

# St. Amelia Knightly News

*December 2011 Edition*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

## *Thanksgiving Feast*

Sarah Coupal and Joanna Long

On November 17, the Pre-K and Kindergarten classes held a Thanksgiving feast. They had turkey, cranberries, rolls, corn, milk, juice and homemade applesauce. The students made Indian and pilgrim costumes which they wore at the feast. The feast was delicious and everyone had a great time.



## *Altar Serving*

Rebecca Munoz

Each year a new group of students in the sixth through eighth grades make the choice to become altar servers. Before they are able to serve at either a school or Sunday Mass, they must go through training with Fr. Tom or Fr. Ryszard. During training, the servers learn how to set up the chalice and properly wear the alb. They also learn the procedures they will use during the mass and how to prepare the altar before Mass and after Communion.

Once the servers have completed their training, they begin by serving school Masses. Eventually they serve daily Mass and then Sunday Mass. Once the servers have gained enough experience, they will be asked to serve weddings and funerals.

Altar serving is a way of giving time to our Church and a way of using our talents to serve God.



Molly McCarthy

## *Staff Spotlight*

*Mrs. Gramza*

Mrs. Gramza is one of our many secretaries here at St. Amelia School. Mrs. Gramza has been working at St. Amelia for 37 years, since 1974. Before she worked at St. Amelia, she was a volunteer. Her three children went to St. Amelia and this way she would be home when her children came home from school. All three of her children graduated from St. Amelia School.

Mrs. Gramza has worked for four principals and Mr. Mule' is the first lay principal that she has worked for. All of the other principals were nuns. Mrs. Gramza loves working for St. Amelia School and believes that we are her extended family.





## *Christmas Around the World*

### *Christmas in Italy*

Olivia Harvey and Victoria Pohrte

The Christmas season in Italy begins in early December, usually starting around December 8<sup>th</sup>, which is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Eight days before Christmas, children go from house to house wearing colorful costumes, playing the flute, singing and reciting poems. The religious celebration extends through January 6<sup>th</sup> which is the Epiphany. Babbo Natale, otherwise known as Father Christmas, comes to give gifts on Christmas, but the main day for giving gifts is on the Epiphany. The Epiphany is the day when the three Wise Men came and gave gifts to the baby Jesus.

Christmas trees and decorations are becoming more popular in Italy, but throughout the churches in Italy the main focus is the presepio, or the Nativity scene. The presepio is the center of the Christmas celebration for most families. On Christmas Eve, a midnight Mass is celebrated by the Pope at Saint Peter's Basilica. The Italians enjoy the traditional meatless meal called cenone, which is eaten on Christmas Eve.

The next day the Pope gives his blessings to the large crowds gathered in Vatican Square. Friends and relatives go to one another's houses for a Christmas lunch beginning with antipasti and tortellini in broth. The main meal consists of lasagna or cannelloni, some type of roast beef, and ends with various sweet desserts including panettone, Christmas cake and espresso. The drink of the evening celebration is champagne.

The Italians do not have big fancy store displays or people rushing about loaded down with presents. In Italy, they certainly know the real meaning of Christmas. What a perfect way to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ!





## *Christmas in Bolivia*

Hannah Laski



Bolivia is a Catholic country in South America. They do celebrate Christmas but more so the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Every year they make new gourds that are hollowed out and painted. They also make a presebre, or Nativity set. The Nativity is the main focus in the house. Many are made in the shape of a pyramid with the manger scene on top and figures representing things from their village or stores on the bottom. They do not decorate outside or go caroling. Every Christmas Eve, night bells ring to announce that it is time for Mass. The mass is called Mesa de Gallo, which means Mass of the rooster, and begins late at night and lasts into the early morning. Families gather for a feast after Mass, but children do not receive presents on Christmas Day. They receive their presents on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany. The children leave their shoes outside the door and the three kings come to fill them with treats during the night.



## *Christmas in Sweden*

Sara Coupal

Christmas in Sweden is different from Christmas in the United States. Christmas celebrations in Sweden last an entire month from December 13- January 13.

The Swedes celebrate St. Lucia Day on December 13. On this day the oldest daughter in the family dresses up in a robe and wears a wreath of candles on her head. She serves her family breakfast. Also during this day, the Lucia Choir Show is performed which is similar to a play.

Christmas in Sweden also has similarities to Christmas in the United States. In Sweden, families have Christmas trees decorated with straw and glass ornaments, lights and tinsel. On Christmas Eve a large dinner is served and a family member or a friend dresses up as "tomte" or Christmas gnome. He pulls gifts from his sack, many of which have a funny rhyme attached on them that hints at their contents. The Swedish Santa is Jultomen. Just like we leave cookies and milk for Santa, the children in Sweden leave out porridge for Jultomen. On Christmas Day, families may attend church services or continue their family celebrations. The Christmas season concludes on January 13. The Christmas trees are taken down and Christmas in Sweden is over for another year.



## *Nollaig Shona Duit*

Timothy Beltrami



Christmas is celebrated all around the world, and each country has different traditions. Ireland has its own special traditions, from decorations to Christmas Eve dinner.

In Ireland, the decorations go up on Christmas Eve and come down on January 6. People start by cleaning their houses really well and decorating with fresh sprigs of holly, like a wreath of holly on the front door. Another tradition is for the youngest member of the family to light a candle in the front window to light the way for the Holy Family. After dinner on Christmas Eve, the table is set again with a loaf of bread filled with caraway seeds and raisins, a pitcher of milk, and a large lit candle, and the door to the house is left unlocked for the Holy Family or any wandering travelers to feel welcome. While children sleep, stockings or pillowcases hang at the end of their beds for Santa to put their gifts in.

The day after Christmas, December 26, is celebrated as Saint Stephen's Day. Saint Stephen was trying to stay hidden, and a wren revealed his location, resulting in him being caught and executed. Kids go door to door on this public holiday, begging for treats or caroling.

In Ireland, Gaelic is the common language, and Merry Christmas in Gaelic is "Nollaig Shona Duit."

## *Christmas In Poland*

Nick Taboni and Shannon Gilmartin



Christmas in Poland is very similar to an American Christmas. Just like in America the Polish have a Christmas tree, however they decorate their trees on Christmas Eve. They also have a big dinner called the Wigilia Vigil which they eat on Christmas

Eve. It is for the immediate family only. They leave one seat open at the table for Jesus for when he returns. There are thirteen dishes served at the dinner. Some of these dishes include dried mushroom soup, pierogies, placek, and some meatless foods. At dinner, they also serve a wafer called an optatek. When someone receives a wafer they wish the giver good luck in the coming year. The members of the family also put straw on the table. This symbolizes the manger that Jesus was laid in.

Many Polish families go to midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, however, the children do not open gifts on Christmas Day. They exchange presents on December 6<sup>th</sup>, St. Nicholas Day. Swiety Mikaiotaj is the name for St. Nicholas or Santa Claus.

We would like to thank Fr. Ryszard for his help with this article.

## Christmas Play 2011

Olivia Harvey



Last week St. Amelia School put on their annual Christmas play. This year the play was called *A King is Coming to Town*. All students in grades 1-8 participated.

The story started off in Rumor's Mill, USA. Two children named Drew and Ellie were putting posters up all across town declaring that a king is coming. There were many suggestions as to who the king really was. Many people such as Mayor Wheel thought the king was the King of Rock and Roll while others like Barbara Booster and many other citizens thought it may be King Tut or the King of the Jungle. Greta Van Popcorn, a news reporter, along with her camera crew, captured all of the action on tape, while Sheriff Badge and Chip tried to keep everything under control. In the end, Drew and Ellie explained that if everyone in Rumor's Mill would just focus on what Christmas is really about, they would realize that the king who is coming is really Jesus Christ.



We would like to thank Mrs. Renee Obringer, our director, Mrs. Carmarie Glogoza, our choreographer, Mr. Joseph Donohue and Mr. Steve Hunter, our musical directors, and our sound and tech crew. Also, we would like to thank all the other students, parents, staff and faculty for all of their hard work and dedication to our play.

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Christmas Festival

Matt Taboni

The Pre-K and Kindergarteners held a Christmas festival on Friday, December 16. It started with arts and crafts, making gifts for people in nursing homes and a delicious smelling snack. They made a Christmas tree with glitter and a mouse to hold their candy canes, along with presents for nursing home residents. The students would switch activities every thirty minutes. At ten o'clock they went to the Don Miller hall with their parents to sing Christmas songs. Pre-K 3 sang and shook bells. Pre-K 4 sang *Five Little Candles* and Kindergarten sang *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. After they finished singing, there were cookies and brownies. The Festival was a huge success.

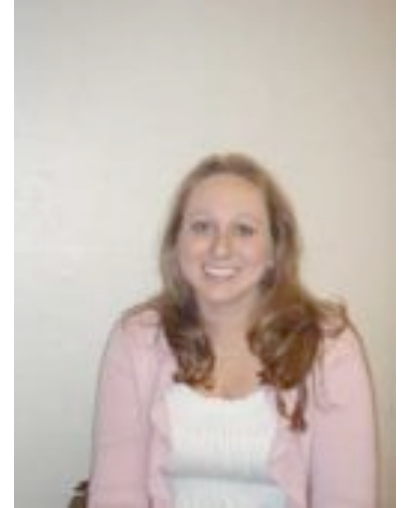


## *New Teacher Spotlight*

Nick Taboni and Shannon Gilmartin

### Mrs. Kane

Mrs. Kane is an eighth grade teacher. This is her second year teaching but her first time as a homeroom teacher. Her birthday is November 23. She is not a big animal fan. Her favorite drink is Sprite and her favorite color is pink. She loves chicken. It can be served any way and she will still eat it. She loves the season of fall. Her favorite sport is hockey and her favorite movie is *Princess Bride*. She went to Niagara University for college and went to North Tonawanda High for High School. She went to high school and college with Miss Tucholka, but Mrs. Kane was a year older.



### Miss Trapasso

Miss Trapasso is a Pre-K teacher. Her birthday is March 31. Her favorite animal is a rabbit and she likes lemonade. Her favorite foods are dill pickles, salad, French fries, and strawberries. Her favorite color is pink and she likes late spring. Her favorite sport is ice skating and her favorite movie is *Beauty and the Beast*. In her free time she likes to read. She went to Geneseo State University. Her and Miss Smith, a second grade teacher here, were in the same classes all through college and are good friends.



We are happy to have Mrs. Kane and Miss Trapasso here at St. Amelia!



## *St. Amelia Bowling Club*

Tim Beltrami

The St. Amelia Bowling Club met once a week, on Wednesdays, for seven weeks. Twenty-two St. Amelia students met at the Tonawanda Bowling Center along with Mrs. Beltrami who was in charge of the group. Every week we bowled two games and the bowling alley served us pop. During each game, Mrs. Beltrami would announce that if you got a strike or spare in a certain frame, you would win a snack token or a pass for a free game of bowling. On the last day of bowling club, we had a pizza party with pop, cookies and brownies. Every time you got a strike or spare in any frame, you were entered into a drawing to win passes for a free game of bowling. Aiden Root (4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Ryan Zimmerman (7<sup>th</sup> grade) won certificates for cupcakes for their homeroom, made by Mrs. B. All the bowlers improved their game each week and had a great time with their friends outside of school. As a participant in the St. Amelia Bowling Club, I thought it was a great, non-competitive way to have fun. “Even the Tonawanda Bowling Lanes manager complimented our students on their behavior,” said Mrs. B. “I’m very proud of them.” Come and join us during the spring session to have a really great time!



# Into The Wild With Molly

Molly McCarthy

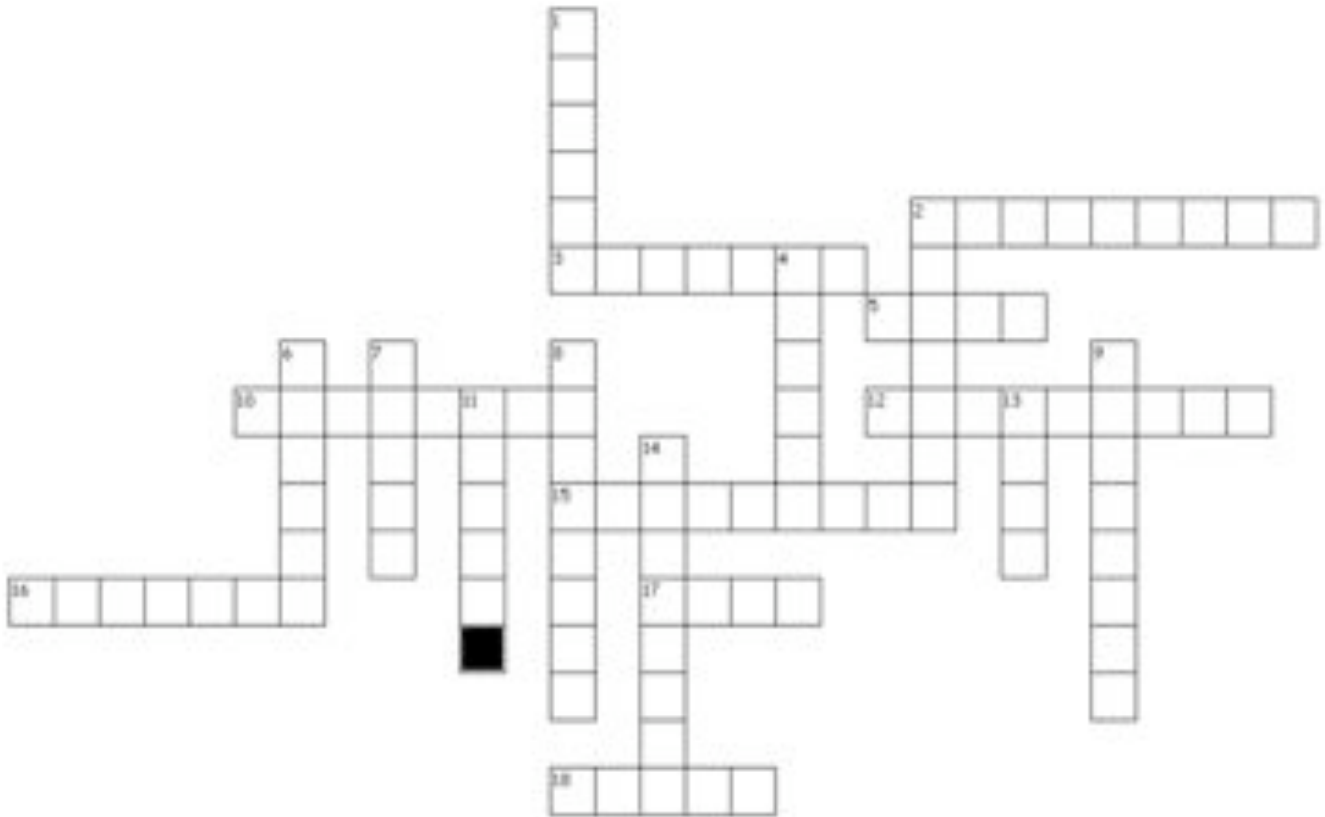
## Reindeer



For this month I decided since Christmas is right around the corner I would talk about Santa Claus's four-legged friends, the reindeer!

Reindeer are hoofed creatures and are sometimes called caribou. Reindeer are herbivore's which means that they like to eat plants and grass. Reindeer have very unique hair which allows them to keep their warmth insulated in their body. Their hairs also allow them to float in the water which makes them excellent swimmers. They can move against the rushing water and frozen ice of the Arctic Ocean. Both male and female reindeer have antlers. In the winter, male reindeer usually lose their antlers while female reindeer usually keep theirs. Reindeer are very unique and interesting animals that you cannot find in many places. Wait for Christmas, though. You never know when you could see one!





## *Christmas Criss-Cross*

### **Across**

2. Candy in the shape of a cane
3. A man made of snow
5. What the elves make
10. Hung on a Christmas tree
12. Kissing branch
15. The day Jesus was born
16. Santa's lead reindeer
17. White stuff that falls from the sky
18. The Messiah

### **Down**

1. Bright and colorful
2. What we leave for Santa
4. The 4 weeks before Christmas
6. Green and round
7. The one who brings us presents
8. Things we hang on our fireplace
9. Animals that pull Santa's sleigh
11. Santa's toy makers
13. The thing we decorate with ornaments
14. The things we receive for Christmas

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