



# *Everything* you need to know about the 2013 Bluffton Blaze of Lights

**By Fred Steiner**

*The Blaze of Lights is more than just a one-day event. In addition to the events taking place on Nov. 30, it includes these elements that continue nightly through Jan. 1:*

- *the Ream folk art holiday display*
- *the Gift of Giving light show extravaganza*
- *Bluffton Main Street business district Christmas window displays*
- *a tour of Bluffton's residential yard lighting*

The stage is set for the 2013 Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce's Blaze of Lights. This year's event, the 27th annual Blaze, begins Saturday, Nov. 30, in downtown Bluffton. Here is the up-to-the-minute Blaze information.

## ✓ **Parade marshals – turn on the switch**

Three Bluffton residents, each actively involved in several community activities, will be recognized this year.

Jerry Burkholder and Roger Brodman are the Blaze parade marshals. Both have volunteered for several community activities, especially the Blaze of Lights. Everett Collier, retired Bluffton postmaster, will turn on this year's Ream display lights.

## ✓ **John George - Blaze MC**

John George, who has served as the Blaze master of ceremonies since 1995, will again perform that role. Dressed in his traditional town crier garb, George will announce events from the Blaze review stand on the Presbyterian Church lawn. He and Junior Weihrauch, Blaze parade coordinator, will announce Blaze parade entries from the review stand.

## ✓ “Deck the Farm” premieres this year

New to this year’s Blaze is the premier performance of Pat Rodabaugh’s “Deck the Farm.” The work includes short vignettes involving drama and song that brings to life Dorothy and Harry Ream, creators of those magical folk art holiday cutouts. The performance will follow the parade at approximately 6 p.m. on the Blaze stage in front of the Ream display.

Rodabaugh estimates the performance to be about 30 minutes. The cast includes:

**Narrator:** Everett Collier

**Harry and Dorothy Ream:** Kevin Gratz and Pat Rodabaugh

**Roger Mullenhour, Fred Rodabaugh and Larry Badertscher:** Dan Stanowick, Dan Basinger and Steve Rodabaugh

**Carolers:** Bob and Cheryl Schirmer, Mary Gratz, Wendy Chappell-Dick, Kara Zink, Steve and Linda Rodabaugh

**Wise men:** Bob Schirmer, Everett Collier, John George

**Angels:** Mary Gratz, Linda Rodabaugh, John George, Cheryl Schirmer, Wendy Chappell-Dick, Steve Rodabaugh

**Girl with Greeting Card:** Kara Zink

**Boy Scout figures:** Steve Rodabaugh and sons

**Music by:** Kristi and Phil Schey

## ✓ Also new this year:

### First National Bank’s “Kasasa Gift-For-Good Exchange”

Starting on Nov. 30 and continuing until Dec. 7, First National Bank invites area residents to do a good deed and receive a free gift certificate, courtesy of Kasasa, its rewards checking account partner.

Using the philosophy that “no good deed goes unrewarded,” First National Bank supports six Bluffton non-profit organizations during the Blaze in its “Kasasa Gift-For-Good Exchange” program. The bank will encourage residents to volunteer at one of those agencies in December or January.

First National Bank will reward the first 250 persons who pledge to volunteer by providing Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce gift certificates to those who successfully complete their volunteer commitment.

#### Here’s how it works:

From 4 to 9 p.m. during the Saturday, Nov. 30, Blaze of Light celebration, First National Bank will have a booth on the corner of Cherry and Main streets. Persons have an opportunity to pledge two hours of volunteer time by Jan. 31, 2014, at one of the following Bluffton non-profit organizations:

- Bluffton Child Development Center
- Bluffton Hospital
- BFR Sports and Fitness
- Bluffton Community Assistance Program
- Bluffton Public Library
- Bluffton Senior Citizens Center

Each of the six organizations has projects where volunteers may assist. Persons unable to attend the Blaze also have the opportunity to pledge volunteer hours at Bluffton's First National Bank branch from Nov. 30 to Dec. 7.

The first 100 volunteers to return their completed hours will each receive a \$20 gift certificate from the bank. The 101st through 250th volunteers to return their completed hours will each receive a \$10 gift certificate.

Persons interested in more information about the program may contact the bank.

### ✓ Ice sculpture

Ice sculpturer Chad Hartson of Ice Creations, from Napoleon, for the third year, will create a work of art from a large chunk of ice. He is one of America's leading sculptors with national and international recognition. Beginning at 4 p.m., as the crowd watches, Hartson will work with a block of ice 40 by 20 by 10 inches and over the next 45 minutes will create an ornate snowflake. Hartson's work is described as a the "ultimate cool."

### ✓ Nov. 30 schedule

4:00 p.m. – Ice carving exhibition by Chad Hartson

4:00 p.m. – Parade line up on Snider Road

5:00 p.m. – Parade

6:00 p.m. - "Deck the Farm," premier performance

6:40 p.m. – Bluffton HS show choir performs

6:55 p.m. – John George recites Christmas story from Luke 2

7:00 p.m. – Everett Collier turns on the Ream lights

• Immediately following the parade - Horse and wagon rides and kiddie train rides

### ✓ Lollipop cutouts

Several new pieces, created by Terry Mullenhour, join the Ream display. This year she has created nearly 28 small lollipops located along the Presbyterian Church wall in the rear of the Ream display.

### ✓ 100-unit parade possible

This year's parade forms at 4 p.m. on Snider Road. The parade begins at 5 p.m. A first, second and third prize will be awarded to the top floats, with each winner receiving a trophy. Judging takes place during the parade line up. Float winners will be announced during the parade. Parade units will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Nov. 30.

Junior Weihrauch, parade coordinator, said that this year's parade could be the largest in Blaze history. Persons wanting to be part of the parade may contact Weihrauch, 20791 State Route 68, Arlington, Ohio 45814, or call 419-365-5304. The parade route travels Snider Road south to Main Street and to College Avenue. It turns east on College and disbands at Triplett Drive.

### ✓ Food

• County Kettle Corn (Crawfis family), Sports Warehouse alley

• Bluffton Senior Citizens will offer their traditional Blaze supper from 4 p.m. until approximately 7:30 p.m. Their menu includes soups, sandwiches and homemade pie.

• Bluffton Lions Club will offer a chicken barbecue on Main Street from 4 to 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale from Lion members.

### ✓ **Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus**

Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus will be in the Blaze parade. Following the parade, they will meet with youth of all ages at the Senior Citizens Center.

### ✓ **Horse and wagon rides one night only**

J.A. Smith's Town and Country Carriage Service, Van Wert, will provide horse and wagon rides on the night of the Blaze. This is the only night that those rides will be offered.

Rides will start at the conclusion of the Blaze parade and will continue during the evening. Departure point for the rides is in front of Common Grounds coffee shop.

Tickets for horse and wagon rides are \$4 for persons 11 and older and \$2 for youth 10 and under. Children who can sit on an adult lap have no charge. Tickets will be sold at the front of Common Grounds. Ticket sales will begin during the parade. This year's horse and wagon route will be on South Main Street.

Thank you to S.H.A.N.N.O.N Service Club for selling tickets and assisting horse and wagon riders getting on and off the wagon this year.

### ✓ **Romick Railway**

A ride for young children, the Romick Railway, will start offering rides following the parade. The railroad will be located on Main Street near Citizens National Bank.

### ✓ **The Gift of Giving light show extravaganza**

In its sixth season, the Gift of Giving light show extravaganza will be shown across from Harmon Field stadium on East College Avenue. The show will be viewed nightly from 6 to 11 p.m. through Jan. 1. Based upon last year's attendance, it is anticipated to attract an audience of over 5,000. On Blaze night, the show will start following the parade.

### ✓ **Chamber website and Facebook**

All Blaze updates are posted on the chamber website: [www.explorebluffton.com](http://www.explorebluffton.com). Free maps showing locations of light displays in Bluffton are also available to download and print from the website.

We encourage persons to "like" the chamber's facebook so that you may receive immediate Blaze of Lights updates.

### ✓ **Main Street windows contest**

This year's Main Street retail window judging is similar to last year. One ballot will be given to each of the businesses that participate in the downtown garland project. The ballots allow businesses to rate all windows in the contest on a scoring system to determine winners.

Ballots will be distributed Monday, Nov. 18, and must be returned to Citizens National Bank by Wednesday, Nov. 27. The winning business will be announced on the Blaze stage on Saturday, Nov. 30. A traveling trophy, on display at the bank, will go to the business lighting contest winner.

## ✓ Residential lighting contest

Thanks to a \$450 donation from First National Bank, Bluffton's residential holiday lighting contest prize money totals \$800 this year. First National's donation is assisted courtesy of Kasasa, its rewards checking account partner.

"Thanks to First National, the Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce will award eight prizes this year," said Fred Steiner of the chamber. "We've created five new lighting categories and hope this encouraged residents to really make Bluffton a blaze of lights."

### **Judging on Dec. 4**

Judging takes place on Wednesday, Dec. 4. Residents wanting their displays judged must send a request to [blufftonchamber@gmail.com](mailto:blufftonchamber@gmail.com). The e-mail request must have the family name and address listed. Or, residents may mail their request to be judged to: Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 142, Bluffton, OH 45817.

The e-mail or mailed entry assures that your residence will be judged. However, judges may also consider displays not formally entered.

### **Residential holiday lighting contest categories:**

First place overall - \$150 prize  
Second place overall - \$100 prize  
Third place overall - \$50 prize

### **New categories this year:**

Mayor's choice (chosen by Dennis Gallant) - \$100 prize  
Best religious - \$100 prize  
Best secular - \$100 prize  
Best "use of lights" - \$100 prize  
Best "minimal" use of lights - \$100 prize

The contest is open to any residence inside the Bluffton village limits. Winners will receive Bluffton chamber gift certificates, which may be used in any Bluffton business.

In addition, winners will be listed on the village holiday light map. The free maps will be posted on the chamber website, available in businesses and in the red mailbox on the Presbyterian Church lawn.

## ✓ Map showing holiday lights

Residents with outdoor Christmas displays may place their residence on the 2013 Bluffton Christmas lights map.

The printer-friendly map will be posted on the Bluffton chamber website ([www.explorebluffton.com](http://www.explorebluffton.com)).for the benefit of out-of-town persons interested in knowing where to go to view lights in Bluffton.

Printed copies of the map will be available in the Ream display red mailbox on the Presbyterian lawn. Printed copies will also be available at the Bluffton Marathon and other businesses.

The chamber has offered the free maps for several years. All Blaze sponsors are listed on the maps. Generally 400 to 500 maps are picked up, indicating the number of out-of-town visitors Bluffton has during November and December.

To place your residence on the map, e-mail your street address to: blufftonchamber@gmail.com. In the announcement, state that you wish to be placed on the holiday lights map. Maps will be updated continually during this holiday season. Please review the map on page 7 to see if your residence is marked.

## ...and during the entire Blaze season to Jan. 1

### ✓ **Santa Claus coming to town**

The chamber has scheduled Santas visit to Bluffton three times in addition to the Blaze of Lights night. Here are those dates and locations:

**Saturday, Nov. 23** – Santa arrives in the old Bluffton fire truck at 10 a.m. and will be in Common Grounds, 101 S. Main St., from 10 a.m. to noon.

**Saturday, Dec. 7** – Santa will be in the Shannon Theatre, 119 S. Main St., from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Greg's Pharmacy will be set up to take complimentary photos of youth sitting on Santa's lap.

**Saturday, Dec. 14** – Santa will be in First National Bank, 112 Cherry St., from 10 a.m. to noon. Greg's Pharmacy will be set up to take complimentary photos of youth sitting on Santa's lap.

### ✓ **Senior citizens peanut brittle**

Ohio's best peanut brittle is available only in Bluffton and only in November and December (while supplies last). The candy is produced each Monday in November by members of the Bluffton Senior Citizens Center. It is available for \$6.50 a pound.

### ✓ **Deck the Hall Christmas cards**

Beverly Amstutz has created "Deck the Hall" greeting cards. The cards have a color watercolor of the front of the town hall. These are available for \$1 each at Greg's Pharmacy.

### ✓ **Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Gift Certificates**

Available in any amounts, these may be purchased at Citizens National Bank. the gift certifications may be used anytime in the next 12 month in any Bluffton business, or may be redeemed for cash at Citizens National Bank. They make great Christmas gifts.

# ✓ 2013 Blaze sponsors

More than 25 businesses assisted the Blaze with sponsorships this year. Those sponsors follow:

## **Gold - \$1,500**

- Bluffton University
- First National Bank
- Jerry Lewis McDonald's Restaurants

## **Silver - \$500**

- Bluffton Paving and Bluffton Stone Co.
- Bluffton Hospital
- Citizens National Bank
- DTR Industries
- Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio
- Shannon Theatre and Shirley's Gourmet Popcorn Co.

## **Ruby - \$300**

- Family Eye Care
- Kirtland Auto Sales
- Northwest Physical Therapy
- Sielschott, Walsh, Kiefer & Regula, CPA
- Smith's Realty Professional
- Tower Automotive

## **Bronze - \$150**

- Bluffton Aeration Service
- Bluffton Icon
- Boehr Site Seeker
- Chiles-Laman Funeral Home
- Common Grounds Coffee Shop
- Edward Jones
- Mennonite Mutual Aid Society
- Samuel Diller
- Stratton Auto
- The Centre at Bluffton
- Tommy Tire

## ✓ **Blaze committee**

Blaze members are: Lauren Beasley, John George, Ryan Lowry, Phil Zimmerly, Junior Weihrauch and Fred Steiner.

Your **FREE** guide to the lights of Bluffton, Ohio 2013

# Welcome to Bluffton - a community of Christmas lights!

The Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce and the following businesses bring you this holiday lights map and wish you a Merry Christmas.

## **\$1,500 GOLD SPONSORS**

- Bluffton University
- First National Bank
- Jerry Lewis McDonald's

## **\$500 SILVER SPONSORS**

- Bluffton Hospital
- Bluffton Stone Co. - Bluffton Paving
- Citizens National Bank
- DTR Industries

• Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio

• Shannon Theatre- Shirley's Popcorn

## **\$300 RUBY SPONSORS**

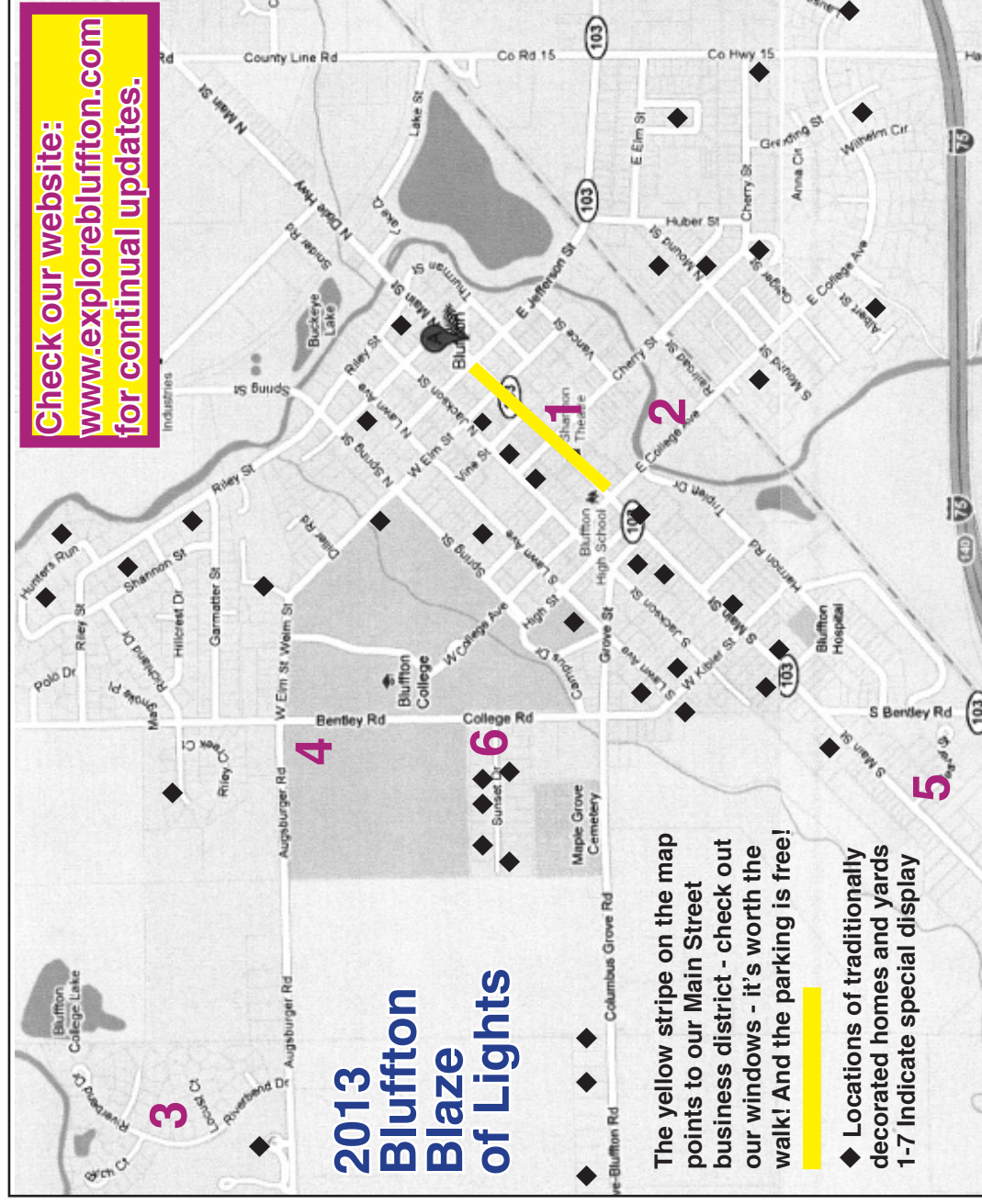
- Family Eye Care
- Kirtland Auto Sales
- Northwest Physical Therapy
- Sielschott, Walsh, Keifer & Regula CPA
- Smith's Realty Professionals
- Tower Automotive

## **\$150 BRONZE SPONSORS**

- Bluffton Aeration
- Bluffton Icon
- Boehr Site Seekers
- Common Grounds
- Chiles-Laman Funeral Homes
- Edward Jones
- Mennonite Mutual Aid Society
- Samuel Diller Law Office
- Stratton Auto Sales
- The Centre at Bluffton
- Tommy Tire

• **Ream display and Gift of Giving** nightly Nov. 24 through Jan. 1

• **Dec. 8 - Handel's "Messiah" Founders Hall, Bluffton University 4 p.m.**



"The Gift of Giving - Christmas Light Spectacular" uses "Deck the Halls," "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen," and "Joy to the World," by Mannheim Steamroller, used by permission, all rights reserved, c 1984, 1985 American Gramophone LLC, Dots and Lines, Inc.



