

# Deck the halls!

## The legend of Christmas greenery

One of the favorite traditions of Christmas is decorating the home with winter greens. Vases brimming with holly, wreaths made of evergreens and doorways hung with mistletoe can bring the holiday spirit to every room of the house.

Filling the home with Christmas greens today is as easy as a stop at the local florist shop. But the custom is actually older than Christmas itself, dating back 1,000 years before the birth of Christ.

Holly has perhaps the most intriguing heritage. Long before Christ, the early Druids were convinced holly's mystical powers could cure colic, worms, smallpox and even dislocated bones.

The belief in witches and demons was common by both peasants and aristocracy, and continued as late as the 17th century. Because of holly's sanctity, it was hung over doorways, windows and chimneys lest a witch enter through the openings.

Unmarried women were thought the most likely candidates to become witches, so a sprig of holly was tied to their bedposts on Christmas eve to save them from this dreaded fate.

The ancient Egyptians were the first to use winter greens decoratively. Holly's evergreen leaves and winterberry fruit (symbolic of life) were combined with ivy, fragrant herbs and other evergreens. They were coiled into wreaths and garlands, much as we do today, to decorate the feasting tables at joyful winter events.

Because of these early pagan customs, the first fathers of the Christian church strictly forbade the hanging of greenery. But the urge to "deck the halls" was strong and soon holly, greens and herbs were used to honor the birth of the Christ child.

Christian symbolism was then quickly attached to holly and the legends became abundant. One such legend tells how the Christ child was hidden from Herod's soldiers beneath the barren branches of a holly bush. The branches miraculously formed leaves to conceal the babe and wreathed Him in a protective circle of thorns. In thanks, Jesus blessed the holly to be forever green.

Other religious myths retell how the holly

berries, once yellow, were washed with Christ's blood, making them forever red. And each year on Christmas Eve, Christ was thought to walk on earth again, with young holly plants sprouting from his footsteps.

Christmas during the Victorian era found ladies spending hours constructing elaborate holly centrepieces for their dining room tables. This created a great demand for fresh greenery. The holly peddler soon emerged to provide this service. Country folk would gather cartloads of holly, mistletoe and evergreens to sell on city street corners.

Today the holly peddler no longer barks

his wares on the streets, and women need not spend hours creating holly centrepieces. These services are readily available—in the festive atmosphere of your favorite flower shop.

Follow these tips from your florist to keep holly as fresh as possible:

1. Use in water-filled containers, and check water level daily.

2. Keep cool, especially at night, but do not allow to freeze.

3. Avoid furnace drafts.

4. Mist regularly to add humidity and extend life.

Want answers to your questions on flowers and plants? Contact your local professional florist!



### It will be a gloomy day tomorrow

The vast majority of workers at the RCA plant in Midland will be reporting for work for the last time tomorrow. A major plant layoff is planned for Dec. 31. Between Friday and then workers will be

on their Christmas holidays. There's still hope the plant can be sold early in the new year although no buyer has yet come forward.

## Dateline North Simcoe

### Want to buy a '67 fire truck?

Township of Tay plans to advertise in Municipal World for the sale of its 1967 tank truck presently declared as fire department surplus equipment.

At Tay council's last meeting, it was also agreed that Fire Chief Tom O'Hara arrange for advertisements in firefighting magazines, as he feels necessary, in an effort to sell the '67 tanker.

### Area board countdown to demise

Midland council was told, Monday night, that once Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing examines the 1982 balance sheet of the now (almost) defunct Tiny-Tay Peninsula Planning Board, clearance will be given by Queen's Park to officially and finally dissolve the area planning board.

At that time surplus funds from the board will be distributed appropriately.

Surplus funds amount to \$22,531.

### Raffle winners

The winners of the Midland-Penetang and District Branch of the Canadian Diabetes

Association Christmas raffle are Theresa Dubeau of Penetanguishene (a needle sculpture doll), Penny Copeland of Collingwood (Raggedy Ann and Andy), and Wesley Johnston of Midland (gingerbread house).

### Celebrating a major milestone

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Dunlop of 292 Delia Street, Orillia, formerly of Victoria Harbour and Midland area, are celebrating their 57th Wedding Anniversary on Dec. 23, 1982.

They are parents of Mrs. Marion Phillips of Midland, Mrs. Gladys Anslow of Niagara Falls and Mr. William A. Dunlop of Barrie.

### Two meetings for Tay councillors

Tay Township council was to have met this morning at 9:30 a.m.

As well township lawmakers are to meet on Jan. 13. Next month's meeting is set for a 9:30 a.m. start.

### Fail to report charge laid

Leon Robitaille, 25, of Borden Crescent, Midland, has been charged with failing to report an accident following a single vehicle traffic accident

at 2 a.m. last Thursday, just west of William Street, Victoria Harbour.

Robitaille received minor injuries. Two seat belt charges were also laid by the Midland OPP. The car went off a curve.

### Tree thieves at work in Port McNicoll

Tree thieves are active in Port McNicoll.

A 40 inch high cedar was taken from the Ninth Avenue property of Albert Meechan last Friday. The tree was cut from where it stood on the Meechan front lawn some time between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

The Midland OPP also report that around 2 a.m. last Sunday Jules Bourgeois of Second

Avenue, Port McNicoll, frightened away a man who was attempting to chop down a tree in his back yard.

### Two calls for help: Belfry

Midland firefighters quelled a chimney fire, Friday night at 26 Bayview Dr. Damage was nil, reports Deputy Fire Chief Hal Belfry.

Saturday morning, fire department officials were called to 359 Eighth St. A small fire there had been snuffed out before officials arrived.

### Would you sign in please

John Bayfield and Carol Gerow will be holding an autograph session tomorrow at 3 p.m. at Penetanguishene town hall in connection with their Penetanguishene Centennial Book "This Was Yesterday."

### Due honours for banker

Mrs. Janie J. Frank of The Royal Bank of Canada in Midland has become Fellow of the Institute of Canadian Bankers, following completion of the Institute's continuing education program.

The Institute is responsible for all educational activities and for the development of professionalism in the Canadian banking industry.

The Institute of Canadian Bankers was founded in 1967. Its principal objective is to meet the demands of modern banking in providing business education and aiding in fostering professionalism among bank personnel. Last year, more than 11,591 people enrolled in its courses given at 54 universities and by correspondence. Of the total, 4,591 were from Ontario.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

Best wishes to our many good friends this holiday time!

from  
BUMSTEAD'S  
ELECTRIC  
322-2613  
Wyevale



May the warmth and beauty of Christmas remain in your heart and home throughout the New Year.

Charlie & Gene Colling,

**Yorkton Securities Inc.,**  
536 Dominion Avenue, Midland, Ontario  
**526-8449**

### Its aim is crime prevention

Norman Sterling, provincial secretary for justice, today announced Community Justice Week, April 17-23, 1983, an initiative to assist communities in

developing crime prevention programs. "A working group has been formed to assist and encourage communities in designing their own Justice Week

programs. The group includes representation from government, business, education and community crime prevention programs," Sterling said.