the calendar

THE SPLASH SEVEN

BY THOMAS CONNORS

1 'Mistletoe Mixology'
Dec. 5: Eggnog may be the official beverage of the holiday season, but why stop there? With family and friends gathering round, it couldn't hurt to expand your offerings. And here's your chance: Death's Door Spirits ambassador and educator Meg Bell sets up bar in Allium at the Four Seasons to whip up a selection of libations that are sure to what anyone's whistle (including such '50s-era favorites as the Palm Beach Special, Vesper and Moscow Mule). Executive chef Kevin Hickey will send out appropriately festive snacks. $100 per person. 120 E. Delaware. For reservations, call (312) 799-4900.

2 Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
Dec. 6-9: Thirty-five years young this season, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago — under the direction of Glenn Edgerton — remains ever on the lookout for new, challenging and exciting work to add to its impressively eclectic repertoire. For its holiday engagement at the Harris Theater, the group offers a richly varied program that includes the company premiere of “Casi-Casa,” a compelling, psychologically driven work by famed Swedish choreographer Mats Ek. Tickets: $25-$94, 205 E. Randolph. Call (312) 850-9744 or visit Hubbardstreetdance.com.

3 Open Doors Gala
Dec. 7: Fostering creativity is key to the programs at Columbia College, and countless young people have honed their talents in its classrooms, studios and performance spaces. The Open Doors Gala supports scholarships for Chicago Public Schools graduates and includes an award presentation to John Bryan, former chairman and CEO of Sara Lee Corp. (and one of the city's greatest cultural supporters), who will be honored with the Chicago Legacy Award in memory of Johnson Publishing founder John H. Johnson. The event — held in Columbia's Jeanne Gang-designed Media Production Center — showcases student works in the visual arts, dance, theater and fashion, and includes a performance by the Columbia College Gospel Choir. Tickets: $1,000, 1600 S. State. Call (312) 369-8188 or contact Bcaburnay@colum.edu.

4 'The Nutcracker'
Dec. 7-27: One of the most fanciful holiday traditions ever, the “Nutcracker” ballet comes alive at the Auditorium Theatre as the Joffrey Ballet presents its exquisitely executed production. Choreographed by company founders Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, and set to the inimitable Tchaikovsky score (performed live by the Chicago Philharmonic), “The Nutcracker” — like Handel’s “Messiah” and “A Christmas Carol” — is one of those year-end treats we just can’t do without. Tickets: $31-$132, available at the Joffrey Ballet Box Office, 10 E. Randolph; by phone at (800) 982-2787 or online at Ticketmaster.com. Performance at 50 E. Congress.

5 Spirit of St. Nicholas Ball
Dec. 7: Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, one of the largest private, not-for-profit social service agencies in the Midwest, has been lending a helping hand for 95 years. And for the past 23, its December fundraiser has been a holiday tradition. This year’s event at the Hilton Chicago, which benefits numerous children’s programs, begins in the Great Hall, where Cardinal Francis George and Monsignor Michael M. Boland will welcome guests. Then it's on to dinner and dancing and the chance to do a little good. Not a bad way to begin the season. Tickets start at $400. 720 S. Michigan. Call (312) 655-7912 or email Ashley Owen at Aowen@catholiccharities.net.

6 World’s longest candy cane
Dec. 8: As viewers of the Food Network know, chefs like a challenge. Chef Alain Roby is no exception — and he thinks big: He’s created a 1,250-pound cake for “The Martha Stewart Show,” and The Guinness Book of World Records recognized him for the world’s tallest cooked sugar building (12 feet high) and the world’s tallest chocolate sculpture (more than 20 feet tall). Now he’s out to fashion a 40-foot candy cane running through Geneva from his All Chocolate Kitchen. Do we smell a three-peat? Free. 33 S. Third. 7 p.m. For more information, call (630) 232-2395 or visit Allchocolatekitchen.com.

7 Holly Ball
Dec. 8: Fox News Channel’s Bret Boler headlines the second annual Holly Ball for Barrington Children’s Charities. The 2-year-old nonprofit was founded by Barrington residents Tom and Darby Hills with the goal of funding need-based causes for children in the area, such as Blessings in a Backpack (which provides weekend meals for children on federal meal programs). The black-tie event will include dinner, dancing to the Pete Fleming Orchestra and a live auction with tickets to the 2013 Grammy and Emmy awards. Tickets: $200. Barrington Hills Country Club, 300 W. County Line, Barrington. Barringtonchildrenscharities.com.