

# Sharing Corner

## DECEMBER'S SPOTLIGHT



This month North Bellevue Community Center is featuring Mark Colbert, the very talented and energetic President of the Sound Of Swing (SOS) Big Band.

This nonprofit band consists of 17 volunteer participants and was started nearly 20 years ago. The band's mission is to play music (mostly nostalgic) for dancing and listening. Mark was not an original member but joined as a substitute. He is the guitar bass player and director. The band practices every 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday and plays for a dance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. (The public is invited to their rehearsals also.) The band members have also performed at other area venues as a whole or as an octet or quartet. Mark really appreciates the diversity of backgrounds and attitude of his fellow band members.

Mark was raised in Seattle and discovered his talent for music in school playing different instruments with the emphasis on the bass section. After attending Central Washington University Mark has worked in the office supply and promotional merchandise fields as well as his family food business. Mark has taught music in schools and also volunteered in Lunch Buddies as well as other areas. However, until Covid, music grew to be more than a full time job for Mark. He was in six bands playing every style of music as well as playing for local theater musical productions.

Mark has had hobbies through the years. Starting with baseball, Mark has been active playing on teams for 35 years. He was a collector of cards also. He is an avid movie lover. And of course, he is a music lover and collector. He says that Miles Davis is maybe his favorite artist. Mark has over 60 of his albums! Travel has been a major pas-time and has visited Hawaii around 25 times.

Family is so very precious to Mark. He is the proud single father of a college aged son. In 2013 Mark was able to reunite with family that he was lost from as a youngster. That has been a life changer for him. It has expanded his family immensely and brought him much love and inspiration. Mark has also been involved as a member in other "non" related families.

Mark is one of the many individuals who has been dramatically effected by the pandemic. After finally "making it" in music, he unfortunately has to rethink his future. His musical gigs and family food business have ceased. For the first time he has been forced to slow down (after living as a "tornado"). A return to college and a new career are present considerations.

North Bellevue Community Center is so fortunate to know Mark and have him facilitate Jazz Band music to its members. He is truly hardworking, positive, practical, resourceful and caring. We miss the band and we hope that it will return sooner than later. Mark believes:

**"That you need to put one foot in front of the other and that you can do anything. Everyone should love yourself. Music is Life. Life is Beautiful. Love life. Love each other."**

**"And All That Jazz"**

## REFLECTIONS AND SHARING

*To Our Readers,*

*This section was designed to stimulate education, memories, creativity, adventure and communication. Reminiscing and sharing with your family and friends has been our hope to connect with others. This monthly newsletter will be our final Sharing Corner. If you have enjoyed it or have any suggestions for another series sometime in the future, please send your thoughts by E-mail to [abragg@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:abragg@bellevuewa.gov). Thank You-Barb Higgins*

\* December is known to bring on excitement, wonder, family gatherings and of course religious celebrations. How do you feel during this month? Do you anticipate the month with more than normal stress and/or are you relieved or “let down” when January comes along? Here are some personal questions for your family members and friends. What family traditions have been passed down through the generations? What were your favorite gifts and why? Do you have a favorite Holiday Movie? Song? Food? What do you think of Fruitcake? If you received a stocking or gave any to children, what was inside? Did you ever work or pose as Santa or Mrs Claus?

\* New Year’s Eve is looked upon as a chance to party and celebrate ‘what has been and what will be’. Is this something that you usually look forward to? A lot of folks probably are thinking that 2021 has to be better than 2020. Have you enjoyed partying or were you content to stay home and play games or watch television? Have you been to New Year’s Eve in Time’s Square or would you have wanted to if you were younger or had the means? How many Resolutions have you made and kept? Any of these common ones sound like yours: Exercise More, Lose Weight, Get Organized, Learn a New Hobby or Skill, Save more Money, Live more In The Moment (more Mindful), Take Up A Cause?

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Did You Know?

#### About December:

**Birthstone** is Turquoise, **Flower** Narcissus (alternate Holly), **Colors** are Indigo and Green

**Organizations or people celebrate this month:** Bingo’s Birthday, Made in America, Universal Human Rights, Cookie Day, Underdog Day, National Tie Month among other themes

**Hanukkah**, meaning Festival Of Lights, is an 8 day Celebration that arose from a miracle over 2000 years ago. The word means “rededication”. The holiday commemorates a battle victory that enabled reestablishing the Temple to the Jewish people and the burning for eight days of oil in the Holy Lamp. There was just enough oil for one day. Fried foods (donuts and potato pancakes-Latkes) are eaten to symbolize the burning oil miracle. A game of Dreidel is played with a spinning top that originally was played to teach. It was used in disguise, as a decoy for teaching religious studies which was forbidden. Originally money was given as gifts, but nowadays gifts are given for eight nights. It is a happy holiday but not too holy. The dates vary according to the Jewish calendar. This year the festival is from December 10-18.

**Christmas** has inspired names of towns. Your job is to find the states where they are located. Starting with “Christmas”, that town is in 2 states. Christmas Valley is in 1 state. “Bethlehem is in 6 states. “Holly” is in 2 states. “Jerusalem in in 2 states. “Mistletoe” in in 1 state. “Nazareth” is in 4 states. “Noel” is in 1 state. “North Pole” is in 3 states. And lastly, “Santa Claus” is in 1 state. How many did you know or have you visited?

**Boxing Day** is December 26 in Canada and the British Isles. It was the day when Boxes were opened of Christmas charitable money gifts to be given to the needy and also to honor the service workers. It is a legal public holiday. December 26 is also known as “National Whiners’ Day” (especially for returning unwanted Christmas gifts).

**Kwanza** is an African-American holiday celebrated from December 26-January 1<sup>st</sup> around the world. It was founded in our country in 1966 by an African-American professor, Dr. Maulana (Ron) Karenga and is not associated with any particular religion. The word Kwanza (in Swahili) means “first fruits of the harvest”. It’s purpose simply is to celebrate African culture, each individual’s dignity and community. Families and communities are guided by the following Seven Principles: Unity, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and Faith. Celebrations feature music, dance, poetry, reflection, stories and a lavish feast.

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Word Unscramble

How many 3 or more letter words can you form from the following letters?

**E I R D R A** (29 possible) (No proper names)

### Delight In The Lights

One of the highlights of December is enjoying the Holiday lights. This seems to be enjoyable to everyone regardless of age. Unfortunately our Garden d'Lights display at the Bellevue Botanical Gardens was canceled this year due to COVID. It seems that Redmond will be having their winter light walk downtown and Bellevue will have Snowflake Lane open if you don't mind the elements. Bothell has Kenner Christmas Lights, a drive around display. It just might be that since so many folks are spending more time at home this year that there will be more elaborate neighborhood displays. So take a ride or walk around your neighborhood or town. But also, a fun way to see other's amazing holiday spirit is to watch ABC's "The Great Christmas Light Fight" series premiering on Wednesday, December 9 at eight.

### Food Fun

Christmas Tree tortilla rolls are an easy, tasty holiday appetizer. Mix 1 8 ounce softened package of cream cheese with ½ cup chopped drained roasted red bell peppers from jar, ¼ cup chopped black olives, ¼ cup chopped fresh basil leaves, ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese. Divide the mixture into four. Spread each portion onto a green Spinach flavored flour tortilla (8-10 inches in diameter). Roll up tightly and then press rolls into triangle shapes. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 2 hours. Cut rolls into ½ inch slices. Place olive half under and secure with a toothpick. (You can also make a cream cheese and cranberry filling if you prefer)

### Recipe Moose Farts: (Easy no-bake dessert treat)

Combine ¼ cup melted butter with 1 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Add 1½ cups of graham cracker crumbs, 1½ cups fine or medium flaked coconut and 1½ cups chocolate chips. Refrigerate for an hour before rolling the mixture into 1¼ inch balls. Roll in additional graham cracker crumbs. Chill until firm. Store in a sealed container.

### Activity Idea

Did you ever watch a TV show a few years back called "Minute To Win It"? Here are 2 holiday games that could be played in your small group or as a family Zoom or Face Time. It is best to look up directions online.

#### Candy Cane Pickup

Unwrap several medium sized candy canes and place in a bowl. Take turns and time each participant for a minute or two. Place one cane in mouth with hook pointing outward. Then see how many other canes you can pick up without your hands from the bowl and place on the table.

#### Snowman Assemble

Needed equipment is chopsticks and a bag of mini marshmallows. Time each contestant for one or two minutes to see who can use only chopsticks to make the most stacks of three to resemble snowmen.

*May You All Have A Holiday Season With Treasured Memories!  
And May You All Have A Healthy, Happy Fulfilling New Year!*



This program receives funding from the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy in partnership with the Bellevue Parks Department.