

Celebrating the Holidays



*Santa Claus is
coming to town ...*

*Find out where he's headed &
why he does it, See page 4 & the back page*

a special supplement to the

Peninsula
KEY NEWS

Celebrating the Holidays

"Celebrating the Holidays" is a special supplement to Key Peninsula News.

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The holiday season in this country spans more than the month of December, with ethnic celebrations among many.

Whether or not you celebrate specific days from a religious background, it is impossible to ignore the events and spirit of this festive season.

All families have traditions, and a few are collected in this issue in stories and photo.

Pick and choose events to attend, perhaps try a recipe, and enjoy in your own ways this holiday season on our Key Peninsula.

Colleen Slater, Holiday Celebrations editor

HOLIDAY DATES & EVENTS

Dec. 3

Lakebay Community Church, Christmas program, including carol singing, 7 p.m.

Dec. 4

Tree-lighting at Key Center Corral, 4 p.m., featuring Dr. Roes' Down Home Band, the Key Singers, carol singing by all, and of course, the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Santa by fire engine for photos and treats.

Dec. 8

Musical Winter Interlude - Gabrielle

Miller, harpist, Key Center Library, 7 p.m.

Dec. 10

● Community Breakfast, Key Peninsula Lutheran Church, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

● The Fine Art of Lefse Making - Key Peninsula Lutheran Church, 10 a.m. Free.

● Key Singers' Christmas Concert, Key Peninsula Lutheran Church, 2 p.m. Free, with donations of money or nonperishable food for Community House food bank.

● PLU Jazz Combo, Longbranch Improvement Club, 7 - 8:30 p.m. tickets \$7, includes refreshments

Dec. 11

Messiah, Christmas section, Grace Presbyterian Church, 11 a.m. worship service

Dec. 13

Santa Lucia Day

Dec. 17

Boat lighting at Longbranch Marina, at dusk

(See **EVENTS**, Page 3)

**Danger
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Keeping Christ in Christmas

Worship Service 10:30 am

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Key Peninsula Civic Center



(From **EVENTS**, Page 2)

Dec. 18

Grace Presbyterian Church worship service presented by children, based on the 12 Days of Christmas, 11 a.m.

● Key Peninsula Baptist Church Christmas Program — 11 a.m. (Key Peninsula Civic Center, Whitmore Room)

● Kids and Christmas in Longbranch, Longbranch Improvement Club, noon to 4 p.m. Girls Scouts will have crafts for gift-making, Santa Claus will have a gift for each child, photos with Santa available, refreshments. All free.

● Children's Christmas Play, Vaughn Community Church, 6 p.m.

Dec 21

● Senior Christmas meal, Community House, noon. Ham with trimmings.

● Winter Solstice

Dec. 22

KP Seniors Christmas lunch, KP Civic Center, meat and beverages provided. \$5 gift exchange — bring one and receive one. Call 884-5052 for information.

Dec. 25

● KP Civic Center Senior Christmas dinner by Mike and Joyce Salatino. For reservations, 851-4556.

● Hanakkuh begins at sundown, lasts 8 days.

Dec 26

● Kwanzaa begins, lasts 7 days

● Boxing Day

Dec 31

New Year's Eve

Jan 1

New Year's Day

Christmas Eve Services

- Grace Presbyterian Church - 5 p.m.
- Key Peninsula Lutheran Church - 10 p.m.
- Lakebay Community Church - 7 p.m.
- Longbranch Community Church - 7 p.m.
- Vaughn Community Church - 7 p.m.
- Community Bible Fellowship - (Miracle Ranch) 7 p.m.

Christmas Day Church Services

- Community Bible Fellowship (KPMS) - 10:30 a.m.
- Grace Presbyterian Church- 11 a.m.
- Key Peninsula Baptist Church (KPCC, Whitmore Room) - 11 a.m.
- Key Peninsula Lutheran Church - 11 a.m.
- Historic Vaughn Bay Church (KPCC, VFW Room) - 10:30 a.m.
- Lakebay Christian Assembly - 10:30 a.m.
- Lakebay Community Church - 10:30 a.m.
- Longbranch Community Church - 11 a.m.
- Vaughn Community Church - 10 a.m.



Santa's rounds



Photo by Hugh McMillan

Mr. and Mrs. Claus will visit neighborhoods throughout the Key Peninsula starting Dec. 4 through Dec. 15. This event is sponsored by the Key Peninsula Business Association and the Key Peninsula Firefighters Association. See the back page for a complete schedule of events.

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Santa Claus

for all the right reasons



By Chris Fitzgerald
KP News

Santa's blue eyes are soft beneath his bushy white brows as he thinks about some of the special children whose wishes he's heard over the years.

"For one little girl who wasn't expected to live until Christmas," he says quietly, "I made an early visit in October..." His voice becomes a whisper that fades into silence.

"One year, a group of special needs adults, still all children in their minds, especially enjoyed my holiday visit," he says.

Another time there were packages of fruit and candy left after closing at a department store where his photo had been taken all day long with children. He loaded up the leftover treats in his sack and headed down to skid row in Seattle, passing out holiday cheer and human warmth on streets unaccustomed to compassion. Clearly, this is a Santa with a heart.

A tall man in whose presence a person instantly feels at ease, today Santa is dressed in typical attire for a wet, chilly November in the Northwest.

No one knows that for a few weeks in December, he wears a red suit recognized and beloved the world over. No one thinks about how he comes to be in all the right places at just the right times so children can share their secrets with him. Although he works just a few days a year, his job is too important, his next employment too soon and too close to home, to divulge the identity he goes by most of the year.

He began donning his crimson suit at age 24, when, as a children's photographer, he found himself with a complete costume, and friends who had small children. For 52 Christmas seasons now, this Key Peninsula Santa has given children in several cities and states the gift of his undivided attention, and patience to overcome little ones' fears of the big man in the red coat.

Over the years, he has refined his wardrobe. Now his snowy beard is of the finest quality yak hair. His red corduroy suit is hand-made and trimmed with real fur.

He delights in the smiles of children. "That's why I keep doing it," he says. "To see those smiles, those shining eyes. It's all about the kids."

For one family in a nearby city, Santa has been visiting every year for 40 years, beginning with their children then who now await his arrival for their own grandchildren.

Every child who sits on Santa's knee gets a small gift from his plump white bag. "A little something until I come with my reindeer to your house with a big surprise on Christmas," he explains solemnly to a rapt child. Santa buys the gifts himself, and occasionally accepts dona-

Schedule a visit

If you'd like to schedule a visit from Santa for a company or personal party, with a donation to the Washington Elks Therapy Program for Children, Santa can be reached at 253-851-0271.



tions. He once received several boxes of coloring books, just right for giving.

When he appears at a business, although there are wages involved, he accepts no money. "I am not Santa Claus for money," he says. "I ask the business to send a check to the Elks Therapy Program for Children." Through the Elks, and anyone else who asks, Santa does his best to say "yes" when called upon.

Over the years, in addition to families and friends who have enjoyed his holiday visits for decades, Santa found time to visit a home for the elderly. "They were just sitting. The TV was on but they weren't really watching. When I walked in ringing my sleigh bells, they just lit up." He thinks about going again to places and people often overlooked at the holiday season; his love of children keeps him waiting in his chair, ready to welcome little Susan or Joey on their first visit to Santa Claus.

Santa will make two appearances this year on the Key Peninsula. He will be at the Peninsula Market in Lake Kathryn Village on Dec. 2 from 6 to 10 p.m., and at the Peninsula Market in Key Center on Dec. 17 from noon to 4 p.m. Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

Above, Dane Hokenson and Emma Barber tell Santa their Christmas wishes. Right, Tasha Morris smiles as she sits on Santa's lap last year at the Peninsula Market in Key Center.

Photos courtesy of Santa



Shop for the perfect KP Christmas tree

By Christina Moore
KP News

As Halloween decorations are tucked away until next fall and Thanksgiving feasts are but leftovers in the fridge, you know it's time to pick out a tree. Luckily there are three Christmas tree lots on the Key Peninsula with two attentive people, Chuck Niemann and Stephen Ude, to help you out.

Niemann inherited two lots, both located in Key Center, from his grandfather. He does this for his deceased uncle, partly because the property used to be his. Because of lack of help, he may be forced to close his lots within two years. Niemann offers two varieties of Christmas trees: the Douglas Fir, which is the classic Christmas tree due to its ability to withstand harsh weather conditions, and the Grand Fir, which is lightweight, but gives off a citrus-like evergreen scent. These lots open the first week of December from 9 a.m. to dark.

Ude found himself with 5 acres of land, three of which were filled with logs and stumps, so he planted his lot in 1987 and began selling Christmas trees about six years later. He decided to use his earnings for his two children's college funds. Ude opens his lot the day after Thanksgiving and is basically open 24/7 with the help of his wife and father. He says the best part of his job is meeting new people... grumpy people don't shop for Christmas trees. His tree varieties include Noble Fir, Fraser Fir, Grand Fir, Douglas Fir, and two species of Spruce.

When out Christmas tree shopping, it is a good idea to test the branch's strength by bringing an unbreakable ornament. U-Cut tree lots are guaranteed fresh, but if you're shopping elsewhere, a fresh tree has resilient needles — not brittle.

Before obtaining a tree, be sure to measure out the designated area so the tree will stand at least one foot shorter than the ceiling to allow room for a star or angel.

Dear Santa ...

By Chris Fitzgerald
KP News

On the Key Peninsula, Santa Claus gets his mail. Although he keeps them busy all year long making toys and gingerbread, Santa's elves take time to tiptoe into the post offices in Wauna, Vaughn, and Lakebay over Thanksgiving weekend. They set up a special mailbox in the lobby of each post office, just for "Christmas Wish Lists" addressed to Santa. Parents can bring their children to personally mail their letters until just before Christmas Day. When postal delivery people and sorting helpers pick up letters addressed to Santa, they deposit them in his special box, too.

One of Santa's helpers said the letters were very precious to him. He takes them home to the North Pole to read in the evening, when the toy workshop is closed and quiet. Mrs. Claus makes hot chocolate, and Santa sits in his comfortable chair by the fireplace. One by one, he takes letters from the stack on the table by him and reads them completely. He pens good cheer and warm wishes on special stationery to each person who



Santa's mailbox at the Vaughn Post Office.

Photo courtesy of JoAnn Clarke

included a return address. He cannot promise dreams come true, but sometimes a letter from Santa is gift enough.

Santa is sentimental, and has Christmas wish letters in a special file from the Vaughn Post Office dating back to 1986, which coincidentally is the year the current postmaster took up her position.

When Santa receives mail from the Wauna Post Office, he sends replies with a cancellation from the North Pole. The Lakebay Post Office has already received mail for Santa, which will be held until his elves arrive with his mailbox.

The three postmasters estimate they collectively receive about 90 letters every Christmas season. That's 90 excited smiles when, at the end of a long day at school waiting for vacation to begin, a parent looking through daily mail holds up a decorated envelope and says, "It's for you! From Santa!"



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TRADITIONS

Traditions are special no matter how big or small

By Irene Torres
KP News

Considering the family unit is the core of our society, tradition has long played a vital part in bringing families together, helping them build strong relationships. A large number of families celebrate family traditions, most often during the holiday season.

Some traditions have survived in my family for at least six generations.

Shopping, wrapping gifts to secret away until the Big Day, tree-trimming,



housecleaning, baking and more baking precede every Christmas holiday. The honor of topping the tree usually goes to the youngest toddler.

Every Christmas Eve, the children must be in bed before midnight — Santa won't stop by if he knows they're awake. The excitement of the season is sometimes punctuated by the sounds of

sleighbells or reindeer hooves outside in the darkness. Two Christmas cookies and a glass of milk are left next to the tree. In the morning the children awake by dawn, if not before, to find a bite taken out of one of the cookies and some of the milk missing. Santa must have been in a hurry, or full from all the cookies left for him by all the world's children.

Presents miraculously appear under the tree sometime during the night, allegedly left by a jolly old elf. The waffle iron is hot and ready for breakfast. Each member of the family receives an orange to savor or save.

After presents are opened, the best China and crystal are set on the heavy-laden holiday table for a midday feast of

turkey with cranberry sauce, cornbread dressing, deviled eggs, olives, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, and fruit salad. As if that isn't enough, there are pies and cakes, breads and candies of every calorie-laden description.

Clean up, visiting with relatives, playing board games or enjoying new toys, working on handicrafts, and taking naps fill the rest of the day.

There are always plenty of leftovers, if someone feels hungry later.

Every tradition started with someone. Anyone can begin a family tradition.

Imagine how holiday observances your family already celebrates could be expanded. Or start a new tradition, unique to your family, that can be enjoyed for generations into the future.

First things first

By Paula Moore
KP News

I grew up in a home where Christmas was almost like any other day. We got one package each on Christmas Eve and had clam chowder. We sometimes had a special dinner, maybe not. So when I married a man with many holiday traditions, I accepted them eagerly. His family made a big deal of Christmas. They saved money all year to splurge at that time, they bought ahead to get bargains and just the right gifts. They made plum pudding and fruitcake several months ahead so they were properly aged. Wow! We were going to have fun.

Our first Christmas Eve, there was just the two of us. We put up the tree, our

stockings, and then Jerry said we must set the table for our Christmas breakfast. We put on a pretty tablecloth, nice dishes and silverware, and then one small gift each on top of the plate. That seemed all right, but why? Jerry said he would explain later.

We woke the next morning with lots of gaily-wrapped presents under the tree. I was like a kid in a candy shop. I could hardly wait to start unwrapping the gifts. "Let me at them," was all I could think about.

"No," Jerry said. "We must eat breakfast first." So we got breakfast, sat at the table, said grace, and then he said I could open my one small gift. I did and was thrilled. After eating, we tackled the tree. It was all I expected it to be; I was absolutely

rejoicing.

Much later in the day and after a big turkey dinner, I remembered to ask Jerry, "Why do we have breakfast first with a small gift, then the tree? Is there something symbolic about it?"

He laughed and said, "No, we have to do it because, when I was a very small boy, I was very excited about the gifts under the tree and wanted to open them right now. I was ripping one open, when my aunt told my mother my bathrobe was missing a button. Being the good, thrifty Scottish women they were, they had to sew that button on immediately. The gifts would wait; the button must go on the bathrobe.

"Well, I felt different. I worked myself into such a stew, I fainted. Out cold, on the living room floor. It took some time to revive me. Then everyone got to remembering: Jerry does that, faints if he gets upset or excited, especially if he hasn't eaten in a long time. I still do!"



What a secret to finally share with his wife of one year.

So each year of our 43 years of marriage, we have had a Christmas breakfast with a small gift at the table, because Daddy still faints. Our daughter has carried on this tradition with her child, so now three generations have enjoyed this rite, which in my book makes it a proper tradition.

Grandma's special Christmas stocking

By Paula Moore
KP News

My husband Jerry's mom was born and raised in Dundee, Scotland. As a young woman she moved to Canada, and later to the United States. She still could speak Gaelic, but she left Scotland behind and became a U.S.



citizen. She worked hard as a single mom to provide for her family. She always made Christmas a special time to spoil her two children. She became a beautiful mother to me and spoiled our two children too. We loved it when she came to visit. Those were very special times of great joy.

One Christmas when she visited, she seemed a little sad. When asked about it, she said as she grew older, she was beginning to remember all the holidays spent in

Scotland as a child. She shared how she, as young as 3, had knitted her own stocking so she could hang it on the chimneybreast.

All she received was a couple of coins, a stick of peppermint, and an orange. Later that night after she went to bed, we talked and shared ideas how we could give Grandma her special stocking again.

Christmas morning she found a stocking she had knitted for Jerry hanging on the chimneybreast, filled with several coins, a

peppermint stick and an orange, with a picture of Scotland. She was happier with this small present than anything she received that day.

She shared stories about her home, her family and country. It was the first time she really opened up and there were a few tears shed. We found a gift of love, filled with beautiful memories, is worth more than all the big, expensive gifts. Love was the answer.

Keeping Santa's tradition alive

By Colleen Slater
KP News

When we were young, idealistic parents, we agreed we would not "teach" our children about Santa, the Easter bunny or the tooth fairy. Then, our thought was, we wouldn't have to disappoint them later.

We didn't figure on Grandpa.

When a young boy's grandfather tells him to be good so Santa will be kind to him, or to put his first tooth under his pillow to get money from a tiny being with wings, parents have to make choices, and ours were to let it go so Jamie wasn't disappointed in one of his heroes.

My husband's family tradition was to open gifts on Christmas Eve, and we continued this plan as we traveled on Christmas Day to celebrate with my family.

The year our oldest was not quite 3, we had our Christmas Eve celebration at the grandparents' home as usual. After a bountiful dinner (and the dishes washed!), gifts were opened.

As I tucked Jamie in, he asked, "Will Santa Claus still come tonight?" Dumbstruck, I wondered how we would answer this dilemma. I reminded him of all of the gifts he had opened. But of course, just before bed, his dad had read "A Visit From Saint Nicholas," another family tradition. I said I guessed we'd have to wait and see, and hurried out to confer with my mother-in-law.

She was a resourceful lady who had lived some distance from town most of her life. She was also state Grange home-ec chairman, and always seemed to have a collection of assorted things for whatever might come up.



He was delighted with his "Santa" gifts, and the adults agreed that our Christmas Eve gift opening needed to be changed.

We went into her office, and she pulled out two children's books, a small car and a dolled up empty detergent bottle. A bright aqua felt wrap had been stitched to cover the original use of the container, and in pockets were scissors, colored pencils, a large eraser, and other assorted items for a creative child.

We wrapped them, put on tags "from Santa" and set them under the tree.

In the morning, Jamie's first words were, "Did Santa Claus come?"

"Go look and see."

He was delighted with his "Santa" gifts, and the adults agreed that our Christmas Eve gift opening needed to be changed. After that, one special gift was opened the night before, and a few "new" ones added under the tree before morning.

Sounds of the season



Photo by Hugh McMillan

Dr. Roes' Down Home Band, the Key Singers, carolers, and of course, the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Santa by fire engine for photos and treats will be featured during the tree-lighting ceremony at 4 p.m. Dec. 4 at Key Center Corral.



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Key Peninsula News
wishes everyone a happy
holiday season!*

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**Children's Christmas Play
Sunday, December 18th 6pm**

**Christmas Eve Candle Light Service
Saturday, December 24th 7pm - 8pm**

Christmas Day Service from 10am - 11am

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RECIPES

Yum..... Holidays equal goodies

Try Skillet Cookies & White Christmas Pie

By Colleen Slater
KP News

Every holiday has special food associated with it, plus families may have traditional ethnic food for their celebrations. Sometimes it's simply a recipe the whole family likes, and it comes

to be expected that Aunt Sue will make her special pie, or Grandma will bring her magnificent cake.

In our family, son Rob makes a spinach dip, his wife, Tonja, a cake with fruit (but not really a fruitcake), our daughter, Megan, a green bean casserole, her hubby, Bob, a great pecan pie, daughter-

in-law Joy does candied yams.

I make rolls, apple and mincemeat pies, and a Jell-O® salad recipe my daughter insisted was a tradition by the second year.

My grandmother always made a large baking pan of red Jell-O® with sliced bananas. Aunt Elsie added pineapple,

strawberries, walnuts and sour cream to make Washington Square Sinful Salad. I sometimes make a three-color layered one with the bananas in red on top, but the favorite in our family is still the simple original.

Here are two traditional recipes from Key Peninsula women:

Skillet Cookies

I don't know where this recipe came from, but my mom has made it since I can remember. My mom and grandmother got a lot of recipes out of McCall's magazine from the 1950s and 1960s. ~ Karen Hale

1 c melted butter
2 c cut-up dates
2 eggs, beaten
1 c chopped nuts
4 c Rice Krispies®

1 1/2 c brown sugar
2 tbsp milk
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla
shredded coconut

Melt butter, add sugar & dates. Cook over low heat. Add milk and slowly stir in beaten eggs. Bring to a boil; boil 3 mins. Remove from heat. When cool, add nuts, vanilla & cereal. Stir to mix well. Form into balls or logs, roll in coconut. Yum!



White Christmas Pie

This recipe was handed down from my Great Grandmother (known to us as Mimi). For our family, it just wasn't Christmas without this pie! ~Amy Palsrok

1 tbsp unflavored gelatin
1 c sugar, separated
1/2 tsp Salt
3/4 tsp Vanilla
1/2 c whipping cream
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
1 ready-made pie crust

1/4 c Water
4 tbsp Flour
1 1/2 c Milk
1/4 tsp almond extract
3 egg whites
1 c flaked coconut

Garnish with maraschino cherries (optional)

Soften gelatin in water. Mix together in saucepan: 1/2 C sugar, flour and salt. Gradually stir in milk. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until it boils (10-15 minutes). Boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in softened gelatin. Cool. When partially set, beat with rotary beater until smooth. Blend in vanilla and almond extract. Gently fold in whipping cream that has been whipped until smooth. Carefully fold into a meringue of 1/2 c sugar, egg whites, cream of tartar. Fold in coconut. Pile into cooled pie shell. Chill 2 hours. Cut maraschino cherries in half. Dab excess juice from cherries before placing on pie. Place cherries cut side down on top of chilled pie.



Make your holidays as stress-free as possible

By Karen Hale
KP News

Have you ever had a holiday when you had so much to do, you were stressed to the max and still couldn't find enough time for it all?

Someone has to: bake tons of cookies, put up and decorate the tree and keep the pets out of it; stock up on groceries; wrap presents and keep suspecting eyes from finding things they shouldn't.

Before entering into the holiday foray, here are a few helpful suggestions, born of my many years of catching the worst cold or flu in the midst of the celebrations, due to the stress from all the preparations in week one.

1: Take a true accounting of how many people will actually be eating. Are you baking too much?

2: Choose recipes to bake earlier in the month that won't taste stale, like baklava, a wonderful traditional Greek pastry of fillo dough, cinnamon, sugar, walnuts (I prefer pecans), a pound of melted butter and a lot of honey. Baklava never seems to taste old, and



can be cut up and put in a container. All month long, take what you need for a party, visitors, or a snack for the kids. Skillet cookies also have a longer life.

3: Decorating the tree — I recommend adults do the setup, run the lights and decorate the higher elevations, but let the kids do the rest. There's nothing

like family time when everyone gets to help, and the kids really can get into the spirit of the season and feel satisfied they get to help. If you use home-made décor such as popcorn strands or paper-chains, have the kids make them early in the month so they're ready for the tree ahead of time.

4: Decorating the house — how much do you do? Too much, or not enough? If you fight with your spouse about how much, then it's probably too much. Find a happy medium. Everyone is stressed; don't make the outside lights into something big. If the kids complain about not enough, tell them you will have more lights when they are big enough to hang them.

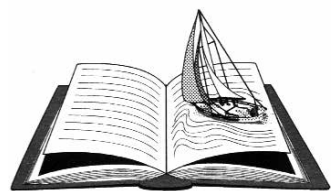
5: Gift wrapping. Do you spend a week of nights wrapping presents? If you shop when the kids are at school, then let the store do complimentary wrapping. Many stores (especially at the malls) have people nearby at a table with a beautiful selection of paper (you don't have to buy that, either) and ask if you would like it wrapped. Try not to pay extra for it. If the kids are old enough,

they can help wrap.

6: Lastly, don't overbook. Do you go to one town for Christmas Eve, then another for Christmas Day, just to fit in both families? When you do that, you set up no traditions for your own family. If you want the grandparents involved in those days, try to get them to come to your house and share in your kids' experiences. It's easier to put on dinner than drive back and forth and load the car a hundred times, and all the kids remember is a blur of presents they are too tired to play with, and sleeping in the car for two days.

If you have millions of aunts, uncles and cousins you want to see, start calling them in October! Never too soon to set up days to see everyone you want to see. Remember to discuss who is bringing what so everyone knows who is cooking and who isn't. Rotating years keeps everything fair.

The key to a great holiday versus an OK holiday is not feeling overwhelmed, and remembering to take the time to treasure your family and reflect on the meaning of the season.




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A different way to think about the changing seasons

By Nancy Lind
Special to KP News

What is it about the way we observe the traditional beginnings of each season of the year that puts those dates way too late into the season, for me anyway? Those days are winter solstice, Dec. 21, spring equinox, March 21, summer solstice, June 21, and fall equinox, Sept. 21. Every year this mindset left me more and more curious because I hated thinking spring started as late as March 21 and winter as late as Dec. 21.

I finally decided to do something about it. I made a graph with four mountains, the peaks being the traditional dates of our equinoxes and solstices, and the sides of each mountain were six weeks before and six weeks after. Where the mountains joined at the bottom, I found that the dates coincided with some of our traditional fun holidays we all know very well and one we don't celebrate.

Six weeks before Dec. 21 is Halloween, six weeks before Mar. 21 is



Groundhog Day, six weeks before June 21 is May Day and six weeks before Sept. 21 is Lammas Day (described in the dictionary as Loaf Mass or bread feast). These dates are approximate. One day I heard an astronomer on TV (I think his name was Horkheimer and he sat on a cardboard cutout of the moon against the night sky and told us to go out and "keep looking up").

He said these midseason days are called cross-quarter days. I was intrigued and pleasantly delighted, as they were exactly the days at the bottom of my mountains. I began then to think of the first days of the seasons as Halloween, Groundhog Day, May Day and Lammas Day. I had my solution to always feeling behind.

Sometime later I came across a book about the Celts. The Celts were the ancients of Europe (Irish, English, French, etc. I think most of us are Celtic) and their holidays were the cross-quarter days that I just happened to discover several years earlier.

In "The Celts" by Hazel Mary Martell, I read, "The Celts divided their year into four parts and the beginning of each part was marked by a festival. Samhain was the name for the festival of the New Year and was celebrated on Nov. 1. Beltane was celebrated May 1, Imbolc was on Feb. 1 and Lughnasad on Aug. 1." So here it was in black and white. I had already made this change but now it was confirmed by the ancients who paid much closer attention to these things

than we moderns.

There is a caveat though. These are the holidays of the Druidic groups (ancient Celt) that celebrate cross-quarter days, equinoxes and solstices today.

Other cultures have been more realistic about the seasons than we, since the beginning of the Christian era. One doesn't have to be Druid to enjoy the observation of these first days.

When I think of winter starting on Nov. 1 and spring by Feb. 1, I definitely feel that winter is shorter and spring comes earlier. Summer starts on May Day and fall starts on Aug. 1 when there is a haze and a feel in the air, some leaves are falling and a kind of sadness that summer is already over.

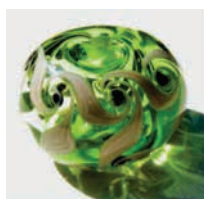
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Santa's 2005 Schedule

The Key Peninsula Fire Fighters Association will be sponsoring Santa's visit throughout the Key Peninsula area - with candy canes for the children and the young at heart. Look at Santa's schedule for your neighborhood.



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Sunday – December 4 – 4:00 p.m.

Tree Lighting – KC Corral

Tree lighting sponsored by The Key Peninsula Business Association. Tree furnished by Sunnycrest Farms. Thank you Key Peninsula Firefighters Local #3152 for hauling and setting up our tree.



Friday— December 9

6:00 – 6:15 pm Minterbrook Homes
6:15 – 6:30 pm Creviston Ridge
6:30 – 6:45 pm Fir Acres
6:45 – 7:30 pm Green Tree



Saturday – December 10

6:00 – 6:15 pm Wind and Tides
6:15 – 6:30 pm Bell-Mar
6:30 – 6:45 pm Wauna Shores
6:45 – 7:00 pm Danforth Heights
7:30 – 8:00 pm Horseshoe Estates



Sunday – December 11

6:00 – 6:45 pm Lake of the Woods
6:45 – 7:00 pm Bell Ridge
7:00 – 7:15 pm Huckleberry Ridge



Monday – December 12

6:00 – 6:45 pm Lake Holiday
6:45 – 7:00 pm Cramer Road and 134th Ave.
7:00 – 7:30 pm Lake Minterwood
7:30 - 7:45 pm Key Peninsula Civic Center



Wednesday – December 14

6:00 – 6:30 pm Jackson Lake Area
6:30 – 6:45 pm Cherry Crest Homes
6:45 – 7:30 pm McEwan Rd. and Home Area
7:30 – 8:00 pm Joemma Beach Farms



Thursday – December 15

6:00 – 6:30 pm Taylor Bay Estates
6:45 – 7:30 pm Palmer Lake