

Salado welcomes Scottish clans, Christmas

By Jessica Chia

'Tis the season

to celebrate in Salado. The village, nestled on Interstate 35 halfway between Waco and Austin, is in full festive mode November and December. A celebration of Celtic heritage is quickly followed by events steeped in Christmas holiday cheer.

Scottish clans and Highland Games

For half a century, tartan banners have flown in Salado, honoring the town's Scottish ties.

The festivities unfold Veterans Day weekend, Nov. 11-13, against a backdrop of the log cabins and limestone buildings of the Salado Civic Center, off exit 285 from Interstate 35.

The weekend officially kicks off with the "Calling of the Clans" at 7 p.m. Friday with a torchlight ceremony on College Hill welcoming representatives from an estimated 50 clans.

Visitors on Saturday can peruse the wares of Scottish vendors, enjoy Scottish and Celtic music and storytelling, or watch clan members



The 50th annual Highland Games will draw people celebrating their Scottish ancestry to Salado for a variety of activities.

vie for titles in drumming, piping, Highland dancing and Scottish athletic competitions.

Plenty of Celtic food and non-alcoholic beverages will be available at the family-friendly event, organizers say.

Saturday's official opening of the Highland Games parade is at noon, featuring Fort Hood's color guard and pipers followed by a procession of clan representatives, banners and several bagpipe bands.

Participants are invited to show their strength in the caber toss,

hammer throw, stone toss, weight throw and sheaf toss, events their Scottish ancestors used long ago to demonstrate their physical prowess at gatherings of multiple clans.

Dancers can compete in any of three traditional Scottish dances: the hornpipe, the Highland fling and the sword dance.

Saturday afternoon's competitions begin with the battle of the clans tug-of-war at 1 p.m. Less physical contests are a Scottish shortbread cookie competition and

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"bonniest" (best-looking) knees contest for the kilt-wearing folk. Those start at 2 p.m.

Anyone inspired to dig deeper into their heritage can get helpful pointers at a beginners genealogy workshop at 5:30 p.m. in Scots Clan Hall.

Evening events include a tattoo, which is a gathering of the pipe bands, at 5:30 p.m. on College Hill; a performance by North Texas Celtic band Seamus Stout at 7 p.m. in Fest Tent; and finally, a banquet with live music and dancing known as a tartan ceilidh, which will take place at 8 p.m. in the Longhorn Room.

Entry to the tattoo costs \$6 per person. Admission to the Seamus Stout concert costs \$10 and the tartan ceilidh banquet runs \$30 per person.

Sunday's activities begin with a church and kirking (presentation) service at 9 a.m., after which the vendors, music and storytelling will resume, with the addition of a pipe band contest and Scottish athletic games adapted for the children.

The weekend's festivities conclude with a final parade of the bands and close of the games at 3 p.m.

Grounds admission is \$5 for all visitors Friday, \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12 Saturday and \$8 for adults and \$5 for children Sunday.

For more information, call 254-947-5232, email office@ctam-salado.org or visit ctam-salado.org.

'Christmas Is on the Air'

The Salado Silver Spur Theater, accessible from exit 284 off I-35, presents its holiday production,



A radio show goes awry in the play "Christmas Is on the Air."

"Christmas Is on the Air," throughout December.

The comedy follows the mishaps that occur during a fictional Salado radio station crew's attempt to broadcast a live Christmas eve variety show.

The show-within-a-show is geared toward family audiences, and includes music, a comedy routine, dancing, a cartoon and audience participation.

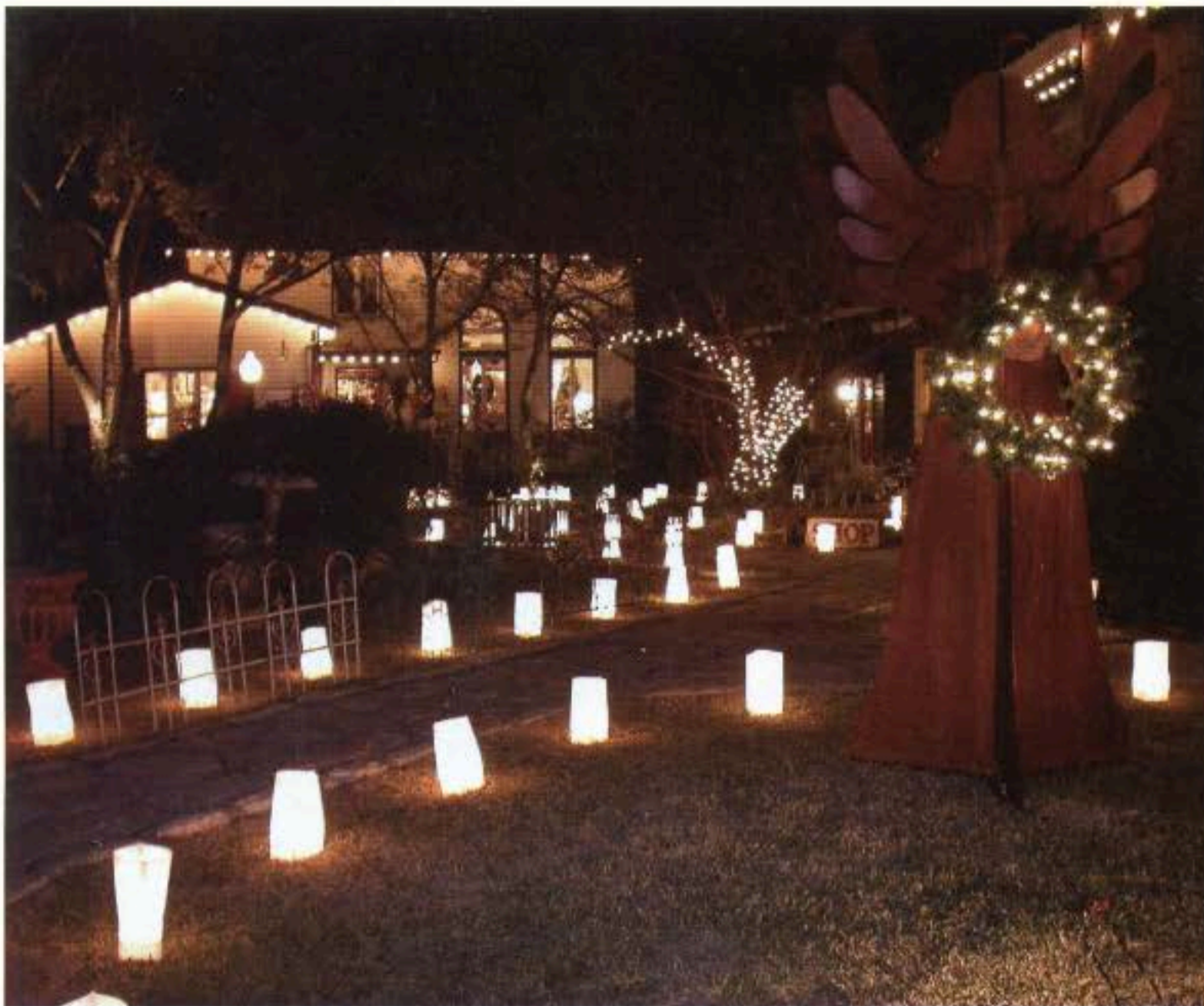
The cast will be available to meet and greet audience members at the close of each show.

Performances run every Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2 through 23.

Tickets are available at the door, but reservations are encouraged.

Admission to Friday and Saturday evening performances are \$15 for adults, \$12 for senior citizens, students and military personnel and \$8 for children 12 years and younger.

Admission to Saturday afternoon performances cost \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens, students and



Businesses and shops in along Main Street and throughout Salado will be decked out for the holidays during the Famous Christmas Stroll the first two weekends of December.

military personnel and \$8 for children 12 years and younger.

All seats are general admission.

For additional details or to make reservations, contact the Silver Spur Theater by phone at 254-947-3456 or visit saladosilverspur.com.

Famous Christmas Stroll

Salado's Famous Christmas Stroll, held the weekends of Dec. 2-4 and 9-11, is a simple way to get into the holiday spirit.

Just a few minutes from Exit 285 on Interstate 35, Main Street in Salado and the shops and businesses that line it will be decked out in full holiday style.

The event officially begins with the Christmas parade along Main Street at 5 p.m. Dec. 1, and ends at the civic center, where visitors can take photos with Santa Claus or watch the annual lighting of the Christmas tree.

There is no cost to attend the parade or Christmas tree lighting, and

free hot chocolate will be provided by Salado's Chamber of Commerce that evening.

During the first two weekends in December, from 7 p.m. until 9:30 p.m., visitors can enjoy classic holiday tunes sung by carolers in period clothing, view a live nativity scene and hear live music.

The Revolution Electric String Orchestra, the Central Texas Master Singers and the Salado Community Chorus will provide musical entertainment for strollers on different nights.

The Salado Chamber of Commerce advises out-of-town visitors to make overnight arrangements well ahead of time. Returning strollers often reserve their accommodations a full year in advance and lodging books up quickly.

For more information about the Christmas Stroll or for general questions, contact the Salado Chamber of commerce at 254-947-5040 or visit salado.com.



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