

DECEMBER 2019

# OPENING



# STATEMENTS

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## FROM THE DESKS OF RAZUMICH + DELAMATER

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

In what seems like a lifetime ago, Razumich Law opened its doors on December 1, 2006. Over the past thirteen years, we've helped well over a thousand people navigate the legal system and protect their futures and their freedom from being trampled by the state, and we're just getting started!

It's been a wild ride. We've seen team members come and go, we published a book, we reworked and reconfigured multiple times in order to provide you with the best possible service and representation that we could, and we NEVER, STOPPED, FIGHTING, EVER. That's our job, to fight for you to get you the results you deserved.

As I mentioned in an earlier column, the only constant in life is change, and that applies here, too. There are some major changes in the wind for the coming year, and we will, as always, keep you in the loop regarding our comings and goings. Thanks for your trust and your faith, and here's to many more years.

This issue focuses on a Christmas theme, and it's our sincere hope that you have the opportunity for some holiday cheer this season. See you next year!



Winter is a time for festive joy when celebrations culminate to carry us through the gloomy weather and keep us cheery about ringing in another year. Sometimes it's hard to look outside our own traditions because we love them so much, but there's a whole world out there full of people who have their own wonderfully different ways of celebrating a season that means so much. Here are just a few you might find as fascinating and heartwarming as we do.

### RUSSIA: MASLENITSA, OR PANCAKE WEEK

Celebrated at the end of February to denote the passing of winter, this seven-day festival is a time of indulgence for people all across Russia. As the name suggests, piping hot pancakes (or blinis, as they're called in Russia) are served up every day of the celebration as people stuff themselves to the gills in preparation for Lent. The blinis are golden, fluffy, and come with an array of decadent toppings, like chocolate and fruit, or savory options, like sour cream and caviar. The festival also involves plenty of dancing, winter sports like ice skating and skiing, and culminates in the burning of the Maslenitsa straw figure to

signify the forgiveness of any wrongdoings suffered. That all sounds fun and dandy, but they honestly had us at pancakes.



### CHINA: LUNAR NEW YEAR

While this holiday is celebrated all around the world with varying customs from country to country, China's history and traditions surrounding the holiday are the most renowned. Often falling in late January, Lunar New Year marks the start of a new lunar cycle, and thus a time to reflect on the past and look to the future. Family from across the country comes together to spend time appreciating one another and their

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ancestors as neighborhoods are adorned in a festive scarlet red. Cash gifts are given in small red packets, and food, dancing, parades, and fireworks entertain late into the night. It all culminates in the Lantern Festival when families light lanterns as a sign of peace and forgiveness.



#### **MEXICO: NIGHT OF THE RADISHES**

Celebrated every year on Dec. 23 in Oaxaca, Mexico, Night of the Radishes is pretty much exactly what it sounds like. Bright magenta radishes are grown just for this one-night celebration, when they're picked then carved into fun and intricate figurines, including Nativity scenes, mythical monsters, and much more. They're put on display for all to enjoy for just a few hours before they start to wilt, and prizes



are awarded to the best carvings. This tradition has roots (pun intended) that date back to 1897 when the mayor of Oaxaca at the time made the carving competition part of the annual Christmas market in an effort to promote local agriculture. Seeing as radishes were already an integral part of Oaxacan cuisine, citizens latched on tight and haven't let it go since.

#### **AROUND THE WORLD: SANTA CON**

You may have heard of this one or even participated in the past. But for those of you who haven't, SantaCon is open to all! Throughout the month of December in cities big and small, men and women alike dress up in Santa's traditional red garb and get together

to have some fun. The biggest gathering ever recorded occurred in New York in 2012 where an estimated 30,000 Santas all congregated to celebrate! While some like to get a little rowdy by turning their celebrations into events like festivals and pub crawls, others volunteer their time at charities or raise funds for good causes. Whatever the case, it's a time for adults to get into the spirit of the season by harkening back to their childhood whimsy about Santa and all the joy he brings.

This winter, we hope you'll celebrate and cherish your own fun traditions to the fullest, whatever they may be. The season can be cold and drab for some, but for all, it should be a time to reflect on our past, be thankful for what we have, and tap into the potential of all the things the coming year may bring.



## **LIGHT UP THE NIGHT WHY DO WE HANG CHRISTMAS LIGHTS?**

The first string of twinkling lights illuminating your neighbor's house is always a telltale sign of the upcoming seasonal festivities. Christmas lights are a holiday staple, but have you ever wondered where this beloved tradition started?

The tradition of hanging lights on the tree originally started with candles. Because this posed an immense fire hazard, Edward Hibberd Johnson, a close friend of Thomas Edison and vice president of the Edison Electric Light Company, vowed to find a better way to decorate Christmas trees with light. In December 1882, three years after Edison's invention of the lightbulb in November 1879, Johnson hand-wired 80 red, white, and blue lightbulbs together and wound them around a Christmas tree in his parlor window. A passing reporter saw the spectacle and declared in the *Detroit Post and Tribune*, "One can hardly imagine anything prettier."

Johnson continued this tradition, increasing the number of lights each year and eventually putting them up outside. But because electricity was still a new concept, many years passed before the fad took off for regular Americans. In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge began the tradition of lighting the National Christmas Tree, which spurred the idea of selling strung lights commercially. By the 1930s, families everywhere were buying boxes of bulbs by the dozen. Today, an estimated 150 million Christmas lights are sold in America each year, decorating 80 million homes and consuming 6% of the nation's electricity every December.

Whether you'll be putting up your own lights or appreciating the most impressive light displays in your neighborhood or town, let the glow fill you with joy this season. Just don't leave them up until February!



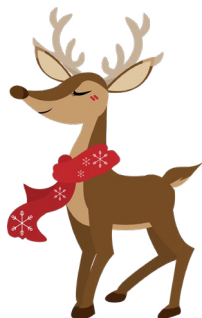
# WHAT ABOUT DUNDER AND BLIXEM?

## THE STRANGE HISTORY OF SANTA'S REINDEER



We all know reindeer visit our rooftops every Christmas Eve, but what brings them there? Follow the unique and complicated history of Santa's reindeer to find out.

**A visit from who on what night?** In the 1820s, Clement Clarke Moore penned a holiday poem that became the foundation for a phenomenon still alive today. Commonly known as "Twas the Night Before Christmas," "A Visit From St. Nicholas" is a beloved story shared by every generation. It is in this poem that reindeer were first credited with powering Santa's sleigh around the globe. Many popular songs, movies, and plays have preserved Moore's vision of St. Nick, and his reindeer and their names are no exception. (Well, kind of.) Rudolph wouldn't join the squad until a department store added him as part of their promotions in the 1930s.



**What's in a name?** Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, and Cupid were all brought to life by Moore, but have you ever heard of Dunder and Blixem? Though we now know the duo as Donner and Blitzen, Moore originally named them Dunder and Blixem — the Dutch words for thunder and lightning — but publishing companies wanted names that would rhyme better with the rest of the poem. Still, it was a few decades before Donner and Blitzen made their appearances in the version of the poem we know today.

**Reindeer burgers, anyone?** Moore's poem paved the way for Santa's most famous form of transportation, but it was actually Carl Lomen, an Alaskan businessman, who mass-marketed reindeer as Santa's companions. In the late 1890s, the Sami natives of Northern Europe, who were longtime reindeer herders, made their passage from Norway to the U.S. with a herd of reindeer to invigorate the Alaskan landscape and help their native neighbors. Lomen saw the reindeer as an opportunity and partnered with the Macy's department store company to create a promotional Christmas parade in which Santa, led by his reindeer, a sleigh, and Sami herders, were prominently featured. Lomen's goal was to promote his massive reindeer conglomerate for the production and sale of reindeer meat. Instead, a holiday story was born.

## TAKE A BREAK!

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## CLASSIC ROAST CHICKEN AN EASY, TRADITIONAL MEAL

*Inspired by Ina Garten*

### Ingredients

- 1 chicken, approx. 5–6 lbs
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 large bunch fresh thyme, 20 sprigs removed
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 head garlic, cut in half crosswise
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large yellow onion, thickly sliced
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- Olive oil

### Directions

1. Heat oven to 425 F.
2. Rinse chicken inside and out, removing giblets if included. Move to a work surface, pat dry, and liberally season with salt and pepper. Stuff cavity with thyme bunch, lemon halves, and garlic head. Brush outside with butter, and then season again. Tie chicken legs together with kitchen string.
3. Meanwhile, in a roasting pan, toss onions and carrots in olive oil and season with salt, pepper, and 20 sprigs of thyme.
4. Place the chicken on the vegetables and roast for 1 1/2 hours.
5. Remove from oven, and let stand for 20 minutes covered with foil.
6. Slice and serve with the vegetables.





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### SOLUTION

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## LIGHTS OUT

### FLORIDA CITY BATTLES TO END 'EXTREME' LIGHTS DISPLAY

There's nothing quite like the magic of twinkling Christmas lights. But for city officials in Plantation, Florida, Christmas lights are a stark reminder of a prolonged fight, nearly \$500,000 in court fees, and continued drama.

In 2014, Plantation sued residents Mark and Kathy Hyatt for their "Hyatt Extreme Christmas" lights display, claiming it was a "public nuisance." Each year, the Hyatts decorated their yard with more than 200,000 lights, snow, a Christmas tree, a Nativity scene, a functioning Ferris wheel, and more. Their creation was featured on two nationally televised programs and attracted flocks of visitors.

But, for the Hyatt's neighbors, extreme didn't even begin to explain the chaos. Neighbors complained to the city about increased traffic, litter in their yards, and potential injury or death to pedestrians due to the traffic. Police officers in Plantation were dispatched to the light display multiple times each season for complaints by neighbors, accidents, and traffic control.

After a two-year battle in court, a judge ruled in favor of the Hyatts, claiming the city could not prove the display was dangerous or a nuisance. The city had spent nearly half a million dollars fighting their case.

For the Hyatts, Christmas 2016 was a celebration, though their display was restrained due to the timing of the court's decision. By 2017, "Hyatt Extreme Christmas" was in full swing again, much to their neighbors' chagrin. Mark Hyatt rode the wave of support for his display all the way to a vacant seat on the Plantation City Council in 2016, but the highs would soon stop there. Plantation news outlets reported in 2018 that Mark Hyatt filed for divorce, effectively ending any hope of another "Hyatt Extreme Christmas."

As the snow has settled, an extravagant lights display has instead become a story of nasty court battles with a sad ending for the Hyatts and their "extreme" Christmas devotees.

