

Hogmanay in Scotland

Consider yourself lucky if you find yourself ringing in the New Year in Scotland. Their Hogmanay holiday is one of the world's greatest New Year's celebrations.

No one is exactly sure what the term *Hogmanay* means. It first appeared in writing back in 1604, and historians believe the festival was celebrated decades earlier. Some speculate that *Hogmanay* derives from the French word *hoganine*, meaning "gala day." Others believe it comes from the Norman French word *hoguinian*, meaning "New Year's gift." Historians agree that both the term and the celebration likely appeared after Mary, Queen of Scots, returned to Scotland from France in 1561.

One of the foremost Hogmanay traditions is *redding the house*. This involves a deep cleaning of the home for the new year. It was traditional to clean the ashes from the hearth. Some community members were called upon to read the ashes, the way some soothsayers read tea leaves. The cleaning wasn't complete until a smoking juniper branch was carried from room to room, dispelling evil spirits. One last way of keeping house was to clear up all family debts before midnight.



The stroke of midnight brings the *first footing*. The *first foot* refers to the first person to set foot in your house on New Year's Day, and this first footing is symbolic of the year to come. This is why many new year's visitors come bearing gifts of shortbread and black buns, both considered luxurious foods. Hosts are obliged to offer their first footers a small drink, or *wee dram*, of whiskey. First footers often visit many homes, and the wee drams certainly add up.

Bonfires are also traditional. Since ancient times, fire has symbolized purification in Scotland. This is yet another means of cleaning for the new year. Of course, Hogmanay wouldn't be complete without the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*, written by Scotland's national poet Robert Burns.



Ann (Resident)---	December 1
Sue (Resident) ----	December 2
Bobbie S. (Resident) -----	December 4
Pat (Resident) -----	December 8
Johnny (Resident) -----	December 12
Linda (Staff) ----	December 13
Taylor (Staff)----	December 24
Norma (Resident)---	December 29

Richard Pryor (comedian) – December 1, 1940
 Andy Williams (singer) – December 3, 1927
 Kirk Douglas (actor) – December 9, 1916
 Ada Lovelace (programmer) – December 10, 1815
 Rita Moreno (actress) – December 11, 1931
 Brad Pitt (actor) – December 18, 1963
 Jane Fonda (actress) – December 21, 1937
 Humphrey Bogart (actor) – December 25, 1899
 Susan Butcher (musher) – December 26, 1954
 LeBron James (athlete) – December 30, 1984



Three Forks Tribune

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A Tough Nut to Crack

December brings many beloved holiday traditions, but one soars above the rest. No, not flying reindeer, but the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Tchaikovsky's classic ballet *The Nutcracker* has become a holiday staple all around the world, despite not mentioning the nativity story or Santa Claus.

It was not Tchaikovsky's idea to write *The Nutcracker*. After enjoying success with his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1890, Tchaikovsky was asked to compose a ballet for the Imperial Theatre. Tchaikovsky turned to his friend and collaborator Marius Pepita, who suggested they write a ballet based on the fairy tale *The Story of a Nutcracker*, by the French writer Alexandre Dumas. Dumas himself had "borrowed" the story from the German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann, who wrote *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* in 1816. In the 1800s, nutcrackers were common decorations in German households, revered as symbols of good luck. While composing in France, Tchaikovsky discovered a new instrument, the celesta. He decided to feature its wonderful sound in his new ballet. Before the ballet premiered, a short concert of the musical suite was played in St. Petersburg. Every number was given an encore. Tchaikovsky knew the music was good, but he worried about the performance.

Tchaikovsky was right to worry. Critics did not like *The Nutcracker* when it premiered at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia, on December 18, 1892. One particularly harsh review read, "*The Nutcracker* cannot in any event be called a ballet." For decades, only the first half of the ballet, featuring the battle between the soldiers and the rat king, was performed. But in 1944, the San Francisco Ballet, led by William Christensen, staged the entire ballet, and it became an instant holiday hit. Nutcrackers suddenly became cherished holiday decorations. By the 1960s, dance companies all across America were performing *The Nutcracker* as an annual December tradition. For many children, *The Nutcracker* remains their first and best exposure to ballet and classical music.

Three Forks Team

Emily Whitson
Executive Director

Corie Ford Gonzales
Resident Care Director

Tony Jackson
Clinical Director

Alex Davis
Community Relations Director

Shelby Mathis
Business Office Manager

Bill Lawson
Maintenance Director

Angela Tyler
Life Enrichment Director

Are You Game?

Games Day was created partly out of desperation in 1975 when an annual gaming convention scheduled for August was canceled. Games Workshop, a British-based manufacturer of miniature tabletop wargames, decided to sponsor their own Games Day to fill the void. On December 20, 1975, the first Games Day was held in Seymour Hall, London, as an opportunity for game enthusiasts to meet each other and play. Furthermore, it was a chance for Games Workshop to advertise their games and promote gaming communities throughout England. Today, the UK Games Expo is an annual event held in Birmingham, but for many, Games Day remains a perfect time to play their favorite games, be they board games, card games, video games, or strategy games.

Health experts have repeatedly demonstrated that habits matter when it comes to brain health. Adding a game night to your lifestyle is a fun way to increase mental stimulation and improve mental acuity. There are many computer games or puzzle websites that promote mental acuity, but many of these are designed to be played alone. Tabletop games not only challenge your mind but they promote social bonds as well. December 20 falls so close to the holidays that perhaps visiting family members can be convinced to play. Not only is a new game a great holiday gift but games provide a wonderful and creative way to pass the time with relatives.

Game aficionados have seen a tabletop gaming renaissance during the past few years. While traditional board games like Monopoly, Clue, and Scrabble are fun, designers have been busy developing new card, tabletop, dice, and role-playing games for players of all ages. There are even game-design conferences where inventors showcase their games while attendees get to play them and offer feedback. What new games are out there? Log on to websites like boardgamegeek.com or boardgamequest.com to peruse the newest offerings.



Residents and staff enjoyed a hot coco bar provided by Angels Care Home Health.



Special Events!

White Elephant Gift Exchange is on Wednesday, December 23. This annual event is something everyone seems to enjoy, except for the person who only receive one sock last year. Make plans to exchange an item that you no longer need that someone else might enjoy. AutoZone has once again chosen our community for their angel tree project. Employees use their own money to hand select items for each resident. We will be passing these gifts around during our Christmas party on Christmas eve. Other caring groups like the Boy Scouts, Mary Kay Cosmetics, and children from the Forney ISD will be bringing goodies for everyone. We are very thankful for the Forney community who always spread joy to our residents each year.

Strange Christmas Traditions

Christmas brings with it many beloved traditions: trimming the tree, hanging stockings, and singing carols. Many countries around the world enjoy traditions you may be less familiar with.



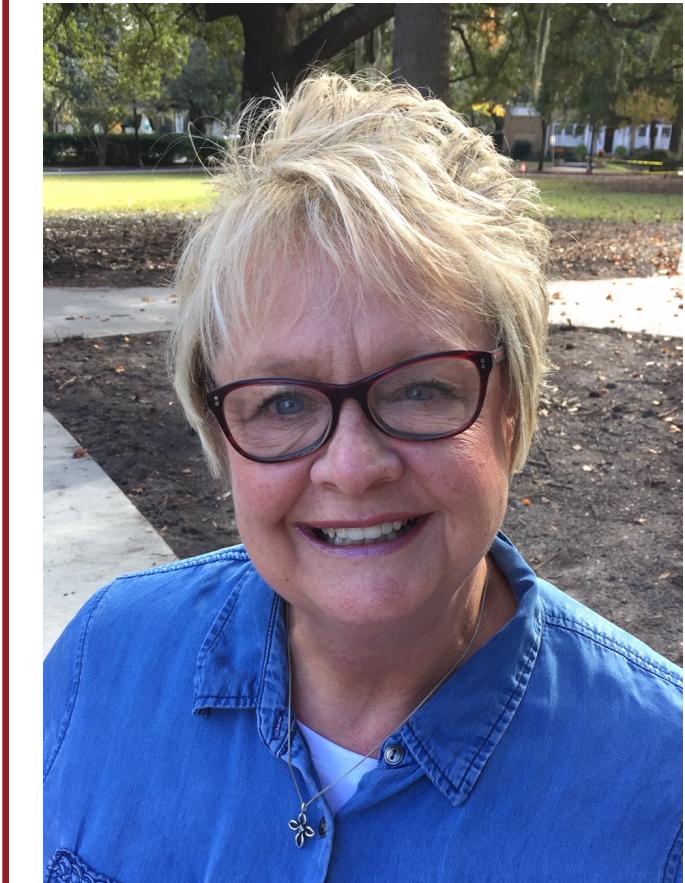
In Japan, an estimated 3.6 million families eat Kentucky Fried Chicken during the Christmas season. This is largely thanks to Takeshi Okawara, who managed the first KFC franchises in Japan. In 1970, Okawara marketed the Christmas "party barrel," a complete fried chicken dinner replicating American turkey dinners. There were so few existing Christmas traditions in Japan that KFC filled the void. These days, if you do not pre-order your KFC dinner weeks in advance, you will have to stand in line for hours to get your "Kentucky Christmas."

If you happen to be in Norway for Christmas, you'll be hard-pressed to find a broom, for they are all hidden away. Norwegian folklore tells of how evil spirits and witches emerge on Christmas Eve. Norwegians hide their brooms so that witches cannot steal them for riding.

In Caracas, Venezuela, Christmas morning brings presents and roller skates. Authorities close down the city streets on Christmas morning so that thousands of residents can roller-skate to church in safety. One tradition tells of how children go to sleep with one end of a skate lace tied around their toe and the other end dangling out the window. In the morning they are awakened by skaters tugging at the lace to alert them that it is time for mass.

In Ukraine, trees are not decorated with tinsel and ornaments but with faux spider webs. A common folktale tells the story of a poor woman who could not afford tree decorations. When she awoke on Christmas morning, she found her tree glistening with spider webs, courtesy of the spiders in her house who took pity on her.

These traditions may seem strange to you, but does your family have any Christmas traditions that others may find nontraditional?



Employee of the Month

LINDA COLE

Congratulations to Linda Cole for being the employee of the month for December. Linda has been at Three Forks of Forney for a year. Linda mainly worked as the receptionist, and recently she spread her wings and got certified as the assisted living medication technician. She says that her favorite thing about working here is the pleasant atmosphere, and enjoyable coworkers.

Linda was born in Detroit, and currently resides in Forney. She has 4 children and 8 grandchildren. She hopes to travel to Savanna this December to spend some time with her daughter and grandchildren.

In her free time she likes to sew, paint furniture and watch movies.

Great Job