

LIFESTYLE

A Potpourri of Holiday Traditions ♦ Events ♦ Gifts

by Hilda M. Morrill

There are many traditional "props" that we have come to associate with the holidays. Special foods, gingerbread houses, sugar cookies, Christmas trees, gifts, stockings hung by the fireplace, fresh greens and garlands made of holly and ivy, greeting cards, and the "traditional flower of Christmas," the poinsettia, are just a few.

Many of the traditions began in ancient times. For instance in ancient Greece and Rome people exchanged gifts during year-end celebrations.

Christmas festivals, generally observed by Christians since the 4th century, incorporate pagan customs, such as the use of holly, mistletoe, Yule logs, and wassail bowls.

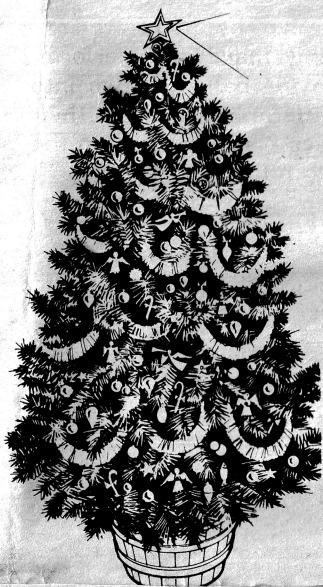
The Christmas tree, an evergreen trimmed with lights and other decorations, derives from the so-called Paradise tree, symbolizing Eden, of German mystery plays. The use of a Christmas tree began early in the 17th century, through Germany and then into northern Europe. In 1814, Albert, Prince Consort of Victoria, Queen of England, introduced the Christmas-tree custom to Great Britain.

Santa Claus, now a beloved symbol of giving and sharing, is himself a product of the amalgamation of old and new traditions. Early Dutch settlers in the new world brought with them the legend of St. Nicholas (Sinterklass), who on St. Nicholas' eve would distribute books, cakes, fruits and small toys to virtuous boys and girls.

There are many wonderful

general. The book is filled with wonderful photographs and renderings. It makes a great gift for oneself or for a special person.

Barbara Segall, an internationally recognized garden



writer, is currently working on her next book which will explore the world of Christmas trees. It, too, will be published by Clarkson Potter.

Other traditions, such as the use of poinsettias to decorate our homes and offices, are fairly new. Call it Fire Plant, Mexican Flame Leaf, Christmas Flower or even Lobster Flower, the poinsettia is now very much a part of our Christmas holiday.

It wasn't until the mid 1830's that Joel Robert Poinsett, our first minister to Mexico, encountered the colorful wild-growing, roof-high plants while negotiating a commercial treaty between that republic and the U.S.

National Poinsettia Day, Sunday, December 12.

Local holiday events incorporate, celebrate and duplicate many of these wonderful traditions. In addition to those mentioned in previous columns, you may want to consider the following:

Trees of Christmas at the Concord Museum -- In

December 1853, Henry Thoreau wrote in his journal of a Christmas tree in the Concord Town Hall, "My white spruce tree, one of the small ones in the swamp.... looked double its size.... It was lit with candles...."

In this illustrious tradition, the Guild of Volunteers of the Concord Museum is pleased to present **Trees of Christmas: A Celebration of Family, Friends and Traditions**. Opening on Saturday, December 4, and running through Sunday, January 2, 1994, the benefit exhibition will fill the galleries and period rooms of the Museum with sixteen splendidly and very specially decorated trees. **Trees of Christmas** will offer visitors a look at personal celebrations, fond memories and whimsical imaginations as the volunteer decorators interpret the theme of family, friends and traditions.

In Brooke Hall at the entrance, a sugarplum fantasy tree with garlands of gumdrops, cornucopia filled with candy, and gingerbread people, will set the tone of the exhibition. A tree based on the memory of three generations of women baking Christmas cookies in a warm and loving kitchen will be displayed in the Stencilled Gallery. Angels will be the theme of yet another tree in the Museum's galleries, decorated with laces, pearl garlands, ribbons, and porcelain ornaments. Trees of wit, trees of fancy, natural trees and remembered trees of childhood will further transform the Museum.

As part of the celebration of **Trees of Christmas**, the Museum Cafe will serve lunch on weekdays; two special Candlelight Evenings complete with dinner at a local inn will be held; a special children's tour of the "Trees" exhibit will be offered; and the Concord Museum Shop will be stocked with seasonal decorations and many items for gift giving.

For more information, call (508) 369-9763.

The Scents and Sights of Christmas at the Historic Lyman Estate -- Indulge your holiday spirit with a visit to the Lyman Estate Greenhouses

in Waltham on Saturday, December 4, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for a Christmas plant sale featuring scented plants for the home.

Experience December's aromatic blend when these antique greenhouses will be perfumed with jasmine, citrus, sweet olive, freesia, orchids and Australian mint bush.

Fresh evergreen swags and wreaths will add their woody essence to the gentle fragrance of the myrtle and scented geranium topiaries and rosemary hearts. Treat yourself to a wide variety of winter-blooming plants that will be at peak performance during

Saturday and Sunday, December 4 and 5.

Both homes will be decorated for the season with fragrant greenery, colorful fruit pyramids, and glazed tarts and cakes. Museum guides dressed in period costume will acquaint you with colonial era controversies surrounding the observance of Christmas, and the popularity of New Year's Day parties and Twelfth Night balls. Warm up with a cup of mulled cider and treat yourself to delectable goodies baked from early American recipes.

Each afternoon from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. musicians will present lively renditions of



(Photo courtesy of the Poinsettia Growers Association.)

winter's cooler temperatures. Venture into the far corners of the camellia house and discover the first blooms of these stately charmers. Explore the collection of tropicals and find succulents fashioned into living wreaths for a unique Christmas gift.

Continue your visit at the 1793 Federal mansion which will be open for tours on the same day from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Resplendent in Christmas garb, the mansion is an elegant example of an eighteenth century country house designed by Salem architect Samuel McIntire. The magnificent two-story ballroom and graceful oval parlor are still preserved as they were planned 200 years ago.

The Lyman Estate is located at 185 Lyman Street in Waltham. It is owned and operated by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

For more information, call (617) 893-7232.

Holidays at the Paul Revere House -- How was Christmas celebrated in colonial Boston? See for yourself at the Paul Revere House and adjoining Pierce/Hichborn House on

seasonal songs. On Saturday, "Ayriel" performs carols from the 18th and 19th centuries in period costume, providing fascinating commentary as they go. Ayriel has presented programs at historical societies, museums and libraries throughout New England. On Sunday, costumed members of "Chari Vari" will delight visitors with wassails, carols and sacred songs popular in the colonies in the 16th and 17th centuries.

North End residents are admitted free of charge at all times.

For further information, call (617) 523-2338.

(Continued on Page 13)



books that explore the origins of these traditions. Among the best and most charming is **The Holly and the Ivy: A Celebration of Christmas** written by Barbara Segall and published by Clarkson Potter Publishers of New York (\$18.00).

Ms. Segall, who interestingly enough lives in "Holly Cottage" outside of London, has created a little jewel of a book filled with lure and lore of Christmas decorations, cards, presents, carols, poems, the garden and the world of holly and ivies in

A greenhouse enthusiast, he eventually began to propagate them in his native home of South Carolina sharing "cuttings" with friends and neighbors. It was not long before professional growers were shipping them all over the world. Now, with more than 52 million plants sold nationwide each year, the poinsettia is the number one flowering potted plant sold in the U.S.A.

Poinsettia lovers can rejoice this holiday season as their favorite flower is honored on

Annual S.S. Cosmas and Damian Society Ball

by Dr. John Christoforo

Every year, on the Saturday Eve that is closest to Halloween, the Society of Saints Cosmas and Damian has a costume ball. The organization is composed of people from the coastal city of Gaeta in southwestern Italy, part way between Rome and Naples.

Locally the headquarters is in Cambridge, where Sal and Marie DiDomenico, and a group of "Gaetani," keep the memory of the two brother-saints alive and well.

This year's costume ball was again held at Caruso's Diplomat in Saugus, and was attended by approximately three hundred members and friends of the Society. Cardinal Bernard Law was a special guest at the celebration.

During the annual ball the S.S. Cosmas and Damian Society makes their Man and Woman of the Year presentations. This year the honors went to Mike Nicolero, Man of the Year, and Norma Buonomo, Woman of the Year.

A special presentation was also made to Frank and Jean Privitera for their generosity toward the Society. This year the Priviteras sponsored Anna Maria Alberghetti as the evenings entertainment.

Once the dinner and all of the formalities were out of the way, the crowd leaned back and listened to the song stylings of the great Anna Maria Alberghetti.



The S.S. Cosmas and Damian Society presented their Man and Woman of the Year Award at annual ball. Left to right are: Norma Buonomo, Woman of the Year; Antoinette Borriello, Vice President; Maria Valente, President; Mike Nicolero, Man of the Year; Sal DiDomenico; and Marie DiDomenico.



The members of the S.S. Cosmas and Damian Society pose with Cardinal Bernard Law (center rear).



Frank and Jean Privitera were presented with an Award of Appreciation for their generosity to the S.S. Cosmas and Damian Society. Left to right are: Vice President Antoinette Borriello, President Maria Valente, Jean Privitera, Frank Privitera, Marie DiDomenico, and Sal DiDomenico.



Among the special guests at the banquet were (left to right): Dr. Dean J. Saluti; Marjorie Cahn; Philip Boncore, State President, OSIA; entertainer Anna Marie Alberghetti; Goldie Boncore; Joseph Giuffrida, State 1st Vice President, OSIA; Jean Privitera; and Frank Privitera.



S.S. Cosmas and Damian Society President Maria Valente presents a bouquet of roses to Anna Maria Alberghetti.



Cardinal Bernard Law with Atty. David Saliba and his wife, Gilda.



A few of the partygoers at the annual costume ball pose with Cardinal Bernard Law. Left to right are: Lisa DiDomenico, Glenda the Good Witch; Paul Ferreira, Nun; Robert Ameral, Lion; Sal N. DiDomenico, Scarecrow; Cardinal Law; Louie Brum, Tin Man; Brenda DiDomenico, Dorothy; Allison DiDomenico, Baby; and Tricia Tankevich, Wicked Witch.



Anna Maria Alberghetti (center) with Frank and Jean Privitera.

MM

Consent.

December 20, 1993

5

Councillor Toomey

Whereas: On Saturday, October 30, 1993 the Society of Saints Cosmas and Damian held its annual costume ball at Caruso's Diplomat in Jangus; and

Whereas: This organization is composed of people from the coastal city of Gaeta in southwestern Italy, part way between Rome and Naples; and

Whereas: At this annual event, the Society named and presented their Man and Woman of the Year award to two individuals who exemplified the qualities and attributes of this "Gaetani" Society; and

Whereas: Michael Nicoloro and Norma Buonomo were this years recipients of this prestigious honor for their dedication, faith, commitment and devotion to the Society; now therefore be it

Resolved: That this City Council go on record extending its heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Michael Nicoloro and Norma

be it further

Resolved: That the City Clerk be & hereby is
requested to forward suitably engrossed
copies of this resolution to Michael
Nicolero and Norma Buonanno on
behalf of the entire City Council.



City of Cambridge

5.

IN CITY COUNCIL

December 20, 1993

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR WALSH
MAYOR REEVES

WHEREAS: On Saturday, October 30, 1993 the Society of Saints Cosmas and Damian held its annual costume ball at Caruso's Diplomat in Saugus; and

WHEREAS: This organization is composed of people from the coastal city of Gaeta in Southwestern Italy, part way between Rome and Naples; and

WHEREAS: At this annual event, the Society named and presented their man and woman of the year award to two individuals who exemplified the qualities and attributes of this "Gaetani" society; and

WHEREAS: Michael Nicoloro and Norma Buonomo were this years recipients of this prestigious honor for their dedication, faith, commitment and devotion to the Society; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Michael Nicoloro and Norma Buonomo on the occasion of them being named the 1993 Man and Woman of the Year by the society of Saints Cosmos and Damian; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward suitably engrossed copies of this resolution to Michael Nicoloro and Norma Buonomo on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council December 20, 1993.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:- *D. Margaret Drury*

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



City of Cambridge

5.

IN CITY COUNCIL

December 20, 1993

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

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RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Michael Nicoloro and Norma Buonomo on the occasion of them being named the 1993 Man and Woman of the Year by the society of Saints Cosmos and Damian; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward suitably engrossed copies of this resolution to Michael Nicoloro and Norma Buonomo on behalf of the entire City Council.

Consent Order #5
Russell, Sullivan, Walsh, Reeves
Councillor Toomey re: Congratulations
to Michael Nicoloro and Norma
Buonomo As recipients of an award
by the Society of Saints Cosmas and
Damian's costume ball.

Order Adopted

In City Council,

December 20, 1993