

# Totoket Times

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For Our Town From Our Town

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Volume 32 No 4 December 5, 2025





#### 2025-2027 Town Council and BOE Sworn in

On November 18th the newly-elected 2025-27 Town Council(top photo) was sworn-in to office, taking the oath administered by Town Clerk Lisa Valenti. Mayor Rose Angeloni, Deputy Mayor Jeff Macmillen and incumbent Councilors Thomas Zampano, Ronald Pelliccia, Walter Goad, Craig C. Miller, and Marie Diamond were re-elected, and new Councilors Robert Whitworth and Vincent Mase, Sr. were added to the Council.

Board of Education members Carolyn Candelora, Marjorie Bonadies, Elizabeth Siena and Marcey Onofrio also took the oath of office.

Congratulations to the new Town Council and Board of Education!

# Time to help keep your Hometown Newspaper Strong



To spend time explaining all the Totoket Times does for our community would be a waste.. After close to 25 years, those who know, know and those who don't know will never

get it. **IF YOU FORGOT, THERE IS STILL TIME** to help support the continuance of "Your Town newspaper by making a voluntary payment.

The postage is \$1,200. per issue and the printing is close to \$1,000.

As you can easily see, our advertising dollars do not support those expenses and I don't want to increase advertising rates as our local businesses are fighting hard enough to keep afloat.

So whatever you can do will greatly help the process. Send you payments to:

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#### **TOTOKET TIMES**

<b>Deadline</b>		Publication Date	
December	12	December	19
January	2	January	9
January	16	January	23
January	30	February	6
February	13	February	20
February	27	March	6
March	13	March	20



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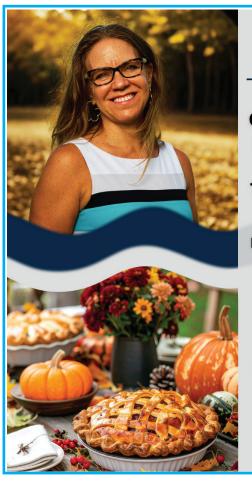
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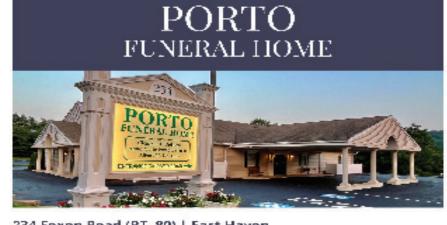
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# State Representative Vincent Candelora Problems in State Government Are Piling Up



It's been a rough couple of weeks for Connecticut state government. The steady drumbeat of scandals, mismanagement, and accountability failures should make clear to officials who would like to brush off what's transpiring that these issues can no longer be ignored. Government needs a hard reset.

Last week, the state's Department of Motor Vehicles finally fired an employee who had been using his position to personally profit from towed vehicles—nearly five years after investigators uncovered the scheme. The DMV worker traded favors with a towing company, letting them skip DMV lines in exchange for the ability to buy towed cars at deeply discounted prices, which he then resold for thousands of dollars in profit. That it took five years to relieve the individual from his position is an embarrassment in bureaucracy.

Spending in our state colleges and universities system received more media coverage recently when state auditors revealed that Eastern Connecticut State University was missing documentation for more than \$100,000 in expenses and contracts for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Unsurprisingly, purchase card transactions were also an issue. Thankfully, the legislature has dug into the issue of lax financial controls at schools—it rose to prominence after the former \$450,000 a year chancellor's spending abuses—and is scrutinizing the problem.

Meanwhile, former state Representative Christopher Ziogas pleaded guilty to bribery charges, admitting he delivered thousands of dollars in bribes to former state budget official Kosta Diamantis to kill a Medicaid audit of his fiancée's optometry practice. It's been one of the less-heralded federal corruption stories, though he faces a maximum of 55 years in prison. Diamantis, already convicted on separate bribery charges related to school construction contracts, now faces trial in February.

The federal investigation into state nonprofit funding keeps uncovering problems. This week revealed that the Department of Economic and Community Development was warned in 2023 about a conflict of interest involving Senator Doug McCrory but failed to inform the Governor or State Ethics office. A nonprofit director reported "political coercion" over a \$5 million grant split with McCrory's associate—a concern that apparently didn't get the attention it deserved at the time.

Adding to the rough week was an embarrassing set of emails obtained through a Freedom of Information request of the Attorney General's Office, which has marketed itself as the paragon of virtue in state government. Office employees made derogatory comments about a whistleblower who had filed discrimination complaints against state agencies and searched for personal information to find liens against him. Aside from being unprofessional, such conduct directed at a whistleblower raises serious questions about how the office handles sensitive matters.

These aren't isolated incidents. They reveal a pattern: corruption and controversy thrives when there's no transparency, no oversight, and no consequences. Investigations languish for years. Whistleblowers get mocked instead of protected. Warnings about conflicts of interest get ignored. Basic documentation requirements are treated as optional.

I've been pushing for comprehensive reforms—demanding transparency in how tens of millions of dollars in grants are distributed, requiring public hearings and audits, and insisting on real oversight of state agencies.

When the legislature re-convenes in February, I hope Republican accountability proposals—including an expansion of duties for the state's inspector general—will get the consideration they deserve. Particularly given what we're seeing in the news media.

Connecticut taxpayers deserve better. It's time for real change.

Rep. Vincent Candelora -House Republican Leader 86th Assembly District

Nort Branford, Durham, East Haven, Guilford

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The publisher assumes no responsibility for typographical errors. In the event of an error, the publisher will issue a credit adjustment on only the incorrect portion of the advertisement, as well as a retraction in the next issue.

# Let's Be "Frank"

Well brother, as the old man would say, "Another Thanksgiving shot to hell". As is always the case, this one had it's ups and down. From tables filled with many family members, plenty of laughter, tons on food, wine, lemon cello, sambuca and football games, this one was quite different

There was no alcohol, the menu was limited and football was silenced. Gina's game was on Tuesday, because Fairfield Prep is in the tournament and they wanted to stretch the games out so the kids got proper rest between games. Frankie would up going to his brother-in- law's in California, so I opted to not watch football without my favorite eating and game day partner. When we sat down to the dinner table, there were only three of us. A far cry form the crowds of the past.

SueAnn made the full compliment for the traditional menu with a few items left out. We literally went from soup to nuts (chestnuts). Only pumpking pie for dessert and a few gluten free items for when Erica and her family came for leftovers on day two.

Some of the traditions did remain. I started the day with my usual trip to the cemetery to visit with the people who graced my table for many years. While there (as I do every year), I did a welfare check with a few elderly friends to wish them a Happy Thanksgiving. Our friend Cathy is 92 and she still is able to have a glass of wine a day and as she put it, "once a week, two fingers of scotch with one ice cube.

The ways of the church still baffle me. Although not a Holy Day of Obligation, when we were kids one church had two or three Masses to give the people an opportunity to properly thank the Lord for our gifts. Now with more than four or five churches in a single parish, most parishes only had one Mass for the family of parishioners. Some of us adjust. I relax and reflect at the cemetery but many do not. Another discouragement with no formal means of gathering together to express thanks and worship with our parish family. As one priest casually explained to me, "It's not about the convenience of the people". I was told the look on my face was priceless when I realized he was serious.

The day was very relaxing. It actually gave more time than usual to reflect on the great life (even with its bad times) that we really have. Out of memories to mon and Mary, we watch for the gazillenth time, the Sound of Music. I also watched bits and pieces of It's a Wonderful Life. I usually watch it in its entirety on the anniversary of mom's death, the day after Christmas.

Although quieter than most, it was a good day and I still wonder why I am still here and you and Mary are gone.

Now it's on the Christmas. Feeling better this year I will be having the usual house full for Christmas Eve. Erica and John for the first time will be hosting a multi family event on Christmas Day. On Saturday we will be

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Varsha Salani, D.M.D., LLC (203) 234-1901 having a party with a few close friends who don't get to see Frank and Ana too often.

On Sunday I will be resting because watching SueAnn do all this work is often very tiring.

Well that's it for now. I miss all of you and obviously you at my dinner table was much better than visiting you at All Saints. I must say it is a lot quieter.

My best to everyone. Let them know I'm still doing my best to keep up traditions and the family togetherness.

Take care and I'll see you soon,.

#### Letters to the editor...

This paper encourages all readers to voice their opinions and comments.

The Totoket Times is not responsible for erroneous information or statements in letters to the editor. Letters should be as brief as possible.

All letters must be signed. A telephone number should be included and no personal attacks.

This paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

All letters should be addressed to:

The Editor

P.O. Box 313, Northford, CT 06472

#### **Totoket Times December 5, 2025**

## For the Health of it...

### Stress Less and Enjoy More this Holiday Season



For many people, the holiday season arrives wrapped in lights, music, and traditions that are tied with a not-so-festive bow of stress. Between social obligations, family dynamics, financial pressure, travel, and the simple expectation to feel joyful, it's no wonder this time of year can feel overwhelming. The good news is that a calmer, and even more meaningful holiday is entirely possible. It begins with giving yourself permission to slow down, simplify, and approach the season

with intention rather than pressure.

How can I possibly do that you might ask, since the expectations of others are based on past traditions or standards I myself have set? The ultimate goal isn't to eliminate stress, that isn't realistic. It is, however, possible to ease that stress. Read on for tips and tools that can help you to assess, adjust, and possibly eliminate things from your Holiday "To-Do" list.

#### **Adjust expectations**

One of the biggest sources of holiday stress is the quiet belief that everything needs to be perfect: the perfect meal, perfect gifts, the perfect family gathering (Really??). When perfection becomes the standard, the season shifts from enjoyable to exhausting. Instead, try setting realistic, compassionate expectations for yourself. Ask, "What really matters to me this year?" Maybe it's creating a cozy atmosphere at home, spending time with someone important, or carving out a few peaceful days for rest.

Simplify

It's easy to overcommit—holiday cards, baking, decorating, hosting, volunteering, attending events. Choose the few activities that genuinely bring you joy and cut back on the rest. Delegating tasks can be just as powerful; if someone offers help, accept it. And if no one offers, ask. Most people appreciate being included, and shared responsibilities can create deeper connections. Remember, busy doesn't equal festive. Slowing down allows you to be more present and actually enjoy the moments you work so hard to create.

#### Reconsider

Financial strain is one of the most common holiday stressors. Instead of stretching your budget thin or hunting for the "perfect" item, think in terms of meaningful simplicity. Set spending limits. Offer experiences instead of objects. Suggest a family gift exchange instead of buying for everyone. And if money is tight, heartfelt letters, group donations, baked treats, or handmade gifts can be just as thoughtful. Gifts are meant to express love and that's something we can't put a price tag on.

#### **Include moments of rest and routine**

During the holidays, regular habits often disappear; sleep becomes irregular, exercise gets skipped, meals get rushed. But keeping a few simple routines in place can make an enormous difference in your stress level. Prioritize sleep the best you can. Take short walks, even ten minutes at a time. Drink water. Eat something balanced and nourishing before you dive into holiday treats. None of this has to be rigid or perfect—just enough to help your body stay balanced while life feels a bit less predictable. (At holiday time or anytime).

#### Prepare for emotional triggers.

Not everyone experiences the holidays as joyful. This time of year can highlight loneliness, grief, complicated family relationships, or memories of past losses. If certain gatherings are stressful, consider setting boundaries around the time you spend there or the topics you're willing to discuss. You are not obligated to attend every event or engage in conversations that drain you. If this season stirs up difficult emotions, acknowledge them with compassion. Reach out to a friend, therapist, or support group if you need a space to talk. Feeling what you feel is not a failure of holiday spirit—it's part of being human.

#### Are past traditions and rituals still serving you well?

Find out with the assessment tool below: "To Toss or Not to Toss" where you will be encouraged to ask yourself just that! It's my Holiday gift to you!

#### Guide to Easing Holiday Stress~ To Toss or Not to Toss

Simply put a "K" next to the things you'd like to keep and a "T" next to those you'd like to toss in order to ease your stress this holiday season. Before you answer, here are some things to think about.

Would the holidays be the same without it? Is it something I can do differently? Do I do it out of habit, tradition, free choice, or obligation? Can I ask someone else to do this task? Do I LIKE doing it?

- Decorating
- Making donations
- Making long lists of what need to be done
- Making homemade holiday gifts
- Sending cards
- Buying something special to wear
- Doing your holiday shopping
- Seeing people you never see any other time of the year
- Having the house clean

It's my hope that this has offered some guidance that will lead to a holiday filled with the right amount of what's meaningful to you. Even if in the long run that means keeping it all, remember stress is definitely not the reason for the season!

Nothing magical happens on January 1st, so why wait? Join in on my push-up challenge where the only person you compete against is YOU. Wall push-ups, modified push-ups and full push-ups all count. Report-in daily via WhatsApp. Contact me to join in the fun at Joann@wellnessfusion.net.

Remember this monthly article is here for you- For the Health of it!



# THEY MAKE US PROUD

Natalie Luangsay was incorrectly posted as achieving honors from grade ten at NBHS. Natalie was actually a high honors student for the first marking period.

# North Branford Soccer Club Annual Board Meeting

North Branford Soccer Club is holding its annual board meeting at 7:00pm on December 17, 2025. Changes to the club bylaws and voting on board members will occur at this meeting. All may attend. See our facebook page or email <a href="mailto:info@nbsoccer.com">info@nbsoccer.com</a> for the link to the virtual meeting.







#### BRUCE ABELSON RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE

At a recent Town Council meeting, Bruce Abelson was recognized for his service on the North Branford Town Council from 2021-2025.

During his time on the Council, Bruce was an advocate for the town's children, and served as liaison to the Board of Fire Commissioners. Bruce is committed to remaining involved in our community.

Mayor Rose Angeloni presented Bruce a plaque on behalf of the town honoring his four years of service on the Council. Thank you Bruce!

## **HOLIDAY SHOPPING?**



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## **CHURCH DIRECTORY**

Branford Bible Chapel. 212 Branford Rd., corner of Twin Lakes Rd. 203-488-3586. Sunday morning: 10:00 - 10:30 Worship & Lord's Supper, 10:30 11:00 Announcements and Music Minity, 11:00 -11:45 Ministering of God's Word & Sunday School. Nursery provided. Vacation Bible School, missions & outreach programs. www.branfordbiblechapel.org

St. Ambrose Parish – Roman Catholic Parish with two church buildings, St. Augustine, located at 30 Caputo Rd. North Branford and St. Monica, located at 1321 Middletown Ave. Northford.

The pastor is Rev. Robert L. Turner. All are welcome and invited to join us for Mass! Summer Mass times include: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 9:00 AM at St. Augustine. Weekend Masses are celebrated on Saturday at 4:30 PM at St. Augustine (English Ordinary no incense used), Sunday at 9:00 AM at St. Monica (English Ordinary, no incense used) and on Sunday at 11:00 AM at St. Augustine (Latin Ordinary with use of incense). The sacrament of Reconciliation is offered a half hour before all Masses, excepting Sunday, and on Monday evenings from 5-6 PM during Adoration. The parish office is located at St. Augustine Church and is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-1. You can access the bulletin and staff emails at NBcatholics.org. If you are new to the area and looking for a wonderful parish or homeschool co-op to join, please visit us or give us a call!

Hope Christian Church (we are an Assemblies of God affiliated church) 211 Montowese Ave., North Haven C T www.hopeag.com. Sunday Service 10:00 AM, Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM. Follow us on Facebook. "realpeople realhope reallife" (203) 234-7328

Community Baptist Church. 53 Hopson Avenue, Branford, CT. Pastor Jon Bickel. Sunday Bible Classes 9:30 a.m. and Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Nursery is provided. Adult bible study and prayer meeting, and children's clubs on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. For more info.: 203-488-8581; <a href="mailto:info@cbcbranford.org">info@cbcbranford.org</a>; <a href="https://www.cbcbranford.org">www.cbcbranford.org</a>

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, the White Church on the Hill in the Heart of Northford, has been an integral part of Northford since 1763! Worship services are held Sundays at 10:00 a.m. Refreshments and fellowship always follow. Please join us - we'd love to get to know you! All are always welcome!! The church is also open to all in the community for individual prayer, Tuesdays from noon to 2 p.m. St. Andrew's supports many community programs, and contributes regularly to the North Branford Scholarship Program; North Branford Social Services (NBSS) Thanksgiving Basket Share and Christmas gift and food basket share programs; NBSS Back-To-School Backpacks; clothing donations (donation shed located at the back of the church parking lot); and more. A number of fundraising events are held throughout the year to help us help our neighbors, such as an Annual Rhubarb Fest, summertime Ice Cream Socials, and the annual Harvest Supper. Please join us for the events, and help us help our neighbors! Additionally, the church's Parish Hall is available for rent for birthday parties, showers, receptions, etc. The Rev. Bryan Spinks is St. Andrew's priest; Nan Monde is Sr. Warden. For more information please contact Nan at 203-710-7005

Northford Community Church. Church is located on Old Post Rd. (Corner of Rte 17 and Rte 22), PO Box 191 Northford. Phone (203)-484-0795, Fax (203)-484-9916. Email: <a href="mailto:northfordcc@gmail.com">northfordcc@gmail.com</a>. Office Hours: Tuesday 9am-1pm; Other days by appointment. John Vigneri, Pastor. Catherine Klouda, worship leader. Worship service 10am. Join us for coffee hour following worship. Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. Like us on Facebook. Our website is <a href="https://www.northfordcommunity.church">www.northfordcommunity.church</a>.

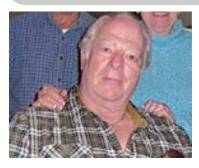
The North Branford Congregational Church, NACCC, 1680 Foxon Road, North Branford CT. Join us for meaningful worship and Bible based teaching every Sunday at 10 am. Sunday School for children during service. Communion on the first Sunday of the month. We offer Bible study, choir, lunch bunch, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday brunch, charity work, book club, praise team, men's fellowship and more. To contact our church: Office hours are Wednesday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Phone: 203.488.8456, email: <a href="mailto:nobdcong@sbcglobal.net">nobdcong@sbcglobal.net</a>, website: www.northbranfordcongregational. org Come grow in faith with us!

Shoreline Community Church located at 9 Business Park Dr., Units 1-4, Branford, CT. Call us at 203.481.8919. Sunday Services at 8:30 and 10:00 AM (Children and Jr. High activities meet during our 10 AM service). For more information, check out our website <a href="www.sccbranford.org">www.sccbranford.org</a>. SCC is a diverse community that is dedicated to Making the Invisible God Visible.

Please join us for worship at St. John's Episcopal Church at 129 Ledge Hill Road in Guilford, CT 06437. Our services are at 10 am each Sunday with Youth Spiritual Foundation for ages 5 and up every first and third Sunday. Coffee hour after our service in our parish hall. See our Facebook page St. John's Episcopal Church, Guilford CT. 203-457-1094. check our website at <a href="https://www.saintjohnsguilford.org">www.saintjohnsguilford.org</a>

United Methodist Church, Branford 811 East Main St, Branford (Route 1, across from Bill Miller's Castle). <a href="www.umcbranford.org">www.umcbranford.org</a> or (203) 488-0549. Sunday service 9:30am - both in-person and live on our website. "The Church on the Rock," led by Pastor . We invite you to discover the power of faith in Jesus Christ bringing God's love to the world. Join us to worship, experience God's word, and stay connected.

Zion Episcopal Church, 326 Notch Hill Road, North Branford. While we are in transition, we continue to hold services of Morning Prayer following Rite 2 in the Book of Common Prayer, and do have services of Holy Eucharist when we are fortunate to get a supply priest. At this time, we have a single service at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday morning. Refreshments and fellowship to follow service in the parish hall. Please visit our Facebook page or our website zionepiscopalchurch.org. Zion is an open and affirming congregation for those seeking a safe place to worship and grow in Christ. 203-488-7395



#### DEATH NOTICE John Joseph Dwyer. Born 10/27/1944 New Haven, CT Died 11/13/2025 Lompoc CA

Son of John Peter Dwyer and Emma Juhasz Dwyer. John Joseph Dwyer was an Air Force Sergeant, was a Deputy

# **Recycling News**

Christmas Day and New Year's Day are Trash Holidays Pickups will be delayed 1 day after the holiday for these 2 weeks.

There will be a curbside pickup of leaves in untapped biodegradable paper bags (no tape please), the weeks of December 1 - 12.

Here are some tips for this holiday season.

#### **Meal Planning**

- Single-use paper plates, cups, napkins and utensils all belong in the trash.
- Shop smart to avoid throwing away excess food.
- Compost your food scraps.

#### **Gift Giving**

- Think outside the box purchase experiences, memberships or donating to a non-profit on behalf of a friend or family.
- Check out local thrift and consignments stores for holiday gifts.
- Shop local to support your local economy.

Please recycle the packaging that your holiday shipments arrive in.

- Cardboard shipping box recycle bin
- Styrofoam trash bin
- Bubble wrap plastic film drop-off location
- Shipping envelopes (plastic in and out) plastic film drop-off location
- Shipping envelopes (mixed materials) trash bin
- Plain cardboard gift box recycle bin
- Plain wrapping paper recycle bin

If you aren't sure if it should go into the recycling or trash, put it in the trash.

Don't put your recyclables inside a cardboard box or plastic bag.

Recycling should always stay separated and loose.

#### Can I recycle it?

Connecticut has a website to help with recycling questions:

www.recyclect.com.

They also have an app.

For more information about recycling in North Branford you can check out North Branford's Recycling Committee's website: https://www.northbranfordct.gov/245/
SolidHazardous-Waste-Recycling-Committee or our Facebook page: North Branford CT Hazardous Waste & Recycling Committee

#### Thank You for Your Participation

Sheriff for Santa Barbara, CA, He was a long haul truck driver, Elks Club, Knights of Pytheas, NRA member, and a member of many local California gun clubs.Predeceased by Betty Carr Dwyer, Pamela Jackson Survived by his son John Dwyer, daughter Leslie Ann Johnson, James Jackson, and brothers Richard Paul Dwyer north Branford, CT, and Dennis Mark Dwyer Guilford, CT.



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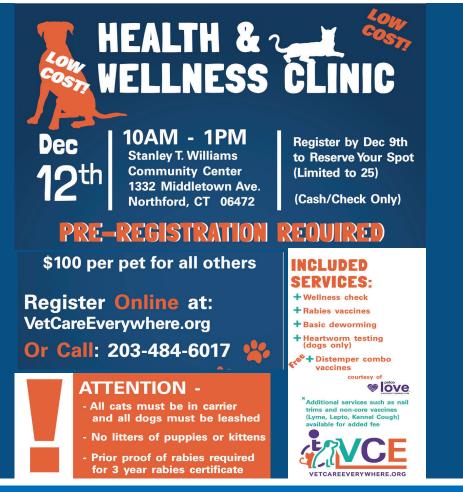
The drawing will be held on 12/4 and the winner will be notified.

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# -SENIOR CENTER-



## AQUA TURF

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Menu: Roasted Turkey & Baked Cod

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#### IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE

Playhouse Holiday Jamboree At Ivoryton Playhouse

December 17, 2025-\$58res/\$63nr

Lunch (on your own) at Lenny & Joe's then we're off to the theater to celebrate the holiday season at the Playhouse Holiday Jamboree!

Celebrate the holiday season with a lively, festive evening of music and storytelling!

This joyous show, features a captivating selection of classic and contemporary holiday favorites performed by world-class entertainers.

Departs 10:30 am Returns: appx. 5:00 pm Payment is due at time of registration

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Did you know:

The Statue of Liberty was once a functioning lighthouse. In 1886 the famous statue was a working lighthouse for years. You could see its light from 24 miles away.

