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Smoke Signals

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Don't be a Humbug...

...Come to the Prairie Trail Federation's annual night at the Theatre of Western Springs, Thursday, December 11, at 7pm. We will have the theatre to ourselves for a special showing of their holiday show, *Scrooge, the Musical*. Come see some of the finest local talent (including many current and former Federation members, and at least one Nation Chief) in this delightful adaptation of the Dickens classic. Once again, we will be hosting a cookie-and-cocoa reception after the show, with a cast "meet and greet", and a special visit from Santa Claus! Send an e-mail to event coordinator John Rymysza at JKRYM991@comcast.net to reserve your spot. Hurry – Federation events have been selling out early this year, and the theatre only holds about 400!

Earn a Patch by Drinking Cocoa??

We are calling on tribes to once again help the YMCA Men's Club with their annual Christmas Tree Sale. See the attached schedule for your tribe's assigned time/date, or, if you can't attend at that time, please find some time within the sale period. The kids actually love it. We help with sales, answer questions, load trees onto cars, and keep the lot tidy. (It's beyond me why the kids love to do this, yet we can't get them to clean their rooms...). Do this for an hour or so, drink some of the free cocoa, get your patch, and you're done! Easy as Christmas pie!

Aim of the Month #2

Part 2 of a six month series highlighting the Six Aims., the guiding principles of the Guide and Princess programs. Each month we will discuss a different Aim.

Aim #2: To be pals forever with my dad (son). – Guides

To be friends always with my dad (daughter) - Princesses

Flip to the back page to learn more about Aim #2

Spread some Holiday Cheer!

At the November Longhouse, your chief (hopefully) picked up one or more bags for your tribe to fill up with clothes, toys, and school supplies for some of our area's most vulnerable citizens. We do this each year for a wonderful local charity, the Community Nurse Health Association's **Secret Santa** program. Ask your chief how many children your tribe will be shopping for (items in a completed bag should cost per between \$125-150). If you would like to participate, but have not yet picked up bags, or if you would like additional bags to fill, contact coordinator Jeff Sides at jasides@sbcglobal.net. In my humble opinion, nothing captures the spirit of our Federation's mission quite like this philanthropy. Plus, unlike writing a check to a charity, our kids are very involved.

Trailblazer News:

Trailblazer Winter Campout '09 has moved “up market,” to the beautiful Wilderness Resort, the Midwest’s premier waterpark resort. Of course, you’ll still be skiing and boarding Cascade Mountain. See the enclosed flyer and act fast; with the upgraded digs comes a need to commit early. Deposits are due December 1st.

Trailblazers Love to Ski, so we do it twice. On Feb. 7th, we will be skiing, boarding, and tubing the day away at Sunburst Ski Area. Enjoy the ride up and back in a luxury motorcoach with onboard movies and restroom. See the flyer for details.

Night at the Museum

You won’t see Ben Stiller or Teddy Roosevelt at the Museum of Science and Industry, Saturday, Feb. 28. What you will see is a group of 350 guides, princesses, and trailblazers sleeping over at the coolest museum of them all! (Flyer with signup sheet attached). Last time I checked, there was still some availability left, but if you would like to attend, **sign up now!** This one will sell out within days!

Ice Skate Away at the Darien Sportsplex

Sunday, January 4, 2009, from 2-4pm. The \$5 admission includes skate rental! By far the best deal in town. No need to sign up...just show up!

Coloring Contest Corner:

Congratulations to this month’s winners, **Clara Weismantel** (Black Cat) of the Fox Princesses, and **Hannah Godellas** (Sleeping Cub) of the Hiawatha Princesses. How How!!

New Web Features!!

Have you made your way over to www.yigp.org recently? In addition to being constantly updated with the latest Federation happenings, we have just added the ability to manage Federation e-mail. Just go to the web site and check out the bulletin entitled “Where’s my E-mail Blast?” Follow the link to subscribe/unsubscribe/change address. You will also find a couple handy tips from Webweavers Wahlstrom and Tipperreiter.

Aim #2 – Pals Forever and Friends Always

This has, at times, been the most difficult aim for me. In fact, I’ve found myself saying, on occasion, “I’m not your friend, I’m your father!” I would usually say this as a parental decision is being challenged by a preteen exerting a newfound independence. You would never “ground” a friend or tell him or her to clean their room, right? Or put limits on what they can and cannot do on the internet. Or, a personal favorite, say to a daughter, “You’re **not** wearing **that** outside the house!” Parents can be sooo uncool sometimes.

Well, what is a friend? A true friend is someone you can talk to about anything. You can give solicited (and sometimes unsolicited) advice in a somewhat non-judgmental way. You enjoy each other’s company and like to spend time together. You would sacrifice almost anything for a friend. This is the essence of friendship, as well as the parent-child relationship.

So, be a parent first and foremost. But, remember what true friends do. You’ll truly be “pals forever.”

Next Month: Aim #3, **To love the sacred circle of my family.**

Happy Thanksgiving from the Prairie Trail Federation!