

Community news

## Tours help you dream of a Wright Christmas

By Jeanette Mines Ryan

A GLIMPSE OF a Turn-of-the-Century Victorian Christmas will be possible Saturday when the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio is opened to free public tours.

The Oak Park Mall, in conjunction with the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation, is opening the home, 951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The house where the architect and his family lived from 1889 to 1909 is decorated the way the Wright home was decorated every holiday season. The Wright children provided the decorating tips, said Carla Lind, executive director of the home and studio foundation.

The evergreen boughs, pine cones and dried flowers throughout the house were arranged and donated by Jim Rankin of Oak Park.

THE DINING-ROOM table is set for Christmas dinner. An Oriental silk runner, on loan from Ken Kilner of Kerin Dee Antiques, Oak Park, adorns the table. The table is set with the Wright china, Limoges porcelain purchased from Marshall Field & Co. during the 1890s. The china recently was donated to the Frank Lloyd

Wright Foundation by David Wright of Phoenix, the fourth child of Frank and Catherine Wright. Antique crystal water glasses, on loan from Kerin Dee Antiques, and an etched antique crystal water pitcher, on loan from Jeanine Guncheon of Beggars Market in Oak Park, complete the table.

In the second-floor playroom, a child's Turn-of-the-Century Christmas comes to life. Six stockings, one for each of the Wright children, hang on the mantel, waiting to be filled with fruit and candy. A 20-foot-tall Christmas tree decorated with cranberry strings, vintage ornaments, popcorn strands and dozens of candles stands beneath the skylight. A wooden sleigh filled with presents sits beside the fireplace.

Eighth-grade students from Emerson Junior High School, Oak Park, will give the tours and tell of a typical Wright family Christmas.

Traditionally, adults gathered on the balcony overlooking the playroom to watch Sleeping Beauty performed by their children and neighborhood children. On Christmas Eve, the adults decorated the tree. On Christmas morning, Catherine kept the children from the playroom until Frank lit the candles on the tree.



A large Christmas tree decorated with turn-of-the-century trimmings dominates the second floor play-

room of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, 951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park.

AFTER THE PRESENTS were opened and the family had eaten, all gathered in the playroom to sing and dance.

"Christmas back then was a lot less commercialized. Christmas centered around the home more," said Paul Bhorjec, one of the 8th

graders. Free tickets for the tour are available at the Santa House, 125 N. Marion St.