

DUNDEE- MEMORIAL PARK ASSOCIATION



*Happy
Holidays*

**No DMPA
Meeting
in December**

Join Us January 9th

**Gwen Howard
and Burke Harr**



**Check out
THE LIST**
of Decorated Homes.

On Page 5

Dundee-Memorial Park Association Newsletter

"Dedicated to Preserving the Community"
www.dundee-memorialpark.org



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President's Report

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving as we get ready for Christmas and Hanukah. It is hard to believe that another very year is coming to an end. As we head into 2012, our neighborhood has a great many things to be proud of including being named one of the 10 Best Neighborhoods in America.

As we head into the new year, work has already begun on our annual flower baskets. You should have heard from your block captain already about donating for the flower baskets on your block. If you have not been asked to donate, please contact Peter Manhart and he will let you know who is your block captain. Every year we hear from people when the flower baskets go up in May asking why their block had no baskets and the answer is always the same. If your block does not collect donations for the baskets, then your block will not have baskets. It takes time for the plants to grow over the winter which is why we need to know how many baskets are to be planted now. Waiting until the spring to collect donations is too late. If you want flower baskets in May, you need to donate now.

Every winter when the weather gets cold, we see an increase in the number of vehicles that are stolen in Dundee because they are left running in order to warm them up. Not only is this an invitation to have your car stolen, it is against the law to leave a car running unattended.

A reminder that there will be no general association meeting in December. Our next meeting will be Monday, January 9, 2012 at 7:30 pm in the basement of Dundee Presbyterian Church. Our speakers will be State Senators Gwen Howard and Burke Harr. This is a great opportunity to come let your elected representatives in the Legislature know your views on the issues. We are fortunate to get both Senators at the beginning of the legislative session. Please plan on attending and bring your questions and comments.

2012 is looking to be another busy year for the Dundee-Memorial Park Association. We are currently working on a project to place bronze signs at the major entrances to our neighborhood. We have been working with the City on finalizing locations and finding the financial resources to complete this project which will provide a welcome to visitors to our neighborhood. Dundee-Memorial Park has also applied for grants through the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance for tree plantings. If the funding comes through, we will be planting over 30 new shade trees along our streets.

Another project we are considering is a rain barrel project but we wanted to get a feeling as to how many people would be interested in receiving a rain barrel. For those who do not know, rain barrels are connected to your house downspout to collect rain water with a filter to keep out debris.

Continued on page 4.

Dundee-Memorial Park Association

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DMPA MEETINGS CALENDAR

**Meeting
January 9th**

**Gwen Howard
and Burke Harr**

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Revised list, members current 8/11 To join as a business member, send dues with the form on the inside back page. Please send to Elizabeth McNichols, address below.

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President's Message

Continued from front page.

The water can then be used for garden watering or other uses. Not only do rain barrels cut down on the amount of water used by a household, it also keeps water out of the waste water system needing treatment. If you are interested in possibly doing this, we have set up an e-mail address at dundeerainbarrel@hotmail.com. Please send your name, address, phone and e-mail. You must be a current member of DMPA in order to receive a barrel if we move forward with this project.

Most of us hope that we do not see much snow this winter, but we all know it will happen. Please remember that it is your responsibility to remove snow from the public sidewalk within 24 hours of the end of a snowfall. If you have neighbors who are disabled or elderly, please help them out. One of the things that makes our neighborhood so great is its walk-ability but people cannot walk if they are covered by snow and ice.

There has been an increase in the number of burglaries in our neighborhood. Police say most of these burglaries are happening during the day when people are at work. Thieves are especially targeting flat screen televisions. If you see anyone who you do not feel belongs in the neighborhood or is acting suspiciously, call 911 immediately. One way to help police in recovering stolen property is having serial numbers for your valuables, especially electronics. This is especially true during the holidays when people are receiving new gifts. Enclosed in the newsletter is a Serial Numbers Assist Police form for you to document your household items. If police have a serial number, it is easier for them to recover items if they are taken to a pawn shop.

Have a great holiday season and we look forward to seeing you on January 9th.

Dave Schinzel

Dave Schinzel

Thankful for Dundee

The first thing our kids do when they come home (all now 43 to 53) is get on their jogging shorts and shoes and take a run - through the beautiful, shady lanes and sweeping hills of Dundee- down to the sunks or up to Memorial Park and the rose garden or to the trolley corner.

They come back winded and cool down with their stretches and then they always say, "Thank you for letting me grow up surrounded by all this beauty!"

And this fall it has been exceptionally beautiful for a very long extended Indian Summer-Autumn. The trees took their time changing slowly from green to yellow and red.

The roses were still blooming in November with the geraniums holding their vibrant red heads high till mid month. The lawns stayed green, and the various hay grasses were tall and bronze, floating gently in the breeze unhampered by snow cover. Indeed, we were surrounded by a very beautiful, enriching nature.

It must have been into this setting that an Ameircan Planning Association Board member walked, and he decided then and there that Dundee was a prize-winning neighborhood.

We had been told before that colleges preparing students for City Planning degrees use Dundee of Omaha as their example of a well planned neighborhood, but we never expected it to win prizes.

But the American Planning Association cited the old fashioned lamplights and the hanging flower baskets as symbols of community cooperation that helped label Dundee as one of the top ten neighborhoods in the nation. I know our kids would agree.

As winter approaches and I slip and slide on the ice all the way to the garage, I must remember to be thankful for our detached garage, which the American Planning Association said was one of the contributing factors to making Dundee a strong community: you meet your neighbors when you have to go outside your home to get in the car.

Jane Meehan

A 48-year Dundee Resident



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Please Clean up
after your dog!!!

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This Newsletter Possible.

Ibrahim Bakhit - May 15, 1952 - Nov 21, 2011

My life and Abe's have crossed paths many times over the course of the last twenty years. I first met Abe when my six year old son went out for the Memorial Park Little League. Being a dad, I was eager to participate in any way I could. Abe soon had me pitching to the kids, drilling them on the fundamentals of baseball and coaching first base. Five years later my second son signed up for Little League and I got to know Abe all over again. I was very impressed with Abe's knowledge and love of baseball. For several years I volunteered to be his assistant coach until I finally became coach of my own team. Using what Abe had taught me, my first season was almost a champion season until my team went head to head against Abe's team and we ended in Second place.

Abe was a generous man who loved kids, coaching, and baseball. As a resident of Dundee, I frequently shopped at Abe's for gas, a quick snack, milk, soda, or leaf bags. Last year I was offered a job in Dundee, less

than a half block from Abe's Phillips 66. Each morning I would walk to Abe's and buy a morning snack or cup of coffee. Without fail Abe would always end the sale by wishing me a fantastic rest of the day. It was a simple thing, a friendly greeting, a chat about the neighborhood, my morning snack, and a wish that I would have a great rest of the day. I am very saddened by Abe's unexpected loss. He was a part of my day that I looked forward to. I will miss his wit, and his sense of humor, but most of all, his wish that I have a great rest of the day, which will be a little less great without my friend.

Curt Hickman



Holiday Lighting and Decorations

The Sunday after Thanksgiving always seems a bit early to view holiday decorations in a neighborhood but that's the way it is, so your panel of reviewers moved forward into the night to come up with recommendations for your holiday viewing. We did not look for or discover "spectacle" but many neighbors have celebrated the season with tasteful and colorful displays and, as always, there will be more to come.

We were struck with the number of locations where the home itself was on display along with the decorations...homes bathed with white or colored light....visit 630 and 640 Emile, 704 South 52 St., 505-507 South 53; and north of Dodge see 4814 California, 119 and 123 North Happy Hollow, 5219 Chicago, 5114, 5121 (including Santa hats on the lions) and 5207 Cuming, 5205 Izard, and 722 North Happy Hollow. Wrought iron fences come in for their share of attention with draping of garlands and subtle lights...640 Emile, the corner of Happy Hollow Blvd. and Jones, and the corner of 52 and Jackson. We have yet to receive our first snowfall but snowflakes are certainly in evidence in the trees at 109 North 54 and just up the street on the lovely Tudor at 115. Around the corner at 104 North 55 there is an example of the traditional home with the windows filled with lighted candles.

Examples of displays for children and the child-like abound; 5120 Underwood and 113 South 51 Street have "everything Christmas", oddles of lights are visible at 521 North 52, 5204 Izard and 5605 Jones, a menagerie of ribbons, bows and candy canes may be viewed at 726 North 56, the ever changing Santa at 5120 Capital will be a "wow" for some, at 5017 Webster a large tree trunk becomes a peppermint candy stick formed with red & white lights, and the toy soldiers are back at 5103 Cuming.

The 5200 block of Cass is probably the street with the most homes decorated, in a wide variety of styles....they didn't plan together but most did something of a celebratory nature. Isolated spots on otherwise dark streets may be seen at 303 South 50 Avenue, 4903 & 4919 Burt and 5016 Izard.

Finally, while the area north of Memorial Park is fairly large, an after dark stroll will pay dividends, with special attention paid to; 656, 664 & 674 North 58 Street, the soft blue trees at 652 North 59, and the displays of color at 5316 & 5335 Izard, 703 North 57 Street, 726 North 57 Avenue, 5215 Webster, 5421 Nicholas, and 658 North 55.

Once again, the Dundee-Memorial Park area is magical!



“Bricks and Mortar—A Timeless Love Story”. Nope. How about “When Good Masonry Goes Bad”? Nah.

Forgive me, I’m just trying to find a way to jazz up the rather mundane topic of repointing and repairing a brick wall. I’ve been looking for a way to make the subject more compelling, even sexy.

But let’s face it, mortar repair just isn’t going to be very interesting and it’s not one of those renovation projects that will get passers-by to stop and stare at your old house in admiration. But, if you own a brick home, that brick is your first line of defense against the elements. If you ignore crumbling mortar and cracked bricks you’re inviting even more serious damage to everything behind the bricks.

Whether you choose to do the work yourself or hire it done, there are some important facts you need to know about masonry repair.

I thank Christine Dahlin at Landmarks, Inc. for the two articles she sent me regarding repointing brick that are the basis for this month’s tips. One of the articles contains this cheery advice: “The owner or administrator of an historic building must constantly remember that repointing is likely to be a lengthy and expensive process.” Wow, there’s one of my favorite combinations—lengthy and expensive. (It reminds me of the way my teachers in school would explain my progress to my mother, “Sure, he’s not very bright, but he is lazy.”)

The decision to repoint is most often the result of some obvious damage such as disintegrating mortar, cracks in the mortar, loose bricks or—if the elements are winning—damaged plasterwork inside the house. Unless you just like to throw away money, the cause of any damage needs to be determined and repaired before tackling the mortar repair. Are the gutters leaking? Is the brick subject to unusual weather exposure? Has a wall settled so far as to require “mudjacking” to realign it?

As with any renovation project the first admonition is to no more harm to your old house. The trouble with most brick wall repairs is the new mortar is killing the brick. The original mortar in most pre-1930s houses was made of a mixture of lime and sand. Lime and sand mortar is relatively soft and will expand and contract as the brick expands and contracts with the changing Nebraska weather. Pre-1930s brick was also softer and more porous than brick manufactured later.

Portland cement commonly used in contemporary mortar mixtures is usually not appropriate for use on old houses. Portland cement is very hard and in a battle with the older, softer brick, the brick loses. While it may seem that a harder mortar would be more durable, it will

actually do more harm to your wall.

A mixture of three parts of sand to one part lime is a ratio established in 10 BC by a Roman engineer. And lime mortar has stood the test of time. The pyramids are held together with lime mortar.

A patch of new mortar on top of the old (a technique often referred to as tuckpointing) is likely to fail within two or three years. The old mortar should be chiseled out to a depth of ½ to 1 inch deep to prevent mortar “popouts”. Hand chiseling is the recommended procedure. (Remember that sanguine advice about this being a lengthy and expensive process?) Using an electric grinder with a diamond wheel is generally not recommended unless the mortar joints are particularly wide and even then only on the horizontal joints, never the vertical joints. It is very easy to damage your bricks with an electric grinder, which not only affects the visual character but also makes them more susceptible to deterioration.

Mortar can be colored in a large range of hues with masonry pigments but getting the color right takes the hand of a master or lots of experimenting and sample mortar batches.

The good news (and I knew we’d finally get to some good news) is that if the mortar is properly repointed it won’t need repairing again for another 50 years or more.

Old House Source of the Month

Masonry pigments are available at Stetson Building Products, 6820 “J” Street.

Quick Tip of the Month

To help in your mortar color matching process, spray water on the old mortar and compare that with your new mortar mix while it’s still wet.

Connections

For an online archive of previous articles go to: <http://www.dundee-memorialpark.org/>

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Meet the Merchants

Beyond Ireland

A Touch O'the Green in this Lunch Spot

By Molly Romero, Marks Bistro

On a blustery November day, I breezed into Beyond Ireland and into the warmth of Cassie Brown's tea and gift shop – which does not begin to describe the cozy, friendly and charming space she has created with her sister, Jenny Brown, and friend Donna Thompson.

The three of them are not just the backbone and visionaries for Beyond Ireland, they comprise the entire staff. Cassie and Jenny have known Donna for over 20 years, and it seemed like a good idea to venture into the land of entrepreneurship about a decade ago, to try their idea of bringing a traditional Irish tea shop to the Dundee area. Matthew, the Browns' brother, manages the Dundee Theater, and it was his presence in Dundee that inspired his sisters to choose Dundee as the place that would be the birth of their dream.

The Browns' family comes from Galway, Ireland, and they have visited there, as well as all over Ireland, enjoying learning about the country and engaging in some genealogical research. When Cassie described what it was like to arrive in Ireland, she became wistful, saying, "You can feel it the moment you get off the plane. The air is different; it has a mist to it." She described the landscape with such affection – towns, cities, coastal cliffs, rolling meadows and seascapes. She said they often stay in "self-catering cottages" where they have independence, with kitchens and a separate house all to themselves. Normally, the proprietor stops by daily to make certain they have everything they need, and in doing so, they develop a delightful friendship.

On one trip in Galway, they found the street where their maternal grandfather grew up and felt a tingle as they stood there looking at the place where the modest home used to be. Their mom, being a first generation American, had a strong affinity for Ireland, as so many children of Irish immigrants do. She passed this affinity on to her daughters, accompanying them on a month-long trip to Ireland. Among the photos on the wall in the shop, you can find their mother perched on a stone in the "Giant's Causeway," a spectacular arrangement of hexagonal stones created by ancient volcanic activity.

Their mother was a driving force for the shop. Cassie, Jenny and Donna were all working full-time jobs at the time they were developing the shop, going to work on the shop after a full day at their jobs. Some days, Cassie said, they could muster the energy only because their mom would say, "Come on, girls, let's get to work!" A few months before opening, their mother died, making their efforts even more challenging, but also more important.

They had to keep going to honor their mother. That

was a very difficult time for them. Beyond Ireland opened nine years ago, in December 2002. Because the shop keeps them so busy, they have not been able to return to Ireland since opening, but are thinking that for their 10th anniversary, perhaps they can celebrate by taking a two-week vacation trip to Ireland with their family.

Speaking of family, Jenny and Cassie come from a large family – there are seven children. This has been a blessing, as many of them are strong supporters of their endeavor – and are great cooks, contributing feedback on recipes, as well as recipes.

What exactly is Beyond Ireland? There is a scenic, quaint town in Killarney National Park called Ladies View, on the "Ring of Kerry," with tea shops serving tea, scones, and other light foods, and offering crafts and gifts, which provided the inspiration for Beyond Ireland. Their experiences in such shops were so delightful and memorable, they decided to create a Dundee version of the experience. It seems like a perfect fit.

Cassie and Jenny make scones – among other things. The scones, they said, are cherished by many of their regular customers. For many, Saturdays are "scone day," when folks come to pick up loads of scones for the weekend. Often, Cassie said, they will have as many as eight varieties on any given Saturday, with as many as four or five kinds during other days of the week. Some of the varieties are blueberry, raspberry, mixed berry, and cinnamon chip (which I ate as soon as I arrived home from our meeting, and can vouch for as a true delight with a cup of tea). In describing how she makes scones, Cassie said, "I must be in the zone, with music playing – in my good place" to get the scones just right. If she is feeling tension or not "in the zone," the scones are not as good. Jenny added, "It's the love," in the scones that makes them so good. And Cassie said she loves being in the zone, with her hands in dough. It seemed transcendental, the way she described her feelings.

Their brother Mike grew a huge batch of jalapeno peppers this summer, delivering them to Cassie and Jenny. The need to find a way to use them gave rise to the birth of a savory jalapeno scone, which has developed a devoted following, that they use in their "sconewich." And speaking of scones, customers have called in advance for large scone orders, sometimes over 100 scones in a single order. Cassie said that her customers often tell her they are the best scones they have ever tasted. Recently, they provided over 60 of



Meet the Merchants

their caramel apple scones to someone celebrating his birthday, taking them to his office for colleagues to enjoy.

Also on the menu are soups, sandwiches and Irish soda bread from an old family recipe. Cassie described their process in making soups – all from scratch, and then she handed me the November soup schedule which identifies which soup is scheduled for each day in November. She said she started distributing the schedule to her customers, and then tried going back to making whatever soup she felt like for a while, but her customers said they preferred the schedule, so she sets out the whole month in advance, with not a single duplication of a soup during the whole month. “My customers have grown to trust my cooking,” she said, “and will try things I make that they would never try before.”

In addition to the comfort soups, sandwiches, scones and tea, you will find an eclectic, but notably Irish, gift shop focusing on crafts and other items imported from Ireland, along with items crafted by Cassie, Jenny and Donna. On Cassie’s to do list for the next day, she told me, was to make soap. That’s right, not a typo, soap (in addition to soup). Yes, they make soap, nicely wrapping the fragrant chunky bars smelling of heather and moss; oatmeal, milk and honey; cranberry orange; or some scone fragrances. I am definitely returning to find a bar of soap to perhaps transport me across the sea (heather and moss) or remind me of a great scone flavor.

Cassie’s pleasure comes from using her hands; she makes collages (sit at one of the tables they made with all things Irish in a collage under glass), enjoys dressing the display windows, and embroiders pillows with Gaelic sayings and images (available for sale). What Cassie loves is the creative part. In their shop, you will find the “must haves” of perfumes, jams, Irish music, jewelry, as well as wool socks, cashmere scarves, T-shirts, and some photos and paintings. For the holiday season, they will also carry holiday tree ornaments and Irish Christmas music, which Cassie wishes she could play all year. I cannot close without mentioning the beautiful collection of tea cups – and the delicious Barrys Irish Tea, which Cassie set before me as soon as I arrived. They sell the Barrys tea by the box, but be careful, you will not return to Lipton if you try Barrys.

Beyond Ireland is open Tuesday through Friday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. They are located just north of Dodge at 107 N. 50th. You may reach them at 402-614-1442.

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Dundee Community Garden

2011 Wrap-Up

We’ve just completed our third season at the Dundee Community Garden. This year we donated a total of 750 pounds of fresh local produce—almost all of that going to the residents of the Underwood Tower across the street. That’s 100 pounds more than we donated to a food pantry in 2010! While most of our summer squash were devastated by the squash bug, we had very productive crops of collards, kale, beans, beets, and tomatoes growing in our “food pantry” plots.

We doubled the size of our sweet potato plot this year, (located in the “parking” area between the sidewalk and the street on 49th St.) and we more than doubled our sweet potato harvest—increasing from 300 pounds in 2010, to 700 pounds in 2011.

We built a bulletin board/tool rack in the garden this summer, and we pioneered the idea of a Dundee Food Community, offering a weekly food swap at the garden where people could trade surplus garden produce, baked goods, and more with their neighbors. We hope to refine and expand the concept in 2012.

And our 44 garden members grew all kinds of produce for their families in their own 4’ by 10’ plots.

We’ve been preparing the site for winter, though you may glimpse a few hardy gardeners still picking cold-season crops. Have a good winter and we’ll see you next spring!

Mary Green

**WE WELCOME
THESE NEW MEMBERS**
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MEG COTTON
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Mon - Thurs 8:30 am - 8:30 pm Fri 8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Kids' Activities

Winter Crafts for Kids - Thursdays| 4:30 pm

Have fun and be creative while you make a variety of winter-themed crafts. Registration required. (Gr. K-6)

December 1: "Snowflake Craft Stick Ornaments"

December 8: "Decorate a Gingerbread House"

Please bring a bag of candy to share!

December 15: "Clay Ornament Sculpting"

December 22: "Clay Ornament Painting"

December 29: "Time Machine Craft"

Baby & Me Storytime - Fridays| 10:30 am

Parents, babies and toddlers will enjoy this program that incorporates rhyming games, puppets, songs & musical instruments.

Bilingual Storytime - Sat, December 3 & 17 | 10:30 am

Immerse your preschooler in the Spanish language through a variety of interactive activities and stories. (Ages 3-5)

Fit Club - Saturday, December 3 | 2 pm

Have fun while working out! Try out yoga, do strength training, aerobics and even balance games. (Gr. K-12)

Storytime - Wednesdays | 10:30 am

Read books, sing songs, play games and make crafts. Fun for toddlers/preschoolers.

Curious George Storytime - Wednesday, December 7 | 10:30 am Come to the Library and meet Curious George! Remember to bring your camera!

LEGO Club - Wednesdays, December 7 & 21 | 4:30 pm

Use your imagination to build anything you want with LEGOs. Snack provided. (All ages)

Golden Sower Storytime - Saturday, December 10|10:30 am

This storytime focuses on Golden Sower nominees for the primary level with complimentary activities and crafts.

Movie Day | 1 pm

Watch a movie while enjoying popcorn! (All Ages)

Saturday, December 10: "A Christmas Story"

Wednesday, December 21: "Elf"

Friday, December 23: "A Christmas Carol"

Wednesday, December 28: "The Smurfs"

Friday, December 30: "Kung Fu Panda 2"

Teen Activities

Homework Hangout -Tuesdays, Dec 6 & 13 | 4:30 pm

Get basic homework help, use Tutor.com or type a paper on one of our teen computers. (Gr. K-12)

LEGO Club - Wednesdays, December 7 & 21 | 4:30 pm

Use your imagination to build anything you want with LEGOs. Snack provided. (All ages)

Christmas Crafts for Teens| 4:30 pm

Have fun while creating different kinds of Christmas ornaments just in time to hang on the tree! Registration required.

Wednesday, December 14: "Glitter Glue Ornaments"

Friday, December 16: "3-D Paper Ornaments"

Tuesday, December 20: "Honeycomb Ornaments"

Teen Book Club - Saturday, December 17 | 2 pm

Discuss the "The Strange Case of Origami Yoda" by Tom Angleberger! Refreshments will be provided.

Teen Advisory Board (TAB) - Saturday, December 17 | 3 pm

Have fun creating gingerbread houses and discussing ideas during this special Holiday meeting!

Board Game Day— Tuesdays, December 20 & 27 | All Day

Have fun playing board games at the Library all day long! Bring your favorite board game to share or borrow one of ours.

Game Time | 2-4 pm

Have fun with your friends while trying out some of the Library's Wii and Xbox 360 Kinect games! (All Ages)

Thursday, December 22: "Just Dance 3"

Thursday, December 29: "Super Mario Brothers Wii"

Saturday, December 31: "Kinect Sports"

Adult Activities

Adult Game Time: Scrabble - Thursdays| 1 pm

Join us at the Library for some fun with the classic board game Scrabble!

Movie Day for Adults: "The Help" - Friday, December 9 | Noon

Watch a movie set in Jackson, Mississippi in 1962 where some women will start a movement that will forever change the town. Popcorn will be provided.

Movie Day for Adults: "A Christmas Story" - Tuesday, December 13 | Noon

Watch a classic Christmas movie about a young boy named Ralphie and his Christmas quest. Popcorn will be provided.

Holiday Safety

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, and that means more cooking, home decorating, entertaining, and an increased risk of fire and accidents.

Following these guidelines will help make your holiday season safer & more enjoyable...

Holiday Decorating & Lighting

Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.

- Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials, and do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees.

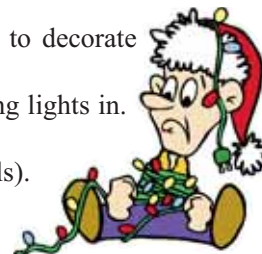
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in.

Do not overload extension cords.

- Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the cord's wire insulation (i.e., using clips, not nails).

- Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.

- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.



Holiday Entertaining

Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range.

- Provide plenty of large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse cigarette butts with water before discarding.

- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of sight and reach of children (preferably in a locked cabinet).

- Test your smoke alarms, and let guests know what your fire escape plan is.

Trees

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break.

- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.

- Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.

- Make sure the base is steady so the tree won't tip over easily.

Lights

Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.

- To hold lights in place, string them through hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks.

- Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.

- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.

- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Fireplaces

Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.

- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten.

- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

Security

- Use your home burglar alarm system.

- If you plan to travel for the holidays, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to keep an eye on your home.



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