Winter Wonderland at the Pfeiffer Center!

Monroe Township is ringing in the holiday season with its Winter Wonderland to be held on the grounds of the Pfeiffer Community Center on Saturday, Dec. 2nd, from 5 PM to 9 PM!

The event is free to the public, of course, and involves a wide array of holiday activities for the whole family. There will be vendors to buy Christmas gifts from. Santa and Mrs. Claus make their appearance at 6 PM for the tree lighting at 6:15. There’ll be a carousel and a mini-train ride, along with food trucks to buy food from (as well as some free cocoa and snacks). You’ll also get a choice of activities during the course of the evening: ventriloquist Justin Thomas, a holiday movie in Owens Park, a concert from our wonderful vocal group Shades of Harmony, a live Nativity scene at the United Methodist Church, and holiday tours of the Ireland Hofer House. All that and a visit from Olaf the snowman and his pals!

Anyone visiting this event is encouraged to bring new, unwrapped toys for needy families. After all, there’s no greater joy during the holidays than following Santa’s example.

The Pfeiffer Center is located at 301 Blue Bell Road. For more information on this and other events, call 856-728-9841. Let’s start off Monroe Township’s holiday season in grand style!

Williamstown Middle School Craft & Vendor Show

Want to get some unique handcrafted gifts? Williamstown Middle School’s PTO is holding its Craft & Vendor Show on Saturday, Dec. 16th, from 10 AM to 2 PM!

Vendors from all over the area will be at this one, with special wares, many of them handmade. You can access the event at the 5th-6th grade entrance. Of course, there will be food available, as well as door prize drawings you can enter, and much more.

If you’re interested in being a vendor, visit the event’s Facebook page and click the link provided. If not...see you there to shop!
Chevy Chase at Harbaugh Village!

Harbaugh Village in Mullica Hill will be opening up its holiday festivities on December 3rd...and featuring a very special guest!

Steve Harbaugh started out by decorating his house like the Griswold home in *National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation* and expanded it to a full-blown entertainment venue, with a replica of the Griswold home. This year, the holiday festivities will kick off with the house being officially lit...by none other than Clark Griswold himself, Chevy Chase!

The evening’s activities will feature ice skating, carousel rides, boardwalk games, and a costume contest. Also, you’re encouraged to bring a new unwrapped toy. Proceeds will go to benefit George’s House, a charity that helps local families get back on their feet.

That’s all included in the general admission, which is $50. A VIP ticket, which is $250, will get you a private screening of Christmas Vacation and a Q & A with Chevy himself!

To order tickets (which are sure to sell out quickly), visit harbaughvillage.com. This holiday season, you can help out the needy...and get a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with a comedy legend!

Glow Drive-Thru Light Experience in Washington Twp.

An all-new drive-through holiday light experience has shown up in our area. Glow is located at the corner of Cross Keys Bypass and Rt. 42 North.

You can do the drive-through light experience ($35-40 per car) to synchronized music. The walk-through Dazzling District with its light-up snowman show, vendors’ booths, food trucks, amusement rides and other great attractions is $10 per person. And Santa’s workshop is located in what used to be the TD Bank...you can visit with him and let him know what’s on this year’s list!

Advance reservations are a must, so visit www.visitglow.com to book your time slot.

Enjoy a new addition to Gloucester County’s festive holiday scene!

Hot Cocoa and Ornament Painting

Paint-A-Treasure Studio in Haddon Heights is hosting a special kids’ creative event—a hot cocoa and ornament painting afternoon with Holly the Elf on Sunday, Dec. 17th at 11:00 AM!

Kids of all ages are welcome, with one non-painting adult. You’ll get some hot cocoa with marshmallows while you paint and decorate your choice of ceramic ornaments. There will be various kinds of paints and decorations on hand. All the while, Holly will be entertaining the group with stories, songs, and photo opportunities! (And maybe she can take your request to Santa.)

Tickets are $22 per person. To order, visit paintatreasure.com/eventcalendar.

Come and enjoy a great family event that will leave you with a special keepsake for future holidays!
Holiday Murder Mystery Dinner at Scotland Run

If you’d like a little murder and mayhem with your Christmas cheer, Scotland Run Country Club will be putting on The Most Wonderful Crime Of The Year, a murder mystery dinner that’s packed with thrills and laughs!

The scenario: a comedy night with an up-and-coming new standup comic. His holiday show is full of seasonal laughs...until there’s a backstage murder! Of course, the victim had plenty of enemies, so there are loads of suspects...and the comedian may be next on the hit list. So it will be up to you to connect the clues, talk to witnesses and possible suspects, and solve the murder before another victim falls!

You’re encouraged to wear festive holiday attire (the more ridiculous the Christmas sweater, the better). There will be a cash bar throughout the evening with seasonal cocktails.

Tickets are $75 per person before Nov. 25th, $85 per person afterwards. The price includes the evening's bill of fare, which offers a choice of prime rib, salmon, stuffed pork chop, or stir-fried vegetables. To order tickets, visit Eventbrite.com and search for the event.

May your murder be merry and bright!

Christmas Cookie Cupcake Wine Pairing at Blue Cork

With Christmas approaching fast, it’s useful to know what wines to serve at your gatherings. Blue Cork Winery can help with that, with their Christmas Cookie Cupcake Pairing event on Thursday, Dec. 21st at 6:30 PM.

The evening will start with each participant getting three Christmas cookie cupcakes and three two-ounce pours of Blue Cork’s finest wines. The wine experts at Blue Cork will offer a tutorial on which wine is best paired with each sweet, and why. Of course, you’ll get to enjoy both the treats and the wine. In between tastings, you’ll get to enjoy a few games of holiday trivia!

Tickets are $30 per person, plus tax. If you’d like to come early, you can enjoy some charcuterie snacks in the tasting room, or order from the local pizzeria that’s partnered with Blue Cork and will bring the food to your table.

To order tickets, visit bluecorkwine.com. (All participants must be 21 or over.)

Bordentown Chocolate Walk

Want to enjoy some holiday sweet treats in one of South Jersey’s nicest small towns? Bordentown is holding its Chocolate Walk on Friday, Dec. 1st, from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

You can buy your Chocolate Passport ahead of time for $8 by visiting downtownbordentown/events, clicking on the event link, and scanning the QR code. (You can also get it for $10 the day of the event, but it usually sells out.) You’ll pick up your passport at “headquarters” at the start of the evening. Bordentown’s participating businesses will have lots of chocolate goodies to sample, and will also stamp your passport for you. You can turn in your passport at the end of the evening for a chance to win Bordentown Bucks that are good at the town’s businesses!
All The World’s A Stage...

It’s no “humbug”...Pitman’s Broadway Theater will be presenting the musical version of *A Christmas Carol* from Dec. 8th to Dec. 17th.

This particular version ran for years at New York’s Madison Square Garden. It features a score by Disney legend Alan Menken, and was filmed for television with Kelsey Grammer in 2004. Of course, we all know the familiar story...Ebenezer Scrooge, a hard-hearted businessman with no time for the less fortunate, receives a surprising visitor one Christmas Eve...his late partner Jacob Marley, who is suffering in the afterlife for the misery he inflicted on others, and warns Scrooge the same fate awaits him if he does not heed the warnings of the Spirits who are about to arrive. From there, Scrooge is visited by the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet To Come, and learns how his actions affect others and may have grave consequences in the future. Can he take the lesson to heart before it’s too late? The Dickens, you say!

With a joyous, festive score, this is the perfect holiday outing...and, with *A Christmas Carol* turning 180 years old this year, very appropriate. To order tickets, visit thebroadwaytheatre.org.

One of the greatest MGM movie musicals is adapted for the state with *An American in Paris*, onstage at Haddonfield Plays and Players from Dec. 1st-16th.

As Europe recovers from the ravages of the Second World War, American artist Jerry Mulligan arrives in Paris and strikes up a friendship with composer/pianist Adam Hochberg, a fellow American ex-pat, and wealthy heir Henri Baurel, who is interested in starting a career in the arts. Jerry is also captivated by dancer Lise Dessin, who lives with Henri’s family after they saved her life during the war. He and Lise fall in love, but Lise feels as though she owes it to the Baurels to marry Henri, although his heart isn’t really in it either. To make matters more complicated, Adam develops feelings for Lise as well. The four grapple with issues of love, duty, and art...all set to the breathtaking music of George Gershwin, culminating in the famous dance sequence that gives the show its title.

With some of the best music of all time, this production will no doubt make Gene Kelly proud. To order tickets, visit haddonfieldplayers.com.

“The Tale as old as time…” *Beauty and the Beast*, the stage version of the Disney animated classic, comes to Philadelphia’s Walnut Street Theater until Dec. 31st. (Often, the Walnut will extend their holiday show’s run.)

The stage version (Disney’s first foray into Broadway musicals) follows the plot of the movie closely. Book-loving Belle, daughter of inventor Maurice, feels out of place in her provincial village—and is definitely not interested in her would-be suitor Gaston, a handsome but insufferable egotist. But when her father stumbles into the enchanted castle of a Beast who imprisons him, Belle bargains away her own freedom in exchange for Maurice’s. As she settles into the castle with its staff of enchanted household objects, Belle makes it clear she won’t stand for the Beast’s arrogance...and as time passes and the Beast becomes more gentle, the two develop feelings for each other. The Beast is actually a prince under a curse that can only be broken if he can love and be loved in return...and time is running out to break it. And all the while, Gaston is plotting how to force Belle into marriage. Can the pair overcome the obstacles and break the curse?

With all of the beloved songs from the original, with some new ones by Alan Menken and Tim Rice, this is one of the best shows to come from Disney Theatrical. To order tickets, visit walnutstreettheatre.org.
Pure imagination had to begin somewhere...and we see how the most famous chocolatier got his start in *Wonka*, premiering Dec. 15th.

Willy Wonka (Timothee Chalamet) is a young would-be chocolatier selling chocolate in a small shop. In memory of his beloved mother (Sally Hawkins), he is determined to start making his own fantastical candies and become the greatest candy-maker in the world. But rival chocolatiers Prodnose, Fickelgruber, and Slugworth aren’t too keen to have anyone else on their turf. Willy is fighting upstream against the obstacles they set for him...but he finds help in a couple of surprising sources: a young girl named Noodle (Calah Lane) and a strange creature named Lofty (Hugh Grant) who calls himself an Oompa-Loompa. With these two allies on his side, Willy just might be able to make his dream come true...and give the dream of magical candy, as well as pure imagination, to others.

First responses have been very good so far, so it looks as though this is going to be the holiday classic of the season. (And, from the previews, it looks as though Hugh Grant is just going to walk away with the whole movie.) With some all-new songs (as well as the classic “Pure Imagination”), this musical is sure to be as sweet as chocolate. So go there, and be free...if you truly wish to be!

Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* has been adapted into a stunning movie by Steven Spielberg and an award-winning musical. That musical is now coming to the big screen on Dec. 25th.

Young Celie (Phylicia Pearl Mpası, Fantasia Barrino) has already suffered sexual assault by her father, resulting in two children that he gave to a couple in town. Her only comfort is her sister Nettie (Halle Bailey, Ciara). When brutish widower Albert Johnson needs a wife to keep his brood of children in line, Celie’s father marries her off to him. Celie endures his abuse with Nettie’s help, but Albert drives Nettie off after she refuses his advances. A few years later, still waiting for some word from Nettie, Celie becomes acquainted with Albert’s lover, jazz singer Shug Avery (Taraji P. Henson), whose tough exterior masks a large heart. As she falls in love with Shug, Celie begins to gain a sense of herself as a person, gaining the courage to stand up to Albert, to strike out on her own, to find out what happened to her sister...and to change the lives of those around her.

With a cast full of talented singers and a breathtaking score, this looks to be a superb interpretation of one of Black literature’s greatest novels.

*Aquaman* was one of the DC Film Universe’s surprise hits. He returns to the screen with *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*, debuting Dec. 22nd.

Aquaman, aka Arthur Curry (Jason Momoa), has adjusted to his new life as King of Atlantis...and to top it all off, he and his wife Mera (Amber Heard) have welcomed a child. But the villainous Black Manta (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II), aka David Kane, a ruthless pirate, is out for revenge after Arthur killed his father in the previous movie. To achieve this end, he gets his hands on the Black Trident, a powerful artifact and weapon. Now, to protect Atlantis, his family, and perhaps the world, Aquaman must release his imprisoned half-brother Orm (Patrick Wilson) to join forces with him. Can he trust Orm after his past treachery, and which of their past allies—and foes—will survive the battle to come?

Fans of DC Comics (and of Jason Momoa) have been waiting eagerly for this hero’s further adventures, so this Christmas season is the perfect time to journey beneath the sea for high adventure!
The game’s afoot for Holmesians this holiday season with Tim Major’s wonderful 2022 pastiche *Sherlock Holmes and the Twelve Thefts of Christmas*.

In the days leading up to Christmas, Sherlock Holmes receives a parcel of sheet music called “the Adler variations” from operatic star Irene Adler, the only woman ever to have outwitted him. Along with this score comes a series of puzzles for him to solve, set up by Irene herself...thefts that turn out not to be thefts. (For example, a not-very-valuable statue that disappears from a museum ends up hidden in the room it was taken from.) Holmes, who’s been dying for a challenge in the crime-free Christmas season, becomes preoccupied with these ingenious puzzles, so much so that he neglects the case of another client, Nordic explorer Fridtjof Nanssen, who’s been receiving animal carcasses on his doorstep and fears a threat to his life...or perhaps a supernatural warning. What could be plaguing the famed explorer, and can Holmes decipher both sets of riddles? And, most intriguingly, are the two cases related?

This ingenious mystery, sprinkled with Christmas cheer, is elementary for Holmes fans who would like more Holmesian yuletide fare than the single Christmas story Arthur Conan Doyle wrote.

Sophie Hannah has made a name for herself reviving Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot series. With her new novel, *Hercule Poirot’s Silent Night*, she follows in Dame Agatha’s footsteps by giving Poirot a festive mystery to solve (something Dame Agatha did several times).

Christmas, 1931. Hercule Poirot and his associate Inspector Edward Catchpool (an original creation of Hannah’s) are recruited to solve the murder of a hospital patient in Norfolk. Edward’s mother Cynthia invites them to stay in a crumbling mansion so the family, and their Belgian guest, can be together over the holidays while the detectives solve the case. Cynthia fears that her friend Vivienne’s husband Arthur, soon to be admitted to the same hospital, is slated to be the next victim, although neither she nor Vivienne can explain exactly why they think so. As Poirot does his best to unravel the crime in a week’s time (gotta be home by Christmas!), he and Edward deal with the (literally) crumbling accommodations...and, as always, the threat that the killer may strike even closer to them.

You’ll enjoy exercising your little grey cells along with Poirot in this wonderful Yuletide whodunit.

Alexandra Benedict has written several holiday-themed mysteries. With *Murder on the Christmas Express*, she harkens back to one of the most classic mysteries of all time.

In the bleak Scottish midwinter, a holiday night train is derailed by a fallen tree on the tracks. As the passengers wait for rescue (which won’t come for several hours), they interact (and clash occasionally) with one another. Among the passengers is Roz Parker, a recently retired Metropolitan Police detective who’s on her way to her very pregnant daughter’s side to welcome her first grandchild. But the situation grows more complicated when social influencer Meg is murdered...and, as is common in such closed-circle mysteries, the killer can only be someone on board, and Meg might not be the last victim. As a most non-festive paranoia takes hold, Roz must keep her head, interview suspects, and unravel the clues, all in the few hours she’s got before help arrives and the killer can slip through her grip.

Combining a classic setup, a cozy mystery vibe, and some side puzzles and brain-teasers incorporated into the story, this is a perfect Christmas gift for mystery lovers. (Trigger warning: there is discussion of sexual assault/trauma in the course of the story.)