

It's That Time of Year Again



by Alexandra Edwards

Although some festive activities are already underway, Santa's arrival at the end of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade officially marks the beginning of the Christmas season. The shops are playing those all familiar sounds of Christmas and tempting shoppers to get into the spirit of the season.

The entire month of December is jam packed with family events that are sure to bring a tear of joy to the eye and a warm glow to the heart as that wonderful spirit of Christmas returns once again.

Here in beautiful Cleveland, Tennessee, where it's officially OK to say Merry Christmas, the 'Christmas' events will commence on December 4th at 6pm with the Lighting of the Community Christmas Tree. Following the lighting, local church choirs will perform Carols in the City. Good ol' Santa will be there to greet the guests and free carriage rides will be given around the court-house square.

Cleveland's annual Christmas Parade will start 6pm on Saturday December 5th where a long trail of colorful decorated floats playing the joyous sounds of Christmas will follow the regular route from Bradley Central High School on South Lee Highway, around downtown, to the monument, then returning to the school.

For those that can never get enough of a parade, after the Cleveland parade, get on to I-75 and it may be possible to catch Chattanooga's 'Holiday Starlight Parade' which starts at 8pm on December 5th.

Another part of Chattanooga's Winter Days and

Nights events will be the 'Appalachian Christmas' on Friday December 11th at 7pm at Waterhouse Pavilion at Miller Plaza. Enjoy a family evening featuring Appalachian music with cider and cookies. Tickets are just \$3 (children 10 and under are free). For more information, call 423-265-0771.

The Arts and Culture Alliance of Knoxville will sponsor their 6th Annual Emporium Holiday Extravaganza on December 4th and 5th. This two day holiday shopping event will feature fine crafts and handmade gifts by local artists and museum gift shops. Local art and crafts will include jewelry, paintings, handbags, sculptures, pottery, stained glass books and many more unique gift



den's trail into a nocturnal fantasyland. Enjoy a hot cup of cocoa while listening to nightly entertainment from local choirs in the pavilion. With a Sugar Plum Fairy makeover, kids

can dress up and become magical fairies for the night and watch the elves harvesting candy canes and building toys. For more information, call 1-800-854-0675.

Also at Lookout Mountain, 'Deck the Falls' will be open from 8am-8pm through the month of December except on Christmas Day. See Ruby Falls in all it's Christmas glory with a special state of the art LED holiday light show at the waterfall. Visitors can enjoy the sounds of the season while touring the famous caves. For more information, call 423-821-2544.

What could be more enjoyable for the family than a trip to the North Pole to see Santa? For the past decade, Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum's 'Polar Express' has been taking children and their families down the tracks to the North Pole, passing by Santa's workshop with storytelling, hot chocolate and cookies served on the trip. On arrival at the North Pole, passengers do not detrain. Instead, Santa will get on board the train and greet the children as the train travels

Dates of operation are December, 3-4-5-6-10-11-12-13-14-17-18-19-20-21 and 22. Departing at 5:45pm and 7:30pm. For more information, call 423-894-8028.

For those that prefer to stay closer to home to see Santa, rumor has it that he will be at the Bradley Square Mall, sitting in a big green chair right up to Christmas Eve, when he will need to leave on his reindeer to deliver toys to all the girls and boys. Children of all ages can sit on Santa's knee and have their photo taken while telling him what they would like for Christmas. Santa will be there Monday through Sat-

Children and their families are also invited to the Bradley Square Mall and Junior Achievement Breakfast with Santa on December 5th from 8:30am to 10:00am. Tickets are available at guest services. For more information, call 423-472-2393.

For those who really love to get into the spirit of Christmas past, Franklin, Tennessee will host their annual 'Dickens of a Christmas.' This Victorian event, full of charm and elegance of days gone by, will be held all along Main Street in historic downtown Franklin on December 12th and 13th from 10:00am to 5:00pm. More than 250 vol-

unteers dress up as characters from the Charles Dickens novel, 'A Christmas Story' and other popular classics. Activities include dancers, street musicians, violinists, hand bell choirs, carolers, and storytelling as Tiny Tim, members of the Cratchit family, and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, parade the street interacting with the visitors. Franklin police officers don costumes of English Bobbies to

chase Fagin's scruffy little urchins down the street. Visitors can feast on Victorian treats of fish'n'chips, turkey legs, roasted chestnuts and sugar plums. This 24th annual event is expected to attract some 50,000 visitors from surrounding areas. For more information, call 615-591-8500.

Finally, if you can't make it to the Big Apple on New Year's to say farewell to 2009, nowhere puts on a better fireworks show than the city of Gatlinburg, TN where an estimated 40,000 are expected to gather to welcome in the new year 2010!

Wishing all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Ruby Falls



Polar Express



Dickens of a Christmas, Franklin, TN

ideas. With a purchase of \$10, the public and downtown workers will be invited to lunch on the Alliance beginning at 11am. Free live performances will follow on Friday starting at 5pm and 12pm to 2pm on Saturday. For more information, call the Arts & Culture Alliance (865) 523-7543.

Rock City's 'Enchanted Garden of Lights' will run through the holiday season from 6pm-9pm. This award winning light extravaganza has been a popular family tradition for 15 years and features more than 30 holiday scenes and over a million lights magically transforming the gar-

den's trail into a nocturnal fantasyland. Enjoy a hot cup of cocoa while listening to nightly entertainment from local choirs in the pavilion. With a Sugar Plum Fairy makeover, kids

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urday from 10:30am to 8:30pm and on Sunday 12:30pm to 6:30pm. Remember, family pets love Santa too! Cats and dogs of all sizes still have a chance to give their list of treats

they like for Christmas, while having their photo taken on December 7th from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.