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*Merry*  
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&  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

# A TIME AND A PLACE

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# THINK LOCAL

*this festive season!*



In an age dominated by fast fashion and giant online retailers, many everyday goods and commodities come from foreign markets that often prioritize low prices over quality. This holiday season is the perfect opportunity for you to support our many local businesses. Spoil your loved ones while promoting local production and craftsmanship.

## HIGH-QUALITY GOODS

When you buy local, you can be confident you're getting premium products. From delicious treats and traditional dishes to fine clothing, pottery and unique alcoholic beverages, many local items are crafted with exceptional ingredients and sustainable materials. This commitment to quality sets local goods apart from mass-produced alternatives.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH

Shopping at our community businesses benefits everyone. Your purchases boost the income of local

entrepreneurs, who often reinvest a portion of their earnings back into our communities by sourcing from local suppliers and expanding their offerings. This cycle keeps the economy thriving and enhances our regional independence.

## UNIQUE GIFTS

Each local clothier, distiller or artisan brings their own style and values to their creations. In addition to providing quality and economic benefits, local Catskill products are truly one of a kind. Our region features its own special products, reflecting the personalized character of our local entrepreneurs.

In short, by gifting local products to family and friends or serving them during the holidays, you can add a unique twist to your festive traditions while also supporting your community. Grab your reusable bags, put on your hat and mittens and set out to discover the businesses in our area.

# Christmas Stroll

## House Tour & Holiday Market

Saturday, December 13th in Franklin

SHOP  
PLAY  
& DO!

## Holiday Festivities Happening Village Wide

We'll see you in Franklin, Saturday, December 13th -- the Franklin community is revving up for the holidays!

### Christmas Stroll House Tour

The traditional Christmas Stroll House Tour includes seven homes and the Franklin Railroad and Community Museum in historic Franklin, beautifully decorated for the holidays. Most locations are in the village within easy walking distance of each other. The Stroll will take place on Saturday, December 13th from 1pm to 5pm. Tickets are \$10 per person or \$15 per couple. Tickets will be sold at the Firehouse Holiday Market from 10am to 3pm on Saturday, the 13th.

Connie Martin, Christmas Stroll Coordinator, said, "The Stroll is a fun event where attendees can learn about the history and architectural details of the homes, chat with your hosts and enjoy light refreshments." Martin added, "Most of the homes participating this year were built between the 1820s and early 1900s, and six are located in the Village of Franklin, which is on the National Register of Historic Places." Coordinator John Wilson added, "The homeowners have conducted research on their homes and any renovations are done with attention and care in an effort to preserve the unique character of the homes. It's practically a guarantee that attendees will come away with some great ideas for renovations and décor!"

After expenses, proceeds from the tour benefit the Franklin Improvement Society, a 501c3 organization.

### Franklin Railroad and Community Museum

The popular Trees and Trains for Christmas exhibit

at the museum is a must-see! Take a step back in time as you enjoy the beautifully decorated trees, The Warwick dining car and an enhanced layout with several new exhibits at the museum. There is a wealth of history about Franklin and surrounding towns in the area, and much more! The museum is located at 572 Main Street and will be open from 10am to 5pm.

### Firehouse Holiday Market

Shop for unique holiday gifts at the Franklin Firehouse garage at 351 Main Street from 10am to 3pm. Artisans and vendors from the local area will offer holiday wares, home décor, distinctive handmade items, food and more!

**NEW** – Gourmet Wine and Cheese Tasting at Good Taste Epicurean Market. Sample an assortment of fine wines and an array of gourmet cheeses, dried sausages and other delicacies at the Market at 438 Main Street from 10am to 6pm. Enjoy a free cup of freshly brewed coffee while you taste and shop. Owner Mark Handelman offers freshly baked baguettes and croissants, and a variety of both imported and farm-to-table eats to grace your holiday table, along with wines and liquors.

**NEW** – Holiday Festivities at King's Café. Enjoy a light breakfast or lunch while you shop for antiques, art, decorative items, textiles, and clothing. Owner Antoinette King also has holiday festivities planned!

### Holiday Stories and Santa's Visit at the Library

The Franklin Free Library, 334 Main Street, will  
*continued...*

have holiday storytime at 11 am, followed by a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus with gifts for the kids. Home-baked cookies and punch will be served.

**Church Festivities** – Cookies, Carols, Hot Soup Lunch and More. Open Doors Methodist Church, 475 Main Street, is having a Christmas Cookie Sale at 11am with decorated cookies and traditional favorites. Fortify yourself with homemade hot soup and freshly baked buttered rolls while you catch up with neighbors. St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 307

Main Street, a Gothic architectural gem designed by Upjohn, will have a tour and seasonal music for your enjoyment from 10 am to 1pm. The Community Bible Church, 89 Center Street, will have Christmas caroling and hot cocoa from 2pm to 3pm.

**NEW** – Tree Lighting and Carols in the Park and A Visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus on the Fire Truck. Bring your children to the Village Park beginning at 5:15pm for our festive Tree Lighting, carol singing and *continued...*



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[Answer]  
They both stay bright and steady all season long.



# DECEMBER 13TH, 2025

## Christmas Stroll, Holiday Market and Events

### Trees and Trains for Christmas

Franklin Railroad and Community Museum  
572 Main Street - 10am-5pm

### Holiday Market

Fire Department Garage  
351 Main Street - 10am-3pm

### Gourmet Wine and Cheese Tasting

Good Taste Epicurean Market  
438 Main Street - 10am-6pm

### Holiday Festivities

Kings Café, 375 Main Street - 10am-4pm

### Tour and Seasonal Music

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
307 Main Street - 10am-1pm

### Holiday Stories & Santa's Visit

Franklin Free Library  
334 Main Street - 11am

### Christmas Cookie Sale and Hot Soup Lunch

Open Doors Methodist Church  
475 Main Street - 11am

### Christmas Stroll House Tour

Village of Franklin and  
Surrounding - 1pm-5pm  
\$10 single, \$15 per couple

### Carols and Hot Cocoa

Community Bible Church  
89 Center Street - 2pm-3pm

### Tree Lighting, Carols and Santa on the Fire Truck

Village Park  
Main Street across from Firehouse - 5:15pm

### Meet Mr. and Mrs. Claus

Fire Department Garage, 351 Main Street  
5:45pm (following Tree Lighting)

a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus on the fire truck. Head across the street to the Franklin Firehouse at 351 Main Street for more time and a photo op with Santa and the Mrs. The jolly old elf and his better half will have a gift for each child, and hot chocolate and cookies will be served.

### Franklin Eateries and Businesses Are Open

Walk along Main Street and enjoy the lighted holiday trees decorated by Franklin Rotary Club members. Get delicious eats at local restaurants on Main Street. King's Café will have a light breakfast and lunch available, and The Tulip and The Rose Café will be serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Local shops featuring interior design, home décor, antiques and designer clothing will be open for shopping.

If you have questions about the Christmas Stroll House Tour or other festivities around town, contact Connie Martin at [candjmartin@fastmail.com](mailto:candjmartin@fastmail.com) or John Wilson at [jwilix48@gmail.com](mailto:jwilix48@gmail.com) or watch Facebook and [www.franklinny.org/stroll25](http://www.franklinny.org/stroll25) for updates.

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# An outdoor Christmas party? Why not!

If your gang loves spending time outdoors, why not organize an sledding party, a fireside get together, or even an outdoor Christmas party this year? It's an ideal way to create a memorable event, provided you plan it carefully. Here's a quick overview.

- **Lighting.** It gets dark early in winter, so use lighting to create a magical atmosphere and keep everyone safe. String lights, lanterns, spotlights and headlamps—more is always better!

- **Activities.** Plan a friendly hockey game, a walk in the woods, a snowman-making contest, ice-skating or sledding. You could create a dance floor in your yard.



- **Food.** Serve comforting and delicious dishes. Options like barbecued sandwiches, homemade soup, hot chocolate and mulled wine will surely please your guests.

- **Warmth.** Keep your guests warm by providing space heaters, an outdoor fireplace, and blankets for wrapping up and you'll need extra to cover seating.

Above all, always have a backup plan. A heated basement or garage can save the day if Mother Nature decides to spoil the party.



Why Cook? Come and join us!

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## Tips for taking great family photos at Christmas

- **Choose the backdrop.** Select a plain backdrop that keeps the focus on your family rather than busy decorations and bright lights. Ensure no unsightly objects are in the frame, especially if you lack photo editing skills.

- **Test the lighting.** Check the light sources. Ask a friend or family member to help you test them. Try to avoid using the flash unless absolutely necessary. It can cause people to blink and affect the image quality.

- **Look for blemishes.** While everyone gets settled, take a quick look at each person for stray hairs, stains on clothing, something caught in teeth, etc.

- **Vary the poses.** Try a variety of standing or sitting poses, and take a few relaxed shots where everyone can make funny faces. And take several shots to make sure you get at least one good one.



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# How to prevent frost on your windshield—and remove it

We've all rushed to get ready on a winter morning only to find our windshield covered in frost. You know how frustrating it can be. Scraping car windows in the frigid cold is never fun, but you can use several tricks to prevent frost from forming in the first place.

- In the evening, place an anti-frost cover over your windshield. In the morning, simply remove it. This accessory is both effective and easy to use, and you can find various models for around \$30.
- Mix one part water with three parts white vinegar and spray this solution on your dry windows. After spraying, wipe the surface with a cloth. Repeat this process regularly throughout winter to help prevent ice crystals from forming on the glass.
- Visit a repair shop to have your windows treated with a special water-repellent product. This treatment makes the ice stick to a protective layer rather than the glass, making scraping much easier.

What about removing frost that's already formed?

If you didn't have time to prepare and your windshield is frozen solid, start your vehicle and turn on the defrost function, setting the fan to high. Lower the sun visors to help trap warm air against the glass. This will speed up the defrosting process. For even better results, consider purchasing a de-icing solution from a local supplier.

Stock up on frost-fighting products at your local automotive products retailer or hardware store.



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## Inviting someone to join you for Christmas dinner is a wonderful gesture!

There are many reasons why someone might find themselves alone on over the holidays. If you have a colleague, neighbor or friend who has no holiday plans, open your heart and your home by inviting them to celebrate with you.

They may hesitate, fearing they'll be a nuisance or feel out of place at a family gathering. Tell them you understand their feelings, but that you would be delighted to have them join you. Remind them that the more, the merrier, and that you're sure they would do the same for you.

Before extending the invitation, be sure to consult your partner and other family members.

Chances are they'll empathize with your guest and welcome them with open arms.



Here's a tip: get your guest involved in the party planning by asking them to bring a vegetable tray or board game. When they arrive, introduce them to your loved ones. If you're expecting a large group, help your guest feel more comfortable and focus on connecting them with the people they're most likely to get along with.

This year, open your doors and create a warm and welcoming Christmas celebration!

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!



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# **Pet Me Please!**



Heart of the Catskills  
Humane Society

by Laura Wright

## ***A Season of Presence, Not Presents***

Winter is officially here! I am looking out my office window to see snow falling softly. It's beautiful, but the season comes with additional challenges; staying warm and fed, more dangerous travel, and the holiday celebrations on the horizon.

Everything seems so expensive right now. What if we all agree to focus on the true meaning of the holiday season this year instead of stressing about getting the perfect gift for everyone in our lives? My extended family and I stopped giving each other Christmas gifts years ago. We don't really "need" anything, and nobody can afford it. The kids get gifts from their parents. Sometimes we make each other an edible treat or something handmade. I exchange gifts with a few special friends who are chosen family, and that's it. The time I spend with the people I love is the important thing and, honestly, I have enjoyed the Christmas season so much more without the stress of going broke over gift-giving. And I love giving gifts!

What can we offer each other this year? There are so many fun ways to give without going broke. There are so many ways we can help our friends who may be struggling a bit more than we are. Give your time; offer to watch someone's children, walk their dog, pet sit their cat. If you have a skill, like building or fixing or sewing, offer to share your skill and time with someone who needs something built or fixed or patched. If you're a massage therapist, give the gift of healing touch to someone in your life who needs that. If you like to drive, offer rides to someone who can't drive.

What about giving a gift card for groceries,



or a Chewy card to help people get supplies for their pets? Give a gift basket of homemade food treats for humans and animals for an even more personal touch. Make homemade cards for family with your kids and attach a photo of them with the family pets to send to loved ones.

For the person who has everything and needs nothing, donate to a local charity in their honor. Get creative! The season is about love, peace, kindness, and togetherness. Let's make the Holiday Season even more special this year by embracing and sharing these warm concepts in our giving, rather than focusing on buying.

*Have a safe, peaceful,  
and joyful Holiday Season!*

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**BUY locally THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!**



# T'IS THE GIVING SEASON

every day at  
*Glaiss Álainn*

by Suzanne M. Walsh ©2025

The "Season of Giving" in the Catskills shines brightly these days through the countless outstanding and largely unnoticed random acts of kindness made by unsung heroes throughout the region. One of these people is Sarah Brennan, whose Irish DNA has taken the "giving" part of the season even one step further.

The very molecules in Sarah's being seem to have embedded a naturally built-in knowing that true giving is not only the temporary prompt heard so often during the holiday season, but also a meaningful way of life operating straight from the heart.

GLAIS ÁLAINN (pronounced gloss a-lahn) "appears" to be a hair salon owned and operated by Sarah located on ancient Rte. 20 in Esperance, the most north-eastern village in old historic Schoharie County. The word "appears" is used here

Photos courtesy of Glais Álainn

*Sarah Brennan, right, owner and operator of Glais Álainn ("Beautiful Locks") Hair Studio celebrates the Holiday Season all year long helping people with what she does best--making them happy and shining*



because her hair studio is so much more than meets the eye that it sometimes boggles the imagination.

Born and raised with the heritage of Kilkenny Ireland palpable in her presence, this young woman's aura emanates genuineness with every transaction she conducts.

Men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds come through her studio door located on the first floor in one of the old "grand dame" Victorian buildings on the main thoroughfare in this tiny corner of the greater mosaic that makes the Catskill Region the curiously wonderful place it is.

On the porch outside of Glais Alainn--Irish for "Beautiful Locks" as in locks of hair--creaking wooden floorboards announce arriving clientele far more amiably than any digital beam could.

Customers opening the door run the gamut of famously-known rock stars and world-acclaimed writers with second homes nearby who mix with everyday folks whose lives have been spent farming the same surrounding lands as had their ancestors for generations. Here, everyone gets treated the same down-home way...Sarah tolerates no entitlement.

She remembers each client by name, identifying their arrival by the unique sound of each vehicle entering her parking lot, which is confirmed with just one momentary glance through her shop window without missing a single beat of lively banter engaged with whomever happens to be sitting under the scrutiny of her comb, scissors or curling iron.

"This place is my happy place..." It's the UPS delivery man, stopping by to pick up or drop off a package and catching a bit of town news with customers who happen to be inside on any particular day wrapped up in tin foil or waiting under wet hair and smiles in the non-stop rhythm of the place synched somehow with the tune of that internal stopwatch Sarah's infallible intuition must've been born with, making the place hum.

When a medi-vac helicopter lands outside in her parking lot because of the serious accident nearby, Sarah is the first one to know details asked about by later customers that day, because the town mayor along with his cell phone just happened to be in the chair under those skillful scissors at that precise moment. Glais Alainn is the mayor's happy place, too.

I watched a woefully lost-looking woman from out

of town stumble into Sarah's shop asking to borrow a phone for help with her disabled car and cell phone while explaining her desperate plight of trying to catch a scheduled plane out of Albany. Sarah knows exactly which nearest auto mechanic is available on that specific day, at that specific hour (lunchtime) and puts through the emergency call. The mechanic that answers is one of her customers, too.

That day she not only made all the necessary auto repair arrangements for the distraught woman, she also invited her to park the disabled car safely in the salon's lot and calmed the woman down while waiting in the salon provided with a fresh bottle of water. Sarah even called an Uber from her own app, scheduled the ride to Albany airport and taught the nervous woman how to do this for herself in the future, all at the same time.

This stranger—now a grateful friend—later texted thanks from high up in the air to Sarah, for her uncommon act of kindness.

It's because of Sarah's remarkable willingness to follow her heart when it tells her it's the right thing to do that blessings seem to overflow outward from this unassuming shop in the little village. Genuineness becomes contagious with some unnameable sensitivity when customers, entering as strangers sitting next to other wet-haired strangers, leave together as intimates exchanging contact information.

And her caretaking intuition is uncanny, which seems all the more remarkable in one so young. She unerringly senses the various silent calls for help from each individual that sometimes even results in rearranging the furniture so her especially-loved nonagenarians can sit comfortably while, with her quicksilver sense of humor, she attends to making them laugh out loud till their tummies hurt, while making them look beautiful again like magic.

"It wasn't always this way," Sarah muses when I ask her how she manages to make women feel so good about themselves. "When I was growing up in our small village in Ireland, I mistrusted women...we all mistrusted each other, imprisoned as we were within our own isolation locked up with the crazy notion that by beating down another one of us—the archetypal 'competitor'—we elevated our own rickety sense of self-worth—" Sarah pauses before continuing with a serious smile, "then something happened that changed me."

That “something” was a mix of many things, not the least significant of which was caretaking her aunt with whom she was very close. Her aunt had become terminally ill.

“With the unbearable thought of her leaving, it struck me to my core just how deeply I loved and valued this woman’s whole being.” Sarah is silent a moment before continuing to describe this life-changing awakening.

“I tried so hard to stave off her leaving that I’d run to the top of the nearby mountain each morning just so I could bring back to her bedside a glow to her cheeks with the full recounting of how glorious the sunrise was on yet another day she was able to spend with us.”

Sarah is still a pre-sunrise runner, to this day. Up by 4 am or earlier, her daily schedule additionally includes morning face time with her mother in Ireland and checking in on her dad and grandfather. As early as 6 am she can be found in the studio busy enhancing women clients’ self-esteem, coaxing out their beauty and confidence with the considerable skills she’s been endowed with before sending them off to their own places of work looking lovely and happy.

Recently the banter in the salon has become even more enlivened with the implementation of Sarah’s latest inspiration: serving up an authentic Irish tea experience with an “anything goes” attitude recorded as her very own live podcast—a first in “the Big E”, Sarah’s affectionate moniker for the little town she’s so fond of.

“I’m making a time and place where women can

let their hair down in an atmosphere supportive of feeling free to share anything at all.” Sarah explains.

And men? Would men ever be invited to share in this unusual communal support?

“Absolutely!” exclaims Sarah. “Men would be very welcome—everything’d be welcome that could draw us all closer in finding meaning through helping each other.”

Sarah Brennan shares the Holiday gift of giving through a life lived in close companionship with the famous quote by Nelson Mandela: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

## Glais Alainn Hair Studio

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To Us All!*

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## Homemade Holidays: Free Holiday Crafting Events

Friday, December 12th, 12–2pm

Saturday, December 20th, 12–2pm

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[headwaters@roxburyartsgroup.org](mailto:headwaters@roxburyartsgroup.org)

[www.roxburyartsgroup.org](http://www.roxburyartsgroup.org)



Holiday crafting is a great way to celebrate wintertide and contribute to the magic of the festive season. In the Homemade Holidays series, Headwaters Arts Center will provide an opportunity for community members to join in the old tradition of holiday gift making with free crafting events on Saturday December 6th, Friday December 12th and Saturday December 20th, each from 12–2pm.

These special crafting events will include creating unique gift wrapping (Dec 12th) and building gingerbread houses out of nontraditional materials (Dec 20th).

Gingerbread house building will be part of Headwaters' festive holiday party for the community on the final day of Homemade Holidays, to which folks of all ages are invited to enjoy snacks, drinks and plenty of opportunities for creating.

All are invited to join in these free crafting events, and all materials will be provided. For more information visit [www.roxburyartsgroup.org/workshops](http://www.roxburyartsgroup.org/workshops).

This event series is sponsored by Sluiter Agency. All programs offered by the Roxbury Arts Group are supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the NYS Legislature, the A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation, the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, The Community Foundation for South Central New York, the Tianaderrah Foundation, The Delaware National Bank of Delhi, and individual supporters.

## HERE'S A TIP by JoAnn Derson

### Holiday Hacks

**Wrap smarter:** Use leftover fabric scraps, dish towels, or brown paper bags for gift wrap—eco-friendly and charming.

**Zero-stress hosting:** Set the table the night before, then load a laundry basket with anything that doesn't belong in the main room and stash it in a closet before guests arrive.

**Label your lights:** When taking down decorations, wrap lights around a piece of cardboard and label which room they belong to—next year becomes a breeze.

**Meal prep magic:** Chop veggies for big holiday meals a day early and store them in zip-top bags, sorted by recipe.

**Gift tracker:** Take a quick photo of each gift as you wrap it and note who it's for—no more guessing what's inside once it's under the tree.

**Holiday card shortcut:** Take a photo of your decorated living room or tree and text it as a digital card to friends you won't see in person—fast, personal, and free.

**Cookie swap hack:** Hosting or attending a cookie exchange? Bake one simple base dough and add different mix-ins (peppermint chips, cranberries, nuts, chocolate) to create variety without extra work.

**Gift wrap station:** Keep scissors, tape, tags, and pens in a small caddy or shoebox. Wherever you wrap, just grab the box—no more hunting for tape under the couch.

**Ornament emergency kit:** Keep a box of plain hooks, zip ties, and ornament hangers handy. When something falls off the tree, you can fix it faster than anyone can say, "I didn't touch it!"

**Gift-tag genius:** If you run out of gift tags, just write "From Santa" in your best handwriting. No one questions Santa.

## Beloved

### Holiday Traditions from the 1950s–1980s

For many of us "older folks", the holidays are as much about memories as they are about celebrations. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, families across America created traditions that still warm hearts today—and often feel like they came from a simpler, more magical time.

In the 1950s, Christmas often began with the arrival of the Sears "Wish Book." Children spent hours circling toys while parents planned holiday menus filled with Jell-O salads, glazed hams, and homemade fudge. Aluminum Christmas trees—complete with rotating color wheels—became symbols of mid-century modern cheer. Families gathered around black-and-white TV sets to watch "A Christmas Carol," "The Ed Sullivan Show," or the original broadcasts of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," which premiered in 1964 and remains a staple to this day.

The 1960s and '70s ushered in new rituals. Tree tinsel shifted from lead strands to the plastic icicles many of us remember untangling every December. Holiday cards filled mailboxes, often tucked with family newsletters typed on a typewriter. Vinyl records from Bing Crosby, Perry Como, and later the Carpenters provided the soundtrack to bustling kitchens and festive living rooms.

By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the camcorder era arrived. Families began filming Christmas mornings, capturing bed-head children unwrapping Cabbage Patch Kids, Atari consoles, and Easy-Bake Ovens. Holiday décor grew brighter, too—think oversized outdoor lights, ceramic Christmas trees with glowing bulbs, and the steady beep of microwaves warming hot cocoa.

Through all the decades, one thread remained constant: people gathering with loved ones to share food, laughter, faith, and stories. These traditions—from the quiet glow of menorah candles to the bustle of holiday baking—continue to anchor us, reminding us that the best parts of the season often come from the memories we carry forward.



# Renovating your home in winter: 3 good reasons to go for it

Winter is an underrated time of year for home renovations. Here are three good reasons to tackle your renovation projects during the cold season.

## AVAILABILITY OF PROS

In winter, professionals such as architects, designers and electricians generally have more availability. This makes it easier for them to take on your project without any delays.

## SHORTER LEAD TIMES

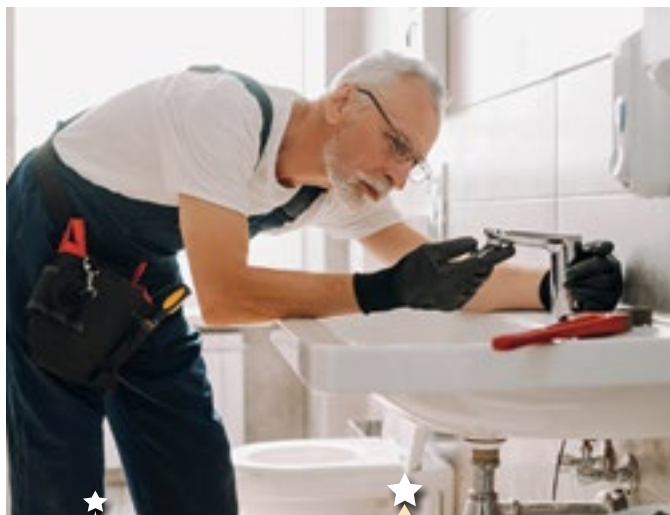
Specialized contractors often have more flexible schedules during winter. Shorter wait times mean the work can start and finish more quickly than in busier seasons.

## LOWER PRICES

Since demand is lower in winter, some suppliers and contractors offer highly competitive rates on labour and materials. With inflation at an all-time high, it would be silly not to take advantage of this!

Additionally, keep in mind that choosing to renovate your home in winter means you can sidestep the stress of overseeing a construction site during the warmer months. When the sun comes out and your social life reawakens, you'll be happy you completed your projects in the off-season.

Start planning your winter projects today!

A vertical advertisement for Tender Land Home. The background is a snowy forest path. In the center is a white oval with a green house icon at the top. Inside the oval, the text reads "Savor the Season..." in black, "Tender Land Home" in large red letters, and "for the Holidays" in black. Below the oval is a green holly leaf. At the bottom, a green banner contains the text "gifts / accessories / home decor" in white, and "10am - 5pm / 64 Main St, Phoenicia, NY" and "845-688-7213 / tenderlandhome.com" in white.

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A horizontal advertisement for Spray Foam Solutions, Inc. The background is a blue gradient. At the top, the text "SPRAY FOAM" is in large green letters with a white outline, and "SOLUTIONS, Inc." is in smaller green letters with a white outline. Below this is a photo of a person in a white protective suit and mask. To the right of the photo, the text "Residential Commercial" is in bold black letters, with a small house icon. Below that is the phone number "607-435-7930" in large red letters with a white outline. At the bottom, the text "Free Estimates & Fully Insured" is in bold black letters.

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# LEVEL UP TECH TALK

by CJ Karcher  
Owner & Systems Administrator  
**Level Up Tech Support**

## Unplug!

We were still digesting the Thanksgiving turkey when suddenly... Black Friday! Cyber Monday! Deals! Deals!! Deals!!!

It just happens to be Cyber Monday as I write this. I did some online shopping myself. Got to love how things are the same price they were a week ago, yet it says 15% off.

No doubt this is the busiest time of the year. Everyone is shopping for their loved ones, planning that winter getaway... Going, Going, Going! So I'm going to make this a short one.

First, I'd like to say thank you to a A Time and a Place Magazine for the opportunity to present Tech Talk, and thank you as well to all the readers who enjoy my column. I hope that it's been helpful and educational for all. Hard to believe it's been a year already.

We live on our devices. Technology has advanced so much in the last 20 years that most of us would not be able to function without it. It truly is amazing how far we have come in such a short time. So here is... what I want you all to do before Christmas. Before everyone gets that new tech we asked Santa for — Unplug! Unplug yourself from the modern world. Turn off your phone, your computer... yes, the TV. Instead, bake a cake with your family. Make a Pizza with your friends. Go outside and have some fun. Play a board game, or do something you loved to do as a kid, and show your kids what you did. Have that bonfire out in the woods. Whatever it is, just unplug. Enjoy something else for an hour or more. Don't tweet it, don't share it just unplug.

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## Shopping for gifts online? Avoid these common mistakes.

Online holiday shopping is certainly convenient, but before you fill that digital cart, keep these tips in mind—and remember, many of our local retailers offer online shopping, giving you the best of both worlds.

**Don't wait until the last minute** - Online shopping and holiday procrastination rarely end well. Start early, check estimated delivery dates, and build in extra time for seasonal delays. If you fall behind, you may have to pay for rushed shipping—another reason to shop local, where same-day pickup may be an option.

**Don't skip the product details** - Read descriptions carefully, especially sizes, dimensions, and materials.

Vague or incomplete information can signal a questionable website.

**Don't trust unfamiliar websites** - Use secure, reputable retailers with real contact information and transparent return policies. If prices seem impossibly low or the site looks poorly maintained, steer clear. Sticking with local businesses—online or in person—keeps your dollars in the community and reduces risk.

**Don't overlook return policies** - Before checking out, understand whether refunds, exchanges, or final-sale rules apply. A quick review saves frustration later.

Smart shopping keeps the holidays merry!



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# STRANGE BUT TRUE

by Lucie Winborne

*Manhattan, New York's most popular transportation hub, Grand Central Terminal, is radioactive.*

*The tradition of serving ham at Christmas comes from the Norse festival of Yule, where a boar was sacrificed to honor the deity Freyr.*

*Ancient Romans gave a hard "no" to the practice of eating butter, with Pliny the Elder referring to butter as "the choicest food among barbarian tribes." Why? Mainly because they used it for treating burns and thus thought of it as a medicinal salve rather than food.*

*Pencils have never been made from lead.*

*The leather diamond patch on the outside of backpacks, called a "lash tab," was initially used by mountaineers to secure their gear.*

*Harvard University is older than calculus.*

*The blocks of the Washington Monument are held together by gravity and friction, rather than mortar.*

*"Watching paint dry" is an actual occupation for some folks, requiring an observation of the changing colors and particles of the substance as it dries, both on walls and under a microscope.*

*America's first dentist, John Baker, trained Paul Revere to be a dentist.*

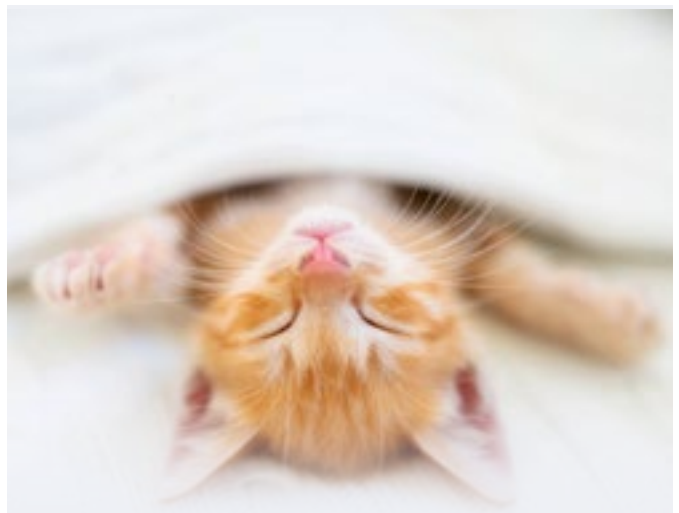
*Canadians eat more macaroni and cheese than any other nation in the world.*

*No matter how badly fingerprints are damaged, they will still grow back in their original pattern.*

*Eggnog originated from the medieval hot, milky ale-like drink known as a posset.*

*The band name Imagine Dragons is an anagram. Lead singer Dan Reynolds described it as a "phrase that meant something to all of us," but the group has yet to confirm what that is.*

*Sea otters have the thickest fur of any mammal, at 1 million hairs per square inch.*



## RELAX

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## ***Always Remember***

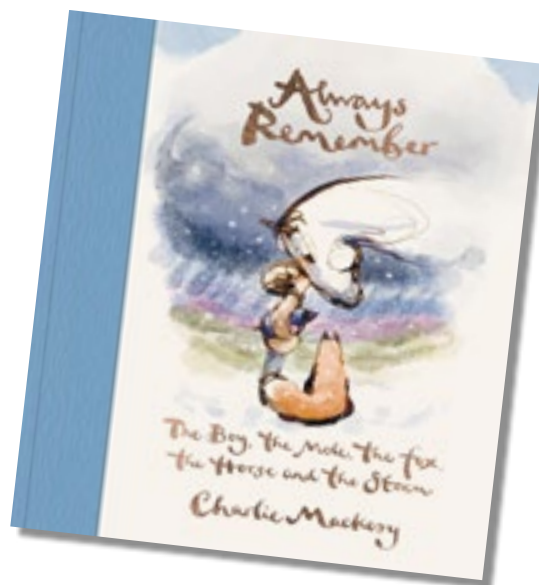
December is always my favorite time to review because I choose a children's book, hoping that kids will receive a book for the holidays. Books are not as popular gifts as they once were, so I try to pick carefully. I have rarely been more sure of a book recommendation than this one, *Always Remember: The Boy, The Mole, The Fox, The Horse and The Storm*. This is the second book in this series by author, illustrator, Charlie Mackesy. I call it a second, rather than a sequel because each book is a stand alone. But if you have one, you will want the other.

The characters are a tightly bonded quartet of unlikely friends with no names. They don't need names because they come alive through the text and illustrations. They have no adult supervision, only each other and the kind of endless, adventurous free time that invokes real childhood days.

That is the unusual thing about this book, it can suspend time, making an adult reader feel like a child again. The text is suitable for a child or an adult. The undercurrent of theme running through this book are the feelings of self-doubt the boy experiences while weathering the storms of life which while mature, are tempered by the telling, done with gentleness, love and hope, so much hope. The boy embodies the universal human condition, he is all of us.

Mackesy is at his core, an artist. His illustrations are simple, spare, linear, sometimes slightly unfinished but always circular, suggesting movement that brings your eye back to the center. Then, every few pages there is a finely detailed illustration with color, as if the pages preceding it have evolved into it. So compelling are the images, that if you didn't also read the equally artistic, inky text, you would still comprehend the entire story.

This hardback book is gorgeous, inside and out. The creamy, sketchbook pages are so thick it feels like



AVAILABLE ON  
**amazon**

Author and Illustrator: Charlie Mackesy  
Publisher: Penguin Books

you are turning two pages at once. There is navy blue satin bookmark attached adding to the luxurious feel. The pages are not numbered, the magic of Mackesy is that he breaks all the rules, but I counted them at 128, just the right amount to make a child feel like they have a big kid book in their hands.

Read this to your child when they are having a bad day, then read it to yourself. The first book is a global bestseller and this book published in October is already a NY Times Bestseller. They are both instant classics, shelf worthy books. As Mackesy writes in the forward, "This book is for everyone, whatever age you are, and I hope it helps you remember that you are loved, and you matter. You are brave and magnificent."

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# Holiday **BITES**

Nothing says party like an enticing cupcake. This easy Christmas-themed recipe is sure to delight all your guests.

## Festive Cupcakes

**INGREDIENTS** ( Makes 12 Cupcakes)

- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
- 2 eggs, at room temperature
- ¾ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 2 cups 35% heavy whipping cream
- 1 cup fresh cranberries
- A few sprigs of fresh rosemary



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line 12 muffin cups with paper liners.
2. In a bowl, combine the flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
3. In another bowl, cream the butter and powdered sugar together with an electric hand mixer until light and fluffy (about two to three minutes). Add the vanilla. Incorporate the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
4. Gradually add the dry ingredients and milk to the wet mixture, alternating between the two.
5. Pour the mixture into the 12 prepared muffin cups.
6. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean. Let cool completely before decorating.
7. Meanwhile, pour the white sugar into the cream and beat with an electric hand mixer until stiff peaks form. Top the cupcakes with whipped cream, cranberries and rosemary, arranging the rosemary to resemble holly.

# History of Our Hamlets

History of Our Hamlets is sponsored by



*Photos and recollections courtesy of Diane Galusha,  
Historical Society of the Town of Middletown*

These three photographs were all taken in Arkville in the first quarter of the last century. They are a study in contrast!

The congregation of the Methodist Church (top right) wore their Sunday best for the portrait on the church steps, while the folks at the Burhorns (bottom right) over at what had been the Pakatakan Artists Colony tried various disguises at a costume party.

Meanwhile, over on Dry Brook Road, the guests at Kolbert House (bottom left) were dressed for comfort on a lazy summer day.







# Green living

## 10 Tips for a Greener Christmas and New Year

The holidays bring a feeling of abundance—good food, sparkling décor, thoughtful gifts, and joyful get-togethers. All that celebrating can add up environmentally, though. Make your winter gatherings a little greener with these 10 simple tips:

1. Buy food for your feasts from local shops
2. Choose reusable or recycled wrapping for your gifts
3. Carpool or take public transportation whenever possible
4. Avoid disposable or fragile decorations, like helium balloons and paper lanterns
5. Sort your waste carefully
6. Prevent food waste by preparing smaller portions and using containers for leftovers
7. Use washable dishes and utensils
8. Opt for practical, second-hand gifts, gifts from holiday markets or opt for presents like show tickets or activities
9. Select your outfits from local thrift stores, rent them or support local designers and boutiques
10. Serve your guests locally made alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages

This year, proudly join the global movement of eco-friendly celebrations—our planet will thank you!



## Thought for the Day

"The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits."

-- Albert Einstein

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# Celebrate Responsibly: **DON'T DRIVE IMPAIRED**

Do you have a few Christmas or New Year's parties to attend this year? Will you be driving yourself—and possibly others—late at night? To ensure your festivities don't turn into a tragedy, make it a priority to keep yourself and those around you safe by never getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol or drugs.

## **MULTIPLE EFFECTS**

Driving while impaired poses serious risks, including:

- Slowing your reaction time
- Reducing your field of vision
- Impairing your ability to maneuver
- Decreasing your concentration
- Affecting your short-term memory

These impairments can lead to a serious accident and significant legal consequences, including the loss of your driver's licence.

## **SENSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Fortunately, you can easily avoid risky situations with some simple strategies. If possible, consider staying overnight. If that's not an option, plan your return trip with a designated driver, a taxi, a ride-share service, or public transit.

Remember, even small amounts of alcohol can impair your judgment. In other words, just because you feel fine doesn't mean you're fit to drive. Although provincial laws permit a maximum blood alcohol concentration (BAC) somewhere in the range of 0.05 to 0.08 per cent (50 to 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood), this doesn't guarantee your safety behind the wheel.

Don't contribute to accident statistics linked to alcohol or drug use while driving. Before you hit the road this holiday season, ensure you're completely fit to drive. Stay safe and enjoy the festivities!



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