

Go A-Wassailing



Whether you have a good singing voice or not, get into the swing of the holiday season with Go Caroling Day on December 20. You may be surprised to hear that carols did not originate as holiday songs at all. Carols were folk dances, and *carol* meant “to dance in a ring.” Most often

these dances and their accompanying songs were sung in the pubs (along with the presumptive overindulgence of ale). So when did carols make the jump from the alehouse to the church house? The answer might lie in Victorian England.

Wassailing, or the act of wishing good fortune on your neighbors, was a fairly common practice during the medieval era. It was believed that if you passed well wishes to your neighbors, they would reward you in turn. Caroling, or performing folk songs of well-wishes to neighbors, became traditional during local festivals and on holidays like May Day. But it was during the Victorian Era that caroling became forever merged with Christmastime. Legend has it that the first Christmas carol service was held in Truro, England, in 1880, when Edward White Benson attempted to lure carolers out of the pub on Christmas Eve by publicizing a carol service at church. Benson would go on to become the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It was also during Victorian England that Christmas became more popular and commercialized. Publishers began compiling and printing vast anthologies of carols. Some went so far as to take ancient songs and rewrite them as hymns to the birth of Christ. Many of the most famous Christmas carols date from this period, including “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” “The First Noel,” “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing!,” and “Joy to the World.” Nowadays, Christmas caroling is almost uniquely found during church services. Rarely do carolers venture door-to-door *a-wassailing* as they once did in olden times. But on December 20, Go Caroling Day, the practice may be revived. So don’t be surprised if you hear a knock on your door and a choir of voices.

December Birthdays

In astrology, the Archers of Sagittarius are those born between December 1–21. These open-minded travelers are in constant motion, searching the globe for meaning. Curious, optimistic, and enthusiastic, they are not afraid of change and treasure freedom. Those born from December 22–31 are Capricorn’s Goats. Goats are focused on lofty goals; these hardworking and determined souls will prevail with grit and resilience.

Aaron Rodgers (quarterback) – December 2, 1983
 Walt Disney (animator) – December 5, 1901
 Dave Brubeck (musician) – December 6, 1920
 Emmett Kelly (clown) – December 9, 1898
 Rita Moreno (actress) – December 11, 1931
 Shirley Jackson (writer) – December 14, 1916
 Betty Grable (actress) – December 18, 1916
 Chris Evert (tennis pro) – December 21, 1954
 Howard Hughes (magnate) – December 24, 1905
 Clara Barton (nurse) – December 25, 1821
 Tiger Woods (golfer) – December 30, 1975
 Donna Summer (singer) – December 31, 1948

The Little Tree



It stood there so forlorn
 Beside big Oaks it was born
 Hoping to grow big some day
 To see the woods in a larger way
 Having the sunbeam shine on him too
 And the wind come whistling through
 Year after year it stood
 Growing no bigger than six foot
 Along comes a boy, what a surprise
 Saying it’s just the right size
 I will take it home with me
 It shall become my Christmas tree

Written by Aberdeen Gardens resident
 Marie L.

ABERDONIAN

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December Highlights

- Dec. 4 Christmas Door Décor Sale
- Dec. 5 Scarves for You Sale
- Dec. 5 Card writing for Canadian Forces
- Dec. 7 The Boutique Sale
- Dec. 7 Lap Blanket Raffle
- Dec. 7 Resident Goodbye to Moira
- Dec. 11 Trip to Karma Candy store
- Dec. 12 Patty & Janet Kraft Sale
- Dec. 13 Swiss chalet dinner & Christmas light Tour
- Dec. 14 McMaster student’s Seniors of Canada Initiative
- Dec. 14 Santa’s visit and gifts
- Dec. 14 Shiny Jewelry sale
- Dec. 17 Preschool visit
- Dec. 19 Crystals By Kathy sale
- Dec. 18 Food Matters – Pasta
- Dec. 20 Dutch Mill Lunch and shopping

Letter from your Executive Director - Maddi



Letter from Maddi!

Hi folks! Things are looking a lot like Christmas. Doug, our new Environmental services manager found some new friends from Woodstock. The 2 gingerbread folks out side are so cute. Inside Barb has been decorating our lovely home in preparation for our Annual Christmas Party! This Friday, November 30th. All are

welcome, please call to let us know you are coming! In November we held “everything Aberdeen” training for all the staff, this took place over 3 days and almost 100% of the staff participated. I am so proud of them and their contributions to the training days, some insightful information was shared and a new staff Charter was created! Yeah team. In the New Year we will be saying good bye to our dear friend and Marketing Manager, Moira. She said she is finally ready to retire! (I still do not believe it). WE will miss her, she has helped create Aberdeen Garden’s beautiful ambiance and environment and has a tremendous sense of humor that has filled many days with fun! Bye Moira and good luck on your new journey, all the best!!

Message from the Activity Director – Barb

Christmas is a time for giving. Thank you to all the residents that worked hard all year knitting scarves for the homeless and knitting squares for the Homewood Cancer centre. This year we added collecting socks, mitts, scarves and hats for the 541 Barton Eatery & Exchange who hang the items in their eatery. Those in need can help themselves to a warm item. Thank you to residents and family members who donated items at our Christmas party.

This year we will also be writing Christmas cards to send to the Canadian Forces. Look for it on the calendar. I wish everyone and their family a happy and healthy New Year.

Home for the Holidays

The sweet and spicy smell of gingerbread is a clear indicator that the holiday season is in full swing. By the time Gingerbread House Day arrives on December 12, you may have already indulged in eating this seasonal treat.



Gingerbread, made with ginger root, is believed to have originated in East Asia, where ginger was originally cultivated. It is believed that ginger and gingerbread were

introduced to Europe after the Crusades of the 11th century. Gingerbread was adopted most heartily in Germany, where monks perfected their heart-shaped *lebkuchen* cookies. These cookies were first made as unleavened honey cakes, made in the same fashion as communion wafers. With the introduction of ginger, German bakers transformed *lebkuchen* into their beloved gingerbread. In 1487, Emperor Friedrich III presented the 4,000 children of the city of Nuremberg with gingerbread cookies shaped to his likeness.

The shape of gingerbread was not limited to hearts, faces, and people; miniature houses made of the cookie were also common. This is why a gingerbread house figured so prominently in the tale *Hansel and Gretel*, first published by German folklorists and brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in the 19th century. What better way for a witch to lure two children into her home than to build a home out of Germany's favorite cookie? Through this tale, the Brothers Grimm spread the popularity of making gingerbread houses beyond Germany.

It may be surprising that one of the most enduring holiday traditions was popularized by the tale of a witch attempting to eat two children by luring them into her gingerbread house. But the religious significance of gingerbread has deeper roots than *Hansel and Gretel*. Perhaps it stems from the development of gingerbread by German monks. Or the use of gingerbread in religious ceremonies. Whatever the reason, warm, spicy gingerbread has become synonymous with the Christmas season.

Me and The Mirror

It's Christmas and we don't have to be told
Of all things that must be done
Shopping for Santa toys and for that special one
Clean the house, trim the tree, decorate the mantel
Put up the outside lights and wreaths
Everything to perfection
Christmas Eve – Midnight Mass
Choirs singing carols, the Baby in the manger
The rush is over now, so sublime and peaceful!
Golden turkey, cranberries, stuffing, creamy mashed potatoes
Pecan pie, melt in your mouth shortbread cookies
Rum sauce and Christmas pudding
Everything to perfection
But wait!
That was then and this is now
We seniors with memories locked deep in our hearts
Wishing we could capture and relive it all
For just one more time

So look in a mirror and what will you see?
A sad face with a tear in your eye?
Of course not! You've lived it all many times over
Those memories are yours to cherish
Look at a happy face, with eyes that shine
To pass on to all you meet
And greet with a happy smile
These too are memories to lock in your heart
Of friends you've made and staff who serve
We seniors living here at the Gardens
So Merry Christmas to all, lots of hugs and smiles
To all who play an important part
Of the memories we're making to add to the many
While living here, our home now, here at Aberdeen Gardens

Written by resident Margaret G.

Jay's Book Review

Sheer Folly by
Carola Dunn



In March of 1926, Daisy Dalrymple Fletcher and her friend and collaborator Lucy (a.k.a. Lady Gerald) head off for several days at stately home reputed to have the best grotto in the country. Working on a book of follies (architectural), they plan to research and photograph it. Leaving her husband and young twins behind, Daisy is expecting a productive weekend at Appsworth Hall, with the only potential difficulty being keeping Lucy from offending the current owner, a manufacturer of plumbing products. Alas, it's not to be quite so simple. At the home, they find themselves faced with a curious assortment of people including the abominable, tactless Lord Rydal, who is rumored to be having an affair with one of the guests while at the same time in ardent and artless pursuit of the hand in marriage of another. When the grotto explodes with Lord Rydal in it, it's not a question of who would do it—as most who've met him would be sorely tempted—but who actually did do it.

The book has a lot of the older generation stuffy protocol but also shows the newly liberated woman of England between the wars.

Available in LARGE print

Word Power

Test your vocabulary by selecting the correct definition of the word listed

Words

Renunciation – A: act of joining a holy order. B: act of refusing or giving up. C: planned sequence of events.

Mustachioed – A: a seasoned with mustard. B: with a mustache. C: sneezing because of allergies.

Facetiously – A: flippantly. B: apologetically. C: confusedly.

Answers

Renunciation - B: act of refusing or giving up; as Anita declared her *renunciation* of potato chips to her friends in hopes they would hold her to it.

Mustachioed – B: with a mustache; as, Hercule Poirot is the famous *mustachioed* sleuth created by Agatha Christie.

Facetiously – A: flippantly; as, Thanh *facetiously* described his messy room as a form of self-expression, but his mother was not amused.

Activity Wish List

New years to some mean cleaning out our spaces to make room for the new. You may have items that you will be discarding that would enhance and expand our programs.

The list below contains items we could use:

China Tea Cups
Lego building blocks (small)
Meccano or Erector sets (construction/building sets)
Word Search, Crossword puzzle books
Adult Coloring books
Cards new or used
Post cards new or used
Wool
Large print books
Puzzles 500 pc

We are grateful for your generous support.