Hello Readers,

As fall turns into winter and the holiday season begins we give thanks for each other and understand that the real gifts in life are our connections with those in our lives.

The Custom Company hopes you are having a great year and we look forward to great things in 2017.

Can you find Perry’s moustache (not on him) hidden within this issue? Submit your answer to tmroz@customco.com no later than Thursday, December 22nd for your chance to win a gift card. Thank you.

THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

The Custom Companies 30 Years of Growth

As 2016 comes to a close we look back on 30 years of growth. Founded in 1986 by Perry Mandera, the Custom Companies has grown from its modest beginnings in a two door facility in Elk Grove Village to its current size occupying nearly five hundred thousand square feet of the old Montgomery Ward distribution facility in Northlake, IL with more than four hundred dock doors plus a two hundred fifty thousand square foot space in Santa Fe Springs, CA supporting west coast operations.

Growth is the heart of any business and The Custom Companies has expanded not only in size and by region but also by service offerings with the addition of over the road carrier CDN logistics in 1998, air freight services with Custom Global Logistics in 2001, refrigerated and flatbed in 2012 with the purchases of ATS and Circle W and most recently the purchase of cartage company Tri Air Transportation in August of 2015. In an interview given to the Custom Communicator earlier this year Mr. Mandera said his vision for the future was “To continue to grow and expand in a strategic fashion as the industry and economy dictates”. Congratulations on 30 years of growth!
**Did You Know??**

Given the different time zones, Santa has 31 hours to deliver gifts, but his reindeer really have to fly, since that means visiting 823 homes per second.

Dreaming of a green Christmas? Household waste increases by 25 percent between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day.

In the United States, trash from wrapping paper and shopping bags totals 4 million tons.

The U.S. Postal Service delivers 20 billion cards and packages between Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.

The Löschner family of Neuhausen, Germany, owns the biggest nutcracker collection: 4,334. It is said that German craftsmen made the first decorative nutcrackers around 1800 as a way of mocking authority figures, leading to the phrase “a hard nut to crack.”

An average of 5,800 people end up in the ER after suffering injuries from holiday decorating.

Christmas trees have been sold in the U.S. since 1850.

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**Spotlight on Custom Companies**

**Halloween 2016**

Custom’s Annual Halloween Costume and Department Theme Contest Winners!!

**OCTOBER 31, 2016**

**Individual Costume Prizes:**

- **FIRST PLACE:** Diana Ryan and Agostino Chiaramonte - Undead Skeletons
- **SECOND PLACE:** Anthony Roldan - Hilary Clinton
- **THIRD PLACE:** Megan Luscombe - Undead Bride

**Department Contest Prizes:**

- **FIRST PLACE:** Customer Service and OS&D and Claims Day of the Dead - Día de Muertos
- **SECOND PLACE:** 2nd Floor - The Presidential Race
- **THIRD PLACE:** City Dispatch - Casino and Credit & Collections - Lower Co-Wacker Drive

Thank you to everyone who participated. Happy Halloween!
Did You Know???

President Teddy Roosevelt, an environmentalist, banned Christmas trees from the White House in 1912.

The first person to decorate a Christmas tree was reportedly the Protestant reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546). According to legend, he was so moved by the beauty of the stars shining between the branches of a fir tree, he brought home an evergreen tree and decorated it with candles to share the image with his children.

In 1962, the first Christmas postage stamp was issued in the United States.

The Viking god Odin is one precursor to the modern Santa Claus. According to myth, Odin rode his flying horse, Sleipnir (a precursor to Santa’s reindeer), who had eight legs.

In the winter, Odin gave out both gifts and punishments, and children would fill their boots or stockings with treats for Sleipnir.

British illustrator John Callcott Horsley (1817-1903) invented the first Christmas card in 1843.
A Window Wonderland

By Carol Guarino

For over a century, Marshall Field's has been delighting Chicagoland children at Christmas time. The Walnut Room tree, the main aisle decorations, and visits to Santa have enthralled generations, but the biggest attraction of all is the Christmas windows. These fantasies behind glass have been a huge marketing success for the company, but they have come to mean much more to the people of Chicago. The holiday windows trace their history back to the early days of Marshall Field's. The store was founded in 1852 as a dry goods business, but as it grew, the company diversified and became one of the first of a new breed called, department stores. A few years later in 1897, Field's new display manager, Arthur Frasier, pioneered window design. His Christmas toy windows were especially enchanting.

These windows continued through World War II. During the war a new idea struck the visual team at Field's – a plan that would make Marshall Field's as unforgettable as Santa Claus himself. They designed theme windows that span the length of State Street. As you walked from one end to the other, the windows told a story.

The window strategy all along has been to "Give the kids what they want", and keep people coming to the store. The Marshall Field's Christmas windows have reflected change over the past hundred years, but have still found a way to keep Chicagoans entranced.

As of 2006 Macy's the stores then-owner discontinued the Marshall Fields name. But Macy's continues the holiday window tradition. Underneath the 42 trumpets protruding over State Street are seven large windows, decorated with a new theme that may be timely or timeless but always attracts a crowd.
At Christmas - Images to Restore Faith in Humanity

Michigan coach gives team manager with Downs syndrome a chance to play

Music fest goers lift wheelchair to give disabled man a view of the festival

Tourist feeds disabled homeless man

Students shave heads in support of classmate with cancer

Two year old triplets offer donuts to their friends Chad and Rob the garbage men they wait for each Thursday

Wendy's employee removes table umbrella to help elderly man to his car

Man gives his shoes to homeless woman

Commuters push train to help a stuck rider

Firefighter saves Koala from death and holds its hand while giving water

December Anniversaries

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Did You Know???

Retailers rely on several psychological triggers to attract consumers such as placing limits on items, offering “gifts” with purchase, employing visual tricks, and declaring that sales are ending soon.

On average, it takes five trips to the mall to complete all holiday shopping. Many “door buster deals” advertised on Black Friday, such as those on expensive items (like HDTVs), are typically in very limited supplies—maybe just 4-6 per store—and act merely as lures to attract customers.

Christmas purchases account for 1/6 of all retail sales in the U.S.

The busiest shopping day of the year is not Black Friday, but the Saturday before Christmas. The busiest online shopping day takes place on the Monday or Tuesday a week before the week of Christmas.

Researchers have proven that a “50% off” sign leads in increased sales, even if shoppers don’t know the original price or what a reasonable price for the product would be.

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Doing Great Things the WCPF Way

“One act of kindness...can offer a child a completely different outcome in life.”  -Walter Payton #34

While we know that the Walter & Connie Payton Foundation does great work helping the less fortunate, there are a few other important projects they also created; such as the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award which recognizes the charitable and volunteer acts of an NFL player; The Veterans Project which helps provide a safe, healthy living environment for veterans; The School Supply Drive which helps provide much-needed school supplies for less fortunate children throughout the state of Illinois and Holiday Giving which helps to provide holiday gifts to children and veterans throughout Illinois. The Foundation has many big projects on the horizon and hopes to enact even more positive change in the lives of the less fortunate.

WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award is given annually by the National Football League honoring a player's volunteer and charity work, as well as his excellence on the field. Prior to 1999, it was called simply the NFL Man of the Year Award. Shortly after Chicago Bears running back Walter Payton died (having been the 1977 recipient himself); the award was renamed to honor his legacy as a humanitarian. Each year, a winner is selected from 32 nominees from the 32 different teams. A panel of judges, which includes the Commissioner of the NFL Mr. Rodger Goodell, Connie Payton (widow of Walter Payton), the previous year's winner, and a number of former players, selects the winner of the award. The Man of the Year winner receives a $25,000 donation in his name to a charity of his choice. The other 31 finalists also receive donations in their name of $1,000 each to charities of their choice.

Recognition:
WCPF hosts a private luncheon each year the Friday before Super Bowl for all 3 finalists to attend. During this luncheon each finalist is recognized for their outstanding charitable contributions by the Commissioner, The Payton Family and WCPF.

VETERAN PROJECT

The Walter and Connie Payton Foundation is honored to partner with Concord Place...
Assisted Living Community in Northlake, Illinois to assist in providing a warm safe place for Veterans to live. While residing at Concord Place, each veteran has full access to everything this 55 year and older community has to offer; three meals a day, indoor swimming/therapy pool, theater, health care check and many social activities. To-date over 40 fully furnished "suites" have been sponsored.

Each suite is sponsored by a donation of $2,500.00. We welcome anyone that wants to visit the project to please contact us directly to schedule a tour. This labor of love project is so meaningful and 100% of the monies donated go directly to aid a Veteran.

**Our current resident Veterans are so thankful, when it is we who should be thankful for their service and sacrifice to protect our freedom.**

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE**

The Walter and Connie Payton Foundation’s priority is to help in-need children throughout the State of Illinois. We want to help these children prepare to go back to school with all of the necessary supplies. WCPF distributes supplies to schools and individual families that contact us in need of a helping hand. Businesses and individual persons host School Drives for WCPF. You can host it at your work, summer school, or on your own as a personal charity. After the drive is over, WCPF collects the supplies and brings them to our warehouse to be sorted and stuffed into backpacks. This helps us give them away in an orderly fashion, as there is one filled backpack per child.

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIVING PROGRAM**

The Walter & Connie Payton Foundation's largest program is our Holiday Giving Program. This program helps provide holiday gifts for thousands of in need children and Veterans throughout the state of Illinois. The Custom Companies is proud to assist with donations, time, space and equipment.

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Retailers take advantage of traditional Christmas smells and tastes to attract customers. For example, retailers may waft the smell of roasting chestnuts throughout their store and offer free samples of Christmas cookies.

Holiday smells and tastes also stimulate the saliva glands, which makes shoppers hungry. Hungry shoppers are more likely to buy anything, not just food. December 15-24th is the crux of the holiday shopping season, accounting for 40% of holiday business.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach, author and scholar-activist who stresses the indispensable need to preserve, continually revitalize and promote African American culture.

Every winter, at least one septillion (that’s 1 followed by 24 zeros) snow crystals fall from the sky.

Winter cold kills more than twice as many Americans as summer heat does.
That’s How We Roll – LeRoi Cochran

Reviewed by: Mary Poreda

If you are looking for a meaningful gift for a young child this Christmas, you may want to check out the books of LeRoi Cochran. Cochran writes books about having gratitude and gives parents the opportunity to talk with children about the different jobs that people do and how their lives are impacted by them. “Our goal is to teach kids awareness and gratitude for the everyday wonderful world around them.” says Cochran. His book Drive America, “That’s How we Roll”, is about having gratitude for truck drivers. The book flows like a poem, teaches rhyme and talks about how “Everything you use and buy was delivered by the trucking guy!” “Fruit and veggies, mac and cheese, toys and games, shorts and tees!” The book has illustrations of all kinds of different trucks and drawing space so that children can draw their favorites. It also prompts children to think about what they may want to be when they grow up! Another book in the series is “Celebrate with Gratitude” 20 holiday poems for kids.

The Stork - Congratulations go out to:

- Jessica Sturges on the birth of her son; Jaxson Edward, November 24, 2016, 6 pounds, 10 ounces, 19 inches

- Steven Bartolone on the birth of his son; Sage Alexander Bartolone, November 14, 6.5 lbs 19.5 inches

- Salvadore Lagunas on the birth of his daughter; Iris Adela Lagunas October 9, 8 lbs, 22 inches

We wish them much happiness with their new bundles of joy!
January
Anniversaries

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Across
3. Tax imposed on imported goods
5. Trailer without sides
7. Cargo vehicle operating on water
8. Protects driver from shifting cargo
10. Transferring cargo from one vehicle to another
11. Label that identifies shipment types
13. Indicates charges that are paid by shipper
14. A set of axles placed close together

Down
1. Small creature that makes toys
2. To run loads from terminal to terminal
4. Truck that is driven empty
6. Driving a tractor without a trailer
9. Falling frozen water vapor
10. Trucking company’s home base
12. Refrigerated trailer
Cubs World Series Victory is Good for Baseball
By Daniel Leach

The Chicago Cubs are the 2016 World Series Champions. Let that sink in for a moment. It sounds unbelievable that within our lifetime this actually happened. Though I’m not a fan of the Cubs, I found myself logging onto YouTube to see live footage of fans gathering around Wrigley Field. Hair stood on end, goosebumps rose as I heard the roar of jubilee echo off what the message board shouted in bright yellow letters: “CUBS WIN!” This wasn’t just about a World Series drought coming to an end, or a patient generational fan base finally being rewarded. Folks, this was about history!

I won’t bore you sports fans with the breakdown of the World Series games – especially Game 7 where 40 million fans tuned in. I’m more interested in the big picture. What is that big picture? Regardless of who won the World Series, Major League Baseball was in dire need of this. Television ratings have been dwindling since 1991. And while there have been spikes in viewership every 4 years, the 1994 strike and the scandals surrounding the Steroid Era, damaged public trust – almost beyond repair. I say almost because in the past 4 years we’ve seen an explosion of up-and-coming talent that are hitting the dawn of their careers. Mike Trout, Bryce Harper, Kris Bryant, Clayton Kershaw, and others have made big splashes in the Show. All of these players are under 30 years old and have not been linked to the shackles of MLB’s steroid past. Commissioner Rob Manfred (who took over from Bud Selig) is overseeing a league that’s experiencing a new day. Again, it’s not about whether the Cubs won or not, it’s about adding legitimacy to a league. The Chicago Cubs were the best team in the National League (NL), and then they became the best team in the world.

This is only the beginning folks. As the star is rising for the Wrigley faithful, the other teams in the NL Central just aren’t matching that intensity. My St. Louis Cardinals had an impressive record on the road but couldn’t win at home. Cincinnati Reds took a surprising step back, and may continue to tank in the following season. Pittsburgh Pirates aren’t posing a threat to anyone. And the most recognized name in the Milwaukee Brewers’ payroll continues to be Bob Uecker.

Much to my chagrin, and - I imagine - to the chagrin of Chicago White Sox fans too, there’s another World Series in the works for the Cubs. This particular team is – simply – too good to settle for just one. Theo Epstein, President of Baseball Operations for the Cubs, made a long term plan for a complete team rebuild. And, so far, it’s succeeding way ahead of schedule!

NFL Officiating
By Daniel Leach

As I write this, we are at Week 12 in the NFL. Excitement is finally beginning to pick up to what’s been a lackluster fan turnout for the beginning of the season. While the NFL has had to compete for attention in the backdrop of the Presidential Election, and playoff Baseball in the MLB, this hasn’t been a problem for America’s most popular sports league in the past. Sports commentators have voiced their educated opinion on one particular reason why the NFL underwent a dip in their ratings. That reason is poor officiating; and I agree with them!
Rewind back to 2012, replacement referees took over officiating duties after the NFL referee lockout. Monday Night Football between the Green Bay Packers and the Seattle Seahawks looked to be a competitive primetime game pitting great coaches and QBs against one another. Unfortunately, for the Packers, the officials missed an obvious offensive pass interference call which cost them the game. QB Aaron Rodgers immediately stated that "Our sport is a multi-billion dollar machine, generated by people who pay good money to come watch us play. The product on the field is not being complemented by an appropriate set of officials. The games are getting out of control." Unfortunately, in my opinion only, his words would fall on deaf ears for an additional 2 years. During which the overall quality of play began resembling the lack of discipline from the officiating crew. And even after the referee lockout was over, so many penalties were called that games became to resemble a circus of over-officiating.

NFL referees are part-time employees – even during the regular season. Jerome Boger and Jeff Triplette are in their 60’s. Mike Carey’s retired recently. While Ed Hochuli’s got some impressive guns, he’s still 65 and the NFL doesn’t seem to have a plan for successive management. Up-and-coming players are only getting stronger and faster. With that, a younger generation needs to take over officiating.

During the 2013 NFL season, the NFLPA submitted an idea that undrafted players (who don’t make it onto a practice squad) could be mentored by the officiating crew to take over after they retire. There are plenty of athletic, college educated players that don’t make it onto an NFL roster. While I believe that excellence knows no age, the NFL can’t afford to rely exclusively on these men who are approaching retirement age. For the good of the game, the NFL needs to facilitate more opportunities for experienced officiators to pass the torch to a new generation otherwise Aaron Rodgers’ words from 4 years ago might ring true once again.

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**Holiday Events in Chicago and Los Angeles**

**Chicago**

**Christkindlmarket**- a Chicago favorite, comes to Daley Plaza on November 21 offering a festive open-air European holiday market featuring traditional art, handmade gifts, German foods, choirs, carolers and more. It runs daily through December 24.

**Caroling at Cloud Gate (the BEAN)**-returns November 28th for the holiday season.

**Ice Skating**- at Millennium Park's Ice Rink opens November 14 and the Lincoln Park Zoo's rink November 28 through March 1

**Kwanzaa**- a 7-Day Celebration at the DuSable Museum features special programing and Daily Candle Lighting Ceremonies beginning at Noon. December 26 through January 1, 2015. 740 E. 58th Place.

**Los Angeles**

**Downtown on Ice Winter Wonderland Outdoor Skating Rink, Pershing Square**- Grab the family and jump into this 'Christmas Card' scene on the 50x90 foot rink.

**Harvest Festival, Pomona**- America's oldest and largest touring crafts marketplace. The Harvest Festival transforms major convention centers into

**Reindeer Romp, Los Feliz**- For a limited time, the LA Zoo offers the only opportunity to see real reindeer in Los Angeles. They typically visit the zoo from the day following Thanksgiving until just after the New Year.
The Custom Companies congratulates 17 year old Austin Kunert for success this year in the number 29 car on the JEGS All Stars Tour. After finishing sixth in 2015 Driver Points with the JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour Presented by Chevrolet Performance and second in VanDoorn Racing Development Rookie of the Year points, 17 year old Austin Kunert had some pretty high expectations for the 2016 season with his Lorz Motorsports Team, part of those expectations was the addition of veteran JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour competitor Josh Nelms to the team for the 2016 season.

The team came away with a respectable 18th place finish on the lead lap in the series season opening Masters of the Pro’s 144 at Lebanon I-44 Speedway, an event that not only attracts the best of CRA, but also some of the top late model drivers around the country, plus several talented local racers.

The series went on to the Berlin Raceway, Salem Speedway, Anderson Speedway, Spitzer Motor Speedway, Winchester Speedway, Owosso Speedway where he moved up to third place in the pack and two races to go. The famed Lucas Oil speedway was next where Kunert finished 15th dropping him to fourth in overall standings.

The Season Championship event at Winchester Speedway was up next as Kunert and the Lorz Motorsports Team looked to close out the season on a high note. Kunert timed in at eighth place in qualifying out of the 26 cars that took time and would start outside pole to Labor Day Weekend event winner Brandon Oakley. Oakley would get the jump and take the early lead. Race winner Travis Braden would make a pass of Kunert and race leader Cody Coughlin to take the lead on lap 55. Kunert would follow Braden across the finish line with a career best second place finish. With that finish, Kunert would also move up to finish second in series points behind Champion Coughlin.

“I felt like I did really good this season, a lot better than last year,” remarked Kunert. “And as a team, the Lorz Motorsports Team did a lot better also. To the middle and the end of the season I felt the crew and myself really figured out how to communicate as a team.” Great job this year Austin, best of luck in 2017.
Cooks Corner
By David Lorge

Salt Dough Ornaments
2 cups flour
1 cup water
1 Cup Salt
Mix all together, then knead. Use a little more flour for needing if necessary. Roll out dough to 1/2 inch thickness and cut with cookie cutters or shape free-free-hand. Bake in lightly floured pans at 350 for approximately 25 minutes or until hardened. Paint with tempera colors and when dry, spray with shellac.

Nut Cups
INGREDIENTS
Dough
1 stick margarine or butter
3oz cream cheese
1 cup flour
1 tsp. sugar
Chocolate chips (Set Aside)
Filling
3/4 cup ground nuts
1 egg
3/4 cups packed brown sugar
1 Tbsp. Melted Butter
1/2 tsp vanilla
DIRECTIONS
Mix all the dough ingredients together and set aside. Then mix the filling ingredients together and place in refrigerator. Make 24 balls from the dough. Place ball of dough into an ungreased tiny cupcake pan and shape to pan. place filling in each cup and top with 3-5 chocolate chips. Bake at 375 for 20 minutes or till lightly browned. Cool and can be sprinkled with powdered sugar.

Lemon Chess Pie
1 (9 inch) pie shell
5 eggs beaten
2 cups sugar
1 Tbsp. flour
1 Tbsp. corn meal
1 cup milk
1/4 cup butter softened
2 tsp grated lemon rind
1/4 cup FRESH lemon Juice
3 Tbsp. lemon zest
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
In a large mixing bowl, cream together sugar and butter or margarine until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and milk. Add flour, cornmeal, lemon juice, and lemon rind. Mix until smooth. Pour mixture into pastry shell.
Bake in preheated oven for 35 to 40 minutes, until set in center.
Referral Bonus Request Form

At The Custom Companies our most important asset is our employees. We know that each and every individual is unique and networks with other unique individuals that possess valuable skill sets which could be a perfect fit for opportunities within our organization. We encourage all employees to pass on information regarding job opportunities to friends and contacts and inform them of the benefits that The Custom Companies has to offer.

All referred candidates must be submitted to Human Resources. If a candidate is hired and successfully completes 90 days of employment, the referring employee will receive $500 for their valuable contribution to The Custom Companies.

Keep in mind that in order to receive the referral bonus, you must be actively employed and in good standing with The Custom Companies. For the purpose of this program, no former employee or temporary worker is eligible for referral. Employees with a status level of Director or above and/or employed in the Human Resources department will not be eligible to receive such bonuses. Supervisors/Managers are not eligible for referral bonuses when referring candidates for positions directly reporting to them. Furthermore, the referred candidate must indicate the name of the Custom employee (referrer) on his/her application for employment.

The referring employee must complete this form and submit it to Human Resources no later than one month following the completion of the referred employee’s 90th day of employment. If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Human Resources.

PLEASE PRINT

Employee Name: ____________________________

Referred Employee's Name: ______________________

Referred Employee's Date of Hire: ________________

Employee Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________

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JOB OPENINGS
The Custom Companies and CDN Logistics

If you are interested in & are qualified for any open positions contact HR.

Do you know anyone looking for a job? If the person you referred is hired and successfully Completes 90 days of employment, you will receive $500.00!

Customer Service Representative - TCC
POD Clerk
Receptionist - CDN
Dockworkers (CHI & LAX)
Local City Drivers (CHI & LAX)
City Dispatch Operations Manager (CHI)
Dispatch Coordinator (CHI)
Fleet Manager/Dispatcher – TCC & CDN

Crossword answers

Across
3. Tariff
5. Flatbed
7. Barge
8. Bulkhead
10. Transloading
11. Placard
13. Prepaid
14. Tandems

Down
1. Elf
2. Linehaul
4. Deadhead
6. Bobtailing
9. Snow
10. Terminal
12. Reefer
At The Custom Companies, our main objective is to deliver your goods on time and in perfect condition. We understand the importance of a great customer – vendor relationship. Our customer service center is just a phone call away to provide a rate quote, track a shipment, schedule a pickup or access accurate documentation. In today's fast paced environment, we work to provide transportation solutions that fit every economic situation.

Our “Customer First” program ensures that your shipments will be delivered on time and with the highest degree of care. In order to maintain these standards, we measure performance levels on every shipment. As a result our internal operational systems are constantly improving to provide better, more accurate service, allowing our transportation specialists to meet your growing needs.