

Behind the scenes of two beloved holiday films

Holiday movies have a way of making audiences laugh and cry while inspiring those warm and fuzzy feelings that perfectly complement the season of family and giving. Depending on the individual, favorite movies may include old classics or new releases.

A lot of work goes into making movies, and holiday films are no exception. Fans may be surprised by some of the events that went on behind the scenes of their favorite holiday films, as well as background information about the actors and settings of the movies.

Get into the festive spirit by learning about the following beloved holiday films.

“It’s a Wonderful Life”

Anyone who has ever wondered what life would be like if they took a different path or made different decisions can relate to this classic Christmas film. It’s difficult to make it through the holiday season without seeing “It’s a Wonderful Life,” and many people make it a point of to view it every year. The following are some interesting tidbits about George Bailey and the film that put savings-and-loan managers on the map.

• The movie began as a short story titled “The Greatest Gift.” Writer Philip Van Dornen Stern was unsuccessful at shopping the story and turned it into a Christmas card for 200 friends and family. A producer at RKO pictures got a copy and purchased the movie rights for \$10,000.

• Many now agree that

Jimmy Stewart was the perfect choice to play lead character George Bailey, but studio heads originally had Carey Grant in mind for the lead. The role went to Stewart when Frank Capra signed on to the film and named Stewart his leading man.

• Although Donna Reed was a seasoned actress prior to the movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life” marked her first starring role.

• Bedford Falls, the fictional town in the movie, is reportedly based on upstate New York towns Bedford Hills and Seneca Falls. Nearby cities like Rochester and Buffalo are referenced in the movie. However, the movie was not filmed on location. It was filmed in the sum-



mer time on a back lot in the San Fernando Valley section of Los Angeles.

• The movie received a technical Academy Award for the snow effects, which were created by using a “snow” mixture

of water, soap and a fire-fighting chemical called Foam-ite.

• The movie was not well received upon its release in 1946. The film received mixed reviews, which might surprise those who consider it a cinematic classic.

“A Christmas Story”

An equally beloved holiday film and a cult favorite, “A Christmas Story” follows a 1940’s Indiana family anchored

by Ralphie, the cynical but lovable schoolboy played by actor Peter Billingsley. The movie was based on autobiographical tales penned by author and radio personality Jean Shepherd, who narrates the film.

• The movie was a low-budget film that used virtually no special effects. It also used tracking shots instead of Steadicam.

• The setting for the movie is based on Shepherd’s hometown of Hammond, Indiana. Shepherd grew up on Cleveland Street and went to Warren G. Harding Elementary School. However, the movie was filmed in Cleveland, Ohio, and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The house from the movie

still stands in Cleveland. Part of the decision to film in Cleveland stems from the willingness of Higbee’s department store to allow crews to film inside the store.

• Darren McGavin played Ralphie’s father, a role he won over Jack Nicholson. McGavin might have won the role because of Nicholson’s typically large salary demands.

• For the scene in which “Flick’s” tongue sticks to the flagpole, a hidden suction tube was used to safely create the illusion that his tongue had frozen to the metal.

• Three leg lamps were made for the movie, and all three broke during filming.

Prepare for a sledding adventure

Dashing through the snow in a one-horse open sleigh ...

Winter holidays are made all the more merry with the addition of some outdoor recreation. Sleights and sleds are par for the Christmas course, especially when a bounty of snow is in the forecast.

Sledding has been part of snowy celebrations for ages. Sledding is a fun-filled activity, but it can be made an even better time, and a little safer, if revelers learn a little more about it.

Sled styles

Sleds come in many different styles, each with its own advantages. Sleds with metal blades will work like ice skates,



balancing riders’ weight on two metal runners. These sleds can work well during icy conditions or with hard-packed snow. Toboggans can fit multiple people, which can increase the fun factor and downhill speeds. Saucer-style sleds are good for one or two people. Foam liners on

some saucers can absorb shock for riders, making those downhill bumps a little easier on the backside. Keep in mind that sleds with steering mech-

anisms are easier to control, which can equate to safer sledding.

Layer up

It is best to dress in layers when going sledding. Even if it seems warm at home, it may be colder and windier at

the top of hills. Sweating when it’s cold out can increase a person’s risk for hypothermia. According to experts at Timberline Trails, a person who works up a sweat and comes in contact with ambient air when taking a break will feel an immediate chill. This is called evaporative danger, and can be remedied by dressing in layers and trying to stay dry.

Invest in a helmet

Sledding requires the use of a helmet. At high speeds, a blow to the head can cause a concussion or worse.

Let others go first

Wait until some sleds have already gone downhill, allowing them

to compact the snow, which should make for a smooth ride.

Choose safe hills, such as those that are free of bare spots, holes, trees, and obstructions, and do not end abruptly at a road. Hills with a long, flat areas at the end make for easy, safe stopping.

Safety first

Put safety first when sledding. Sled during the daytime so visibility is better. Keep arms and legs on the sled, and only sled feet-first, advises the National Safety Council.

By keeping these guidelines in mind, sleds can make sure this popular winter activity is as safe as it is fun.

How to be certain you’re buying safe toys this holiday season

Few things compare to seeing the joy on a child’s face upon opening a holiday gift. Many adults remember holiday gifts they received as children, and holiday shoppers often try to look for gifts that will be just as memorable to the special youngsters in their lives.

Shoppers might have kids’ smiles on their

minds when holiday shopping, but it’s just as important to focus on safety when buying gifts for children. Prevent Blindness®, an organization devoted to ensuring everyone enjoys healthy vision from infancy through adulthood, offers the following tips to toy buyers who want to make sure they give safe gifts to kids this holiday

season.

• Read all warnings and instructions on the box. Before taking a toy to the check out line, give the packaging a thorough read-through, paying particular attention to product warnings and instructions. Such warnings are designed to keep kids safe. When buying toys online, only purchase toys that in-

clude the warnings within the product description.

• Purchase age-appropriate toys. Kids’ toys come with age recommendations, which are typically listed on the front of the packaging. Stick to these recommendations. Kids might not have the ability to use toys designed for older children, and such toys might not be safe for them to use, so it’s always best to stick to the age guidelines.

• Avoid certain toys. Toys with sharp or rigid points, spikes, rods, or dangerous edges can pose a threat to youngsters. Avoid such toys, opting for toys with rounded and/or dull edges instead.

• Stick to sturdy toys. Kids do not often treat their toys delicately. Toys will be dropped or thrown, so choose sturdy toys that can withstand



being dropped or thrown without breaking into tiny pieces. Tiny shards can pose a choking hazard to curious youngsters.

• Purchase toys with the ASTM designation. ASTM International is an international standards organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus technical standards for a wide range of products, including toys. Prevent Blindness notes

that toys with the letters ASTM on the packaging have been tested and met the toy standards set for by ASTM.

• Avoid toys with parts that shoot or fly off. These types of toys can damage the eyes and lead to other accidents or injuries.

When shopping for toys for children this holiday season, shoppers must consider safety first.

PAWNEE COUNTY

Christmas Events '18

<h4 style="text-align: center;">December 1st</h4> <p>11:00 am Larned Christmas Parade @ Downtown Larned (4th - 8th Street) 'There's No Place like HOME for the Holidays'</p> <p>2:00 pm Chamber Ambassadors' Kiddie Movie @ Larned State Theatre</p> <p>4:00 pm Santa's Snowball Deals @ Courthouse Lawn</p> <p>4:00 - 7:00 pm Santa's House @ Courthouse Lawn</p> <p>5:00 - 8:00 pm Hometown Holiday Celebration & Broadway Lighting @ Downtown Larned</p> <p>All Day Burdett Christmas Celebration Parade, Games, Lunch & More @ Burdett</p>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">December 8th</h4> <p>9:30 - 11:30 am Larned Civic PRIDE Kiddie Shopping @ Larned City Hall</p> <p>10:30 am - 1:00 pm Santa's House @ Courthouse Lawn</p>
<h4 style="text-align: center;">December 2nd</h4> <p>11:00 am Rozel Christmas Celebration Lunch, Parade, Games & More @ Rozel</p>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">Ongoing Events</h4> <p>11/24 - 12/14 Holiday Punch Card Program Giveaway: 12/17</p> <p>11/17 - 12/21 12 Turkeys & Hams of Christmas Giveaway Giveaway Dates: 11/30, 12/7, 12/14 & 12/21</p> <p>Downtown Late Night Shopping Participating businesses open until 7:00 pm 12/6, 12/13 & 12/20</p>

Come Visit Santa

Saturday, Dec. 15 1-3 pm

5520 10th Street • Great Bend