

Fun activities for the winter

By Rachel Robinson
Staff Writer

The winter season is just around the corner, and with that brings lots of snow, hot chocolate, and many fun activities. When you think of winter, many things may come to mind. What people in Spokane don't realize is that there is more to do than just snow-board or ski here. This year, try some new things. If you don't have any activities you've wanted to try, then this may be helpful to you.

The Campbell House- This house is a turn-of-the-20th-century home right here in Spokane. The house was built by architect Kirtland K. Cutter. There are 45 minute tours available. It's decorated for the holidays from November 27, 2009 through January 2, 2010.

Ice Skating & Sledding- There are public ponds around

Spokane that freeze over in the winter that are easily accessible. There are ponds on Cannon Hill and Manito. There is also the Ice Palace (for adults 13+, it costs \$4.25, and for youth \$3.25) and Roller Valley that are great for skating. For sledding, there are many places all over Spokane that are great for sledding. There are big hills in Manito Park that are perfect for going fast. Hangman Hills Golf Course is also a good location for sledding. The hills aren't as steep, but you can build your own snow jumps and get some air!

A movie night and hot cocoa- You can have so much fun just staying inside on a cold, snowy winter night with a group of friends, significant other, or your family. Pick a genre of movies that you and your group would enjoy or don't usually watch (comedy, horror, action, romance, or

thriller), make some hot cocoa and gather up friends or family, and you've got yourself a cozy, fun night.

First Night Spokane- A festival of the arts right here in Spokane! Not only that, but it has an awesome fireworks show, and there is more entertainment you can see in one night than you could see in a week at a low price! It only costs \$12 to go if you buy your pass before New Year's Eve, and if you buy your pass the night of its still only \$15.

Game Night- Everyone loves board games, but with all the technology of xbox and Wii, it seems people don't play them as much anymore. Invite friends over and have a few board games ready to play. Monopoly, Sorry!, Cranium, or Scattergories are all great group games to play. Prepare some snacks and drinks, and it's a guaranteed good night.

Chocolate Apothecary- is a great place to find gelato, chocolate, and coffee. It's open Monday to Thursday from 9 to 7; Friday close varies; Sunday - 12 to 5. It's a great place to indulge in sweets and drink espresso as well.

These are just a few of the many things that you can do at little or no cost right here in Spokane. If none of these things sound like something you would want to try, then get creative and think of things that you've always wanted to try or just really enjoy. No matter your interests, there's something out there that you'll enjoy doing!

For more ideas you can visit The Official Site of the Spokane Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau (<http://www.visitspokane.com/travel-trade/itinerary-ideas/winter-fun/>).

The Power of a Wish

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"Share the Power of a Wish" is what the Make-A-Wish foundation lives by. Since 1985, over 8,000 wishes have been

granted in just about every state. Make-A-Wish is a foundation which helps grant wishes

for children fighting cancer. The child is able to pick anything that they want and the Make-A-Wish foundation makes it happen. Many doctors say that the best medicine is a wish granted. Children are granted one wish, anything from going on a shopping spree to visiting a Disney theme park. 46% of children choose a Disney theme park or a Disney cruise.

There are many ways that you can contribute to this foundation; one way is to jump on the internet and visit their site, <http://www.wish.org/help/donate>. On this site, you can choose how much you would like to donate. When donating you can let your donation be private. Meaning that when you donate money you have the opportunity

for your donation to be anonymous or you can put a name with your donation.

Washington's Make-A-Wish foundation is teamed up with Alaska, Montana, and Northern Idaho. Over the past year they

have granted 307 wishes. This year they plan on granting around 327 wishes.

"Make-A-Wish has chosen to focus on children because they want the children to have a chance at life. Life can be un-

fair and by giving the child something to look forward to makes the fight seem worth it," said Bonelli, Spokane's Make-A-Wish receptionist.

Another way is to go to Macy's and ask to write a letter to Santa, which is only offered around Christmas time. For every letter that is written, one dollar is donated to Make-a-Wish. The wish goes to a child that has been in the hospital fighting for their life.

Giving money is not the only way to help. You can donate flying miles or building materials. To find out more ways to give to Make-a-Wish, you can visit your local Macy's or check out their home website at www.wish.org.



Stress, depression and the holidays: 9 tips for coping

By: Carlie Dickson
Staff writer

The holidays can be a very stressful time of year for many reasons like you don't have enough money to buy the presents you would like to give or you are having family over and your house isn't the way you would like it to look. Here are a few tips to help you become a little more prepared.

1. Listen to your feelings- if you have lost someone in your family, or you can not be with your loved ones, it is quite normal to feel sad or depressed, but you cannot make yourself feel happy just because it is the holiday season.

2. Be realistic- the holidays do not have to be perfect or be like the past years. Families change and grow up and may need to change traditions. For example, if your children, grandchildren or you cannot come home for the holidays find ways to celebrate it together such as photographs and e-mails.

3. Set aside differences- if you do not get along with a family member or a friend try to accept them as they are or treat them with kindness even if they don't get along with you.

4. Stick to a budget- before you go shopping for food or gifts decide on how much you can afford to spend. And stick

to that budget! Do not try to buy someone's happiness with a lot of gifts.

5. Plan ahead- set a specific day to shop, bake and visit friends. Plan your menus and then take it when you go shopping.

6. Learn to say "no"- saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling overwhelmed. Friends and family will understand if you can't participate in every activity or project.

7. Don't abandon healthy habits- don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Over-eating adds to stress and guilt. Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so you don't eat so many sweets.

8. Take a breather- make some time for yourself by spending 15 minutes alone without distractions. Take a walk at night gazing at the stars or listen to some soothing music.

9. Seek help if needed- you try to make the holidays happy for everyone, but if you can't seem to feel happy, find someone you can talk to about issues you are having. Keeping things bottled up inside isn't a good thing to do to yourself.

Take control of the holidays don't let the holidays become something you don't want to do. If you follow these few tips then your stress level won't be as high.

Christmas baking a great family tradition

Erica Patterson
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Who can celebrate the joyous holiday season without eating a few homemade sweets? When most of you think of Christmas season, you might think of Christmas baking. Most of the well-known Christmas baking around America includes cookies, candy canes, pumpkin bread, or even fruit cake. One little Christmas ritual I'm sure a lot of families do around this time of year is Christmas baking. Each Christmas, my mother and I do lots of Christmas baking together. Some of the cookies below are just some of the delicious cookies and treats that my family makes.

Peanut Butter Blossoms- These cookies are probably my favorite out of all the cookies we make. These cookies are so easy to make and have a delicious blend of the classic chocolate- peanut butter taste that we all love. To make these cookies, you basically follow the same recipe as peanut butter cookies. The only difference is that you get to add a scrumptious little Hershey's kiss in the middle when they come right out of the oven. I recommend that you should add these cookies to your baking list if

you are a chocolate-peanut butter fan.

Mexican Wedding Cakes- A little well-known Christmas cookie known as Mexican Wedding Cakes have a sweet and settle taste with a little chewiness to them. The dough mostly contains butter and flour with toasted pecans (or whatever nut you want) added to it. These cookies might take a little more time than those peanut butter blossoms because you have to chill the dough for awhile before baking them. When it does come time to bake, they are rolled into little balls and stay in the oven for about 18-22 minutes (depending on what your recipe tells you). After they are done and cooled off, these little cookies are lathered in powdered sugar and await to melt in your mouth!

Peppermint Bark- An all-time classic taste of fresh cool peppermint. This treat is very simple to make and totally worth it in the end. To put this simply, you only need about 15-20 crushed candy canes or peppermint candies (whichever you prefer) and a lot of

baker's real white chocolate. In a double-boiler or on the stovetop, melt the white chocolate until it is thick and creamy. After the chocolate's melted, prepare a large cookie sheet(s) lined with aluminum foil or wax paper. Arrange the crushed candy canes evenly throughout the cookie sheet and

pour the white chocolate into the cookie sheet. After that, let the bark cool for a few hours or until the chocolate has hardened. Cut or break into even pieces and enjoy!

Christmas Brownies - As non-Christmas as it sounds, my mother and I like to make

your everyday brownies with our baking. Adding Christmas sprinkles and colors to the frosting are what make these brownies scream "Happy Holidays!" Any brownie recipe works and you can also add nuts if you prefer. Just be creative; do whatever you want to your brownies.

Fudge- Who doesn't love the soft and creamy melting sensation that fudge gives our taste buds? When making fudge, you need to know exactly what kind of fudge you are going to make. Popular

flavors of fudge include chocolate, peanut butter, white chocolate, chocolate peanut butter, etc. Most people like to add pecans or walnuts to their fudge, which is what my mother and I do. You will need have one or two bags of the chocolate chips you chose, sweetened condensed milk, and a double-boiler or pot. Put the chocolate chips and milk into your pot and heat on 5-7. You want to keep a low, yet hot enough temperature so that you don't burn the mixture. Be sure to always keep an eye on the fudge and to stir it regularly so that it doesn't burn or stick to the bottom and sides of the pot. After the fudge is melted, pour the mixture into a pan of your choice (13x9 cake pan, bread pan, etc.) lined with clear plastic wrap. Put the fudge into the refrigerator for about an hour or until the fudge is hardened. Cut into pieces and enjoy!

I hope that after you have read about some of the things my family bakes, you will consider making your baking list and checking it twice. Baking can be a great way to spend time with the ones you love and to enjoy the tastes of the holidays. Have a great Christmas and happy holidays!



Winter Holidays of many religions

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Christmas isn't the only holiday during the winter season. With the holiday season come Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Solstice, along with, Christmas. Each of these holidays has symbols that are well known to the whole world, and each symbol has a special meaning.

Christmas' most well known symbol is the Christmas tree. The Christmas tree originated in 722 when Saint Boniface encountered some pagans who were about to sacrifice a child under a big oak tree. He cut down the tree to prevent the sacrifice and a Fir tree had grown at the base of the oak. He told everyone that this tree was a holy tree, its branches pointing to heaven. He said this tree was a symbol of the Christ child and a



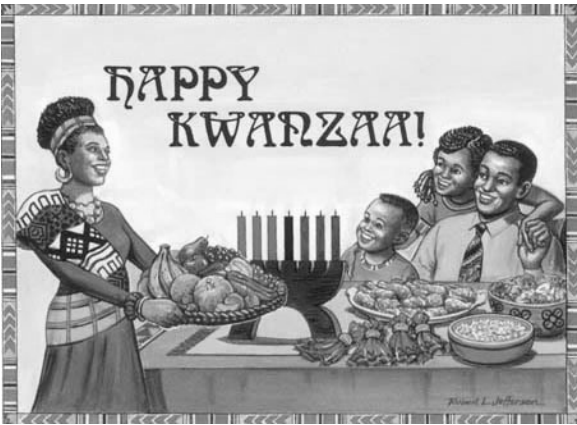
symbol of His promise to eternal life. Now-a-days, the Christmas tree is bought by families in the month of December as decoration—strung with lights and adorned with ornaments. Whether it's a live tree, or an artificial one, it's a symbol of the holidays and merriment.

The Yule log, which is another Christmas tradition, is actually said to be the oldest known tradition. The Yule is a representation of "no work" for as long as the log burns. The use of the log started in Scandinavia as a Solstice holiday tradition. It was a representation of the celebration of the rebirth of the sun, since in

the winter, it's the darkest time of year.

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday, which lasts eight days in the month of December. Families that celebrate Hanukkah open a gift each night for the holiday. The most important symbol is the menorah—an eight-branched candelabra. Each night, one of the candles is lit. Prayers and singing accompany the candle lighting. The menorah dates back to 165 B.C.E. when the Jews proclaimed victory over the Syrians. When they got back to the Temple, only a small flask of oil was left to like the menorah, which should have only allowed for one

day of burning, but miraculously allowed for eight. That is why the celebration lasts eight days. Kwanzaa is another holiday in December that is celebrated originally by Africans and is still continued to be celebrated by descendants of the original African culture. There are quite a few well-



known symbols that are recognized in this celebration. There is the Kikombe cha Umoia (The Unity Cup), which is symbolic of the principle and practice of unity, which is said to make all else possible. Like Hanukkah, Kwanzaa also has a candle holder known as the Kinara. It's symbolic of the African heritage's roots. The seven candles (Mishumaa Saba), which are lit one day at a time for the number of days that Kwanzaa lasts, are also a representation of the Seven Principles—the set of values with African people are urged to live by to keep their lives in their own image.

Whether you have a symbol(s) that define your holidays or not is up to you because that is not what is important during the holidays; No matter your religion or your choice of celebration, the holidays are a time for family gatherings and spending time with the ones you love, and not what defines that time.

