

HUBBARDSTON SENIOR NEWS
DECEMBER 2020
CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS FROM
AROUND THE WORLD



It's the most wonderful time of the year. For a couple of weeks every year the world takes on a magic glow, people seem merrier and even winter somehow feels cozy.

Whether you're celebrating a religious festival, like Hanukkah or Christmas, or a more secular occasion, you're sure to have your own selection of rituals or customs that make the holiday season so special. Our favorite Christmas traditions around the world are loud, proud, and guarantee oodles of festive fun.

[The Yule Lads, Iceland](#) The 13 days leading up to Christmas, 13 tricky troll-like characters come out to play in Iceland. The Yule Lads visit the children across the country over the 13 nights leading up to Christmas. For each night of Yuletide, children place their best shoes by the window and a different Yule Lad visits leaving gifts for nice girls and boys and rotting potatoes for the naughty ones.

[Germany](#) The Tradition of the Christmas Pickle. It's Christmas, a time of jingle bells, stockings, presents under the tree and family traditions. Celebrate the holidays with a time-honored, German tradition and have fun with your family for years to come! Following an Old World custom, parents waited until Christmas Eve to hide a small pickle ornament on the Christmas tree, tucking it out of sight among the branches. On Christmas morning, the first family member to spot the pickle was rewarded with a special blessing for the coming year and received the first present from under the tree.

[The Straw Goat of Sweden, and the pepparkakor!](#)

This Goat is a protection for the family and it is under the Christmas tree. The Yule goat was supposed to help deliver presents, so sometimes Santa Claus would ride a goat instead of his sleigh. Another tradition is the pepparkakor a very thin ginger crisp (cookies) served anytime especially with the very large Smorgasboard on Christmas Eve. Rice porridge has been served with a skin peeled Almond in the recipe. Whoever gets the almond gets married the following year.

[Canada](#) Every year, the Canadian province of Nova Scotia gives a Christmas tree to the US city of Boston. The tree is in appreciation for help given by Boston residents after a ship exploded in Halifax in 1917. In Quebec, people celebrate Epiphany on January 6th. One tradition is baking a cake with a bean in it, and whoever finds the bean is named the king or queen of the feast.

Sleepy Santa Hidden Picture

Can you find...





Claudia's "COVID" Christmas Challenge

Top 10 Ways

To Stay Together Even When You Are Far Apart!

1. "Elf Yourself" ~ make an elf ornament and put a picture of your face on it then send it to your family so they can hang it on their tree, and you can become a part of their festivities!
2. Choose a gift and wrap it in gold and mail it with a tag "You are as good as gold to me!"
3. Send an empty box with a tag that explains "It's not empty, I blew kisses into it until it was full."
4. 4-week puzzle contest ~ buy a Christmas puzzle put it together then divide the puzzle into 4 quarters and mail a quarter each week to your loved one so they can put it together in sections and be surprised!
5. Christmas recipe ~ share a recipe include in the box the recipe, ingredients (non-perishable) and a note that says, "The secret ingredient is always love"!
6. Handmade Card Contest ~ call your loved ones and challenge them to make their holiday card to you this year declare a winner and send a \$2 lotto ticket for the reward!
7. Secret Santa by Mail ~ write down names fold them so even you can't see and mail them to whomever wants to participate (*include yourself*) if you are tech savvy try the Elfster App.
8. Christmas movie night "Zoom", "Facetime", "Phone" ~ choose a night with a loved one and plan on watching your favorite Christmas classic together share your thoughts throughout the show.
9. Mr. Postman Competition ~ decorate your mailbox and share pictures with your family then take a vote. Who has the most creative, original or festive mailbox?
10. My personal **FAVORITE** the 12 Days of Christmas ~ pick 12 small gifts and mail or deliver them one at a time representing the 12 Days of Christmas.

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas. Find ways to stay connected with your loved ones during these complicated times. A heartfelt thank you for all of you who have volunteered in 2020.

**Most Importantly I wish you and your family a
Happy and Healthy New Year!**

Holiday Celebrations with Covid—An Uphill Battle

The year 2020 has been one of the most challenging and complex ones that most of us have had to live through. So much—and so many!—have been lost. Our daily routines have had to be changed radically. Many occasions and events that have always marked the changing seasons have been eliminated by the ever-present fears of spreading the Corona virus, or have had to be so modified that we barely recognize them. At this writing, people are still agonizing over decisions regarding their Thanksgiving celebrations, with some adamant about not changing their holiday guest list, and others planning to adhere to recommendations by pandemic experts and having smaller family groups to keep everyone safe.

Thankfully, there has been dogged determination and some incredibly creative thinking on the part of many who refuse to relinquish ALL the normalcy that has had to be shelved in order to keep us safe.

Throughout the pandemic, the Senior Center has continued to function and help our seniors, reaching out to those who have been isolated and letting them know they are still remembered. Seniors who used to come to the congregate meals and socialize, now are getting their meals delivered along with the shut-ins. Donated fresh vegetables are being delivered periodically along with the Country Hen eggs to supplement senior's food budgets. A drive-through plan still allows people to come to the Center and pick up their eggs and other donated foodstuffs while keeping them safe. Small gatherings have resumed; eight or so is the limit inside, but coffee and conversation is still being held at the center. Bingo is back, and the book club and watercolor painting still goes on, but with much smaller numbers.

The Council on Aging met recently, with everyone using "Zoom" on their computers so they could see and hear each other, and the main topic under discussion was whether or not to try to hold the Christmas Fair. There were so many negatives and opportunities for it to be a real spreader of Corona virus if it was held as it had always been, with tight quarters, limited air circulation, and too many people packed in 'cheek by jowl.'

Ironically, the circumstances that has made the fair a highlight of community connection each year, getting together before the holidays to buy gifts for one another, seeing friends not seen all year, and a chance to catch up with local news, are what made holding it an impossibility in its usual form. After some brainstorming, the Council decided not to let this beloved tradition be relegated to the dust heap, as so many of our special occasions have been this year. They decided to hold at least a semblance of the Christmas Fair, only in a very limited fashion. Severe restrictions had been imposed on the Planning Committee by the Board of Health, which feared that letting a large group gather at the Center could be a "Super Spreader" for the senior population. Sadly, the much-enjoyed tradition of serving Hunter Stew was among the many casualties of the restrictions. The Council decided to concentrate on just *two* fundraising efforts. The beautiful and imaginative gift baskets that Claudia had made for years will still be available, but in a new wrinkle, they will be shown on line on the town website, with photos depicting the contents of each one. Half the fun of the basket raffle used to be perusing the different baskets to determine what they hold, and then deciding which one should get a ticket, but former fair-goers must adapt to the demands imposed by "Mistress Covid," and play by the new rules. Instead of using tickets, the baskets will be offered via a silent online auction, with each basket going to the highest bidder. Lovely colorful and woodsy arrangements of greens, appropriate for cemetery baskets for the holiday decorating of graves, or as centerpieces, will be created instead of selling Christmas decorations. We welcome pre-orders please call the Senior Center at 978-928-1400 x211.

This won't be a Fair like other years, but we can still connect as a community and share some holiday spirit, which we all sorely need in these dark days. Come and support us, and even though we won't be able to see your smiles behind the masks, we hope you will share in the fun!

December Special Events

November 27th–December 5th - Viewing of Christmas Baskets by appointment at Senior Center

December 1st – make Christmas baskets for Holiday Fair

December 2nd – Book Club – “Educated” 11 a.m. – 12 noon

December 3rd – Blood Pressure Clinic

December 4th - Golden Agers Club 1 p.m.

December 5th– Basket Drawing

December 12th – Hay Ride – more details to follow

December 24 – 25 – Senior Center closed for Christmas

December 31st – Senior Center Closed

Weekly Events

Monday

9 a.m. -11 a.m. Coffee with Friends

12:3- p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Bingo Please call Flo to register 978-928-5113 10-person limit

Tuesday

9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Walking Club. Richard Hackett. Meet outside of Center.

MOC meals delivery

Wednesday

9 a.m. -11 a.m. Coffee with Friends

Thursday

9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Walking Club. Richard Hackett. Meet outside of Center.

MOC meal delivery

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Water Color painting 10-person limit – taught by Charles Gray

Friday

Closed

Christmas Baskets

We have beautiful Christmas baskets available. Suggested donation for tickets are \$5 for 15 or \$10 for 25. The tickets can be purchased at the Senior Center.

Holiday Arrangements

You can pre-order or drive by for purchase December 5-12.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Just a reminder to everyone it is now time to pay your dues. We have kept our dues at \$5.00 a year.

Our Christmas party is at Williams Restaurant at 12:30 PM, Wednesday, December 16, 2020. Any member wishing to attend please call Bev at 978-464-5041 by December 7th. Limited seating to 25 people due to the Corona virus.

BOOK CLUB

The Book Club will meet on Wednesday, December 2nd at 11:00 PM-12:00 PM. Anyone interested in joining please call the Senior Center. We are now reading Educated, by Tara Westover. A total success!

FRIENDS OF HUBBARDSTON

Did you know....

You do not have to be a senior and you do not have to be A Hubbardston resident to be part of the Friends of the Hubbardston Senior Center?

We can all work together to help out our seniors. The annual membership renewal is approaching soon in January. Please contact Kay Senckowski at 978-820-1360 home or cell 808-372-5167 or email me at :

wavegrl38@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you! Have a wonderful Christmas season.

Activites are subject to change due to new Coronavirus protocols.

SPACE FOR SALE

Great Medium to Reach the Senior Citizens!

CALL 603-601-8047

Email: seniornewsletter@aol.com

OR WRITE TO:

SENIOR NEWS PUBLICATIONS,
7 PHILBROOK TERRACE, HAMPTON, NH 03842



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Swedish Pepparkakor

These thin, crispy spice cookies are a Christmas tradition in Sweden. They're usually cut into heart, flower or star shapes. Dusting your cookie cutters with flour will make it easier to cut the dough. Ingredients:

- 3 3/4 cups all purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cloves
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg beaten
- 2 tablespoons dark corn syr
up



Directions:

Sift the flour together with the baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, ginger in a mixing bowl. Beat the butter together with the white and brown sugars in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Mix in the egg and corn syrup until smooth. Gradually stir in the flour mixture until evenly blended. Divide the dough into 4 equal portions and wrap tightly each with plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 1 hour, or overnight. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Lightly grease baking sheets Using 1 portion at a time, work on a floured surface and roll out dough to 1/8 inch thick. Cut into shapes with cookie cutter, and place 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake in preheated oven until set, about 5 minutes. Cool completely. Store in tightly covered tins.

NEWS FROM SHINE NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2020

Medicare Open Enrollment Ends December 7th!!

It is important to review your options EVERY year to be sure your insurance coverage is still the best for your needs. Open enrollment is the time you can change your medical and or prescription drug coverage for 2021. Every year, Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage (HMO, PPO) plans can change their premiums, co-pays, deductibles, formularies (list of drugs covered) and preferred pharmacies. In the case of Medicare Advantage Plans they can also drop providers from their Plan. **This year we are anticipating that there may be some new plans and choices for you to make. Along with these new plans and choices we expect there will be some aggressive marketing with an unusual high volume of plan sponsored meetings.**

REMEMBER!! YOU NEED TO BE SURE THAT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN AND OTHER PROVIDERS ARE COVERED IN THE PLANS NETWORK **BEFORE** YOU CHANGE TO A DIFFERENT MEDICARE PLAN. YOU SHOULD ALSO BE SURE YOUR MEDICATIONS ARE COVERED AS WELL.

THIS YEAR WE ARE STRONGLY URGING ALL BENEFICIARIES, TO SIGN UP FOR A "MyMedicare Account". HAVING THIS ACCOUNT WILL ALLOW US TO ASSIST YOU MORE COMPREHENSIVELY WITH YOUR CHOICES FOR 2021. INFORMATION ON SIGNING UP IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE www.shinema.org. JUST CLICK ON THE **MYMEDICARE** LINK.

CENTRAL MASS SHINE WEBSITE

Please visit us on the web at www.shinema.org. Our site has valuable general information and links to other agencies that can assist you with your insurance needs.

Trained SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Everyone) volunteers can help you! They offer free, unbiased, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to anyone on Medicare. OUR COUNSELORS ARE WORKING REMOTELY! Call your senior center and ask for a SHINE phone appointment.

HOW TO SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS FOR THE MART VAN

Call or leave a message for Sharon at 207-710-1777 or 978-928-1400 ext 210

If she does not answer, please leave a message.

Your call will be returned within 24 hours (excluding weekends).

Please give her the following information:

- Time and location you need to be picked up
- Time and location of your appointment
- Time your appointment should be finished
- A phone number where she can reach you

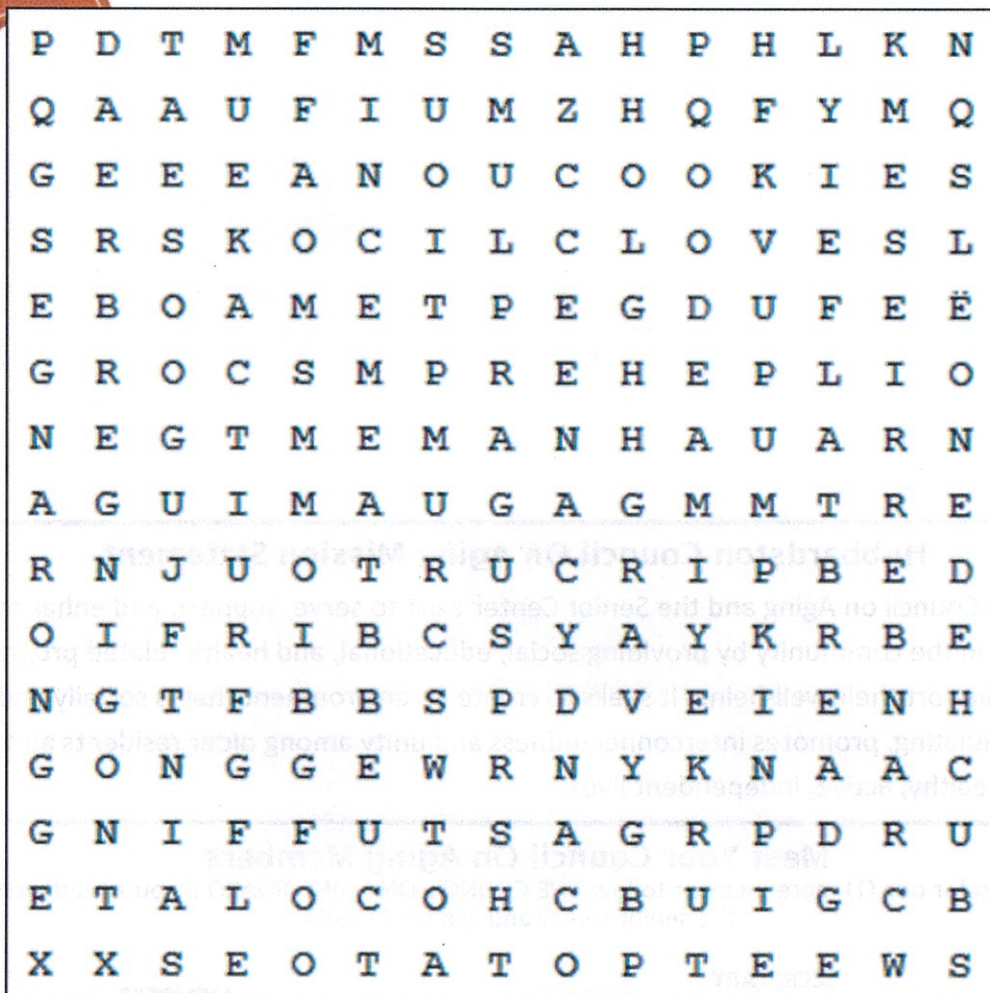
Medical Appointments: Available as needed Please note: If the appointment is for surgery, the client needs to find other transportation home. Van drivers cannot be responsible for a client after having any major medical procedures.

Shopping: Available as needed. Anyone wanting to attend meals at the Senior Center.

Please call ahead. The Van driver will give you a ride to the Senior Center and then back home free of charge. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Mart Van please call Sharon @207-710-1777 or 978-928-1400 X211 **Please remember the Mart Van will not be running when school is closed due to weather or holidays.**



CHRISTMAS TREATS



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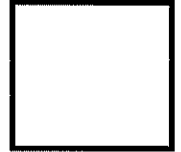
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Hubbardston Senior Center

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Hubbardston Council On Aging Mission Statement

The Hubbardston Council on Aging and the Senior Center exist to serve, support, and enhance the lives of all senior citizens in the community by providing social, educational, and health related programs and activities which support their well-being. It seeks to create an environment that is socially and intellectually stimulating, promotes interconnectedness and unity among older residents and encourages them to pursue healthy, active, independent lives.

Meet Your Council On Aging Members

We are still looking for one (1) more member to join THE COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD if you are interested please call the senior center and ask for Claudia.

DIRECTOR

Claudia Provencal
Center 978-928-1400 x 211.
Please leave a message
Home 978-928-5195
coa@hubbardstonma.us

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