



THE VILLA  
*Villager*

A Monthly Newsletter for Residents and Friends of Vincentian Villa

## DECEMBER 2019

### *Letter from Larry*

It's that time of the year once more. From myself, and all the Villa staff, a very happy and safe Christmas to one and all!

December also has a significant date as far as the Villa and me are concerned. December 14 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for both. Ten years ... WOW! I remember saying back then, "what will the Villa look like 10 years from now?"

Well, now I know! Sure, the trees are bigger, we have welcomed new residents while sadly saying good-bye to others, but the Villa remains a wonderful place to live and for me a fantastic place to work.

Now, I do have some stories to tell, but they will have to wait until 2020. For this month, I would like to do something a little different. You all know the Christmas carol, "*The Twelve Days of Christmas.*" But did you ever stop to think about what it means. Or, was it just a meaning-less song with a catchy tune?



## MEANING BEHIND THE TWELVE DAYS of CHRISTMAS

At Christmas time the carols try to convey, in one way or another, the spirit of Christmas. There is one carol which, on the surface, does not convey any message related to the great Feast – "*The Twelve Days of Christmas.*" However, when we

know more about it, we understand that it conveys a remarkable message. It is more than a repetitious tune with lots of pretty phrases and strange presents.

From 1558 until 1829, Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. During this period “The Twelve Day of Christmas: was written in England as a catechism song for young Catholics. The song has levels of meaning: one surface meaning, that no one would object to, as well as a hidden meaning, known only to Catholics, in which each element was a symbol for a religious reality, which would help the children remember.

According to this interpretation, the “true-love” mentioned in the song would seem, on the surface, to be a suitor, but according to the catechetical interpretation it is God, Himself. The “me” who receives all the presents is each and every one of us. The “partridge in the pear tree” is Jesus Christ, symbolically presented as a mother partridge which feigns injury to decoy predators away from the helpless nestlings. The pear tree resembles the apple tree, part of Adam’s fall.

The hidden meaning of the other symbols is ~~~

Two turtle doves	- stand for the Old and new Testaments
Three French Hens	- (beautiful & costly) the gifts of Faith, Hope & Charity
Four calling birds	- the four Gospels
Five golden rings	- the first five books of the Old Testament, which includes the history of the Fall, etc.
Six geese a-laying	- the six days of creation
Seven swans a-swimming	- seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
Eight maids a-milking	- (vital nourishment) like the 8 Beatitudes
Nine Ladies dancing	- the 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5.22)
Ten Lords a-leaping	- the 10 Commandments
Eleven pipers piping	- the 11 faithful disciples
Twelve drummers drumming	- the 12 points of belief in the Apostles Creed

*So, when you hear the Twelve Days of Christmas this year, it should have more meaning for you.*

We also need to remember the **7th of December 1941**. In 2019, we recognize the 78th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is observed across the nation this day in honor of all those who lost their lives serving this nation at Pearl Harbor. There were more than 3,500 Americans who lost their lives or were wounded on that solemn day.

I would like to end this newsletter with a poem instead of a quote.

**T**was the night before Christmas, he lived all alone, in a one-bedroom house made of plaster and stone. I had come down the chimney with presents to give and to see just who in this home did live. I looked all about, strange sight I did see, no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand, and on the wall pictures of far distant lands. With medals and badges, awards of all kinds, a sobering thought came to my mind. For this house was different, so dark and so dreary, the home of a soldier, now I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping. Silent, alone, curled up on the floor in this one-bedroom home. The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder, not how I pictured a United States soldier. Was this the hero of whom I'd just read? Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that saw this night, owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight. Soon round the world, the children would play, and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day. They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year, because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone, on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home. The very thought brought a tear to my eye, I dropped to my knees and started to cry. The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice, "Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;

I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more, my life is my God, my country my corps." The soldier rolled over and soon drifted to sleep, I couldn't control it, I continued to weep. I kept watch for hours, so silent and still, and we both shivered from the cold evening's chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark night, this guardian of honor so willing to fight. Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure, Whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas day, all is secure." One look at my watch, and I knew he was right, "Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."

**By Lance Corporal James M. Schmidt**



# STAFF GIFT POLICY

## **Tis the Season!**

As you all know, the holiday season is here once more. It is an honor to care for our beloved residents. We do not expect any special recognition for our work. However, at Christmas time, many residents ask if they can show their appreciation to the staff by making gifts. Please know that we never solicit gifts for our staff and that gift-giving is strictly voluntary. We appreciate your generosity and ask that you follow a few simple guidelines if you want to recognize staff.

Our policy **does not** permit any cash gifts to employees under any circumstance. Such gifts must be refused or, if this is not possible must be turned in to the Villa office. One suggestion might be a small gift of sweets, cookies, fruit, etc. that can be enjoyed by all.

Employees **are permitted** to accept gift cards and gifts of a nominal value; total not to exceed \$50 per rotating year per employee; all others should be turned into the Villa office.

While we understand that someone may want to thank staff, Vincentian is known for providing exceptional quality care with a personal approach to each individual. We don't want you to assume you need to give a gift to receive this level of care.

**Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.**



~ Larry

# What's Up and Where We're Going

The Villa Management office which is located in the Apartment Building #911 is open during the hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday. Office number is 412-364-6591.

**Remember Maintenance/Security is on the campus 24/7.**

**Between the hours of 7 am - 3:30 pm ~ call .... 412-592-5352**

**Between 3:30 pm and 7 am ~ call .... 412-592-5704**

Many of your family and/or friends live out of the area. Please remind concerned loved ones *not* to leave messages on the office phone stating that they were attempting to get in touch with you and were not able to do so.

**As “peace of mind” for them, please provide them with the number/s for Maintenance/Security.**

This way if they are attempting to contact you and you are not at home, they can call Maintenance/Security and have them check to be sure that you are ok.

To make things as convenient as possible for you, please note what is listed below:

The **information bulletin board** which includes the monthly sign up sheets for up and coming events **is located** just inside the front doors in the foyer of the Apartment Building #911. A mail slot just inside the front doors in the foyer of the Apartment Building #911 is for your convenience. This can be used to drop off your menus, other correspondence such as forms, or your monthly fee check (or it can be mailed to the address found on your statement).

Information **ONLY** is posted at Club House for your convenience.

**Remember: If you are planning on using Villa Transportation for a Villa sponsored event, you MUST sign up and/or notify Sandie as seating is limited!**

Please mark your calendar for the following up and coming events:  
**Specifically note the “Sign Up By Date”**

Date: **Every Monday (Unless Otherwise Noted)**  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Where: Club House  
What: **Games & Card Night**

Date: **Second & Fourth Tuesday of Month**  
Time: 10:45 a.m. – 12:00  
Where: Apartment Building Library  
What: **Villa Bible Study**  
*All Residents Invited to Attend*  
***NOTE: Change of time***

Date: **First and Third Tuesday Every Month**  
Time: 1:30 p.m.  
Where: Apartment Building Library  
What: **Crafty Corner**  
*All Residents Invited to Attend*

Date: **Every Thursday (Unless Otherwise Noted)**  
Time: **9:00 a.m.** (McIntyre Square)  
**12:30 p.m.** (McIntyre Square & Kuhn’s Market)  
Where: Pick up at your home or apartment  
What: **Thursday Weekly Grocery Shopping Trip**

Date: **First Friday of Every Month**  
Time: 1:00 p.m.  
Where: Apartment Building Library  
What: Villa Book Club

## MEDICAL CORNER

### How the Weather Affects Your Health

The forecast can predict a lot more than whether you'll need an umbrella or coat. Rain, wind, sleet and snow all impact your well-being. Minimize the negatives with these tips.

#### MOOD

With less sunlight in fall and winter, you may experience a seasonal slump. "Light is one of the most important factors in mood," says Patricia Farrell, Ph.D., a psychologist in Tenafly, NJ. Fewer hours of sunlight can disrupt your internal clock and cause a blue mood that's a symptom of seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

- **Head If Off:** Being in bright light first thing in the morning can almost substitute for sunlight, says Nitun Verma, M.D., with the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Install the highest wattage lightbulbs possible in your bathroom. Regular exercise (15 minutes of brisk walking) help because it releases endorphins that keep your mood on an even keel. A growing body of research also shows that you can combat stress, anxiety, and depression by spending time in nature. If you can't make it to your local park or hiking trail, Farrell recommends exercising your green thumb with houseplants, which can have the same soothing effect.

#### YOUR HEART

Extreme temperatures can put a strain on the heart attack or stroke in people who already have atherosclerosis, a buildup of plaque, cholesterol, and/or fats on the artery walls. Cold temps cause blood vessels to constrict, making the heart work harder to circulate blood.

- **Head it Off:** On very cold or hot days, avoid overexertion. Don't shovel heavy snow, for instance, or do strenuous yard work, especially if you're not exercising regularly, says Jennifer Haythe, J.D., codirector of the Columbia Women's Heart Center at Columbia University Medical Center. Also prevent overheating by avoiding direct sun during the hottest hours of the day (noon – 3pm).

#### ALLERGIES

Weather influences the severity of allergy season because symptoms are mainly caused by pollen and mold (indoor and outdoor), which are impacted by temperature and moisture. For instance, a warmer-than-usual winter makes trees pollinate sooner, causing symptoms to show up earlier and last longer; hot spells in

spring can result in more intense periods of pollen released; and an early snow melt or wetter spring can intensify mold, says Kenneth Mendez, president and CEO of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Rain can be a blessing or a bother for seasonal allergy sufferers, depending on when it happens. A wet spring promotes rapid plant growth, which can cause allergy symptoms to come on quickly and intensely. But rain can also temporarily ease itchy eyes and a runny nose by washing away airborne pollen—from trees in the spring, grass in the summer, and weeds in the fall. Dry and windy weather can cause an uptick in symptoms, wind spreads pollen and mold.

- **Head it Off:** Know when pollen and mold season peaks in your area and avoid extended outdoor activities during those times. Keep doors and windows closed and know that pollen levels are usually highest before 10 a.m. If you regularly have allergy symptoms, see an allergist. Research shows allergy hots reduce symptoms in about 85 percent of people with hay fever – the itchy nose and eyes and inflammation caused by pollen.

## **SKIN**

Winter is often the season of skin's discontent. "The dry outdoor air and indoor heat cause the skin to lose moisture and become red, dry, and itchy," says dermatologist David Bank, M.D. Many common skin conditions can be exacerbated, including rosacea, eczema, and psoriasis. One the other end of the spectrum, hot temps and sun can also aggravate these conditions by dilating blood vessels and increasing blood flow to the skin.

- **Head it Off:** Hydrate, moisturize and protect. Pat moisturizer onto damp skin right after your shower to seal in moisture. If you're in a dry climate or during seasons with low humidity, consider using a humidifier. When outdoors, wear sunscreen (even in winter), and if it's windy, protect your face with a scarf to prevent chafing.

## **ACHES & PAINS**

When people say "I can feel the storm coming in my bones," there is some truth to it. A fall in barometric pressure may cause the shock-absorbing parts of your joints to become overly extended and achy or painful, says Vinicius Domingues, M.D., a rheumatologist in Daytona Beach, FL. "It's more common for people to have swelling than too." Chilly weather also can tighten muscles.

- **Head it Off:** Staying warm is crucial. Heat boosts blood flow, stimulates skin receptors that improve pain tolerance, and relaxes muscles. Keeping up with an exercise routine wards off symptoms too. Inactive joints and muscles can get stiff and painful. Yoga has been shown to improve chronic back and neck pain as well as discomfort from rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.

## **HEADACHES**

A fall in barometric pressure, which happens before a front or storm moves in, is such a strong predictor of a migraine attack in some people that they're referred to as migraine meteorologists. In one study nearly two-thirds of people with migraines had attacks when the barometric pressure dropped, possibly due to an effect on pressure-sensitive receptors in the brain. Both wind and sunlight (even brief 5-to-10-minute exposure to direct, bright sunlight) have been shown to trigger migraines as well. Dehydration caused by high heat and humidity can be another trigger for migraines and headaches in general because dehydration may play a role in the overall inflammatory process, says Noah Rosen, M.D., director of the headache center at Northwell Neuroscience Institute in Great Neck, NY.

- ***Head it Off:*** If you know a storm is on the way, taking a long-acting pain reliever like naproxen (Aleve) or prescription pain medication may help avoid a migraine. Because weather is only one trigger, limiting exposure to other triggers (caffeine, alcohol, the food additive MSG) can prevent or lessen an attack caused by a drop in barometric pressure. No matter what the season, wear sunglasses and stay hydrated. (Eating fruits and vegetables that are more than 90 percent water, like watermelon and cucumbers can help).

***About 7% of Americans experience Seasonal Affective Disorder***

***This information is general information. Please consult with your physician with any questions / concerns and prior to starting any physical program.***

# Taste of the Villa – Foolproof Fish

## Poached Prevençal White Fish

Serves 4



1 onion, thinly sliced  
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced  
¼ cup dry vermouth (optional)  
1 tsp. orange zest  
¾ tsp. kosher salt

1 bulb fennel, thinly sliced  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved  
¾ tsp. kosher salt  
A few fennel fronds

1½ lbs. tilapia or other firm white fish, skin removed and cut into chunks  
½ lemon, cut into wedges

In a large, deep pan over medium heat, sauté the onion, fennel, and garlic in the oil, stirring often, until they start to brown 3-5 minutes.

Add the vermouth (if using) and simmer until reduced by half, 1-2 minutes.

Stir in the tomatoes, zest, salt, and 1 cup of water. Simmer until the vegetables are tender, 5-7 minutes.

Push the vegetables to one side. Add the fish to the open part of the pan. Spoon the vegetables over the fish. Gently shake the pan to distribute the fish evenly. Reduce the heat to low and very gently simmer until the fish flakes easily with a fork, 5-10 minutes.

Garnish with the fennel fronds. Serve with lemon wedges.

*Note: Gently poaching fish in a flavorful liquid just about guarantees a perfect outcome  
– juicy, tasty fillets!*

## **FYI**

There are many reasons why you chose to come to Vincentian Villa to live but one of the important reasons was to take the guesswork out of where to go if and/or when you would require the services of assisted living and/or a nursing home. This is part of the “Continuum” of care. If you end up in the hospital and the doctor tells you that you need to go to an assisted living or a nursing home for rehabilitation, you need to:

- Call the Villa office to let them know you are in the hospital
  - Inform the Social Service worker assigned to you that you are a resident of Vincentian Villa, therefore, they need to contact Admissions at Vincentian Home
  - You yourself can call Julie Schell, Admissions Coordinator at Vincentian Home @ 412-366-5600 Ext. 1526 to inform her of your need for a bed
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- ➡ Remember to check the bulletin board in the Apartment Building foyer and the bulletin board at the Club House for event postings, changes and/or corrections, and items of general interest.
  - ➡ As a reminder, Maintenance/Security is here 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. If you need assistance...do not hesitate to call them.
  - ➡ Update the Villa Management Office of any/all changes you may have since your original move in, i.e. new vehicle, phone number change, etc.
  - ➡ Transportation Services – As a reminder ALL personal transportation requests MUST be scheduled through the Villa Management Office. You need to call the Management Office for available dates and times BEFORE scheduling any/all appointments or requesting transportation to a function sponsored by the Villa. Please refer to your Resident Handbook under the heading “Transportation Services” for further clarification. If you have any questions, and/or to schedule a trip, call Sandie at 412-364-6592.

- ➡ REMEMBER – If you are planning to be away overnight or longer, please complete a Residence Absence Notice. You can pick this form up at the management office.