

Christmas Traditions

Diane **Skinner**

The traditions we create now will be the memories our children cherish in the future.

Think back to your Christmases past and what do you recall that warms your heart? It is possible that the things you remember were the traditions that happened in your home or community every year? Nostalgia or the longing for the past is part of the Christmas experience. Even COVID-19 cannot take away those fond memories. Some traditions exist only in the past, such as a lump of coal in your Christmas stocking.

Other newer traditions have appeared such as Elf on the Shelf. Sometimes it is the little things that mean a lot. Which of these traditions have you experienced? Which do you observe?

True meaning of Christmas

Celebrating Christmas is in honour of the birth of Jesus Christ over 2,000 years ago. The angel appeared to Mary and Joseph to tell them about the coming birth of their baby. They travelled to Bethlehem and could not find anywhere to stay. They had to sleep in a stable that night and that is where Jesus was born. Special visitors came and brought the baby some gifts. It is important that we teach children to be kind and generous to others at Christmas.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus is known by many names including Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Saint Nick and Kris Kringle. This legendary character brings gifts on Christmas Eve, but only when you are asleep.

Games Night

A rather new tradition is playing board games on Christmas Eve. Put out some festive snacks and drinks and get out a board game that everyone can enjoy. Games such as Monopoly, Scrabble, Snakes and Ladders, Pictionary, Risk, Clue and Backgammon can be a lot of fun. Keep in mind the ages of the participants.

Christmas Eve Appetizers

On Christmas Eve, rather than make a big sit-down meal, serve only appetizers. People can grab a paper plate and serve themselves over the evening. Sausage rolls,



The whole family in their matching pyjamas.

Photo: Diane Skinner

baguette with an assortment of cheeses, devilled eggs, veggie platter, fruit kebabs and bacon wrapped Brussels Sprouts are yummy, but anything your diners would enjoy is great.

Ugly Christmas Sweaters

Wearing an ugly Christmas sweater has become popular over the past decade. There is no shortage of these sweaters available and once you buy one, you have it forever. You probably will only be wearing it once or twice every Christmas. If you do not own one, wait until after Christmas sales and get one for next year!

Traditional Family Recipes

When planning the Christmas menu, chances are you will choose time-honoured foods to prepare. Some foods are only served at Christmas such as Yule log cakes, eggnog, fruitcake, cranberry sauce, and Christmas pudding. Christmas cookies are always a favourite and using a recipe handed down through the family is customary.

Wearing Matching Jammies

This is a fairly new tradition, though in the past children would receive new jammies for Christmas Eve and siblings often had matching ones. Now the whole family may buy matching pyjamas. This is great for a photo op.

Making Gingerbread Houses

This has become a tradition in

many homes. The making of the house is a great opportunity for family fun. What kid would not enjoy building with gingerbread, icing and candies? You can buy kits that have the house parts already baked. You just need to assemble and decorate it.

Open One Present on Christmas Eve

Some families allow their children to choose one gift to open on Christmas Eve. This does cut down on the mess of opening all the gifts on Christmas morning.

Enjoying the Christmas Lights

An enjoyable evening can be had while going out after dark for a drive to admire the Christmas Lights. This is great to do the night before Christmas Eve and for many children and adults this becomes one of the highlights of Christmas time. Practice saying, "ooh, ahh."

Carolling

In years gone by carollers would go from house to house and sing Christmas carols. Those days are over, but you can honour the tradition by singing Christmas songs and carols in your home. Print out carol sheets and everyone can sing along. Some people make it a karaoke event, either way it is a lot of fun.

Lump of Coal

If you found a lump of coal in your Christmas Stocking it meant that you had been naughty. Years ago, parents would use this possibility to

remind children to behave before Christmas.

Nativity Play

A tradition at church was, and still happens in some churches, the nativity play. The children who attended Sunday School would practice their parts and perform the nativity story for the congregation. This was always a moving event and, of course, the roles of Mary and Joseph were the most sought after.

Leaving Treats for Santa

Leaving out a glass of milk and some cookies for Santa is a lovely ritual that is still widely practiced. Don't forget a treat for the reindeer because flying all around the world in one night really works up an appetite.

Ornament Exchange

This is fun to do annually with a group of friends. This can be organized in a variety of ways. You can buy or make a particular ornament for each person in your group, or you can wrap the ornaments you bring and each person chooses one to unwrap. If you do this for years, your Christmas decora-

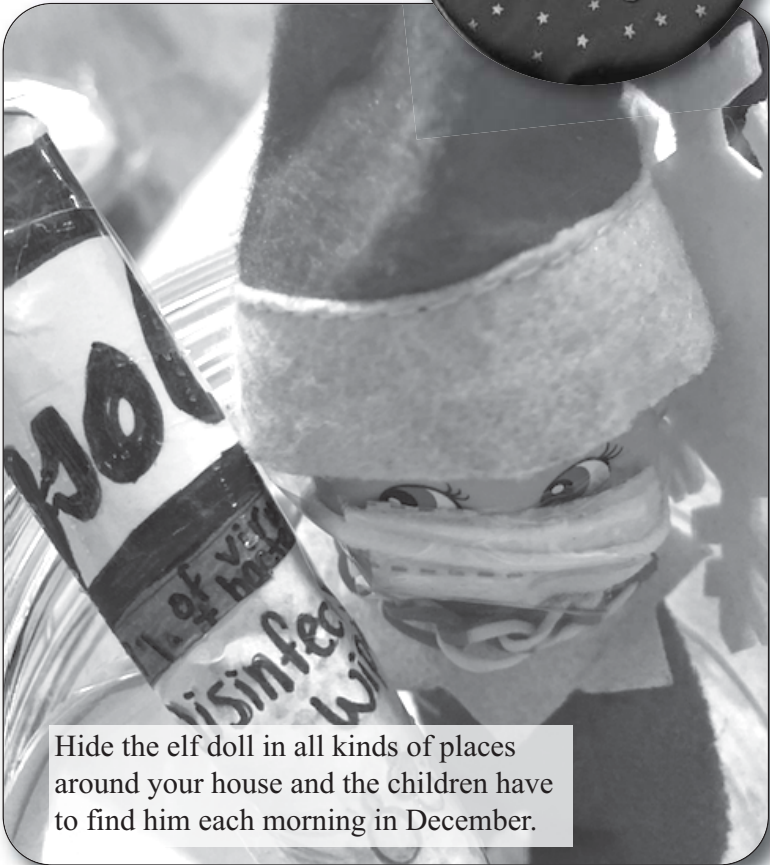
tions will have many stories to tell!

Poinsettias

Poinsettias were originally grown in Central America but were made widely known by Joel Roberts Poinsett when he imported them to the U.S. in the 1830s. The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves is thought to be symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The sap in poinsettia leaves is mildly toxic to pets and children. It can cause nausea, vomiting and intestinal upset.

Elf on the Shelf

This has become popular over the past ten years or so. You put an elf doll in all kinds of places around your house and the children have to find him each morning in December. This can be a lot of fun for the adults too. The elf can get into mischief so be creative about where you hide him.



Hide the elf doll in all kinds of places around your house and the children have to find him each morning in December.

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Christmas drinks

Diane Skinner

Food is such an important part of Christmas but don't forget the special drinks that can add to your festive fun. Classic Christmas drinks, many which have been served for many years, often contain Christmas spices – they taste great and smell lovely, too.

Eggnog

Eggnog has been around for a long time. Over the years the recipe has changed but it can be traced back over 500 years. It was originally called posset which was a mixture of curdled milk and ale or wine, and spices were added. Over the years it evolved into eggnog when eggs became one of the ingredients. One theory of where the word eggnog came from is that it is a combination of the words egg and grog. Grog was a traditional drink made from milk and wine or rum.

You can buy eggnog in the store and add a bit more spice and maybe some rum, if you

wish. For those who like to make their own eggnog, this recipe is fairly straightforward. This recipe will make three servings and takes only five minutes to make.

Ingredients: 2 beaten eggs, 3 tbsp. sugar, 2 1/3 cup of 2 % milk, 1 tsp. vanilla extract, dash nutmeg. Blend together eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla and nutmeg. Serve very cold topped with whipped cream.

Important note: This contains raw eggs. Pregnant women, young children, the elderly and people who are ill should not consume raw eggs. According to the American Egg Board your chances of having an infected egg is very small, less than 0.0005% but better safe than sorry.

Apple Cider

Make this beautiful apple cider to sip while wrapping gifts. You need 6 cups of

apple cider, 1/4 cup maple syrup, 3 cinnamon sticks, 3 whole cloves, 6 allspice berries, orange and lemon peel cut into strips, a square of cheesecloth.

Pour cider and maple syrup into a large stainless-steel pan. Place the cinnamon, cloves, allspice berries, lemon and orange peel into a piece of cheesecloth. Tie it with some kitchen string. Drop the bundle into the cider. Over medium heat, allow to heat for about 10 minutes. Do not boil. The smell will be amazing. Remove from heat and throw away the bundle of spices. Serve in mugs.

Wassail

Wassail is not just a word in a Christmas carol: Here We Come A-wassailing. It is an old-time Christmas punch. It does not take a lot of preparation time but it is best to allow it to simmer for a couple of hours in a slow cooker to allow all the flavours to

blend and fuse together. You will need 1 gallon of apple cider, 4 cups of orange juice, 10 cinnamon sticks, 1 tbsp. whole cloves, 1 tbsp. juniper berries, a piece (about the size of your thumb) of fresh ginger, and an orange cut into circle slices. Place all the ingredients in a slow cooker and cover. Turn on high for about 3 hours. This will fill your home with its beautiful aroma. Place in mugs and sip.

Hot buttered rum

This drink is sweet, spicy, smooth and warm, a winning combination. For a single serving you will need 1 tsp. brown sugar, 1 tbsp. butter, a dash of cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg, a tiny bit of vanilla extract, 2 ounces of dark rum, 5 ounces of hot water. Place the sugar, butter and spices into an Irish Coffee glass (aren't you glad you did not get rid of them?) or a large mug and mix well. Add rum and the water. Sip and enjoy.

Hot toddy

Hot toddies are perfect at Christmas, but some people enjoy a Hot Toddy when they are feeling "under the weather." You will need 2 tsp. rum (more or less), 1 tbsp. maple syrup, a slice of lemon and a squeeze of lemon juice, a cinnamon stick and boiling water. Add the rum, maple syrup, lemon and cinnamon to a mug. Fill with hot water and stir.

Poinsettia

This colourful and simple cocktail is perfect for Christmas or New Year's Eve. To make a single serving you require 1 ounce of cranberry juice, 1/2 ounce of Triple Sec (optional), 4 ounces of very cold champagne or a sparkling white wine and a couple of fresh cranberries to garnish. Pour cranberry juice into a chilled wine glass or a champagne flute. Add Triple Sec. Fill glass with champagne. Add cranberries for a lovely garnish.

Turkey Leftovers

Diane Skinner

Why is it that turkey is more delicious the day after Christmas? Depending on the size of your turkey, you may be eating that bird for many days. Cooked turkey lasts from three to four days in the fridge and two to three months in the freezer. The easiest way to save your turkey is to slice it off the bird and store in in the fridge in a container. If you are freezing the turkey, cut it into bite sized pieces in double freezer bags to prevent freezer burn.

There are many recipes to choose from including:

- Turkey Pie with gravy and vegetables. Use a bag of mixed frozen vegetables, if needed.
- Turkey and Stuffing (if you have any left!) Casserole, vegetables and gravy
- Turkey and Barley Soup
- Hot Turkey Sandwiches
- Turkey and Rice Stir Fry
- Turkey Salad Plate
- Turkey Quesadillas or Enchiladas
- Turkey Sub Melt

- Turkey Poutine

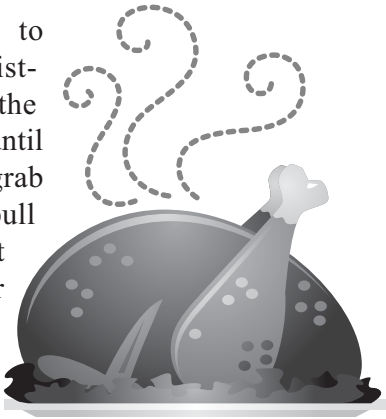
- Turkey topped pizza with prosciutto, goat cheese, arugula and cherry tomatoes

Dark turkey contains more vitamins and minerals than white meat but dark meat contains more fat and is higher in calories, however, much of the fat is in the

turkey skin so if you want to lower the calories avoid eating the skin.

Turkey contains Vitamins B-6, B-12, niacin, selenium and zinc. Turkey also contains tryptophan which is said to be the cause of feeling sleepy after eating a turkey supper.

Save the wishbone to make a wish after Christmas! Typically, you dry the wishbone for a few days until it is brittle. Two people grab a side, make a wish and pull until it breaks. If you get the bigger piece, your wish may come true.



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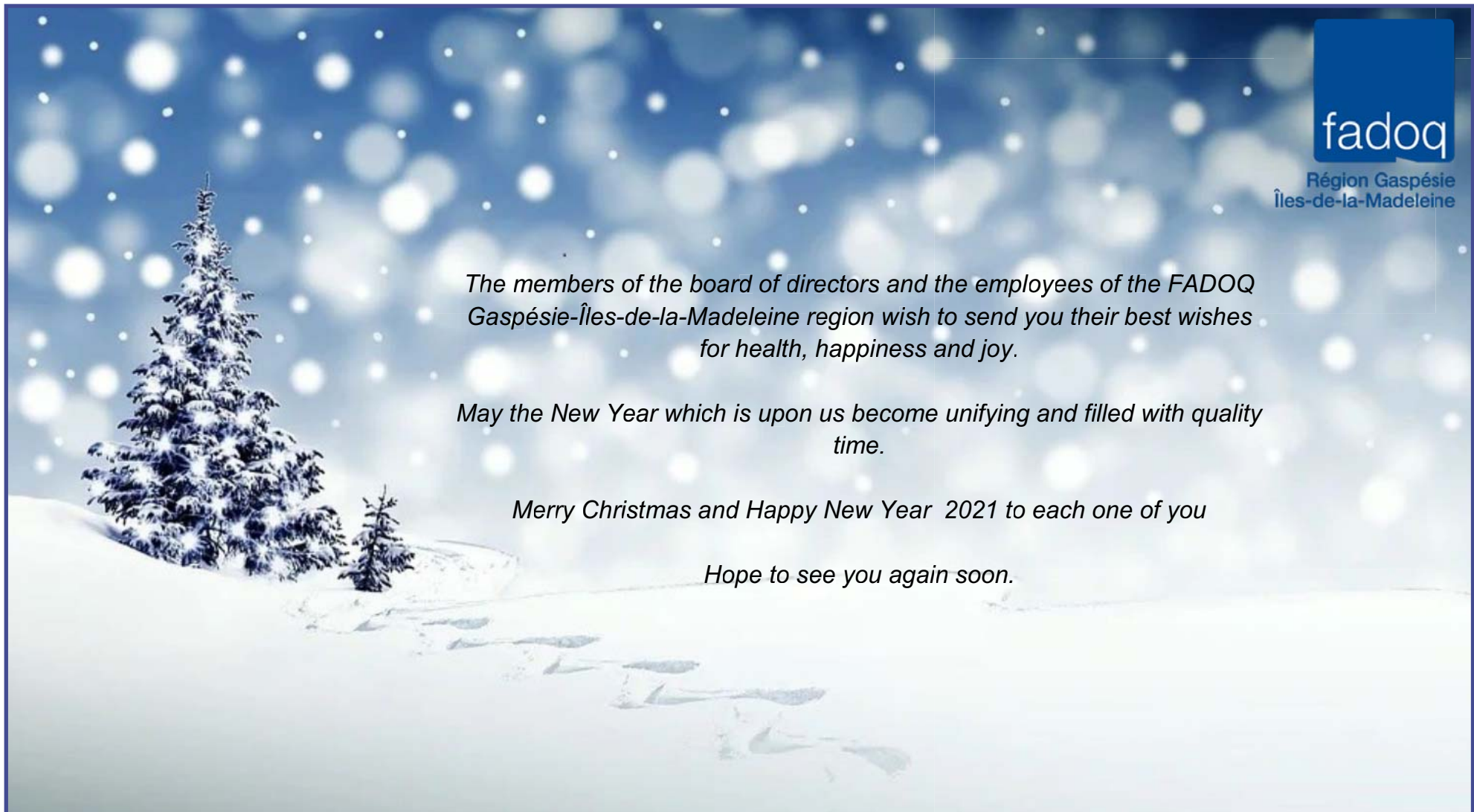
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for health, happiness and joy.*

*May the New Year which is upon us become unifying and filled with quality
time.*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2021 to each one of you

Hope to see you again soon.

* SANTA'S VILLAGE: *

▶ *Cont'd from cover*

"The project was designed during the pandemic's first period of confinement, in March. We never thought that the pandemic would last so long. We thought of a place that puts emphasis on the outdoors. We are right in line with what is recommended even if we didn't know that those conditions would still be in force today," explains Ms. Robitaille.

Recuperated material prevailed in the planning of the village and its construction, just as for the bicycles, she adds.

"A citizen from the town, Patrice Raiche, gave us three old snowmobiles that were no longer used. We received building material, old buckets that are used as sugar camp equipment, old windows that we have repainted, blue foam sheets that were turned into fake brick walls and so on. We gave a second and sometimes a third life to those things," points out Chantal Robitaille. The initiative's cost hovers around \$20,000, a sum that is covered in a proportion of 50% by sponsors, either businesses or individuals.

"There is a lot of handiwork in the set-up, by town employees that were sidelined by the COVID pandemic and volunteers," she says.

"All the kids who wrote to Santa Claus will get a reply from him, in the language used by the child, either French or English. They will also receive a book. We have sponsors for those books but considering the success rate of Santa Claus' mailbox, we need more sponsors and donations," mentions Chantale Robitaille.

The initiative has far surpassed the surrounding area of Paspebiac. "We have received letters from as far as Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé and Gespegiag," she underlines.

The North Pole Village will come back in the years to come. "We will build it incrementally, one year after another, for the lighting system, for example. Just like the material we use, it is a renewable project," concludes Chantale Robitaille.



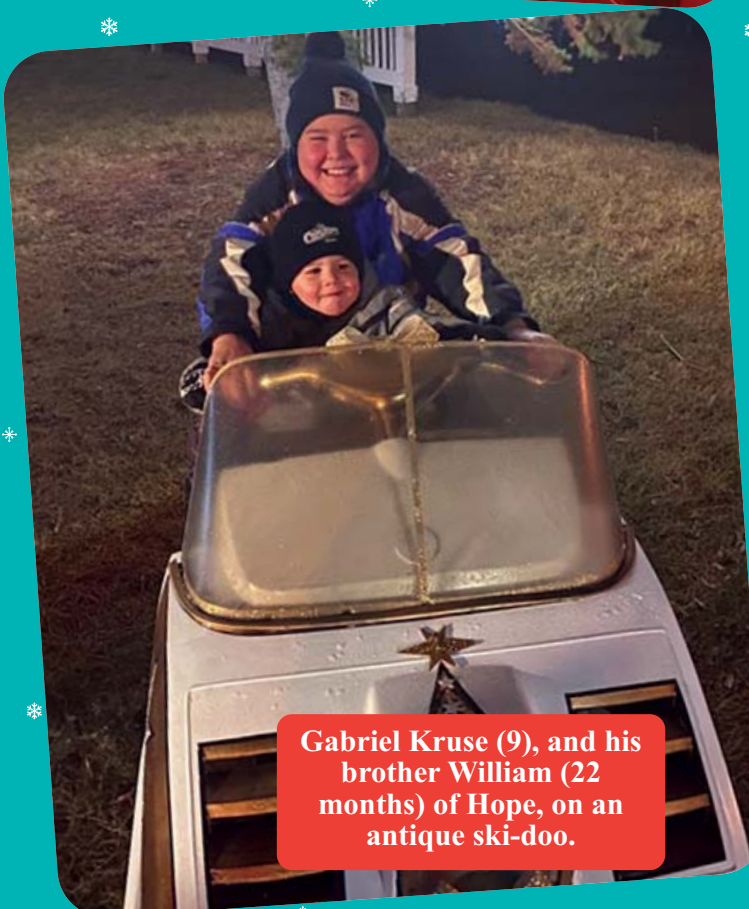
Sisters Madison (10), Sophie (9) and Aubree Ross (6) of Hope Town mail their letters to Santa at the special drop off.



Twins Lucy and Leah Couture (5) of Port Daniel, were excited to mail their letters to Santa



Hayden James Renouf (8) of New Carlisle, is making certain his letter gets to Santa



Gabriel Kruse (9), and his brother William (22 months) of Hope, on an antique ski-doo.

We wish you all
Happy Holidays
and a healthy and
Happy New Year!

Thank you for your
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KIDS & Christmas

CHRISTMAS Quiz



- Diane Skinner

1. Where does Santa live?
2. What are the traditional Christmas colours?
3. What are Santa's helpers called?
4. What day is Christmas on?
5. In the song Jingle Bells what does Santa ride in?
6. On the first day of Christmas in the song the 12 Days of Christmas what did the true love send?
7. Santa Claus is also known as Saint ____.
8. What colour is Rudolph's nose?
9. What did the other reindeer not let Rudolph do because of his shiny red nose?
10. Where was baby Jesus born?
11. What made Frosty the Snowman dance around?
12. Three of Santa's reindeer's names begin with the letter D. Can you name them?
13. What do most people place at the top of the Christmas tree?
14. In the movie Frozen, what is the name of Kristoff's reindeer?
15. How many reindeer does Santa have? (include Rudolph)

Bonus Activities: Find the North Pole on a map of the world. Draw a picture of Frosty dancing. Put the reindeer's names in alphabetical order. Watch the movie Frozen. Draw a picture of your favourite reindeer. Draw a picture of your Christmas tree. Make a list of five things that are red. Make a list of five things that are green. Write a letter to Santa.

Answers on page 31

Talking about Christmas

Diane **Skinner**

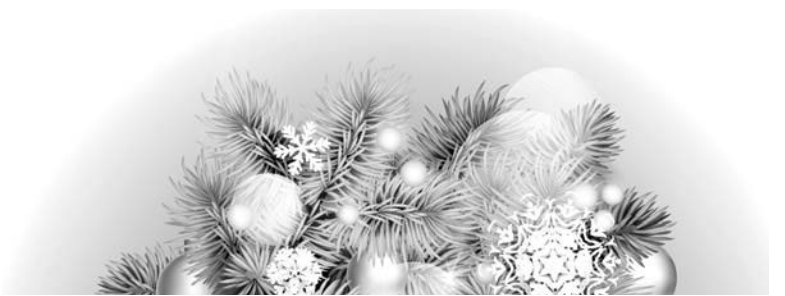
Having a chat with your children about Christmas is a great opportunity for a family bonding time. Some conversation starters may lead the discussion into other topics. It is important to maintain communication with your child for the times when the discussions may be about more difficult subjects. I recall some good advice from years ago that was similar. Never stop hugging your children as they get older or it will feel awkward to start again when they are adults. Hug today.

Some conversation starters:

- Who is your favourite reindeer and why?
- What is your favourite Christmas tradition? Start by trying to name lots of traditions, together.
- If you could give the world a gift, what would it be?

- Why do people give Christmas gifts?
- Read a Christmas book or a poem together, such as The Grinch, The Polar Express, The Night Before Christmas, The Legend of the Poinsettia, Christmas in the Manger, The Spirit of Christmas, and Franklin's Christmas Gift. Discuss the book.
- What are your favourite Christmas goodies? Then make one of the recipes together.
- Why do we celebrate Christmas?
- What is something we could do to help someone at Christmas? Brainstorm ideas and then choose one kind act and do it together.
- Have you heard the phrase "A Green Christmas?" What does it mean? What are some things we can do as a family to keep a Green Christmas?
- Ask if there's more to Christmas than just presents. Come up with at least a couple of

- ideas that are not gifts. Then read this from the book "The Grinch:" "What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more!"
- What is your favourite Christmas song? Then listen to it together and maybe sing along.
- The Santa talk. This is usually initiated by the child, likely when they ask you if Santa is real? You could, depending on the age of the child say, "Of course," or avoid answering the question. Or you could respond by asking them if they think Santa is real. Chances are if they are asking, they know. The discussion could shift to the magic of Christmas and giving.
- Talking to your child about Christmas and the importance of kindness, family and generosity will keep the magic of Christmas alive.



A Plump Little Partridge: 2020 Style

'Twas the night before Christmas, all along the Gaspé,
Not a creature was stirring even out on The Bay.
The stockings were hung up with a bit of twine.
We were eating Grandma's cookies, that suited us just fine.

A plump little partridge stood out in the snow,
A proud father buck and a cute little doe.
A light dusting of snow covered the bales
And grandmas were telling the wee ones some tales.

"On the Coast, little dears, some 200 years past,
Came settlers so hearty and also steadfast.
They were tough and brave: struggling to survive
After harsh, stormy seas they were grateful to be alive.

They came to the Gaspé from far, far away,
From Scotland, France and Ireland. I'd like to say
That some lived here before us in this gorgeous land –
Mi'gmaq: Indigenous, something you should understand.

Some were Acadians who settled here, too,
From what's now Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, maybe
you knew?
From islands called Guernsey and Jersey, my child.
They came here to these shores where the forests grew wild.

And then there's the Loyalists, loyal to the Crown
Loyal to Britain, they came here...not even a town.
All they had was some land, some grain and an axe.
They worked very hard. No time to relax.

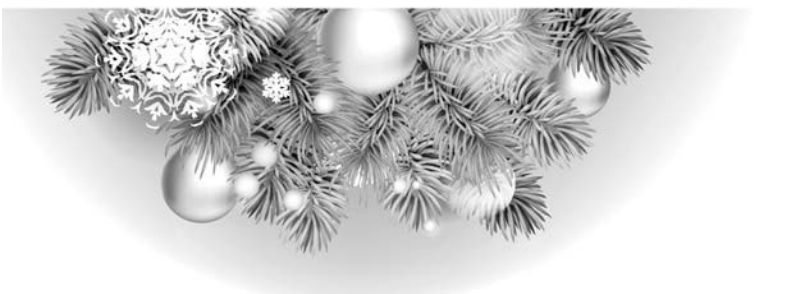
They farmed, and they fished, and they made their own way
And the descendants of them live here to this day,
And you must stand tall and be very proud.
They fished in the lakes. The land they plowed.

So, if you are Gaspesian, don't ever forget,
That the blood of these ancestors flow through you yet.
You know who you are. You're from the Gaspé
Whether you're living here or maybe away.

Now hush go to sleep for Santa is near.
And when you awake in the morning, my dear
The sun will be shining on the new fallen snow
But remember the Gaspé wherever you go!"

Even though COVID is with us this year
We know that Santa will always appear.
He'll be wearing his mask cause he's COVID smart
But the reindeer must stay six feet apart!

- Diane Skinner



Keeping Pets Safe at Christmastime

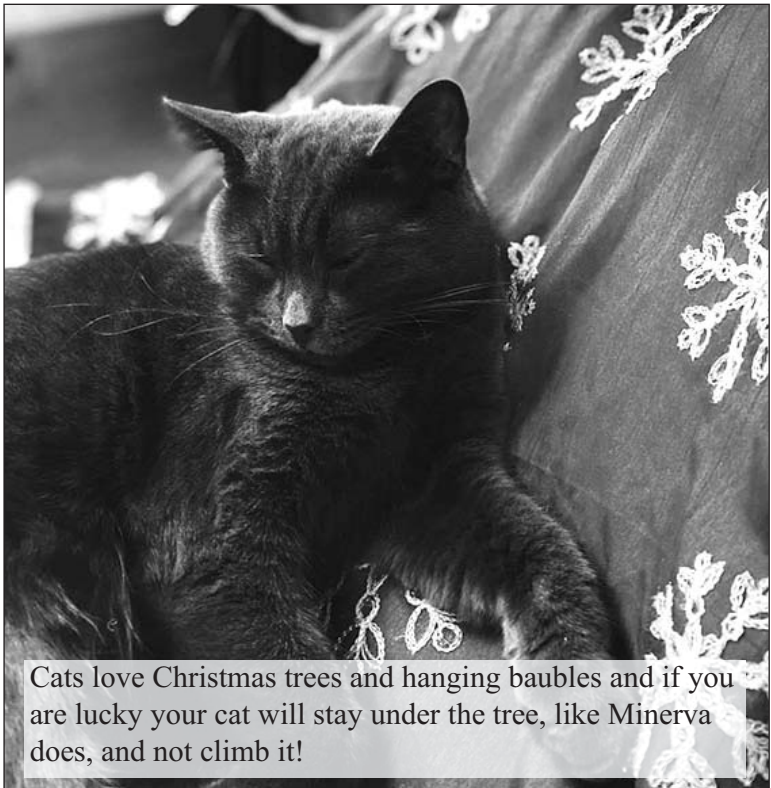
Diane Skinner

It is Christmas and you are busy. Perhaps your routines have been changed and you are busy but don't neglect your pets. There are additional items in and around the house during the season that could be harmful.

Keep in mind:

Plants – Some of the most iconic Christmas plants can be toxic to animals. This includes holly, mistletoe and poinsettias. They could have some side effects if your cat or dog eats a leaf or two. Keep them out of reach which can be a challenge if you have cats.

Ornaments – Be mindful of the ornaments that animals can reach. If you notice your pet nibbling on an ornament, it is best to either put it higher on the tree or even put



Cats love Christmas trees and hanging baubles and if you are lucky your cat will stay under the tree, like Minerva does, and not climb it!

it away. Hooks on hanging ornaments can also be a danger. Tinsel, once so popular, is not a good treat for a curious cat because cats will eat

tinsel. Breakable glass ornaments can cut paws.

Chocolate – Chocolate can

be toxic to dogs and cats. Rarely is it fatal but can make your pet very ill. Dark chocolate is particularly harmful to dogs. If you suspect that your dog has eaten dark chocolate, call your vet. Depending on the size of the dog and how much they ate, your dog may need an immediate appointment.

Antifreeze – The smell of antifreeze is enticing to some animals. It is extremely toxic, possibly fatal. Watch out for spills on the ground and keep the containers out of reach.

Lights – Turn off Christmas lights when you leave the house in case your pet chews on the cords.

Trees – If you have a live tree, eating some sap can cause an upset stomach. Needles can get stuck in

paws, so sweep around your tree daily.

Wrapping – Clean up thoroughly after wrapping. Some cats cannot resist eating scotch tape. This is an actual condition known as pica. This can occur when kittens are weaned too early.

Turkey bones – If you give your pet some turkey, make certain that there are no bones in it. Can cause choking.

Fire safety – If you have an open fire, such as a fireplace, watch to see if your pet gets too close to the flames. Most will not, call it instinct.

Follow these few tips and have a wonderful Christmas Season by keeping your pets safe. Just hoping you do not have a cat that likes to climb the Christmas tree!

CHRISTMAS

Quiz for kids

ANSWERS

1. North Pole

2. Red and green

3. Elves

4. December 25

5. A one-horse open sleigh

6. A partridge in a pear tree.

7. Saint Nick

8. Red

9. Join in any reindeer games

10. In Bethlehem

11. He began to dance around when the hat was placed on his head.

12. Dasher, Donner and Dancer

13. A star or an angel

14. Sven

15. Nine. They are Rudolph, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

Keeping Christmas simple

The idea of Christmas whether old-fashioned or modern is to keep it simple and focus on caring about others. As the holiday season approaches, our hearts swell with kindness for others. This year it may be more difficult for many because of COVID19, so instead of boosting Amazon, ebay, etc. why not prioritize shopping local.

The spirit of Christmas goes beyond shiny gifts as it reaches deep within our hearts. During this festive season enjoy the goodies baked with tender care and at times that cinnamon and peppermint smell that fills the air in many homes.

On Christmas Day, a baby boy was born with neither riches nor with fame, as it was the birth of Lord Jesus. Everyday we receive gifts from God. Challenges throughout this year were enormously filled with COVID-19, but let's focus on the gifts we did receive from God and how we can help those in need.

Let this Christmas be filled with laughter, surprises and smiles. In closing I must say, I don't want much for Christmas this year. I just want our country and the whole world back to normal, to be healthy, and loved once again.

Ken Ross,
New Carlisle

Christmas QUIZ

Answers

1. Donald Trump

2. An angel gets its wings.

3. Tiny Tim

4. 1823

5. Doves, hens, calling birds, geese and swans

6. White Christmas by Bing Crosby

7. Will Ferrell

8. Jimmy Stewart

9. The Nutcracker

10. Hansel and Gretel

11. Coca-Cola

12. Candy canes

13. Four: Jacob Marley, and the spirits of Christmas: Past, Present and Future.

14. Capricorn

15. Macy's

16. 3 p.m.

17. A traditional French-Canadian meal eaten after returning from Midnight Mass and opening the gifts late on Christmas Eve. The literal translation is "waking up."

18. The Huron Carol

19. Gabriel

20. Ebenezer

21. Elvis

22. Tiny tots

23. Feliz Navidad

24. Sugarplums

25. Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

Less than 14 Bah! Humbug

15 - 20 correct Watch a Christmas movie, while reading The Night Before Christmas, followed by listening to some Christmas songs and carols.

21 – 24 correct Reward yourself with a plate of cookies and your favourite Christmas drink. (See Spec of December 9 for some cool Christmas drink recipes.)

25 correct plus the BONUS You are a brilliant shining star at the top of the tree!

BONUS: 364 gifts

So, partridges = 1 x 12 (on each of the 12 days)

Turtle doves = 2 x 11 (over 11 days)

French hens = 3 x 10 (over 10 days)

Calling birds = 4 x 9 (and so on...)

Gold rings = 5 x 8

Geese a-laying = 6 x 7

Swans a-swimming = 7 x 6

Maids a-milking = 8 x 5

Ladies dancing = 9 x 4

Lords a-leaping = 10 x 3

Pipers piping = 11 x 2

Drummers drumming = 12 x 1

After multiplying, add them together.

She gets a total of 364 gifts!

I would rather have fewer birds and more golden rings.

Announcements...



In Memory

CLARK: Ralph

CLARK: Della

CLARK: Morris

*You left us beautiful memories,
Your love is still our guide,
And though we cannot see you,
You are always by our sides.*

Loved and missed always, the Clark family.

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Engagement, Birthday,

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SUBMISSIONS FOR THIS PAGE MUST
BE IN OUR OFFICE BY THURSDAY.

Happy Birthday



Happy 89th Birthday Mom (Rowena Gallichan)
December 18, 2020. Have a great day! Love you!

The New Carlisle
Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the family of
Hélène Jiona Bélanger



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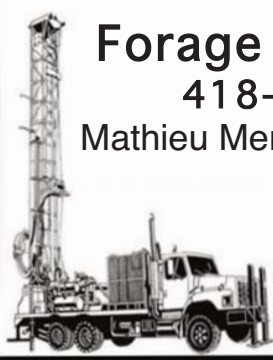


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Looking For: In July 2018 our father Osborne (Bon, Bonnie, pronounced Bunny) Mitchell, who has now died on November 18, 2020, visited Barachois for the funeral of his sister Cynthia (Tena) Maloney. While there he apparently loaned his songbook to someone. His songbook is a 3 ring grey coloured fabric binder measuring 11"x8". This binder has songs from Hank Williams and other country artists and most importantly it contains songs written by our father Osborne Mitchell. These songs were handwritten by our now deceased mother Dollie Mitchell. This binder is precious to us. We ask whoever you are to please send this binder C.O.D. to 32 BLACKTOFT DRIVE, SCARBOROUGH, ON M1B 2M6 in care of Cyndie Judge. We have no desire to know who you are just that you find it in your heart to return this precious songbook to our family. Sincerely, Cyndie Judge, Chris Mitchell and family

COAST ROUND-UP

GASPE: **Gaspé Cancer Foundation**

Members and supporters of the Gaspé Cancer Foundation are asked to please note that our office at the Gaspé Hospital has been temporarily closed due to COVID-19. To renew or become a member of the Foundation, please send your twelve dollar (\$12) payment to the address indicated below. For members who have travelled outside the region for treatment while we are closed, please send your referral paper(s) with

your address and phone number to: The Gaspé Cancer Foundation, CP 6078, Gaspé, QC, G4X 2R6. Your request will be processed and a cheque will be mailed to you.

YORK: **York Hall**

Please note that the York Hall has a new number: 581-887-9351. We can also be reached through our web site, www.yorkhall.ca, where you will also find rental information and prices.

NEW CARLISLE: **Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation**

Members and supporters of the Linda LeMore-Brown Foundation are asked to please note that our office located at 168 Gerard D. Levesque, New Carlisle, is closed to the public due to COVID-19. To renew your membership or to give correspondence, we ask that you please mail it to our office. For financial support travelling outside the region for cancer treatment or any other information, call the office at 418-752-5995. To make an appointment you must also call the office. Walk-ins will not be permitted. We thank you for your patience and cooperation during these difficult times.

NEW CARLISLE: **Anglican Church**

To the parishioners of the Parishes of New Carlisle and Chaleur Bay, members of the local communities, and visitors to the area. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, we are conscious that we must do so in a way that is safe and respects health protocols. St. Andrew's Anglican Church will be open for services on Christmas Eve. Please contact

the Rev. Joshua Paetkau (418-752-3227) or email: jpaetkau@quebec.anglican.ca if you intend to attend the Christmas Eve service. You may also leave a message at <https://www.facebook.com/standrewsnewcarlisle/>. Happy Christmas! and stay safe

NEW CARLISLE: **United Church Pastoral Charge**

Anyone wanting to pay their 2020 church dues, please make cheque payable to: United Church Pastoral Charge. Anyone wanting to donate to the following cemetery or building funds: St. Andrew's United Church Hope Town Cemetery or Building Fund and Zion United Church New Carlisle Cemetery or Building Fund. Make cheque payable to St. Andrew's United Church or Zion United Church. Please mail to: 229 chemin du Vieux Moulin Hope Town, QC, G0C 3C1. Thank you to all who have already sent their donations. Linda MacWhirter treasurer. 418-751-4398.

NEW CARLISLE: **Drive-In Gospel Meetings**

The meetings that have been held at Fair Haven Bible Camp grounds all summer will now be held at the New Carlisle Bible Chapel, Sundays at 2 p.m. COVID-19 considerations/social distancing will be respected. All are welcome - invite a friend! For more information, please call 418-752-3372.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, December 20
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Thanks!
For Your Support

Thanks to the following people for their generous donations to The Gaspé Spec

Mary Zenaitis - St. Leonard, Quebec

York River Senior Citizens - Gaspé, Quebec

Ruth Watt Lyall - Green Valley, Ontario

Sheila Powers Baird - Fredericton, New Brunswick

Peggy Sclater - St. Hubert, Quebec

Edna Brouillette - St-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, Quebec

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Ted Sullivan - Milton, Ontario

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Vilma Scott - Toronto, Ontario

Gerald MacWhirter - Niagara Falls, Ontario

Bessy Craig - New Carlisle, Quebec

Kenneth Le Grand - Saint Bruno, Quebec

Francis Moran - New Carlisle, Quebec

Ivan McKoy - St-Georges-de-Malbaie

Merry Christmas & Many Thanks

The Gaspé Spec Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our loyal supporters, subscribers, advertisers, volunteers and contributors. We wish each and everyone of you a peaceful holiday season. We thank you for your support and look forward to a new year of publishing The Gaspé Spec.

This is the last issue of The Gaspé Spec for 2020.

The office will be closed on Friday, December 18, 2020 and will reopen on January 8, 2021. **Please note that the office will remain closed to the public until further notice. You can reach us by calling 418-752-5400 or emailing specs@globetrotter.net.**

The first issue of the The Gaspé Spec in the new year will be January 13, 2021.

New Year's: Back Then and Moving Forward

- Mel Simoneau

It's December 31. A few light snowflakes dangle and fall in the damp air.

There are 16 of us on cross-country skis this mid-afternoon. We tote big backpacks with supplies for overnight and the next morning. The ski from the parking lot in Gatineau Park, just north of Ottawa, to Brown Lake and its cabin is easy enough: two+ kilometres and uphill that's not terribly steep.

When we arrive, the cabin is warm. There's an echo as we stamp snow from our ski boots. The cabin is spartan – kitchen, wood stove, lots of split wood, sofa, picnic benches, 16 bunks and everything is clean.

There's a big auger to pierce the Brown Lake ice and containers to collect the water we need for cleaning and cooking. We unpack our food and clothes and choose bunks. Some go back outdoors for a longer ski in the dusk, up and down hills among soundless snowy trees.

Each person has brought agreed-on food such as appetizers, main meals, and desserts. On their own, many in the group are creative cooks so dinner is a feast.

The wood-stove fire is deliciously hot and the cabin's vibrant: We talk and play board games into the night. Before midnight, we start the countdown – 10, 9,...2,1,...!!! The many smiles and hugs are only mildly abetted from dinner wine and evening whisky.

The fire dies out overnight and in the morning, we dress with hurried purpose. At breakfast, among other staples, we enjoy homemade Irish soda bread and sip steaming coffee. We clean the cabin for the next group of visitors and ski back to the parking lot.

That was New Year's Eve, 1995. This New Year's Eve, the world over, will look much different.

I ask friends to consider 2020, New Year's Eve, and moving forward.

*Mel Simoneau, formerly from Murdochville,
is a writer in Gatineau.*



“You were part of that group of 16 skiers in 1995. In years to come and after the pandemic, can you imagine another overnight trip – ski or camping, let's say – with friends and family, activities people can't do now?”
Martin Ruddy, Library and Archives Canada, Russell, Ontario: “The restrictions imposed by this pandemic have reinforced for me how precious those times are when we gather with loved ones. Camping and cottage/cabin trips, immersed in nature, are among my best memories and I want to create more of them.”

“What's it been like to run your business during the pandemic?”
Gabrielle Hélène Coulter, Choreography, Yoga and Aromatherapy, Gaspé: “I have found other ways to connect with my clients and students. There have been obstacles, but I have built a new kind of resilience for the inevitable seasons of change that arise as an entrepreneur.”

“Have things been difficult for your distillery in 2020?”
Michael Briand, O'Dwyer Distellerie/Distillery, Gaspé: “We have been working hard to get a few more products on the market, which has been a challenge since not all suppliers are fully operational. At first it was difficult but businesses like ours are now able to adapt more easily to the government-enforced changes.”

“Oil and acrylic painting are your passions. Has your painting during 2020 been a welcome diversion?”
Trish Pye, Artist, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia: “The interior world of brushes and paints came into their own when “Pandemic” became the main event of 2020. My little studio presented freedom and imagination as some pieces sold, but others became gifts for friends needing calm and kindness.”

“What does a university campus look and feel like since March 2020?”
Max Read, University of British Columbia, Vancouver: “When I was on campus, it was like a ghost town. The campus belonged to the seagulls and crows by day, and the raccoons by night. But for the first month or so, we were getting a glimpse of what our university would look like if we left it to the animals who also live there, and it was definitely something to think about.”

“How will a romance writer spend this unusual New Year's Eve?”
Cynthia Owens, Romance Author, Writing Instructor, Montreal: “It may not be the sweeping adventure my characters enjoy, but for this romance writer, there's nothing more romantic than cuddling before the fire and a midnight kiss.”

“When life gets back to normal, what would be a good celebratory meal?”
Carola Price, Event Coordinator/Sommelier, Gatineau: “It depends on the season. Spring or summer begins with sparkling cider, move to a delectable County Chardonnay with baked trout, gremolata, asparagus and new potatoes. The fall and winter cries out for vintage Pol Roger, braised lamb shank, polenta and rapini, with an earthy Oregon Pinot Noir.”

HAPPY NEW YEAR
S E A S O N ' S G R E E T I N G S

Happy New Year

With 2020 behind us we will not forget the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual damage that hampered many of us. Thank you, God, for keeping many Gaspesians safe throughout 2020. As a new year begins, let's focus on new adventures, new achievements, and dreams which we can cherish this coming year.

Every new year comes with some obstacles, new challenges, and hurdles which many of us have to conquer and 2021 is no different. Gaspesians typically have their hearts filled with giving, loving, and compassionate thoughts towards each other.

Gaspesians are known for their faithfulness, kindness, and the comfort they bring to friends and neighbours. Let 2021 bring us new blessings and prosperity, peace, and happiness. Keep our hearts open daily and let our willingness and desires grow so 2021 can be filled with encouragements and blessings for each one of us. Let this year be filled with unconditional love, warmth, and affection as well. My wish for you is to have an awesome year ahead.

*Ken Ross
New Carlisle, Quebec.*



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Celebrating New Year's around the globe

Diane Skinner



Many people stay up past midnight on December 31 to see the New Year in. There will not be any large gatherings or parties this New Year's Eve so most will celebrate with their family bubble and watch some modified celebrations on television. The stroke of midnight has traditionally been a time to "make some noise!" In some communities, church bells ring, people toot horns and blow on noise makers. A loud chorus of HAPPY NEW YEAR is normally shouted out and is followed by lots of hugging and kissing. This is not a normal year.

Many people celebrate New Year's in their own way that befits their culture. Some of these customs are historical and are no longer practiced and during COVID likely none of the usual large gatherings will or should take place.

Australia – December 31 is the peak of summer in Australia and massive fireworks displays are often part of the evening. The next day, as in Canada, people relax and visit family and friends, but likely outdoors in the warm sunshine at the beach. Australians will be able to celebrate in groups because they have managed to lower COVID-19 cases to near-zero by implementing immediate and strict restrictions.

South Africa – It's a new beginning in South Africa and their custom was to throw old, unwanted furniture out into the street. Now they celebrate with fireworks and big parties.

Nigeria – Large parties and prayers are part of the Nigerian tradition. They hold masquerade carnivals where people dress in elaborate costumes and masks. Their celebrations last for 20 days.

Zimbabwe – Citizens of Zimbabwe celebrate for three days and nights. There is traditionally a huge crowd that gathers at the biggest waterfall on the continent, Victoria Falls. Entertainment is provided by stilt walkers, fire dancers and musicians.

Denmark – People gather in large groups and first listen to the speech by Queen Margrethe II. There are traditionally huge gatherings in the Copenhagen town square to wait for the giant clock to chime 12 times. Some follow the custom of breaking old dishes. They then climb onto chairs and "jump" into the New Year.

Scotland – People go from house to house to visit their family and neighbours to celebrate Hogmanay. It is a sign of good luck if the first person to enter your home after midnight has dark hair. In the streets you may hear the traditional bagpipes and drums.

Ireland – It is customary to thoroughly clean your home for the New Year. Another custom is to throw bread at the walls to chase away bad spirits. To pay honour to those who have passed during the year they leave the door unlocked and set a place at the supper table for their departed loved one.

Germany – A very large New Year's celebration takes place in Berlin where millions of people gather. Fireworks and German wine are traditionally part of the evening. An old custom that is said to predict the coming year is melting lead in a spoon over a flame. The molten lead is then dropped into a bucket of water. If a pig appears in the shapes you will have lots of food, a ball means luck will roll your way. Sounds like a version of reading tea leaves!

China – Children dress in new clothes at New Years and people carry lanterns while walking through the streets. At the front of these parades is a large silk dragon. Each new lunar year is named after an animal. In 2021 it will be the Year of the Ox. The Chinese follow the Lunar calendar so celebrations will take place from February 12 to 26, 2021.

Canada – We celebrate much like our neighbours to the south. Parties, drinks and good food, the countdown, fireworks and music are a big part of the celebrations. Some hardy Canadians participate in the Polar Bear plunge on New Year's Day.



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Wishing our community members, partners and funders throughout the region and beyond a wonderful holiday season.
Kim, Fay, John & Ashley



To the youth in our communities, may the Christmas season fill your home with joy, your heart with love and your life with laughter. Merry Christmas from the CASA RIESS team!
Lisa Jade, Shannon, Kathy & Cindy



CASA's Avignon office wishes everyone a warm and restful holiday season. May love touch your hearts in unexpected ways, and know that you are important and appreciated. To our wonderful partners in the area, thank you for all that you do. It makes a difference in the lives of so many and you are all so appreciated.
Meredith

*Merry
Christmas
Joyeux Noël
Wel Nuewum'g*
FROM CASA



The Bright Beginnings team would like to thank all the families who participated in our activities this year. Our team appreciates **YOU ALL** and we hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Shannon, Becky & Krystal



To our seniors near and far, we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Senior Wellness team. We miss seeing all of you. Stay safe everyone!
Madelyn, Sally & Kathy



Remember to take care of yourself this holiday season with rest, relaxation and doing what makes you happy. Merry Christmas!
Matthew



May the magic of Christmas fill your homes with love, laughter and special moments.
Mary & Jennifer

