

Calendar

Friday, December 23

Happy Holidays!

Monday, December 26

Happy Holidays!

Weather



Sunny 43°/33°

[Extended Forecast](#)

[Weather at Fermilab](#)

Current Security Status

[Secou Level 3](#)

Wilson Hall Cafe

Friday, December 23

- Grill Only

Find menu and holiday hours [here](#).

Chez Leon

Wednesday, December 28

Closed

Thursday, December 29

Closed

[Chez Leon Menu](#)

Call x4512 to make your reservation.

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Info

Happy Holidays!

The Fermilab Today staff wishes all employees, users, contractors and friends a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year. Fermilab Today will return on Tuesday, January 3.

Christmas Bird Count Finds Fewer Geese, More Robins



Denis Kania (far left), Diann Bilderback, and Jim Hedges revisit the Wilson's snipe they saw earlier in the day. (Click image for larger version)

A small group of avid birdwatchers gathered in the pre-dawn hours on Saturday, December 17, to find birds for the annual Christmas Bird Count at Fermilab. "Our first bird of the day was a Wilson's snipe," said Denis Kania, area 1 leader for the Fermilab-Batavia count group. Counters found the snipe, a brown freshwater wader, foraging in an unfrozen stream near Wilson Hall.

The volunteers, who had broken into three groups to scour the site, found a total of 2,931 birds from 49 species at Fermilab. These numbers are down from last year's total of 12,299 individuals. "On the plus side we had the only Pied-billed Grebe on the entire count," said Kania, who has served as compiler for the

It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's... Santa at Nearly Light Speed!



Fermilab physicist Arnold Pompos wrote "Santa at Nearly the Speed of Light" for *FermiNews* in December, 1998. (Click image for larger version.)

About this time of year, inquisitive children of a certain age begin to question whether Santa is real. After all, Santa has a major delivery problem. There are some 2 billion children in the world expecting Christmas presents. Assuming an average of 2.5 children per household, then, Santa has to visit about 800 million homes scattered about the globe.

The distance Santa has to travel can be estimated from the following. First, while the surface area of Earth is about 10^{14} square meters, only about 30 percent of that is land mass, or about 0.3×10^{14} square meters. Second, we'll assume, for simplicity's sake, that the 800 million homes are equally distributed on this land mass. Dividing 0.3×10^{14} by 800 million gives 4×10^4 square meters occupied by every household (about six football fields); the square root of that is the distance between households, about 200 meters. Multiply this by the 800

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Fermilab count for the past 13 years. "And we broke the whole count record for Common Goldeneye with 135."

"Any day you see a bluebird is a good day," said a counter who spotted two Eastern bluebirds, an uncommon sighting in winter. Fermilab counters also recorded a number of Yellow-rumped warblers, Cooper's hawks, and American robins, a species whose winter range has shifted northward. Kania noted that while the count of robins was high, there were fewer Canada geese this year.

The CBC is an Audubon Society event that has taken place throughout North and South America since 1900. More details of the 2005 Christmas Bird Count results can be found on the Birds of Fermilab [Website](#).

—Dawn Stanton

Photo of the Day



A frozen physicist was found in the Village in front of Dorm 5. (Click image for larger version; *Photo by Dawn Stanton.*)

In the News

million households to get the distance Santa must travel on Christmas Eve to deliver all the children's gifts: 160 million kilometers, farther than the distance from here to the sun.

Thanks to the rotation of the earth, Santa has more time than children might initially think. Standing on the International Date Line, moving from east to west and crossing different time zones, Santa has not just 10 hours to deliver his presents (from 8 p.m., when children go to bed, until 6 a.m., when they wake up), but an extra 24 hours— 34 hours in all.

Even so, Santa's task is daunting...

[Read More](#)

—Arnold Pompos

Announcements

Recreation Office Holiday Hours

The Recreation Office will be closed on Friday, December 23 and Friday, December 30. The Recreation Facility will be open to its members throughout the holidays.

Employee Assistance Program

Employee Assistance Program will be closed December 22 through January 1, 2006.

Dancing

Scottish Country dancing and International Folk Dancing are continuing at the regular times, 7:30 p.m Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Barn.

The Payroll Department

The Payroll Department will close at 4:30 pm on December 22 and reopen at 7:30 am on January 3, 2006

**From *The Beacon News*,
December 18, 2005:
Honestly, this guy just wants to return
big wad of cash**

In fact, he's so honest, when he found a whole bunch of money a few weeks ago, his first thought — after the initial surprise — was how to return it to the owner.

It was \$1,000. Just lying there in a white envelope close to the bike path near Fermilab, where DeMar often walks while take a lunch break from his job as the guy who runs the computers at this Batavia physics facility.

The first thing DeMar did was check the law, always a good idea for us law-abiding citizens. Turns out, the lost property statute in Illinois states the finder must make an attempt to locate the owner; and if the property is more than \$100, the finder should file an affidavit in the country circuit court.

So DeMar decided to first take a stab at locating the owner. Since the area where the money was found was close to four police jurisdictions, he contacted Naperville, Warrenville, Aurora and Batavia.

None of them, he said, had any reports of someone missing a ton of cash. Nor did they seem to know how to respond to his unusual find. One department wished him a cheery "good luck" in finding the owner. Another told him he had to turn it in to local police, and seemed surprised when DeMar quoted the state statute to him. The third department got a little testy, he said, when he wouldn't disclose the exact amount found, then refused to

Cashier's Office Holiday Schedule

The Cashier's Office will be close at 4:00 pm on December 22 and reopen at 12:30 pm on January 3, 2006.

Travel Office Holiday Schedule

The Travel Office will be closed on Dec 23, Dec 26, Dec 30 and Jan 2 for the Holidays. Please make plans to pick up airline tickets and arrange travel on dates other than the above. The Travel Office staff wishes you all Happy Holidays!

ES&H Holiday Schedule

During the winter holidays, the Lab's Fire Department, Security Department, and Communications Center will remain on duty. Therefore, personnel should continue to dial 3131 for any onsite emergency. However, other ES&H Section functions/services will be curtailed since many workers will be on vacation. In particular, the Medical Department will be closed from 11 a.m. on 12/23/2004 through 7 a.m. on 01/03/2005. During this period the Fire Department will substitute for the Medical Department in dealing with onsite injuries. For more information, visit the [ES&H Website](#).

Spyware Upgrade

On the morning of Wednesday, December 28, 2005, the Fermilab Email Team will be upgrading the version of SpamAssassin software used on the spam filtering machines. This version should improve the effectiveness of the centralized spam filtering. The upgrade should produce no noticeable service interruptions.

New Classifieds on Fermilab Today

New [classified ads](#) have been posted on Fermilab Today.

look through reports of lost money because it would mean "searching through 28,000 reports."

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