

HOLIDAY

Gift Guide



INSIDE



The 2023 Holiday Events Calendar

There is plenty of Holiday Cheer to be found at the many Community events.

Page 3



Christmas in Maple Lake

A good time awaits all for people of all ages in Maple Lake on Dec. 2.

Page 8



Pairing Wine with Foods

Choose the wine that works best with your Holiday Meals and Appetizers

Page 14



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Holiday Events Calendar

Giving Tree/Secret Santa

Nov. 21-Dec. 12: Help Santa help kids, the handicapped and the elderly of the Maple Lake community by donating to the Giving Tree/Secret Santa program. Organizers are looking for donations of new, unwrapped toys, clothing, hygiene supplies and other useful items for people of all ages in need in our community. Local businesses hosting collection boxes this year are: Starbank of Maple Lake, Spooky Brew Coffee Co., The Costume Shoppe, Maple Lake Lumber, Kings 46, Nutrition is Our Mission and Holy Gifts. The Giving Tree/Secret Santa program is hosted by St. Timothy's Church and Maple Lake Organizations.

Thanksgiving

Thursday, Nov. 23: This is a day to give thanks and enjoy time with family and friends.

ANML Lightning Turkey Trot

Thursday, Nov. 23: The Annandale-Maple Lake Lightning Wrestling team is hosting the annual Turkey Trot. Registration begins at 6:30 a.m. at Annandale Middle School. The race starts at 8 a.m. Proceeds will go to the wrestling team.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Thursday, Nov. 23: The Annandale United Methodist Church, 250

Santa Claus will make an appearance at several events around the county this Christmas season so get your camera ready.

(See **Holiday Calendar** on page 4)



VINTAGE SNOWMOBILE DISPLAY

Shop LOCAL
"You" Helping Yourself

A MAPLE LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENT

FUN For the Whole FAMILY!

PHOTOS WITH SANTA



Christmas IN MAPLE LAKE

10 a.m. to Noon

Saturday, December 2

TENT EVENT

An Evening under the

Featuring
The Butchery,
Dangerous Man
Brewing & The New
Light Display

3p.m.-6p.m.

A Maple Lake Chamber Event

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM OUR CHAMBER MEMBERS

- A Plus Performance
- Airlift Doors
- Albion Ridges Golf Course
- Annandale Monument & Countertops
- Avenue Realty-Georgie Christian
- Bernatello's Pizza
- Bethlehem United Church of Christ
- Birch Lake Landscaping
- Blizil's Repair
- Book Break
- Buffalo Country Inn & Suites
- Buffalo Hospital/Allina Health
- Carefree Lawn Sprinklers
- Cedar Lake Engineering
- Church of St. Timothy
- Costume Shoppe
- Cuddigan Leather
- Dingmann Funeral Care
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- J & J Athletics
- Jane Goodall Envir. Science Academy
- Jewel Cabinet Refacing
- Jude Vending
- KRWC Radio
- Lake Central Insurance Services
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- Lake Region Co-op Assn
- Light Bulbs & More
- Lundeen Bros.
- M & M Bus Service
- M & M Express Sales & Service
- Madigan's Pub & Grill
- Maple Lake-Lake POA
- Maple Lake Legion
- Maple Lake Library
- Maple Lake Lions Club
- Maple Lake Lumber
- Maple Lake Messenger
- Maple Lake Post Office
- Maple Lake Public School
- Maple Lake Retail Center
- Maple Lake Royalty Program
- Maple Manor Apts
- MCP Collision & Glass
- Mike Grant Mechanical
- Milestone Medicare
- MP Nexlevel
- Northstar Granite Tops
- Oak Realty
- OPS Assembly
- OTC Vintage
- Pace Industries
- Pagel Law Office
- Paws & Claws Grooming
- Rhino
- Rivers Precision
- Southbrook Golf Course
- Spooky Brew Coffee House
- Spray Foam Insulation Systems
- Star Bank
- Subway-Maple Lake
- Sunfish Dental
- The Butchery of Maple Lake
- The V by HH
- Thomes Insurance Group
- Thryv
- Total Care Chiropractic, PA
- Twin Lake Design Group
- Whispering Pines Golf Course
- Wr.Co. Community Action
- Wr.Co. Economic Dev. Partnership
- Wright-Hennepin Electric
- Wright Technical Center
- Young & Brown, LLP
- Zahler Photography





FUN ACTIVITIES & GAMES!

REAL LIVE REINDEER

Holiday Calendar

(From page 3)

Oak Ave. N, will host a Community Thanksgiving Dinner Thursday, Nov. 24 at noon. A free will offering will be accepted, but not required.

Holiday Tour of Lights

Friday Nov. 24-Friday, Dec. 29: Trailblazer Transit is offering one-hour rides through the city of your choice to see the Christmas lights. Ride any time between 5 and 8 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person. Schedule your tour by calling 1-888-743-3828. Trailblazer requests you call 24 hours in advance.

Small Business Saturday

Saturday, Nov. 25: This is a day to show support for small businesses and the impact they have on our communities by shopping local.

Christmas Tree Lighting

Saturday, Nov. 25: A community Christmas Tree lighting ceremony will take place at 5 p.m. at the Clock Tower Park in downtown Annandale. Enjoy festive music, Christmas carols and hear about all the fun festivities in store this holiday season. See the chamber website and social media for more

information, www.annanandalechamber.org.

Festival of Trees

Friday, Dec. 1-Saturday, Jan. 6: The Wright County Historical Society's 17th annual Festival of Trees display opens at 8 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 1 and runs through Friday, Jan. 6. Festival of Trees is a gift to the community—an indoor winter wonderland for everyone to enjoy, complete with family-friendly activities for all ages and abilities. Admission is free thanks to the Wright County Commissioners commitment to history access for all residents, and generous donors.

Christ Child Luncheon

Friday, Dec. 1: St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Annandale will host its annual luncheon from 10:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proceeds will go to pro-life organizations. Sponsored by the St. Ignatius Council of Catholic Women.

Christmas in Maple Lake

Saturday, Dec. 2: Meet Santa Claus and his reindeer from 10 a.m. until noon in downtown Maple Lake. Enjoy indoor crafts and activities hosted at



FESTIVAL OF TREES The Wright County Historical Society's 17th annual Festival of Trees display will be open for viewing from Friday, December 1st through Saturday, January 6th.

the downtown businesses, see Santa's reindeer courtesy of Bluestem Reindeer Ranch, roast marshmallows over an open fire, tour a vintage snowmobile show and have your picture taken with Santa. Return to downtown Maple Lake at 3 p.m., but this time leave the kiddos at home. Enjoy an outdoor winter market, live music, a heated tent, and drinks until 6 p.m. See the story in this guide for more information.

Village Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 2: Minnesota Pioneer Park in Annandale will hold its annual Village Christmas from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will include pictures with Santa, wagon rides, live Christmas music, bake sale, craft sale, food, beverages and more. Some of the historical buildings will be open for visitors to get a feel for what Christmas was like during pioneer times.

Wishing everyone a
very Merry Christmas!



Look to us for Future Employment!

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Annandale ★ Maple Lake

Christmas Luncheon, Bake Sale, and Silent Auction

Saturday, Dec. 2: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, 331 Harrison St. W., Annandale. Enjoy this festive annual event, Lefse will be made and sold on site. Other bakery items will be available. There will be a silent auction featuring local merchants. Enjoy a sloppy joe lunch and more. Proceeds go toward the youth ministry.

Santa at Bertram Park

Saturday, Dec. 2: Wright County Parks and Recreation will host Santa Claus at Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. There will be a professional photographer on hand, horse drawn wagon or sleigh rides (depending on whether there is snow), smores by the campfire, goodie bags and refreshments. The cost is \$25 per family and pre-registration is required. Sign up online through Wright County Parks and Rec. at <https://wrightcountyparksandrec.perfectmind.com/> Bertram Park is located at 9910 Briarwood Ave NE, Monticello.

AHS Choir Concert

Monday, Dec. 4: The Annandale High School choirs will present a holiday concert at 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.

Share your Christmas Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, Dec. 3: The Annandale Kiwanis Club will host the 32nd annual Share Your Christmas Pancake Breakfast from 8 a.m. to noon at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, lower level. In addition to pancakes, there will be egg bake, and all the trimmings. This is a fundraiser for the club and its community projects.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Thursday, Dec. 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day observes the attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii during World War II.

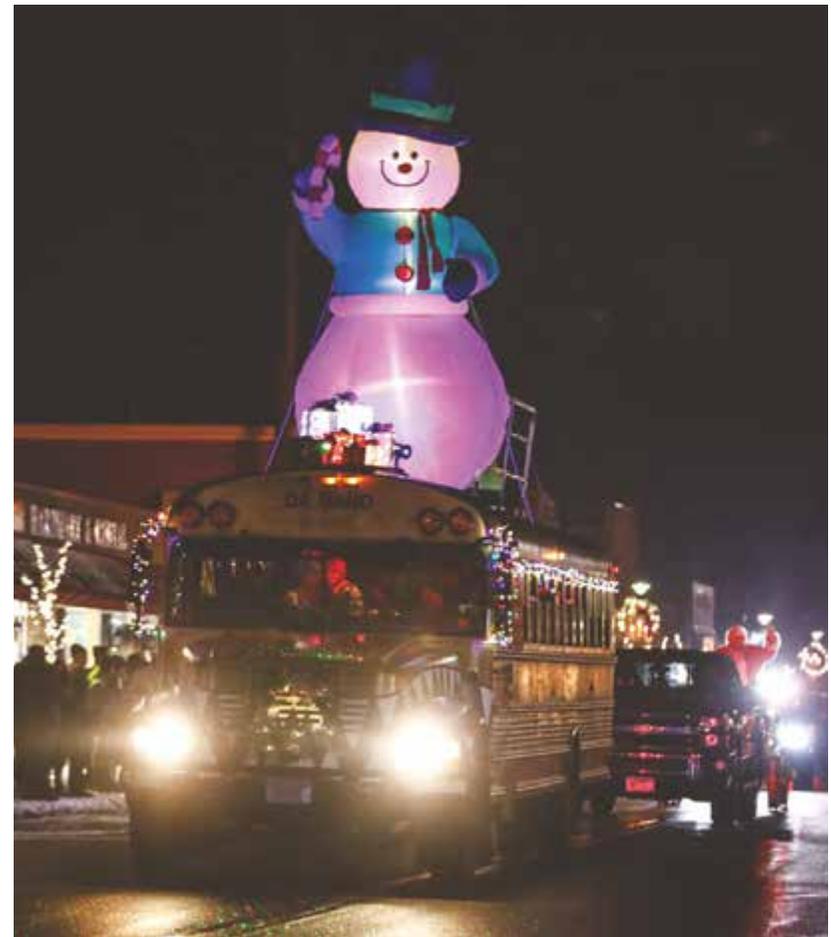
Annandale Middle School Band Concert

Thursday, Dec. 7: The Annandale Middle School's Band Concert begins at 6 p.m. for sixth grade, and 7 p.m. for seventh and eighth grade, at the high school's Performing Arts Center. All are invited to this free concert.

Main Street Holiday

Saturday, Dec. 9: Main Street Holiday has fun activities for the whole family. Visit downtown Annandale, from 1 to 6 p.m. There will be a Main Street Mile run before

(See **Holiday Calendar** on page 6)



ANNANDALE'S MAIN STREET HOLIDAY is Saturday, Dec. 9. The Holiday Lights Parade ends a day of family fun and getting into the holiday spirit.

A festive holiday advertisement for Bernatello's Foods. The background is a teal color with white snowflakes. In the center, the Bernatello's Foods logo is displayed in a stylized, yellow and red font. Below the logo, the text "HAPPY HOLIDAYS!" is written in large, white, bold letters. Underneath that, a handwritten-style message reads: "We hope your holiday season is filled with joy... and pizza!". At the bottom, there are three cartoon characters: a polar bear wearing a blue scarf, a penguin wearing a red hat and scarf, and a snowman wearing a blue hat and scarf. The website "bernatellos.com" and the address "200 Congress St W Maple Lake" are listed at the bottom.

Holiday Calendar

(From page 5)

the event at 1 p.m. pictures with Santa, s'mores, light parade at 5 p.m. and more. See the story in this guide for more information. See the December issue of the Lake Country Lure for the Main Street Holiday flyer.

Canadian Pacific Holiday Train

Wednesday, Dec. 13: The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train returns to Central Minnesota this year with stops in Buffalo and Annandale. The 1,000-foot train with hundreds of thousands of LED lights is scheduled to arrive at 5:45 at the 5th Street NE railway crossing in Buffalo. At 7:15 p.m. it will arrive at Downtown Park in Annandale near the Harris Street West railway crossing. Sometime between 6:30 and 7:15 p.m. it will pass through Maple Lake. For those wanting to catch a glimpse of the bedazzling locomotive, First Street on the south end of the Maple Lake Community Park is a good place to do it. CP Holiday Train rides to raise money for local food shelves.

Breakfast with Santa

Sunday, Dec. 17: The Lions Club will host Breakfast with Santa from

8:30 a.m. to noon at Annandale High School. Kids eat free with an adult. There will also be photos with Santa and more. Watch the Advocate for more details.

Tunes and Treats

Monday, Dec. 18: The Annandale High School and Middle School jazz bands will present a "Tunes and Treats" concert in the high school commons area at 7 p.m. Everyone is invited to get in the holiday spirit. This is a free event open to the public.

Winter begins

Thursday, Dec. 21: It is the first day of winter.

Christmas Break

Monday, Dec. 25 to Monday, Jan. 1: Christmas Break. No school in Annandale School District and Maple Lake School District. Classes resume Monday, Jan. 2.

Christmas Eve

Sunday, Dec. 24: Many businesses close early today. Many churches hold Christmas Eve services.



TIS THE SEASON! There are so many local events to choose from this Holiday Season. Have a Merry Christmas and enjoy the Christmas spirit that is sure to spread throughout our community.

Christmas Day

Monday, Dec. 25: Give gifts and give thanks with family and friends. Celebrate the birth of Christ.

New Year's Eve

Sunday, Dec. 31: Have a safe and happy new year.

New Year's at 9

Sunday, Dec. 31: Bring in the New

Year with this family-oriented event. Gather around at 8:45 p.m. to watch the ball drop at 9 at Clock Tower Park in downtown Annandale. A photo op will be available with Father Time and Baby New Year. See the story in this guide.

New Year's Day

Monday, Jan. 1: Time to start on those New Year's resolutions.

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at

★ 2024 ★ 2024 ★ 2024

Bring in the New Year



By Steve Prinsen
Staff Writer

Annandale will once again usher in the new year with its New Year's Eve Ball Drop, which is also known as "New Year's at 9."

The unique winter tradition in Annandale focuses on the "New Year's at 9" Times Square style, lighted-crystal ball drop from the top of the Clock Tower at the Clock Tower Park, not at midnight but at 9 p.m. This year's event will be on Sunday, Dec. 31.

Since it started in 2014, the New Year's Eve ball drop event has been a popular attraction. With the exception of the pandemic and a year when the temperatures were just too cold - even for Minnesotans - the ball drop has been a family tradition.

It became even more popular since the time was changed to provide an opportunity for families

to attend, thus allowing families with children to enjoy the tradition without having to stay up until midnight.

"Watching the excitement of the children who attend brings a special kind of community focus to the event," Vicki Morgan said, who coordinated the ball drop for many years and still helps out.

Father Time and Baby New Year will appear again this year, offering fun photo opportunities to celebrate with noisemakers, hats, and other celebratory effects.

The tower will be specially lit, and music from Minnesota Main Street Radio will add to the festivities, which occur from about 8:45 to 9:15 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 31.

The entire community is invited to the ball drop, which is sponsored by the Annandale Chamber of Commerce. Come out and welcome in the new year a few hours early.



Celebrate with Father Time and Baby New Year and watch the lighted-crystal ball drop, Times Square style, at Annandale's New Year's at 9, Sunday, Dec. 31. The event rings in the new year early for families to enjoy the festivities without the wait until midnight.

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Something for every age at Christmas in Maple Lake



Well known holiday characters roaming the streets will give kids a thrill at Christmas in Maple Lake. Above, Haley Anders gives Frosty the Snowman a high five at last year's event.



REINDEER COME TO MAPLE LAKE. Tikes will see real-live reindeer at this year's Christmas in Maple Lake courtesy of Bluestem Reindeer Ranch.



PICTURE OPPORTUNITIES with Mr and Mrs. Claus will be available inside the dental clinic all morning long. Look for signs to see which participating downtown businesses are offering activities indoors for children to enjoy during Christmas in Maple Lake.

By Brenda Erdahl
Staff Writer

Find fun for every age at the newly imagined Christmas in Maple Lake.

Downtown business owners took the 18-year-old holiday tradition and put a new spin on it for Christmas 2023. What used to be a morning event that catered to families with young children, has expanded into two events – one for kids in the morning, and one for grown-ups in the afternoon, said Brandan Hoon, owner of the Spooky Brew Coffee Co. and one of the event organizers.

Parents are invited to bring the kids to downtown Maple Lake from 10 a.m. until noon, Saturday, Dec. 2 where they will get to meet Santa Claus and his reindeer, roast s'mores over an open fire and enjoy an assortment of activities indoors at the downtown businesses.

At 3 p.m. the tone of the event will change. Santa Claus will still be around, but the kids' activities will be replaced by an outdoor winter market, live music, and drinks. Parents are invited to leave the kiddos home with a babysitter for this portion of the celebration.

This annual event has been the highlight of the community's holiday festivities for nearly two decades. Hosted by the Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce, it takes place outdoors along Division Street and Birch Avenue.

The focal point of the morning celebration is Santa Claus who arrives by fire truck to the delight of the waiting children. This year he'll disembark at Sunfish Dental's new clinic in the old McHugh building on Birch Ave. After greeting the congregated children, he'll head inside where families can pose for photos with him in the comfort of the heated dental office.

Just down the street in the empty lot, Bluestem Reindeer Ranch of Maple Lake will have a few special guests - Santa's



CHRISTMAS IN MAPLE LAKE Santa will arrive by fire truck at 10 a.m. Saturday morning, Dec. 2 outside Sunfish Dental on Birch Avenue .

reindeer! This is not a petting zoo, but children will be able to see up close the muscle behind Santa's Christmas Eve deliveries.

From there, check out the Vintage Snowmobile Show then warm up at one of the grated fire pits where children will find all the makings for a s'more. If you're still cold, grab a hot chocolate or coffee from Spooky Brew or shuffle into a participating downtown business where the kids will be further entertained with activities such as ornament making and coloring. Watch for signs showing which businesses are participating, Hoon said.

In years past, Miss Maple Lake and her princesses have been on hand making their special magic reindeer food for children to sprinkle around their yards on Christmas Eve. They always like help and will have stations set up for kids to participate.

Throughout the morning, children will get a thrill from seeing some of their favorite holiday characters mingling with the crowd. In past years Olaf from Disney's "Frozen," has paid Maple Lake a visit along with elves, Mrs. Claus,

and a walking Christmas Tree.

The evening portion of the celebration takes place from 3 to 6 p.m. Find unique Christmas gifts at the winter market, which Hoon said will be something like a mini-Makers and Growers Market from the summer. A hand full of vendors will be set up along Birch Avenue. There will also be a heated tent where those 21 and older can enjoy an alcoholic beverage. Katie King from Kings 46 Wine Bar will be mixing up Sake Cider and the signature German drink, Warm Gluhwein. This drink is served hot to warm you from the inside out.

Nearby, Doug Lindenfelser of The Butchery of Maple Lake will be cooking up warm sandwiches and through it all, there will be live music.

Christmas in Maple Lake has been a tradition looked forward to by the children in this community for almost 20 years. For many years it was held inside at the elementary school. Two years ago, organizers moved it to Birch Avenue to show off the city's unique downtown. Local business owners are helping to put this year's event together.

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White Pine
With its gentle soft needles, you might be tempted to give this tree a (very careful) hug.

🌿🌿🌿
🌿🌿
\$\$



Canaan Fir
Enjoy this tree's rich color and layered structure that's excellent for displaying ornaments.

🌿🌿🌿
🌿🌿
\$\$\$\$

🌿 = needle retention 🌿 = fragrance \$ = price

By Brenda Erdahl

Though retailers may begin playing holiday tunes shortly after Halloween, for many people, no date on the calendar marks the beginning of the holiday season better than the day they pick up their Christmas tree.

For many, this tradition means an expedition to a tree lot or a Christmas tree farm to find the perfect Fir or Spruce.

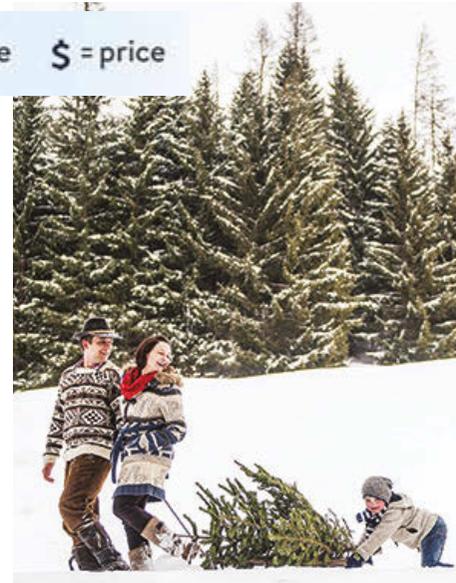
The Minnesota Grown Directory offers this list of local tree farms. There are cut your own and pre-cut options, plus extras like visits with Santa, live reindeer, gift shops and more.

Crow River Nursery

Crow River Nursery is located on the Crow River five miles north of Howard Lake on County Road 6. This grower of fir and pine trees has many different varieties of trees available including Balsam, Korean, Siberian and Fraser Fir; Scotch, Norway, and White Pine; Blue, Meyer, Serbian and Norway Spruce. Hours are Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 17-Dec 17 and Wednesday and Thursday from 12 to 5 p.m. Nov. 29-Dec 14. Closed Thanksgiving.

Peterson Tree Farm

Peterson Tree Farm is a 225-acre family farm in a beautiful country setting in Clear Lake. Cut-your-own Fraser, Balsam, Canaan, Korean and Siberian Fir, Spruce, Scotch, Norway, and White Pine. Many tall trees are



Picking the best tree for you can come down to a few factors that matter most when bringing the outdoors indoors this Holiday Season. Choose the best tree with a Minnesota Northwoods fragrance or a soft touchable tree with the best needle retention.

available. Or shop indoors for a variety of pre-cut trees harvested from their tree fields. Free shaking/baling, candy canes, hayrides, giftshop, wreaths, greens and tree stands are available. Driving in the fields is allowed. Peterson Tree Farm is Conveniently located six miles north of I-94, take the Clearwater exit. Hours are Friday – Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 24-Dec. 17. Santa will be visiting the tree farm for pictures Nov. 24, 25 and 26 and Dec. 2 and 3 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

B&J Evergreen

B&J Evergreen is a Christmas and landscape tree farm that offers cut-your-own Fraser Fir, Balsam Fir, White Pine, Scotch Pine and Spruce. Pre-cut

trees, holiday greenery and unique holiday items for sale as well. Free activities are available on weekends including horse drawn wagon rides, Santa and Mrs. Claus visits, petting zoo with Cliff the Camel, playground, face painting and much more. The farm is located at 12946 47th Street in Clear Lake and is open for the season.

Rum River Tree Farm

Located in White Bear Township, Rum River Tree Farm sells Christmas trees, wreaths, spruce tops, garland, and decorating greens. Located next to Cub Foods at 1059 Meadowlands Drive, the family-owned business has been growing quality Christmas trees for over 40 years. Rum River specializes in premium quality Balsam, Fraser, and Canaan Fir; Scotch and White Pine are also available. They offer a wide selection of spruce tops, garland, wreaths, and tree stands. The finest and best 4-16-foot trees are specifically cut for their tree lots. Quality and freshness is guaranteed. The farm opens the Friday after Thanksgiving and is open Monday – Friday from noon to 8 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Turck's Trees

Located in Litchfield, this farm has 50,000 plus Christmas trees, cut-your-own and pre-cut in six varieties: Balsam Fir, Fraser Fir, Canaan Fir, White Pine, Black Hills Spruce, and Meyers Spruce. Also available are custom Balsam wreaths, garland, and a gift shop with indoor bathrooms. Santa Claus visits the first two weekends after

Happy Holidays



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Starting Nov. 29 - Wed & Thurs. 12-5

pine tree FOR THE **Holidays**



Thanksgiving from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Enjoy hayrides on the weekends and live reindeer. Open Nov 19-mid Dec. daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

What makes the best Christmas Tree

Whether it's a trek to a Christmas tree farm or a short drive to the nearest pre-cut tree lot, the process of selecting a tree that will serve as the crown jewel of the entire season is a great way to make lasting memories.

Each person has his or her set of criteria for what makes the ideal Christmas tree. These tips can help families find the right tree.

Choose your species

Do some homework on the type of tree you want prior to buying the tree. Balsam fir and Fraser fir are popular Christmas tree varieties, but there are many others, such as noble fir and

(See **Choosing A Tree** on page 13)



Scotch Pine
Beloved by traditionalists and a good choice for budget-conscious shoppers.

\$\$\$



Fraser Fir
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Canadian Pacific Holiday Train returns Dec. 13



By Brenda Erdahl

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train returns to Central Minnesota this year with stops in Buffalo and Annandale on Wednesday, Dec. 13th.

The 1,000-foot train with hundreds of thousands of LED lights is scheduled to arrive at 5:45 at the 5th Street NE railway crossing in Buffalo. At 7:15 p.m. it will arrive at Downtown Park in Annandale near the Harris Street West railway crossing. Sometime between 6:30 and 7:15 p.m. it will pass through Maple Lake. For those wanting to catch a glimpse of the bedazzling locomotive, First Street on the south end of the Maple Lake Community Park is a good place to do it.

This is the CP Holiday Train's 25th year of touring. Throughout the holiday season it makes stops at large and small com-

munities across the United States and Canada supporting the local food shelves by raising money, food, and awareness for food insecurity.

While it's a sight all on its own as it trundles across the country with its 14 brightly lit rail cars, each decorated with illuminated holiday designs, it's the show that will really fill your cup with holiday spirit. At 6 p.m. in Buffalo and 7:30 p.m. in Annandale, the train will open its side doors to a musical stage fit for a star – or two stars in this case.

Dallas Smith, a three-time Canadian Country Music Awards winner for Entertainer of the Year, is teaming up with MacKenzie Porter, a 15-time CCMA nominee, to deliver a toe-tapping Holiday concert that is sure to warm the heart even if it's a cold night outdoors. But the real heart of the Holiday Train isn't the lights or the music. Its true purpose is to

fight hunger.

Between the CP Holiday Train's first stop in Annandale in 2004 and its last before Covid in 2019, it helped raise a total of \$272,560 and 24,557 pounds of food for the Annandale Food Shelf. That final year before Covid attracted an estimated 2,000 people to Annandale and generated \$36,000 in donations and 536 pounds of food. In 2020, the Annandale food shelf still managed to raise \$21,900 despite the pandemic and no CP train. In 2021, CP hosted a virtual tour, and the local food shelf was able to raise \$31,000. That amount included a check of \$4,500 from Canadian Pacific. Last year was the first year the Holiday Train was back, live and in person.

The donations go a long way in helping the local food bank provide groceries to families in need in its three communities - Annandale, Maple Lake, and South Haven. Donations over the years have also helped the local food shelf buy a used van and build a new building.

Since the Holiday Train program launched in 1999, it has raised more than \$21 million and collected 5 million pounds of food for community food banks across North America.

Holiday Train shows are free to attend, Canadian Pacific only asks attendees bring a cash or non-perishable food donation if they are able.



When the CP Holiday Train's doors open in Annandale this year on Dec. 13, Canadian country music sensations Dallas Smith and MacKenzie Porter will step out to put on a holiday concert that will warm the heart.



The mission of the CP Holiday Train is to help local food shelves raise money. This was the check presented to Annandale Area Food Shelf Managing Director Jean Skomoroh last year.

Photos from Messenger Archives



A family watches as the CP Holiday Train passes through Maple Lake on its way to Annandale last year.

Choosing a Tree

(From page 11)

Norway spruce. Balsams are known for having the most fragrant smell, but Frasers tend to keep their needles the longest. For those who prefer a Douglas fir, keep in mind that they sometimes drop their needles prematurely due to foliar diseases like needle-cast fungus.

Space for ornaments

In addition to aroma and needle longevity, look for trees that have a desirable shape and allow for adequate space between branches. Trees groomed to be lush and full will look beautiful unadorned, but once ornaments are added, full branches may cause those ornaments to hang low or even fall off. Trees with sparse branches allow for ornaments to hang straight.



Measure your space

Trees in the field or in a lot may look much smaller than they do when brought into the living room. Don't make the mistake of selecting a tree that is too large for your home. Measure the room from floor to ceiling and subtract the height of the tree stand and tree topper. It's equally important to measure the width of the area where the tree will stand and allow for ample space for foot traffic around the tree.



Head to your local tree farm with these tips and find the perfect tree that will serve as the crown jewel of the entire holiday season in your home.



Perform a needle check

Every tree will drop some needles, and most evergreens hold their foliage. Modest needle loss is not an indicator of a poor tree. However, if 50 percent of the needles are lost when you swipe your hand down three to five different branches around the tree, the tree likely is not a good choice. In addition, avoid a tree that has glaring defects in the trunk as it can impede water flow through the tree.

Heavier is better

A heavy pre-cut tree means it is full of water and has been cut more recently. A healthy, fresh tree is going to require an effort to lift. Older, dried out trees will not be heavy.

Upon arriving home, make a fresh cut off the tree trunk and get it in water as soon as possible - even if that's a bucket until a tree stand can be set up.

Did you know . . .

Historians believe a man named W.V. McGallard established the first commercial Christmas tree farm when he planted 25,000 Norway spruce seedlings at his Mercer County, New Jersey farm in 1901. By 1908, customers could visit the farm and choose trees for \$1 each. McGallard helped create a new industry that now accounts for 350 million trees being grown and sold in the United States every year.

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Contributed Report

The renowned writer Ernest Hemingway is credited with saying, "My only regret in life is that I didn't drink more wine." Perhaps if the author had a better understanding of pairing wine with food, he would have enjoyed his wine a bit more often?

Unless you're spending time with a master sommelier or a seasoned oenophile, you're unlikely to be given a hard time if your wine and food pairings are not perfect. Although there is no need to always pair a bottle with food like an expert - and it's certainly alright to break the rules if you're particularly passionate about a specific type of wine - a general knowledge

of classic food-and-wine parings can help anyone expand their knowledge and please their palate. And yes, it goes beyond white is for fish and red is for beef.

As the holidays approach, many more people will be looking for that perfect bottle of wine to serve their guests. Fortunately, there are several liquor stores in the area with knowledgeable staff who can offer advice in that department including O'Brothers Wine & Spirits and French Lake Liquor in Annandale, Maple Lake Wine and Spirits in Maple Lake and Dassel Liquors off Highway 12 in Dassel. Some stores will even allow you to sample different varieties if you just

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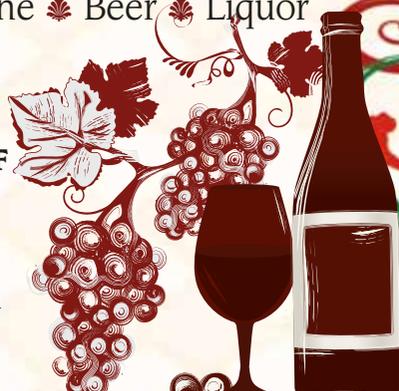
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can't make up your mind. Maple Lake Wine and Spirits offers that service and more. The municipal liquor store hosts a wine club for those who are passionate about wine year-round. For the rest of us, every December, they host a Holiday Wine and Spirits Tasting at the Maple Lake American Legion. This year's event will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 6 and will feature close to a dozen vendors who will be giving away samples of a variety of liquors including wine, spirits, and beers. To keep things fun, there will also be appetizers and prizes given away. The cost is \$20 for the public, and \$10 for wine club members.



There are liquor stores in the area with knowledgeable staff who can help you pick out the best wine for your holiday party. Some of the stores even offer samples. If you still haven't found that perfect wine for your Christmas table, think about attending the Holiday Wine and Spirits Tasting at the Maple Lake American Legion.

If you are in a hurry, this crash course on basic wine pairing courtesy of the experts at Food & Wine, Tasting Table and Wine Folly can help anyone find the right combination for their dinner table this holiday season.

Basic methodologies

As you grow more familiar with wine, you'll learn why these tried-and-true suggestions often work

- Red wines pair best with bold flavored meats (red meat).
- White wines pair best with light-intensity meats (fish and chicken).

- The wine should have the same flavor intensity of the food.
- Wine should be sweeter than food.
- Wine should be more acidic than food.
- It is better to match the wine with the sauce than with the meat.
- Think about whether you want contrasting or congruent pairings. Red wines often create congruent pairings while white, sparkling and Rosé will create contrasting pairings.

Congruent versus contrasting

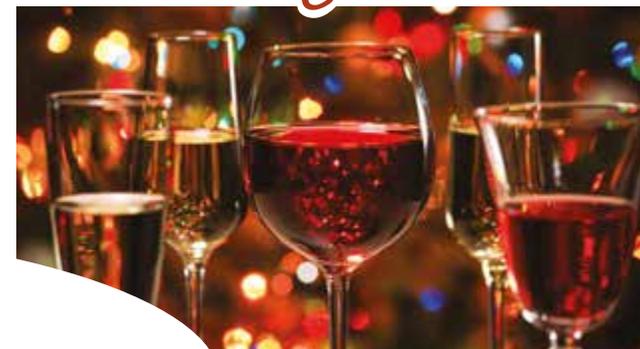
Congruent pairings, according to Wine Folly, create balance in the mouth by amplifying shared flavor compounds. For example, earth wines paired with earthy mushrooms. Contrasting pairings create balance through contrasting flavors. Therefore, a salad with acidity and bitterness may be complemented with a wine that is sweeter and not so acidic, or so may be the case with a fatty, salty food like foie gras.

Common pairings to try

- Mushrooms, lentils and even salmon go great with reds like Pinot Noir or Dolcetto. These wines are light-bodied but also full of savory appeal.
- Champagne and oysters work because Champagne has a touch of fruity sweetness. This helps it cut through salty foods like oysters or even chips.
- Cabernet, and Bordeaux are ideal with steaks and lamb dishes. The tannins in cabernet will cut through the protein and fat in these red meats, while the fat balances out the rich tannins.
- You'll need a white wine that pops like Sauvignon Blanc, to go with tangy foods, such as grapefruit or scallops. White wine works with various vinaigrettes or tangy cheeses.
- Chianti is a prized Italian wine made from Sangiovese grapes. High acidity and noticeable tannins will help chianti pair well with high acid foods like those featuring tomato sauces, such as a rich pasta dish.

It may take some time to gain experience pairing wine and foods. However, with a little practice, you too can perfect your wine pairing skill.

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New Years Day: Closed

Have an Old-Fashioned Christmas

By **Brenda Erdahl**
Staff Writer

IF your heart is yearning for an old-fashioned Christmas this holiday season, look no further than Minnesota Pioneer Park. The open-air museum located just off highway 55 in Annandale knows how to celebrate the holidays in the same simple style families did 150 years ago.

On Saturday, Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Pioneer Park volunteers invite you to take a trip back in time during the park's Village Christmas celebration and experience the nostalgic simplicity of a bygone era.

Start your tour at the 1886 train depot then make your way up the path to the original Crow River Finnish Apostolic Church and see what Christmas mass was like in the early 1900s.

Breathe in the campfire aroma at the 1884 Sorenson Cabin where volunteers Bob Ahonen and his wife prepare biscuits and heat apple cider using the working cast-iron cookstove that needs to be fed wood constantly in order to keep heating evenly.

Visit the one-room school and the 1902 house then make your way down to the village to walk the wooden boardwalk and explore turn-of-the-century shops like the general store and the millinery. Finally, have your

picture taken with Santa Claus.

It's hard to imagine what life was like during pioneer days and how the holidays were celebrated, but according to Legends of America, Christmas traditions in the mid-1800 weren't that different from what we celebrate today.

One of the oldest traditions, but still very much alive in our own homes, is the Christmas Tree. The Germans are credited with the creation of this custom when they became the first to bring evergreen trees inside their homes to be decorated. Evergreen boughs were long appreciated as a reminder of springtime in the dark of winter, but the practice of decorating a "Christmas tree" is said to have really taken off when Germany's Prince Albert and his new wife, Queen Victoria of England were pictured in front of one in 1848.

Pioneer families upheld this tradition as best they could, but they often ran into difficulties. If they lived on the prairie, for instance, pine trees would have been scarce, Ahonen said. As an alternative, they may have brought inside a single branch from whatever tree they could find and decorated its smaller boughs with popcorn strings, bits of ribbon and yarn or cookie dough ornaments painted in festive colors.

Even if there were plenty of pine trees in the area, pioneer homes were often too small to fit a full-size tree. Families solved that problem by chopping off just the top of the tree and using that as their holiday centerpiece. There was also a fear of fire, which deterred some pioneer families from taking part in the Christmas Tree tradition all together, Ahonen said.



Pioneer homes were often too small to fit a full-size tree, so some families cut off just the top of a tree to use as their holiday centerpiece.



A volunteer demonstrates the work of a blacksmith at Pioneer Park. Tour what life was like 150 years ago this holiday season.



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Gift giving was alive and well during the pioneer days, as was Santa Claus who had made his way into popular American culture by the end of the 18th century. According to History.com, the name Santa Claus evolved from St. Nickolas's Dutch nickname, Sinter Klaas, a shortened form of Sint Nikolaas (Dutch for Saint Nicholas). In 1804, John Pintard, a member of the New York Historical Society, distributed woodcuts of St. Nicholas at the society's annual meeting. The engraving depicts the now-familiar image of Santa by a fireplace from which stockings hang filled with toys and fruit.

Of course, gift giving in the 19th century was a lot more subdued than it is in today's materialistic culture. Christmas gifts were mostly handmade, Ahonen said and during the holiday season talents were traded and bartered.

Say a family had a grandparent or neighbor who was a talented woodworker, they might have him carve a toy for their son or daughter and they would trade something of equal value in return, maybe a service of some kind, Ahonen said.

Homemade gifts might have included corn husk dolls, sachets, pillows, knitted

Feeling nostalgic?

Pass on these Old-fashioned Crafts

- **Pinecone Ornaments:** Collect pinecones and paint them in fun colors.
- **Paper Snowflakes:** Cut out snowflakes from white paper and hang them up around your home.
- **Cinnamon Stick Ornaments:** Tie cinnamon sticks together with twine and add a ribbon to hang them up.
- **Popcorn Garland:** String popcorn together with a needle and thread to create a garland that you can hang on your tree.
- **Salt Dough Ornaments:** Mix flour, salt, and water to create a dough that you can shape into ornaments.



Corn husk dolls like the one pictured here were gifts given to Pioneer children on Christmas morning.

up well by almost every pioneer family, Ahonen said.

According to Legends of American, a traditional pioneer Christmas meal consisted of preserved fruits and vegetables, fresh game if possible, and for those that could afford it, a beef or ham. Many women began to bake for the holiday weeks ahead of time.

Wilder wrote in her books of her family's Christmas preparations, describing how her "ma" was busy all day long, "cooking good things for Christmas. She baked salt-rising bread and 'Injun bread, Swedish crackers, and a huge pan of baked beans, with salt pork and molasses. She baked vinegar pies and dried-apple pies and filled a big jar with cookies, and she let Laura and Mary lick the cake spoon."

A few of Pioneer Park's historic buildings will be open, Dec.2, for visitors to view and volunteers will be available to answer questions, Ahonen said. There will be kids' activities in the Big Woods building which is also where Santa will be waiting for pictures. Enjoy wagon rides around the park, live Christmas music, a bake sale, craft sale, food and beverages and more.

scarves, hats, mittens, and socks. According to Legends of America, if the family had a good year, the children might find candies, small gifts, cookies, and fruit in their stockings.

Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the famous Little House on the Prairie books, once wrote about her Christmas morning gifts, describing how she was "delighted to find a shiny new tin cup, a peppermint candy, a heart-shaped cake, and a brand-new penny in her stocking."

Christmas Eve generally found pioneer families singing carols around the Christmas tree or fireplace, telling

stories, and reading from the Bible. On Christmas Day, most would attend church.

Chris Lantto is the guide at Pioneer Park's Finnish church, and he likes to tell guests what it was like attending that very church when he was a child. He will talk about how the men sat on one side of the aisle and the ladies on the other, while mothers sat in the back with their children to be near the stove, Ahonen said.

After church families returned home for the Christmas feast. This was the one part about the holidays that was done

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A day of festive family fun awaits at Main Street Holiday



PICTURES WITH SANTA. Opportunities for pictures with Santa are available throughout the day, Saturday, Dec. 9 at Annandale's Main Street Holiday.

By **Steve Prinsen**
Staff Writer

Annandale's Main Street Holiday is Saturday, Dec. 9. Started in 2015, it has become a popular family tradition for residents and visitors alike. Bring your family and join your friends celebrating the season on Annandale's historic Main Street - Oak Avenue. With plenty of shops and eating venues, most of which are open all day and into the evening, you're sure to have a wonderful day.

This year's many events include the Holiday Lights Parade, Main Street Mile, pictures with Santa, elf scavenger hunt, wishing tree and photo scene, horse drawn carriage rides, and more. Shops and restaurants will be open to shop, browse, warm up and enjoy good food.

Main Street Holiday will kick off at 1 p.m. with the running of the Main Street Mile. The one-mile race will start at Clock Tower Park and end downtown as well.

"This is a family-friendly event for runners of all abilities," said Main Street Mile organizer Mike Combs. "Bring your friends, coworkers, family or strangers to run your fastest mile and possibly compete for some cool and unique awards."

Half of the race's proceeds will be donated to help the Annandale community, primarily students at

Annandale schools and the Annandale volunteer police officers, noted Combs. In addition, the Annandale volunteer reserve officers will be volunteering their time to ensure the Main Street Mile is a successful and safe event.

Register for the race at www.tinyurl.com/mainstreetmile. There is a charge. For questions, email mike@running-tangents.com.

Many events will start at 2 and continue until 5:30 p.m. when the Holiday Lights Parade gets underway. The parade culminates a day of family fun and getting into the holiday spirit.

Kids and parents can take part in gingerbread house making from 2 to 5 p.m. at In Hot Water coffee shop. Get creative and a little sticky for this fun activity.

Back this year are horse-drawn carriage rides, which begin and end at Clock Tower Park. Enjoy a trip along Annandale's streets, almost like the days of yesteryear. Enjoy this open-air ride!

A holiday photo station for families will be held from 2 to 5:30 p.m. at Shore

Santa's Schedule at Main Street Holiday

Take your picture with Santa at these times & locations

Miller's Jewelry
2:00 - 2:40 pm

Art & Textile Center
2:50 - 3:30 pm

Kaz Hardware
3:40 - 4:20 pm

Vintage Patina
4:30 - 5:10 pm

SMORE FUN IN ANNANDALE. There will be spots to warm up over an open fire and roast smore's at the Main Street Holiday.

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An Elf Scavenger Hunt will be held from 2 to 5:30 p.m. It's sponsored by Miller's Jewelry and Vintage Patina, and it will allow your family to find the elves around downtown Annandale. The scavenger hunt form can be picked up at Vintage Patina or Miller's Jewelry. Drop

the completed form off at Vintage Patina or Miller's Jewelry for a free candy cane when your hunt is over. In addition, your name will be entered into a drawing for a retail gift card.

Stop at Vintage Patina and create an ornament from 2 to 5:30 p.m. and leave a wish on the outdoor "Wishing Tree."

Weather permitting, there will also be a vintage red truck with straw barrels for a cute photo opportunity. Ask at the front desk, and they will take a photo of you and your family. Family photos may also be taken inside.

The always popular Holiday Lights Parade will start at 5:30 p.m. From the Annandale Middle School, the parade route is Cherry Street,

Chestnut Street to Oak Avenue to St. Ignatius Catholic Church and then back down to Cherry Street to the middle school. Everyone will want to grab a spot on Main Street (Oak Avenue) and see the marvellously-lit floats!

The Annandale Boy Scouts will be serving hot chocolate at Clock Tower Park from 2 to 5:30 p.m. Support the scouts and warm up with some hot chocolate!

Before you head out to the Main Street Holiday, get in the spirit of giving with the Coats for Kids and Adults in Need. Drop off gently used winter coats, snow pants, boots, mittens, gloves, scarves, and hats at In Hot Water. Adult sizes are especially in demand. Drop offs can be made beginning Thursday, Nov. 30 through Wednesday, Dec. 13, during business hours. Help make it a warmer holiday season for families in need.

To learn more about Annandale's Main Street Holiday, visit annandalechamber.org and see the flyer that is inserted into this weekend's Lake Country Lure.



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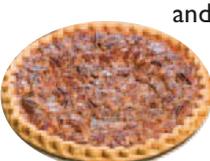
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