



Jen Bewski
PHOTO CREDIT

The Valley Voice

The Voices of the Columbia Valley

INSIDE THIS EDITION

GRATITUDE: A GIFT TO YOURSELF

At this time of year, with Christmas just around the corner, gratitude feels almost natural. It's the season of giving, after all, a time to appreciate the people and moments that make life extraordinary.

HOW TO BEAT THE HOLIDAY STRESS: PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A HAPPIER SEASON

The holiday season is a time of celebration, joy, and togetherness, but it can also bring its fair share of stress.

SEASONAL ANTENNA MAINTENANCE: WINTERIZING YOUR SETUP

As December arrives, radio operators face a unique set of challenges: plummeting temperatures, snow, ice, and high winds.

THE SCIENCE OF SNOW: WHY WINTER IS MAGICAL

Winter is often thought of as a season of quiet beauty, when the world slows down and frost paints the landscape in shimmering white.

Fundraiser!

**The Christmas Bureau of the Columbia Valley,
The Windermere Whitehouse Pub and The O'Sullivans**



THE O'SULLIVANS WITH MATT O'SHELSON

are hosting a fund raising event to benefit The Christmas Bureau!

December 7, 2024

Doors open 7 pm • Music at 8 pm

Tickets available at The Whitehouse and at the door.

All proceeds go to The Christmas Bureau.

LETTER FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

As we embrace the festive month of December, we want to take a moment to share a heartfelt message with all of you. The holidays, while joyful for many, can be a difficult time for others. This season, let's remind ourselves to lead with kindness, show compassion, and offer support to those who may be struggling. A small act of care—a kind word, a helping hand, or simply listening—can make all the difference in someone's life.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from all of us! We encourage you to cherish the time you have with your loved ones. Whether it's a festive gathering, a quiet evening at home, or a simple phone call, these moments of connection remind us of what truly matters. Time is a precious gift, and spending it with family and friends is one of the greatest joys of the season.

As the weather turns colder, we also remind you to stay warm and safe. Whether it's bundling up in cozy blankets, sharing a warm meal, or offering assistance to a neighbor in need, let's ensure everyone has a chance to experience warmth—both

physically and emotionally—this winter.

We also want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude. To everyone who has submitted guest content, thank you! Your words, ideas, and stories enrich this space and inspire us all. To our incredible readers, thank you for being with us on this journey. Your support and engagement keep us going strong.

We've been fortunate to serve our community for the past four years, and with your help, we'd love to reach even more people. If you enjoy what we do, please share our content with a friend or family member. Spreading the word about our work is one of the greatest gifts you can give us—and it truly makes a difference.

Here's to a December filled with warmth, love, and kindness. Let's make the most of this season and continue to support one another in every way we can.

The Valley Voices Volunteers (VVV)

DECEMBER @THE HUB



AFTER SCHOOL TIL' 8PM

YOUTH OF THE MONTH: SAM

11AM BREAKFAST DURING WINTER BREAK

2024

PRIDE & ALLIES MON	COOKING 5PM TUE	WED	CANAL FLATS & EDGEWATER OPEN THU	JAM NIGHT! 5PM FRI	OPEN GYM SAT
2 CARD MAKING	3 FOCACCIA & DIP	4 MAKE A GRINCH TREE	5 CLOSED	6 CARD MAKING OPEN GYM @DTSS 1:30-5	7 OPEN GYM @DTSS 12-3PM
9 WINTER CRAFT	10 GOOD SOUP	11 WINTER CRAFT	12 YOUTH OF THE MONTH ACTIVITY PICK	13 PAINTING OPEN GYM @DTSS 1:30-5	14 OPEN GYM @DTSS 12-3PM
16 BAKING DAY	17 YOUTH OF THE MONTH MEAL PICK	18 BOARD GAMES	19 DARTS TOURNI	20 GRINCH GIFT EXCHANGE OPEN GYM @DTSS 1:30-5	21 OPEN GYM @DTSS 12-3PM
23 OPEN 10AM-4PM	24 CLOSED	25 CLOSED CHRISTMAS	26 CLOSED BOXING DAY	27 OPEN 10AM-4PM	28 CLOSED
30 OPEN 10AM-4PM	31 OPEN 10AM-4PM	JAN 2025	1 CLOSED NEW YEAR!	2 OPEN 10AM-4PM	3 OPEN 10AM-4PM
					4 CLOSED

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HOW ARE WE DOING?

The Volunteers of the Columbia Valley Voices Online Magazine are dedicated to providing content that is generated and supported by our valley residents.

We welcome and encourage all communication - we want to know how we're doing!

Send us a note on Facebook or Instagram [@thevoicecv_official](https://www.instagram.com/thevoicecv_official)

OR

by email to news@thevoiceca.ca

SUBMIT CONTENT

This only works if we all do. Your content is what DRIVES this publication. We need it all because we need you.

NEXT EDITION December 4, 2024

SUBMISSION DEADLINE December 3, 2024

WE NEED

BUSINESS ADS

Any and all businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs are welcome to submit a business ad for free. *Ads must be refreshed periodically. Once an ad is out of date or stale, we will remove it.*

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Any and all are welcome and encouraged to submit their photos. Credit given when requested. Great way to get your art out to more eyes.

PERSONAL INTEREST

Got something to say? Expert in something? Know how to handle a season with skill? Send it in! We'll edit it only if requested. We'd LOVE to publish your brilliant works.

NEWS

Did you hear about it or see it? We could use your help! Snap a photo and send a blurb/article and we'll make sure it get included.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

We are always looking for content curators, liaisons, photographers, and promoters.

Want to get involved?

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Gratitude: A Gift to Yourself

At this time of year, with Christmas just around the corner, gratitude feels almost natural. It's the season of giving, after all, a time to appreciate the people and moments that make life extraordinary.

But here's the thing: gratitude isn't just for December and Christmas. It's a daily practice that can wake you up to the life you already have, making it richer, fuller, and undeniably yours. It's a way of saying to yourself and the world, "This matters. I see it. I'm thankful for it." And when you approach life with that mindset, everything begins to shift.

Let's start with what gratitude is. At its heart, gratitude is about being thankful and appreciative, not just for the big, obvious things but for the small, overlooked details of your day. It's a perspective shift, a choice to focus on abundance rather than lack. As Meister Eckhart said centuries ago, "If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, 'thank you,' that would suffice." Those two words, thank you, carry incredible power. They can ground you in the present moment,

connect you with others, and remind you that life is a gift.

But gratitude doesn't always come easily. Life gets busy, distractions creep in, and it's all too easy to focus on what's missing instead of what's here. That's where practice comes in. Yes, practice. Gratitude isn't just a feeling; it's a skill. It takes effort at first, like learning to ride a bike, but over time, it becomes second nature.

Try starting each morning with a gratitude exercise. Before you check your phone or leap into the day, take a moment to think about three things you're grateful for. They don't have to be profound; maybe it's the soft pillow under your head, the quiet of the early morning, or the simple fact that you woke up today. By doing this, you're training your mind to look for

Why does this matter? Because gratitude changes how you see the world and how you see yourself in it. Studies show that practicing gratitude can boost your immune system, improve your ability to handle stress, and even help you sleep better. It lowers feelings of depression, increases energy, and strengthens determination. But more than that, it pulls you out of autopilot and puts you in control.

When you pause to feel grateful, you're not just reacting to life but shaping it. You're saying, "I choose to focus on what's good, on what lifts me up, instead of what drags me down." And that choice ripples out. When you're grateful, you're more patient, generous, and connected to the people around you.

Even small gestures can make a big difference. It could be thanking a cashier for their help, not just in passing, but with intention, or telling a friend how much their advice meant to you. It could be a note to a colleague or a quick text to someone you haven't spoken to in a while. These moments of gratitude don't just brighten someone else's day; they deepen your connection with them. As American educator Randy Pausch said, "Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other." You're saying, "I see you and I appreciate you."

Of course, obstacles will come up.

Distractions, envy, and even habits of negativity, focusing on the bad instead of the good, can get in the way. Social media, in particular, can make it hard to feel grateful; it's easy to compare your life to someone else's highlight reel and feel like you're falling short. But gratitude shifts your focus. Instead of looking at what others have, you start seeing what you have. As the American poet Edwin Arlington Robinson put it, "There are two kinds of gratitude: the sudden kind we feel for what we take; the larger kind we feel for what we give."

So, how do you get started? Begin small. Take a moment during meals to appreciate the food in front of you and the people who made it possible. Share your gratitude with others, even if it's just a smile or a quick "thank you." Instead of feeling frustrated or complaining about a long day, be grateful for having meaningful tasks or opportunities. Some folks keep a gratitude journal and write down one or two things each day for which they're thankful. The more you practice, the more natural it becomes.

As you move through this Christmas season and beyond, let gratitude be your guide. Let it influence your mornings, conversations, and quiet moments alone. And as you practice gratitude, you'll find that it doesn't just change your perspective; it changes your life.

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VALLEY PROMOTIONS



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Nestled just 4km south of Radium Hot Springs, we invite you to explore our whimsical collection of antiques and treasures at 8288 Hobbit Frontage Rd, Hwy 93/95. Our charming shop is bursting with unique finds that are sure to spark joy and nostalgia! Have you visited us before? Share your favorite discovery in the comments on Facebook! If you haven't, what kind of collectible are you hoping to find? Don't forget to swing by and say hello, we're open and ready to help you uncover your next great treasure! [#HobbitHouseCollectibles](#) [#AntiqueAdventure](#) [#RadiumHotSprings](#)



Celebrating a Green Christmas:

Sustainable Holiday Practices

The holiday season is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also create a significant environmental impact. From disposable wrapping paper to plastic decorations, waste often piles up during this festive time. However, celebrating Christmas sustainably doesn't mean sacrificing cheer or beauty—it just takes a little creativity and mindfulness.

Eco-Friendly Decorations

Instead of purchasing plastic decorations, consider using natural elements to deck the halls. Pinecones, holly, and evergreen branches make stunning, biodegradable ornaments. String dried orange slices or cinnamon sticks to create fragrant garlands. If you're setting up a Christmas tree, choose a potted tree that can be replanted after the holidays or seek out a sustainably sourced real tree.

Sustainable Gift Wrapping

Traditional wrapping paper often isn't recyclable, but there are plenty of greener alternatives. Wrap gifts in fabric using the Japanese art of furoshiki, or reuse brown kraft paper and decorate it with hand-drawn designs or twine. Old newspapers, magazines, or even maps make unique and eco-friendly wraps. And don't forget to save ribbons, gift bags, and tags for future use!

Thoughtful Gifting

Choose quality over quantity when it comes to gifts. Opt for locally made

or handmade items to support the community and reduce shipping emissions. Experiences, such as a local cooking class or concert tickets, also make meaningful gifts with little to no waste. If you're shopping for children, consider wooden or recyclable toys instead of plastic ones.

Reduce Food Waste

Holiday feasts often result in piles of leftovers. Plan meals carefully to avoid over-preparation, and get creative with leftover recipes like turkey soup or stuffing-stuffed bell peppers. Compost food scraps to ensure they don't end up in the landfill.

Mindful Celebrations

Holiday lights are a staple of Christmas cheer, but they don't have to drain energy. Use LED lights and limit how long they're on each night. For greeting cards, go digital or choose ones printed on recycled paper.

This Christmas, let's spread holiday cheer while keeping the planet in mind. By adopting sustainable

RADIUM PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAM SCHEDULE December 2024



Join us this winter for events and programming for all ages. All programs are free and everyone is welcome.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

KIDS - Ages 5+

WINTER SEASONAL CRAFT
(Friday, December 6th) | 3:00 pm
Join us for a festive ornament craft!



Special SANTA STORYTIME (ALL AGES WELCOME)
(Wednesday, December 18th) | 11:30 am
Stories and candy canes with Santa and Mrs. Claus!

*Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult for all programs

TEENS

TEEN Grab & Go Craft Kits: Ages 13-19
Available across from the circulation desk.
New craft each month!
This month: Folded-paper star garland



ADULTS/SENIORS

WHOLESOME HOBBIES: PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS 50+ | Every 3rd Friday of the Month
(Friday, December 20th) | 2:00pm-3:30pm
A rotating series of projects and activities for adults 50+ to foster creativity and develop connections.
This month: No-sew fabric star decorations.

Visit <https://radium.bc.libraries.coop/>

WEEKLY PROGRAMS



TUESDAYS

Art In the Afternoon
December 3rd, 10th, 17th
1:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Drop in to create with other local artists!
*Supplies not provided



WEDNESDAYS

Storytime | 11:30am
December 4th, 11th, 18th
Stories, songs, and a craft!
(Preschool Age & Families)
Special guests:
Santa and Mrs. Claus: Dec 18th



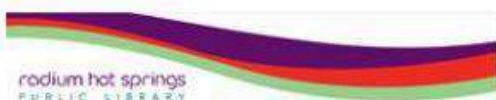
THURSDAYS

Little Lambs | 11:30am
December 5th, 12th, 19th
Join us for songs, rhymes, and stories with your babies.



THURSDAYS

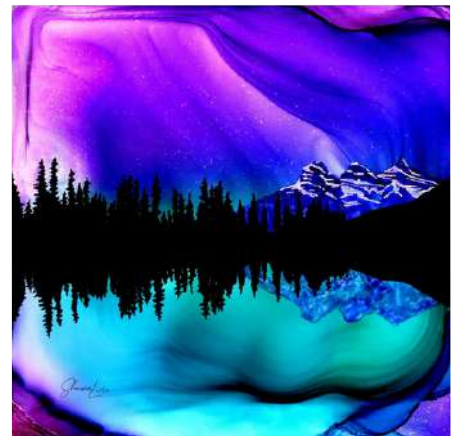
Tech Tutors | 2:00-4:00pm
December 5th and 12th
One-on-one computer, phone, or tablet assistance
Pre-registration is required, call 250-347-2434.



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VALLEY PROMOTIONS



Kootenay Christmas Cheer

Friday, December 6, 7:30 pm
Saturday, December 7, 2:00 pm

Knox Presbyterian Church
corner of Victoria Ave & 3rd St. S.

Tickets: \$10
Youth 12 & under: \$5
Available at:



Cash preferred

Choir Members or  **At the Door**



HOW TO BEAT THE HOLIDAY STRESS:

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A HAPPIER SEASON

The holiday season is a time of celebration, joy, and togetherness, but it can also bring its fair share of stress. Between shopping, planning events, hosting gatherings, and meeting year-end deadlines, the "most wonderful time of the year" can feel overwhelming. It's important to remember that taking care of your mental health during this busy season is just as important as checking off your holiday to-do list. Here's a comprehensive guide to managing holiday stress with mindfulness techniques and local resources.

1. Embrace Mindfulness in the Moment

Mindfulness is about being fully present and aware of your surroundings, which can be especially helpful in managing the chaos of the holidays. Here are a few mindfulness practices to incorporate into your day:

- **Breathe Deeply:** When you feel the pressure mounting, take five slow, deep breaths. Focus on the sensation of the air filling your lungs and leaving your body. Deep breathing can lower your heart rate and reduce feelings of stress almost instantly.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Reflect on three things you're grateful for each morning. It could be something as simple as a hot cup of coffee or a kind word from a loved one. Focusing on gratitude shifts your perspective and keeps stress in check.
- **Limit Multitasking:** Instead of trying to do five things at once, dedicate your full attention to one task at a time. Whether it's decorating the house or wrapping gifts, being fully present can turn stress into satisfaction.

2. Set Realistic Expectations

The holidays often come with a societal pressure to create a "perfect" celebration. However, perfection is an impossible standard that leads to burnout. Focus on what truly matters to you and your loved ones:

- **Simplify Your Plans:** Instead of hosting a massive dinner party, consider a casual potluck where everyone contributes. This lessens the burden on the host and fosters a sense of community.
- **Learn to Say No:** It's okay to decline invitations or limit commitments. Respect your boundaries, and remember that quality time is more meaningful than spreading yourself too thin.
- **Budget Wisely:** Financial strain is a common holiday stressor. Create a realistic holiday budget and stick to it. Consider homemade gifts or meaningful experiences instead of extravagant purchases.

3. Stay Active and Nourished

Physical health is closely tied to mental health, and taking care of your body can help you cope with holiday stress.

- **Get Moving:** Even a short daily walk can work wonders for your mood. Exercise releases endorphins, the body's natural stress relievers, and provides a much-needed break from the hustle and bustle.
- **Eat Mindfully:** It's tempting to indulge in holiday treats, but balancing them with nutritious meals can help stabilize your energy and mood. Keep healthy snacks like nuts, fruits, or yogurt on hand to curb cravings.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Amid the busyness, it's easy to forget to drink enough water. Staying hydrated can improve focus, energy levels, and overall well-being.

4. Prioritize Sleep

Sleep often takes a backseat during the holidays, but it's essential for managing stress. Lack of sleep can heighten feelings of anxiety and

reduce your ability to handle challenges. Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night. To improve your sleep:

- Stick to a regular bedtime routine.
- Avoid caffeine and heavy meals before bedtime.
- Create a calming environment by keeping your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.



5. Connect with Loved Ones

The holidays are a time to foster connection, but social dynamics can sometimes cause stress. Here's how to make the most of your relationships:

- **Communicate Openly:** Share your feelings with trusted friends or family members. Sometimes, simply talking about your stress can lighten the emotional load.
- **Delegate Tasks:** Don't feel obligated to handle everything yourself. Let others help with shopping, cooking, or decorating—it's a chance to bond and lessen your responsibilities.
- **Focus on Joyful Moments:** Instead of worrying about impressing others, enjoy the laughter, stories, and special moments that make the holidays truly meaningful.

6. Take Time for Yourself

Amid the holiday rush, don't forget to schedule time for self-care. Even a few minutes of "me time" each day can recharge your mental batteries.

- **Meditate:** Apps like Headspace or Calm offer guided meditations that can help you reset and refocus.
- **Treat Yourself:** Do something that brings you joy, whether it's reading a book, soaking in a warm bath, or watching your favorite holiday movie.
- **Unplug:** Take a break from social media or your phone to avoid the pressure of comparing your holidays to others'.

7. Be Kind to Yourself

Remember, it's okay to not have everything go perfectly. The holidays are about creating meaningful experiences, not meeting unattainable standards. Practice self-compassion by:

- **Letting Go of Guilt:** If something doesn't go as planned, remind yourself that it's okay. Focus on the positives and what you can control.

- **Recognizing Your Efforts:** Celebrate your hard work and the care you've put into the season. You're doing your best, and that's enough.

8. Access Local Resources

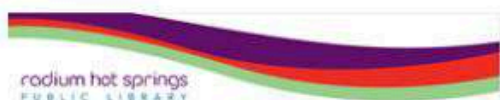
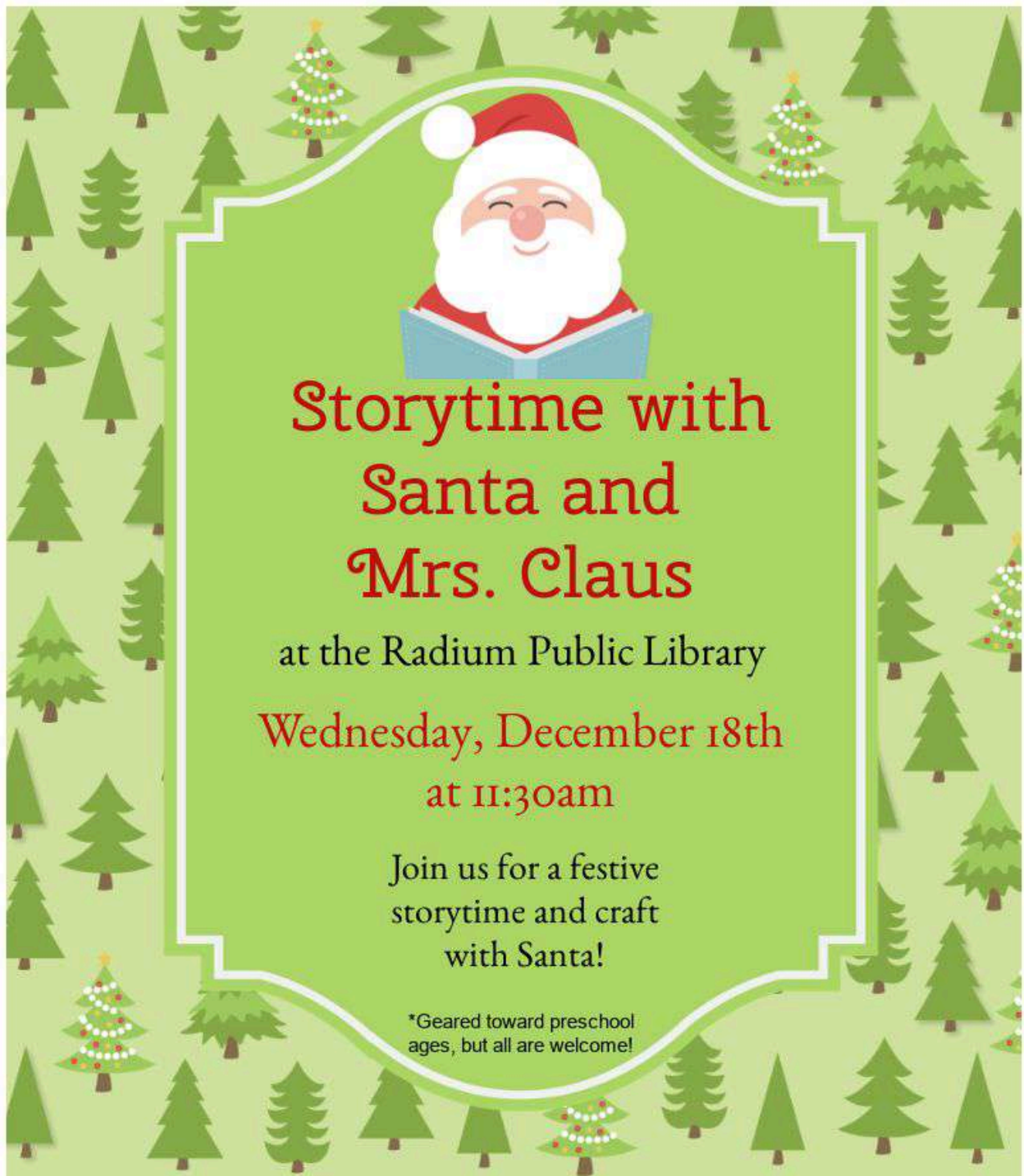
Sometimes, managing holiday stress requires additional support. Don't hesitate to seek help when you need it. Here are some local resources that can help:

- **Community Centers:** Many community centers host free or low-cost holiday activities, workshops, and mindfulness classes.
- **Mental Health Services:** If you're feeling overwhelmed, local counseling services or support groups can provide guidance and understanding.
- **Hotlines:** Crisis hotlines, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association's support line, are available to offer immediate help if you're struggling.

9. Focus on What Matters Most

At the end of the day, the holidays are about love, connection, and giving back. Shift your focus from materialistic expectations to the values that truly matter. Consider volunteering at a local shelter, donating to a food bank, or simply spending quality time with your family. Acts of kindness not only benefit others but also bring a sense of fulfillment and joy to your





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When the holiday season rolls around, cities and towns across the world transform into sparkling wonderlands filled with twinkling lights, colorful ornaments, and festive decorations. These displays bring joy, warmth, and a sense of togetherness to the season. But have you ever wondered how this beloved tradition began? From candle-lit trees to modern light shows, the history of Christmas lights and festive decorations is as fascinating as it is colorful.

The Origins of Christmas Decorations

The tradition of decorating during winter predates Christmas itself. In ancient times, people used greenery to celebrate the winter solstice, marking the return of longer days. Evergreen plants like holly, ivy, and fir symbolized life and renewal during the dark, cold months. These decorations were used in pagan festivals, such as Saturnalia in ancient Rome, which eventually influenced Christmas customs.

The modern Christmas tree, one of the most iconic decorations, can

be traced back to 16th-century Germany. Devout Christians brought evergreen trees into their homes and adorned them with candles, apples, nuts, and other ornaments. Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, is often credited with adding lit candles to trees, inspired by the beauty of stars twinkling through the branches of evergreens.

The Invention of Christmas Lights

The use of lights on Christmas trees has its roots in the German tradition of decorating trees with candles. While beautiful, this practice was also extremely

Enter Thomas Edison and Edward H. Johnson. In 1880, Edison, the inventor of the electric light bulb, created the first outdoor electric Christmas display at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey. Two years later, his associate, Edward H. Johnson, hand-wired a string of red, white, and blue bulbs and strung them around his Christmas tree, creating the first known instance of electric Christmas tree lights. While these early lights were expensive and required access to electricity (which was still uncommon at the time), they paved the way for safer, more widespread use of lights in holiday decorations.

By 1895, U.S. President Grover Cleveland showcased the first electrically lit White House Christmas tree, complete with multicolored bulbs. This helped popularize the use of electric lights in holiday celebrations. In the early 20th century, General Electric began producing pre-assembled strings of Christmas lights, making them more accessible to the general public.

The Rise of Festive Displays

As electric lights became more affordable, decorating moved beyond the Christmas tree. By the mid-20th century, outdoor light displays became a popular way to share holiday cheer with neighbors and passersby. The post-World War II economic boom in the United States brought increased prosperity, and with it, the ability to spend on festive decorations. Suburban homes were often adorned with strings of lights, illuminated Santa figures, and nativity scenes.

In the 1960s and 70s, Christmas displays became increasingly elaborate with the introduction of themed ornaments, blinking lights, and plastic blow molds. The tradition of competing for the most extravagant light display in neighborhoods emerged during this time, further fueling creativity and innovation.

Modern Innovations in Christmas Decorations

Today, Christmas decorations have evolved into dazzling spectacles, blending tradition with cutting-edge technology. LED lights, which are more energy-efficient and longer-lasting, have largely replaced incandescent bulbs. These lights are available in a variety of colors, shapes, and even programmable patterns, allowing for custom displays.

Projection technology has added a new dimension to holiday decorating, enabling homeowners to transform the exteriors of their homes into animated light shows. Music-synchronized displays, where lights "dance" to holiday tunes, have become popular attractions in communities around the world.

Beyond homes, large-scale public displays have taken Christmas lights to new heights. Cities like New York, London, and Tokyo host world-renowned light displays, drawing millions of visitors each year. Landmarks such as Rockefeller Center's Christmas tree and the Champs-Élysées' glowing streets have become synonymous with holiday magic.

Local Examples of Festive Displays

Closer to home, communities in the region have embraced the spirit of Christmas with stunning light displays and festive decorations. Here are a few local examples that showcase the creativity and passion of holiday decorators:

Downtown Light-Up Events: Many towns organize annual "Light-Up" events, where the entire downtown area is illuminated with strings of lights, glowing wreaths, and towering Christmas trees. These events often include parades, live music, and markets, bringing the community together to celebrate the season.

Residential Light Shows: Some neighborhoods have become

Community Landmarks: Parks, museums, and community centers often host festive light displays during the holiday season. Walking through tunnels of lights or admiring beautifully lit sculptures is a magical experience for families and friends.

your porch, admiring a neighborhood display, or wandering through a local holiday market, take a moment to appreciate the rich history and meaning behind the decorations that brighten our holidays. After all, it's not just about the lights themselves, but the memories and connections they illuminate.

Eco-Friendly Holiday Decorating

As the world becomes more conscious of environmental impact, eco-friendly holiday decorating is gaining popularity. Here are a few sustainable practices to consider:

Switch to LED Lights: LED lights use significantly less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs, reducing your carbon footprint and lowering electricity bills.

Choose Reusable Decorations: Invest in high-quality, reusable decorations rather than single-use items. Vintage ornaments, handmade crafts, and natural elements like pinecones and dried flowers add charm and reduce waste.

Repurpose Materials: Get creative by upcycling household items into festive decorations. For example, turn mason jars into candleholders or use old scarves as tree garlands.

Support Local Businesses: Shop for decorations at local markets or from artisans in your community to reduce the environmental cost of shipping and support small businesses.

The Meaning Behind the Lights

While the methods and materials may have changed over the centuries, the essence of Christmas lights and decorations has remained the same: to bring light, warmth, and joy to the darkest time of the year. For many, decorating is a way to express love, hope, and generosity during the holiday season. It's a tradition that connects us to our history, our communities, and the people we hold dear.

So, whether you're stringing lights on



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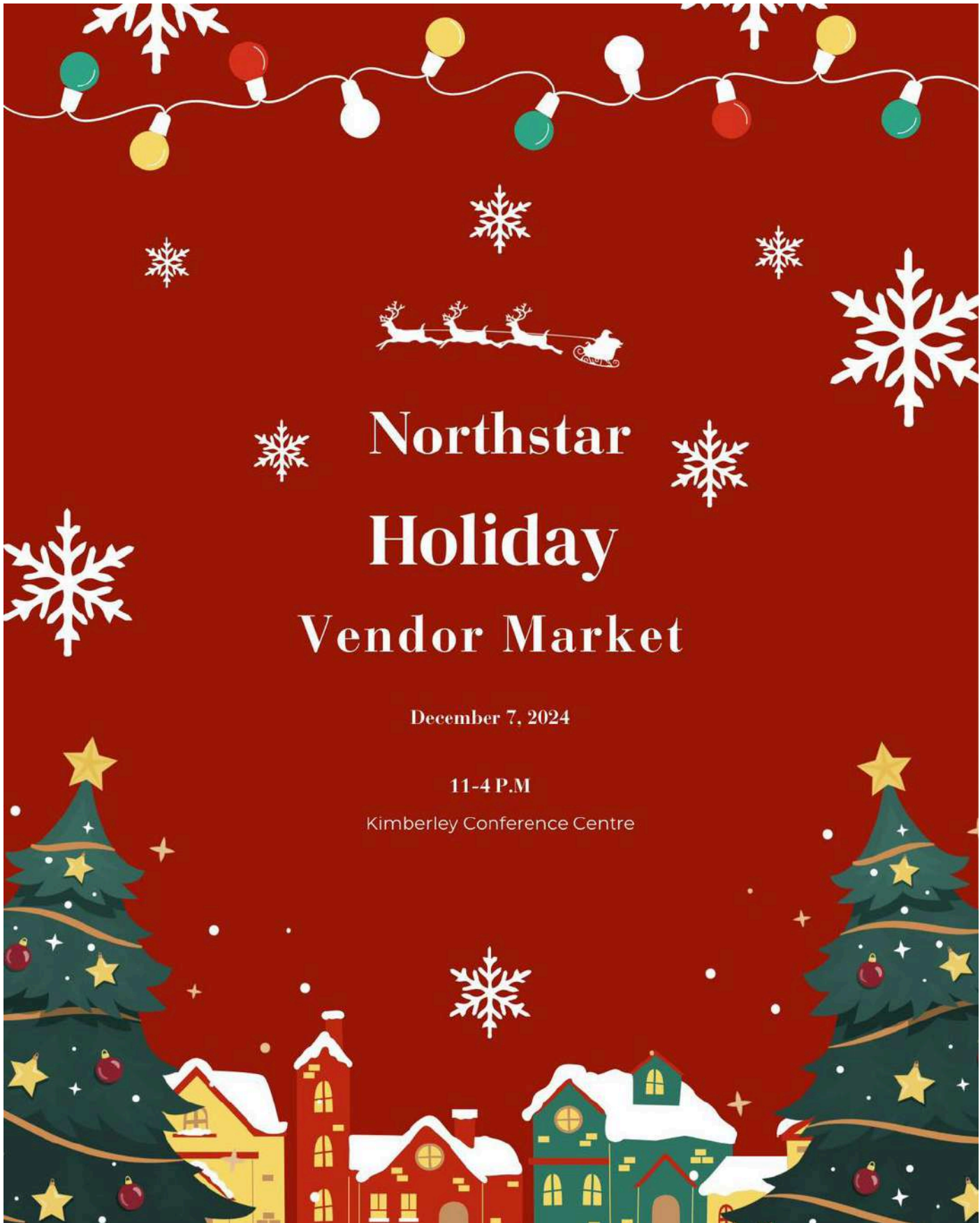
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- 2 oz vodka
- 1 oz peppermint schnapps
- 1 oz white crème de cacao
- Crushed candy canes (for rimming the glass)
- Mini candy cane (for garnish)

Instructions:

- Rim a martini glass with crushed candy canes by dipping the rim in water and then into the candy cane bits.
- In a shaker with ice, combine vodka, peppermint schnapps, and white crème de cacao. Shake well.
- Strain into the prepared glass and garnish with a mini candy cane.

GINGERBREAD EGGNOG

Ingredients:

- 1.5 oz spiced rum (or bourbon)
- 4 oz store-bought eggnog
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- Whipped cream (optional)
- Crushed gingerbread cookies (for garnish)

Instructions:

- In a cocktail shaker, combine spiced rum, eggnog, ground ginger, and ground cinnamon. Shake well.
- Pour over ice into a festive glass.
- Top with whipped cream and garnish with crushed gingerbread cookies.



POMEGRANATE SPARKLE (MOCKTAIL)

Ingredients:

3 oz pomegranate juice
 2 oz sparkling water or ginger ale
 1 oz orange juice
 Fresh pomegranate seeds (for garnish)
 Orange slice (for garnish)

Instructions:

- Fill a glass with ice and pour in the pomegranate juice and orange juice.
- Top with sparkling water or ginger ale.
- Garnish with fresh pomegranate seeds and an orange slice for a pop of color.

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Ingredients:

2 oz bourbon
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 1 sugar cube
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 Orange peel (for garnish)
 Fresh cranberries (for garnish)

Instructions:

- Place the sugar cube in a glass and add a dash of Angostura bitters. Muddle until the sugar dissolves.
- Add bourbon, cranberry juice, and a large ice cube. Stir well.
- Garnish with an orange peel and fresh cranberries.




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Seasonal Antenna Maintenance: Winterizing Your Setup

As December arrives, radio operators face a unique set of challenges: plummeting temperatures, snow, ice, and high winds. While these conditions can be beautiful, they also pose risks to outdoor radio equipment. Proper seasonal antenna maintenance ensures your setup remains operational and efficient throughout the winter months. This guide covers everything you need to know about winterizing your antenna system, protecting coaxial cables, and safeguarding outdoor equipment against the elements.

Why Winter Antenna Maintenance Is Essential

Winter weather can be unforgiving. Ice buildup, windstorms, and moisture infiltration can damage your antenna system, leading to degraded performance or complete failure. Routine maintenance and preparation can help:

Maintain Signal Quality: Proper upkeep ensures your signals remain clear despite adverse conditions.

Prevent Costly Repairs: Addressing small issues before they escalate can save money in the long run.

Extend Equipment Lifespan: Protective measures help prevent corrosion, rust, and wear on components.

Step-by-Step Guide to Winterizing Your Antenna Setup

1. Inspect Your Antenna System

Begin by visually inspecting all components:

Antenna Elements: Check for cracks, bends, or signs of wear. Cold weather can worsen structural weaknesses.

Connections: Ensure all bolts, screws, and clamps are tight. Loose connections may worsen during high winds.

Guy Wires: Inspect for tension and fraying. Adjust and replace as needed to handle winter wind loads.

Pro Tip: Use binoculars to inspect antennas mounted on tall towers.

Anti-Ice Measures:

Antenna Covers: Install weatherproof covers designed to minimize ice accumulation.

Spray Coatings: Apply a non-stick spray or hydrophobic coating to antenna surfaces to reduce ice buildup.

De-icing Equipment: Invest in de-icing systems for critical setups, such as heated elements.

Snow Shielding: If your antenna is located near the ground, consider installing a physical barrier or shield to deflect snow drifts.

3. Safeguard Coaxial Cables

Coaxial cables are the lifelines of your system but are vulnerable to winter damage.

Moisture Protection:

Seal Connections: Use self-amalgamating tape or coaxial sealant to waterproof all connections.

Inspect Cable Jackets: Look for cracks or damage in the outer sheath, which can let moisture in.

Prevent Cable Stress:

Cable Ties: Use UV-resistant cable ties to secure cables without overtightening, which can cause cracks.

Slack Loops: Allow for small loops to accommodate cable contraction in cold weather.

4. Check for Proper Grounding

Grounding is crucial during winter storms to protect against lightning strikes and static discharge:

Inspect Grounding Rods: Ensure grounding rods are properly buried and free of corrosion.

Test Continuity: Use a multimeter to check the electrical continuity of your grounding system.

5. Reinforce Mounts and Towers

Winter winds and ice loads can test the structural integrity of your mounts and towers.

Tighten Bolts: Re-check all mounting hardware for tightness.

Apply Rust Prevention: Coat exposed metal surfaces with rust-proof spray or paint.

Install Wind Dampers: On taller towers, dampers can reduce vibrations caused by high winds.

6. Monitor SWR and Performance

Regularly check your system's standing wave ratio (SWR).

Why It Matters: SWR changes can indicate physical damage, water ingress, or misalignment.

When to Check: After major weather events or ice storms.

7. Protect Your Shack Entry Point

Where coaxial cables enter your shack is another potential vulnerability:

Weatherproof Entry Points: Use grommets or pass-through panels to seal openings.

Install Drip Loops: A drip loop ensures water runs off before reaching your entry point.



Preparing for Emergency Repairs

Even with proper preparation, unexpected damage can occur. Having a repair kit ready ensures you can address issues quickly:

Essential Items: Coaxial connectors, spare cable, electrical tape, and self-amalgamating tape.

Portable Tools: Keep a wrench set, pliers, and a multimeter on hand.

Common Winter Challenges and Solutions

Ice on Antennas: Use anti-ice spray or a heating element.

Wind-Induced Sway: Reinforce guy wires and add dampers.

Frozen Connections: Inspect and weatherproof connections before winter.

Water in Coaxial Cables: Seal connectors and check cable jackets for damage.

Advanced Tips for Severe Climates

For operators in extreme winter conditions, consider these additional precautions:

Install Remote Monitoring: Use sensors to monitor SWR, signal strength, and system performance.

Backup Power: Have a generator or battery system ready for outages.

Deploy Redundant Systems: Set up a secondary antenna in case the primary one fails.

The Science Behind Winter Propagation

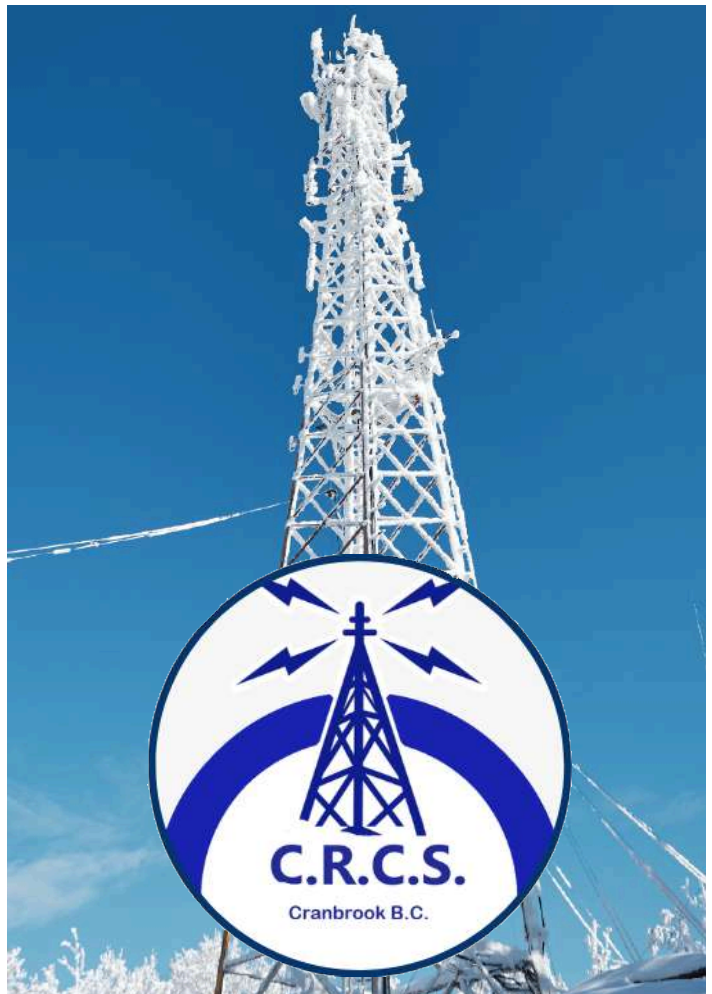
Cold weather doesn't just affect equipment—it also impacts radio wave propagation. Icy layers in the atmosphere and snow-covered ground can enhance certain frequencies while attenuating others. Understanding these effects can help you adapt your communication strategies.

Final Checklist for Winterization

Before the first snowstorm, run through this final checklist:

- Inspect all antenna components for damage.
- Tighten and weatherproof all connections.
- Apply anti-ice measures to antennas.
- Ground your system and test continuity.
- Secure and inspect coaxial cables.
- Reinforce mounts and towers.

Winter can be one of the most demanding seasons for ham radio operators, but with proper seasonal antenna maintenance, your setup can thrive even in harsh conditions. Regular inspections, weatherproofing, and preparedness are the keys to success. By investing time in winterizing your equipment now, you'll enjoy uninterrupted communication throughout the season.



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Keeping Your Home Safe and Cozy This Winter



As the cold winter months set in, keeping your home safe, warm, and energy-efficient becomes a top priority. With some simple tips and preventative measures, you can prepare your home for the harshest weather while staying comfortable and avoiding costly repairs.

1. Prevent Frozen Pipes

Frozen pipes can burst and cause significant water damage. To prevent this:

Insulate exposed pipes, especially in basements, attics, and crawl spaces. Foam pipe insulation is inexpensive and easy to install.

Keep your thermostat set to at least 15°C (60°F), even when you're not home.

Let faucets drip slightly during extremely cold weather to maintain water flow.

If you're away for an extended period, ask a friend or neighbor to check your home or leave your heating system running at a low, consistent temperature.

2. Seal Drafts and Improve Insulation

Drafty windows and doors let in cold air and drive up energy bills. Here's how to stay cozy and energy-efficient:

- Use weatherstripping around doors and windows to seal gaps.
- Apply caulking to any cracks or crevices in window frames.
- Consider adding heavy curtains or thermal window coverings to retain heat.
- For long-term benefits, check your attic insulation. Heat rises, so poorly

insulated attics can lead to significant energy loss.

3. Maintain Your Heating System

A well-maintained heating system ensures your home stays warm without wasting energy.

Have your furnace or boiler serviced annually by a professional to ensure it's running efficiently.

Replace furnace filters regularly to maintain airflow.

If you have a fireplace, have it cleaned and inspected to prevent chimney fires.

4. Safety First

Ensure your home is safe during winter by:

Checking smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they work properly.

Keeping sidewalks and driveways clear of ice and snow to prevent accidents.

With these simple steps, you can enjoy a warm, safe, and energy-efficient home all winter long!

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The Science of Snow: Why Winter is Magical

Winter is often thought of as a season of quiet beauty, when the world slows down and frost paints the landscape in shimmering white. While many marvel at the peaceful scenes of snow-covered mountains and frosted pine trees, the real magic of winter lies in the science of snow. From its formation high in the clouds to its significant role in the ecosystem, snow is more than just a seasonal phenomenon—it's a fascinating and crucial part of life on Earth.

How Does Snow Form?

To understand snow, we must first delve into the basics of how it forms. Snow starts its journey in the clouds, where the right combination of temperature and moisture sets the stage for this winter wonder. For snow to form, the atmosphere must be below freezing (0°C or 32°F), and there must be moisture in the air.

Formation of Ice Crystals:

In cold clouds, tiny water droplets latch onto microscopic particles like dust, pollen, or salt. These particles act as nuclei around which ice crystals form. This process is called deposition, where water vapor turns directly into solid ice without passing through the liquid phase.

Snowflake Growth:

Once the ice crystals form, they begin to grow as more water vapor freezes onto their surfaces. The

temperature and humidity within the cloud determine the shape of the snowflake. Surprisingly, snowflakes aren't always the classic six-sided stars; they can also take the form of columns, needles, or even plates depending on the conditions.

Falling to Earth:

When these ice crystals grow heavy enough, they fall to the ground as snow. If the air between the clouds and the ground remains below freezing, the snow reaches us intact. However, if the air warms up, the snow can melt and fall as rain instead.

Each snowflake is unique, shaped by the specific atmospheric conditions it encounters on its descent. This is why no two snowflakes are identical—a small but enchanting reminder of nature's complexity.



Why Does Snow Look White?

One of snow's most magical qualities is its brilliant white appearance, which contrasts starkly against the barren landscapes of winter. Interestingly, snow is not inherently white. Snow is made of ice crystals, which are transparent. So why does it appear white?

When light hits snow, it is scattered and reflected by the many surfaces of the snow crystals. Because all colors of light are scattered equally, the snow appears white to our eyes. This scattering of light is also what gives snow its dazzling sparkle on a sunny winter day.

Snow's Role in the Ecosystem

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, snow plays a vital role in the health and function of ecosystems around the world. Its impact can be observed in various ways:

Insulation for Soil and Plants:

Snow acts as a natural blanket, insulating the ground and protecting plants and microorganisms from extreme cold. The air trapped within the snowpack acts as an insulator, keeping soil temperatures more stable than the frigid air above. This helps overwintering plants and

hibernating animals survive harsh winters.

Water Reservoirs:

Snow is a critical water resource. In mountainous regions, the snowpack serves as a natural reservoir, storing water during the winter and releasing it slowly as it melts in spring. This meltwater feeds rivers, lakes, and aquifers, supporting agriculture, drinking water supplies, and ecosystems downstream.

Albedo Effect:

Snow has a high albedo, meaning it reflects a significant amount of sunlight back into space. This helps regulate the Earth's temperature by preventing excessive heat absorption. In areas with consistent snow cover, this reflective property helps mitigate global warming to some extent.

Support for Wildlife:

Snow is essential for many animal species. It provides shelter for small mammals like voles and mice, which burrow under the snow to escape predators and conserve heat. Additionally, some animals, like the Arctic fox, rely on snow for camouflage, helping them hunt or evade predators.

The Sounds of Snow

Have you ever noticed how the world seems quieter after a fresh snowfall? Snow has a unique ability to dampen sound, creating the serene, hushed atmosphere we associate with winter. This phenomenon occurs because the porous structure of fresh snow absorbs sound waves. The tiny air pockets trapped between snowflakes prevent sound from traveling far, resulting in a peaceful, muffled environment.

However, as snow becomes compacted or turns into ice, it loses this sound-absorbing quality. That's why older or icy snow doesn't have the same tranquil effect as fresh powder.

Snow in Human Culture and Folklore

Snow's beauty and power have inspired countless myths, legends, and traditions across cultures. For example:

In Japanese Shinto traditions, snow is seen as a symbol of purity and renewal.

In Scandinavian folklore, snow is often associated with powerful winter spirits and deities.

Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, like the Inuit, have dozens of words to describe different types of snow, reflecting its importance in their daily lives.

Even in modern times, snow remains a central theme in literature, art, and film. Think of the magical snow scenes in holiday classics or the sense of wonder evoked by a snowy landscape in a painting.

Fun Facts About Snow

Record Snowfall: The world's largest snowfall in a single year occurred at Mount Rainier, Washington, where 31.5 meters (1,240 inches) of snow fell during the winter of 1971-1972.

Snow Isn't Always White: In rare cases, snow can appear pink, green, or even black, depending on the presence of algae, pollutants, or volcanic ash.

Snowflakes and Math: Snowflakes are excellent examples of fractals—complex patterns that repeat at different scales.

Enjoying the Magic of Snow

For many, snow brings joy and recreation. Skiing, snowboarding, sledding, and snowball fights are just a few ways we connect with this natural wonder. Snow also plays a significant role in tourism, attracting visitors to ski resorts and winter festivals.

However, it's essential to respect snow's power. Avalanches, icy roads, and extreme cold are real hazards associated with winter weather. By understanding the science of snow, we can better appreciate its beauty while staying safe.

Nature's Winter Masterpiece

Snow is a testament to the intricacy and wonder of the natural world. From its delicate formation high in the atmosphere to its profound impact on ecosystems and human culture, snow is much more than frozen water—it's a phenomenon that brings beauty, life, and meaning to the winter season.

So, the next time you see snow falling gently from the sky, take a moment to marvel at the science and magic behind it. Each flake tells a story of temperature, moisture, and movement—a fleeting masterpiece of nature's design. And as it blankets the earth in white, it reminds us of winter's quiet charm and the importance of understanding and cherishing the natural world.

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Game Review: Lollipop Chainsaw Repop

Platform(s): Nintendo Switch , PC , PlayStation 5 , Xbox Series X , Xbox Series S

Released: September 12, 2024

Developer(s): Dragami Games

Publisher(s): Dragami Games

The cult classic hack-and-slash title Lollipop Chainsaw is back with a revamped edition, Lollipop Chainsaw Repop, bringing a fresh coat of paint to the 2012 favorite while staying true to its delightfully bizarre roots. Developed by Dragami Games and reimagined for modern platforms, Repop retains its trademark blend of over-the-top action, campy humor, and high-octane zombie-slaying fun, all while giving the game a much-needed visual and technical upgrade.

For the uninitiated, Lollipop Chainsaw Repop puts players in the cheerleading boots of Juliet Starling, a high school student who happens to be a chainsaw-wielding zombie hunter. The plot, as absurd as it is entertaining, revolves around Juliet battling hordes of undead while saving her friends and family, with her boyfriend's disembodied

head (yes, really) hanging from her hip as comedic relief. The game's unapologetically quirky tone, combined with its hack-and-slash gameplay, makes it a one-of-a-kind experience.

Visually, Repop is a treat. The graphics have been completely overhauled, with new textures, lighting effects, and fluid animations that bring Juliet's vibrant world to life. The game's colorful aesthetic—part high school drama, part grindhouse horror—feels right at home on modern consoles. While the original game leaned heavily on its stylized, cartoony vibe, the remaster strikes a balance between its roots and modern graphical expectations, making it accessible to both nostalgic fans and newcomers.

Gameplay-wise, Lollipop Chainsaw Repop sticks close to its original formula. Players slice through waves of zombies with Juliet's trusty chainsaw, performing combo attacks, special moves, and acrobatics while collecting points and unlocking upgrades. New quality-of-life improvements, such as smoother controls and updated camera mechanics, make the experience far less clunky than its predecessor, addressing one of the original's main criticisms.

The game's soundtrack has also received an update, blending its iconic pop-rock bangers with additional licensed tracks to keep the adrenaline pumping. However, some fans of the original may miss certain songs that couldn't make the jump due to licensing issues.

While Repop does a stellar job modernizing the visuals and controls, it does little to address the more dated aspects of the original. Some of the humor, though intentionally over-the-top, may feel cringeworthy or out of touch for modern audiences, and the reliance on fan service remains a double-edged sword. The story,

while charmingly ridiculous, lacks depth, and the repetitive nature of combat may wear thin after prolonged play sessions.

Still, these shortcomings are part of what gives Lollipop Chainsaw Repop its identity. It's not trying to be a profound or groundbreaking game—it's here to be absurd, outrageous, and unapologetically fun.

In the end, Lollipop Chainsaw Repop successfully revives a cult favorite for a new generation, bringing Juliet's chainsaw-swinging escapades into the modern gaming landscape. While it might not appeal to everyone, fans of quirky, campy action games will find plenty to love in this over-the-top adventure.

Rating: 7.5/10

Verdict: A fun, flashy, and faithful remaster that captures the spirit of the original, despite some dated elements. If you're ready for chainsaws, cheerleaders, and zombies galore, Lollipop Chainsaw Repop is well worth the ride.



Sierra Says

HYPNOTIST

ENTERTAINMENT

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- WEDDINGS
- BACHELORETTES
- STAFF EVENT
- BARS
- ETC.

Sierra Franklin

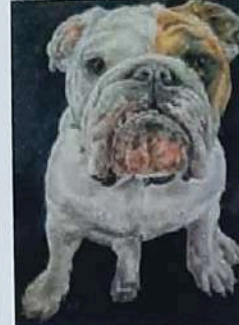
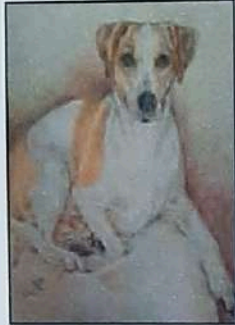
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Movie Review: Wicked

The highly anticipated Wicked movie adaptation, directed by Jon M. Chu, brings Gregory Maguire's reimagined tale of the Land of Oz to life with a breathtaking blend of music, heart, and spectacle. As fans of the beloved Broadway production have long awaited, this film delivers a new dimension to the enchanting story of Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) and Glinda (Ariana Grande), two young women whose unlikely friendship is tested by fate, politics, and personal ambitions.

At its heart, Wicked is an exploration of identity, morality, and the power of choice. Elphaba, misunderstood due to her green skin and unorthodox ways, captures our hearts with her fiery resolve and vulnerability. Cynthia Erivo's portrayal is nothing short of extraordinary; her raw emotion and powerful vocals breathe life into iconic numbers like "Defying Gravity." On the other hand,

Ariana Grande's Glinda is bubbly, charming, and layered, offering a nuanced take on the character's journey from shallow popularity to a deeper understanding of the world around her. Their on-screen chemistry brings both humor and heart to the story, making their evolving relationship all the more poignant.

Jon M. Chu's direction enhances the magic of the Land of Oz, with vibrant cinematography and stunning visual effects that bring iconic moments to life. From the grand halls of Shiz University to the Wizard's majestic palace, each set is meticulously crafted to immerse viewers in this fantastical world. The costume design is equally captivating, striking a perfect balance between theatrical grandeur and cinematic realism.



Universal Pictures
Canada

PHOTO CREDIT

While the film stays largely faithful to the Broadway show, there are a few creative liberties taken, particularly in fleshing out supporting characters and backstories. Jeff Goldblum as the Wonderful Wizard of Oz adds an enigmatic and slightly whimsical touch to the story, and his scenes with Elphaba add depth to the film's exploration of power and corruption.

Musically, *Wicked* excels in every way. The reorchestration of Stephen Schwartz's beloved score retains its emotional resonance while taking full advantage of the cinematic format. Iconic songs like "Popular" and "For Good" shine brighter than ever, while the choreography and staging elevate each musical number to unforgettable heights.

However, the film is not without its flaws. At times, the pacing feels uneven, particularly in the transition from the

characters' carefree days at Shiz to the darker, more complex elements of the story. Some fans of the musical may also miss certain theatrical nuances that couldn't fully translate to the screen.

Despite these minor setbacks, *Wicked* is a triumph that will leave both fans and newcomers spellbound. It's a visually stunning, emotionally resonant, and deeply human story that reminds us of the power of friendship, the complexity of good and evil, and the importance of standing up for what you believe in.

In the end, *Wicked* not only honors the legacy of the Broadway sensation but also reimagines it for a new generation of viewers. It's a dazzling spectacle and a heartfelt journey that's well worth the trip down the Yellow Brick Road.

Rating: 9/10

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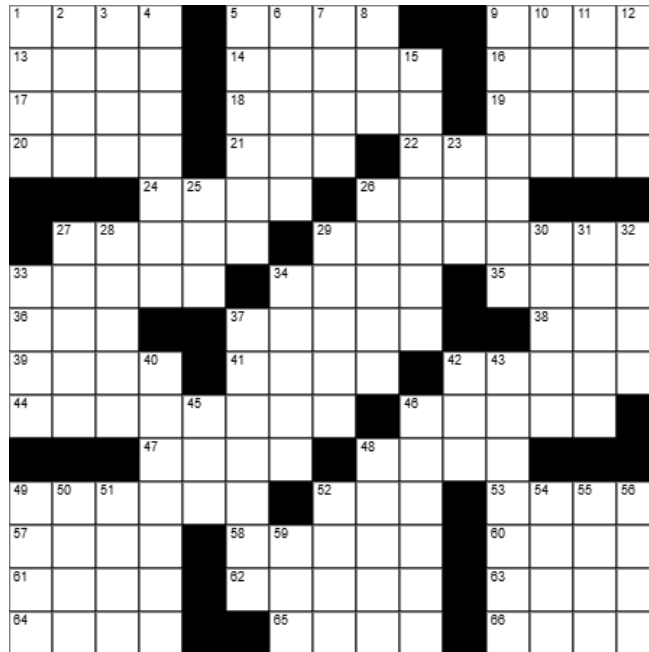


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A LITTLE FUN

Across

1- Ah, me!; 5- Adds; 9- Handles clumsily; 13- ___ colada; 14- Deplete; 16- Succulent plant; 17- Rushed, drove too fast; 18- Young rabbit; 19- Outback hoppers; 20- Cornerstone abbr.; 21- Used to be; 22- Child's toy; 24- Tel Aviv server; 26- Quarter, e.g.; 27- Medium of exchange; 29- Skin preparation; 33- Brainy bunch; 34- Asian cuisine; 35- Infrequent; 36- Wolfed down; 37- Gross; 38- A Kennedy; 39- Afternoon affairs; 41- Cafe au ___; 42- View; 44- Archie Bunker's is in the Smithsonian; 46- Task; 47- 1996 Tony-winning musical; 48- Examine by touch; 49- Monetary unit of Thailand; 52- Religious sch.; 53- Weak, as an excuse; 57- Type of machine found in Las Vegas; 58- French school; 60- They may clash; 61- DEA agent; 62- Hazardous gas; 63- Wrigley varieties; 64- Adam's third son; 65- Desire; 66- Comfort;



Down

1- Church section; 2- Kissers; 3- Work without ___; 4- Makes sorrowful; 5- Underground electric railroad; 6- Customary; 7- Department store department; 8- Sky light; 9- Associate; 10- Tremendously; 11- Fleece; 12- Zaire's Mobutu ___ Seko; 15- Heartburn; 23- Goal, intention; 25- Pasture; 26- Seashore; 27- Unit just above a yard; 28- Wee hour; 29- Seat; 30- Spud; 31- "Goodnight" girl; 32- Give up; 33- ___ Hari; 34- Characteristic; 37- Blunder; 40- Deal with poison ivy, in a way; 42- "___ loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah"; 43- School; 45- Female fowl; 46- Building material; 48- Criminal; 49- IRS IDs; 50- Wings; 51- Civil wrong; 52- Bubbly drink; 54- Juan's water; 55- May honorees; 56- "___ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 59- Cornfield cry;

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