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Poland kindergarten students have Thanksgiving feast, balloon parade

Poland Central School District kindergarten students continued one long-standing Thanksgiving tradition and started a new one.

The kindergarten classes had their annual Thanksgiving feast on Nov. 23 and for the first time designed balloons inspired by the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and had their own parade around school.

Kindergarten teachers Julie Dutcher and Carrie Roark said that after the Thanksgiving feast had to take place in separate classrooms last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, they were happy to find a way to safely bring the event back to the school cafeteria this year.

"They're very happy to be back with their friends again and able to move around," Dutcher said. "You have to give the students something to look forward to

and some sense of normalcy and fun again and this is a way we chose to do that."

Kindergarten students learned about Native Americans, Pilgrims and how and why the first Thanksgiving took place and the kindergarten Thanksgiving feast involved each student bringing in one food item to share with the group.

"I think it's important for them to see how everyone brings something to the feast and to be thankful for each other," Roark said. "It's an important time for friendship, kindness and togetherness."

It was nice that both classes could be in one place this year, Roark said.

"Luckily, we can be back in here this year with the other kindergarten students," she said.

The kindergarten classes also baked bread and

made their own butter on Nov. 22 with the bread cooking in the cafeteria ovens to be ready for the feast.

Before sitting down for their meal, the students who were dressed in turkey outfits made out of paper performed a dance to go along with the song "Pow Wow" by Jack Hartmann.

Kindergarten students had learned about the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade by reading in Scholastic News about how the floats are designed and created, so the teachers decided to let their students design and create their own decorated balloons for a parade this year.

Students spent a lot of time working on their designs and putting their balloons together, the teachers said.

"That turned out great," Dutcher said. "They loved it."



Poland Central School District kindergarten students put on a performance and dance to the song "Pow Wow" before their annual Thanksgiving feast in the school cafeteria. Photo courtesy of Herkimer BOCES

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Christmas in Little Falls is back

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Little Falls. The City of Little Falls invites you to save the dates. That's right – the dates. Christmas in Little Falls (CILF) returns with a two-day celebration. Friday, Dec. 10 and Saturday, Dec. 11 will be filled with festive events, specials and entertainment.

For over a decade, this staple event has offered a day filled with holiday cheer. Like so many things, the activities were postponed last year with hopes that CILF could return for 2021. This summer, a group of volunteers met at the LF Youth and Family Center to discuss a revival. The discussion centered upon how to maintain some of the more traditional pieces of the event and how to incorporate new features.

One of the most notable changes is the expansion to include Friday evening as a kickoff to the regular full-day event. The inaugural Celebration of Lights at Canal Place takes place 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sterzinar Park will transform into a winter wonderland of lights with a tree lighting ceremony, free tractor pulled wagon rides, outdoor musical entertainment, shopping, yummy eats, activities and more. Valley Cinemas will also host a screening of the Christmas classic 'Elf' at 7:30 p.m. for just \$3/ticket.

The fun continues bright and early the next morning. Other new additions include a reading of 'Little Blue Truck Christmas' which is perfect for younger children and will take place at the Little Falls Public Library at 9:30 a.m. Guests can also have their photo taken with our very own little blue truck decked out for the occasion. Then watch Jackson Street come alive as Candy Cane Lane with outdoor holiday-themed Reindeer Games for kids from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. And Pause for All Paws invites you to the Youth and Family Center from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. for Paw Patrol themed activities and goodie bags while supplies last. There will be face painting by Leysmy of La Take-ria and the NEW House of Flavor Bar & Grill located 622 E Main. Also, Valley Cinemas invites you to wear your favorite pajamas for 'Polar Express' at 1 p.m. for only \$3/ticket.

Saturday offers something new for the adults too with

a Schitt's Creek Christmas Party at the Elk's Lodge #42. Dress as your favorite character from the show for a chance to win an award.

Another new feature for 2021 is the Merry Chicksmas Market at Travelodge from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. This includes 20 vendors comprised of talented local female entrepreneurs and is brought to you by the women behind the popular Chicks Along the Canal event.

New businesses join the fun as well with Main Street Mercantile offering free family holiday polaroids, Chickweed Boutique's wish list event, and The Mustard Seed providing gift basket central.

Of course, there are classic events that return including live music. The LF High School student band will perform at Elk's at 10 a.m. Then the Edelweiss Schuplatters German Dancers take the stage at 11 a.m., followed by the Appalachian Still Band from 12-2 p.m., and finally The Brian Mulkerne Band from 3-5 p.m. The LF First Presbyterian Church will also be caroling along E. Main Street from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Other classic CILF activities return including an 8 a.m. registration (\$20/runner, ages 12 and under free) at the Youth and Family Center for the annual Red Nose Reindeer Run organized by Rock City Runners. Feet hit the street at 9 a.m. when Santa starts this festive 5k and runners dressed in their best holiday outfits race throughout the city and end at Ed & Bud's for the award ceremony and to sip a Tom & Jerry holiday drink. Advanced online registration is also available. Santa will then tour the city in a firetruck and be dropped off at the Youth and Family Center at 10 a.m. for professional photos with guests until 12 p.m. Bob Critser, owner of DSP Images, offers free 4x6 print photos of this special moment. If you'd like to deliver a letter to Santa, you can visit Ed's Pizza Place for the drop box sponsored by Skye Financial Services.

Additional morning activities include the superhero pancake breakfast at the American Legion (8-11 a.m.), cookie decorating sponsored by White Rose Bakery at the Community Center (10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.), H.A.L.O. tree

lighting at CVS (9:30 a.m.), toy collection at Dollar General (8 a.m. – 9 p.m.) and the Utica Zoomobile at LF Ace Hardware (11 a.m. – 1 p.m.).

Of course, free horse-drawn wagon rides return from 11:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m. to offer tours of historic downtown with pick-up & drop-off at the M&T Bank lot. There will also be open houses throughout the day at Paca Gardens, the Arts Center (MVCA), Showcase Antiques of CNY, LF Antique Center and the WCA. The LF Historical Society offers an outdoor exhibit as well.

In the theme of 'giving to others,' the Tipsy Server Race hits E. Main Street at 11 a.m. Come cheer on your favorite server as they race for charity trying not to spill their trays laden with drinks. Many organizations have benefited from this competition and the fun begins at Ruggiero's Trattoria.

Another charity-focused event challenges taste buds rather than racing skills. The popular Soup Fest coordinated by Think Local Little Falls runs from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. For \$10, you can taste all the delicious soups and stews by the best chefs from Little Falls and all proceeds benefit local charities.

The entire city will be bustling with entertainment, activities, shopping and more throughout the day. Event planners encourage folks to review the full schedule of events to plan their day, keeping in mind the numerous local businesses that will be open and running specials for your holiday enjoyment.

This event is made possible by the Christmas in Little Falls committee, Little Falls Youth and Family Center, Think Local Little Falls, the City of Little Falls and numerous financial supporters. This project is made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a re-grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Governor and the NYS Legislature and administered by CNY Arts. Additional information is available on the 'Christmas in Little Falls' Facebook page. You may also contact the Youth and Family Center with questions or to donate at 315.823.1740.

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Poland first graders participate in Thanksgiving traditions including balloon parade

Poland Central School District first-grade teachers made sure their students took some of the last day of school before Thanksgiving break to participate in some Thanksgiving traditions.

First graders took an in-school trip to the movies to watch "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" in the school auditorium and paraded around the school hallways with balloons they decorated based on the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Despite the limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions, first grade teachers Christina Kress, Kathleen Hess, Patricia Linneen and Sarah Barron were happy with the activities they were able to provide for students.

"We tried to make it as normal as possible, so the kids could still have fun and enjoy the traditions we would have in a regular school year," Kress said.

First graders read a book called "Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade" and read about traditions in Scholastic News, so the Thanksgiving

movie and parade they participated in were an extension of those topics they learned in class.

Kress said she and Barron

wanted to help start some traditions with the Thanksgiving activities during their first year as first grade teachers.

"Being new to first grade, we

wanted to come up with some new ideas to do some different things," Kress said.

Barron said the idea to watch "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" came from her personal tradition of watching it each year.

"It's nice to bring them some of these traditions at school," Barron said.

Along with watching "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving," students ate the same food the characters in the film have for their feast: toast, jellybeans, pretzels and popcorn.

For the parade, students designed and decorated their own balloons, which were filled with helium and floated along as students carried them down hallways for other students and teachers to see. Students also made Snoopy hats, which tied into both "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" and the Snoopy float from the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Even with following COVID-19 guidelines, there were still ways to give the students a memorable experience, Barron said.

"They're still able to have a fun day," she said.

Hess said the activities were a great opportunity to have some joint experiences among all of the first graders.

"It was nice for everyone to be together," Hess said.

The students enjoyed creating their balloons, participating in the parade and showing what they made, Hess said.

"They were really proud of it," she said.

Linneen said students learned about Native Americans, Pilgrims, the history of Thanksgiving, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and more. Connecting that learning to fun activities is especially important for students the age of first graders, she said.

"It keeps them engaged, and they are way more likely to remember the history of the parade and Thanksgiving if you make it fun," Linneen said, noting that it can be hard to keep first graders focused. "So if it's fun and involves balloons and putting stickers and designs on balloons, then they're all about it."



Poland Central School District first graders participate in a Thanksgiving balloon parade around the school with balloons they created with inspiration from the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Photo courtesy of Herkimer BOCES

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2021 Staffworks Save A Life Campaign runs now through Dec. 31

The 2021 Staffworks Save A Life Campaign is matching donations to the Susquehanna Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SQSPCA) being made from Nov. 29 - Dec. 31.

This year, the Save A Life Campaign has 33 participating animal welfare organizations located in 11 counties in New York State and Pennsylvania.

The campaign match is up to

\$25,000 for each participating organization.

Since 2014, the Save A Life Campaign has raised over \$6 million for nonprofit organizations caring for at-risk animals in our regional communities.

"We are so grateful to Staffworks and the Save A Life Campaign for this opportunity to once again leverage donor contributions into additional funds, based on the success

of our own fundraising efforts," said SQSPCA Executive Director Stacie Haynes. "Our goal this year is \$160,000. Staffworks will match the first \$10,000 dollar-for-dollar. After that, we receive \$500 for each additional \$5,000 in donations, up to \$160,000. The Save A Life Campaign has greatly boosted our year-end totals, which has in turn helped us improve and expand our services. We're

hoping for the same results this year."

Anita Vitullo, founder of the Save A Life Campaign, stated, "Organizations that provide direct care and support services for homeless and abused animals, spay/neuter programs and pet food pantries do not receive state or federal funding and rely on community donations. The campaign provides an opportunity to increase the

impact of donations with a substantial match to make a positive difference for animals in need throughout our regional communities."

During this campaign, you can maximize the impact of giving, visit savealife.staffworkscny.com/organizations/susquehanna-sPCA or mail checks to SQSPCA, 5082-5088 State Rt. 28, Cooperstown, NY 13326.

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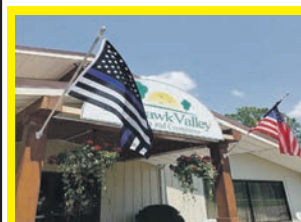
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Consumer Alert:

NYS Division of Consumer Protection offers tips for a safe holiday season

The New York State Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) recently alerted consumers to issues impacting the holiday shopping season. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the holiday shopping season will be rife with delays, higher prices and potential scams. Consumers should expect to have a lengthy wait for goods and holiday presents due to the continued supply shortages and shipping backlogs.

Secretary of State Rossana Rosado said, "The holiday season brings out the best of us as we share with family and friends in celebration of this special time of year. However, this holiday shopping season may be frustrating due to delays, higher prices and the risk of scams. To help consumers enjoy this festive time, the Division of Consumer Protection encourages everyone to follow these basic tips to have a smooth and safe holiday shopping experience."

The DCP advises consumers to exercise caution this holiday season. Scams and theft are common this time of year, and it is essential consumers continue to protect themselves.

Shop safely using these tips:

Avoid Pandemic-Related Shortages

- **Shop early** this holiday season to avoid merchandise shortages and shipping delays. Experts advise to get shopping done ahead of time and avoid the last-minute rush to ensure your gifts arrive on time.

- **Consider virtual gifts.** Avoid shipping concerns altogether by gifting items that can be used online, such as streaming subscriptions, virtual gift cards or online learning classes. Always verify the source of online retailers and shop on secure sites to avoid scams.

- **Shop local.** Support small business and pick up direct from in-store locations for holiday gifts. Many local retailers are offering deals to encourage consumers to shop locally from neighborhood businesses. Continue following COVID-19 safety protocols when shopping in person.

Know Your Rights

- **Retailers must inform you of any changes to your**

delivery. The Federal Mail, Internet or Telephone Order Merchandise Rule (the Mail Order Rule) states that your order must be delivered within 30 days unless otherwise stated at the time of purchase. If there is a delay, you must be notified. If the company cannot reach you to obtain your consent to the delay, they must, without being asked, promptly refund all the money you paid for the unshipped merchandise.

- **Review refund policies.** Retailers must post their refund policy. If it is not posted, the retailer is legally required to accept a return within 30 days with receipt.

Savvy Online Shopping Tips

- **Shop on trusted sites** with retailers known to you. In the era of social media marketing and influencers, consumers are more exposed to sham businesses that advertise a premier product but only deliver a low-quality version of the advertised item, if they deliver anything at all. Use caution on trusted sites that host items for third-party sellers.

- **Beware of third-party vendors.** If redirected from a trusted site to a third-party site, read the seller's policies, review ratings, read consumer comments and most importantly do a broad internet search before making your purchase. Trusted retailers who host third-party sellers do not warrant their sales, thus you could get a substandard product or no product at all when you take the risk and purchase from an unknown third-party vendor.

- **Do your research** if you want to try a new site or retailer. Performing a broad internet search will provide you with important feedback from other customers. Read the comments within any social media advertisements. This will help you assess what to expect if something goes wrong.

- **Read product specifications.** Online marketing is geared to get you to buy, so it is important to understand the product you are purchasing and the terms of the sale to ensure you are getting what you want.

- **Comparison shop.** Search other websites to compare

price, quality, return policies, delivery cost and speed. Buying the "cheapest" advertised price may cost you more when you factor in delivery charges in the short term or return policies in the long term.

Tips for Using Credit Cards Online

- **Check the website's encryption.** It's easier than you think. Before entering your credit card information, make sure that the website's address begins with "https" and that there is a closed lock or unbroken key symbol in the lower portion of your window or up on

Consumer 8



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Calendar of events

NOTE: Calendar items must be submitted by Tuesday prior to the publication date to be included in the Calendar of Events. Entries may be emailed to cfeditor@leepub.com

December 10

Friends of German Flatts Town Park, Rt. 5S, Mohawk NY (next to Ft. Herkimer Church) **presents Santa and Mrs. Claus** from 5-8 p.m. at the Community Center Building. Santa will have presents for the kids. Refreshments available. There will be a Christmas Basket Raffle. Door prizes. More information contact Carol Vercz at 315.866.6791 or email pvercz@twcny.rr.com

December 11

St. Nicholas Bizarre and luncheon 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Luncheon 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 594 Albany St., Little Falls. Craft vendors, raffle baskets, silent auction, homemade cookies and confections. Soups and sandwiches. Call for details 315.741.4672. Free delivery for luncheon to Herkimer and Little Falls.

Ilion First Baptist Church Holiday Craft Fair 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at 8 Second St., Ilion. Visit from Santa 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Chinese Auction. Bake Sale. Several vendors for everyone's holiday shopping. For more info call 315.894.9041.

Christmas with Northern Grace 1 - 3 p.m. at Newport United Methodist Church, 7488 Main St. (St. Rt. 28), Newport. On Facebook @Newport-NYMethodist. For more information call 314.845.8730 or 315.686.4799. There will also be a bazaar in the backroom and cookies for sale.

December 12

Brooks BBQ 1 p.m. - sold out. Herkimer Elks Lodge No. 1439, 124 Mary St., Herkimer. Half-chicken, salt potatoes, coleslaw, roll, \$13. Eat-in or takeout.

13th Annual Candlelight Memorial Service sponsored by Catholic Daughters of the Americas and Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church in Fort Plain at 6:45 p.m. at Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church, 115 Reid Street, Fort Plain. RSVP by Dec. 1 to Doris Dutcher, 52 Garfield Street, Fort Plain, or call her at 518.993.4612.

Mohawk Valley Choral Society Concert 3 p.m. at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes at 2222 Genesee St., Utica. Tickets \$12 in advance. Tickets may be reserved by emailing the Choral Society at mail@mvchoral.org or by calling

315.826.3092. Audience members must be vaccinated and wear a mask throughout the concert

December 13

Rabies Clinic at Susquehanna SPCA 2 - 5 p.m. Register at 607.547.8111 ext 111.

Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser for OESJ Cheerleaders 4-7 p.m. at Masonic Temple, 24 Bridge St., St. Johnsville. Dine in or take out. bake sale.

December 15

Third Wednesday Night Dinners 4-6 p.m. (or sold out) at Ilion First Baptist Church, 8 Second St., Ilion. Take-outs: call 315.894.9041.

December 17 and 18

Pierogi, golumbki and bake sale featuring holiday breads from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Friday and 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Dec. 18 at St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 324 Moore Ave., Herkimer. Pierogi \$7 a dozen; golumbki \$26 a dozen; \$13 half dozen or three-piece \$6.50.

Area Church Services

To Place or Update
Church Listings
Call 518-673-0108
or email tkrieger@leepub.com

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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
467 Main St.
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM

NEW LIFE CHAPEL OF THE AEA
3447 St. Rt. 8
Pastors: Rev. Gail & Rev. Mike Jay
315-826-7115
Sunday Worship 10:30am
Intercessory Prayers Tuesday 7pm
(please call to confirm)

DOLGEVILLE
NEW HOPE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Pastor Peter Spiak
32 Spencer St.
Sunday School 9:30 AM
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Tuesday Bible Study 7 PM

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF DOLGEVILLE
Pastor Len Byerly
12 Van Buren St.
Morning Worship 11-12:30 PM
Lunch 12:30-2 PM
Afternoon Worship 2-3 PM

DOLGEVILLE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
Rev. Anthony Bradseth
21 N. Helmer Ave.
Church Phone 429-7381
Sunday Church Service
Oppenheim @ 9:30 AM
Dolgeville @ 11 AM

DOLGEVILLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Pastor Marvin Isum
3 Elm St. Phone 429-8390
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Mid-week Service Tuesday 7 PM

UNITED LUTHERAN
PRESBYTERIAN PARISH
26 E. Faville Ave.
Worship 11 AM

ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Father Brian Slezak, Pastor
31 N. Helmer Ave.
Phone 315-823-3410
Mass 9 AM Sunday

EAST SCHUYLER
CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY OF SCHUYLER
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3659 Route 5, East Schuyler
Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Wednesday Night 6:30 PM
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414 Frankfort St., Frankfort, NY
Pastor: Father Paul Catena
Deacon: Micheal Carbone
Mass Schedule: Saturday 5:30 PM;
Sunday 9 AM; Tuesday & Thursday 9 AM

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4 PM (fall/winter months)
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM Sundays

TEMPLE BETH JOSEPH
327 N. Prospect St.
Phone 866-4270
Friday 7 PM

ST. FRANCIS de SALES CHURCH
Rev. Mark Cunningham, Pastor
219 N. Bellinger St.
Phone 866-4282
Saturday Vigil Mass 4 PM
Sunday Mass 8 AM

CHURCH OF SAINTS
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229 S. Main St.
Phone 866-6373
Sunday Mass 10 AM
No Saturday Vigil

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326 Moore Ave.
Sunday Divine Liturgy 10 AM
Holy Day Liturgy 9 AM
Phone 866-1336

NEW LIFE CHURCH
Pastor David Hayner
337 Protection Ave.
Phone 866-1164 • www.nlc-mc.org
Worship 10 AM
Wednesday Worship 6:30 PM

THE SALVATION ARMY
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Sunday School 10 AM
Morning Worship 11 AM

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Wednesday Mid Week Service 7 PM
Sunday Morning 11 AM

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May 1 - November 1
36 Second Street, Ilion

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CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF LITTLE FALLS
Father Brian Slezak, Pastor
763 E. Main St.
Phone 823-3410
Saturday Vigil Mass 4 PM
Sunday Mass 10:30 AM

EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH
588-594 Albany St.
Sunday Schedule:
High Mass, Rite II 10 AM
Nursery & Sunday School 9:45 AM
(Sept.-May)
Fellowship Coffee Hour 11:15 AM
Choir Rehearsal 11:30 AM
Holy Day Masses as announced
Confessions by appointment

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD
Senior Pastor Timothy Parisi
559 E. Jefferson St.
Phone 823-4043 • firstaglf@gmail.com
Sunday Morning All Worship 10 AM
Thursday Bible Study 6:30 PM

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
512 E. Gansevoort St.
Sunday School 9:15 AM
Sunday Worship 9:30 AM
Wednesday Worship 11 AM & 6 PM

LITTLE FALLS
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Pastor Tamara Razzano
16 Jackson St.
Phone: 315-823-3004
Email ffirstpres@gmail.com
www.presbylff.org
Sunday Worship 10 AM
Sunday School 10 AM

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Sunday Worship Service 10 AM
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Pastor Mark Hediger, 315-429-9085
pastormarkh@aol.com
Sunday Worship 8 AM

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GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
7 E. Main St.
Phone 315-866-4782
or 315-520-4723
Holy Eucharist 10 AM

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COMMUNITY CHURCH
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Morning Worship 11 AM
Evening Worship 6 PM
Wednesday Prayer 7 PM

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September - June

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Pastor Gary Wilcox
54 W. Main St. • Phone 717-3011
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Fellowship Lunch: 12:30 PM
Discipleship Hour: Sunday 1:30 PM
Bible Study & Prayer: Wednesday 6 PM

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Sr. Mary Jo Tallman, CSJ,
Parish Life Director
Rev. Leo Potvin,
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Phone 866-1752
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Sunday Worship 10 AM
Wednesday Bible Study
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UNITED METHODIST
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Consumer from 6

the website address bar.

- *Don't keep the credit card on file* for future purchases. Provide your credit card number each time you make a purchase.

- *Designate one credit card and one email address* for online shopping. This will allow for easy review of purchases and provide protection in case of a dispute.

Online Privacy Protection Tips

- *Protect your passwords.* The key to safe passwords is to update them regularly and make them unique. Try using a passphrase instead of a password and include special characters and numbers. If it's difficult to remember so many passwords, try a password manager with multi-step authentication to manage your passwords.

- *Avoid autofill.* Saving usernames, passwords and credit card information on your device saves time. Unfortunately, it also makes it easier for thieves to get access to that information if they ac-

cess your account or device. Re-entering important information each time – as opposed to autofill – is an extra step to safeguard personal information.

- *Check social media logins.* Many apps allow you to use your social media credential to create a new account on their platform, but when you stop using those apps, your social media accounts



still have access to the information. Once a year, check the list of apps that you access through your social media account and delete any you do not recognize or no longer use.

- *Secure your connections.* Do your shopping while connected to a secure

network, rather than public WiFi or an unknown WiFi server. Public WiFi does not mask any information, even if a website or app seems secure. Usernames, passwords, credit card and account information can be easily seen by hackers who are logged into the same network. On home networks, keep operating systems and antivirus software up to date

with the latest security patches and ensure the network has a strong password.

- *Don't become the product.* Everything you do on your computer or device creates a digital imprint. That information is often compiled, tracked and sold to interested parties to better market

products directly to you. This is called "behavioral advertising." You can shut this feature off on your devices. Go to your device's main settings and look for the settings marked "Privacy." You can adjust the privacy settings to your comfort level.

Package & Delivery Scams

- *Keep track of your packages.* Package tracking and delivery scams are common during the holidays. Review the tracking information for your package and note any issues right away through the merchandisers' websites.

- *Beware of phishing attempts.* Another common scam this time of year is scammers using phishing emails and text messages and impersonating delivery companies (e.g. UPS, USPS, FedEx), banking and credit card companies, and other large retailers (e.g. Netflix, PayPal, eBay, Amazon), which often include links to sites attempting to steal your information. Always open a browser and type the company's website address yourself instead of clicking on a link in an email or text message.

Good Housekeeping**Raisin-Bread Pudding**

- 1 loaf Raisin bread with cinnamon
- 2 quarts milk
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- 3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 6 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons maple or maple-flavored syrup

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease 13- by 9-inch glass baking dish.

2. Place 8 bread slices, in one layer, in baking dish. Cut each remaining slice of bread diagonally in half and arrange in baking dish, overlapping slices.

3. In very large bowl, with wire whisk or fork, beat milk, sugar, cinnamon, vanilla extract, nutmeg and eggs until blended. Pour milk mixture evenly over bread in baking dish. Press bread down with fork; let stand for 15 minutes for bread to absorb some of the milk mixture.

4. Bake 55 to 60 minutes until knife inserted in center of bread pudding comes out clean, covering loosely with

foil during last 15 to 20 minutes of baking if top begins to brown too quickly. Brush top of bread pudding with maple syrup. Serve warm. Or refrigerate to serve cold later. Makes 16 servings.

- Each serving: About 255 calories, 8g total fat, 96mg cholesterol, 240mg sodium.

For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/.

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Poland second graders say thanks to school staff with 'turkey cookies'

Poland Central School District second graders recently connected Thanksgiving and turkeys to everything from cookies to oral book reports.

Second grade teachers Heather Judd, Michelle Garrett and Rachel Hitt and their students prepared cookies that they wrapped up and decorated to look like turkeys and then each student delivered at least one cookie to school staff members to thank them for all they do.

Additionally, second graders did turkey-themed oral reports about a book they read and decorated turkey illustrations to look like characters from the book.

Second graders also enjoyed a "Mayflower Munchie" feast with food items that represented the first Thanksgiving.

*Poland Central School District second graders pose with cookies that they decorated to look like turkeys and presented to school staff members to thank them for all they do.
Photo courtesy of Herkimer BOCES*



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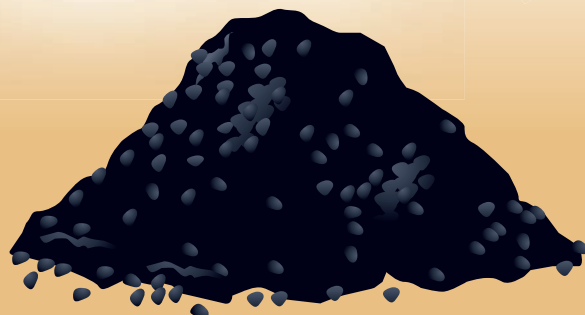
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It's wintertime and the snackin' is easy

Could it be that winter is the new summer? Once defined as a time of quiet hibernation, winter has come into its own in a social sense. In fact, we are often busier entertaining friends and family in the winter than during any other season. Consider the numerous celebratory occasions that begin with the harvest and continue on through the holidays and beyond, not to mention all the fun and frosty get-togethers prompted by skiing, skating and sledding. Truly, the winter social calendar can be downright exhausting! Luckily, by keeping a few ingredients on hand, you can whip up tantalizing popcorn snack recipes to feed and please crowds of party goers,



carolers or game day fans. Since popcorn is a whole grain that provides carbohydrates and fiber to the diet, and it's naturally low in fat, you can even feel good about serving it! As an added bonus, these recipes will fill your home with the comforting fragrance of favorite wintry flavors.

This colorful White Chocolate Peppermint Bark packs both a festive punch and a sweet crunch.

White Chocolate Peppermint Popcorn Bark

5 cups popped popcorn
12 ounces white chocolate baking chips, chopped white chocolate or white candy coating

1 cup crushed hard candy peppermints

Cover a baking pan with foil or wax paper; set aside. Place popcorn in a large bowl; set aside. Melt chocolate in a double boiler over barely simmering water, stirring until smooth or melt according to package directions. Stir in crushed peppermints after chocolate is melted. Pour chocolate mixture over popcorn mixture and stir to coat.

Spread onto prepared pan; allow to cool completely. When chocolate is cooled and set, break into chunks for serving. Store in an air-tight container at room temperature.

Variation – White Chocolate Popcorn Crunch: Omit candy peppermints. Mix 1/2 cup dried sweetened cranberries and 1/2 cup sliced almonds with the popcorn. Pour chocolate over the mixture after it is melted. Yield is about 1 pound.



Served warm from the oven, this Gingersnap Popcorn Snack Mix is perfect for a cozy get-together around the fire.

Gingersnap Popcorn Snack Mix

2 quarts popped popcorn
Butter flavored cooking spray
1/3 cup granulated sugar substitute
2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground cloves
1/8 tsp. freshly ground black or white pepper

Preheat oven to 325° F. Spread popcorn on baking sheet and spray lightly with the cooking spray. Combine remaining ingredients in a small bowl and sprinkle evenly over popcorn. Spray again with cooking spray and toss to coat evenly. Bake 7 minutes and serve warm. Yield: 2 quarts.

For more simple and tasty popcorn recipes, visit popcorn.org.

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Herkimer BOCES, VRS continue partnership through work by conservation students

Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES conservation students have been putting up signage on the neighboring Valley Residential Services (VRS) property in Herkimer to help prevent trespassing and are using skills from class to review the resources on the land.

Herkimer BOCES conservation instructor William Carpenter said the partnership is beneficial for students because students get to apply their learning on the property, which includes a pond and trees, and the students provide free work to assist VRS.

"I think it works – just being neighborly and helping each other out," Carpenter said.

Herkimer BOCES has a long-standing partnership with both VRS and its sister facility, Valley Health Services (VHS). Both facilities are under the Bassett Healthcare Network and are located in Herkimer. The Herkimer BOCES William E. Busacker Complex property at 352 Gros Blvd. in Herkimer directly abuts the VHS property behind it.

For many years until COVID-19 put the visits on hiatus, Herkimer BOCES special education teacher Alana Connolly's career awareness class would visit VRS to present to residents, sing for them and conduct gardening. Herkimer BOCES health science careers high school students participate in clinical experiences at VHS, and VHS works closely with the Herkimer BOCES Adult Practical Nursing Program – including sponsoring certified nursing assistants to become licensed practical nurses through the BOCES program.

Recently, new layers were added to

the partnership after Herkimer BOCES School Safety Advisor Jim Garcia approached VRS Administrator Jennifer Miller to get approval for some safety planning assistance from VRS.

"With our properties connecting, it

only makes sense to be on the same page for safety planning as it relates to emergency preparedness and site security," Garcia said. "By consulting with a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation officer and having him

tour our land and advise us on the requirements for posting it, this ensured we are adequately versed in our rights and responsibilities as we strive to keep

Herkimer 12



Herkimer BOCES conservation program seniors put up signage on the neighboring Valley Residential Services property in Herkimer. (L - R) Alex Scholl, Jordan Mendez, Justin Lacelle Jr., Caleb Bennett, Jake Parrotta, Chase Brewer, Katie Marhaver and conservation instructor William Carpenter. (Absent from photo: Seniors Donald Gatto, Jaiden Lawrence and Izaic Kerr.) Photo courtesy of Herkimer BOCES

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Herkimer from 11

the land secure, undisturbed and safe for our students. Those things are obviously paramount.”

Garcia said Miller has been great to work with through the process.

“Strong community partnerships with our neighbors are a priority for us, and I’m thankful to have connected with her,” Garcia said. “The fact that our conservation program is able to help them out as well in a collaborative effort is a bonus that benefits both organizations.”

Wanting to help out in return, Carpenter and the summer program students studying conservation conducted gardening and beautification efforts at VHS, and students in the Conservation Career and Technical Education program continued efforts this school year with the signage.

Miller said VRS has 226 acres, so students working on the property helps free up grounds and maintenance staff for other work. “We find that really helpful,” Miller said.

The residents in the assisted living residence also enjoy seeing students around and knowing they’re helping on the property, Miller said.

“Hopefully, it gives the students a feeling of purpose of helping out their neighbors and the community,” Miller said.

Carpenter and his senior conservation students also plan to submit a land management plan to VRS as a suggestion for how the pond, trees and other natural resources there could be utilized.

Between the signage work and the land management plan, students are able to practice using compasses, surveying land and managing aspects of land including wild-life, forestry, soils and natural resources, Carpenter said.

“The students are using all the skills they’re learning in class for real-world applications,” Carpenter said. “They’re getting to actually assess the land and recommend how to best utilize the property.”

Direct experience such as this can make a difference when looking for employment, Carpenter said. “Sometimes, that’s what gets you the job,” he said.

By helping VRS, conservation students are earning volunteer hours required by all schools for graduation and work-based learning hours required for Herkimer BOCES CTE programs, Carpenter said.

Carpenter hopes the land management plans lead to continued cooperation between Herkimer BOCES and

VRS because students could potentially map the property, conduct logging, study the pond and more.

Miller said she would love to have the conservation students present their ideas to VRS and the residents to see what else can be done going forward.



“We would love to continue to work with the students

in the program and enhance their learning opportunities and experience outside of the classroom,” Miller said.

Miller said she is happy to have VRS involved with the community and forming partnerships among people of all ages.

“I think it’s a wonderful thing,” she said.

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	2				7	9		
1	5			3			7	
		8	6					4
3			9			2		
	9			4			6	1
		5			8		3	
	3		8			1		
		4			2			8
2			1	9			4	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

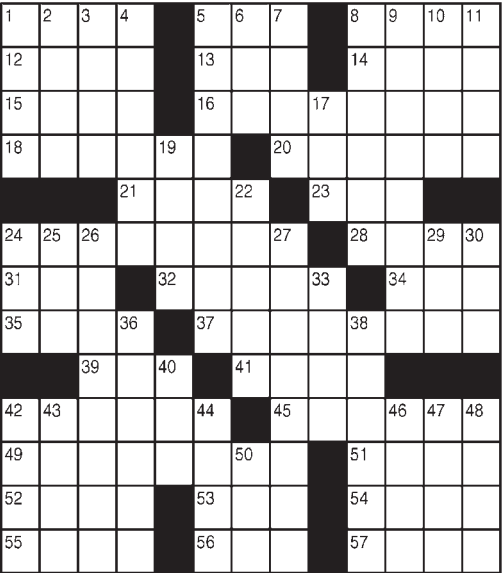
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Creche trio
5 The whole enchilada
8 Outlet letters
12 Teensy bit
13 Irish actor Stephen
14 Vivacity, in music
15 At the summit of
16 Her bed was too soft
18 Jungle trek
20 Make happy
21 Swindles
23 Workout site
24 Spaghetti topper
28 Whirled
31 Hosp. area
32 Small stream
34 "As I see it," to a texter
35 Lavish affection (on)
37 Lunar light
39 Family card game
41 Greek letters
42 Regard highly
45 Morals
49 Legume used in Asian cuisine
51 Acknowledge
52 Wax-coated cheese
53 Baton Rouge



- sch.
54 Country's McEntire
55 Actress Ward
56 ShriII bark
57 "Hey!"
9 Slapstick mis-sile
10 "Buenos —!"
11 Apple center
17 H.S. math
19 Eldest Stark child on "Game of Thrones"
22 Sailing vessel
24 Central
25 Green prefix
26 Fall-related
27 Relax
29 Actress Thurman
30 — de plume
33 Make a scarf
36 Puzzle
38 It's equivalent to C, in some scores
40 Sphere
42 Iowa city
43 Ranch visitor
44 Slithery
46 Currier's partner
47 Corn castoffs
48 Smack a baseball
50 "— was saying ..."

DOWN

- 1 "Serpico" author Peter
2 "— girl!"
3 Blunder
4 Influence
5 How lovers may stroll
6 Meadow
7 Genie's home
8 Monasteries

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MAGIC MAZE ● AT FIRST

V W T D Q N J G D A X U R O L
J G D A E X V S P N K I M F C
A X Y V S D Q O L T J H U E C
A X V H T R N P N N S L I J C
H F D B P Y X E V I T R R I P
O M K I C O M A T N A L T A G
E D B I Z E R N X T S N A W L
A T T E N U A T E U A M T L R
Q T O O N L L J A L L O O I G
A F T E T E L H T A T T I R E
D A C A A H C A T T A A Y X W

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: SPACE JUST BELOW THE ROOF

Athlete	Atlas	Atrium	Attended
Atlanta	Atoll	Atrophy	Attenuate
Atlantic	Atom	Attach	Attire
Atlantis	Atonement	Attend	

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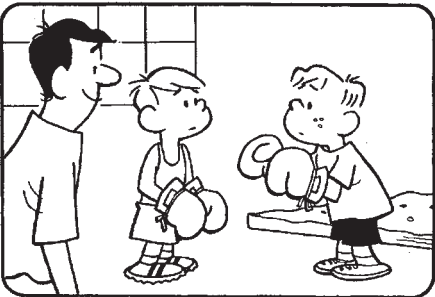


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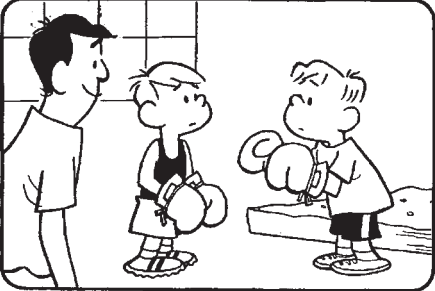
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



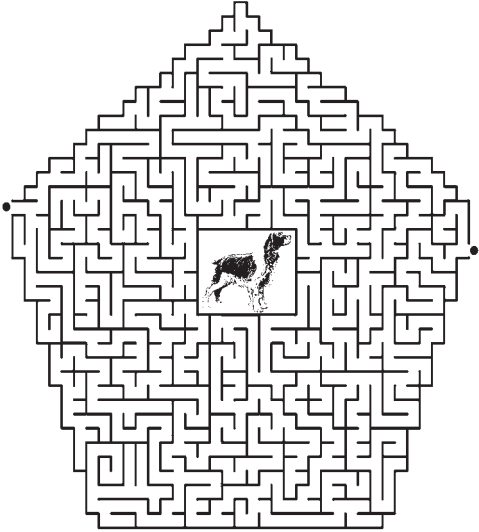
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Shirt is different. 2. Sleeve is shorter. 3. Freckles are missing. 4. Mat is thicker. 5. Stripe is added. 6. Nose is smaller.

Mega Maze

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Dainty				
RENTED				
Dream				
RANEY				
Unkind				
DINES				
Sniff				
HEALIN				

TODAY'S WORD



"Hey, Al, do we have something back there called _____?"

Home Country

by Slim Randles



It began the way most miracles do: by accident or the hand of God, take your pick.

It might have been the weather, at least partly. For winter, the day had been almost balmy and warm. You know, sweaters instead of heavy coats. No mittens in sight.

Then there were still some Christmas lights on the stores, and that little bunch of Girl Scouts out raising money in front of the Read Me Now bookstore. Jasper Blankenship was inside going through the books to fortify his cabin's library for winter and sat, listening with a smile to the girls as they laughed and waited for customers that weren't really coming along too briskly.

"It's a shame there aren't more people out today for those girls," said Sarah McKinley, behind the counter. Jasper nodded and paid for his books, then walked out to the truck. He stopped and thought for a while, then brought out his violin, rosined the bow, and walked over to the sidewalk next to the girls.

"You girls like fiddle music?" he asked.

"Sure do."

And Jasper began playing fiddle tunes.

Carla Martinez was driving down the street, headed for the Soup 'R Market when she saw the Girl Scouts dancing with each other in front of their table to Jasper's music. Before he'd had time to finish that tune, she'd returned with her guitar and joined the fun. Jim Albertson, the local school principal, showed up with a harmonica, and he wasn't bad at it.

Dud got out his accordion and joined in the fun.

By this time, it was getting dark in the street, and several people turned headlights on the area in front of the bookstore. Older people had joined the Girl Scouts



dancing in the streets, and Delbert Chin from the Chinese restaurant across the street sent one of his girls out with a huge pot of coffee and paper cups.

The party was on.

It lasted until the cars' headlights began to wear down the batteries, but during its brief lifetime, the street dance and mid-winter party cast a blessing on us all.

It must have been the weather.

Brought to you by the genuine cowboy music and musings of Steve Cormier up in New Mexico's Sandia Mountains. Check him out at stevecormier.net.

It's here. Get rid of it.

by Courtney Llewellyn

In addition to all of the photos being shared of happy families reuniting for Thanksgiv-

ing this year, my social media feeds were full of another kind of image. Across much of the Northeast, many of my friends received their first few inches of the white stuff. Some were filled with wintry glee at this prospect; many others had accompany-

ing text that read something along the lines of "Noooo."

Living where we live, snow is inevitable. Sometimes it appears in October. Sometimes it sticks around until May. Ah, the glorious uncertainty! One thing many of us can be certain about, however, is

that we will have to move it – probably a lot of it – and not just once.

Being prepared is key. And there are lots of ways to remove snow, starting first with a good scraper/brush combo for your vehicles. If you're like me, a good Upstate

New Yorker, that scraper never leaves your car, not even on the muggiest days in July (because you never know when you'll need it). Something with a long handle is a must, as in many states you are required by law to not just have clear wind-

shields and windows but also a clear roof. If you've ever seen a big sheet of frozen snow or ice fly backwards off a speeding car or truck, you know why.

For the complete story, make sure to check out countryculture.co.

SCRAMBLERS

Today's Word

VANILLA

1. Field 2. Flange; 3. Invest; 4. Detain

AT FIRST

2	8	7	1	9	5	6	4	3
5	1	4	3	6	2	7	9	8
6	3	9	8	7	4	1	2	5
7	6	5	2	1	8	4	3	9
8	9	2	7	4	3	5	6	1
3	4	1	9	5	6	2	8	7
9	7	8	6	2	1	3	5	4
1	5	6	4	3	9	8	7	2
4	2	3	5	8	7	9	1	6

Answer

Weekly Sudoku

Mega Maze

S	E	L	A	Y	I	P	S	S	T		
E	D	A	M	L	S	U	R	E	B	A	
M	U	N	G	B	E	A	N	A	V	O	W
A	D	M	I	R	E	E	T	H	I	C	S
									</		

Solution time: 22 mins.

Answers

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1040 Services Offered
1075 Snowblowers
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1096 Sports
1109 Thrift
1140 Trailers
1147 Trains
1148 Travel
1165 Trees
1170 Truck Parts & Equipment
1180 Trucks
1187 Vacuum
1190 Vegetable
1200 Veterinary
1205 Wanted

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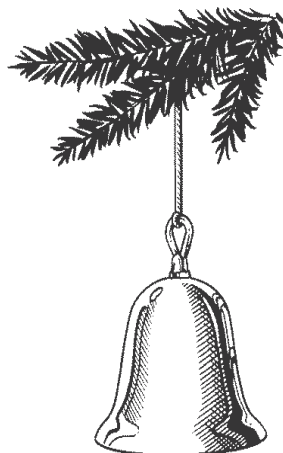
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Five great gifts for tweens and teens this holiday season

Children often marvel at the world around them. They're delighted to receive just about any toy and play with items that others may not see as fun — including everything from mixing bowls to cardboard boxes. Slowly that cherubic toddler turns into a school-aged wonder, and later into a young adult trying to find his or her place in the world. With each passing year, the task of finding gifts for tweens and teenagers becomes that much more challenging.

While most parents and other relatives may never seem "cool" in the eyes of their teens, they can gift the tweens and teens they love with presents that will earn them a few extra brownie points. The following are five gift ideas that are tailor-made for tweens and teens.

1. LED strip lights

Both girls and boys may enjoy customizing their rooms as they see fit. Teens can utilize LED strip lights to create a unique ambiance that reflects their style. These often self-sticking ribbons of lights adhere right to walls. They come in a variety of lengths so they can be used to frame the perimeter of the room, if desired. Complete with multicolored options and a remote control, teens can set their room colors as their mood dictates.

2. Gift cards

Teens try to keep up with the latest styles. A gift card or clothing gift from one of their favorite retailers can help them build their ensembles that much quicker. Aeropostale, Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, Forever 21, Zumiez, American Eagle and Tilly's are just some of the stores popular among today's tweens and teens.

3. Wireless earbuds or headphones

Wireless headphones are used on a daily basis by tweens and teens. They rely on them for listening to music, watching movies on their devices and even during remote learning sessions. There are many brands to choose from, and Beats by Dre and Apple AirPods are among the most popular.

4. Sneakers and shoes

Sneakers have long been popular gifts for teenagers, but they tend to be costly, especially for trending styles and brands. Vans Slip-On™ Core Classics, Converse Chuck Taylor All Star High Top Sneakers, Reebok Club C 85 Vintage, Nike Air Force One, and Adidas Sobakov are popular among today's tweens and teens. In addition, thanks

to the resurgence of 1990s style, Dr. Martens boots are once again in demand.

5. Video game consoles

Each gamer has his or her preferred platform for gaming. From the Nintendo Switch to the Xbox Series X to the Sony PlayStation 5, these systems are in high demand. Due to that demand, these prod-

ucts may be harder to find the closer you get to Christmas Day. Grab them while you can and soak in the smile on your favorite tween's or teen's face.

Teens and tweens are notoriously challenging to shop for. However, with some knowledge, loved ones can find gifts tweens and teens are more likely to use and enjoy.



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GOLDMINE JEWELERS



Ten gifts for automotive enthusiasts

The roar of the engine and the feeling of the wind in your hair is part of the magic of taking to the open road behind the wheel of a beloved vehicle. Whether a person is the ultimate gear head who needs to have the latest aftermarket accessory or someone who simply appreciates a pristine ride, auto enthusiasts come in all shapes and sizes. Luckily, there are all types of automotive gifts that can make it easy to impress car guys and gals this holiday season.

1. Dashboard cell phone holder: Using a mobile phone while driving is not a good idea. However, many people use their phones as GPS devices. Holding a phone while navigating is dan-

gerous, but a phone mount near the dash can keep the phone visible without compromising the safety of drivers and their passengers.

2. Customized floor mats: Know an auto fanatic who's also a sports fan? Offer a gift that mixes the two passions, such as floor mats featuring a favorite sports team's logo.

3. Cleansing wipes: When drivers are short on time, a full car wash and wax may not be possible. Drop Wipes are a product made from a neutralizing acid that destabilizes stains or bird droppings for an easy cleaning.

4. Magazine subscription: A wide selection of publications are geared to auto enthusiasts. They provide plenty of pertinent information, and some car lovers like to collect and display certain issues. Yearly subscriptions are affordable and can make ideal stocking stuffers.

5. Racing experience gift certificate: Research racing car schools and experiences where you live. Chances are you can find an opportunity for an automotive enthusiast to get behind the wheel of a race car with professional drivers offering tips for navigating the course at high speeds.

6. Car cleaning kit: Taking care of a ride means making sure it is clean inside and out. A quality car cleaning kit can ensure the job is done effectively and the car or truck always looks its best.

7. Personalized leather keychain: Ensure that a person can drive and keep their keys handy in style with leather keychains engraved with a driver's name or initials.

8. Racing video games: A love for the open road may not end when cars pull into the driveway. Modern racing games and consoles produce incredibly realistic graphics and action that mimics real life.

9. Automotive cufflinks: As a nod to a love of driving, find quirky cufflinks that are shaped like everything from gear shifters to speedometers to steering wheels.

10. Roof or car racks: When a love of driving merges with the call of the great outdoors, drivers may need something to help haul their stuff. Various racks have been designed for toting around bicycles, kayaks, luggage, and more.

When gifting automotive enthusiasts, look no further than their favorite hobby for inspiration.

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