

# CLUB MDTOWN CHRISTMAS DANCE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19th

ADMISSION 75c  
8:30 p.m. - 1 a.m.

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Promoting Organized Outdoor and  
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Activities for the Children of  
Georgetown  
**Announcing a**  
**General Meeting**  
**THE AGENDA TO INCLUDE:**  
1. An account of the Association's formation, its  
accomplishments and hopes for the future  
2. Financial Statement  
3. Introduction of all coaches and players who have assisted  
4. Membership Plan  
5. Equipment Report  
6. Election of Executive  
**Sunday, Dec. 14, 1958**  
at the ROSE ROOM - ARENA  
3:00 P.M.  
All Parents and others interested, are respectfully asked to  
attend.

## Christmas Customs May Vary But Meaning is Still the Same

At Christmas in the Hampshire village of Overton the hooded dancers gyrate through the streets.

As the men of the village have done for 800 years, they act out the story of St. George and the dragon.

This fantastic ceremony is performed by farm laborers, who speak their parts in an ancient Anglo-Saxon dialect handed down by father to son over the centuries. Curiously, none of the mummets knows why he should re-enact the story of St. George at Christmas-time.

What is certain, though, is that the ceremony takes its rightful place among Christmas customs the world over — Christian, traditional, or frankly pagan — that have their origins in the forgotten past.

**Children At Heart**  
In contrast is the recently inaugurated custom of the arrival of the Three Wise Men in Los Angeles — by air from Mexico City.

Even hard headed businessmen, it seems, are children at heart when it comes to dressing up. For when they arrive to greet the mayor or the celluloid city on behalf of their president, they come dressed in robes more glamorous than the Magi were ever likely to wear. They wear gold crowns and carry an orb in their hands.

And Christmas being above all a children's festival, they come laden with sweets and all kinds of gifts.

On the other side of the world, in Australia, an innovation that has taken on the hallmark of an ancient tradition is the ceremony of "Carols by Candlelight."

Two decades ago an Australian radio announcer thought up the idea with the aim of helping sick children. To his surprise, no fewer than 10,000 people gathered, candles in hand, at Prince's Bridge the gateway to Melbourne, to sing the favourite carols they or their families sang back in their countries of origin in the Old World.

Now every Christmas Eve more than a quarter of a million people take part in the ceremony and guest artists travel the world to be present.

Since the Prince Consort set up a tree in Windsor Castle in 1841, for the Royal children, the Christmas tree has become a centre of festivities in England. His action had its repercussions in America, too. Today American cities vie with one another to set up in their city squares ever larger trees around which they sing carols. Record height so far is 200 feet.

Belgium and France, while not forsaking their traditional New Year festivities, are becoming Christmas tree conscious and are increasingly adopting English or German Christmas customs.

In Brittany and southern France the traditional custom of burning the yule log still holds sway — as it does in the northern parts of Italy and Spain.

A belief held in common is that the ash from the log has some miraculous powers. The Breton believes it ensures protection from lightning. The Italian and Spaniard never fears hailstorms when he has some of it in his pocket.

**Yule Log**  
The ceremony of burning the yule log varies from country to country. In southern France the whole family goes out on Christmas Eve to collect it. Wine is poured over it and, as it burns, the head of the family calls for a blessing on the house.

In Italy blindfolded children beat the burning log, and then the whole family sing an Ave composed especially for the occasion.

Another ancient and much-loved tradition is that of the crib — a scene to the Italians or puts to the Germans and German-Americans. The custom was started by St. Francis of Assisi, who in 1223 set up a nativity scene, which included live animals in a church in Greccio, Italy, to show how Christ was deprived of all comforts at His birth.

The most elaborate cribs can be seen in Italy, not only in the churches and private homes but also in banks, chain stores and railway stations.

They are prepared with extreme care and the figures of the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Wise Men, with their finely carved features, are elaborately dressed with clothes.

**Repairing Cribs**  
Farmers in northern Europe spend the long winter evenings repairing their cribs, which sometimes contain so many figures that a whole room is filled with them.

In many parts of Germany, Austria, Italy and South America

there are clubs where children learn to build their own cribs, being encouraged to use their imagination in producing different styles and shapes.

Americans of German descent in Pennsylvania go puts-putting at Christmas — that is, visiting one another's homes to view their friends' cribs, which might contain hundreds of figures, fanciful landscapes, waterfalls, bridges, fountains and, sometimes, whole villages.

**Bind Parents**  
Among the world's more unusual Xmas customs is that of the Yugoslav housewife sprinkling the tablecloth with wine so that a guest who happens to knock over his glass need not feel ashamed. For in that country it is no disgrace to get drunk at Christmas.

Another Yugoslav custom is for children to bind their parents in chairs and release them only when given their presents.

In America garlands of evergreens and holly on the front door symbolize goodwill to the householder to the passerby, while in the West of England such a wreath is intended to keep the devil out and good luck in.

At Queen's College, Oxford, on Christmas morning the feast of the boar's head is celebrated. For centuries the Provost and Fellows have walked in solemn procession to the great dining hall while old carols are sung. The boar's head roasted and stuffed with an apple in its mouth, follows, held high on a silver dish.

This was the Englishman's traditional Christmas dish long before the turkey arrived from across the Atlantic and is believed to be a relic of paganism from the time of the Danish conquest in the seventh century.

In Denmark today, as in the rest of Scandinavia, fish forms the chief item on the yuletide

menu.  
**Bitter Almond**  
The Danes follow this by eating a rice pudding which has a bitter almond in it. The finder is guaranteed good fortune.

The Serbs hide a lucky coin in their cake — like the lucky charms in the English Christmas pudding, while Rumanians bake cakes made in folds symbolic of Christ's swaddling clothes.

In the Tyrol milk is left out when the household goes off to midnight Mass on Christmas Eve — a gift for the Child and His Mother.

But what about St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus? He makes his appearance on December 6th in many European countries. The children welcome him eagerly, for his arrival means an early delivery of presents.

One of the more elaborate ceremonies in Switzerland at this time of year is the arrival of St. Nicholas. He has a bodyguard of about 50 white robed dancers wearing six-foot-tall hats resembling stained glass windows thru which candles shine.

**Pagan Origin**  
While hanging up a stocking is the more widespread custom, Basque and Dutch children put their shoes or sabots on the window ledges into which the Three Kings can put their gifts.

Christmas boxes are believed to be of pagan origin, the practice of exchanging gifts being part of the Roman Saturnalia and Nordic yule festivities.

The custom of opening the "poor into which sailors and travellers on long sea voyage put thank offerings to the monks for saying Masses for the safety of their vessels. These were presented to the monks at Christmas.

The custom of opening the "poor box" by the parish priest on St. Stephen's Day, Dec. 26th, and the distribution of its contents to the needy has added an extra day, Boxing Day, to England's Christmas holiday.

Regardless of how presents are

**Branch 120**  
**CANADIAN**  
**LEGION**

**Christmas Tree**  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18th  
UPSTAIRS IN THE LEGION AUDITORIUM  
at 7.15 p.m.

There will be a present for every child aged 12 and under of a Legion or a Legion W.A. member.

box' by the parish priest on St. Stephen's Day, Dec. 26th, and the distribution of its contents to the needy has added an extra day, Boxing Day, to England's Christmas holiday.

Regardless of how presents are exchanged, the fact remains that life would be bleak without the pleasant anticipation of receiving a Christmas box (whatever its shape or value) — and of course, the pleasure in giving one.

at a meeting in St. George's parish hall. Decision to form a district council was made at that meeting.

The new group will formulate ideas and correlate programs for social and scouting events. It is planned also to have a weekly news column in the Herald.

Vic Gunn will act as chairman and Harrison Wood vice-chairman of the new group.

**DISTRICT SCOUTERS' COUNCIL FOR TOWN**  
Last Thursday, Georgetown District Scouters' Council received its official blessing from District Commissioner David Dills, Acton at a meeting of the North Halton district scouters. On the previous Monday, Georgetown 2nd were host to scouters from 1st and 3rd Georgetown and 1st Glen Williams

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