Rudolph, how many reindeer pull Santa's sleigh?
2. In which country is it a tradition to hide all brooms in the house on Christmas Eve?
3. How many "drummers drumming" are there in the song "The 12 Days of Christmas?"
4. Is it true that there is an island called Christmas Island?
5. How many ghosts visit Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*?
6. What does Ralphie want for his present in the movie *A Christmas Story*?
7. What fruit do you need to make traditional Christingles?
8. Where did the McCallister family go on vacation when they left Kevin alone in *Home Alone*?
9. Which state produces the most Christmas trees?
10. What is the name of the elf who wants to be a dentist in *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*?
11. The movie *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* takes place in what city?
12. Who kisses Lucy in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*?
13. In the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, how did George Bailey become deaf in one ear?
14. What holiday carol includes "figgy pudding?"
15. What fruit does Santa's nose look like?
16. What is the name of the main character in *Elf*?
17. How many points does a snowflake have?
18. Who wrote "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"?
19. What color are the berries on the mistletoe plant?
20. What does the word "advent" mean?
21. What two words are normally pre-printed on gift tags?
22. What people were popularly called robins because of their red uniforms in Victorian England?

## December Birthdays

In astrology, those born between December 1–21 are the Archers of Sagittarius. The Archer's open mind, optimism, curiosity, and enthusiasm make them the travelers of the zodiac. They treasure freedom: freedom to roam, freedom of thought, and freedom to express themselves. Those born between December 22–31 are Capricorn's Goats. Goats are responsible masters of self-control. They are practical planners and leaders who value experience and expertise.

Christa Henkelmann, December 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Barbara Holland, December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 Lucille Roberts, December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 Joan McGee, December 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 Al Barber, December 10<sup>th</sup>  
 Annabeth Terry, December 11<sup>th</sup>  
 Bill (335) Becker, December 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Betty Cable, December 18<sup>th</sup>  
 Claudia Trnka, December 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Pat Edmonds, December 22<sup>nd</sup>  
 Caroline Brown, December 23<sup>rd</sup>  
 Marianne Riley, December 27<sup>th</sup>  
 Bob Laukat, December 29<sup>th</sup>

## December Anniversaries

Ginger Gunnerson – 9 years  
 Peggy Smith – 6 years  
 Adele Davis – 3 years  
 DD Despard – 3 years  
 Notch Parino – 3 years  
 Esther Franklin – 2 years  
 Senova Lamothe – 2 years

## Welcome New Resident

Jeff C. #135



## Holiday Facts

### Hanging stockings started by accident

According to legend, we hang stockings by the chimney with care thanks to a poor man who didn't have enough money for his three daughters' dowries. Generous old St. Nick (remember, that's his trademark!) dropped a bag of gold down their chimney one night, where the girls had hung their stockings to dry. That's where the gold ended up, and how the tradition began.

### Boxing Day is actually about boxes

Multiple theories abound as to how this bank holiday received its name. The most popular theory suggests it was traditionally a day when servants had the day off to visit their families. Their employees would send them home with "Holiday boxes" containing money, gifts or food to thank them for their reliable service throughout the past year.

### Turkeys replaced peacocks on the Holiday table

Before turkeys were brought into this country over 500 years ago, people used to eat geese, boars' head and even peacocks during the festive season! Henry VIII was the first English king to enjoy a turkey on December 25th and the bird was still regarded as a luxury up until the 1950s, with many choosing goose instead. Thanks to the invention of the fridge and the ability of the large turkey to feed a whole family, it soon took top spot on many holiday tables.

### Mince pies did originally contain meat

Medieval people during the 16th century believed that if you ate a mince pie every day from December 25th to Twelfth Night (5th January), you'd have happiness for the next 12 months. These pies were known as holiday Pyes, and contained anything from rabbit to mutton, pigeon to pheasant! They were larger than their modern creations and made into an oval shape, which was said to represent the crib in the manger.

### Holiday Trees have pagan roots

During the time of the winter solstice, pagan homes would be decorated with evergreen branches in the hope of scaring away evil spirits and to remind the occupants that spring was just around the corner. This tradition survived the conversion to Christianity and during the 16th Century in Germany devout Christians began bringing holiday trees into their homes. The practice was made fashionable in the UK during the mid-19th Century, when popular Queen Victoria, German Prince Albert and their children were drawn in *The Illustrated London News* standing around the main holiday tree at Windsor Castle.

### Mistletoe has been revered for thousands of years

From the Ancient Greeks to Norse mythology, mistletoe has been a symbolic herb for centuries. Many customs have linked it to love, fertility and new life. In some way these beliefs eventually led to the custom of kissing under the mistletoe during the holiday period. This tradition became increasingly popular in Victorian England, when men would look to steal a kiss from any woman seen lingering beneath a sprig of mistletoe. A refusal was seen as bad luck.

### Coca-Cola played a part in Santa's image

Before Coca-Cola got in on it, Santa used to look a lot less jolly — even spooky. It wasn't until 1931, when the beverage company hired an illustrator named Haddon Sundblom for magazine ads that we got the jolly old elf. Now, kids won't get nightmares when they dream of Christmas eve.

### Americans spend nearly \$1000 on gifts

According to the National Retail Federation's 2017 data, consumers spend an average of \$967.13 for the holidays, although individual spending can vary widely. In 2018, total retail sales in November and December hit a staggering \$717.45 billion.