



Chatter

- IN THE WOODS -

Read the CHATTER online at

www.redwoodmeadows.ab.ca

Let's get social!

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@Redwood Meadows



Hello Redwooders and Neighbours,

I don't know about you, but this past month has been busy! I'm looking forward to a bit more holiday bustling, but what I'm really excited about is a few weeks of relaxation in order to start 2022 as refreshed as possible.

I sincerely want to thank all of you who read the Chatter for inspiring us to continue with this publication. We appreciate your comments and words of encouragement. You keep us going!

I would also like to thank everyone who contributes to the Chatter. Your articles, stories, photos, puzzles, kids content, etc. are of top-notch quality and you are responsible for our expanded readership.

Last but certainly not least, a big thank you to our advertisers. Like other non-profits, the Redwood Meadows Community Association has been challenged with losing most of its fundraising opportunities the past few years. Revenue from Chatter advertising has been the main source of income and has been a significant reason why RMCA has been able to keep functioning and continue to host events and activities. RMCA thanks you for your support and we hope you will continue to support RMCA in 2022.

Happy Holidays,

Rebecca Parzen

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FRIENDLY RMCA

Hello Redwood,



The Redwood Meadows Community Association recently held their AGM, which provided a good opportunity to reflect on this past year. Despite the continued challenges of the pandemic, the RMCA was still able to continue many services and hold a number of events.


Some of my favorite memories from these events include just recently seeing a once-again bustling Christmas Market. Last February it was whizzing around the skating oval with all the different colors on Neon Night. Then in the spring buying seedlings at the seedling sale, one which grew into a beautiful 10-foot tall, many-headed monster of a sunflower. In July it was great to wave at all the decked-out floats for the Canada Day parade as they cruised by. My favorite memory may have been looking up at the stars the same time Simba, Timone and Pumba were doing so as the Lion King played on our new blow-up big screen on a clear, crisp October evening with people singing along to the classic songs of this movie. And hamburgers at the concession.

I hope everyone was able to make their own memories at these events and that we can keep doing so for many years to come in this great community. There are many people to recognize and thank for making these events happen which include:

- Current and past RMCA board members, specifically our outgoing President Jennifer Illescas, and Vice President Rebecca Parzen
- Everyone at Townsite and our Mayor and Council from this term, as well as the previous
- Other partners such as BCCA and RMES
- Our many volunteers, which our community would not be the same without
- All the contributors to The Chatter
- The Garden Committee which materialized a community garden in just a few short months
- Michelle Thompson for setting up and running a successful Christmas Market
- All our sponsors and advertisers. Please consider supporting these local businesses when in need of the services they provide
- And everyone that attended these events!

Christmas Word Search

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



candycane	ornament
chimney	presents
Christmas	reindeer
cookies	Rudolph
cranberries	Santa
elves	sleigh
family	stockings
holly	stuffing
lights	tinsel
mistletoe	turkey

The RMCA hopes to continue offering our staple events and services, such as the upcoming Photos with Santa and Santa in the Woods, as well as some new ones throughout the coming year. For this to happen, membership in the Community Association is essential. The rate will be bumped up slightly this year from the introductory rate last year. Keep an eye out for a Christmas treat, and membership form and FAQ, landing on your doorstep in the next couple of weeks.

Happy Holidays and enjoy the season!

Alex Mueller
RMCA Treasurer

A MESSAGE FROM REDWOOD MEADOWS MAYOR & COUNCIL



Dear friends and neighbours,

Winter in Redwood is a strikingly beautiful season. Frosty mornings, warmed by bright blue sky, highlighting pristine white powdery snow. When we look outside, it's easy to remember why we choose this beautiful place to call home.

The spirit and soul of our community is created by the many wonderful volunteers that tirelessly give their time and energy to enriching our lives. Investing time with neighbours and community makes these challenging times a little better.

Members of the Redwood Meadows Community Association recently held their Annual General Meeting. To the past members of the leadership team, we thank you for your service and contributions. You navigated the most challenging of recent times. Know that your ideas, vitality, and enthusiasm but most importantly your commitment to community are recognized and appreciated. To the new team undertaking the burdens of leadership, we offer the full support of Townsite and Council. Welcome and thank you for stepping up and giving back to your community in such a meaningful way.

This November we welcomed back the Kananaskis Christmas Market. Thank you RMCA and those who gave time to host this event. It was nice to mingle with neighbours and enjoy the tasty treats marking the start of the holiday season. Upcoming this December we are all looking forward to Photos with Santa and Santa in the Woods.

Though not as festive, Townsite and Council have also been attending events. In late November, some of us traveled to Edmonton to meet with the Provincial Government and build relationships with other municipalities from across Alberta at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Conference.

We received a number of accolades on how unique and progressive our community is. Justice Minister, Kaycee Madu, offered his congratulations on our new and historic agreement with Tosguna (Tsuut'ina Nation Police Service). Many UCP and NDP MLAs were very interested in our recent success in establishing reliable broadband Internet. In fact, further discussions are planned, as many rural communities are interested in replicating our success at providing their communities with the same level of service to their constituents.

Other highlights for Redwood Meadows were our use of provincial funding to develop projects such as waste management development (composting) and LED lights. Our CAO was able to network with many other municipal
(Continued on page 4)

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful." Norman Vincent Peale



Especially in Bragg Creek and Redwood Meadows.....

The River Dragonfly
and
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managers building collaborative and supportive relationships. Many presentations were attended including an extremely important municipal financial projection workshop delivered by experts in the field. This was certainly timely given the significant reduction in provincial capital funding for all municipalities (~60% reduction for the next two years).

Importantly, we capitalized on our discussions with provincial leaders to support our volunteer Fire Department in acquiring the equipment needed to protect Redwood Meadows and the greater Bragg Creek area. We know that wildfire is a serious risk that must urgently be recognized with financial support from the government. We raised concerns of residents in the area with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Ric McIver and with the Opposition Leader, Rachel Notley. Council remains committed to helping RMES acquire the equipment and sprinklers systems needed to protect our communities.

Though we should be proud of the accolades received for our unique, diverse, and progressive community; leading the way sometimes causes hiccups. One such hiccup arose recently with our access to library services.

Council is looking into access to public library services for our residents. We have met with the CEO of the Marigold Library Systems (includes the Cochrane Library) and we started a dialog with the CEO of the Calgary Public Library. In both cases, we explained the uniqueness of our community and expressed the desire to obtain an agreement that provides economical library services without creating unfair disadvantages for our Indigenous residents. This matter was also raised with Municipal Affairs minister, Ric McIver at the AUMA conference. There will be more information to follow on this issue.

In other more operational news, personnel from Townsite Operations will be attending a natural ice-making course in Lake Louise. Townsite is working hard to see the completion of our new concession for the winter months and prepare the best ice possible for both the hockey rink and oval.

In closing, the last 20 months have been difficult on all of us. Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or Christmas, we wish you a happy holiday season and hope you find time to reconnect with family, friends, and your neighbours. On behalf of Townsite and Council, we wish you the very best of the season to you and your family!

Happy holidays, happy New Year.

Mayor Ed Perkins, Deputy Mayor George Allen, Townsite manager Dr. Jamie Mitchell on behalf of your Townsite and council.



CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT THE
TRADING POST

UNIQUE PRACTICAL AND AFFORDABLE

- Really good books by indigenous authors [KIDS too]
- Mother Earth Essentials - from native recipes
- Bragg Creek casual wear - even "retro" sweatshirts
- Country/ Western decor items - many new items
- MITTS - MANY NEW STYLES

At the river 117 White Avenue 403 949 3737

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POST

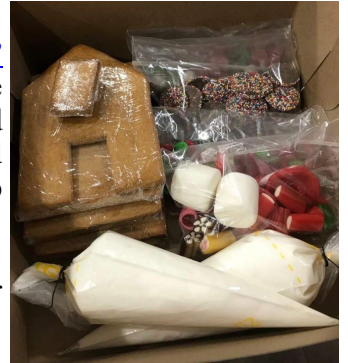
REDWOOD MEADOWS UPCOMING EVENTS AND UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

PHOTOS WITH SANTA

December 5th | 12-4pm | Redwood House (back patio)

Book your 5 minute time slot in advance for a \$20 fee (<https://zone4.ca/register.asp?id=27310&lan=1&cartlevel=1>). Take your own photos or one of our elves can use your camera to take a family picture. Concession will be open with a warm fire and other activities and goodies to be announced. Proceeds will be kept local and donated to XCBC! Food Bank donations are also gratefully accepted. While waiting, warm up with a hot drink from the Concession and bonfire at Curtis Park!



Pre-ordered Gingerbread House Kits will be ready for pick up. Order at www.anitamareedesign.com for \$25! Ten percent of proceeds will benefit RMCA.

Thank you to our community and sponsors for rebuilding Santa's sleigh! Without their support we could not make the magic happen!

ATB Bragg Creek (Sponsor) | Classic Renovations by John Zacharias (Carpentry) | Kevin Carre (Painting)

HOLIDAY CENTERPIECE WORKSHOP

December 11th | 2pm | Redwood House

Create your very own holiday centerpiece with an experienced florist! Bring your heavy scissors/pruners and opaque vase and we'll provide the rest. \$10/centerpiece. All proceeds benefit the Community Garden. Email communitygarden@rmca.ca to register.

SANTA IN THE WOODS

December 11th | Evening

Santa will be coming to Redwood starting at 5pm! Check out the poster on the back cover for the route map and further details. Food Bank donations will be collected.

SENIORS WALK AND CHAT

Mon/Wed/Fri | 1-3pm | Redwood House

Redwood House will be open for seniors to get a bit of exercise walking and meet others in and around the community. This is a free event.

UPDATES

NEW RMCA BOARD

The RMCA AGM was held on November 9th. Congratulations to the new board members: Dean Svoboda, Marc Vasily, Mike Hanson, Alex Mueller, Kelli Sutton, and Kim Snow.

WATER TREATMENT PLANT PUMP REPAIRS

Please reduce non-essential water usage until further notice. Important work repairing pumps has commenced. Contractor vehicles will be accessing the plant via the berm.

TOWNSITE OFFICE

The Townsite Office has returned to COVID protocols. As such, the office will be closed and accessible by appointment only until further notice.

403-949-3563 | admin@redwoodmeadows.ab.ca



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Pre Nuptial & Co-habitation
Agreements
- SMALL BUSINESS

CHATTER IN THE WOODS

Chatter in the Woods is a volunteer-run newsletter with all advertising proceeds supporting the Redwood Meadows Community Association (RMCA). The Chatter is published the first day of every month except July and August. It is distributed electronically to more than 300 email addresses, posted online at www.redwoodmeadows.ab.ca, and a link is posted on several community Facebook pages. Print copies are available at the mailboxes in Redwood Meadows, at Redwood House, and at the Bragg Creek Community Centre.

Receive a link to the Chatter on the first day of each month by emailing us at: theredwoodchatter@gmail.com

ADVERTISING RATES (2022)

Business Card	\$36/month
Quarter Page	\$53/month
Half Page	\$76/month
Full Page	\$144/month
Business Listing	\$50/year (10 months)

ADVERTISEMENT SIZES

Business Card:	2 ½" h X 3 ¾" w
Quarter Page (vertical):	4 7/8" h X 3 ¾" w
Quarter Page (horizontal):	2 ½" h X 7 ½" w
Half Page (vertical):	9 ¾" h X 3 ¾" w
Half Page (horizontal):	4 7/8" h X 7 ½" w
Full Page (vertical):	9 ¾" h X 7 ½" w

PDF and JPG files reproduce best in print and online.

Discount rates are offered for five-month or ten-month commitments.

Send your advertisement to:
theredwoodchatter@gmail.com

Send your payment to:
E-transfer: payment@rmca.ca (subject: Chatter)
Cheque: Drop off at Redwood House

The deadline for submission is the 20th of the month prior to publication. All articles and photograph submissions must be signed or credited.

Chatter in the Woods is not responsible for the content or accuracy of articles printed. The views reflected in this newsletter do not reflect the views of the editors.

Calling All Chatter Enthusiasts:

We are looking for contributors (yes, YOU!) to make the Chatter the best it can be. Make a submission once or commit to a monthly article. If you are looking for a topic here are some ideas:

Recipes - Do you have a favourite family recipe (or one you just came across) that you'd like to share?

How-To Article - This could range from a small building project to making an origami crane to practicing mindfulness. You choose!

Top Ten List - Another open-ended one...movies from the '80s, poisonous spiders, vacation destinations. So many possibilities!

Get to Know Your Community Volunteers - Any aspiring journalists out there? Interview our wonderful community volunteers and write a monthly article on a different person doing amazing things in Redwood Meadows.

Creative Entries - Are you a poet or artist? Send your work in and we'll share it with the community.

Kids Entry - KIDS, the Chatter is for you too! Write a story, draw a picture, come up with anything creative you would like to see published!

Please help make the Chatter the best it can be and fun for the entire community to read! Email submissions and inquiries to theredwoodchatter@gmail.com



A monthly community driven newsletter for Redwood Meadows and surrounding area



Chatter
- IN THE WOODS -

Read the online version of the CHATTER at
www.redwoodmeadows.ab.ca
Let's get social!
Follow us on:
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**We want what you
have to say!!!!**

Contribute to the chatter today

REDWOOD MEADOWS—LOCAL BUSINESS LISTINGS

Anita Curle, Facilitator and Brain-based Coach	403-560-4505	anita.curle@elevatingpotential.ca / www.elevatingpotential.ca
Ann Sullivan, SafariWorks Fitness Classes	403-689-4835	anns@safari.ca / Fit.safari.ca
Bragg Creek Community Centre	403-949-4277	program@braggcreekca.com
Blinda Bilou - Interior Design & Renovation	403-461-9748	bdbilou@gmail.com / BlindaBilouInteriors.ca
Bragg Creek Community Church	403-949-2072	braggcreekcommunitychurch@gmail.com
Candace Perko, Countryside Financial	403-560-6016	cperko@countrysidefinancial.ca
Cochrane Public Library	403-709-0346	Andrea.Johnston@cochranepubliclibrary.ca
Deborah Clark, Century 21 Bamber Realty Ltd.	403-835-3385	dclark@realestatwestofcalgary.com / realestatwestofcalgary.com
Dieter Hendrickson, Re/Max Real Estate	403-612-7849	dieter@remaxbraggcreek.com / www.remaxbraggcreek.com
KarmiK Sport & Personal Development	403-408-6998	karmikathletics@outlook.com
Kamp Kiwanis	403-686-6325	general@kampkiwanis.ca / www.kampkiwanis.ca
Ken Barrie, Century 21 Bamber Realty Ltd.	403-974-0334	ken@newdirectionrealestate.ca / realestatwestofcalgary.com
Leader Service and Renovations Ltd.	403-996-0192	chris@leaderservice.ca / 35 Sleigh Dr.
Linda Anderson Law	403-243-6400	linda@lindaandersonlaw.com / 403-949-4248
Maverick Law	403-949-3339	admin@mavericklaw.ca / www.mavericklaw.ca
Mountain's Edge Renovations	403-949-7727	4wolves@persona.ca / www.mountainsedgerenovations.com
Redwood Meadows Emergency Services	403-949-2012	www.rmesfire.org Call 911 in an Emergency
Redwood Meadows Tae Kwon Do School		redwoodtaekwondo@gmail.com / redwoodtaekwondo.com
Refining Fire Metalworks (comm & res welding)	403-589-6594	bdbilou@gmail.com
Resource & Support Services in Bragg Creek	403-851-2286	wendy.farnsworth@cochrane.ca
Skywalker Electrical Systems, Robert Cordsen	403-804-8072	info@skywalkerelectrical.ca / www.skywalkerelectrical.ca

*****List your business for only \$50/year. Contact theredwoodchatter@gmail.com *****



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REDWOOD MEADOWS EMERGENCY SERVICES

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Practice these simple Christmas safety tips to keep your loved ones safe this holiday season:

- **Replace old lights and use them correctly:** Use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and always turn them off when leaving the house or going to bed. Be sure to replace light sets that have broken sockets or frayed wires.
- **Don't become the subject of the family Christmas story:** Ladder injuries send more than 10,000 people annually to hospital. If you're using a ladder outdoors, do so during daylight hours, and clear away snow or ice before setting it down. Never stand on a rung higher than fourth from the top, and don't climb up or down while carrying anything. Instead, place lights or other items in a container and raise and lower them by rope while maintaining three-point contact with the ladder: one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot. Make sure you have a spotter, too.
- **Practice car safety when traveling:** It's always important to drive safely, but the Christmas travel season can be especially dangerous. Have your car serviced before leaving on a road trip, carry an emergency kit and give yourself extra time to avoid rushing. Remember to decrease your speed if you're driving in snow or ice, and wait for snowplows and sanding trucks to clear the roadways before starting your journey.
- **Don't make the tree a fire hazard:** If you have a "live" tree, cut off **10 cm (2 inches)** of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption. Make sure there's always water in the tree stand. Keep your tree at least **one metre (three feet)** away from heat sources or fireplaces. And if you buy an artificial tree, check that it's labeled "fire resistant."
- **Properly secure the tree:** No one wants to get squished by a falling Christmas tree. Make sure your tree is properly secured with a strong stand that doesn't lean. If you have a fresh tree, don't whittle or taper the trunk to fit your stand; this makes the tree less stable.
- **Don't burn wrapping paper in the fireplace:** Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper; and always use a fireplace screen.
- **Be sure to fully cook the turkey:** Undercooked turkey is one of the top 10 foods that make people sick. But it's not just the turkey: Stuffing absorbs the juices inside the bird, so it has to be as thoroughly cooked as the meat. Eggnog is also notorious for making people sick if it's left unrefrigerated for too long or made with raw eggs, which can contain salmonella bacteria. Unstuffed turkey should be cooked to 170 F (77 C) and a stuffed one to 180 F (82 C). Alternatively, cook the stuffing separately. Stuffed or not, always roast a turkey in a 325 F (160 C) oven. Never start cooking it in one place, then transport it to another and finish cooking there.
- **Be careful with candles:** The top three days for home fires started by candles in North America are Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Be sure to keep candles at least **30 cm (one foot)** away from anything flammable. Make sure candles are in stable holders that can't be easily knocked down, and never leave burning candles unattended.
- **Don't ignore chest pain:** The risk of heart attack spikes during the holiday season. Pressure on the chest, neck, throat, jaw or arm discomfort, shortness of breath or nausea that comes out of the blue needs to be taken seriously. **Don't guess! Call 9-1-1.**

On behalf of all of us at Redwood Meadows Emergency Services, best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season – it was our honour and privilege to serve the community in 2021!



*Let us bless you or
help us bless our community
with food hampers this Christmas*

Food donations can be dropped off
at Bragg Creek Community Centre or The Hub,
234-7 Balsam Ave, Bragg Creek Shopping Centre
before December 15

*(Please note, we are unable to accept open packages, expired goods,
perishables or homemade items)*

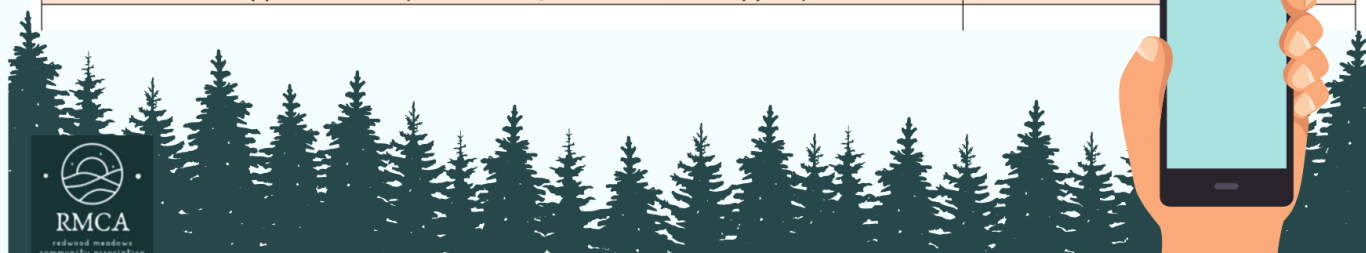
If you or someone you know could use the blessing of a
food hamper this Christmas, please contact Pastor Dave
at braggcreekcommunitychurch@gmail.com
before December 15

To donate financially, please visit
braggcreekchurch.ca/give
and specify "food hampers" in the subject line

 **BRAGG CREEK**
community church

NEED HELP?

REDWOOD MEADOWS RESOURCES	PHONE NUMBERS
FOOD	
Cochrane Activettes Food Bank	403-851-2250
Bragg Creek Community Centre	403-949-4277
TsuuT'ina Food Bank	403-252-5884
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT	
Rocky View / Wheatland Employment Centre https://rwemploymentservices.com/	403-709-0010
TsuuT'ina Nation Official Website https://tsuutinanation.com/jobs/	403-281-4455
FINANCIAL SUPPORT	
Alberta Income Support https://www.alberta.ca/income-support.aspx	1-877-644-5135
Money Mentors – Alberta Debt Relief https://moneymentors.ca/	1-888-294-0076
TsuuT'ina Income Support department	403-238-6406
SUPPORT LINES:	
Access Mental Health - Alberta Health Services	1-844-943-1500
Boys and Girls Club of Cochrane and Area - Youth Support, ages 12-22	403-618-3149
Calgary Youth Drug Line	403-269-3784
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-387-5437
Cochrane & Area Family and Community Support Service (FCSS)	403-851-2250
Cochrane & Area Victim Services http://www.cochranevictimservices.ca/	403-851-8055
Cochrane Family Resource Network	403-851-2265
Distress Centre Crisis Support (24hr)	403-266-4357
Domestic Violence Support – Big Hill Haven, Cochrane	403-796-6564 or 403-437-4636
Domestic Violence Support – TsuuT'ina Spirit Healing Lodge	403-852-9929
Domestic Violence Support – Rowan House, High River	1-855-652-3311
Indigenous Crisis Support (24hr)	1-855-242-3310
Kids Help Phone (24hr)	1-800-668-6868
RCMP Non-Emergency	403-932-2211
Rural Outreach Support Worker (Information, Resources and Support)	403-851-2286



The Rural Community Support Program provides rural residents in West Rocky View County with direct access to free and confidential meetings in Bragg Creek offering: support and problem-solving options, resource information, and referrals and help navigating government systems. If you or someone you know, has a problem and you're not sure what to do, please contact the Rural Community Support worker. Together, we can discuss solutions, options and first steps. For more information about this program, please contact: Wendy Farnsworth, 403-851-2286.

BRAGG CREEK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bragg Creek's Spirit of Christmas – December 4

A Christmas celebration with FREE family-friendly activities including a horse drawn wagon ride, princesses, hot chocolate, cookies, and storytelling. The outdoor Light-Up Market is a perfect place to find one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts. Official Tree Lighting Ceremony followed by lantern walk through town.

Nature Adventures Winter Break Camp – December 27 – 31

ReDiscover Play is back with school break camps. Sign the kids up for some outdoor adventures during the next school break where they will learn wilderness & wildcraft, shelter making, fire building, creative play and so much more.

Cost: \$250/week | Visit: www.braggcreekca.com to register | *Subsidies available

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Visit www.braggcreekca.com for additional programming and services details and full schedules.

Adult Pickleball

Date(s): Tuesdays (Drop-in) | Times: 12-2pm, 7:30-9:30pm | Cost: Members \$5, Non-Members \$8

Yoga—All ages and abilities welcome

Dates(s): Saturdays | Time: 9-10:15am | Cost: \$18/session or \$150 for 10 pass

Rumble & Roar (Indoors!) - Ages 0-5

Date(s): Thursdays | Time: 9:30-11:30am | Drop-in Fee: Members \$2/child, Non-Members \$5/child

Artsy Afternoon—All ages and abilities welcome

Dates: Thursdays | Time: 1-4pm

Co-Workspace

Working from home? Struggling with unreliable internet? We've got you covered!

Shared and private workspaces with power and internet available daily, weekly, and monthly. Call 403-949-4277 or email info@braggcreekca.com to book a space.

Bragg Creek Satellite Library

Visit our take-one, leave-one library or use the online services to borrow books, audiobooks, DVDs, video games, and much more! Local pick up from our Lending Lockers. Visit www.braggcreeklibrary.ca for information.

COVID-19 AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Bragg Creek Ladies Auxiliary COVID-19 Relief Fund

Confidential support is available for residents of Bragg Creek and Area who have an urgent need because of the pandemic. Contact braggcreek.ladiesauxiliary@gmail.com.

Food Insecurity Support

If you are a family or individual needing emergency food support, please reach out via email at either info@braggcreekca.com or braggcreekcommunitychurch@gmail.com or by calling 403-949-4277. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and visit our website at www.braggcreekca.com for news and updates.

Wishing you all the best this holiday season!

Christine Pollard

TRY MICRO FITNESS FOR MACRO BENEFITS

When December rolls around, thoughts of working out turn to thoughts of hanging out -- and eating and drinking and socializing. While these are all excellent ways to spend the long evenings of December, unless you also eat sensibly most of the time and fit in exercise some of the time, you might find yourself regretting your choices come January.

It's hard enough to find time for fitness between January and November, so how do you squeeze it in during the busiest month of the year? The answer might be: in short bursts. If you can spare a few minutes here and there, those small bursts of exercise – also called micro fitness – can add up to big changes in your habits, your health and your approach to fitness in general.

While I was writing this article, I happened to read an opinion piece in the Globe and Mail by a professor who focuses on smoking cessation and cardiovascular disease. Two lines from his piece struck me: “Getting active is the closest thing we have to a ‘magic pill.’ Even just a little bit of exercise each day can provide broad benefits to our physical and mental health . . .”

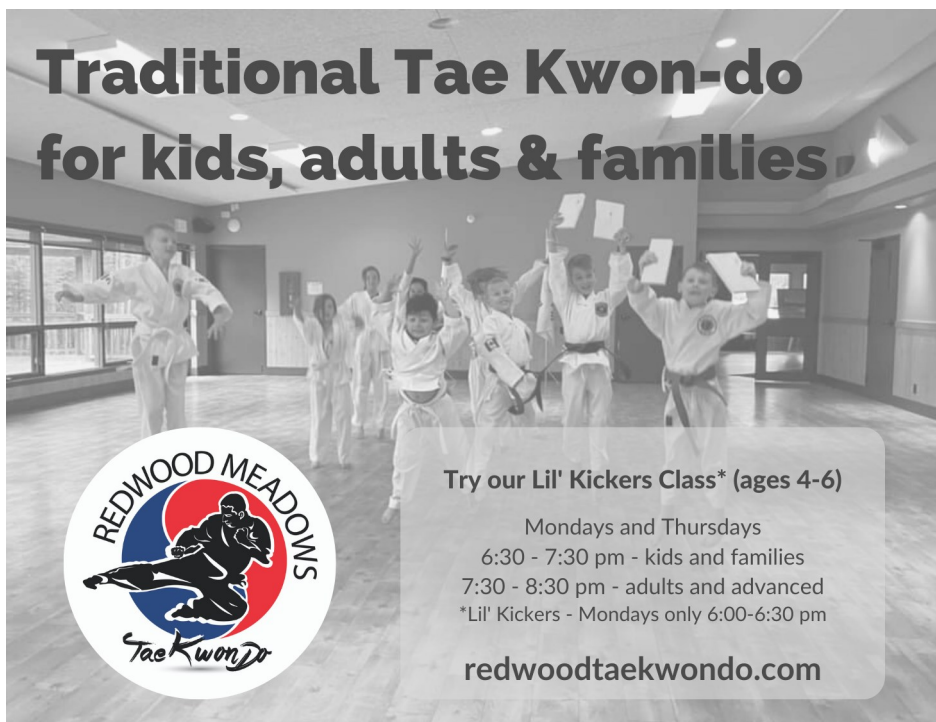
Well, hallelujah. Bring on the fitness moves, whatever their size. It may sound silly, but what harm can it do to turn a minute of waiting for your bread to toast in the morning into a minute of push-ups against the counter? Or 60 seconds of high-knee marches? Maybe you can challenge yourself to do as many squats as possible before the toast pops up or the kettle boils. Soon you'll be looking for ways to build more movement into your day. Here are a few examples I've heard over the years: calf raises in the checkout line, squats in the shower, lunges at the airport, planks anywhere, stretch breaks at the computer and breathing exercises before getting out of bed.

However you choose to add more movement to your day, keep it up. And then do more of it. If you're lucky, the extra activity will become a fun habit that you'll want to develop. One day you might even find yourself running up the stairs with a laundry basket in your hands and a toothbrush in your mouth. Oh wait. That was just me multitasking. I don't recommend it.

Happy, healthy holidays!

Ann Sullivan

Ann teaches fitness classes at Redwood House MWF from 9 to 10 am. anns@safari.ca



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ORIGIN STORIES: THE MAN BEHIND THE REINS

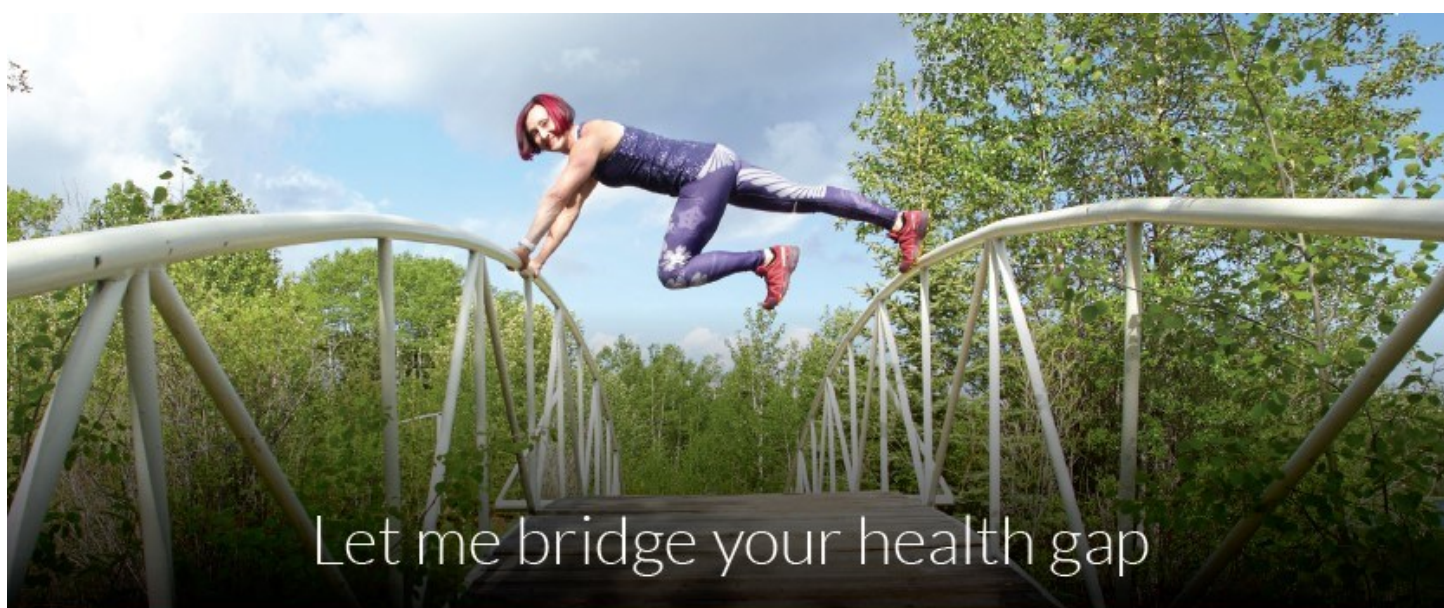
Like a child trying to decide on just one toy to whisper into Santa's ear, I had a tough time choosing just the right story to tell this holiday season. After making a list (and checking it twice) I landed on the tale of Robert L. May, writer of Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, whose story, much like that of his creation, is one of heartbreak and triumph, with a touch of Christmas magic.

Robert May dreamt of writing the next, great American novel. Educated at Dartmouth, May was a bit of an oddball. Small in stature, and never quite excelling socially, he often compared himself to his peers, particularly those who found early success in the field. It didn't help that one of his fellow Dartmouthians, only a year or two older than May, was a man named Theodor Geisel, who you may know as Dr. Seuss. But like so many with big dreams (Seuss excluded), Robert soon became bound by the reality of life's circumstances.

By the winter of 1939, Robert was living in Chicago with his wife and 4-year-old daughter, working as a copywriter for the Montgomery Ward department store. His wife was gravely ill, and his salary barely covered the medical bills.

Each year Montgomery Ward gave out free children's books to Christmas shoppers. Still reeling from the effects of the Great Depression and looking to cut costs, the higher-ups decided that for the next holiday season, the store would take a shot at producing their own Christmas story, and tapped May to write it.

He wanted to write an underdog story, akin to The Ugly Duckling--perhaps inspired by his own experiences growing up and studying at Dartmouth. Inspired by his daughter's love of reindeer and the way the fog rolled in ominously over lake Michigan, May's story began to take shape.



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Robert presented his story to his boss early that spring; his boss thought it was terrible. But Robert was confident in the character he had created. He asked a friend in the art department to whip up some sketches, and when he put it all together, the final product won over his boss. That Christmas, Montgomery Ward distributed over 2 million copies of the book across their stores.

Interestingly, the original tale (written entirely in rhyming couplets) was quite different from the one most of us are familiar with today. In May's original tale, Santa and his reindeer attempt their journey, despite foggy conditions, and are nearly clipped by an airplane. Santa decides, then, that their only hope is to fly low, using the soft glow of homes and street lamps as their guide. Working late into the night, Santa and his team end up stranded in a reindeer-populated town as windows are shuttered and lamps are snuffed out. This is when he meets Rudolph and the rest, of course, will go down in his-story.

But, while all over the country, folks young and old were celebrating the story of Rudolph, Robert's happy-ending was still a ways off. His work on Rudolph was done as 'work for hire', meaning that the story belonged to Montgomery Ward. Deeply in debt from his wife's medical bills, May struggled to stay afloat.

It wasn't until January of 1947 that Montgomery Ward's corporate president turned the copyright over to Robert May. Some say the department store had deemed Rudolph no longer profitable (they had been publishing the book for almost a decade), while others believe that it was a kind gesture on the store's part to return the story to its creator. Given the spirit of Christmas, I'd like to believe it was the latter.

Rudolph was reprinted commercially that Christmas and shown in theatres the following year as a 9-minute cartoon. His star began to really shine (like a lightbulb!) in 1949 when May's brother-in-law, songwriter Johnny Marks, wrote lyrics and a melody for Rudolph's story. A recording of the song, performed by country singer Gene Autry, sold over 2-million copies that year and went on to become one of the best-selling songs of all time.

His finances secured, Robert May quit his job at Montgomery Ward to focus on the Rudolph business. He died a comfortably wealthy man in 1976.

So to all the underdogs, oddballs, and big-dreamers, I hope this story finds you and your loved ones safe and well this holiday season.

Happy Holidays!

Michael Dellebuur
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My goal for today's expedition is to enter the water without making a splash. Challenging given the shape of my body, but I'm determined to do it. I rarely allow anything to hold me back.

There's a slough west of the Elbow River which is perfect for diving. It's plump with aquatic plant life, and the best of it grows at the bottom and in the middle of the body of water. The darkness of the water there makes me think it could be ten to fifteen feet deep. To some, it may seem miraculous that my species can attain such depths and retrieve food.

Simply the thought of ingesting the delectable plants has me motivated to get moving in that direction. As the sun rises, it kisses the dew, giving my surroundings a brilliant glimmer. As the daylight becomes more abundant, it brings more heat, transforming the moisture from the cool ground and into a low-lying fog. My stomach growls, reminding me that I've only eaten roughly ten pounds of food today; insisting I fill it with at least twenty to sixty pounds more before night fall.

I lower my head and rip at a cluster of wet grass near my feet. Whilst still chewing, I move forward, walking at first, then pick up my pace to a full run. If I keep up this pace, I'll get to the slough in record time; I know I can run faster than most. As I move through terrain crowded by majestic trees, parts of me crash into branches and even tree trunks. I'll admit, I'm certainly an awkward one.

Beyond the trees and in a clearing nearby, I spot one of my kind. After I crash against another large branch, their head picks up and they notice me, too. It's obvious by the way they stare at me that they're impressed by my fantastic rack. But it isn't mating season, so I see no reason to stop and check them out. In fact, aside from mating season, I'd be pleased to live in solitude for the rest of my life.

After running a great distance more, beads of sweat form on my neck. To my relief, I spot my slough and the inviting water. I keep running at full speed until I'm near the edge. Then, I stop. My chest heaves with laboured breath from the exertion, but I don't take another moment to rest. Instead, I tip-toe into the water and focus.

I walk out into the water until it brushes against my belly. Then, I clear my nostrils, prepping the valves within them so they'll keep the water out. I look at the water one more time before diving my head into it and pushing myself under the water. Immediately, I can sense I made a splash upon entry. Although I didn't attain my goal for today, yet, I'll keep trying. Even though it may seem impossible for a colossal moose like me to even dare try.

To learn more about the writer, please visit her website at: www.amberzierath.com

PICAPIX PUZZLE

A picture will evolve as you complete the puzzle. Start with the largest numbers or combination of, colour in squares and proceed to work back and forth between columns and rows.

The three basic rules are:

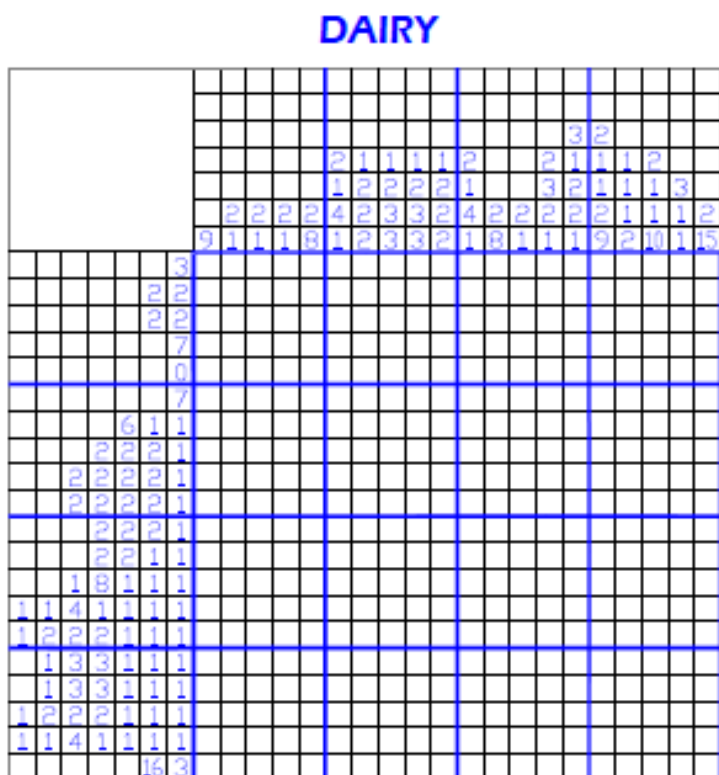
1. Numbers represent how many squares you colour in to form a group or block.
2. Leave at least one square between these blocks.
3. The sequential order of the numbers is the order of the blocks, i.e., top number for a column is the top, block, and left-most number for a row is the left-most block.

The “logic count method” shown below is very useful: The clue at the left of the row is 6, so count 6 squares from the left to right and then count 6 squares from right to left. Confidently shade in the overlapping squares.



This same method can be applied even when there is more than one number, remembering to allow one empty square between groups or blocks. Use a second colour for elimination of background squares.

Created by Diane Baher of Okotoks





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GET INTO THE CHRISTMAS BAKING GAME

If you love to bake, you probably love this time of year. I know I do! So many new recipes to try and old favourites to make. If you're a kitchen newbie but would like to get into the baking game, here are a few tips to help you get started.

I know, I know, everyone suggests this one, but it must be said: Read the recipe. Sometimes we neglect to do it and then find out too late that we have to chill the dough overnight, or melt and cool the butter, or make a trip to the city for some obscure ingredient.

Which leads to the next tip: Make sure you have everything on hand before you start. Pull out your tools and ingredients – especially those that might benefit from some time at room temperature, like butter, eggs and other liquids.

If you're going to bake regularly, it's a treat to have the right tools: a wooden spoon, spatula, different sizes of mixing bowls, baking sheets and tins. Thrift stores can be a great source for some of these things. I highly recommend reusable baking sheet liners (although not from a thrift store). If you opt for parchment paper, know that you can clean, dry and reuse it several - many! - times. Buttering pans works too, as does spraying your pans. Look for a refillable sprayer as it's better for the environment.

Serious bakers use an oven thermometer, which I guess makes me frivolous. I've tried to use them but I either can't read the numbers (the heat from the oven melts my contacts to my eyeballs) or they end up on the bottom of the oven face down. Anyway, I felt I should add that tip. If you don't use a thermometer, get to know your oven and its quirks.

Since every oven is different, trust your instincts. If a recipe says your cookies should take 15 minutes, but your eyes and nose tell you they're ready much earlier, go with your gut and pull them out.

Feeling overwhelmed? Prep recipes in stages. Shell pistachios when you have a few minutes or chop all the dried fruit and toast the nuts for more than one recipe. Store prepped ingredients in containers labelled with the name of the recipe they're for. You can also make dough and chill it until you have time to bake it.

Enjoy your successes and accept your baking fails. My sunken cakes are a constant source of amusement around here (even if the concave tops leave more room for icing!). I have stuck more cakes and overcooked more cookies than I can count. But something about turning butter, flour and sugar into something wonderful is so satisfying that I just have to keep on trying. I figure if you bake with love and great ingredients, you can't really go too wrong.

Ann Sullivan

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CELEBRITIES TRIVIA

1. Who is Ralph Lifshitz also known as?
2. Pop star Madonna's eldest child shares her name with which Catholic pilgrimage site?
3. What do Drew Carey, Jerry Seinfeld and Bill Cosby have in common?
4. Actor David Carradine passed away in what country, where he was making a movie?
5. For which Sweden-born actress/singer did Elvis Presley purchase a round, hot pink bed as a gift?
6. What was the nickname of the silver-screen singing cowboy and father to the late actor John Ritter?
7. Which member of the Beatles died first?
8. What "fruity" Hollywood actress was nicknamed "The Brazilian Bombshell"?
9. Which Oscar-nominated star of "Born on the Fourth of July" was actually born on the third of July?
10. Pop music icon Michael Jackson passed away in what city in 2009?
11. What is the name shared by a country music singer and a MLB player, who pitched a perfect game?

Questions provided by FunTrivia
Answers on page 23

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MORTGAGE MATTERS: MORTGAGE PLANNING TIPS FOR 2022

Whether you are buying a home or renewing/refinancing an existing home this coming year, it is important to make informed housing finance decisions that will help make homeownership viable and affordable over the long term. By planning your mortgage out in advance, you'll save money and be better prepared to deal with any financial setbacks.

Improve your credit score

Your credit score is one of the factors lenders use when they consider you for a mortgage. It's a number that signals your financial health at a specific time. It also gives information about your financial past, and how consistently you pay off your bills and debts.

- Pay your bills in full and on time. If you can't pay the full amount, at least pay the minimum shown on your monthly statement.
- Pay off your loans, credit cards and lines of credit as quickly as possible. Stay within the limits on your credit cards. Keep your balances as low as possible.
- Don't apply for more credit cards or loans than you can comfortably manage.

Borrow less than you're allowed

Prime mortgage lenders use two rules to decide how much they'll lend you:

- Your housing costs cannot be more than 35% (39% for those considered well-qualified) of your gross monthly income. Housing costs include mortgage principal and interest, property taxes, heating expenses, to also include other potential fixed costs such as water hauling, leased-land fees, HOA fees & condo fees.
- Your total debt (all housing costs as per above, plus car payment, credit cards, child/spousal support, etc.) cannot be more than 42% (44% for those considered well-qualified) of your gross monthly income.

Borrowing this maximum amount can be risky. If your income drops, your expenses increase, or interest rates rise, you may have trouble making your payments. Take on a smaller mortgage than your maximum so that your housing costs stay within your means.

Think about how higher interest rates would affect your payments

An increase in the interest rate will increase your future monthly payments. For example, if interest rates rise from 3% to 5%, renewing a \$250,000 mortgage will cost an extra \$260 per month.

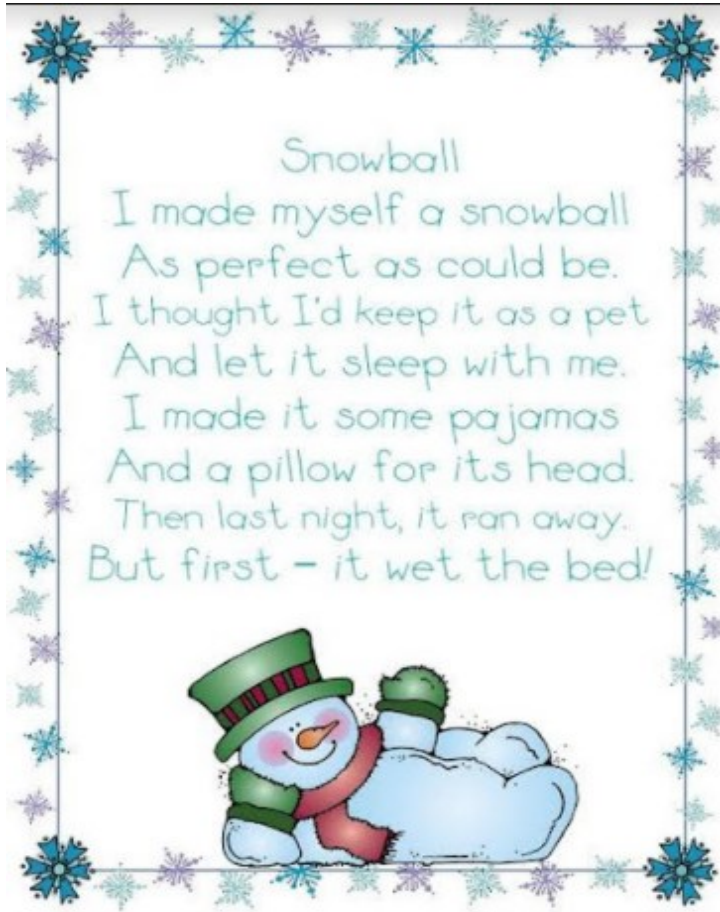
Pay off your mortgage faster

- Increase your regular payment amount. Pay \$700 rather than \$652, for example.
- Make lump sum payments to your mortgage principal. An extra \$1,000 here and there can make a big difference.
- Make accelerated payments. Instead of making one payment per month, make accelerated payments every two weeks (26 per year). By paying more now, you'll save money in the long run and you'll build a financial cushion.

Seek help right away if you can't make your payments. Your lender can help you deal with financial setbacks. Let them know if you're having financial issues.

Candace Perko
Area Mortgage Broker





KIDS CRAFT—CRAFTING AN EVERGREEN WITH BUTTONS

Materials you will need:

- Small brown buttons (at least three)
- Various sizes of green buttons (approximately 10)
- Thin wire
- Ribbon



Instructions:

Step 1: Take a 5-inch-long wire, fold it in half

Step 2: Stack the various green buttons in order from smallest to largest (If this is too uniform for you, feel free to adjust them to your liking, like I did in mine!)

Step 3: To create the evergreen body, thread the wire through the green buttons, smallest to biggest, then thread the other wire end through the other hole (if there are 4 holes, choose the diagonally opposite hole!), leaving a little wire to spare at the tiniest button – this will be the loop for hanging later!

Step 4: Thread small brown buttons onto both wire ends, to create the tree trunk.

Step 5: Twist the wire ends tight and carefully clip (with the help of an adult).

Step 6: Attach a ribbon of your choice through the loop and suspend it.



HAVE FUN!

Provided by Sonja Allen

Funny Jokes for Kids

1. What do you call an old snowman?
2. Why don't mountains get cold in the winter?
3. What two letters of the alphabet do snowmen prefer?
4. Knock, knock! Who's there? Lettuce. Lettuce who? Lettuce in, it's cold outside!
5. What do you get when you cross a snowman and a dog?
6. What do you call a penguin that steals baby octopi?
7. Knock, knock! Who's there? Snow. Snow who? Snowbody!
8. What does Jack Frost like best about school?
9. Where do penguins go to the movies?
10. What falls but never gets hurt?
11. Who are Frosty's parents?
12. What do you call a slow skier?
13. Why do seals swim in saltwater?
14. How do you scare a snowman?
15. What did the snowman and his wife put over their baby's crib?

Answers on Page 23

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Celebrities Trivia Answers

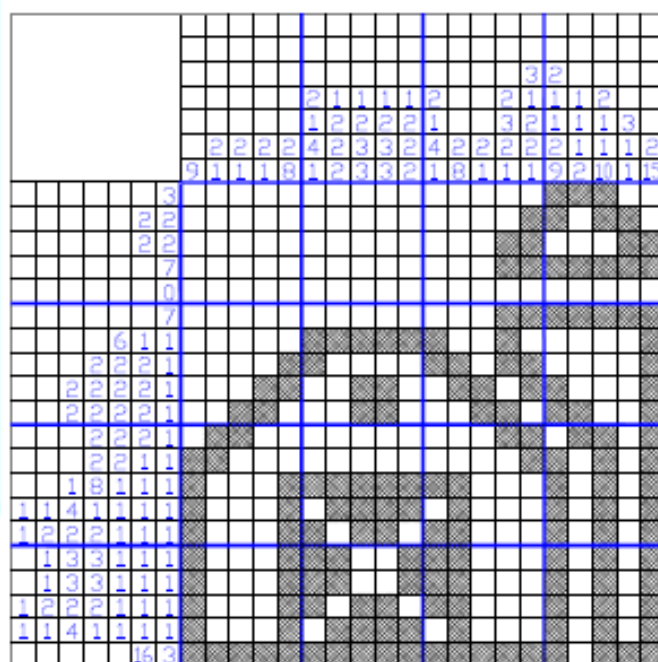
1. Ralph Lauren
2. Lourdes, France
3. They all starred in sitcoms with their own name in the title.
4. Thailand
5. Ann-Margret
6. Tex
7. John Lennon
8. Carmen Miranda
9. Tom Cruise
10. Los Angeles
11. Kenny Rogers

Funny Jokes Answers

1. Water
2. They wear snow caps
3. I.C.
4. Knock, knock joke
5. Frost bite
6. A SQUIDnapper.
7. Knock, knock joke
8. Snow and tell.
9. At the DIVE-in!
10. Snow
11. Mom and Pop-Sicle.
12. A SLOPEpoke!
13. Because pepper water makes them sneeze!
14. Get out a hairdryer.
15. A snowmobile.

PICAPIX SOLUTION

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