

2012 Naples Christmas Parade *The Art of a Naples Christmas*

This year the City of Naples and the Christmas Parade Committee are pleased to announce the theme of the 2012 Naples Christmas Parade: “The Art of a Naples Christmas”..... Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Naples Players with Parade Grand Marshall: Mary Watkins

Our theme this year showcases the spirit of Naples past that lives on today in a wonderful gift to our community that was greatly enhanced in 1952. It started with an idea, a passion for the arts and community and a lot of hard work. What creative and artistic ideas will your entry display in the 2012 Naples Christmas Parade?

History of the Naples Players (As the Story Goes):

The idea of the Naples Players was conceived in 1952 at a sunset cocktail party at the home of **Henry and Mary Watkins**. A theatre director from Cape Coral, Leonard Latham, was in that gathering and suggested that Naples could do well with a live theatre.

The Naples Players was on January 19, 1953 at the Naples Women’s Club, with Lynn Hixon-Holley serving as President and a week later it established \$1 membership.

With a \$35 budget for their first set, the first show, “I Remember Mama,” ran for one night on March 20, 1953 at the then Naples High School (now Gulf View Middle School). The Miami Herald wrote, “Another cultural step in the progress of this city was taken when the newly organized Naples Players gave their first performance...worthy of accomplished professionals.”

By the 1970’s shows, classes, workshops and seminars were underway. The most notable play of the period was “Fiddler on the Roof,” which broke all profit records and resulted in an effort to mount more artistically challenging productions such as “Man of La Mancha” and “The Taming of the Shrew”.

By the 1980’s, the group was presenting four productions a year including “A Lion in Winter” and “Ah Wilderness,” thus establishing The Naples Players as a serious and outstanding community theatre – with no home to call their own..

In 1997, the Naples City Council, in a historic move, closed Seventh Street to create Players Plaza with an outdoor stage. With a major fundraising effort in process, Frances Pew Hayes, Peg and Herb Sugden, Lois and Dick Blackburn and Jay and Patty Baker made the 1952 vision a reality.

Today The Naples Players stage more than 220 performances a year, many of them sell outs. With a subscriber base of more than 4,000, children’s program that reach over 600 children annually, and having been voted Best Live Theatre for nine consecutive years in the Naples Daily News Southwest Florida Choice Awards, the momentum continues strong as ever.

Categories, Awards and Prizes:

Judges will be located on 5th Avenue South & Park Street. Entries will be judged on the

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following categories and awards/prizes will be presented to winners during the televised City of Naples City Council Meeting held in Council Chambers on **December 19, 2012 at 8:30 am:**

1. **Best Overall Theme Entry** - This Parade Float should capture the heritage, special effects, workmanship and spirit of the parade's theme. *Helpful Hint: Creativity and attention to detail will score high points. \$250 gift certificate from a local Naples business!*
2. **Heritage Award** – This Parade Float should capture history in its theme. *Helpful Hint: A strong, creative, history interpretation of this theme will score high points. \$100 gift certificate from a local Naples business!*
3. **The Spirit Award** - Honoring the Greatest Generation - A Patriotic Theme. *Helpful Hint: A creative, patriotic interpretation of the Spirit of 45 will score high points. \$100 Gift Certificate to Homer Helter Antique Mall & Military Museum!*
4. **Organization/Merchant Award** - This Parade Float should work to advertise your organization or business. *Helpful Hint: Advertising your organization or business with flair and catchiness will score high points. \$100 gift certificate from a local Naples business!*
5. **Best Animation & Special Effects** - \$50 gift certificate from a local Naples business!
6. **Best Music** - \$50 gift certificate from a local Naples business!
7. **Best Spirited High School Band** - \$50 gift certificate from a local Naples business!
8. **Best Illumination** - \$50 gift certificate from a local Naples business!
9. **Best Scout Entry** - \$50 gift certificate from a local Naples business!

To be eligible to win award/prize in each category your entry will be judged on three specific criteria:

1. Visual demonstration of the theme.
2. Lighting & entertainment factor.
3. Community spirit
4. **Best Overall Theme Category:** An essay (500 words or less) on how your entry is representative of this year's theme **"The Art of a Naples Christmas"**. This is required to be eligible for the **Best Overall Theme Entry category only** and must be received in Community Services Dept. or email Lois Bolin at sfibolin@aol.com by December 3, 2012 by 4:00 p.m.

Note: If you are stuck for ideas, contact Dr. Lois Bolin at sfibolin@aol.com and she will help you shape your theme and get you going in a direction that will surely be fun and rewarding.