

# Other Holidays Around Christmas Time

By: Vivien Fleisher

While the debate over political correctness at Christmas time ebbs and flows at this time of year, specifically over how inclusive our society should be of other holidays at the risk of suppressing Christmas, one thing is certain: there's more to the holiday season than just Christmas. That's because, one way or another, the sun has been doing a disappearing act since June on the north side of the equator, and ancient peoples were rightly concerned that this shrinking daylight could be a problem. So, they typically included a lot of candles and fire in their festivities to appeal to whoever was in charge to please bring the sun back.

There are holidays

stretching from November into January, as some are based on ancient calendars. Some float around since they're lunar-based—Hannukah and Chinese New Year—and lunisolar-based—Diwali. Many are days-long except for the one-day Winter Solstice. All celebrate light, since it's a pretty dark time of the year. And all involve special food.



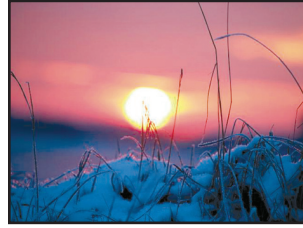
Hannukah is an eight-day Jewish celebration that involves lighting candles in a menorah each night; a 'helper' candle is

used to light one candle the first night, two the second etc. until all eight are lit at the end, adding up to forty-four candles to get through the eight days. It's not the most important holiday for Jewish people traditionally, but has taken on greater importance given its place in the Gregorian calendar, though it's based on the lunar calendar, starting on December 12 this year.



Kwanzaa starts December 26 and ends on New Year's Day. It celebrates African culture by lighting three red candles on

the left, three green on the right, and a black candle in the centre of a Kinara to symbolize seven values. Like the Hannukah menorah, a new one is lit each day in a specific order.

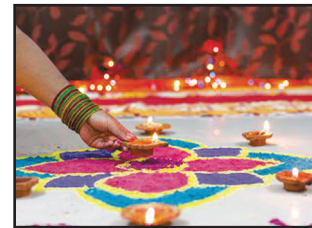


The winter solstice falls around the shortest day of the year in the northern hemisphere, and candles and bonfires are lit to encourage the sun to stop going in reverse. The pagans felt the need to appease the gods in order to bring back the sun. Yule is the ancient word for Christmas and is con-

nected to this shortest day of the year.

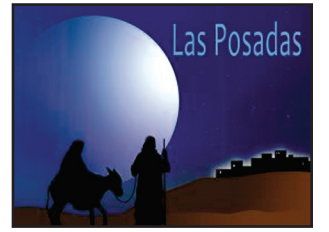


Chinese New Year is the most important Chinese holiday. Though it comes a month after Christmas, it too celebrates the promise of a return to spring. For fifteen days, families feast and celebrate, culminating in a night-time parade.



Diwali is a five-day Hindu holiday and is also a Festival of Lights.

It comes well before Christmas in October and November thanks to the ancient lunisolar calendar and features fireworks, food and family. Small clay lamps are lit.



The Spanish holiday Las Posadas is nine-days long, and though it originated in Spain, is very big in Mexico as well as a few others in the south. It involves candles, processions, feasting, and piñatas.

There are many more holidays throughout the world too, so, rest assured, if you want to extend the holiday season, there's lots to choose from.

## The ROCKWOOD Miller

### Guelph / Eramosa COUNCIL CHIPS By: Vivien Fleisher

#### Bonarrow Meadows Holding Provision Removed

Planner Rachel Martin recommended to council that the holding provision on lots 67-70 in the Bonarrow Meadows subdivision in Rockwood be removed. Following Bonarrow's submission of a completed application last month, the GRCA was satisfied that their request that a storm water management facility be sized according to their own requirements had been fulfilled. The application was deemed complete November 6, and it was also determined at that time that no public meeting would be required. In the agency comments, Wellington County planners and engineers and the Upper Grand District School Board had no objections, while CN left it to Metrolinx to provide comments on railway proximity given they own the corridor, and have plans for high speed trains in future, necessitating a good

buffer for both noise and safety considerations. Bonarrow Meadows is a 211-unit development at the north end of town, and the last big one in Rockwood.

#### Parkland Dedication Bylaw

Every time a new residential lot is created in Guelph/Eramosa, a fee is collected to go toward the creation of or maintenance of existing parkland, known as "cash in lieu" of green-space. For years, the fee was set at \$500, only recently amended last March to \$1,000 per lot. This amount still falls far short of other municipalities though, which typically charge five per cent or a flat fee of \$7,500. Given the tremendous growth in home values recently, Town Planning Consultant Trevor Hawkins presented a report recommending the fee be brought up to reflect the increased land value. Additionally, the current bylaw does not contain any exemptions.

Exemptions are made when, for example, a house burns down and is rebuilt. Waiving of fees for special projects also falls under this category. Other features of the proposed bylaw will guide staff in determining what qualifies for cash in lieu, as well as what land is appropriate for conveyance to the town. As Mayor White said in a discussion after Hawkins presented the recommendation, "We should have done this twenty years ago...we'll have built our last house at the time this passes."

#### Fees Bylaw

Parks and Rec director Robin Milne outlined a revised fee schedule pertaining to township facilities, the cemetery and the aforementioned parkland dedication fee. Driven in part by the provincially phased-in minimum wage increase, the revised fees will absorb the total wage increase at the same time rather than phasing them in in concert with the province's schedule.



## WORD IN THE VILLAGE

with Vivien Fleisher

"What is your personal resolution for 2018?"



Sharon Jull: "I did poorly with last year's. For 35 years, six of us have gotten together every New Year's Eve for dinner, and pick three or four resolutions. Last year I was going to work on the cottage; I did some of that. I was going to walk every day; I did some. And, I was going to do some kind of community service, but I did none. So, I will probably put them back on my list for 2018."

Amy Coull: "I have so many. To find a balance of home life and work life. I think I'll do well with that because my husband and I have the same resolution, so we'll be each other's cheerleader."



Margaret Aitken: "I have a few. One is always to focus first on faith and family, and then my pleasure, which is a passion for riding horses. I want to improve and move forward on that, but only in balance with faith and family."

Jay Moore: "To get rid of my diabetes. I can do that through diet and exercise."

