

December 2020

Cottonwood Villa

450 S. Main St. Ainsworth, NE 69210 * 402-387-1000 * cottonwoodvilla.com
* email: cottonwoodvilla@yahoo.com



Celebrating December

**Universal Human Rights
Month**

Bingo's Birthday Month

Cookie Cutter Week
December 1-7

Hanukkah
December 10-18

Gingerbread House Day
December 12

Christmas Bird Count
December 14-January 5

Free Shipping Day
December 17

Christmas
December 25

Kwanzaa
December 26-January 1

New Year's Eve
December 31

Christmas Tidings From Cottonwood Villa

Merry Christmas from All of us at Cottonwood Villa! Around the world, people celebrating the Christmas Season are doing it in different ways than ever before because of the COVID-19 – but celebrating nonetheless and that includes all of us here at Cottonwood Villa! We have our lobby, dining room and hallways decorated with all things Christmas in nearly every nook and cranny, end table and shelf! It looks lovely as usual and very warm and memory-invoking for each of us. Throughout the day we have melodies of the season playing in the background and one of the staff has brought her collection of musical figurines, that dance, talk and merrily sing Christmas carols. One of the favorites is a small ivory grand piano that plays a long variety of traditional Christmas music – oh! How we've missed our pianists! And all our musicians. As we listen to all these melodies, we reminisce of Christmases past and our hearts ache to be near those we love the most as the year draws to a close and the celebration of Christ's birth joyfully nears each day. We shall miss those of you who would have joined us this season filling our lobby and halls with your Christmas carols and good cheer, and we'll miss terribly those of you who would have joined us for our traditional Christmas dinner of prime rib, laughing and sharing great moments in the warmth of our walls. We're just so thankful to have the memories of Christmases past as we look forward to 2021 bringing this wretched disease under control and thus life back to a more normal course. In our coffee table discussions and resident council meetings and just general visiting with family members who come by there is hope and faith that we will get back to brighter, happier days of enjoying company privately in their apartments, mask-free. It may be a longish winter, but we will prevail and come away stronger and more grateful for those we love as hugs, smiles and tender touches will once more nourish our hearts and souls and restore humanity and family to that which it is meant to be!

Merry Blessed Christmas to You All!

Resident Council Minutes

Cottonwood Villa Resident Council met December 1st at 10 a.m. with 13 residents and 2 staff present.

Dining: Thomas announced that Prime Rib is on the menu for Christmas day. Chinese food is back on the menu in December and evening sandwich/chip meals will be sandwich/soup meals instead now that the weather is turning colder. There were no comments from the residents about the meals.

Housekeeping: Residents were encouraged to let the housekeeping staff know when something was spilled on their clothing right away so they have a better chance of getting the stain out. One resident commented how grateful they were that someone else is cleaning her toilet. "It's just like a dream you have forever and then here we are, someone else cleaning our mess up for up."

Activities: Janelle reminded the residents that the calendar at the beginning of the month is our goal, but with changes in health status and staffing levels, flexibility is very much appreciated. If it seems like there will be a lot of changes, Janelle will set a weekly schedule out everyone's ledge. Otherwise, the white board in the dining room will always be the most up to date. One resident asked if only black dry erase markers could be used on the board, as the other colors are difficult to read. Several others agreed.

Residents and family members will be able to reserve the activity room as we get closer to Christmas. Unlike previous years, families will not be able to do meals in that space or large gatherings, as mask and social distancing requirements will still be in place. With limited spaces available to visit, it would be helpful for families to schedule ahead as they can.

Administrative: Not many changes from last month, just reminders to wash hands regularly and to be diligent about wearing masks when at appointments or when entertaining visitors. One resident asked when the hairdresser will be back. Janelle was not certain, but Ann informed the residents it will be next week.

December Birthdays

In astrology, those born between December 1–21 are the Archers of Sagittarius. The Archer's open mind, optimism, curiosity, and enthusiasm make them the travelers of the zodiac. They treasure freedom: freedom to roam, freedom of thought, and freedom to express themselves. Those born between December 22–31 are Capricorn's Goats. Goats are responsible masters of self-control. They are practical planners and leaders who value experience and expertise.

Richard Pryor (comedian) – December 1, 1940

Andy Williams (singer) – December 3, 1927

*** **Ellen Weyer – December 7** ***

Kirk Douglas (actor) – December 9, 1916

Ada Lovelace (programmer) – December 10, 1815

*** **Shirley Hoefel – December 11** ***

Rita Moreno (actress) – December 11, 1931

Brad Pitt (actor) – December 18, 1963

*** **Evelyn Zink – December 20** ***

Jane Fonda (actress) – December 21, 1937

Humphrey Bogart (actor) – December 25, 1899

Susan Butcher (musher) – December 26, 1954

LeBron James (athlete) – December 30, 1984



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?

The Tale of Beatrix Potter

On December 16, 1901, 35-year-old Beatrix Potter was so fed up with receiving rejection letters that she decided to publish her book *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* on her own. The book had begun as a letter to the sick son of Potter’s former governess. Potter had written and illustrated a letter in 1893 detailing the silly adventures of a family of rabbits, Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, Peter, and their mother. The rabbits of the story were modeled after Potter’s own pet rabbits, Peter Piper and Benjamin Bouncer. Potter later asked for the letter back, so that she could turn it into a children’s book.

Potter first printed 250 black-and-white copies of her book. In 1902, it was picked up by the publisher Frederick Warne & Co. and reprinted in color. The book was such a success that it had to be reprinted six times in its first year, selling 20,000 copies. Ever the self-starter, when Potter and Warne disagreed over her next book, *The Tailor of Gloucester*, she again published 500 copies on her own.

The Bermuda Triangle



On December 5, 1945, five bombers, collectively known as Flight 19, piloted by experienced veterans, took off from a naval air station in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on a routine training flight over the Atlantic. But then something strange happened. The flight’s leader, Lieutenant Charles Taylor, suddenly believed that his compass was malfunctioning. Soon, all the pilots were disoriented and lost. Some believed they were flying out over the open ocean, while others believed they were heading into the Gulf of Mexico. Then the planes vanished. This disappearance is perhaps the most dramatic of those involving the infamous Bermuda Triangle. Scientists today insist that the pilots made several mistakes under poor flying conditions, yet many still fear the Bermuda Triangle as an inexplicable place of menace and mystery.

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 *hoguinan*, 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.

Peak Performance



December 11 is International Mountain Day, a day to show appreciation and respect for the high places in the world. It is also a day to honor those with the courage to explore the mountains.

On December 3, 1910, Australian mountaineer Freda du Faur became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Cook in New Zealand. As a young girl growing up in Sydney, Australia, Du Faur taught herself rock climbing at a nearby national park. Summer vacations to New Zealand inspired her to summit the island's snow-capped peaks. Du Faur's dedication to physical fitness and rock-climbing would become standards for mountaineers of any gender. Du Faur made many first ascents in New Zealand's rugged ranges, for which she would become famous in the mountaineering world.

