



# The pleasures of winter in Takoma Park

**K**ids today (along with many adults) look forward to winter with the same eager hope and expectations as children 100 years ago. They pray for snow days to keep them home from school and send them off to find the nearest sledding hill or skating pond.



PHOTO BY MORRIS BIEN  
COURTESY OF HISTORIC TAKOMA.

The boys in this photo from the turn of the century didn't have far to go – their own front lawn. Those who lived on Elm or Willow or Cedar turned the hilly street outside their door into a snow run. Toboggans were homemade and moms were nearby with hot cocoa to warm you up while dads built bonfires on the street. More often than not kids today have to settle for a long hike to the middle school to find a proper hill.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC TAKOMA

Holiday traditions like Christmas trees and Santa Claus date back to Victorian times. The gifts under the tree may have changed (can you imagine what a Victorian child would think of an iPod or Barbie doll?), but not the promise of all the gaily wrapped packages piled high. This tree was part of the Huck family Christmas in 1911, complete with homemade paper ornaments. Most trees today come from the nearby pre-cut tree lot, but some families still preserve the tradition of cutting their own tree. No longer a simple walk to the nearest woods, it requires a trip up-county to a commercial tree farm.



PHOTOS: JULIE WIATT

**O**ne long-time resident of Takoma Park, Dorothy Barnes, has fond memories of the skating, bonfires, and Christmas trees of her childhood. In particular she remembers, "My Dad always let my brother and me open presents on Christmas Eve. I think it was a German tradition. We loved it."

She still lives in the bungalow where she was raised, but the Christmas tree has been replaced by her Santa Claus collection. More than 200 Santas in all shapes, sizes and materials cover all available surfaces. It all started 15 years ago. "I bought a ceramic Santa from the clearance bin of a souvenir store and then everyone started giving me more Santas."

The largest is a two-foot high puffy stuffed Santa, plus an array of Christmas ornaments and porcelain Santas from large to miniature. Some are decked out in colorful Victorian costumes that evoke a vision of long-ago Victorian times.

'Tis the season to pull out those memories of childhood joys and to create a few traditions of your own.

