

Christmas greenery was displayed longer

Certain plants are traditionally associated with the observance of Christmas. Evergreen trees, mistletoe, holly and ivy are all symbols of the holiday season.

In more recent times, the poinsettia and the Christmas cactus have joined the list of living decorations most popular at this time of year.

Hardly a home exists today without some form of holiday greenery adorning it in late December. Nowadays, most people take their decorations down as soon as Christmas is over, and few leave them up after New Year's Day.

SUCH WAS NOT the case in years gone by.

It was considered unlucky to remove the decorations before Feb. 2, the pagan day for calling back the sun and the witch's sabbath recognizing the coming of spring and the rebirth of the earth.

Later, Jan. 5, the "12th night," became an acceptable time to take down the Christmas finery and end the festivities.

The praise of holly and ivy are sung in many Christmas carols. But long before the celebration of this Christian holiday, these plants were brought into the house every winter, for it was believed they held magical powers and could protect a home from evil.

In some places, it is considered bad luck to burn Christmas greenery. In others, it is acceptable, but only if the plants are no longer living. In any case, it is thought to be very unlucky to burn any evergreen (especially holly) if there is any life in it.

Many people preserve a sprig of holly to keep year around for good fortune. And it is considered a very bad omen to crush a holly berry under foot.

MISTLETOE is an object of veneration all over the world. In ancient



times, it was cut for rituals with only a knife or sickle of sacred gold.

Our present custom of kissing under the mistletoe comes from the ancient belief in the plant's magical association with fertility. This probably came about from the way the plant carries its berries. For a woman to be kissed under the mistletoe was a magical way to ensure that she would bear children.

The freedom now granted a man to kiss any woman (or vice-versa) under the mistletoe comes from the "universal liberty and general amnesty" allowed in England as long as the plant decorated the local church altar — a practice recorded in York as recently as the 18th century.

OUR MISTLETOE legends are nearly all English, while the holly and ivy traditions seem to have originated in Rome.

The German people were first to combine the pagan decorated evergreen tree with the celebration of Christmas, and the poinsettia and Christmas cactus were both added to the observance of this day after Christianity was established in the western hemisphere.

Thus, we see the combination of pagan and Christian, old and new, customs and traditions, joined together in this joyous season.

Now matter how you celebrate it, may this holiday season be a blessed one for you.

Parks ready for snow sports

By LEM MESEER

Outdoors writer

Three Oakland County parks are open now for winter activities. At Addison Oaks Park, 12 miles north of Rochester on W. Romeo Road, there are 13 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. Entrance fees are \$2 per car with one snowmobile and \$3 a car for non-Oakland residents. There is a \$1 fee for each additional snowmobile.

Cross country skiing is available

on eight miles of trails at Independence Oaks Park, Sashabaw Road in Clarkston. Car entrance fees are the same.

Free cross country skiing is available at White Lake Oaks, on Williams Lake Road north of M-59 west of Pontiac. You can rent ski equipment there.

Each park has a concession stand and warming area.

MORE OAKLAND residents are using county parks—so much so that the parks and recreation com-

mission expects fee revenue to increase 66 per cent next year over 1978.

The commission recently passed a \$2.7 million operating budget, banking on collecting \$1.6 million in user fees. That is due entirely to more expected usage, not to a fee increase.

Attendance in 1979 is expected to top 800,000 compared to 782,000 already this year and 630,000 last year.

The other \$1.1 million of the operating budget will come from that quarter-mill property tax we voted to renew in 1978.

Altogether, that property tax yields \$2.3 million—part going to operations and the remaining \$1.2 million for capital improvements.

The increase in park patronage is coming largely as a result of three new facilities—Glen Oaks golf course, the driving range at Red Oaks and the tennis complex at Waterford Oaks.

If you won't read these 7 signals of cancer... You probably have the 8th.

1. Change in bowel or bladder habits.
2. A sore that does not heal.
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge.
4. Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere.
5. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
6. Obvious change in wart or mole.
7. Nagging cough or hoarseness.

8. A fear of cancer that prevents you from detecting cancer at an early stage. A stage when it is highly curable. Everyone's afraid of cancer, but don't let it scare you to death.

American Cancer Society



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Go easy on booze over the holidays

Here are a few suggestions on drinking that might help save your life during the Yule season:

• Use the one-for-one plan. One hour before driving for each drink; no more than one drink per hour; one ounce per drink.

• Never force liquor on a guest who will be driving. Take him at his word when he says, "No, thank you."

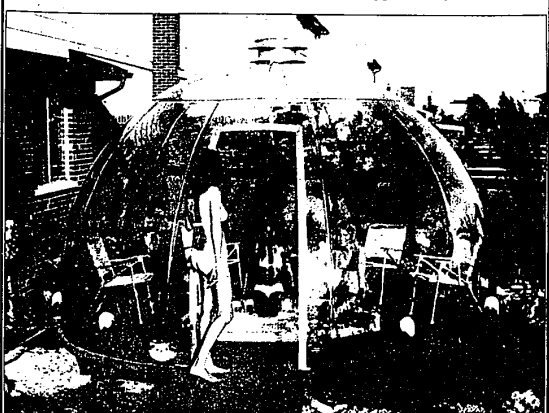
• Casually close the bar—no temper-

ance lectures—at least one hour before you expect the guests to leave.

• For that "one for the road," offer soft drinks or coffee. But remember that coffee does not sober. It does gain time.

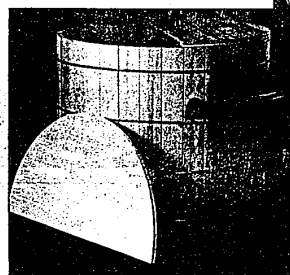
• If necessary, turn on the charm and persuade a drinking guest to let someone drive him home. Maybe he'd find it more comfortable to go home by cab.

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Puttong The Red-Necked Reindeer • Sleighride • Hallelujah Chorus • Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town • Shepherds' Pastoral • Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy • The Flowers • Dance Of The Toy Puppies • White Christmas • Christmas Festival • Joy To The World • Deck The Halls • God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen • Good King Wenceslas • Hark, The Herald Angels Sing • The First Noel • Silent Night • Jingle Bells • O Come, All Ye Faithful



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Having trouble paying your electric bill?

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All of us, of course, must pay for the goods and services we use. From time to time, many of us may have difficulties making those payments—due to illness, loss of employment, an accident or a disability.

If this happens to you, let Detroit Edison know. Detroit Edison has programs to help you if you're having problems with electric bills and to help you avoid overdue bills in the future. The programs are designed to assure uninterrupted electric service.

You can help Detroit Edison help you by getting in touch as soon as possible—by mail, by telephone or by stopping in at any Detroit Edison Customer Office.

Here are Detroit Edison Programs to help when your bill is overdue:

Bill Payment Counseling

Company Customer Representatives will offer advice and assistance and suggest ways to obtain aid in paying Edison bills through public assistance programs such as social service or welfare agencies, if needed. So call or stop in at any Customer Office and talk things over.



Payment Plans

If an extra-large overdue bill seems impossible to pay, don't despair. Payment plans can be tailored to fit your situation and clear things up.

These Detroit Edison Programs can help you avoid problems arising from overdue bills:

Double Notice Protection Plan

When you sign up for this plan, if your overdue bill could result in a service shutoff then a friend, relative or community agency is notified so they can remind you that your bill must be paid, or pay it for you. This plan is especially helpful for the elderly, the sick, the shut-in or persons who spend extended periods of time away from home.

Senior Citizen Rate

If you are 65 years or older and the head of a household, this new rate can help lower your electric bills if you use less than 548 kilowatt-hours a month—848 kilowatt-hours or less if you have controlled electric water heating combined on your regular meter. If you want more information, call or stop in at any Customer Office so that a Customer Representative can review this new program with you.

Wise Use of Electricity

Detroit Edison has booklets on how to use your electric lights and appliances wisely and other ways to save energy around the home. Stop in at any Customer Office and pick up what you need to get the most out of your energy dollar.

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