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"Last year, I had a great year, and this year so far, a great semester," says transfer student Harlan Nichols, an exercise science major. "It's a small campus, so within three weeks, I knew who everyone was, and they knew who I was. They give a lot of support to the students. It's community-based, close knit, with good academics and good learning."

That support is what makes Dean College stand out among the rest.

"The Dean Difference is baked into everything we do," says Jennifer Kelly, Dean College Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communication. "Our students are front and center. This community principle is grounded in the fact that everyone who works at Dean cares for and is committed to inspiring and helping students achieve their goals."

A hallmark of Dean College's traditional offerings is its Dean Career Advantage (DCA). From day one, students work with their



academic advisors in a holistic approach that incorporates career into each student's educational path. Success and career advisors guide students to specific courses to help them stand out in a competitive job market, connecting them with peers within their majors. Plus, Dean College partners with various businesses in the community to offer students co-curricular opportunities to put coursework into practice.

"You could be taking a business marketing class and develop

case studies for the marketing group at Patriot Place," says Kelly. "Last year, one of Dean's business classes provided volunteer support for the Army Navy game at Gillette Stadium. Our goal is to help students stand out in a competitive job market and really build the skills employers are looking for."

While nationally, only one in four college students complete an internship before graduation, at Dean College, every student completes at least one internship. Students also have access to professional resume reviews and mock interviewing opportunities, as well as the school annual career and internship fair.

Dean College has ranked among Colleges of Distinction for its Business program for eight years in a row, for its Career Development for five consecutive years, and this year, Dean was among a limited number of schools selected as an Affordable College of Distinction.

For those looking to finish their four-year degree, Dean College has streamlined the transfer process. Students are automatically considered for merit scholarships. Transfer applicants are guaranteed a decision within one week of applying. In fact, students still have time to get their applications in for the spring semester at Dean, which starts in mid-January.

"We want to make it easy for people to follow their passion, find their path, and plan for their future," says Kelly.

For Massachusetts community college students, the process is even easier. Dean College participates in the Massachusetts Guarantee, created to ease transfer for incoming students who hold an associate's degree from any Mas-



Business spotlight

sachusetts community college. Dean also has an affiliate relationship to ensure an easy process from the following Massachusetts community colleges:

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Cape Cod Community College

Berkshire Community College

Greenfield Community College

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Transfer students will find Dean College offers competitive financial aid, with a generous merit scholarship. The average out-of-pocket cost is just \$25,000 per year.

Students can study at Dean full time, or they can begin part-time, with a mix of hybrid, online and in-person options.

Harlan says his transfer process couldn't have been easier. "They were helpful. If I had any questions, they would hop on the phone with me and make sure I had the right paperwork filled out." Harlan also attests to strong student supports. "The counselors are always there to help, the website is really easy to navigate, and you can always pop into the advising hours," he adds. Harlan recommends visiting the campus to see for yourself. "Do your research, and if you like what you see, visit the campus and take the next steps from there."

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Traveling for the holidays? A Pre-travel checklist

If you're traveling during the holidays, here is a checklist that might help you rest better while you're on vacation.

Before you leave:

- Doors/windows. Make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked.
- Lights. Leave some on, consider timers and motion-activated lights inside and outside.
- Thermostat. Adjust the heat/air to "away" or a low temperature.
- Appliances. Make sure all are turned off or set to "vacation" mode.
- Refrigerator. Discard any food that might go bad while you're away.
- Dishwasher. Run and unload before your leave.
- Garbage disposal. Deep clean it before you leave.
- Washer/dryer. Make sure there are no damp clothes in either.

- Water. Make sure faucets and toilets are not running. If appropriate for the climate, consider turning off the main water supply.
- Pipes. If you expect frigid temps while away, ask a neighbor or friend to run the hot water occasionally.
- Electronics. Unplug all.
- Fireplace/candles. Be absolutely sure that all flames have been extinguished.
- Shades and curtains. Leave them as you would when you're home.
- Plants. Water your plants.
- Lockbox/safe. Consider a household safe for your valuables.
- Mail. Put your mail on vacation hold.
- Delivery services. If you expect any packages while you're away, make arrangements with someone to pick them up.
- Newspaper. Pause your sub-

- scription.
- Trash. Empty household trash.
- Trash pickup. If you put your trash cans out, ask a neighbor to bring them in for you.
- Yard. Mow the lawn before you leave. If wind could be an issue, secure yard furniture, etc.
- Snow. If you expect it to snow while you're away, arrange for someone to plow or shovel your driveway.
- Driveway. If possible, keep a vehicle in the driveway while you're gone (or consider asking a neighbor to park there).
- Neighbors. Share your plans with your neighbors.
- Spare key. Leave a key with a trusted neighbor in case of emergencies.
- House sitter. If you have a house sitter or a pet sitter, share the information with your neighbors.
- Pets. If you have someone checking on your pets, make



- sure they have enough food and supplies while you're gone.
- Police/fire. Don't hesitate to let your public safety officials know you'll be away.
- Security cameras. Make sure all are charged.
- Alarm. Remember to arm your alarm system.
- While you're away: Don't post photos of your trip on social media; wait until you return.
- Ask a friend to stop by on occasion or stay overnight.
- Plan for your return: Plan for the first meal you'll need when you get home.
- Tidy the house before you leave (vacuum, wipe down counters, clean bathrooms, etc.)
- Change bedsheets before you leave.
- Consider plug-ins etc. to keep the house smelling fresh.

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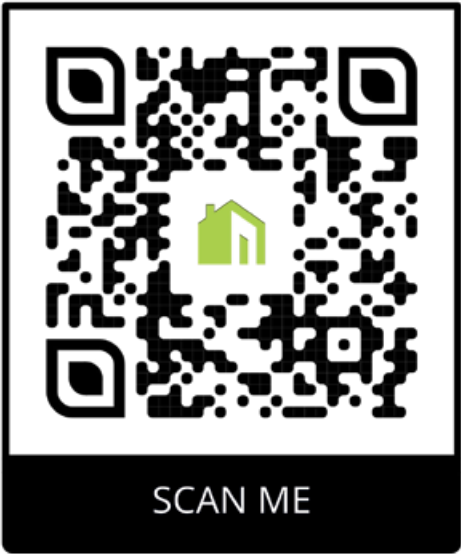
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When politics come to dinner

The holidays are upon us which means the gathering of families and varying opinions, especially around politics. Some families may choose to ignore the “the elephant in the room” while others may intentionally (or unintentionally) discuss the subject.

Here are some ways to handle the topic while trying to retain family harmony.

Steer clear from being the “fire starter.”

Remain civil.

Understand that some people like to debate.

Feel free to change the subject.

Do your homework.

Source: www.thehill.com, bit.ly/PoliticsAtHolidays

The American Psychological Association offers this advice on managing conversations with family and friends when you disagree politically. These tips can help “guide conversations about sensitive topics in a more positive direction.”

Find areas where you agree. You may find that discussing shared viewpoints will make areas of disagreement feel less intense and may decrease stress.

Be open and kind. Try to be mindful of your words and tone, and not let conversations become hostile or combative.

Keep calm when tensions rise. Only you can control your emotions, and being aware of them will help you to lessen tension with others.

Have conversation goals (ex.: informational or relational). Establish easy, attainable goals when communicating with others can help to ease tension in a conversation.

Accept that you may not change the other person’s mind. Use the conversation as an opportunity to share views, not to convince anyone that your view is best.

Disagreeing with someone you care about is ok. It might be hard to accept that a loved

one or friend may have opposing ideologies than you, but understanding their viewpoints will help contribute to healthy relationships.

Know when to end the conversation. If the conversation has not come to a resolution, you may want to find an appropriate time to end the discussion peacefully. It may be that you change the topic of conversation or suggest another activity but reinforce maintaining the relationship you have with the other person.

Be proactive. If you are concerned about potentially difficult conversations at family gatherings, such as during the holidays, remember these events are about bringing people together, not driving them apart. Focus on good memories and what you and your family have in common. Plan activities that foster fun and laughter, such as playing a family game or looking through old photo albums.

Source: www.apa.org/topics/stress/conversations

A [non-traditional] holiday playlist



Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
 It's the Holidays, Maysa
 Snowfall, Ramsey Lewis Trio
 The Holly and the Ivy, George Winston
 The Little Drummer Boy, Kenny Burrell
 Jingle Bells – Remastered 1999, Frank Sinatra
 Storm King, Big Tree
 Little Saint Nick – 1991 Remix, The Beach Boys
 Sonny Boy's Christmas Blues, Sonny Boy Williamson II
 Santa Never Brings Me a Banjo, Kate Rusby
 Christmas Wrapping, The Waitresses
 Plum Puddin', Ramsey Lewis Trio
 I Want An Alien For Christmas, Fountains of Wayne
 2000 Miles – 2007 Remaster, Pretenders
 Dreydl, Canadian Brass
 Skating, Vince Guaraldi Trio
 Soul Cake, Sting
 Riu, Riu, Chiu, Chanticleer
 Kwanzaa-Umoja-Uhuru, Sounds of Blackness
 Pass the Candle, Michelle Citrin
 Boogaloo Navideno, Pete Rodriguez
 Den Trawler, The Spinanes
 Father Christmas, The Kinks
 In Dulci Jubilo, Pittsburgh Symphony Brass
 Carol of the Bells, Harry Simeone Chorale
 Ding! Dong! Merrily on High, XVI Century French
 Friday Afternoons, Benjamin Britten
 House of Broken Gingerbread, The Monkees
 Umoja: The First Day of Kwanza, Valerie Coleman
 O Tannenbaum, Vienna Boys' Choir
 Collage of Koleda Carols, Kitka
 The Shortest Day, Susan Cooper
 Christmas Time is Here, Khruangbin
 Snow, Bing Crosby
 Little Drummer Boy, Dave Grohl
 Rorate coeli desuper, Custer LaRue
 Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes, Bruce Cockburn
 Louisiana Christmas Day, Aaron Neville
 Jingle Bells, William Shatner
 This Year, The Mountain Goats
 Aspenglow, John Denver
 Solstice Hymn, Jay Ungar
 Little Bright Star, The Supremes
 River, Joni Mitchell
 Auld Lang Syne, The Cast

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Edible Gifts

If you're looking for quick and easy edible gifts, here are a few suggestions.

Spiced Nuts

Ingredients:

- 2 cups mixed nuts (almonds, cashews, pecans, walnuts)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1/4 tsp sea salt

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a bowl, toss the nuts with olive oil, maple syrup, cinnamon, cayenne pepper (if using), and salt. Spread the nuts evenly on the baking sheet. Roast for 15-20 minutes, stirring once or twice, until golden and fragrant. Let the nuts cool completely before packaging in small jars or bags.

Homemade Hot Cocoa Mix

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 cup cocoa powder
- 1 cup powdered milk
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips or finely chopped chocolate
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Mini marshmallows (optional)

Instructions:

In a large bowl, whisk together the powdered sugar, cocoa powder, powdered milk, salt, and chocolate chips. Store the mix in an airtight jar or container. To make hot cocoa, stir 3-4 tablespoons of the mix into 1 cup of hot milk or water. For a fun presentation, layer the mix in a jar and add a small bag of marshmallows on top. Tie with a festive ribbon.

Cranberry Almond Granola

Ingredients:

- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup honey or maple syrup

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 325°F (163°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine oats, almonds, cinnamon, and salt. In a small saucepan, warm the honey and coconut oil together until melted. Stir in vanilla. Pour the wet mixture over the oat mixture and stir until everything is evenly coated. Spread the mixture evenly on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 20-25 minutes, stirring halfway through, until golden brown. Let the granola cool completely, then stir in dried cranberries. Package in mason jars or cellophane bags tied with ribbon.



Caramel Popcorn

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 cup corn syrup
- 10 cups popped popcorn (about 1/2 cup unpopped kernels)

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 250°F (120°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in brown sugar and corn syrup. Bring to a boil and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla and baking soda. The mixture will bubble up. Pour the caramel over the popped popcorn and toss to coat evenly. Spread the popcorn in an even layer on the prepared baking sheet and bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Let it cool completely before breaking into pieces and packaging in gift bags or jars.

Be mindful of pets during the holiday season

The magic and wonder of the holiday season can be enthralling for people of all ages. There is so much to see and do during the holiday season, making it easy to forge lasting memories.

With so much to do in December, life at home can sometimes feel a little hectic, especially for the family pet. Although the holidays can be exciting, the season can induce anxiety in pets. Pets like cats and dogs often thrive on routine and familiarity. Switch up that routine and various behavioral issues can arise, including having accidents in the home. Pets also may become more destructive, chewing or clawing at items to release pent-up tension and anxiety. Pet owners who want the season to be festive for their pets can consider the following strategies.

- Gradually introduce new items. Gradually decorate living spaces so pets can grow acclimated to their newly decorated environs. Add a few pieces to rooms each day until you finally have all of your

decorations out for display. This way pets can sniff around the decorations and realize they do not pose a threat.

- Keep familiar pet belongings. Try not to upset the apple cart too much in regard to pets' cherished possessions. For example, do not move the dog bed from the living room and place the Christmas tree in its place. Pets need that familiarity and having some of their items with familiar smells can make for a smooth adjustment to holiday decorations.
- Designate a pet-safe zone. If you will be inviting people over during the holidays, set aside a room for pets so they can be in relative quiet away from boisterous crowds. Locking pets away also helps prevent their escape from the home as guests come and go.
- Secure the tree and other decorations. Pets are often curious about new things, and they may climb or paw at items to try to understand

them better. Decorative items may end up being knocked over by curious pets. Secure the tree using a string and an anchor to the ceiling or wall like you might secure a large screen TV to prevent it from tipping over. Keep breakable ornaments and other trinkets behind display cases or beyond the reach of pets.

- Discourage pets from using decorations as toys. Reprimand pets or move them away from holiday decor so they don't get the idea that these items are now their toys.
- Be careful with holiday foods. Holiday foods and desserts are rich and full of ingredients that may not be healthy for pets. Keep a secure lid on trash pails and remind holiday guests that pets should not be fed table scraps.

Pets may need some time to adjust to the changes that come with holiday decorating and celebrating to keep them happy and safe.





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What's your favorite holiday movie?

A recent poll of readers, family and friends revealed this list of favorite holiday movies. Perhaps your current (or future) favorites are on the list.

A Christmas Carol (1951,
Alastair Sim)

A Christmas Carol (1984, George C. Scott)

A Christmas Carol (1999, Patrick Stewart)

A Christmas Story (1983)

Die Hard (1988)

Elf (2003)

Elmo Saves Christmas (1996)

Emmett Otter's Jug-Band
Christmas (1977)

Home Alone (1990)

Home for the Holidays (1995)

Iron Man 3 (2013)

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Klaus (2019)

Little House on the Prairie
special, The Christmas They
Never Forgot (1981)

Little Women (1994)

Love Actually (2003)

Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

Planes, Trains and Automobiles (1987)

Scrooged (1988)

The Family Stone (2005)

The Holiday (2006)

The Man Who Invented
Christmas (2017)

The Muppet Christmas Carol
(1992)

The Muppet Family Christmas (1987)

The Stingiest Man in Town
(1978)

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Real or artificial? The Christmas tree debate continues

People are passionate about the things they love. Through the years there have been many debates over a wide range of topics, from which cola brand to back to which book/movie character was more deserving of a lead character's heart.

The holiday season features a classic example of taking sides. The debate surrounding artificial Christmas trees and their natural alternatives will pick back up this holiday season. As with any debate, there are two sides to every story. Those on the fence as to whether to go real or fake this year can consider these pros and cons of each.

Real tree

Pros: One of the biggest advantages of a real tree is its pleasing aroma. The fresh pine smell of a natural tree can trigger memories of Christmases gone by and make a home feel cozy and holiday-ready. It takes many years for a Christmas tree to grow large enough to be harvested, and as it grows it provides a habitat for animals and benefits the planet by absorbing carbon and providing oxygen, according to Megan Quinn, coordinator of conservation biology at the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

When trees are cut down, two or three may be planted in their place. Buying a real tree from a business nearby also supports the local economy.

Cons: Real trees can be messy and require upkeep like daily watering. Cutting down a tree oneself and bringing it home can help guarantee freshness, but there is really no way to know when trees at Christmas tree lots were cut down. This means that needles can begin falling the moment the tree is placed in the living room. Another thing to note is that live trees can't be placed just anywhere. They shouldn't be next to fireplaces or heat sources, where they can dry out prematurely and pose a fire risk. A real tree also might have unwelcome bugs or animals hiding within its branches. According to Penn State Extension, anything from spotted lanternflies to spiders to aphids to bark beetles or lice may be on a real tree.

Artificial tree

Pros: Artificial trees can be convenient because they are easy to assemble, disassemble and store. Plus, you don't have to venture out each year to get one. Unlike real trees, artificial trees do not require watering or vacuuming to manage fallen needles.

Since artificial trees can be reused for numerous seasons, they may be more cost-effective than real trees. Artificial trees can last anywhere from six to 10 years, but that life span depends on the quality of the tree and how well it is maintained. Artificial trees also guarantee a uniform, pleasing look year after year.

Cons: Artificial trees are made from polyvinyl chloride and other plastics, and environmentalists attest that those ingredients make them bad for the environment. According to an assessment study of artificial versus natural trees published in 2009 by Ellipso, a Montreal-based sustainable development consulting firm, an artificial tree emits 8.1 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year, compared to 3.1 kilograms of carbon dioxide emitted by a real tree in a given year. In addition, the chemicals used in manufacture may have adverse effects on human health and often are non-recyclable. Artificial trees also take up room in homes year-round since they need to be stored. Plus, they don't emit a pleasing aroma.

The debate over a real or artificial Christmas tree is sure to rage on year after year, so it's up to holiday celebrants to make their pick.

This is a historically inspired Wassail recipe. Traditionally, this is served from a warm pot on the stove, but here we have directions for the crockpot. This is a crowd pleaser and is traditionally served before caroling.

Wassail

Wassail (similar to mulled cider)

- 1 bottle ruby port
- 4 cups apple cider
- 12 ounces lager (ex: Sam Adams Winter, or something dark)
- 1 cup nut brown ale (ex: Samuel Smith's)
- 1 apple sliced
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 10 cloves
- nutmeg to taste
- fresh orange peel for garnish

Heat all ingredients (save orange peels) into a crockpot on high until bubbling, then switch to low for however long the punch lasts. Garnish with orange peel.

Cooking tips: Be aware that the longer the wassail cooks, the stronger the spices become. Leaving the spices in the slow cooker too long may make the wassail bitter.

If serving later, remove the whole spices from the slow cooker after the wassail has cooked. If yours has become too strong add a splash or two of cranberry or orange juice. You can keep wassail on the warm setting of your slow cooker for up to 4 hours.

Serving tips: Place out mugs or paper cups for the wassail. Whipped cream and caramel are great toppings for wassail.

Historical information:

The word 'wassail' comes from the Anglo-Saxon phrase 'waes hael', which means 'good health'. Originally, the wassail was a drink made of mulled ale, curdled cream, roasted apples, eggs, cloves, ginger, nutmeg and sugar.

One legend about how Wassailing was created, says that a beautiful Saxon maiden named Rowena presented Prince Vortigen with a bowl of wine while toasting him with the words 'waes hael'.

Over the centuries, a great deal of ceremony developed around the custom of drinking wassail. The bowl was carried into a room with a great fanfare, a traditional carol about the drink was sung, and finally, the steaming hot beverage was served.

The person offering the drink would say "wassail" (good health) and the recipient would reply "drinkhail" (drink good health). From this, it developed into another way of saying Merry Christmas to each other!

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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas all over the world. Christmas celebrations include various time-honored traditions that celebrants hold near and dear to their hearts. Depending on where someone lives, their Christmas traditions may look quite different from those in other parts of the globe.

It can enjoyable to learn how Christmas is celebrated elsewhere and perhaps even incorporate a few new traditions into your celebrations. Take a peek at these customs near and far.

- Seafood and beachside celebrations: Australia is located in the southern hemisphere, which means Aussies are enjoying the peak of their summer come December 25. A white Christmas is unlikely, unless the "white" refers to white, sandy beaches. Santa is probably swapping his thick coat for a pair of board shorts, and heavy, roast-laden meals are unlikely to make it on to the menu. Instead, Australians dine on seafood feasts and spend Christmas outdoors camping or at the beach.
- Krampus parade: Some Christmas elves are not so jolly. Just ask residents of the Austrian, German and Hungarian Alps. Each year in this region, a true "Bad Santa" is the talk of town. Villagers believed that Krampus, a half-man, half-goat creature with a legion of ill-tempered elves, roamed the mountains wreaking havoc. Krampus was said to abduct miscreants and set unruly youth or even intoxicated adults straight.

Today, Krampus is more the "bad cop" to Santa's "good cop" persona. Krampus is celebrated as an antihero at parades and other events.

- Las Posadas: According to scripture, Joseph and Mary had to make an arduous journey from their hometown to Bethlehem for census purposes while Mary was pregnant. When the couple arrived, they found lodgings were nonexistent, and Mary ended up giving birth to Jesus

how the Three Magi brought presents to Baby Jesus. Le Befana also is believed to fly through the night sky to sweep away all the troubles of the old year and clear the way for a fresh start.

- Move over reindeer: Although reindeer often garner fanfare this time of year, the Yule goat is a Christmas symbol and tradition in Scandinavia and northern Europe. Each year in towns throughout Sweden and other areas,



in a manger surrounded by animals. In celebration of that journey, people in Mexico and Guatemala celebrate Las Posadas, a procession representing Mary and Joseph's journey and their struggle to find lodging.

- La Befana: In Italian folklore, La Befana is a witch-like old woman who, like Santa, delivers gifts to children throughout Italy. Instead of this gift-giving taking place on Christmas, La Befana hands out gifts on the Epiphany Eve in a similar way to

large statues of Yule goats are built on the first day of Advent and stand throughout the holiday season. This tradition dates back to ancient Pagan festivals, and some believe the goat is connected to the Norse god Thor, who rode in the sky in a chariot pulled by two goats.

Holiday traditions differ considerably in various regions of the world. Celebrants may want to consider incorporating foreign traditions into their own Christmas celebrations this year.



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NIGHT LIGHTS

COLOR CASCADE

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4-10PM Daily

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Visit nebg.org/nightlights to get your tickets and create life-long memories!



IMAGES FROM PREVIOUS NIGHT LIGHTS



Holiday Happenings

Editor's note: This list is not meant to be exhaustive. These are the events of which we were aware of at press time.

THROUGH DEC. 25

• Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, times vary. Magic of Lights drive-through experience showcases dozens of displays, festive favorites and captivating digital animations, all brought to life with millions of LED lights, ensuring a memorable holiday experience for the whole family. Pre-purchase tickets. www.patriot-place.com/events/magic-of-lights/?utm-hero

THROUGH DEC. 29

• Southwick's Zoo, 2 Southwick St., Mendon. Winter Wonderland: New England's premier holiday lights display. Take a magical journey through Southwick's Zoo with friends and family to view spectacular holiday lights and handcrafted displays. southwickszoo.com/winter-wonderland/

• The Breakers, Newport, RI. Sparkling Lights at The Breakers, timed tickets required, Now in its fifth season, this event brings the magic of the holidays inside and outside this landmark Gilded Age mansion. You'll stroll along a half-mile-long path glittering with hundreds of thousands of holiday lights while music fills the winter air. See illuminated displays and sparkling surprises along the way. Tour the opulent interior of The Breakers decorated in holiday splendor. www.newportmansions.org/events/sparkling-lights-at-the-breakers-2024/

• The Garden at Elm Bank, 900 Washington St., Wellesley. Celebrate the season at the Garden at Elm Bank with dozens of trees, Snow Village model trains, garden lights, hot cocoa, and s'mores- dates and times vary. www.masshort.org/festival-of-trees

THROUGH JAN. 1, 2025

La Salette Shrine, 947 Park St., Attleboro, open daily, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Christmas Festival of Lights. Photos with Santa on Fri., Sat., and Sun. in the Welcome Center. Carousel, hayride, and ride to Bethlehem on Fri., Sat., and Sun. Visit the International Creche Museum, and/or the Judea, Jerusalem, and Galilee at the Time of Jesus" display. For details, visit lasalette-attleboroshrine.org/christmas-festival

THROUGH JAN. 4, 2025

• Winterlights sponsored by The Trustees - timed tickets required, various locations. Experience the sparkle of the holiday season as Winterlights returns to three special places: Naumkeag in Stockbridge, Stevens Coolidge House & Gardens in North Andover, and Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate in Canton. Enjoy dazzling light displays, festive music, seasonal treats, and time outside among the trees and snow. Event runs through Jan. 4. thetrustees.org/program/winterlights-massachusetts/

THROUGH JAN. 5, 2025

• New England Botanic Garden, 11 French Dr., Boylston. Night Lights: Color Cascade at New England Botanic Garden - 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Immerse yourself in the magic of the season with a breathtaking winter light display that is unmatched in the region. This year, prepare to be amazed by Night Lights: Color Cascade, a one-of-a-kind winter experience where visitors embark on a spellbinding journey through a mesmerizing array of a quarter million radiant, glowing lights in every imaginable color. nebg.org/nightlights/

DECEMBER

• Dec. 1, 6-8, 13-15, 20-23, 27-30, 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., Olde Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge. Christmas by Candlelight, tickets required. Experience the history of Christmas festivities, relish old traditions and create new ones. www.osv.org/event/christmas-by-candlelight/

• Dec. 1, 8 a.m. to noon, Saint Blaise Church, 1158 S. Main St., Bellingham. Breakfast with Santa.

• Dec. 1, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Fri. and Sat.), 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Sun.). Worcester Center for Crafts, 25 Sagamore Rd., Worcester. Holiday Festival of Crafts is a one-stop holiday shopping opportunity for unique, handmade gifts in a range of prices for men, women, and children. worcester-craftcenter.org/events/holiday-festival-of-crafts-331/

• Dec. 1, 1:30 p.m., Norwood Town Common, Holiday Tree Lighting. Celebration includes a reindeer dash, horse-drawn hayrides, and entertainment. The afternoon concludes when Santa and Mrs. Claus make their dramatic entrance and light up the Norwood Town Common at 3:45 p.m. Free.

• Dec. 1, 3:30 p.m., Hillcrest Village, Rockwood Rd., Norfolk. Santa Parade and Holiday on the Hill. Featuring King Philip HS Marching Band, Santa & Mrs. Claus, Rudolph, Santa's elves, Frosty the Snowman, the Grinch, Buddy the Elf, Norfolk police and fire departments, scouts, color guard, varsity and chief Cheerleaders, town officials, and more. Photos with Santa at 4 p.m., Norfolk Public Library community room, BYOCamera.

• Dec. 1, 4 p.m., United Presbyterian Church, 51 Cottage St., Whitinsville. Cookies and Carols. Kick off the Advent season with the singing of Advent and Christmas Carols led by a guest organ player (William Cudmore, who has played for the Woo Sox) and pianist (Eileen Straub, the church's Minister of Music). There will be activities for the kids and singing of seasonal songs. For more information, call 508-234-8220.

Sparkling Lights at The Breakers from Nov. 22 to Dec. 29

In its fifth season, Sparkling Lights at The Breakers in Newport, RI, will be on display from Nov. 22 through Dec. 29.

This event brings the magic of the holidays inside and outside this landmark Gilded Age mansion. You'll stroll along a half-mile-long path glittering with hundreds of thousands of holiday lights while music fills the winter air. See illuminated displays and sparkling surprises along the way. Tour the opulent interior of The Breakers, which is decorated in holiday splendor.

Enjoy holiday treats and adult beverages for purchase at the back terrace and The Breakers Welcome Center.

Timed tickets are required.

Source: www.newportmansions.org/events/sparkling-lights-at-the-breakers-2024/



A photo from Sparkling Lights at The Breakers in Newport, RI. The opulent mansion is decorated inside and outside during the holiday season. Photo credit: Nancy Jones of Norfolk

• Dec. 1, 7 p.m., Vaillancourt Folk Art's Blaxton Hall Theatre, Sutton. "A Christmas Carol" performed by his great-great grandson, Gerald Charles Dickens. The two-hour performance, including an intermission, will ignite the wonderment of the season through the immortal words of Dickens' classic ghost story. Gerald Charles Dickens adopts different voices, expressions, and mannerisms to portray each of the story's twenty-six characters in this acclaimed one-man show. Due to the complexity of a one-man performance, the show is not recommended for children under the age of 8 years old. Tickets range from \$35 - \$100. bit.ly/4h8aw42

• Dec 4, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Upton Public Library, Upton. Make a winter hat with paper, coloring materials, scissors, and cotton balls to make our winter creations. For ages 3+. No registration required. While supplies last.

• Dec. 5, Dean College, Awpie Way, Franklin. Holiday Lighting Ceremony to include lighting of a Christmas Tree, a menorah, and a Kwanzaa kinara. Entertainment and performances by Dean students. www.dean.edu

Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. Annual Jolly Holly Fair featuring local vendors, great food, Silent Auction, decorative greens, face-painting, photos with Santa. For more information, call 508-376-5034 or visit www.millissucc.org.

Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. John's Episcopal

Church, 237 Pleasant St., Franklin. Annual Christmas Fair. Wreaths, crafts, raffles, silent auction, gift baskets, baked items, Cookie Walk.

Dec. 7, 5 p.m., Millis Town Park Bandstand, 900 Main St., Millis. Santa's Parade and photos with Santa, plus Santa's Elves have a special treat for those who attend.

• Dec. 7, 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., Saint Joseph's Parish Center, 145 Holliston St., Medway. Santa Breakfast. Food, activities, crafts for kids, silent auction, pictures with Santa. Cost is \$11 for adults; \$8 for seniors and kids; kids under 3 are free. Family max is \$31. Pictures with Santa are \$20, and each family will receive a thumb drive with 3 to 5 photos on it.

• Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Church, 237 Pleasant St., Franklin. Christmas Fair. Fresh wreaths and greenery, crafts, raffle, silent auction, gift baskets, cookie walk, snack bar, and more. www.stjohnsfranklinma.org

• Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. Christopher Church, 950 W. Boylston St., Worcester. Christmas Festival featuring fun for the whole family. Games, raffles, food, and more. For more information, call 508-853-1492.

• Dec. 7, 9:30 a.m., Waters Farm Preservation, Sutton. Breakfast with Santa, sponsored by Sen. Ryan Fattman. Breakfast, photos, crafts. Free but reservations are required. <https://bit.ly/breakfastwith-santatickets>.

• Dec. 7, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., United Parish

of Upton, 1 Church St. Holiday Bazaar. Vendors, gift cards silent auction, fresh baked pie table, soul fuel café, raffles. lmuetkemeyer@earthlink.net

• Dec. 7, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., various locations, Sutton. Sutton Chain of Lights. Celebrate Christmas in historic Sutton with businesses, churches and organizations in town for the annual Christmas and holiday season celebration. Hop on a free trolley for rides to more than three dozen locations to do shopping, enjoy delicious food, kids' activities, hay rides and animals. The Sutton High School Band plays traditional carols and Christmas tunes at 5:30 p.m. on the Town Common, then head into the First Congregational Church for its famous Lake Ripple Roast Beef Dinner. Seating is from 5-7 p.m. with tickets available at the door. suttonchainoflights.weebly.com/

• Dec. 7, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Bancroft Memorial Library, Hopedale. A stop on the Winter Stroll. The library will display photographs of the library through the years as it celebrates its 125th anniversary. There will be treats and activities for kids in the Children's Room. The Friends of the Hopedale Library will have commemorative glass sun-catcher ornaments for sale along with books and homemade crafts. At 2 p.m., local acapella group Holiday Harmony Quartet will fill the Library with songs of the season while guests enjoy hot cocoa and mulled cider.

• Dec. 7, noon to 4 p.m., 6 Cherry St., Ashland. Downtown Holiday Stroll. Take

a delightful stroll through downtown to shop and enjoy holiday festivities! As you wander, you'll discover a plethora of local boutiques and pop-up shops, creating the perfect opportunity to check off your holiday shopping list. Also check out activities at The Corner Spot! Roast marshmallows at the fire pit, buy a wreath from the Boy Scouts, grab some cookies from the Girl Scouts, tell Santa what you want for Christmas, and enjoy hot chocolate, cider, and noodles from Doragon Eatery. And don't forget to collect stamps as you shop. www.facebook.com/events/8146977692075799/?_rdr

• Dec. 7, noon to 7 p.m., downtown Hopedale. Annual Hopedale Winter Stroll & Shop Hop. The stroll takes place at many stops along Hopedale St. and Dutcher St. including many historic buildings such as the Draper Gym, Hopedale Community House, Bancroft Memorial Library, Hopedale Unitarian Church, Union Evangelical Church, and the Little Red Shop Museum. Shop Hop list will also include stops all over Hopedale to visit, shop, eat, and enjoy. friendsofhistorichopedale.com/winter-stroll

• Dec. 7, 4:30 p.m., Auburn High School to City Hall, Auburn. Lighted Santa Parade & Tree Lighting. Live music begins at 4 p.m. at City Hall, parade begins at 4:30 p.m. After parade ends, at City Hall there will be a tree lighting, a visit from Santa, and live music. bit.ly/AuburnSantaParade-TreeLighting2024

• Dec. 7, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., St. Gabriel's Church Christmas Fair, 151 Mendon St., Upton. The fair has a wide variety of fresh balsam wreaths, cemetery baskets and table top arrangements. Raffles on theme baskets, gift certificates, a \$200 Amazon gift card and a Scratch Ticket raffle valued at over \$450 are available. A New Gift Boutique featuring new and "like new" items, "Old Time" Christmas decorations, Gems and Jewels and a Christmas Holiday decor section will have selections to interest everyone. The Bake Table offers an assortment of cookies, pastries, candy, jams and jellies. Enjoy coffee, tea, cold drinks and breakfast pastries or lunch with an assortment of finger roll sandwiches and chips.

• Dec. 7, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Annual Christmas Bazaar, St. Joseph's Parish Center, 68 Central Street, Auburn. Come and enjoy an old fashioned Christmas Bazaar and check out the Collectibles, Attic Treasures, Jewelry, Plants, Knit Goods, Holiday Décor, Toys, Candy & Baked Items and so much more! Take a chance on one of our many raffles. There is something for everyone! Free Admission. Plenty of parking available. Handicap accessible.

• Dec. 8, 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Placentino-Miller Cafetorium, 235 Woodland St., Holliston. Breakfast with Santa to benefit Holliston Lions Charities and the HMAPA. Tickets (cash or Venmo) are \$7 for ages 2-11 years, and \$10 for ages 12 and up. Under age 2 are free. If you bring a donation for Toys for Tots or the Holliston

Pantry Shelf, you will receive \$1 off photos. For more information, contact valwani@hotmail.com

• Dec. 8, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Grafton Common, Grafton. Grafton Celebrates the Holidays. Frost Stops, Craft & Vendor Fair, and other fun holiday happenings. www.grafton-ma.gov/809/Events-Activities

• Dec. 8, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Grafton High School, 24 Providence Rd., Grafton. Craft & Vendor Fair. Over 75 vendors featuring baked goods, home décor, jewelry, wood-working, and more. www.graftonrec.com

• Dec. 8 at 10:30 a.m., various locations, Millbury. 25th annual Millbury Chain of Lights, a town-wide event to celebrate the holidays with local food, shopping and entertainment! Enjoy nearly 40 stops in town for live music, holiday shopping, holiday figures like Buddy the Elf and the Grinch, raffles and food. Old-fashioned trolleys provide free transportation throughout the day. The event is sponsored by local businesses and concludes with a tree lighting and appearance by Santa Claus at the Millbury bandstand. www.facebook.com/millburychainoflights/

• Dec. 8, 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., Charles River Masonic Hall, 37 Cottage St., Medway. Breakfast with Santa plus free photo. Tickets for adults \$12, children \$8. Bring two non-expired canned goods for the Medway Food Pantry and receive \$1 off one adult breakfast. Also collecting tabs for Shriners Hospital Boston.

• Dec. 8, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 371 River St., Weymouth. Holiday Festival & Winter Sleigh Rides is an inclusive family event featuring sleigh rides through the park, live music, pictures with Santa, arts and crafts, refreshments, and more. arcsouthshore.org/news-events/event-calendar.html/event/2024/12/08/4th-annual-holiday-festival/466985

• Dec. 11, 6 p.m., Upton Public Library, Upton. Winter Paper Trees. Elementary school-aged patrons can share a winter story and then use construction paper and paint to create beautiful skylines of winter trees. For ages 5 to 12. Pre-registration is required.

• Dec. 12, 6 p.m., Upton Public Library. Gingerbread Clay Pots. Tweens and teens will use small terracotta pots, hot glue, and paint to make an adorable gingerbread man. For ages 10 to 16. Pre-registration required.

• Dec. 12, 7 p.m., Franklin Federated Church, 171 Main St., Franklin. "Blue Christmas," a service for those who are having a hard time with the "merry" aspect of Christmas, whether due to grieving or loneliness. The event includes candlelight and comforting songs, readings, and reflection.

Dec. 14, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Bethany House Hope Chest, 1134 Main St., Millis. Visit with Santa. Families are invited to visit with Santa, take a picture and receive a free special gift bag. <https://bethanyhouseministries.org>.

Dec. 14, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Medway Village Church, 170 Village St., Medway.

Medway Village Christmas Tree Lighting, includes carols and free refreshments. www.medwayvillage.org

• Dec. 14, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Maggiano's Little Italy, 4 Columbus Ave., Boston.

Autism Eats Brunch with Santa. The group will have their own private room and delicious buffet.

The event is entirely autism family friendly and all behaviors are welcome. Autism Eats gives autism families an opportunity to enjoy restaurant meals without the stress that often accompanies these outings. It is a way to spend time with other families in an autism-friendly non-judgmental environment. www.spedchildmass.com/event/autism-eats-brunch-with-santa-boston/?instance_id=25787

• Dec., 14, 10:30 a.m., First Congregational Church, 307 Boston Rd., Sutton Center. Jingle Jaunt 5K, must pre-register. Information available at howie189@verizon.net, fccs@suttonfirstchurch.net, and 508-865-0198.

• Dec. 14, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., MIT Endicott House, 80 Haven St., Dedham. Holiday Afternoon Tea. Enjoy a traditional afternoon tea in the splendor of our old-world chateau-style mansion, majestically decorated with holiday tidings of joy! Special culinary delicacies of the season to be served with warm holiday teas, returning the Endicott House to its days of former glory when Boston's notable family hosted their most elite guests. www.mitendicottthouse.org

• Dec. 14, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Douglas Winter

Stroll, Douglas. Do some holiday shopping, listen to carolers, explore the Museum and take part in special events, and treats at the Library (special guest appearances, too!), visit the Orchard, get your trees and wreaths, grab an app or meal...best of all, take in the holiday lights on Main Street up to the Common. For more information, email allyssamanyak@gmail.com.

• Dec. 18, 4 p.m., Hanover Theatre, 2 Southbridge St., Worcester. Sensory performance of "A Christmas Carol," one show only. This performance is intended for guests who are neurodiverse, have sensory sensitivities and need additional accessibility accommodations. * House lights are kept on but dimmed for the entirety of the performances and sounds are lower in volume and intensity. thehanovertheatre.org/event/a-christmas-carol-sensory-friendly/

• Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Valley Chapel, Uxbridge, Christmas Brass Concert. The Birch Alley Brass Ensemble, directed by William Moffett, is made up of 35 student and professional musicians from area towns including Uxbridge, Upton, Hopedale, Mendon, Northbridge, and Milford. Featuring Christmas music from around the world. Free. Public welcome.

• Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. Celebrate the Winter Solstice with Christmas in New England, hosted by the Grass Roots Coffeehouse and the Rockdale Congregational Church, 42 Fowler Road, Northbridge. Karen Wilber, Amy Gallatin, Roger Williams, JD Williams,

Dave Orlomoski, Krissy & Bob Dick will present a night of traditional, contemporary, original Christmas and Holiday/Seasonal songs. Prior to the show, come have a bowl of soup or chili, and at intermission have dessert. Proceeds go to the Church. Also we'll have our Cookie Walk at intermission. Buy a box for \$10 and fill it up with cookies baked by the congregation. Admission to the show is \$15 at the door only. Doors will be open at 6:30. Seating is at a first come/first serve basis.

• Dec. 24, 5 p.m., Franklin Federated Church, 171 Main St., Franklin. Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols" includes Bible passages about the Christmas story as well as non-Bible poems and reflections interspersed with Christmas carols. Worshipers will share the light, passing one candle to the next, in the final carol, "Silent Night."

• Dec. 30 and Dec. 31, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Veterans Memorial Building, 900 Main St., Room 130, Millis. December Break with Chess Wizards, for ages 5 to 12. Fee \$140. Enjoy tons of challenging chess lessons and exciting games. You'll improve your chess skills, meet new friends, and work out your most powerful muscle - your brain! Our camps include fun team chess games, recess time, snacks, tournaments, and puzzles. We include all materials. If you have any questions, please contact Kris Fogarty at kfogarty@millisma.gov or call 508-376-7050. Register at millisrecreation.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs

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A close-up of Santa Claus's hands holding a white list. He is wearing a red suit with white fur trim and white gloves. The background is a soft-focus red and white.

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