

# True meaning of winter



Port Arthur News Staff Photo by Brian Vincent

Ice Technicians Lorenzo Fuentez, left, Jesse Fuentez, center, and Julian Fuentez roll out ice mats that will soon become a layer of ice for the Winter Odyssey skating rink in downtown Port Arthur.

## Ice skating to highlight Winter Odyssey in PA

By DARRAGH DOIRON  
Port Arthur News Staff Writer

Southerners get holiday cards with snowy winter scenes, but they don't live them. We sometimes have to turn up the air conditioner as the house fills with relatives.

The Southeast Texas Arts Council has picked Port Arthur to recreate part of that holiday image.

Winter Odyssey's highlight is an ice skating rink good to go Friday through Dec. 22. They're throwing in a festival so the region can enjoy a flavor of our cultural crafts and backgrounds.

"We're fired up that we're having it. It's gonna be great," Patti Salter, services coordinator of the Port Arthur Convention & Visitors Bureau, said.

Events include a Museum of the Gulf Coast display of "Toyland, Toyland: Games & Toys of Old" on display, Las Posada, Bethlehem on the Boardwalk, a historic homes tour and lighted boats. Most events are Friday and Dec. 14.

"We've had great support from the community and all different types of performers," said Renee Harrington, cultural committee chair.

She's helped round up Jewish dancers, bagpipe players, the Southeast Texas Youth Symphony and Or-



### Chill-out at Odyssey

**WHO:** WINTER ODYSSEY

**WHAT:** Cultural festival and ice skating

**WHEN:** Skating Friday through Dec. 22; other events Friday and Dec. 14

**WHERE:** Downtown Port Arthur

**WINTER ODYSSEY:** will be Friday through Dec. 22 in downtown Port Arthur. Events include an ice skating rink, a Museum of the Gulf Coast display of Toyland, Toyland: Games & Toys of Old, Las Posadas, Bethlehem on the Boardwalk, lighted boats, cultural festival and historical homes tour to promote neighborhood participation and unity.

**TO VOLUNTEER:** Organizers are seeking experienced ice skaters to help children learn to ice skate. Volunteers are also needed to walk in the Las Posada and be in the lighted boat parade.

It is not too late for non-profit groups to sign up to host a booth during the celebration. Call the Southeast Texas Arts Council for time slots still available: (866) 585-2787 or 835-3787.

ange Jazz Co. Youth will help children make Christmas photos and send a letter to Santa. Harrington's Act Out! group will present a puppet show at 2 p.m. Dec. 14.

Ice skating in downtown Port Arthur has been a difficult concept for some, especially those approached during summer months. A year ago Harrington thought some people didn't take the idea seriously, but now that the season for cool weather is here, the community has bonded.

"Come join in and help make this a great event for the kids," she said.

Bill Worsham, a Pleasure Island resident, said generators are the secret to lighting boats.

"We're very excited about having some boats decorated with Christmas lights that will be passing by the boardwalk somewhere between 7 and 8 p.m. on Friday the 13th after Bethlehem on the Boardwalk," he said. "We're hoping that there will be enough interest generated by these boats that we can have a larger boat parade next year."

How do you plug in a boat? Tie lights up on a string and pull them to the top of the mast, Worsham said, then crank up the generator.

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