



HOLIDAY GUIDE

Your calendar of holiday events and the joy
of shopping — and giving — locally
... *inside this week!*



The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 108 No. 47

www.carmelpinecone.com

November 25-December 1, 2022

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HOLIDAY GUIDE

Holidays on ice, on a firetruck, in a helicopter — or just around a tree

By ELAINE HESSER

HERE IN California, we like diversity — not just in the population and culture, but in options for spending free time. Skiing in the morning, gambling at lunch and a moonlight stroll along the Pacific Ocean? Completely doable. Disneyland and Magic Mountain in one day? Absolutely.

The Monterey Peninsula and its immediate neighbors want you to feel the same way about the winter holidays, with a cornucopia of events that range from child-centric, to family-friendly or adult-preferred. Don't believe it? Just have a look.

If you're ready to take to the ice, you can head out to **Custom House Plaza** in Monterey from now until New Year's Day for **Ice Skating by the Bay**. Adults pay \$15, kids are \$13 and skate rental is \$5. Diehard rink rats can get a season pass for \$225, not including skate rental. It's open most weeks from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 8 p.m. Sundays and holidays. For the first time, there are blocks of time available for private parties, too. Check the website at iceskatingbythebay.com for details.

Friday evening, Nov. 26, **Cannery Row's Christmas Tree Lighting**, complete with festive music, will be held in the plaza **near Cannery Row and Prescott**. Santa will be there for the big event, and will hold court out Saturdays and Sundays until Christmas from noon to 3 p.m. so the kids can make their wishes known.

Lots and lots of lights

Salinas' annual **Christmas Parade of Lights** is back for the first time since Grinchy old Covid spoiled the fun a few years back. Kicking off 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 27, the south end of Main Street will be filled with bands, festive floats and cool classic cars. In the past, more than 10,000



Local choirs and musical groups perform on weekends at Monterey's Old Fisherman's Wharf, where seagulls and sea lions sing backup.

people have attended the spectacle, leaving folding chairs and blankets along the route beginning early in the morning to reserve prime spots.

On Monday, Nov. 28 at 5:30 p.m., **Pacific Grove's Christmas tree** will be illuminated in **Jewell Park** at Forest and Grand. School bands and choruses will perform and refreshments will be served. Afterward, head over to

the **P.G. Museum of Natural History** at 165 Forest Ave., where Santa will visit with the kids until 8 p.m.

Circle Thursday, Dec. 1, if you want to see **Pacific Grove's 20th annual Parade of Lights**, from 6 to 8 p.m. Scheduled performers include holiday floats, march-

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ing bands, dance teams and animals. Jolly old St. Nick makes an appearance as well. This year's theme is "A Magical Holiday." Perhaps some "bah humbugs" will be miraculously transformed into happy holiday greetings.

"Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" Charlie Brown has been shouting that question in frustration for nearly 60 years in the Peanuts holiday



Sunset Center's the place to see "The Nutcracker."

TV special. No need for Linus to intervene, though. **Streets of Bethlehem in Salinas**, put on by the city's First Baptist Church, reenacts the story several times every evening from Dec. 1 through Dec. 4, from 6 to 8:00 p.m. nightly. Put on by hundreds of volunteers, the free outdoor event recreates the first-century village with craftsmen, Roman soldiers and live animals. To learn more, go to streetsofbethlehem.com.

Afterward, check out some of Salinas' great restaurants in the revitalized Oldtown area (now City Center) — Patria, Mangia and Villa Azteca offer a diverse variety of tasty fare, and you can find good Chinese food and sushi, too. Gino's (on Highway 68, just south of town) blackened chicken fettuccine is a hearty winter favorite.

Elves have been hard at work downtown preparing for the **tree lighting in De-vendorf Park** on Friday, Dec. 2. You can join the party at 3 p.m. at Sunset Center, with a short musical program and photos by a holiday tree, or meet up with Santa in the park, also beginning at 3 p.m. At 4 p.m., a menorah will be lit (well in advance of Hanukkah's Dec. 18 start), and at 4:30, the music and dance program gets started. At 6 p.m., Mayor Dave Potter and Santa make a joint appearance in time to simultaneously light the big tree, downtown median and park. Immediately afterward,

Carmel Plaza hosts its annual open house until 7 p.m., with refreshments, live music and more.

Sweet dance moves

From Friday, Dec. 2, through Sunday, Dec. 4, **Sunset Center's** stage will host the fictional Stahlbaum family — most notably, young Clara — along with Herr Drosselmeyer and an assortment of dancing fairies, nutcrackers, dewdrops and flowers for three performances of "**The Nutcracker.**" **Monterey Peninsula Ballet Theatre** will perform the holiday favorite Friday and Saturday's beginning at 7 p.m., and there's a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m., with an optional Kingdom of Sweets party beginning at 11:45 a.m. Tickets start at \$35 for children, \$49 for adults and \$120 for the Kingdom of Sweets/performance combo. Discounts



Enjoy ice skating with a view of Monterey's harbor.

are available for active duty military and seniors. Go to sunsetcenter.org to purchase tickets.

Christmas on the Wharf gets under-

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J.S. BACH CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

DANIEL HENRIKS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

WITH ORCHESTRA AND SOLOISTS FROM
I CANTORI DI CARMEL'S VOCAL ARTS ACADEMY

DECEMBER 9, 2022, 8PM

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way every weekend from Dec. 2 through Dec. 18 on Old Fisherman's Wharf in **Monterey**. On Fridays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. (except Dec. 10, when the fun starts at 6 p.m.) and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., take in the beautiful 23-foot Christmas tree and other decorations, visit with Santa in his house by Abalonetti's, enjoy live music with choirs and dancers, and maybe get in some last-minute shopping or grab a bread bowl of clam chowder. On Dec. 3, there's a special holiday safety afternoon from 1 to 4 p.m. with representatives from the Monterey Police Department and Fire Department on hand, with a fire engine and demonstrations by the Monterey Fire Boat. Visit montereywharf.com for a full schedule of performances and special events.

Not enough music? Monterey's **Camerata Singers** present a Christmas concert on Friday, Dec. 2, at 7:30 p.m. at **Northminster Presbyterian Church in Salinas**, and on Saturday at 7:30 and Sunday at 2:30 at **First Presbyterian Church in Monterey**. Tickets are \$20 for the Salinas performance and \$25 for Monterey. Go to camerata-singers.org to purchase online.

On Dec. 3 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., the **Hofsas House** at San Carlos and Fourth will host a **Gingerbread**

House Fundraiser for the Carmel Public Library Foundation. The family-friendly event is priced at \$25, and you'll get a kit to build your very own little Carmel cottage (no permits required), along with a cookie and coffee or hot cocoa. Adults can purchase a glass of wine, sparkling wine or a mimosa, and enjoy a fruit and cheese tray for \$10 extra. Go to bit.ly/3OaFIXN to prepay and register through Eventbrite.

Nautical and nice

It's hard to get any more old-fashioned than the **Historic Downtown Monterey Traditional Tree Lighting Celebration**. On Dec. 2, from 5 to 6 p.m. at landmark **Colton Hall**, the tree will be illuminated and there will be live carolers bringing plenty of cheer, as well as cider and cookies for those who attend.

Caledonia Park in Pacific Grove will be hopping with the **Annual Stillwell's Fun in the Park** on Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Santa will arrive on a P.G. firetruck at noon, and there will be complimentary rides, bounce houses, a petting zoo and entertainment for the whole family.

A **holiday concert** will be held at 2 p.m. Dec. 4 at the **Church of the Wayfarer**, to help raise money for First United Methodist Church of Salinas' homeless ministries. There, Emi Wada will play the piano and organ and



Santa will receive young visitors at his house on Fisherman's Wharf.

trumpeter Kevin Jordan will perform. There will also be a Christmas singalong.

An old carol reports that someone saw "three ships come sailing in on Christmas Day, in the morning..." Not to be outdone, Monterey Yacht Club's **Lighted Boat Parade** is scheduled for Dec. 4, starting in the **Monterey Harbor**. Conditions permitting, lots of cheerfully decorated craft will sail out of the harbor and along Cannery Row to the Monterey Bay Aquarium before returning to

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the docks. The fun starts at 5:30 p.m. and is scheduled to last until 8 p.m. Best viewing is from Fisherman's Wharf or the Coast Guard Pier, where judges evaluate parade participants for prizes.

Don't forget to take an evening cruise of your own through P.G.'s **Candy Cane Lane** on Morse Drive (the well-marked entrance is a bit downhill from David on Forest). Put on some holiday music, bring some hot cocoa or coffee, and enjoy the beautiful, inspirational and just-plain-silly displays designed to delight walkers and drivers alike.

Have you ever wanted to see what's inside of some of those beautiful Victorian homes in **Pacific Grove**? **Christmas at the Inns** on Dec. 6 and 7 from 6 to 9 p.m. gives you the opportunity to do just that. Tickets are \$20 per person (kids 12 and under can tag along for free) and are good for both nights, because different inns are featured each evening. As of this writing, participants include Seven Gables, Centrella Bed and Breakfast, the Martine Inn, Gosby House, Old St. Angela Inn, Green Gables, and the White Hart house on Lighthouse. Asilomar's Phoebe Hearst Social Hall will welcome guests both evenings. There will be live music and treats at each inn.

Monterey's restored Art Deco movie-house-turned-performance-venue, the **Golden State Theatre**, hosts **The Squirrel Nut Zippers Christmas Caravan Tour** on Friday, Dec. 9. The Zippers defy pigeonholing (likely because of the squirrels), drawing from jazz, swing, folk



Whether you're up until midnight or in bed at 9, you can still enjoy great entertainment at First Night Monterey.



(From left) If you want a different kind of Christmas, try Santa's Carmel Valley Fly-in, or a concert by the Squirrel Nut Zippers or Switchfoot.

and punk, occasionally even dipping into klezmer. Visit goldenstatetheatre.com for performance times and to buy tickets, which are going for \$27 to \$62.

Smuin Ballet returns to **Sunset Center** on Friday, Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. with a "fiercely festive" version of its annual "Christmas Ballet." Promising "surprises and new treats," the company once again sets ballet performances to old favorite carols and more contemporary music. Tickets are \$69 and \$89, and can be purchased at sunsetcenter.org.

Historic holidays

Too many cookies, not enough exercise? **Run Rudolph Run** is a 5-kilometer race that starts at **Lovers Point in Pacific Grove** at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10. A 1k "Elf Run" for the kids will be held, too. If you're not the fastest, you can always be the flashiest-dressed — or have the fanciest dog — in the costume contest. The run raises money for the Arthritis Research Coalition. For more information and to enter, go to arthritisresearchcoalition.org/events-1.

Also on Saturday, Dec. 10 and Sunday, Dec. 11, **I Cantori di Carmel** offers its annual Christmas concerts at **Carmel Mission**. Both performances begin at 8 p.m., when the choir will present J.S. Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" (Weihnachtsoratorium), Cantatas I-III, which describes the birth of Jesus, the announcement to the shepherds and the shepherds' adoration of the newborn Christ.

Monterey's 38th annual **Christmas in the Adobes** runs from 5 to 9 p.m. Dec. 9 and 10. Tour more than a dozen historic buildings all decked for the holidays. Many are not usually open to the public, so here's your chance to get a good look, complete with knowledgeable guides in

period costumes. You'll need a mask while indoors and refreshments will be offered at some of the locations. Comfy walking shoes are a must, and in the event of dark streets, please remember that your phone makes a dandy flashlight. Tickets for one evening start at \$25, or both nights for \$40, with discounts for youth, active duty military and Monterey State Historic Park members. The money goes to educational history programs for kids and the restoration of California's First Theater (which will be open for the event). Check out mshpa.org for more information.

Also on Dec. 10, Santa and the Mrs. will arrive by helicopter for the **64th Carmel Valley Fly-In**. After landing on Carmel Valley Airfield around 11 a.m., they'll board a vintage firetruck for a parade into the Village. Come to the **Carmel Valley Community Youth Center** at 25 Ford Road for photos with the Big Guy, face painting, live entertainment, a petting zoo and bounce houses.

Supporters of **YOSAL** (Youth Orchestra Salinas) can take a drive to **Sherwood Hall** in **Salinas** to enjoy the group's winter concert on Dec. 10 at 3 p.m. More than 200 students from Salinas and South County will perform "a diverse program of classical, cultural, and holiday music," and will be joined by 4to Prestigio, a professional Mexican band. Tickets are free, but must be reserved by Dec. 6 at www.yosal.org/concert.

On Dec. 16, **Switchfoot**, a rock band with roots in contemporary Christian music, will perform a Christmas concert at **Monterey's Golden State Theatre**, with tickets ranging from \$33 to \$213 for a "private performance" before the main event. Visit goldenstatetheatre.com for times and to buy tickets.

Whether 2022 was great or awful, give it a proper sendoff. **First Night Monterey** celebrates its 30th year with its annual alcohol-free celebration. From the lawn at Colton Hall to the Conference Center, mark your calendar