

Hometown Holidays



MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2018

AN EVENING SUN PUBLICATION

Bandera family hopes to serve 1,000 free meals in Norwich on Christmas day

By Grady Thompson

Sun Staff Writer

gthompson@evesun.com

NORWICH — The Bandera Family & Community Alliance will bring its free Christmas dinner to the Norwich American Legion on Christmas day this year, offering a warm homemade meal and fellowship to anyone who needs it.

Since 1989 Bandera Family & Community Alliance has served a Christmas dinner in Binghamton, free and open to anyone in need of a meal or company for the holiday. This year it is expanding its offerings from Broome County to a location in Norwich, with free delivery options available as well as a sit-down location at American Legion Post 189 for residents of the greater Norwich region.

"We want people to know we're there, they have someplace they can actually go to and have fel-



For the first year the Bandera Family & Community Alliance will bring its free Christmas day dinner to Norwich, providing a homemade meal and good company to anyone in need on December 25. (Photo courtesy of Bandera Family & Community Alliance)

lowship with other people, have a nice hot meal, and just enjoy the day should they not be able to afford it or they just don't want to be alone," said Bill Bandera, whose parents founded the Bandera Family & Community Alliance in 1989. "We'll provide them a nice place and make them feel like family."

The Bandera Family free Christmas dinner will be held from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Christmas day at American Legion Post 189 located at 29 Sheldon Street in Norwich. It is free and open to the public.

If you would like to register to have a meal delivered on Christmas day, you can call the United Way

helpline at 2-1-1 to log your name, address, location, and number of meals, which will then be forwarded to the Bandera Family & Community Alliance. Meals can be ordered until 5 p.m. on December 21.

If you are interested in volunteering to assist with the dinner, call

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American Legion cornhole tournament benefits Toys-for-Tots

By Grady Thompson

Sun Staff Writer

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NORWICH — Norwich American Legion Post 189 will host a cornhole tournament at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 8 to raise money for the local

branch of the Marine Toys-for-Tots Foundation ahead of the holiday season.

A registration fee of \$10 a person will be charged to participants, and Norwich American Legion Post 189 Board President George Sarpriacone said 100 percent of proceeds will go

towards the local Toys-for-Tots.

Tournament registrants will be accepted in advance as well as through the day of the event. To register or if you have any questions, call the post or Sarpriacone at (607) 334-9414 or (607) 859-2549.

Interested individuals can also stop in the post to register in advance or on the day of the tournament. Norwich American Legion Post 189 is located at 29 Sheldon Street in Norwich.

Registration will take place from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on December 8 before the tournament kicks-off at 11:30 a.m. The length of the tournament will depend on the number of participants, Sarpriacone said.

In addition to the tour-

nament, Sarpriacone said the legion will be raffling off a set of cornhole boards painted by Rick Hansen to a lucky individual.

In 2017 the Norwich Toys-for-Tots delivered toys to over 2,000 children in need. 100 percent of funds donated to the local Toys-for-Tots benefits children in the Norwich area.

If you are unable to participate but would still like to donate to Norwich Toys-for-Tots, visit www.marinetoysfortots.salsalabs.org/localdonation-form/index.html?fun_local_campaign_designation=NY-Norwich.

For more information on the Norwich Toys-for-Tots, visit www.norwich-ny.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/default.aspx.

Norwich American Legion Post 189 will host a cornhole tournament at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 8 to raise money for the local branch of the Marine Toys-for-Tots Foundation. Registration will begin at 10 a.m. on Dec. 8 and registrants will be accepted through the day of the event. (AP file photo)



THE EVENING
SUN

*A hometown daily
for the holidays*

Every year we at the Evening Sun have tried our best to take part in the true meaning of the holidays. For several years our staff has volunteered and/or covered holiday events in our area. Each year it has reminded me that the true spirit of this season is about giving.

For the first time this year we are creating Hometown Holidays. We hope the section reminds our readers of the friendly community in Chenango County, and how our close interconnections can be our best strength.

This year we're trying something new — a community calendar that you can pull out and keep on your wall for the month of December with all kinds of holiday events and happenings listed on it with room for you to jot down your own.

Donations of good will, volunteering of time, donations to charity, all these things will likely have a near positive effect on someone you know personally. It's a small town with a big heart.

One of the highlights at The Evening Sun is the opportunity to pitch in and help the amazing organizations around Chenango County, but it also helps bring attention to the work these groups are already doing, and they definitely deserve the recognition.

No matter where we go or who we meet at these events, they tend to share the same kind of warm atmosphere. At each corner of conversation you can hear a muffled laugh, a story about someone's Christmas or just a plain, "thank you" or "hello."

Thank you to all of those involved with these great organizations and for helping those in our community who need it most.

Many give so freely with their time, it is an example we all should follow during the holidays and all throughout the year.

Wishing you and yours a warm holiday season and a very Happy New Year.

— Sun Managing Editor Tyler Murphy

Steve Craig joins Mid-York Concert Band for holiday concert



The Mid-York Concert Band's fourth annual holiday concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 11 in the Norwich High School auditorium. (Frank Speziale photo)



Director of the Mid-York Concert Band, Mark Sands, conducting the band during a 2017 rehearsal. (Frank Speziale photo)

The Mid-York Concert Band announced it will be joined by President/CEO of Commerce Chenango Steve Craig for this year's holiday concert on December 11. Craig will narrate the band's rendition of "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

By Grady Thompson
Sun Staff Writer

NORWICH — The Mid-York Concert Band and director Mark Sands will present their fourth annual holiday concert on Tuesday, December 11, this year joined by President/CEO of Commerce Chenango Steve Craig as a celebrity narrator.

The concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 11 in the Norwich High School auditorium, again featuring seasonal favorites such as Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" and "Twas the Night Before Christmas"—the latter of which will be narrated by Craig.

Craig became President/CEO of Commerce Chenango in 2011 following a 33-year career in television broadcasting. As CEO, he leads the Chenango County Chamber of Commerce and serves as Executive Director of both the Development Chenango Corporation and the County of Chenango Industrial Agency. Additionally, he's Chenango County's designee to the Regional

Economic Development Council of the Southern Tier.

Sands said other tunes set to be part of the Mid-York Concert Band's repertoire during this year's concert will include "Celtic Carol," "Cowboy Christmas," "Chanukah Collage," along with a number of others.

The Mid-York Concert Band has been rehearsing since kicking-off its fourth season on September 11. It went into this year comprised of 45 local musicians before extending the invitation to interested local musicians to join. Its members hail from within Chenango County, and as far away as Oneonta, Morrisville, and Madison County.

Now in its fourth year, the band's annual flagship concerts include its holiday concert and salute to veterans, which takes place in May.

Admission to the Mid-York Concert Band's fourth annual holiday concert is free, but free-will donations will be accepted at the door.

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Guest Artist Katherine Castaneda exhibits now through December - feathered guests love her birdseed wreaths!

Bandera family hopes to serve 1,000 free meals

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the Bandera Family & Community Alliance volunteer hotline at (607) 231-0706. Donations to the cause can be made at www.banderachristmas.com/donate/.

American Legion Board President George Sarpriacone said the dinner is for any family or individual who is looking to have a nice meal on Christmas with good company.

"We think [Bill Bandera] is phenomenal and we wish we could help him more," said Sarpriacone. "It's all about family and community."

Bandera said for the last five years, the free Christmas dinner has consistently served around 3,000 people, give or take a few hundred. When it began in 1989, it served 68 people; following the flood in 2011, it served about 4,300 meals to individuals on Christmas day. Last year it served meals at Binghamton American Legion Posts 80 and 89, the Endicott Boys and Girls Club, and various senior

centers.

The alliance was founded by Bandera's parents, Bill and Carolyn, who were seeking a way to give back to the community. Bandera said when they founded it nearly 30 years ago, they probably didn't expect it would become the tradition it has become.

"It was just a heart thing," said Bandera. "The kind of people my parents were, they just wanted to give back to the community."

He said he hopes this foundational year in Norwich will spark a tradition for local residents to look forward to every year as they hope to serve 1,000 meals in Chenango County.

"There's a feel and an air about Norwich that everybody's looking forward to this," said Bandera. "That makes it exciting for me and keeps me motivated."

For more information about the Bandera family free Christmas dinner, visit www.banderachristmas.com.

Earlville Christmas Celebration brings full day of festivities

EARLVILLE — The Earlville Christmas Celebration will take place on Saturday, December 8 beginning with breakfast with Santa Claus and ending with a parade and tree lighting ceremony.

Below is a timeline of events in Earlville Dec. 8.

From 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Huff Brau will host breakfast and pictures with Santa Claus. Reservations are required and can be made by calling (315) 691-3300.

From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Earlville Boy Scouts will hold a tree sale in the park.

From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., a free kids craft workshop will be held at the Earlville Fire House Meeting Room, where children can make grapevine wreaths. Children aged 12 and under are welcome, children under five must be with an adult.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Earlville Firehouse will hold a holiday craft show. At the same time and also at the firehouse, the Earlville Ladies Auxiliary will hold a poinsettia sale.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Deli Licious Food Truck will be stationed by the

park.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Earlville Opera House will host its annual Holiday Artisan Sale. From 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., it will host an open house.

From noon to 2 p.m., the Earlville Fire House will host a sit-down chicken barbecue dinner.

At 1 p.m., the Earlville Free Library will host Storytime with Jingles the Elf.

At 6 p.m., the parade and tree lighting ceremony will commence, including the announcement of winners for community contests and free hot cocoa.

Following the parade, the Earlville Free Library will host an open house with a gift basket drawing, meet Santa and Mrs. Claus, and refreshments.

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Ice skating in Norwich delayed until colder weather



Frank Speziale photos

NORWICH — The City of Norwich Youth Bureau said skating at the Borden Avenue ice skating rink is going to have to wait until colder temperatures.

Youth Bureau Director Robert Mason said while everything is in place for ice skating at Norwich's Borden Ave Rink, there

needs to be approximately a week of below freezing temperatures before the bureau can open it to the public.

"We're going to open it when it gets cold enough," said Mason. "Right now we've got everything ready, but the ice on blacktop setup we have

needs below freezing temperatures."

He said when the skating rink opens it'll run on weekdays from 4-9 p.m., and noon to 9 p.m. on school breaks and weekends.

— Zachary Meseck, Sun Staff Writer



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4 holiday party must-haves

Parties are highly anticipated events come the holiday season. Office parties, gatherings with friends and family celebrations are just some examples of the many soirees that dot the social schedules of millions of people between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Office parties might be governed by certain organizational protocols, but parties with friends and families come with no such rules. That said, holiday hosts might want to keep their guests' expectations in mind when planning their get-togethers.

While there's always room to try something new, the following are some must-have items when hosting holiday parties.

1. Holiday foods and beverages

It goes without saying that holiday hosts will be expected to provide food for their guests. But certain foods, such as gingerbread cookies, can put everyone in the holiday spirit. And don't forget that staple of the holiday beverage menu: eggnog. Eggnog can be made with and/or without alcohol so

everyone can enjoy this beloved holiday beverage.

2. Decorations

Decking the halls is a holiday tradition, and hosts should make an effort to string some holiday decorations before welcoming guests into their homes. A Christmas tree might be the most ubiquitous decorative item come the holidays, so hosts can make their tree the centerpiece of their decor. Hang some mistletoe around the house, which also can

be adorned with season-specific plants like holly and poinsettias. If kids are attending the party, a kid-friendly decoration station can even be set up to ensure the youngsters have fun and stay busy during the festivities.

3. Music

Christmas music can go a long way toward getting everyone in the holiday spirit. Utilize iTunes or music streaming services such

as Amazon Prime Music or Pandora to ensure that the holiday hits keep coming throughout the party.

4. Games

Games can be a great way to keep guests occupied during the party. From a safety perspective, games that engage guests might prevent them from overindulging in alcohol at a time of year when the National Highway Traffic and

Safety Administration says drunk driving incidents are at their highest. Games in which participants can win holiday-themed prizes might be especially enjoyable for players.

Holiday parties are highly anticipated parts of the holiday season. Hosts can take their parties to the next level by incorporating certain must-have items into the festivities. HL18A370

Breakfast with Santa at the Butternut Valley Grange

GILBERTSVILLE — Butternut Valley Grange will be sponsoring the annual Breakfast with Santa event on Saturday, December 8 at the Grange Hall, 7 Bloom Street, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Santa will greet youngsters and senior citizens during this time and will have gifts for all children through age 10. Reservations are required



to ensure Santa's gift bag is adequately stocked. Call Rose at 783-2104 by

December 5 to reserve with your child's age and gender.

The complimentary breakfast is one of the Grange's many community service projects where they invite all residents of the township or school district to join in celebrating the Christmas season with neighbors and friends.

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Easy Christmas morning breakfast

Christmas morning is an exciting and joyous time for families. Children are anxious to rush downstairs and see what Santa has left under the tree, and parents are eager to see the looks on youngsters' happy faces.

Having a fast and easy breakfast at the ready on Christmas morning allows families to jump right into

the festivities rather than spending too much time in the kitchen.

This recipe for "Spiced Yogurt Muffins," courtesy of the National Dairy Council, Dannon and McCormick, can be made in advance and then enjoyed while peeking into Christmas stockings or watching holiday parades

on television. This big-batch recipe is ideal for feeding a houseful of overnight holiday guests. Or it can be prepared in advance and doled out as needed throughout the week. The muffins also can be made as a treat for holiday office luncheons. Cut the recipe in half for smaller yields.



Make-ahead muffins can be a quick breakfast that's perfect for Christmas mornings at home.

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Combine yogurt and water in mixing bowl. Whisk until blended. Set aside.

Add spices to dry muffin mix in a large bowl. Add yogurt and water mixture to the muffin mixture. Mix until just blended. Don't overmix.

Using a scoop, portion into greased or lined muffin pans. Bake at 350 F for 24 minutes, or 17 to 20 minutes in a convection oven, until the tops are golden brown.

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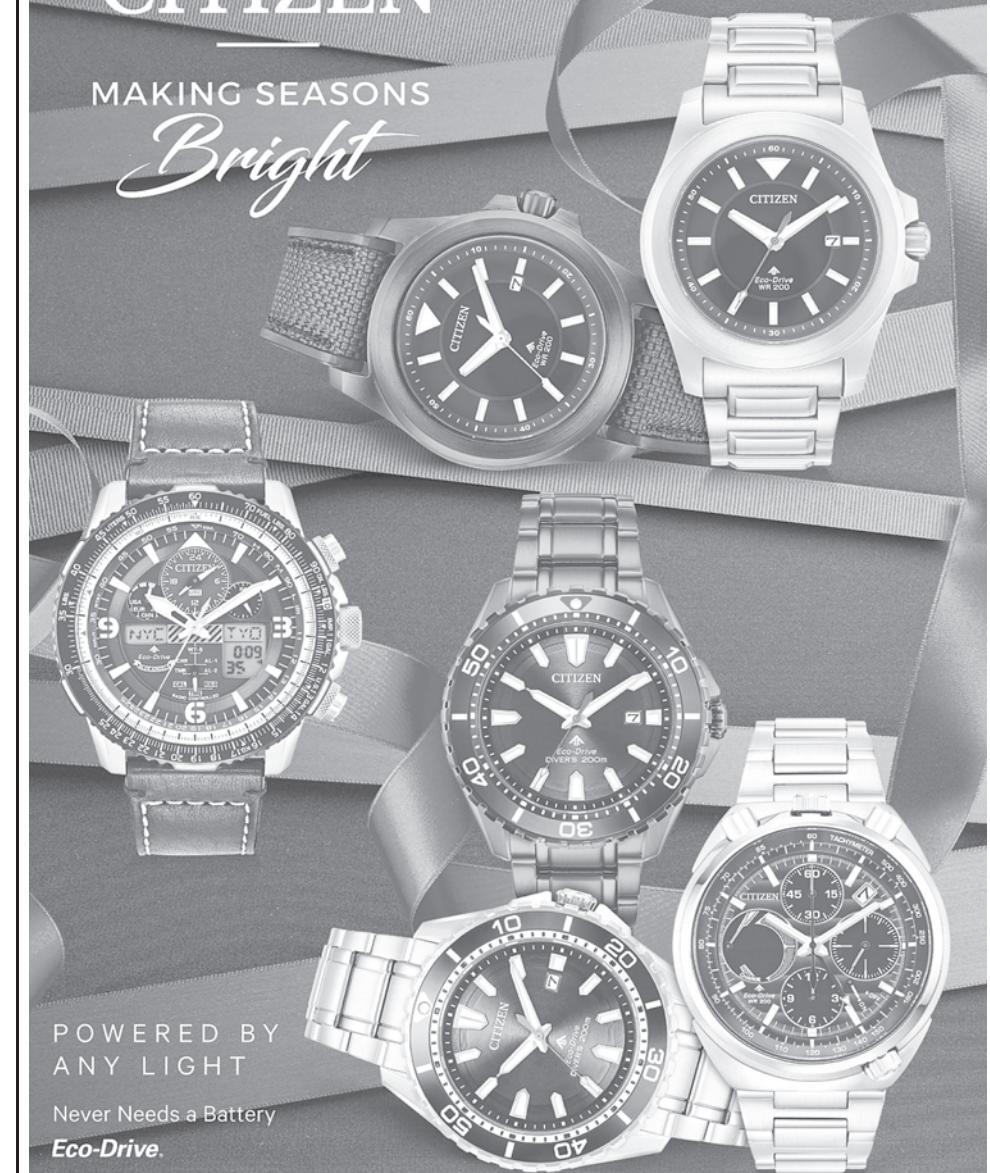
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'Tis the season for more TV Christmas movies than ever

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Have you heard the one about the girl who didn't care about Christmas but found herself in a small town for the holidays surrounded by decorations, cookies and carolers, and found a new boyfriend and her Christmas spirit by Dec. 25? Hallmark Channel has, and they're airing 22 original movies this year built around plots similar to that. The premise may vary, but the themes are the same and Hallmark is very OK with that.

"Yes, you can pretty much guarantee that when you meet our two leads in the first 10 minutes of a Hallmark movie, it's guaranteed that they will end up together," said Michelle Vicary, the executive vice president of programming and network publicity for Crown Media and Family Networks.

While regular network prime-time programming tends to take a hiatus during the holiday season, it's Hallmark Channel's time to shine. Their holiday movies are so popular, they begin airing Christmas movies Oct. 26 and wrap up Jan. 1.

"When viewers kept telling us by virtue of the ratings that they wanted more (Christmas), it was a natural to extend the time that we were programming for them," said Vicary.

Hallmark sells shirts that say, "All I want to do is drink hot cocoa and watch Hallmark Channel." This year there's also an app called Countdown to Christmas to keep track of the programming on Hallmark Channel and its sister channel, Hallmark Movies and Mysteries (which offers more spiritual fare). There's an option to set alerts on your phone and add the movie start times to your calendar. On launch day, it had 140,000 downloads.

This year, Hallmark

Channel has films starring LeAnn Rimes, Kellie Pickler and Patti LaBelle, but the network also features recurring actresses, dubbed the "Christmas queens" internally by Hallmark, who front a new movie a season on the network: Candace Cameron Bure, Lacey Chabert, Danica McKellar and Lori Loughlin.

Bure reigns supreme. "For the last three years she has had the No. 1 Christmas movie on the Hallmark Channel with very, very stiff competition from Chabert and Loughlin," Vicary said.

Bure said the reaction to her Hallmark Christmas movies encourages her to keep making them but also find interesting ways to tell stories that fit the formula.

"It's a big deal to decide which movie to do," she said. "The competitive side of me says, 'Hey, I want to keep topping those charts and helping the company improve and helping my numbers.'" This year's film, "A Shoe Addict's Christmas," is based on a novel by best-selling author Beth Harbison.

Loughlin, who developed her own film for Hallmark this year, admits to also trying to push the envelope a little bit.

"They definitely have a formula and you do have to follow it. If you don't, they rein you back in. As actors we want a little bit of drama so you try to put some highs and lows in there, but you can't argue with (Hallmark). Their format is 100 percent working."

The biggest motivation for returning to Hallmark year after year is the fans, said Bure. She recalled a letter from an older man whose wife had passed away after more than 50 years of marriage. She loved Christmas and would decorate for the season early, and particularly loved Bure's Christmas movies. He forced himself to not only keep up his wife's tradition of decorat-

ing but also sat down to watch Bure's movie that year because it's what they would have done as a couple, and it made him feel closer to her.

"It's more than ratings. It's more than a cheesy holiday spirit. There's a deep meaning behind (these movies) for some people. I love all of them, and that's why I keep doing them," Bure said.

Chabert, who is also known for roles in "Party of Five" and "Mean Girls," said she considers it "an honor" to keep making Christmas movies for Hallmark.

"I've been in this business a long time but the fans of Hallmark are some of the most devoted and some of the most kind," she said.

She also said the movies speak to important themes: "Disconnecting from the world, spending time with family, and just being in touch with what's most important and I think that's always a good reminder."

McKellar agreed: "I really believe these movies encourage connection," she said, joking that she can't count the number of times she's said "family traditions" in her films, adding that's the point. "It's not about ratings. It's about sticking to a set of values that the brand holds dear."

She's especially excited about her offering this year, "Christmas at Grand Valley," because it reunites her with her former "The Wonder Years" co-star, Dan Lauria, who plays her dad in the movie.

Hallmark Channel isn't the only network airing holiday fare. Lifetime does it, too, and begins airing mostly holiday programming after Nov. 21. Films this year include "Every Day is Christmas" starring Toni Braxton. They also have their own crop of "go to" talent, including Tatyana Ali of "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" and Melissa Joan Hart of "Sabrina



This image released by Lifetime shows Toni Braxton, center, and Gloria Reuben, right, in a scene from "Every Day is Christmas." (Bettina Strauss/Lifetime via AP)

the Teenage Witch." Tia Mowry-Hardrict of "Sister Sister" has the distinction of appearing on both Hallmark Channel and Lifetime with new movies this season. She stars in Lifetime's "My Christmas Inn" and "A Gingerbread Romance" on Hallmark Channel.

"There's certain talent that our audience really connects with around the holidays," said Meghan Hooper, a senior vice president at Lifetime. "We like bringing back some of

the same performers like Tatyana Ali that viewers grew up with on 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.' They now see her on our air year after year. It's leaning into that comfort and nostalgia."

Hart's "A Very Nutty Christmas" debuts on Lifetime on Nov. 30. "I don't want to make Christmas movies just my thing," said Hart. "But it's the only place where TV movies still thrive. ... Just having something to watch that's uplifting and light

and romantic. I think it's something really missing in theaters and mainstream television these days."

Netflix has also followed suit with its own original holiday movies. Last year it offered "A Christmas Prince" starring Rose McIver and this year there's a sequel, "A Christmas Prince: The Royal Wedding." They've also added new movies starring Kurt Russell, Kat Graham and Vanessa Hudgens.

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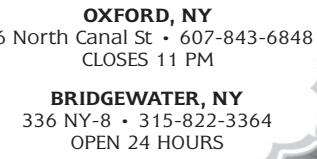
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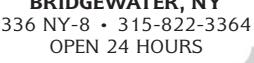
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Birds perched on a branch during a spring snowstorm in Pembroke, N.Y. (David Duprey/Associated Press photo)

Chenango Bird Club to hold Christmas Bird Count

SHERBURN — Calling all birders! Please join Chenango Bird Club members as we conduct the annual Sherburne Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 15.

The club is seeking people to join teams of birders to cover the 177 square miles of the count circle. Individuals are invited to participate any time during the day from dark hours looking (listening) for owls, to light hours driving the roads of the Sherburne area looking for daytime bird activity. This will be the 39th time the Sherburne Count has been held and the 119th year of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

If you are available to participate, please call

count organizer Fred von Mechow at (607) 674-4214, email Fred at fpvon-mechow@gmail.com, or come to the planning meeting at the Chenango Bird Club monthly meeting at Rogers Center on Wednesday, December 12, 7:00 p.m. at the Visitor Center.

Park in the staff parking lot next to the building by taking the driveway off State Hwy 80 just west of the main visitor parking lot exit. Curve around the pond to the right to reach the parking area. Refreshments will be served at the planning meeting.

Everyone interested in the Chenango Bird Club, bird watching, or participating in the Christmas

Bird Count is encouraged to attend the meeting. Program attendees are welcome to stay for all or part of the evening activities.

The Chenango Bird Club presents monthly programs (except January, February, and March). Nature enthusiasts of all levels and interests are invited to all Chenango Bird Club programs, free of charge. Rogers Center is located one mile west of Sherburne Village on State Highway 80. Park in the main parking lot and walk to the west end of the lot to the Bird Exhibit Cabin.

Call Club President, Charlene LaFever at (607) 334-9112 for more information on Chenango Bird Club activities.

How to build a holiday giving budget

Spending time with loved ones and reflecting on all of the blessings the previous year has bestowed is a great way to celebrate the holiday season. But giving, entertaining and traveling are part of the season as well, and that can leave many people wondering how to finance their holiday season.

Many people admit to spending more than they initially intended to spend during the holiday season, leaving them with sizable bills to pay come January. This trend is dubbed the "holiday hangover," and MagnifyMoney found that Americans racked up an average of \$1,054 of debt during the 2017 holiday season, a 5 percent increase over 2016.

Recent data from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York says consumer credit card debt stands at \$808 billion. A portion of that ongoing debt is accumulated during the holidays — but it doesn't have to be. By establishing a budget and a plan to pay down their debt, consumers can gift without grief.

The first step to establishing a holiday shopping

budget is to make a list of all the people with whom you intend to exchange gifts. Jot down charitable gifts and entertaining/social expenses as well. With paper in hand, it can be easier to visualize just how many people are on the gift list, making it easier to allot a certain amount to each person. Friends and coworkers may receive less than family members.

Next think about a total dollar amount to earmark for the holidays. This amount is something that you should be able to comfortably pay off in full at the end of the holiday season — no more than a month or two after New Year's Day.

Do not feel obligated to purchase more than one gift for each person on your list. Parents who want to have a few extra items under the tree for their children or who have to finance presents from Santa Claus can set aside more money to make such purchases. However, these gifts should also be factored into the overall budget.

It's important to keep track of spending even

after the budget has been created. This way you can see if you are adhering to your budget. Record gifts as you would checks in a register. Take home receipts and tally your spending to see if it aligns. Make adjustments as necessary if you are on track to go over your budget.

When budgeting, keep in mind the potentially inflated costs of hot items for the year. It can be tempting to splurge on the latest video game console, but will it be obsolete in a few months? Budgeting and frugal buying go hand-in-hand.

Budgets do not need to remain fixed from year to year. If this year was a banner year in terms of finances, you may be able to afford more. If it wasn't, you may have to cut back. True friends and close family members should understand that the value of the gift is not based on its price tag.

Budgeting is important for holiday spending. With a budget in hand, consumers can avoid holiday hangover and potential financial ruin for months to come.

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Chanukah Begins Dec. 2-10	2 St. Paul's Oxford Soup and Sandwich will be open for one free sitting at 5:30 p.m.	3	4 Norwich Tree Lighting Ceremony 6:30 p.m. in West Park Chenango Arts Council presents Eileen Ivers' Joyful Christmas at 7 p.m. B-G Senior School Concert band, chorus and orchestra, 7 p.m.	5 Santa in Norwich West Park, 5 to 8 p.m.	6 Pearl Harbor Day Chenango Arts Council's Artist Network Reception 6 p.m. at CAC, located at 27 West Main Street Santa in Norwich West Park, 5 to 8 p.m.	7 Norwich High School Craft Fair 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. DCMO BOCES Craft Fair 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to benefit the holiday food basket program Bainbridge Community Christmas Parade 5 p.m. Santa in Norwich West Park, 1 to 4 p.m.
Village of Earville Christmas Celebration throughout the village 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. with appearances from Santa Claus, drawn wagon rides, chicken bbq, and a parade and tree lighting ceremony.	9 St. Paul's Oxford Soup and Sandwich will be open for one free sitting at 5:30 p.m.	10 Mid-York Concert Band's Holiday Concert 7:30 p.m. in the Norwich High School auditorium Oxford High School Winter Concert & Art Show 7 p.m.	11 Greene Middle School Chorus and High School Band Holiday Concert 7 p.m., in the auditorium.	12 Oxford 3rd and 4th grade Winter Choral Concert 6 p.m. at OAPAA Santa in Norwich West Park, 5 to 8 p.m.	13 Oxford UPK-2nd grade Winter Concert 8:30 a.m. at OAPAA. Santa in Norwich West Park, 5 to 8 p.m.	14 Sip & Shop at Hoppies Oxford, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. United Church of Oxford Dinner 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Christmas in New Berlin 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. with pictures with Santa Claus and fun activities for youth Christmas Dinner Theater at cvfree church, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Santa in Norwich West Park, 1 to 4 p.m.
Breakfast with Santa at the Oxford Legion 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.	16 St. Paul's Oxford Soup and Sandwich will be open for one free sitting at 5:30 p.m.	17 Norwich High School Winter Concert 7 p.m. Oxford Middle School Concert & Art Show 7 p.m. Greene Intermediate Winter Concert 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	18 Norwich Middle School Concert 7 p.m.	19 Santa in Norwich West Park, 5 to 8 p.m.	20 First Day of Winter Santa in Norwich West Park, 5 to 8 p.m.	21 Santa in Norwich West Park, 1 to 4 p.m.
23 Oxford Legion Community Breakfast 7:30-11 a.m.	24 Christmas Eve St. Paul's Oxford Soup & Sandwich one free sitting at 5:30 p.m.,	25 Christmas Day Bandera Family Free Christmas Dinner Norwich American Legion at 1 p.m. Delivery available.	26	27 	28	29
30	31					

CSPCA could receive \$30,000 bonus donation with community's support

By Zachary Meseck
Sun Staff Writer

CHENANGO COUNTY — The Chenango County SPCA (CSPCA) is taking part in Staffworks Charitable Fund, "Save A Life," fundraiser, granting the SPCA a chance to receive \$30,000 in bonus donations.

According to CSPCA Director Annette J. Clarke, in prior years the SPCA has raised around \$40,000 in community donations alone, but this year the no-kill, non-profit organization could receive additional funds with the community's help.

"This year we have the opportunity to win \$30,000 by reaching \$10,000 in local donations, having the most donors, and having the most funds raised out of the participating non-profits," said Clarke. "Each step will grant the SPCA an additional \$10,000 funds, and every donation helps make a difference."

Clarke said the fund-raising event will run from November 26 until December 31, and all donations are greatly appreciated.

"This is an incredibly generous community," she said. "Many people truly care for animals here, and I think we have a good chance of getting the extra \$30,000 with their help."

"Last year, with the community's generous support, we were able to raise a total of \$48,000," Clarke said. "This year, we would love to raise the most money and earn that \$10,000 bonus, and donations large and small can help us reach our goal so please consider a gift today."

She said the Staffworks Charitable Fund is a privately owned group that has consistently assisted the CSPCA in fundraising efforts.

She added that the Staffworks Charitable Fund at The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties was created by Staffworks founder and owner, Anita Vitullo, out of her concern for animals and her belief in their right to life.

The fund promotes humane communities by using company profits from branch office markets in central and southern NY to support organizations that provide care for at-risk ani-

mals.

"When you support or adopt from your local animal shelters and rescue organizations you are choosing to save an animal's life," Staffworks Charitable Fund Founder Anita Vitullo said. "We've invested more than \$10 million to reduce animal suffering and help make connections between animals and people."

The CSPCA is also hosting other events this December such as the Bissell Pet Foundation Empty the Shelters on December 1st from noon to 6 p.m., and the "Story Time," event on December 15 from 11:15 to 11:45, both occurring at the CSPCA.

For the Bissell Pet Empty the Shelters event all adoption fees will be \$20, price for surgery not included, if needed. Bissell pays the rest of adoption fee.

Founded in 1907, CSPCA is an open-admission, no-kill animal shelter that provides care for lost and homeless pets, adopts pets to new homes, and educates families and the community about the needs of companion animals. CSPCA serves primarily the residents and animals of

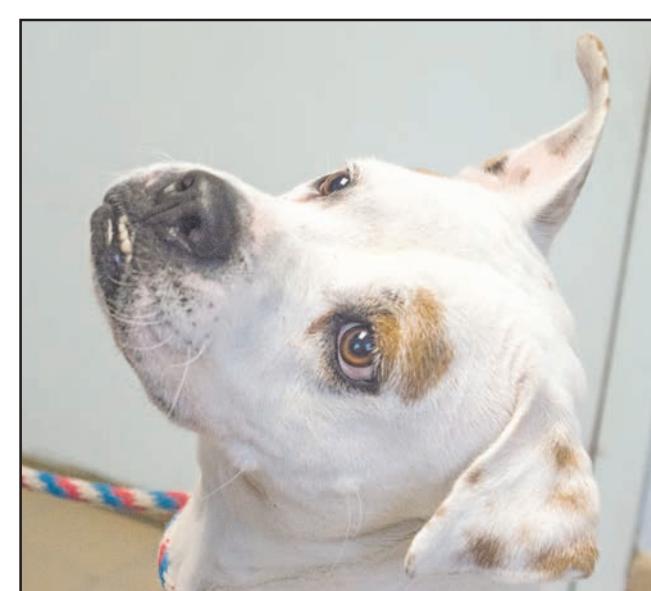


Hotch is a year and a half old cat looking for a patient owner who can make her feel safe and comfortable. Brat is a three year old dog that's been at the CSPCA for approximately four months and is currently up for adoption. Inquire at the CSPCA for more information. (Zachary Meseck Photo)

Chenango County and the surrounding communities.

Those who are interested in donating may reach out to the SPCA online at www.staffworkssavealife.com or with checks payable to The Community Foundation.

For more information please call the SPCA at (607) 334-9724.



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Hot toy list for 2018

Did you grab your L.O.L. Surprise dolls last year? What about Hatchimals the year before? Each year, a new crop of must-have toys surfaces. Smart shoppers who do their research and prepare in advance of the holidays can grab these coveted gifts.

Each year, industry experts weigh in on which toys are sure to be hits with children and adults. This data can help shoppers become more informed consumers and may help prevent the last-minute rush when coveted gifts are already sold out and new stock is nowhere in sight. The following are some gifts children may want to see wrapped and waiting under the tree this year.

- Pomsies by Skyrocket:** These are fashionable plush pets for children to nurture. They're adorable and designed to travel with children in a backpack or wrapped around kids' wrists. The kitties can be played with in a one-on-one setting and also have a mode for social play.

- Luvabella:** This is a life-like baby doll that features many of the same surprises that come with a real

live infant. Realistic facial expressions and responses, as well as interactive accessories, can make this a true-to-life experience for young girls or boys.

- Blind bag toys:** Children seemingly can't get enough of collectible playthings that focus on the act of unboxing. The Toy Association says sales for collectible playthings grew by 14 percent globally in 2017. The act of removing a surprise from packaging is just as exciting as the toy itself. Expect to find many more of these types of collectibles this year.

- Mecard:** This is a battle-action game from Mattel based on the Korean animated series Turning Mecard. Mecards are cars that transform into hero or villain action figures when they drive over a power-charged card.

- Think & Learn Code-a-Pillar:** This toy from Fisher-Price gives youngsters an early introduction to STEM. They learn basic coding, planning and sequencing skills by connecting segments of a cute caterpillar.

- SelfieMic Selfie Stick Microphone:** Children who are into social media karaoke apps can transform themselves into pop stars. They can sing along to their favorite tunes as a solo artist or with friends in a group. This device works in conjunction with the StarMaker singing app available for iOS and Android.

- Slimy squishy toys:** These types of toys were a big hit in 2017 and stand to remain big sellers this year. Make-your-own and premade versions of slime and squishy products are sure to be filling up the shelves of neighborhood stores. WeCool's Squishy Like Slime is one option to keep an eye on.

- K'NEX building sets:** These sets from K'NEX marry tangible building with interactive play. Once kids build the sets, which can include roller coasters and more, they can take them on a virtual reality ride.

These are just some of the hot toys and gifts that are primed as big sellers for this holiday season.



Rogers Environmental Education Center, the popular regional attraction visited by nearly 15,000 people annually, hosts programs in every season of the year. Sherburne American Legion Post 876 is raising funds during their December 6 BINGO session to support Friends of Rogers. (Photo courtesy Friends of Rogers)

Sherburne American Legion to host Friends of Rogers BINGO benefit

SHERBURNE — On December 6, Sherburne American Legion Post 876 will once again host a special session of their weekly BINGO and Friends of Rogers will be the designated beneficiary, with proceeds to support Rogers Center operations. Traditional cash prizes are being offered for the BINGO games.

Doors open at 5:30 pm, with letters called beginning at 7 pm. Basic entry fee is \$3 per person, with the option to purchase additional cards. Traditional cash prizes are being offered for the BINGO games.

"All kitchen profits from this special night will be donated to support Friends of Rogers," said Angela Jones, who coordinated the benefit. "I'm proud to

be a volunteer with this wonderful community organization."

Rogers Center is operated by Friends of Rogers Environmental Education Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization that offers educational programs for people of all ages. Seasonal hours are from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday.

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From Alma

Dear Santa,

I want a Nintendo Switch for Christmas. I will make you a glass of Eggnog and cookies on a fancy plate.

From Atticus

Dear Santa,

For Christmas I want a phone and Sam's phone. I love Santa!

Form, Lyneah

Dear Santa,

I want a xbox and a nintendo switch and huver bord for cherismas.

From Jacob

Dear Santa,

I want a ballerina music box please. I love Santa.

From Sawyer

Dear Santa,

For Christmas, I want a nintendo switch. I want minecraft for xbox. I also want a mario game for Xbox.

Thank You!

From Jason

Dear Santa,

I would like a Mario game, a red and green mario and Luigi please. I also want vampire teeth.

From Sawyer

PS: I also want a charger for my tablet

Dear Santa,

For Christmas, I want My Life clothes for My Life doll because I don't have clothes for my life doll and shoes for her and a coat for her.

From Lilly

P.S. I want a nice thing for my nana.

Dear Santa,

I want a litl city

Dear Santa,

For Christmas, I want a Amarckin girl doll and a cat and a dog and stuf for my anmle and my life close and a babey doll and a hamstre stuft.

Love, Haley

Dear Santa,

I wish for a "Surprize ani-mals." I also want to have a very nice outfit for christ-mas.

P.S. I want my brother to love peperonii.

Sirrtanly, Cianna

Dear Santa,

I want a baby brother for Christmas.

Milo

Dear Santa,

I want a cat, cat toys, dog toys and fish toys.

Teagan



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On Saturday December 8 through December 22 Santa will be available in Norwich at West Park in Norwich. Santa will be in his igloo on Thursdays and Fridays from 5 to 8 p.m., and on Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. The schedule is subject to change pending the weather.
(Frank Speziale Photos)



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Chenango County's Law Enforcement Association hosts annual "Shop with a Sheriff"

By Zachary Meseck
Sun Staff Writer

CHENANGO COUNTY — For the third year the Chenango County Sheriff's Office and the Chenango County Law Enforcement Association (CCLEA), along with individuals and businesses within the county, are working together to help children and their families have a great Christmas.

The annual "Shop with a Sheriff" event will take place at 10 a.m. on December 8 at the Norwich Walmart Center, when 30 children selected by their school districts will have the opportunity to shop with a sheriff's deputy.

Members of the Chenango County Sheriff's Office donate money from their own wallets and the association matches them dollar for dollar to help them reach a goal of \$6,000 raised, according to Vice President of the CCLEA Chad O'Hara.

"If we reach our goal, kids get to spend \$200 each," said O'Hara. "A lot of the times kids spend

\$75 on themselves, and the rest on their families — even though it should be the other way around."

of a family in need, and possess an outstanding and respectful demeanor," said O'Hara.

raised for this event will be donated towards children and their families."

He said this event

want to do what we can to help promote a positive community," said O'Hara. "Thank you for helping us

businesses along with gas cards," he said. "We're going to be giving out gas and gift cards to families as they patrol and respond to incidents."

O'Hara said the cards will be tracked via documents the deputies fill out and the cards were another way the association could give back to its community.

"We've also been delivering gifts to families on Christmas Eve for several years, but the names of those individuals aren't publicized," he said. "Generally those gifts are individually purchased by the deputies."

Donations can be made in the form of gift cards or by writing a check to the Chenango County Law Enforcement Association and mailed to the attention of Deputy O'Hara at the Chenango County Sheriff's Office, 279 County Road 46, Norwich, NY 13815.



The Chenango County Sheriff's Office will host its annual, "Shop with a Sheriff," event again this year with law enforcement doing even more to give back to their community. (Frank Speziale Photo)

He said it's heart-wrenching sometimes, to see the choices that kids will make when deciding to buy things for themselves or for their families, but often times that kind of maturity is why the children were selected for the event.

"Children are selected by their schools on two criteria: they must be part

O'Hara said the sheriff's deputy's donations along with contributions by local individuals and businesses help make the, "Shop with a Sheriff," event successful each year.

"Any money we raise that's over our goal will be donated towards the following year," said O'Hara. "That way all of the money

turned out to be bigger than they could have imagined when they decided to start giving more back to the community around the holidays. He added as the Chenango County Sheriff Office grows they hope to continue to increase the amount they can give back.

"We as law enforcement

make it happen."

O'Hara said without assistance from Chenango County's residents and businesses, the event would be much smaller in scale, and thanked the community for its support.

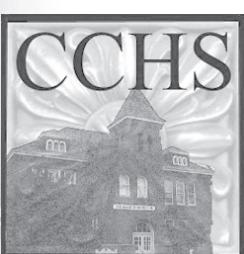
"Separate from the "Shop with the Sheriff" event, the union is also buying gift cards for local

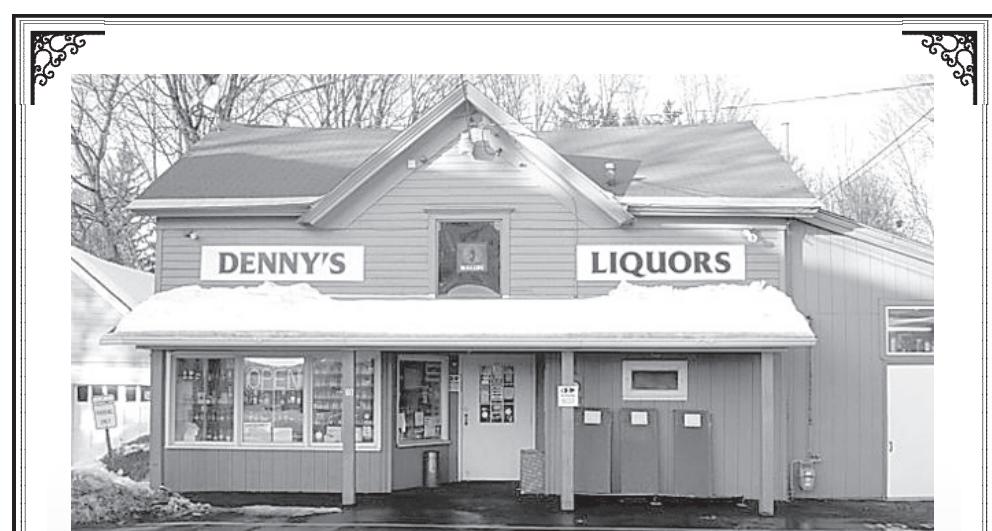
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Gingerbread goodness

Gingerbread is a broad term that can describe anything from a firm and crispy cookie to a moist, soft cake. Traditionally, gingerbread is seasoned with ginger, cloves, nutmeg, and other aromatic spices. Molasses and brown sugar counteract the spice with sweetness. North Americans have been baking gingerbread in various shapes or forms for more than 200 years, and the recipes even pre-date the American revolution. However, ginger-

bread dates back even further to the Shakespearean era, with The Bard having mentioned it in one of his plays. Gingerbread's name can be traced to medieval England and once referred to any kind of preserved ginger. The term went on to reference ginger-flavored cakes in the 15th century, and gingerbread eventually became popular throughout the world. Even though gingerbread cakes and cookies have been made for centuries,

Germans are often credited with creating gingerbread houses, according to Smithsonian. They were probably modeled after the witch's candy cottage in the German fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel." Even though gingerbread can be made any time of year, it is particularly associated with the Christmas season, with gingerbread men and other fanciful shapes turning up on cookie platters. TF18C573

Great last-minute gift ideas

Tradition is a hallmark of the holiday season. Religious services, family gatherings and trips to see Santa Claus are just a few of the many traditions people adhere to during the holiday season.

Many holiday shoppers also adhere to the time-honored tradition of last-minute shopping. The perfect gift can sometimes prove elusive, especially as the sand in the holiday hour glass keeps dwindling. These last-minute gift ideas may be just what shoppers need to put smiles on the faces of their loved ones this holiday season.

on Christmas morning informing them that their books are ready to be downloaded to their devices.

- Experiences: A 2017 survey by the global research firm NPD Group found that roughly 40 percent of holiday shoppers planned to give experiences as gifts last year. Experience gifts



open up a host of possibilities for last-minute shoppers stuck on what to give those loved ones who seemingly have it all.

- Books: Books are often overlooked, especially now that so many readers use e-readers. But books can be an ideal gift and especially convenient for last-minute shoppers, who can even gift e-books. For example, Amazon, which has thousands of e-books in its online library, makes it easy for shoppers to gift e-books to Kindle users, who will simply receive an email

- Food/beverage: Television channels such as The Food Network have changed the way many people look at food. When gifting the family foodie, last-minute shoppers

may not need to look further than the latest hotspot restaurant or specialty grocery store for the perfect gift. Take them out for a night on the town or give a gift card they can use at their convenience. The craft beer boom has created a host of devoted and knowledgeable beer drinkers, so a gift card or growler from a local craft brewery is sure to please people who love hoisting frosty pints.

- Streaming service subscriptions: Many people are cutting the cord with their cable companies in favor of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. Subscriptions to

such services can make ideal and affordable holiday gifts. A six-month or yearlong subscription likely won't break shoppers' budgets and will provide months of entertainment to loved ones.

Last-minute holiday shopping is easier than ever, especially for shoppers willing to think outside the box. HL18A367

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The way to make an evenly brown, shiny crusted challah loaf

By AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

Beautifully braided, rich, and lightly sweet, freshly baked challah is delicious on its own or smeared with softened butter. After a few days, it's great dunked in custard and made into French toast for a decadent breakfast.

The best challah is rich with eggs, and it has a dark, shiny crust and a firm but light and tender texture. For our recipe, we tried using bread flour, but it made no significant improvement to loaves we made with the typical all-purpose, so we stuck with that.

We tested many different egg combinations (challah is known as egg bread, after all); for a tender texture and a rich but not overwhelmingly eggy flavor, we found two whole eggs and an additional yolk to be optimal.

We kept with tradition and made the bread dairy-free, using water and oil to hydrate and enrich the crumb instead of the milk and butter found in less authentic versions. (Happily, we found that the challah

made with water had a lighter and more appealing texture.) Just 1/4 cup of sugar sweetened the loaf and also contributed to its browned exterior.

The recommended shape for challah in most recipes is a simple three-rope braid. Shaped this way, however, our eggy dough rose out instead of up. Some recipes call for braiding six strands for a higher loaf, but this can get complicated—unless you have skills in origami.

Our solution was to make two three-strand braids, one large and one small, and place the smaller braid on top of the larger one. We brushed the loaf with an egg-water mixture before putting it in the oven to produce an evenly brown, shiny crust—the finishing touch to our handsome challah.

Nutrition information per serving: 153 calories; 43 calories from fat; 5 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 52 mg cholesterol; 195 mg sodium; 23 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 4 g protein.

America's Test Kitchen provided this article to The Associated Press.

CHALLAH

Servings: 16
Start to finish: 3 3/4 to 4 3/4 hours, plus 3 hours cooling time (Rising time: 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 hours)
Key Equipment: 2 rimmed baking sheets, pastry brush, instant-read thermometer

3 1/4 cups (16 1/4 ounces) all-purpose flour
2 1/4 teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast
1 1/4 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup (4 ounces) water, room temperature
1/4 cup (1 3/4 ounces) vegetable oil
2 large eggs plus 1 large yolk, room temperature
1/4 cup (1 3/4 ounces) sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten with 1 tablespoon water and pinch salt
1 teaspoon poppy or sesame seeds (optional)

Whisk flour, yeast, and salt together in bowl of stand mixer. Whisk water, oil, eggs and yolk, and sugar in 4-cup liquid measuring cup until sugar has dissolved.

Using dough hook on low speed, slowly add water mixture to flour mixture and mix until cohesive dough starts to form and no dry flour remains, about 2 minutes, scraping down bowl as needed. Increase speed to medium-low and knead until dough is smooth and elastic and begins to pull away from sides of bowl but sticks to bottom, about 10 minutes.

Transfer dough to lightly floured counter and knead by hand to form smooth, round ball, about 30 seconds. Place dough seam side down in lightly greased large bowl or container, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let rise until increased in size by about half, 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Stack two rimmed baking sheets, line with aluminum foil, and spray with vegetable oil spray. Transfer dough to clean counter and divide into 2 pieces, one twice as large as the other (small piece will weigh about 9 ounces, larger piece about 18 ounces). Divide each piece into thirds and cover loosely with greased plastic.

Working with 1 piece of dough at a time (keep remaining pieces covered), stretch and roll into 16-inch rope (three ropes will be much thicker).

Arrange three thicker ropes side by side, perpendicular to counter edge, and pinch far ends together. Braid ropes into 10-inch loaf and pinch remaining ends together. Repeat braiding remaining ropes into second 10-inch loaf.

Transfer larger loaf to prepared sheet, brush top with egg mixture, and place smaller loaf on top. Tuck ends underneath. Cover loosely with greased plastic and let rise until loaf increases in size by about half and dough springs back minimally when poked gently with your knuckle, 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 F. Brush loaf with remaining egg mixture and sprinkle with poppy seeds, if using. Bake until deep golden brown and loaf registers 190 F to 195 F, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Transfer loaf to wire rack and let cool completely, about 3 hours, before serving.



This undated photo provided by America's Test Kitchen in October 2018 shows challah in Brookline, Mass. This recipe appears in the cookbook "Bread Illustrated." (Carl Tremblay/America's Test Kitchen via AP)

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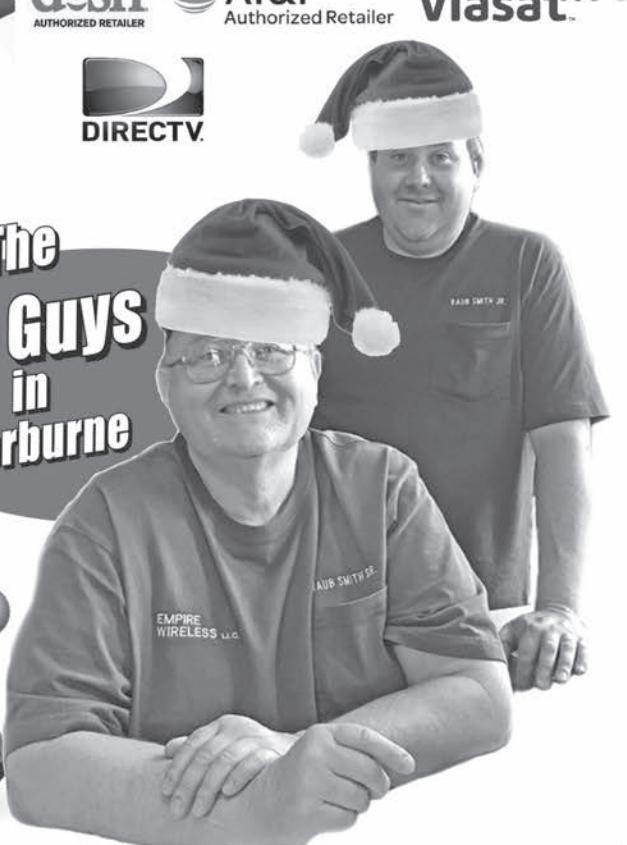


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Holiday appetizers perfect for entertaining



Presents may get much of the glory during the holiday season, but there is much to be said about the foods found throughout this time of year as well. During the holiday season, people frequently find that dinner invites, cocktail parties, office happy hour gatherings, and other opportunities for socialization are easy to come by. At the heart of these events are foods and beverages.

Whether one is hosting a holiday soiree or plans to bring something to a

potluck party, it's helpful to have a list of fail-proof recipes at the ready. Tasting menus, bite-sized treats and finger foods are always a hit at holiday functions — and this recipe for "Mini Merry Meatballs," courtesy of the

Cattlemen's Beef Board and National Cattlemen's Beef Association, is sure to please. Paired with a cranberry barbecue sauce, these savory appetizers are bursting with flavor and holiday appeal.

Mini Merry Meatballs

(Serves 24)

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound ground beef brisket
 $\frac{1}{4}$ pound ground beef ribeye steak boneless
 $\frac{1}{4}$ pound ground beef (80 percent lean)
1 cup seasoned stuffing mix
1 egg, beaten
3 tablespoons water
1 teaspoon minced garlic
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon pepper

Cranberry Barbecue Sauce:

2 teaspoons vegetable oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped white onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups fresh cranberries
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup ketchup
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light brown sugar
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 tablespoons molasses
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground red pepper
Salt

Preheat oven to 400 F. Combine brisket, ribeye, ground beef, stuffing mix, egg, water, garlic, salt, and pepper in a large bowl, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Shape into 24 1½-inch meatballs. Place on a rack in a broiler pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes until the internal temperature reads 160 F.

Meanwhile, prepare the Cranberry Barbecue Sauce. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and garlic; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes, or until tender, but not brown. Add remaining ingredients, stirring to combine. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, or until cranberries burst and the mixture has been reduced to a thick consistency, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; cool slightly. Transfer mixture to blender container. Cover, allowing steam to escape. Process until smooth. Season with salt, as desired.

Serve meatballs with barbecue sauce. HL18A375

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