

# Windsor Manor

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## Celebrating December

**Bingo's Birthday Month**

**Safe Toys and Gifts Month**

**Cookie Cutter Week**

*December 1-7*

**Miners' Day**

*December 6*

**Nobel Prize Day**

*December 10*

**Underdog Day**

*December 16*

**Hanukkah Begins**

*December 24*

**Christmas**

*December 25*

**Kwanzaa Begins**

*December 26*

**No Interruptions Day**

*December 30*

## Holiday Humbug

It was Ebenezer Scrooge, from Charles Dickens' classic novel *A Christmas Carol*, who famously uttered, "Bah, humbug!" London publisher Chapman & Hall released the book on December 19, 1843, and it became an instant success. Scrooge, the central character of the book, is a bitter miser and a hater of Christmas. But after being visited by a series of ghosts, Scrooge eventually learns to love and appreciate the holiday.

Despite his change of heart, Scrooge has always been remembered for saying "Bah, humbug." To this day, anyone not in the Christmas spirit may even be called a "Scrooge." Christmastime should be a joyous season, but let's face it, buying gifts, visiting family, cooking dinners, and hosting parties can be stressful. For that reason, even the most enthusiastic lovers of Christmas may find relief in muttering "Bah, humbug" on December 21, Humbug Day.

The term *humbug* is actually unrelated to Christmas and dates back much further than Ebenezer Scrooge and Charles Dickens. A humbug is a hoax or a sham. Some speculate that the term comes from the Irish *uim-bog*, referring to soft copper coins that are monetarily worthless; or perhaps from *Hamburg*, in reference to the city in Germany from which many worthless coins entered England during the Napoleonic wars. Others think that the term originated in Italy with *uomo bugiardo*, which means "lying man." Regardless of its origins, the word *humbug* was not only used in *A Christmas Carol* but also in *The Wizard of Oz*, where Oz refers to himself as "just a humbug."

So when Scrooge says, "Bah, humbug!" he is effectively saying, "Christmas is a sham." The overwhelming evidence suggests that the holiday, indeed, is very far from it.

## The Games People Play

Whether your pleasure is cards, board games, or video games, any type of gaming goes on December 20, Games Day. However at the first celebration of this holiday, on December 20, 1975, in London, England, the games being played were miniaturized role-playing games similar to Dungeons & Dragons.



The original purpose for Games Day was to establish a convention to accommodate the players. Back in 1975, there weren't many opportunities for gamers to convene, and organizers hoped a special day would help gaming culture progress. The venture proved so successful that Games Day continued for decades. Soon attendees weren't just playing games but getting sneak previews, attending presentations, and participating in contests and art projects. Today, it has been transformed into a more general Games Day, and gamers of all ages are encouraged to play their favorite games, whatever they may be.

Since its invention in sixth century India, chess has never lost its luster as the world's most popular game. It is still one of the most dramatic global contests of intellect. When it comes to cards, poker may get all the press, but contract bridge reigns supreme. The World Bridge Federation boasts 700,000 members worldwide and governs all worldwide competition.

Many people think of Monopoly when they think of board games, but new games are gaining popularity. In Settlers of Catan, players build settlements while negotiating limited resources. Players of The Gallerist buy, sell, and organize art into a museum collection. For Ticket to Ride, players must establish the longest train routes and connect distant cities. Bang is a spaghetti western card game that requires surviving a shootout. Carcassonne is a fantasy game that allows you to build the board as you play. With so many gaming options, your Games Day will likely be filled on December 20.

## Dynamic Duo

Between 1921 and 1950, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy made 107 movies, establishing them as one of the great comedy duos of all time. The first movie that launched them into the public eye was a short silent film called *Putting Pants on Philip*, released on December 3, 1927. In the movie, Laurel stars as Philip, a Scotsman who journeys to America and suffers endless insults and mishaps as a result of wearing his kilt. In one scene, while Philip is standing on a subway grate, his kilt is upturned in a blast of air. Hardy plays J. Piedmont Mumblethunder, Philip's uncle, who is charged with fitting his dimwitted nephew into a pair of pants. While the film may not be their funniest, it established Laurel and Hardy as a comic team. And perhaps this is what inspired that iconic image of Marilyn Monroe standing on a subway grate in her white billowing skirt almost 30 years later in *The Seven Year Itch*.

## An Enlightened Idea

In 1901, Joshua Lionel Cowen fitted a small, battery-powered motor under a model railroad car and ran his new toy on 30 inches of miniature track. The Lionel toy train was born. Less known is Cowen's contributions to the invention of the flashlight.



Before his venture with toy trains, Cowen owned the American Eveready Battery Company. While with Eveready, Cowen developed the idea of a decorative light for potted plants. Cowen fitted a metal tube with batteries containing enough power to illuminate a lightbulb for 30 days. After hitting it big with toy trains, however, Cowen gave both Eveready and his lighting idea to company salesperson Conrad Hubert. Hubert turned the idea into the world's first flashlight. It is no mistake that December 21, the shortest day of the year, is Flashlight Day. Surely, we'd all be left in the dark if it weren't for Cowen.

## Old World Traditions

Singers Nat King Cole and Mel Tormé croon about “chestnuts roasting on an open fire” during the holiday season. But who roasts chestnuts anymore? And when did this culinary tradition become a popular holiday tradition? Hopefully we’ll answer these questions in time for Roast Chestnuts Day on December 14.

Reports of street vendors roasting chestnuts on the streets of Rome date back to the 16th century. Chestnuts have long been part of the Mediterranean diet, largely because they were much easier to grow in mountainous regions than other cereal grains. Chestnuts are not like other nuts; they are low in fat, have no cholesterol, and are high in vitamins and minerals. They also taste and smell delicious. Today, visitors to New York City can still find (and smell) vendors roasting chestnuts in their pushcarts on Midtown street corners.



So when did roasted chestnuts become associated with Christmas? The truth is that they are not solely part of a Christmas tradition. Chestnuts taste best soon after their harvest in September, when the nuts are flavorful and not rock hard. Perhaps this is why chestnuts tend to appear on Thanksgiving dinner tables in November. In Portugal, they are eaten on November 11, St. Martin’s Day, a religious holiday celebrating the maturation of the year’s wine. They are also part of St. Simon’s Day festivities on October 28 in Modena, Italy. Perhaps chestnuts are part of these religious holidays because in early Christianity, the chestnut, owing to its spiky husk, was considered a symbol of chastity. Furthermore, roasting significantly sweetens a raw chestnut’s bitter flavor, and they smell as sweet as honey. Sweets, after all, are typically indulged during the holidays. All these clues, when taken together, may point to why chestnuts are roasted on an open fire during the holidays and memorialized in the voices of Nat King Cole and Mel Tormé.

## December Birthdays & Events

**Harley Kohlhaas 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Elizabeth Chapman 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Mary Vaudt 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**Judy Rosenmeyer 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Dec. 3, 4, 18<sup>th</sup> 1 pm** Carter Nath Performs  
**Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 5 pm** Carolers  
**Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** Sing with Walt  
**Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> 4 pm** Ventriloquist  
**Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> 3 pm** Presb. Choir  
**Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** Plus One Music  
**Dec 13<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** Barb/Piano  
**Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** The Nords  
**Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** CD of A Movie  
**Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> 12:30 pm** LuVerne School Music  
**Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** Down Memory Lane  
**Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> 2 pm** Fairmont Accordion Band  
**Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 2 pm** Music by Jeff  
**Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 6:15pm** United Methodist Carolers  
**Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> 2 pm** Resident Christmas Party



## Halcyon Days

In mid-December, the Halcyon Days arrive. Beginning one week before the winter solstice on December 21 and extending to one week after, the story of these birds is one from Greek mythology. Alcyone was the daughter of Aeolus, the god of the wind. She married Ceyx, and the couple was so happily in love that they called each other Zeus and Hera, after the king and queen of the gods. Zeus, upon hearing his name used in such a way, threw a thunderbolt at Ceyx’s sailing ship, destroying him. Upon his death, Ceyx appeared to Alcyone, who then threw herself into the sea in an effort to join him in his doom. The gods were so touched that they turned the couple into halcyons, a type of kingfisher. The Halcyon Days refer to the winter period when no storms occur at sea. Aeolus stops the wind so that his daughter

## Egregious English



Every December for the past 41 years, Lake Superior State University in Michigan has issued a “List of Banished Words from the Queen’s English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness.”

Past words and phrases that have been banished include: *polar vortex*, *selfie*, *frankly*, *prequel*, *man cave*, and *app*. You might even have a few choice words to banish yourself.

The idea for such a list sprang from the mind of W.T. Rabe, the university’s former public relations director. It all began at a New Year’s Eve party in 1975, when Rabe and fellow faculty and staff came up with their first list of words that made them crazy, including: *macho*, *input*, *meaningful dialogue*, and *at this point in time*. Rabe admits that his intent all along was to draw media attention to the university. He wanted the public to know that his school was no longer a branch of Michigan Technological University, but a full-fledged university offering more than 60 degree programs.

Rabe’s Banished Words List wasn’t his only PR stunt. He also established the Unicorn Hunters, complete with a published hunting season and hunting permits. Rabe also instituted an annual Snowman Burning holiday on the first day of spring, World Sauntering Day, and the World Stone-Skipping Tournament. None of these endeavors, though, has lasted as long or garnered as much attention as his now famous banished word list.

This year’s list contains doozies like *vape*, *price point*, and *manspreading*. The list also disallows using the word *so* to begin the answer to any question. Following tradition, the new list will be decided on New Year’s Eve and revealed on New Year’s Day. There’s still time to add your word for consideration. Anyone can offer their words for banishment through the university’s website. May we suggest the words *staycation*, *literally*, and *retweet*?

## December Birthdays

Those born between December 1st and 21st are Archers of Sagittarius. Archers are both confident and lucky, so they often find success. Their infectious enthusiasm attracts friends to help them achieve their ambitious and lofty goals. Those born between December 22nd and 31st are Capricorn’s Goats. Capricorns are independent, detail-oriented, patient, and self-sufficient. These qualities help the sure-footed goats achieve stability and security needed in their lives.

Marie Tussaud (artist) – December 1, 1761  
Bette Midler (singer) – December 1, 1945  
Walt Disney (animator) – December 5, 1901  
Beau Bridges (actor) – December 9, 1941  
Frank Sinatra (singer) – December 12, 1915  
Margaret Mead (scientist) – December 16, 1901  
William Parry (explorer) – December 19, 1790  
Ava Gardner (actress) – December 24, 1922  
Susan Butcher (musher) – December 26, 1954  
Mary Tyler Moore (actress) – December 29, 1936  
John Denver (singer) – December 31, 1943

## The Curse of the Bambino



The Curse of the Bambino may be one of the most legendary superstitions in all of sports. On December 26, 1919, 25-year-old Boston Red Sox star Babe Ruth—perhaps the most talented player baseball has ever known—was traded to the New York Yankees for \$125,000. With Ruth on the team, the Red Sox had won the World Series in 1915, 1916, and 1918. After acquiring Ruth, the Yankees won the World Series in 1923 and went on to win 26 more titles. The Red Sox endured a spectacular title drought that became known as the Curse of the Bambino. Perhaps it comes as no surprise that in order to win their first World Series in 86 years, the Red Sox had to beat the Yankees, which they did in seven games after losing the first three—at last lifting the dreaded Curse.