

Merry Christmas!

from

Kyle Seeback, M.P. Dufferin-Caledon



Christmas is here Dufferin-Caledon!

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. Part of that is how the Christmas season brings our community together. Everywhere you turn, you see acts of kindness and generosity.

Dufferin-Caledon has a huge heart and at Christmas, it's on full display with the outpouring of support for our local community groups and charities. It makes me incredibly proud!

The last year has been difficult for many families.

If you can, I encourage you to support any of our local community groups or charities in Dufferin-Caledon to help them ensure everyone enjoys a Merry Christmas.

On behalf of my family and my office, I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2025!

Sincerely,
Kyle Seeback, M.P.
Dufferin-Caledon



Kyle Seeback, M.P. Dufferin-Caledon
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180 Broadway, 3rd Floor, Unit B
Orangeville, ON L9W 1K3
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Website: www.kyleseeback.ca
E-mail: kyle.seeback@parl.gc.ca

Kyle Hosts Grand Opening of New Office Location

On December 5, 2024, Kyle was joined by many members of the community for the Grand Opening of his new office location. The new office is located at 180 Broadway, 3rd Floor, Unit B, Orangeville. It remains fully staffed to serve you and the services he's always provided will continue at the new location.

Please stop by during regular office hours regarding any federal concerns you may have.

Kyle can also be reached by telephone at 519-941-1832 (toll free at 1-866-941-1832) or by e-mail at kyle.seeback@parl.gc.ca



Christmas in the Park



Don't forget to visit Christmas in the Park with your loved ones during the holidays. The Orangeville Optimist Club has been bringing this free annual event to our community for 32 years. It's full of incredible light displays, illuminated characters, and great music. It's something the whole family can enjoy together, running now until December 31st.

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PAULA BROWN PHOTO

NEW YEAR, NEW LEADERS: Dufferin County Council held their final meeting of the 2024 term on Dec. 12 and voted in their leaders for the 2025 term. Mulmur Mayor Janet Horner was elected as the 148th Warden of Dufferin County with at 8-7 vote against fellow nominee Lisa Post. Council also selected the Chairs for their four committee, who included Orangeville Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor, Mono Mayor John Creelman, Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills, and Melancthon Deputy Mayor James McLean.

Mulmur Mayor elected as Dufferin County Warden

Written By **PAULA BROWN**
 LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Mulmur Mayor Janet Horner has been elected as the 148th Warden of Dufferin County.

Horner was elected to the position, which she will hold for the 2025 term, during a Dufferin County Council meeting on Thursday (Dec. 12) at the Edelbrock Centre in Orangeville. She will be taking over the role of Warden from Melancthon Mayor Darren White, who held the position during 2024 as well as from 2019 to 2021.

Prior to the election for the 2025 Warden of Dufferin County, White provided a reflection on his term and highlighted the need for change as well as better communication between councillors moving forward.

"Change can create exciting opportunities for growth and new experiences, even if it sometimes feels a bit intimidating at first. When we look or talk about change, we have to keep in mind that growth and comfort do not coexist....Our county, with its growth projections and its very needs moving forward demands from us change. It begs of us to have difficult conversations and make sometimes difficult decisions, refusing to take some of those leaps will serve no one well," said White.

"As a council, we need to communicate more, and we need to communicate better. We need to talk more and listen more to the concepts of others and show respect for those that would try to bring forth new ideas," he added.

Councillors casted their votes for the nominees via an anonymous electronic ballot. Coun. Lisa Post, the mayor of Orangeville, and Horner were both nominated for the position as the head of County Council. Horner was officially elected following an 8-7 vote.

"I'm really proud of Janet and I work really well with her. She's going to do an excellent job," said Post, following the election. "I didn't run against her because it was her by any means. I ran for a different style of leadership in the community, and I'm really proud of Janet. I wish her all the best."

The Warden is the head of Dufferin County Council and acts as the chief executive officer (CEO) for the County, leading Council meetings, and providing representation at functions.

With Horner's election as the 148th Warden of Dufferin County, she joins a small list of Mulmur council representatives who have been elected and served in the position.

The first Mulmur Council member to hold the role of Warden of Dufferin County was Colwell Graham in 1882. The last Mulmur council member to be elected as the head of County Council was Paul Mills in 2018.

Horner has served as the Mayor of Mulmur Township for the last six years, and prior to that she sat as a councillor for four years.

"I'm honoured, because it's my peers that have put their faith in me to be their spokesperson and speak on behalf of Dufferin



PAULA BROWN PHOTO

CANDIDATES: Mulmur Mayor Janet Horner (left) and Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post (right) were nominated candidates for the 2025 Warden of Dufferin County.

County, in and outside of the county," said Horner. "When your peers recognize that you can do the job, the that means a lot."

Orangeville Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor was selected as Chair of the Infrastructure and Environmental Services Committee, Mono Mayor John Creelman will again lead the General Government Services Committee, Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills will oversee the Community Development and Tourism Committee, and Melancthon Deputy Mayor James McLean will take on the role of Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee.

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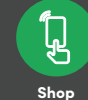
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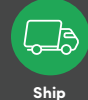
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Shelburne–Orangeville transit route extended until March 2025

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Riders who use the weekday transit system to travel between Shelburne and Orangeville will continue to have access to the service as the County of Dufferin pushes the agreement end date with Grey County to finish plans for transportation solutions.

During their meeting on Thursday (Dec. 12), Dufferin County Council approved a motion to continue supporting Route 2 of the Grey Transit Route (GRT) until March 31.

Dufferin County Council initially approved a motion in September to provide subsidy funding of \$15,000 to the GRT program on a month-to-month basis for up to four months.

The decision to financially support the temporary service extension of Route 2, came after Dufferin County Council received a letter from Brian Milne, Warden of Grey County, in August regarding Grey County's intentions of discontinuing the route.

In the letter, Milne said Grey County had made the decision to discontinue the stops in Shelburne due to over-capacity use from Shelburne residents.

The letter also noted that for the service to continue for riders catching the bus in Shelburne, a second vehicle of the same size and seating, which is 10 passenger seats, would be required for Route 2 and would need to be funded by the County of Dufferin.

Despite mixed ideas on the longevity and cost of supporting the system, Dufferin County Council approved funding the service from September to the end of the year, allowing for the County's transit task force to explore the feasibility of the service and other options.

In October, Dufferin County's Health and Human Services Committee received a report from Brenda Wagner, director of human services, on implementing enhancements to the existing Older Adults Transportation service to address transportation issues.

The Older Adults Transportation Service, operated by the County of Dufferin, is currently limited to medical transportation,

but enhancing it would provide older adults with access to grocery shopping and pharmacy visits through weekly group trips.

According to the report, there are four different potential routes and these trips would be done using the Dufferin County-owned bus, which accommodates up to 18 passengers.

The recommended routes include:

- Route 1 (Orangeville West): scheduled pickups in Grand Valley, Amaranth, East Garafraxa and west Orangeville
- Route 2 (Orangeville East): scheduled pickups in Mono and east Orangeville
- Route 3 (Shelburne West): scheduled pickups in Melancthon and Shelburne
- Route 4 (Shelburne East): scheduled pickups in Mulmur and Shelburne

In the case of Routes 1 and 2, clients would be transported to a shopping centre in Orangeville where they could access groceries and pharmacy, while Routes 3 and 4 would have clients transported to a shopping centre in Shelburne to access groceries and pharmacy.

The report noted that the routes would be

subject to change based on usage patterns and community feedback.

The implementation of the enhanced Older Adult Transportation program was recommended to begin as of January 2025 but was pushed due to undisclosed matters with the Town of Orangeville.

"It's come to light that there are some additional details that still need to be worked out with the Town of Orangeville before we can start operating that service and transfer over from Grey County to Orangeville," said County Coun. Lisa Post, who's also Orangeville's mayor. "It is unlikely that those particulars will be able to be worked out in time for the service to start on Jan. 2 so the CAO proactively reached out to Grey County to inquire as to whether they could extend the service and continue to run it until March 31, giving us a three-month buffer to get all the details worked out with Orangeville."

The County of Dufferin said it is working on providing an ongoing solution for transit after the March deadline. Updates and more information will be shared as it becomes available.

Town signs agreement to implement automated speed enforcement

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shelburne Town Council has approved an agreement to start a three-year pilot project for automated speed enforcement to address traffic concerns in the community.

During their meeting on Dec. 9, Shelburne Town Council received a report from Jennifer Willoughby, director of legislative services, regarding the implementation of automated speed enforcement (ASE). The report recommended the Town of Shelburne enter a service agreement with Global Traffic Group Ltd. to implement a three-year pilot project.

According to the Council report, the

Town of Shelburne is expected to begin the pilot project during the third quarter of 2025 and will receive five cameras, which will be mounted onto existing posts or poles in selected locations. The cameras will collect data on traffic counts, vehicle speeds, stop data and driver behaviour.

"Global and Town staff will determine and implement the number of zones, operating hours and commencement dates for our program," said Willoughby.

Traffic calming is a common physical approach to slowing down traffic and altering motorist behaviour on streets for drivers to have better attention to their surroundings. The goal of traffic calming is to ensure that roadways are safe for all users, such as mo-

torists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

In recent years, the Town of Shelburne has implemented various traffic calming measures including, digital radar speed signs, enhanced crosswalk signage, expansion of designated/arked on-street parking, flexible bollards for seasonal lane delineation, pavement markings, seasonal speed cushions, and the reduction of speed limits on Town streets to 40 km.

"Further research and investigation recommends that adding automated speed enforcement as an added measure to further enforce speed limits, to assist OPP and the Town, for continuous provision of a safe and efficient road network," reads the report.

Willoughby noted that the Highway Traffic Act permits the use of ASE in community safety zones and in school zones.

In 2021, the majority of streets in Shelburne were designated as community safety zones, and Shelburne Town Council approved and passed the motion to reduce the speed limit in town, with the exception of connecting link roadways, to 40 km/h.

A 90-day public awareness period is required before starting the ASC program and an additional 90-day awareness signage must be posted each time the speed device is moved to a new location.

The implementation of the pilot project was included in the 2025 Budget Framework and is based on a revenue-neutral structure.

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society celebrates its 8000th spay, neuter surgery in 2024

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society has achieved a significant milestone to close out 2024.

The not-for-profit organization is celebrating the completion of over 8,000 spay/neuter surgeries this year.

"That's not just a number – it's the prevention of an estimated 480,000 unwanted puppies and kittens who may have ended up in shelters, or on the street," said the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society in a press release.

Since launching high-volume spay/neuter services in 2009, the Ontario SPCA has performed more than 150,000 surgeries at its

clinics in Barrie and Stouffville.

"These clinics, which also provide basic veterinary care for families without the means to take their animal to a local veterinarian for routine care, ensure no pet is left behind – regardless of income or geography," said the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society's press release.

The Society's efforts extend even further with its SPCA Mobile Animal Wellness Services unit, which has been stationed in Sudbury for the past two years to deliver essential care to Northern communities, and with MASH-style pop-up clinics ready to make an impact wherever they're needed.

"Spaying or neutering your pet is more than just a procedure – it's a commitment to tackling overpopulation and keeping animals safe," said Dr. Jill Kirk, chief veterinary officer at the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society. "By providing accessible services, we're giving communities the tools to make a lasting difference for animals and their families."

The benefits of spay/neuter extend beyond population control.

"Fixed pets are less likely to roam, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries, and they experience lower health risks, reduced stress, and even improved behavior. It's a simple act with transformative results," said the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society's press release.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

HELPING HAND: The Rotary Club of Shelburne presented the Shelburne Food Bank with a cheque for \$11,500 during their Nutcracker Gala on Dec. 12. The donation will go towards the food bank's van campaign, and is part of the Rotary's commitment to support them reaching their fundraising goal.

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OPINION

Christmas wishes

It is the Christmas season – the season of peace on earth, goodwill toward men and women.

It is the season of giving and receiving. Some people prefer receiving instead of giving. I've known some people who thought they deserved gifts, and expensive ones, and could not care less about giving to others.

I try to avoid that kind of person. I've known others, whose greatest pleasure is seeing the smile on someone's face when they present them with a holiday gift.

I never expect much in the way of gifts during the holidays. For me, the big deal of getting a gift is the fact that someone was thinking about me.

Last Christmas, someone I know gave me a Tim Horton's gift card – I was thrilled. I wasn't thrilled because I could get several cups of my favourite beverage, I was happy that she actually thought of me, and took the effort to get me something she knew I would like.

To me, that is the spirit of the season. For many people, the gift that brings back the most memories, or may be cherished more than others, will not be the

most expensive or elaborate gift. It may be something simple or understated, but touches your heart.

When I was around eight years old, I was with my mother in a local Playtime Store. I can't remember why we were there, but I'm pretty sure she was surreptitiously buying Christmas presents while I wandered the aisles, star-struck by the rows and rows of toys.

When we went up to the counter to pay, I noticed a bin full of rubber action-type figures. I picked up a little rubber man.

He looked like he was hanging by his elbows in some medieval prison. He was wearing torn green pants held up by a rope. His feet were bare, his eyes bulged from their sockets, and his tongue was hanging out of his mouth.

I thought this was hilarious. I laughed and laughed, and poked my mom and showed it to her.

She took a cursory glance, nodded, said nothing, and went back to paying her bill. I laughed some more and put the little rubber man back in the bin.

A week later, it was Christmas morning. I emptied out my Christmas stocking to see what Santa had brought during the night.

A few things fell out onto the carpet, including the little rubber medieval prisoner.

I guess my mom really did notice how much I liked this ridiculous little trinket probably made in some Japanese factory that sold for .29 cents.

I took that little rubber man and hung him from the light fixture in my bedroom, where he stayed for the next 14 years.

When I moved away, I took him with me. In every place I have ever lived, that little rubber man has had a place of honour in some way or another.

Currently, he is hanging from the light fixture in my home office. Most of the time I forget he is even there.

Once in a blue moon, I look up and see those bulging eyes looking down at me – and I still laugh.

Why does such a small, inexpensive gift still mean something to me after all those years?

I think it just reminds me of a happy time in my life. A time when dinner was made for me every night, and I had a place to sleep. A time when there were no bills to pay, no taxes to pay, no car problems to fix, and my biggest problem was deciding

what I was going to do on a Saturday afternoon.

One day I asked my dad, "why is there a Mother's Day, and a Father's Day, but no kid's day?"

He replied, "every day is kid's day. One day you'll understand."

He was right. So this Christmas, when everyone is opening their presents, take a moment and think about the best gift you really could have, and would it even cost anything?

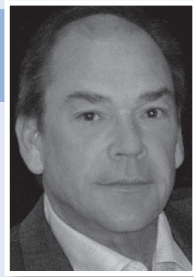
The best gift I could have is to see that my family and friends are happy, successful, and healthy. Nothing else really matters.

Although, I must admit having a red Ford Mustang 5 L convertible, would make me pretty happy. However, that's something I'm going to have to earn myself.

Enjoy your holidays, visit your friends and family, and renew old acquaintances. Revel in this time and don't waste a moment.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all, a good night.

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Syria: Another miracle, please

They're still celebrating the miraculous fall of the Assad regime in Damascus, and the killing has stopped in Syria except for parts of the north, east and south. So what are the odds that the man whose fighters brought down the regime, Ahmed al-Sharaa, can bring peace, prosperity and even democracy to Syria?

Sharaa, until recently known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, is an Islamist who started out in al-Qaeda. He is therefore still listed as a terrorist, which he is not, or at least not any more – but as an Islamist he would normally reject 'modern' forms of Islam that permit abominations like democracy and equal rights for women.

That would not endear him even to Sunni Muslims (70 per cent of Syria's population). Sharaa is Sunni himself, but most of them would see his Islamist doctrines as extreme. And he really frightens the 30 per cent of Syrians who belong to various religious minorities: Alawites, Ismailis, mainstream Shia Muslims, Christians, and Druze.

To make matters worse one of the Muslim minorities, the Alawites, has effectively run the country for the past 53 years under the Assad family, father and son. The other minorities tacitly backed Alawite rule because they feared Sunni domination – and over those years hundreds of thousands of innocent people, mostly Sunnis, were tortured and murdered.

Now an explicitly Islamist Sunni force called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has overthrown the Assad regime. Sharaa promises that the rights of all minorities will be respected and the new Syria will be democratic, but he would say that at this stage, wouldn't he?

One might also mention the country's ethnic diversity (Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Druze), the fact that Syria has just been through a 13-year civil war that has left half the population refugees either at home or abroad, and the presence of foreign troops (Turkish, Russian, Israeli and American) on its soil, all with blood on their hands.

Finished yet? No. The new HTS-appointed government in Damascus is dead broke, with no immediate source of income except its Turkish backers. All the minorities are heavily armed, and HTS forces currently control no more than a quarter of the country's territory.

Israel has just destroyed the Syrian air force in more than 300 air strikes and seized land across the Syrian border, just in case it doesn't like the policies of the new government when they finally become clear. The Russians, Assad's biggest backers, may leave, but the Turks are carving out Syrian territory along the border for a buffer zone.

So what is Syria's biggest problem? None of the above. It is the fear that HTS will try to turn Syria into a radical religious dictatorship like Afghanistan.

That would terrify not only the Americans, the Russians, and the various Shia countries and minorities of the Middle East, but also all the non-extremist Sunni states in the region. Syria would be isolated and stigmatized as a terrorist state, its people would start fleeing again, and the killing would doubtless also re-start before long.

The best insurance against this disaster would be a secular democracy where religious beliefs are a strictly private matter, but it's unlikely that HTS will permit that. So what's the least bad available option? Perhaps some version of the old Ottoman millet system, where every religious group ran its own affairs but Sunni Turks made the big

decisions.

In the Syrian case, it would be Sunni Arabs making the big decisions, while the other religious groups (and also an ethnic group, in the case of the Kurds) would have broad autonomy in matters closer to home.

If this sounds a bit like the old Lebanon, which broke down in a 15-year civil war and never really recovered, well, yes, it is. But that Lebanese state might still be functioning today if it had not been destroyed by the Palestinians and the Israelis. It wasn't a full democracy, but there was at least the rule of law and freedom of speech.

Even this kind of compromise will be hard for Ahmed al-Sharaa and HTS to accept, however, because fundamentalists of any variety have a big problem with secular states. If they truly believe in their version of God, then they should do what he wants – and what he wants, in the Islamist and most other fundamentalist versions of God, is not a secular state.

Not to do God's will, when it is in your power to do it, is definitely a sin. As the Vatican used to put it in the bad old days, "Error has no rights."

Even if Sharaa can talk himself into accepting a democratic and secular state, it's an open question whether the men around him can. (They are all men, of course.) What Syria needs is another miracle.

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SPORTS

CDDHS Royals juniors in second place after win over Westside

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) Royals junior boys' basketball team are in second place in the District 4 standings after their second win this season.

The Royals hosted the Westside Secondary School Thunder from Orangeville at the gym at CDDHS on Wednesday, Dec. 11.

CDDHS took an early lead in the game and kept up the pressure for all four quarters. At the half, the Royals were leading 38-15.

The Thunder tried to respond but couldn't match the Royal's scoring in both the third and fourth quarters.

The Royals left the court with a 56-32 win – their second win for the season.

"We played a really good game," summed up Royal's player Cooper Ferguson after the game. "Our bench really stepped up and started playing hard. Our scoring and passing was probably the best part of our offence today – we would pass, cut, then get open. We were better defensively today, and we score more in all four quarters and we just played better than they did. I feel we should be good the whole season, we just got to beat Erin – they're our main competition. We practice a lot and we've got to be able to be ready for any competition."

There are five high schools entered in the District 4 junior competition this season. They will play an eight-game regular season schedule before going into playoffs.

Only the top four teams earn a berth in



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO
SECURING SECOND PLACE: The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals junior boys' basketball team took on the Thunder from Westside Secondary School in Orangeville in the gym at CDDHS on Wednesday, Dec. 11. The Royals won this game 56-32 win. They are now in second place in the District 4 standings.

the semi-final playoff round.

Erin District High School has moved into first place after going undefeated in their first three games.

Centre Dufferin is in second place with a 2-1 record.

Emmanuel Christian High School is in

third place, followed by Wellington Heights Secondary School and Westside Secondary School.

A lot can happen and the standings can change considerably as the 2024 season plays out and teams gain more confidence on the court.

After the holiday break, the Royals will play two road games against Emmanuel Christian and Wellington Heights.

They will return to their home court at CDDHS on Monday, Jan. 13, when they will host Wellington Heights. Game time is 4 p.m.

Alliston Hornets continue to dominate North Carruthers Division, remain undefeated

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Alliston Hornets continue to dominate the North Carruthers Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League after winning three more games this week.

The Hornets are in first place with an undefeated 24-0 record and 48 points. They are the only undefeated squad in the entire 62-team League.

With three more wins over four days, the

Hornets are now leading the second-place Orillia Terriers by seven points.

Orillia has a 20-4 record including one overtime loss.

The Hornets had wins over the Stayner Siskins, Muskoka Bears and the Midland Flyers.

The Stayner Siskins are in third place in the division with an 18-6 record and 36 points.

In the middle of the pack, the Penetang

Kings have an 11-14 record including two overtime losses. They are followed by the Innisfil Spartans with a 10-18 record, and the Huntsville Otters with 17 points and an 8-18 record including one overtime loss.

The Midland Flyers are in the number seven spot with 5 wins and 11 points.

The newcomers to the league, the Muskoka Bears are having trouble getting start-

ed and have won only three games after 23 times on the ice this season.

This is now the midway point in the 42-game regular season schedule.

Other first-place teams in divisions across the province include the Clarington Eagles, Frankford Huskies, Hanover Barons, Dundas Blues, New Hamburg Firebirds, Essex 73's, and the Exeter Hawks.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

DOMINATING THE DIVISION: The Alliston Hornets played the Muskoka Bears at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Dec. 13. The Hornets won this game 9-1 and continue to lead the North Carruthers division as the first-place team, remaining undefeated after 24 games.

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

AIDAN ROSS

"I started playing club volleyball in Grade ten. I just love the sport and playing with the people that are close to me," explained Centre Dufferin District High School senior volleyball team member Aidan Ross of why he likes the sport. "I love the way the game is played, the pace, the action, and I like connecting with that ball and hearing the crowd. I like the fact that everyone gets a touch – the whole teams has to be involved."

Aidan helped the senior Royals win the District 4 volleyball championship this year.

TEAM:
 CENTRE DUFFERIN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ROYALS SENIOR BOYS VOLLEYBALL

Looking back at 2024: A Year in Review with MP Kyle Seeback

The year is quickly coming to an end and what a year it was locally and nationally. There were many community highlights that made me extremely proud as your Member of Parliament for Dufferin-Caledon. However, it was also a difficult year for many members of our community and Canadians across the country who continue to struggle with the affordability crisis.

Sadly, millions of Canadians continued to go hungry in 2024. Feed Ontario's recently released report cited that in Ontario alone, food banks had to handle 7.7 million visits from over one million residents. Food bank usage has risen in Ontario for eight consecutive years, including here in Dufferin-Caledon. The Orangeville Food Bank experienced a sharp increase, seeing a 19 per cent rise in usage over the last year, which was already the highest in its history.

Throughout 2024, I heard from many of you telling me the dream of homeownership is out of reach. The carbon tax continues to compound the struggles of Canadians. Many of you also contacted me saying that you're feeling less safe in our community.

I, along with all Conservatives, have been working hard to ensure the Trudeau government hears these struggles. We've also been presenting a positive plan to Canadians that will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, and stop the crime. We have common sense solutions that will restore hope and opportunity to Canadians.

Some of the best highlights of 2024 for me involved our community coming together to support and celebrate each other, which Dufferin-Caledon does best. I was honoured to be a part of the Grand Opening of Reese's Rink on February 17, 2024. This new outdoor rink at the Caledon East Community Complex was named after Reese Meyer, a very special young local hockey player for the Caledon Hawks, who tragically, lost his battle with cancer in 2020. I was incredibly touched that his family invited me to participate in the special opening ceremony of the outdoor rink named in his honour. This lasting tribute to Reese gives everyone in our community the opportunity for coming out together to enjoy skating and hockey, just as he did.



Kyle Seeback shares a year-end message.

On July 1st, I saw thousands of you at Caledon Canada Day. I served many of you pancakes while celebrating our great country. Another huge highlight for me was my third annual Hockey Night in Dufferin-Cale-

don (HNDC) on August 14, 2024. It was a massive success thanks to the incredible support of our community. This year, we raised \$150,000! The money will go towards purchasing an MRI machine for our local hospital. In just three short years, HNDC has now raised over \$350,000 for this cause.

Most recently, another special highlight of 2024 for me was the Orangeville Santa Claus Parade on November 16, 2024. I love this annual event, which draws thousands and thousands from within and outside the community. For me, it's the official kickoff of the Christmas season. Not only do I enjoy entering a float in the parade, but it's fantastic to witness the tremendous Christmas spirit it creates bringing us together as a community.

It's been a challenging year, but I remain optimistic about 2025 because I see the resilience and strength of our community and Canadians every day when we pull together during tough times. I'm also looking forward to the promise of a new government next year that will put Canadians first, restoring hope and opportunity for everyone.

Town to supplement rental costs of health centre to retain physicians

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shelburne Town Council will be supplementing the rental cost of a medical facility for three local doctors in 2025.

During their meeting on Dec. 9, Shelburne Town Council received a report from Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Denyse Morrissey regarding the North Dufferin Wellness Centre. Council unanimously supported a recommendation to supplement a rental increase for 2025 in order to continue the retention of family physicians.

Dr. Amy Catania, one of the three physicians at North Dufferin Wellness Centre Primary Care Clinic, delegated to Shelburne Town Council during their Nov. 4 meeting and outlined the issues and challenges they've faced since 2018 as tenants of their building.

In 2018, Dr. Catania and other health care providers in the community came together

to open the North Dufferin Wellness Centre, located at 712 Main Street, as a "patient medical home" or a one-stop medical centre for patients.

The medical and health practitioners located at the North Dufferin Wellness Centre include; the North Dufferin Wellness Centre Primary Care Clinic, consisting of Dr. Amy Catania, Dr. Natasha Gill, and Dr. Sonya Caruso; Shelburne Physio Centre; Shelburne Town Pharmacy; and Hear Right Canada.

Since opening the facility, Dr. Catania said the tenants have dealt with a number of issues and challenges related to the three landlords including bills not being paid, mould, leaks in the roof and basement, property disrepair and animals.

She noted that they've since received a letter indicating their latest landlord's intention to increase their rent.

"I ask you, how much would you tolerate, how much money would you put in yourself before you say 'I can't do this anymore'. We

have to come up with another option or we have to leave and that's the point we're at," said Dr. Catania.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians reported in July that there are about 2.5 million people in Ontario who do not have a family doctor.

According to the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team, the estimated number of local community members needing access to primary and team-based care was over 15,000 as of March 2022.

With the population of the area projected to increase 37 per cent by 2031, Dufferin County and Caledon would require 43 additional family physicians – 14 for Dufferin County and 29 for Caledon – in the next seven years to keep up with population growth.

The report to Shelburne Council indicated that the three physicians at the North Dufferin Wellness Centre see 3,627 patients of which 1,035 or roughly 28 per cent are from Shelburne and 1,550 or 42 per cent are from

Dufferin County.

"All we're asking for is a stable location with a stable landlord. We love Shelburne and we probably care for a bunch of your family member or friends. We know our patients need us. We know there's no public transportation in this community, but we will have to leave if nothing can come out of this."

According to the report the North Dufferin Wellness Centre has a rent of \$23.50 per square foot for 2024 and is expected to increase to \$34.80 per square foot for a total of \$3,138.58 per month in 2025.

"The recommended supplement of \$3,139 represents the actual monthly rental increase that was identified by the doctors when they were last here. That's the difference between what they're paying in rent now," clarified Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills.

The Town of Shelburne will be supplementing the rental cost for the three doctors at North Dufferin Wellness Centre for 2025.

Shelburne Public Library shares weekly news

Holiday Hours:

The Shelburne Public Library is closed from Dec. 24 to 26 and Dec. 31 to Jan. 2. It is open Dec. 27 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and Dec. 28 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Regular hours resume Jan. 3.

Recommended Read

"The Love Elixir of Augusta Stern" by Lynda Cohen Loigman is a heartwarming story that explores how love and healing can be found in unexpected places – and how a bit of magic in each can go a long way.

Why Rose Recommends it: If you're looking for a story with love, loss, and some magic, you're going to enjoy the delight that is The Love Elixir of Augusta Stern! Weaving two separate timelines together, the author

shows us how Augusta came from 1920s Brooklyn to 1980s Florida and the love she lost and rediscovered along the way.

This is a well-researched story, with plenty of detail in both timelines to keep you engaged as a reader, without bogging down the plot.

It was quite an adventure into family dynamics, too, when we see Augusta caring for her patients as a pharmacist, while also turning a blind eye to her Aunt's less traditional remedies when patients sought out her methods. The magic abounds in this one.

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Collections for the day of the holiday and the rest of the week will be shifted to one day later.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 15	December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19	December 20	December 21
December 22	December 23	December 24	CHRISTMAS DAY	December 26	December 27	December 28
double up	December 30	December 31	NEW YEARS DAY	January 2	January 3	January 4
January 5	January 6	January 7	January 8	January 9	January 10	January 11

Monday
ZONE

Tuesday
ZONE

Wednesday
ZONE

Thursday
ZONE

Interruption
no collections

Happy Holidays!

There will be **NO** waste collection on Christmas & New Years Day. Waste collection will be interrupted on Wednesday & Thursday only. Place all Garbage, Blue Boxes & Greens Bins at the curb **ONE DAY LATER** following Christmas & New Years. Waste collection on Monday & Tuesday will remain the same.

Place up to **two (2)** untagged bags/containers of garbage out on your collection day during the week of December 30th.

double up days

REMEMBER!

Always search an item on the **DufferinWaste** app to see if it's acceptable in the Dufferin program **before** placing it in the Garbage, Blue Box or Green Bin.



This holiday season, remember to place the following items in the GREEN BIN:

- All food waste, including bones
- Peelings/egg shells
- Paper plates (non-waxy)
- Paper straws
- Napkins



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BE A HYDRANT HERO



Keep hydrants clear of snow



BE A HYDRANT HERO

Help keep our community safe this winter by clearing snow from fire hydrants and catch basins.

In an emergency, every second counts. By keeping fire hydrants visible and accessible, you ensure that emergency services can respond quickly. Clearing snow from catch basins helps prevent street flooding and icy road conditions, making our roads safer for everyone.

Let's work together to keep our neighborhood safe and sound!
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WINTER SEASON MAINTENANCE



WINTER MAINTENANCE – HOW YOU CAN HELP

We work hard to clear snow and ice from the roads. Sometimes, it can be difficult because of many reasons. Please wait 24 hours after a snowstorm before asking for snow to be cleared.

To help us remove snow quickly, you should:

- Don't park on the road. It makes it hard to clear snow. You can't park on the road from midnight to 8:00 am (By-Law #8-1983).
- Don't put snow on the road. Put all snow on your property. You need to clear your driveway and the entrance.
- Don't put garbage bins on the road, sidewalks, or snowbanks.
- Make sure your car doesn't block sidewalks or roads.
- Keep fire hydrants and drains clear.
- Be polite and give snowplows lots of space. They are working to keep roads safe.
- Be patient. We have a plan to clear roads. Main roads like Greenwood Street, Fiddle Park Lane, Simon Street, and Victoria Street will be cleared first. Then we will clear local streets, crescents, and courts.
- Be kind. Our staff works hard to clear roads and sidewalks as fast as they can.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact jkaske@shelburne.ca or call 519-925-2600 ext. 261.

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Holiday Hours

	Fri., Dec. 27th 10am-5pm	Sat., Dec. 28th 10am-4pm
--	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

Closed: December 24th- 26th & December 30th- January 2nd, 2025

Regular hours resume Friday, January 3rd, 2025.




WINTER PARKING

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AUCTIONS



HOME OF THE 5% BUYERS PREMIUM
 Kidd Family Auctions is calling all buyers and sellers!

DECEMBER 20TH AT 5PM STRAIGHT SHOOTER SIDEKICK SALE

Can't wait for the next Straight Shooter Sale? We've got you covered! Whether you're hunting for more accessories, restocking your ammo, or looking to score top-quality gear, this Sidekick Sale is for you.

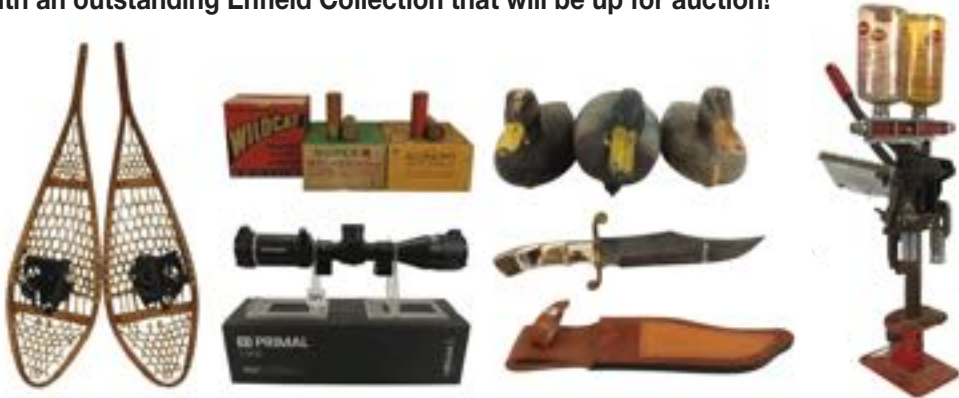
At Kidd Family Auctions, we're proud to deliver the same action-packed excitement you know and love from our legendary Straight Shooter Sales. This Sidekick Sale is your chance to grab more of what you love—making it a must for every outdoor enthusiast.

Preview: Dec 20th, 10a-4p, or call for an appointment on another day. Preview & Pickup will be at our Home Office Base, 438280 4th Line, Melancthon (North of Shelburne).

Lots begin closing at 5pm on Dec 13th.

Features: an overflow of sporting goods, hunting and fishing accessories, edged weapons, ammunition, reloading gear, vintage publications and more. Note: There will not be any firearms in this auction.

Still looking for more? The next Straight Shooter Sale returns on February 18-22 with an outstanding Enfield Collection that will be up for auction!



Call, text or email anytime! Office Phone Number: 519-288-2228
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DECEMBER 27TH AT 5PM CURRENCY COLLECTOR AUCTION

Are you a passionate collector or just starting your journey into the world of currency? The Currency Collector Auction is your golden opportunity to add sought-after treasures to your collection!

From timeless vintage coins to pristine paper currency, this sale features an impressive selection of new and vintage favorites. Whether you're on the hunt for a rare addition or a piece that tells a story, this auction delivers unmatched quality and variety!

Come preview this catalog on Dec 27th from 10am-4pm, or call for appointment on another day, at our Home Office Base 438280 4th Line, Melancthon L9V 1S9.

Features: CCCS Graded \$1-\$50 CDN Banknotes & Silver Dollars; RCM 2019 The Elements \$3 Silver Coins Set; 1937 Bank of Canada \$50 Banknote; 2016 CDN 90th Birthday 1oz Silver Coin; 1923 CDN 25 cent shinplasters; RCM 1976 Montreal Olympiad \$10 Silver Coin; CDN \$5 Misprint Banknote; 2011 RCM 'Gifts From Santa' 50 Cent Coin; RCM Collectible \$20 Fine Silver Coins including 2003 Rocky Mountains; 1944 Germany & France Allied Scripts; 1986 CDN \$2 Sequential Uncirculated Banknotes; RCM Collectible Coloured Coins; CDN & U.S. Silver Dollars; International Coin Sets & Bank Notes and so much more!

Lots begin closing online at 5pm on Dec 27th. **PLACE YOUR BIDS ONLINE NOW.**

Interested in absentee bids? Give us a call if you have any questions. Join in on the fun and let us treat you like family too.



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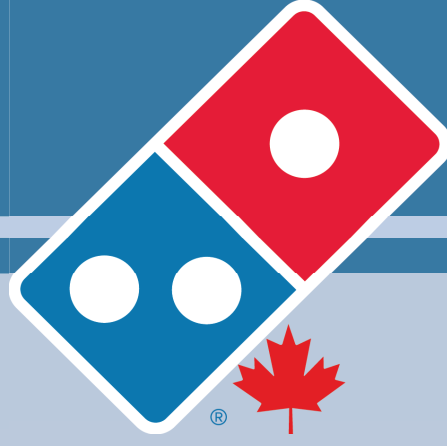


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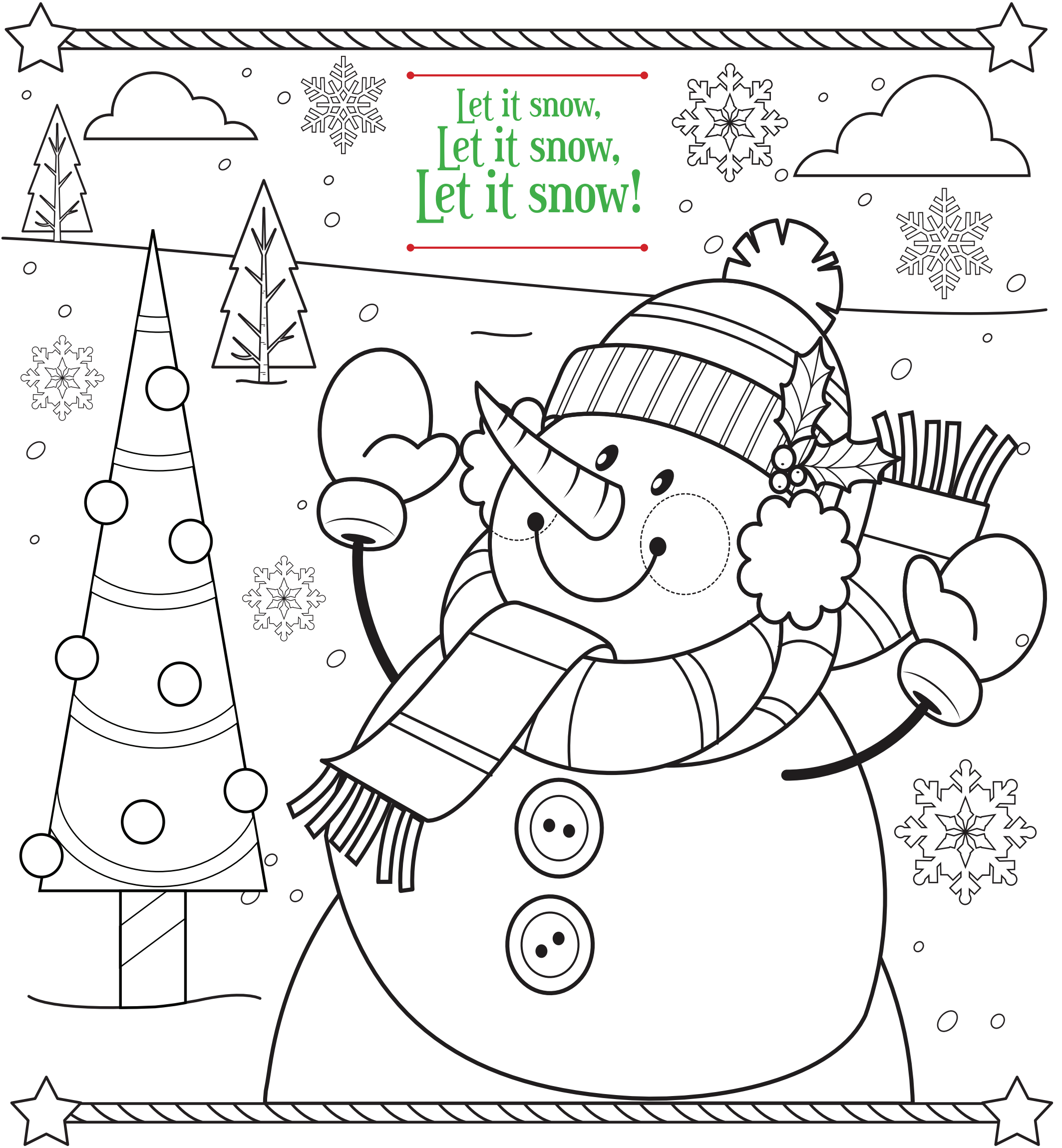
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Get creative with holiday decor

These decorative items add a lot to holiday festivities

It's easy to recognize the holiday season has arrived. Holiday-centric sights and sounds abound this time of year. In fact, the arrival of decorations in stores seemingly comes earlier and earlier each year, perhaps to accommodate people's undying enthusiasm for the holiday season.

Decorating a home or business for the holidays involves some familiar items, but this is a time of year when people can truly make the holidays their own. With that in mind, here are some considerations for decorations and other trinkets that can add a lot of cheer to this already festive time of year.

★**Wreaths:** Wreaths are one of the simplest ways to dress up windows, doors or other areas of a home. These decorative items can be made from various materials. Evergreen boughs are one of the more traditional, but there's also colourful garlands, flowers or even ribbon that can be wrapped to make a wreath.

★**Lights:** Lights are integral parts of both Christian and Jewish holiday celebrations. Lights adorn homes to represent Christ being the Light of the World. In Judaism, the lighting of eight candles for Chanukah represents how a small amount of Temple oil miraculously burned for eight days and nights. Filling a home with artificial lights or candles adds a festive touch to dark winter evenings.

★**Poinsettias:** Poinsettias come in a variety of colours, but red is the hue of choice for holiday decorating. Perhaps surprisingly, poinsettias are tropical plants. The "flowers" you see on the plants aren't flowers at all. They're modified leaves called bracts. If you take good care of poinsettias, they even can be planted outdoors for the summer.

★**Boughs and branches:** One of the easiest ways to add a festive touch to a home for the holidays is with items that likely can be scavenged from outdoors. Take a hike and gather some evergreen boughs, tree branches, pine cones, and holly sprigs, which can be turned into garlands, wreaths or centrepieces. With a little white speckle paint, you can give them a snow-covered look.

Decorating for the holidays is a popular tradition and one that can make spaces even more festive to enjoy. Various items can enhance the ambiance and set the scene for the joyous weeks to come.



The end of the year is upon us and that often involves decorating a home in its holiday finest. Everyone has a different vision of a well-appointed holiday home, but there's always room to make things more unique and creative. These ideas can add a little extra to holiday displays.

Decorate other rooms

Who says holiday decorating is exclusive to living and dining areas? Think about decorating unexpected places, like swapping out everyday towels and shower curtains with something festive. Swags of greenery wrapped in lights can be added to bed frames.

Coordinate the ornaments

Identify a colour theme and then showcase it with ornaments. Think about matching the ornaments to the presents wrapped under the tree as well. Purchase white package paper and colour or paint the

paper to be the same hues as the ornaments on the tree boughs.

It's hip to be square

While round wreaths are traditional, make your own wreaths in a different geometric shape by using wire or another material as the frame. Square wreaths may be unexpected, and you also can turn the square on its side for a diamond shape.

Add a spot of colour

Certain holidays are known for their particular co-

lour palettes, such as red and green for Christmas. But you also can do something unexpected. Whether using a lighter shade of the same colour family or adding an accent colour like purple or blue, you can change things up in a creative way.

Make an unexpected bouquet

Swap flowers for pine cones, berries and greenery in unique vessels. For example, arrange your centrepiece in a tall fountain glass or even a cocktail shaker.

Try a different accent tree

Use a styrofoam cone as the base of a tree for a centrepiece or sideboard. Attach poinsettia branches for a vibrant red tree, or stacked lemons or oranges filled with greenery for a fresh-smelling citrus creation.

Suspend belief

Instead of attaching a tree topper to the tallest bough, hang one from the ceiling just above the tree to add even more whimsy.

Mix and match

When it comes to a holiday table, mix and match table settings for an eclectic tableau.

Shift into neutral

Instead of a large holiday display in familiar colours, rely on neutral, wintry tones that will blend in with the home but add a festive touch. Natural wood, whites and creams, and muted greens can fill spaces. Unique holiday decorations and schemes can be a great way to add new life to a home this December.



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Games add another layer of levity to holiday CELEBRATIONS

The holidays bring together friends, neighbours and family members to celebrate some of the most festive days of the year.

Although celebrants often incorporate traditions they hold dear this time of year, downtime provides an opportunity to embrace new games and entertainment ideas as well.

The following are some fun games to play this holiday season that can help to break the ice and keep everyone laughing.

Reindeer Games

Everyone knows that Rudolph wanted to have fun and participate in "reindeer games," but he was left on the sidelines. Inspired by the tune, everyone can participate in reindeer games at your home. These types of games can include tests of endurance and dexterity, like fruitcake-eating contests, running races or doing hurdle competitions in the yard.

Candy Cane Home Runs

Participants can see how well they can launch a marshmallow into the outfield by hitting it with a candy cane taking the place of the baseball bat. Each participant gets three swings. The person with the most home runs wins.

Guess the Gift

In this game, party hosts wrap up five oddly shaped gifts specifically for the game (the gifts may be oddly shaped or just the wrapping as a decoy). Players take turns trying to guess what is inside and mark down their answers on sheets. One by one the gifts are revealed. If anyone guesses the gift, it is given as a prize. If more than one person guesses a gift, come up with a fun way to break the tie, such as rock, paper, scissors or thumb wrestling.

Holiday Karaoke

Singing traditional carols and popular holiday tunes is not uncommon come December. In this competitive version of karaoke, singers have to keep on singing, even when the lyrics get turned off or covered to



test their true knowledge of these songs.

Present Stackers

This requires keeping a collection of oddly shaped gifts at the ready. Game participants try to stack the presents as tall as they can without them toppling over.

Fishing for Fun

Hang strings on the straight ends of candy canes to fashion fishing poles, with the curved ends serving as the "hooks." Participants try to "fish" smaller candy canes out of a bowl and see how many they can reel in.

The "No L" Game

The game referee has a list of a few categories (i.e., food, sports, colours, cars, etc.) and players are split into a few teams. When the category is called, the teams have to jot down as many words as they can pertaining to the category that do not have a letter "L" in them before a timer runs out.

These are just a few festive ways to have fun with friends or family members during holiday gatherings.

How to keep guests entertained this holiday season

Gatherings with loved ones are a big part of what makes the holiday season such a special time of year.

As families grow and spread out across the map, they may not get too many chances to spend quality time with one another. But the holiday season is a time each year when families make a concerted effort to get together.

As families get together under the same roof during the holiday season, individuals tasked with hosting gatherings tend to have a lot on their plates. Memories tend to be made around the holiday dinner table, but the season also presents ample opportunities to create nights to remember outside the house as well. Hosts can keep the following ideas in mind as they look for ways to entertain guests this holiday season.

★ Take a turn as a tour guide.

Locals may not make the rounds of nearby tourist destinations too frequently, but the holiday season is a great opportunity for hosts to show guests what makes their towns so unique. Serve as a tour guide for

guests on a sightseeing day with visits to local monuments or museums. Wrap the day up at a holiday bazaar where local small business owners have set up shop. This affords guests a chance to tour a new community or a hometown they haven't visited in awhile, and also makes for a great chance for all to squeeze in a little last-minute holiday shopping.

★ Plan an ugly sweater bar crawl.

If hosts and their guests are all of age, an ugly sweater bar crawl can make for a fun night out on the town. Encourage guests to wear an ugly holiday sweater and map out a route and schedule of visits to local bars and restaurants. Hosts must prioritize safety on these types of excursions, so arrange for a bus to take guests from one spot to the next if establishments are far away from one another.

★ Take in some local entertainment.

Whether it's a holiday lighting display show or a local theatre performance of a classic holiday tale like Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol," a night of local live entertainment is a great way for hosts and their guests to get out of the house. Hosts can even book a reservation for a pre-show meal at a local restaurant so they can be free of cooking and give guests their undivided attention.



★ Host a holiday movie night.

Weary travellers who want to stay in may appreciate a holiday movie double feature. Hosts can let guests pick a pair of holiday films and then host a double feature, complete with traditional movie fare like popcorn and candy. Hosts can even offer adult guests a

glass of homemade eggnog during the films to up the holiday ante even further.

Holiday hosts can embrace various ways to entertain guests during a time of year when there's no shortage of fun ways to spend a night.

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GIFTS FOR HOLIDAY HOSTS

Millions of people open their homes to relatives and friends each holiday season. Taking on the task of holiday host can be a labor of love, as it involves not only a commitment of time, but also a financial investment.

Guests benefitting from holiday hosts' hospitality can offer tokens of their appreciation upon arrival. The following are some great gifts to offer hosts this holiday season.

BEVERAGE OF CHOICE: A bottle of wine or another

spirit can be a great gift for holiday gatherings. Let hosts decide if they want to serve it with the meal or save it to enjoy at a later time.

CURATED FOOD BASKET: A guest can put together a basket of different foods, including crackers, cheeses, jams, bread sticks, and other items that can be enjoyed as snacks or appetizers.

HOLIDAY PLANT: A poinsettia or Christmas cactus may be fitting this time of year, and a holiday host can enjoy seeing it grow during the season.

KITCHEN TOOLS OR SERVING ITEMS: A beautiful olive wood serving platter or cutting board might be appreciated, particularly if guests arrive with it covered in a charcuterie spread.

SCENTED CANDLE: Hosts can set the mood and add to the ambiance of an entertaining space with lit, scented candles, which make for a great gift. Guests can inquire as to the hosts' preferred aromas or stick with safe bets like vanilla or cinnamon.

HOLIDAY ORNAMENT OR DECORATIVE PIECE: Guests can offer ornaments for the tree or another decorative item for hosts who are repeat entertainers. Dating the decoration or having it engraved can transform it into a memento hosts can relish through the years.

COMFORT AND CARE ASSORTMENT: Hosting takes effort, so a box of items to pamper holiday hosts can be a great gift. Fill the box with a loofah, bath bombs, shower gel, moisturizing cream, and massage oil.

Happy Holidays

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Fun ways to make Christmas Eve even more special for kids

Parents know that nothing quite matches the excitement young children feel on Christmas Eve. On the day before Christmas, youngsters anxiously anticipate the arrival of Santa Claus that evening, and are perhaps even more excited by the prospects of the following morning, when they'll race into the living room and discover all that the jolly old elf left behind.

Christmas Eve seems to have some built-in magical components, but there are a handful of ways parents can make the day even more special for children.

Track the big guy's movements online

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), has tracked Santa's Christmas Eve flight for more than 60 years. Beginning on Christmas Eve, families can track Santa's movements across the globe at Noradsanta.org. Kids can visit the site to see where Santa is at any given moment on Christmas Eve, growing more excited as the big fella gets closer and closer to their own region.

Create a Christmas Eve craft

Gather children and their cousins and/or friends to create a special Christmas Eve craft or decoration that can be displayed next year. This is a great way to channel youngsters' nervous Christmas Eve energy into something productive, and it can make for a great tradition families can continue even after kids are grown.

Watch a favourite Christmas movie

Hollywood has never shied away from holiday fare, so there's no shortage of festive films to enjoy with youngsters on Christmas Eve. Enjoy a classic like the 1947 film "Miracle on 34th Street" starring Natalie Wood as the adorable "Susan Walker" and Edmund Gwenn as "Kris Kringle," or go with something more recent, such as "The Grinch," the 2018 adaptation of the Dr. Seuss book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

Take a nighttime stroll or drive to see the lights

Lighting displays are another component that makes the holiday season so special. After Christmas Eve dinner, take a stroll through your neighbourhood to see the lighting displays or climb into the car to take in a different neighbourhood's offerings if you're already familiar with those in your own neck of the woods.

Fun books to read to children this holiday season

The holiday season is a special time of year for people of all ages, but children might be the most enthusiastic celebrants come December. Children spend much of the holiday season anticipating the arrival of the man in the red suit, and that enthusiasm can be contagious.

Families have their own unique traditions during the holiday season, but one popular way to harness kids' enthusiasm between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day is to read them holiday stories. There's no shortage of great holiday books for kids, but here are a handful that kids may remember well into adulthood.

★ "The Polar Express," by Chris Van Allsburg: The beloved tale is the story of a young boy who boards a mysterious train bound for the North Pole.

★ "The Littlest Elf," by Brandi Dougherty: Part of a series, this story focuses on a tiny elf named Oliver and a series of misadventures as he navigates his way through Santa's workshop.

★ "Olive, the Other Reindeer," by Vivian Walsh: Olive is no ordinary reindeer. In fact, Olive is a dog who heads to the North Pole believing she is a reindeer. Her decision to join Santa's team ultimately benefits the big man and his trusty reindeer.



★ "The Miracle of the First Poinsettia: A Mexican Christmas Story," by Joanne Oppenheim: A little girl named Juanita is the star of this retelling of a traditional Mexican tale with a valuable lesson.

★ "Gingerbread Mouse: A Christmas Holiday Book for Kids," by Katy Bratun: A fallen tree branch almost ruins Christmas for Mouse, whose determination and resourcefulness mixed in with a little Christmas magic ensures she finds a place to call home in time for the holidays.

★ "A Night in Santa's Great Big Bag," by Kristin Kladstrup: Santa saves the day in this tale starring a young boy's favourite stuffed animal, whose excitement for Christmas compels him to climb into Santa's big bag of presents on Christmas Eve.

★ "Santa Claus and the Three Bears," by Maria Modugno: This twist on the popular tale "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" finds three unsuspecting bears encountering a familiar fellow in a red suit upon returning home after a nighttime walk.

★ "Twas the Night Before Christmas: Edited by Santa Claus for the Benefit of Children of the 21st Century," by Clement C. Moore: Parents will appreciate this updated version of the popular tale that, among other things, has removed the reference to Santa smoking.

★ "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" by Dr. Seuss: Children can join generations of fans that came before them as they hear the redemption story of the Grinch who was once determined to ruin Christmas for the happy people of Who-ville.

★ "The Nutcracker," by the New York City Ballet: The classic story is retold based on famed choreographer George Balanchine's production.

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Reading new and classic holiday stories to children is one tradition any family can embrace.

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Craft an edible HOLIDAY classic from the comforts of home

Symbolism features prominently throughout the holiday season. When walking around in December, or even earlier, individuals can't help but notice lighting displays, decked out Christmas trees in town centres and other symbols that are synonymous with the holiday season.

Gingerbread houses may or may not be on public display, but these impressive constructions are yet another notable sign that the holiday season has arrived. As families prepare to celebrate the holiday season, they can work together to create this impressive, and edible, "Gingerbread House" courtesy of Lines+Angles.



Ginger Bread House

Ingredients:

FOR THE HOUSE:

3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra as needed
 3 tbsp cornstarch
 1 tbsp ground ginger
 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
 3/4 tsp salt
 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
 3/4 cup molasses, warmed
 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE FROSTING:

2 cups confectioners' sugar, plus extra as needed
 1 1/2 tbsp meringue powder
 1 - 2 tbsp warm water

TO DECORATE:

Assorted colourful candies, sugared chocolate candies, round peppermint candies, candy canes, etc.

Directions:

- For the gingerbread: Combine the flour, cornstarch, spices, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Stir well and set aside.
- Beat the softened butter with the molasses and vanilla in a separate mixing bowl until pale and creamy, about 2 to 3 minutes.
- Beat in the flour mixture in 4 additions, mixing well between additions until you have a rough dough; add more flour as needed to form a stiff dough.
- Turn out and knead briefly. Shape into a round, wrap in parchment paper, and chill for 2 hours.
- After chilling, preheat the oven to 325 F. Grease and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper.
- Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Roll out to about 0.333" thickness on a lightly floured surface.
- Cut out two rectangles approximately 4.5" x 4" for the roof. Cut out 2 pointed rectangles approximately 5" at their tallest points and 3.5" wide at the base; these will be the front and back of the house as per the image. Make sure that one side has a round window cut out.
- Using some of the remaining dough, cut out the 2 rectangles to be the sides of the house, approximately 3" x 4" in diameter. Use the remaining dough to cut out 4 even rectangles, approximately 2" x 1.5", to shape the chimney.
- Arrange the pieces across the baking sheets. Bake for about 25 minutes until browned and dry to the touch. Remove to cooling racks to cool.
- For the frosting: Combine the confectioners' sugar, meringue powder and 2 tablespoons warm water in a large mixing bowl.
- Beat with an electric mixer until the frosting is thick and glossy, about 4 to 5 minutes; beat in more confectioners' sugar if too thin and more water if too thick.
- Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a thin, round nozzle. Chill for 15 minutes.
- To decorate: Using the frosting as 'glue,' assemble the chimney using the 4 even rectangles of gingerbread. Let dry and set.
- Start to assemble the rest of the house by glueing the pieces together as per the image, attaching the front and back of the house to the sides before attaching the roof in place. Let set dry and set at each building interval.
- Once the sections are dry, pipe more frosting onto the edges of the roof and down their sides, shaped as icicles.
- When the chimney is set, attach it to the top, cutting the pieces to fit if necessary, and decorating the outside with frosting.
- To decorate: Attach the assorted candies to the house, decorating the roof with a tiled pattern using the frosting.
- Let the house dry and set until ready to serve.

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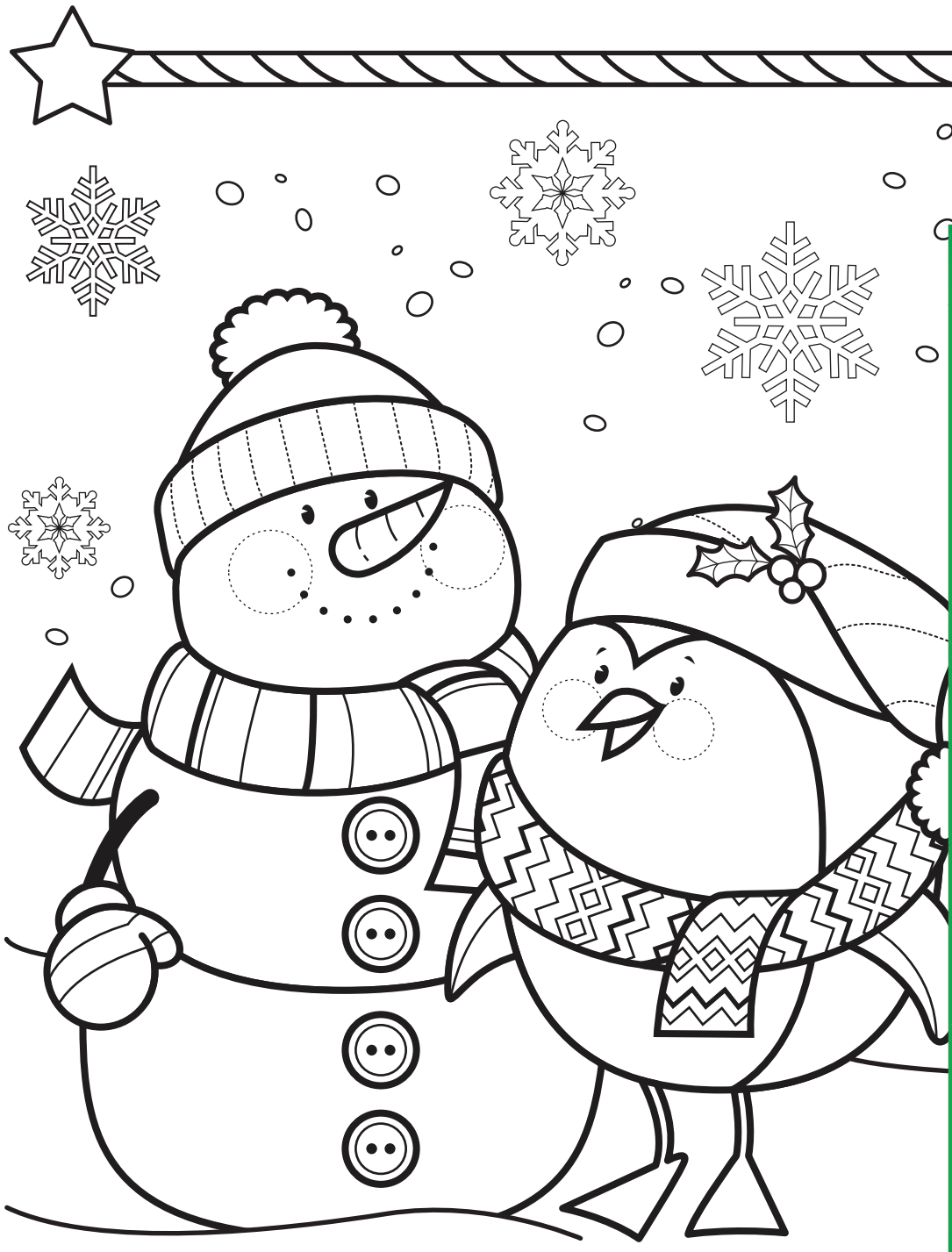


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These colourful cookies are tailor-made for family baking sessions

Christmas Biscuits

Makes approximately 24 cookies
Preparation time: 1 hour, 20 minutes ★ Cooling time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

FOR THE DOUGH:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 1 1/3 cups confectioner's sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 3/4 cup almond meal
- 1 cup unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tbs cold water
- 1/2 tsp fine salt

FOR THE ICING AND DECORATION:

- 4 cups confectioner's sugar
- 3 tbs meringue powder
- 7 tbs warm water, combined with 1 tsp vanilla extract, assorted food colour (e.g., red, pink and turquoise), assorted coloured sugar crystals (e.g., red, pink and white)

1. For the dough: Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Combine flour, confectioner's sugar and almond meal in a large mixing bowl. Stir well to mix.
3. Add butter, egg yolk, water, and salt, and mix well with an electric mixer with spiral attachments until mixture starts to come together as a dough.
4. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead briefly until even. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
5. After chilling, roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to approximately 0.25" thickness.
6. Use assorted star-shaped cookie cutters to cut out approximately 23 variably sized star shapes. Arrange between prepared sheets, spaced apart.

7. From remaining dough, cut out one teardrop and two semi-circles of dough, using appropriate cutters or working freehand with a paring knife. Arrange on one of the baking sheets.

8. Bake cookies for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden and dry to the touch. Remove to cooling racks to cool.

9. For the icing and decoration: Thoroughly stir together confectioner's sugar and meringue powder in a large mixing bowl.

10. Gradually beat in warm water and vanilla extract mixture using an electric mixer until icing is smooth and of a flooding consistency; you may not need all of the water.

11. Divide icing between three bowls. Colour two bowls pink and red, respectively, by beating in enough pink and red colouring to achieve uniform colours. Leave the third bowl uncoloured.

12. Spoon pink and red icing into separate pip-

ing bags fitted with small, round-tip nozzles.

13. To ice the cookies, pipe around their perimeters with the icings to create borders. Fill in middle of cookies with more icing; you can use a damp, warm offset palette knife to spread out icing to an even finish.



14. Carefully transfer iced cookies to cooling racks, decorating with the sugar crystals in festive patterns.

15. Using same technique as in steps 13 and 14, ice teardrop cookie with red and white icing for Santa's hat and beard, respectively. Ice the two semi-circle cookies with white icing.

16. Before icings have set, carefully attach semi-circle cookies to teardrop cookie to fashion Santa's moustache. Colour any remaining white icing with turquoise colouring and then dab onto teardrop cookie for Santa's eyes. Pipe some pink icing below eyes for his nose.

17. Let cookies set and harden before serving.

Happy Holidays!

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Shelburne Free Press

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FROM OUR GOLDEN TREE FAMILY TO YOURS WE WISH YOU A SAFE AND Happy Holiday Season!

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Indulge in food and family fun this holiday season

Families have their own unique holiday traditions, and such customs help to make this time of year so special.

Baking together as a family is a popular holiday tradition that rewards everyone with some tasty treats after a fun-filled day in the kitchen.

Incorporating a holiday theme into baked goods can add to the fun factor, particularly for children. Families looking to mix fun and food this holiday season can try their hands at this recipe for "Chocolate Reindeer Cupcakes" courtesy of Lines+Angles.



Chocolate Reindeer Cupcakes

Makes 12 servings ★ Preparation time: 40 minutes ★ Cooking time: 25 minutes ★ Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes ★ Difficulty: Medium

Ingredients:

FOR CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES:
 2/3 cup butter, softened
 3/4 cup superfine sugar
 3 eggs
 1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
 2 tbsp cocoa powder

FOR CHOCOLATE FROSTING:
 3/4 cup butter, softened
 3 1/3 cups confectioners' sugar
 7/8 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 4 - 6 tbsp milk

FOR DECORATIONS:
 12 sets candy eyes
 12 red gumdrops
 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Directions:

FOR CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F. Line muffin tin wells with 12 paper cupcake liners.
2. In a large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Gradually add flour and cocoa powder, mixing until all ingredients are incorporated.
3. Spoon the batter into the paper liners. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tops are springy to the touch. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan and allow to cool completely before decorating.

FOR CHOCOLATE FROSTING:

1. In a large bowl, cream butter until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar, cocoa and vanilla. Add milk one tablespoon at a time until frosting reaches the desired consistency. Frost each cupcake using an offset spatula.

TO DECORATE:

1. Arrange candied eyes and gumdrop nose on frosted cupcake.
2. Melt semisweet chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Cool slightly, and transfer to a pastry bag fitted with

small plain round tip. Pipe antlers with chocolate on parchment or waxed paper; place in the refrigerator or freezer and allow to set.

3. Once the chocolate has set, carefully remove antlers from paper and insert in cupcake. Serve.



Make holiday crafting a family affair

Families gather frequently during the holiday season as everyone enjoys the feasts and festivities that are synonymous with this time of year. Families often bake and decorate together, as these activities are inclusive of people of all ages.

This time of year also is one for dabbling in creative pursuits. Now is a prime opportunity to bond with children over a table full of paint, glue, beads, and other crafty supplies. The crafts made during the holidays often become cherished mementos that will be regarded fondly for years to come. Here are some ideas to inspire holiday creativity.

Snowman family

Handprint crafts are popular among children. Adults and children can dip their hands into washable white paint and make a handprint stamp on

a small canvas, wooden palette or even a terracotta flowerpot. Decorate the white fingerprints with black dots to look like the faces of the snowmen and paint on top hats and scarves. In the years to come, artists can marvel at how small their hand prints once were.

Wine cork reindeer

Repurpose wine corks by crafting adorable little reindeer. Two corks make up the head and the body, and four vertically will comprise the feet. Stick on googly eyes, and add a small red or black bead for the nose. Pipe cleaners can be bent to form the reindeer's antlers.

Family garlands

This craft also makes use of handprints. Ask all family members to trace their handprints on different colours of construction paper or card stock. Cut out all of the paper hands, punch holes in the tops and then string a ribbon through. Decorate the Christmas tree or a mantle with this garland.

Miniature Christmas trees

Paint the tips of gathered pine cones with green paint and allow to dry. Add white glitter or paint as "snow." Glue the pine cones to wine corks that will serve as the tree trunks, and attach a small wooden star to the top of the trees for the finishing touch.

Decoupage ornaments

Purchase wooden or plastic ball ornaments. Cover with small scraps of cut fabric or paper dipped in craft glue or Mod Podge, and attach to the ornament in an overlapping fashion. Remember to add a string from which the ornament can be hung on the tree. Allow to dry completely before use.

Paper chain Advent calendar

Cut strips of paper to make a link for every day of Advent. Advent begins on Sunday, December 1, 2024, and lasts until Christmas. The top link can be any design artists prefer, but those who need a little inspiration can consider a religious symbol, the face of a reindeer, a snowman, or a Christmas tree. Hang



the chain and then children can take turns ripping off a link from the bottom each day as they count down to the holiday.

Popsicle stick snowflakes

Paint four popsicle sticks per snowflake in desired colours. Decorate with glue, pompoms, beads, or other trinkets. Add small looped strings to hang the ornaments.

Parents, grandparents and children can have fun crafting holiday decorations this December.

Season's Greetings!

Domino's Call 519.925.2121
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No matter how you say it...

Merry Christmas, Joyeux Noel, Feliz Navidad, Buon Natale, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa

Wishing you and your family a safe and happy holidays

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