

Happy Holidays to all of our friends!

### Ocracoke Lighthouse in a Winter Snow, 2002



As the depth of winter envelopes us we often come together with family and friends to pass through this season of long nights with meaningful rituals.

On Ocracoke, as elsewhere, many folks decorate their homes with lights and greens.

### Ocracoke Christmas Decorations



The Ocracoke Preservation Society hosted its annual Tree Lighting & Wassail Party on Friday, December 13. The term “wassail” comes from the Old Norse language meaning “to be well or healthy.” Today it refers to a traditional English toast to someone’s health, as well as to a hot drink made with cider, spices, and sugar. Wassail is traditionally served in a large punch bowl during the Christmas season. Although “wassail” can refer to riotous drinking and revelry, Ocracoke Preservation Society (OPS) normally hosts a rather mild gathering.

On Saturday, December 14, OPS also sponsored the second annual Historic District House Tour. Eight homes were represented and over two hundred residents and visitors walked, biked, or drove through the village for an opportunity to view some of Ocracoke’s historic structures.

Later that evening, Jimmy & Linda Jackson and Jamie Jackson opened up their garage for another community Christmas party & pot luck dinner. Several hundred residents were there to share food, drink, stories, music and dance.

Tables filled with food line the garage



Paula visits with David as he readies his fiddle



A friend makes a special guest appearance



Several of us also gathered on December 22 for our second annual solstice pot luck dinner.

As we now know, of course, the earth is actually nearer the sun in January than it is in June — by three million miles.

The seasons of our year, therefore, are caused not by the proximity of the earth to the sun, but by the 23.5° tilt of the earth's axis. The angle of the earth's rays to the surface of the earth varies based on how far the surface is tilted toward or away from the sun.

At 8:14 pm EST, December 22, 2002, the northern hemisphere of the earth was tilted furthest away from the perpendicular angle. This is the winter solstice — the first day of winter, when the sun appears lowest in the sky and night time hours are maximum. The tilt also causes the seasons to be reversed in the southern hemisphere.

We continued last year's tradition of crowning Ocracoke's Monarch of the Winter Solstice. Last year we followed a medieval tradition and baked a bean in a holiday cake. Pat Tweedie, mother of Molasses Creek's fiddler Dave, found the bean in her dessert and was crowned Queen in 2001. This year we drew lots and Blanche Howard Jolliff was honored with a throne, a staff, a royal robe and a star-studded crown.

#### Blanche, Queen of the Solstice, 2002



In other news, the Ocracoke Assembly of God church held their annual Christmas program on Sunday, December 22. The Methodist church hosted a live nativity on the church lawn this holiday, and conducted a traditional Christmas eve candlelight service. Christmas caroling, again this year, was a joint venture of the Methodist and Assembly churches. Caroling was on December 20.

Of course, the days will now be gradually lengthening, the sun will be rising higher and higher into the sky each day, and within a few months we will be looking for the first robins and the early signs of new growth.

All of us at Village Craftsmen join me in wishing you and yours the happiest of wintertime holidays and the very best in the coming new year.

Hoping to see you again soon,

Philip, Dallie, Jude, Amy, Mary and Leon