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Holiday Happenings

Thursday, December 7

Sayville Menorah Lighting – Candle lit prayers, music, Hannukah gelt and potato latkes at Sayville Chamber House, 6 p.m. Visit sayvillechamber.com.

Friday, December 8

Handel's The Messiah – The Choral Society of the Moriches present this traditional and treasured choral performance live at The United Methodist Church of Patchogue, 10 Church St., Patchogue, 7:30 p.m. Good will offering. Visit www.moricheschoral.org.

Holiday Light Spectacular – Join Brookhaven Town at Holtsville Ecology Site for a walk-through festive lighted display, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays now through Dec. 17. No tickets at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.brookhavenNY.gov/Holiday. For information, call 631-451-5330.

Saturday, December 9

Holiday Spectacular on Ice – Capture the magic of the season as the stage at Bellport's The Gateway Theatre is transformed into an ice rink for this family-friendly musical skating show starring Nancy Kerrigan. Shows through Jan. 1. Tickets and showtimes at TheGateway.org or by calling 631-286-1133.

Senior Citizen Holiday Luncheon – Holiday party at the Bellport Country Club, noon to 4 p.m. \$49 includes a full 3-course lunch with unlimited wine, beer, and soda, and live music by The New Serenaders. For reservations, call BCC at 631-286-4227.

Bay Area Symphony – The BAFFA Symphony Orchestra will perform "Classically Czech-ing Out the Winter Season," at Sayville Middle School, 2 p.m. For tickets and information, visit www.baffa.org.

Sunday, December 10

Holiday Gathering & Open House – Join the Greater Patchogue Historical Society at the GPHS Museum, lower level of the Carnegie Library, 160 W. Main Street, Patchogue, 1-4 p.m. Call 631-804-9269, find them on Facebook, or email gphsociety@yahoo.com.

Winter Concert – The Babylon Chorale will ring in the winter season with a concert of holiday music at St. Peter's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church, 500 S. Country Rd., Bay Shore, 4 p.m. Advance sales: Adults, \$20;

students and seniors, \$14. Tickets at the door: Adults, \$10; students and seniors, \$19. Children, \$10. To purchase tickets, visit www.babylonchorale.org or email info@babylonchorale.org.

Wednesday, December 13

Senior Citizen Holiday Luncheon – Holiday party at the Bellport Country Club, noon to 4 p.m. \$49 includes a full 3-course lunch with unlimited wine, beer, and soda, and live music by The New Serenaders. For reservations, call BCC at 631-286-4227.

Saturday, December 16

Brunch with Santa – Join Kiwanis Club of the Islips at AMVETS Hall, Post 18, 141 Carleton Ave., East Islip, 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Music, food, raffles, and pictures with Santa. Tickets: Adults, \$25; kids, \$15; kids under 5 and veterans, free. For information, call Sandy at 631-882-4994 or email sandyflandina@hotmail.com.

Fundraiser: Breakfast With Santa – Join the Islip-based Dance Fundraising Committee at Applebees, 2550 Sunrise Hwy., East Islip, 8-10 a.m. Advance tickets \$20. At the door, \$25. Includes full breakfast, beverages, photos with Santa, storytime and face painting. Bring an unwrapped gift to donate to Toys for Tots. To buy tickets, visit <https://bit.ly/BreakfastWithSantaDFC>. Call 516-300-3569.

Holiday House Tour – Sayville Historical Society's annual holiday event features 6 local homes decorated for the holidays and open for guests, 2-5 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased in advance at Marc Williams Furniture, Sayville Running Company, and Tiny Raccoon Books. Call 631-563-0816 or email sayvillehistorical@gmail.com.

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas – The staff of the Long Island Advance, Suffolk County News, and Islip Bulletin wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas!

Of Note ...

Girl Scout's Holiday Light Show – Visit the Suffolk County Girl Scout's magical holiday walk-through display at Southaven County Park in Yaphank, Thursdays through Sundays until Dec. 30. For tickets and information, visit www.gssclightshow.com.

Operation Christmas Senior – Now through Dec. 11, Asm. Joseph DeStefano's office will be collecting toiletries, blankets, pajamas, puzzles, non-slip socks, denture cleaner and adhesive, shampoo, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, and other gifts for Voices for Seniors. Drop off donations at 3245 Route 112, Building 2, Suite 6, Medford. For information call DeStefano's office at 631-207-0073.

Holiday Light Spectacular – Brookhaven Town festive lighted walk-through display at Holtsville Ecology Center, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, Dec. 8-17. Admission: Adults, \$10, children under 12, seniors, and veterans, \$8. Ages 3 and under, free. Online tickets only. Visit www.BrookhavenNY.gov/Holiday. Call 631-451-5330.

Gift Wrap and Gift Bag Swap – Instead of throwing out unwanted but still usable gift wrap or gift bags, now through Dec. 23, bring them to Sayville Library's swap. While you're here, pick up some new to you gift wrap or gift bags for your holiday gift giving. Call 631-589-4440.

Holiday Food Drive – Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library will be collecting food through Dec. 15 for members of the community in need. A donation box will be in the lobby of the library. For donation suggestions, call 631-665-4350 or visit www.bsbwlibrary.org.

Holiday Toy Drive – Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library is partnering with Family Service League to collect new, unwrapped toys for children birth through 18 years for local families in need. They request toys be priced between \$5-\$10 and dropped off at the Children's Reference Desk by Dec. 15. Call 631-665-4350.

Holiday Green Screen – Sayville Library is offering patrons a chance to take holiday photos in front of one of their many holiday-themed green screens, Saturday, Dec. 2, 2-4 p.m. or Monday, Dec. 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Register online or call 631-589-4440, ext. 305.

Toy Drive – Now through Dec. 15, drop off new, unwrapped toys for ages birth to 18 years of age at the donation bin in the Children's Room of the Sayville Library. Items will be given to Long Island Cares and other charitable organizations. Call 631-589-4440.

Dining out for the holidays

For some people there is no better way to celebrate the holidays than to spend time with friends and loved ones around the dinner table. Although cooking and dining at home are popular this time of year, some celebrants may not have the time or the inclination to host the holidays at home. Preparing and serving holiday meals to guests can be time-consuming. In fact, many holiday hosts and hostesses lament that hosting duties can compromise the time they get to spend with the ones they love each year.

Dining out is one way to save time and free up more moments for interacting without the pressure of food shopping, cooking and cleanup. The following are some tips for families who opt to dine out for the holidays.

Confirm restaurants are open. Many restaurants close on major holidays to enable staff to spend time with their own family members. This may be more so for Thanksgiving and Christmas than with week-long celebrations like Chanukah and Kwanzaa. Verify with restaurants if they have holiday hours, and more importantly, that they will be open on the day you will be dining out. Christmas Day falls on a Monday in 2023, which typically is a day that many

restaurants are closed.

Make a reservation. If you find an establishment open for the holiday, reserve a table early. Also, some restaurants may ask for a deposit on reservations to ensure you show up.

Expect some menu changes. To account for reduced staff or even ease in meal service, some restaurants may opt for a price-fixed holiday menu or a limited menu from their typical offerings. Some may showcase a seasonal menu that caters to holiday favorites they think diners will expect. There also may be fewer substitutions or customizations allowed.

Avoid peak dining times. Restaurants may fill up after church services or around dinner time. Consider reserving your table for a less popular hour to reduce the propensity for long waits or being rushed out.

Be patient. Kitchens can get backed up on a holiday, and it may take longer than expected for food to make it out to tables. Cut kitchen employees and servers a break as they are likely frazzled. They are trying their best to service all patrons.

Plan to tip generously. It's the season of giving, and you should make sure

you take care of your server. You can make the day even brighter with some words of gratitude and a nice gratuity.

Pace alcoholic beverages. It's normal to enjoy some spirited drinks during holiday celebrations. It's easier to indulge a bit more at home and you do not need to get behind the wheel. When dining out, do not overdo things, and have a plan for who will be driving home.

Dining out during the holidays is a possibility with practical planning. ■



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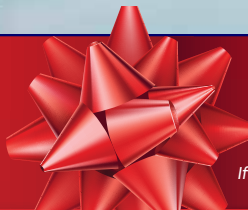
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- 12/14 7pm Yoga Nidra
- 12/16 2pm Joyful Workshop with Sunshine
- 12/17 12pm Kids Yoga Mindfulness Workshop (drop off)
- 12/21 7pm Winter Solstice Pranic Breath Workshop with Hardy & Sunshine
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Last minute holiday shopping tips.

Though devotees of early holiday shopping do not hesitate to point out how convenient it can be to get all their gifts long before the arrival of Chanukah and Christmas, scores of shoppers still wait until the last minute to begin checking names off their lists. It might be beneficial to shop early, but it's easy to procrastinate.

Last-minute holiday shopping might not be as enjoyable a custom as family dinners or office parties, but scrambling to find the right gift in the waning days of the holiday season is a familiar situation for millions of shoppers. Shoppers who find themselves with some last-minute shopping on their to-do list can utilize these tips to make the frantic search for the right gift go smoothly.

Work with store personnel. If a shopping list is lengthy but the time before the holiday arrives is dwindling, speak directly with store personnel, who may offer suggestions but can also help shoppers find what they need. In-person shoppers can speak with a store clerk immediately upon entering a store, while online shoppers can utilize chat functions on retailers' websites for help finding something that's in stock and deliverable before the big day.

Expect competition. Though online shopping would seemingly make last-minute shoppers relics of a bygone era, that was not really the case in 2022. A survey of more than 1,000 shoppers conducted by the retail industry publisher Best Black Friday found that just about 16 percent of consumers estimated they would finish their shopping during the week of Christmas. Last-minute shoppers who want to avoid crowds should consider shopping during off-peak hours, such as on weekday mornings and afternoons when most people are working.

Shoppers who find themselves with some last-minute shopping on their to-do list can utilize these tips to make the frantic search for the right gift go smoothly.

Shop local. Last-minute shoppers may be flocking to malls and busy downtown shopping districts as they hurry to get gifts for friends and family members with different interests. Shopping at small, local businesses can help last-minute shoppers avoid such crowds. And with less on their shelves and smaller storage rooms, small business owners and their staff also tend to know their inventories inside and out. That can ensure a shopping trip is not spent wandering numerous aisles in search of the right gift.

Bag it, don't wrap it. Shoppers who wait until the very last minute likely won't have time to wrap all the gifts they pick up for loved ones. Gift bags conceal gifts just as well as wrapping paper, but it takes a fraction of the time to place a gift in a bag as it does to wrap it in paper. Quality gifts bags also are reusable, which can appeal to anyone looking to create less waste this holiday season.

Don't forget food. If it's truly impossible to find something late in the season and a gift card feels too impersonal, give the gift of food. Adult recipients also can be gifted a bottle of wine or another spirit that can be enjoyed during a holiday meal. Shoppers skilled in the kitchen can whip up a homemade treat, while those without such talents can give a store-bought delicacy or even a subscription to a monthly food club or service.

Last-minute shopping may look different than it used to, but scores of shoppers still wait to buy gifts for their loved ones. A handful of strategies can simplify last-minute shopping.



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\$15⁰⁰
PER DOZ

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the Half Shell**

w/ cocktail
sauce &
lemon

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PER DOZ



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From lush, leafy greens to seasonal vegetables, medicinal and culinary herbs, Stemmler Farms' also collaborates with certified organic farms across Long Island to expand our product range and offer an even wider array of fresh, locally sourced goods.

One of our standout services is our subscription plans for Farm Boxes. Stemmler takes weekly harvests and expertly packages them for subscribers, farm to table for every household, local chefs and restaurants.

For local chefs and restaurants, Stemmler Farms is a trusted source for wholesale herbs and microgreens. The quality and flavor of their products have earned the respect of culinary experts throughout Long Island.

Visit our charming retail barn. Not only homegrown produce but also a carefully curated selection of locally crafted items, such as honey, jams, olive oil and freshly baked goods. Community members can support local businesses while indulging in the best that the region has to offer.

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A wide array of Christmas greens, decorative wreaths, cemetery cones and holiday gift baskets that showcase the best of local goods.

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Sunday hours on December 17th and December 24th for last-minute gifts & pick-up orders**

Festive films that make for a perfect family movie night this season

Family movie night makes for a great way for families to bond and enjoy some relaxing time together. Such nights are a tradition in households across the globe, and they can even become a fun way for extended families to celebrate the holiday days together. When hosting overnight guests this holiday season, hosts can plan a family movie night and line up any of these family-friendly holiday movies.

“A Christmas Story” (1983): This beloved classic based on the writings of author Jean Shepherd focuses on young Ralphie Parker and his humorous family. That family includes his father, played to much laughs by legendary actor Darren McGavin. All Ralphie wants for Christmas is a coveted Red Ryder air rifle, and generations of fans have enjoyed watching this film to see if Ralphie’s dream comes true.

“Home Alone” (1990): Not unlike “A Christmas Story,” this instant classic devotes much of its story to a young boy. Eight-year-old Kevin McAllister (Macauly Culkin) awakens to an empty house after his parents forgetfully leave

him behind as they depart on a holiday trip to Paris with their extended family. That proves to be bad news for bungling burglars Harry (Joe Pesci) and Marv (Daniel Stern), who are outwitted by Kevin at every turn.

“Elf” (2003): Middle-aged Buddy (Will Ferrell) grew up in the North Pole believing he is an elf, despite being significantly larger than the kind-hearted elves who raised him. Upon learning he is not an actual elf, Buddy is determined to reunite with the father (James Caan) he’s never known. Hilarity ensues as the innocent Buddy ends up in the big city in search of his father.

“It’s a Wonderful Life” (1946): Among the most beloved holiday movies ever made, this classic stars Jimmy Stewart as George Bailey, a devoted family man who set aside his own big-city dreams to save the family business and, ultimately, his small hometown of Bedford Falls. Lamenting some bad luck that leaves him on the cusp of financial ruin, George wishes he’d never been born, only to be shown by an especially kind and patient angel-in-training (Henry Travers) how much worse off Bedford Falls and its residents might have been had George Bailey never existed.

A holiday movie night makes for a fun, family-friendly evening when hosting overnight guests during this special time of year. ■





Sunflower CAFÉ — A N D — BAKERY



Sunflower Café & Bakery opens Tuesday, December 12th

Sunflower Café & Bakery is happy to open its doors and make a home here in the Bayport community. Our family welcomes you to a warm, inviting atmosphere, carrying on the tradition of a family-owned restaurant on the corner of Bayport Avenue and Montauk Highway. Our cuisine, cookies and pastry are infused with herbs to delight and awaken the senses. We look forward to developing a personal connection with our neighbors. We have not only made our home here, but we support local farmers, fisherman, and businesses. Tables are where life happens, we hope to see you at ours!

**We are open for Lunch and dinner
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We have a private room available for small gatherings of 25 guests.

Happy Holidays, cheers!

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- HONEY CRISP AND BABY BEET SALAD \$50**
Arugula, beet tops, walnut, purple ninja radishes, feta-yogurt, sage and citrus dressing
- KALE CAESAR SALAD \$50**
Red onion, garlic bread crumb, manchego cheese
- SAFFRON SAUSAGE RICE BALLS \$55**
Mozzarella, basil, parsley, tomato sauce
- CHIPOTLE CHERRY BBQ MEATBALLS \$55**
Beef, pork, breadcrumb, herbs
- CHICKEN CORDON BLEU BITES \$55**
Honey mustard
- STUFFED MUSHROOMS \$55**
Tomato, spinach, garlic, olives, tomato, herbs, parmigiana
- COUNTRY CHICKEN LIVER PATE \$55**
Crostinis, mustard, capers

ENTREES

- POULTRY POT PIE \$85**
Chicken, turkey, cranberry, onion, celery, carrot, parsnip, herbs, puff pastry.
- HORSERADISH CARAMELIZED ONION SLICED STEAK \$90**
Sirloin beef, rosemary roasted potatoes, carrots, brussels, au poivre demi

- RED WINE BRAISED SHORT RIBS \$90**
Caramelized onions, roasted leeks, squash and potato mash, red wine tomato demi, herbs
- LONG ISLAND DUCK CASSOULET \$90**
Braised white beans, toasted garlic, breadcrumbs, onions, rosemary, bacon
- BUTCHER BOLOGNESE \$75**
Rigatoni pasta, ground beef, pork and veal, ricotta, parmesan
- SAUSAGE & PEPPERS \$65**
House-made Italian sausage, bell peppers, onions
- PAPRIKA LEMON PEPPERED CHICKEN \$70**
Battered chicken breast, lemon glaze, herbs

SIDES

- GARLIC MASHED POTATOES \$50**
- BRAISED WHITE BEANS \$50**
Garlic breadcrumbs, rosemary, bacon
- APPLE VANILLA GLAZED BRUSSELS \$55**
- MAC & CHEESE \$50**
Bacon breadcrumbs
- MUSHROOMS AND ASPARAGUS \$50**
Garlic, ricotta salata
- SWEET POTATO MASH \$50**



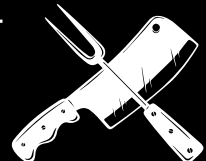
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Inspiring ideas for last-minute holiday shoppers

It's unlikely that anyone aspires to be a last-minute holiday shopper. Putting off holiday shopping until the last minute can make for a stressful home stretch to the season, and there's no guarantee store shelves won't already be picked clean or that gifts purchased online will arrive on time.

Despite how unappealing last-minute shopping can be, it's still a fact of life for millions of holiday shoppers. As the clock winds down this holiday season, shoppers can look to these ideas for inspiration.

Gift cards: Gift cards may never earn a distinction as the most sentimental item to give a loved one during the holiday season, but they are surprisingly sought-after. In fact, a survey from the National Retail Federation found that 54 percent of participants identified gift cards as the most-wanted gift of the 2022 holiday season. Chain retailers, small businesses and restaurants are among the many establishments that sell gift cards, so shoppers are bound to find a card to please anyone on their shopping list.

Food/beverage: The holiday season is a popular time to indulge in some great food and wash it down with a favorite wine or another adult beverage.

That makes food and beverages a great holiday gift. Shoppers can take a loved one out to a favorite restaurant, prepare a homemade treat or purchase a favorite dish from a local specialty grocery store or eatery. Pair the food with an appropriate beverage and this accessible last-minute gift idea is sure to be a hit.

Tickets: Tickets to a movie, sporting event, live theater performance, or concert are another gift idea that likely won't be gobbled up by early bird shoppers. People of all ages enjoy experiences, and a 2022 survey from the travel booking platform GetYourGuide found that 50 percent of survey respondents indicated they would enjoy tickets to a concert or show.


Books: Books make an ideal holiday gift for everyone from young kids to grandparents. Traditional print books are small enough that they can likely arrive on time even if they're purchased just a few days before Christmas. E-book sellers enable gift givers to pick the perfect time to notify loved ones they have received an electronic book. Audiobooks, which can be downloaded to a smartphone or given as a CD, make an ideal gift for loved ones who spend a lot of time behind the wheel.

Last-minute holiday shopping can be stressful. However, various sought-after items can be secured at the last minute, ensuring gift givers' loved ones have a happy holiday season. ■



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Fun ways to enjoy the start of winter

Winter begins on December 21, 2023, and ends on March 19, 2024. Many people lament the arrival of winter, perhaps thinking the colder temperatures and shorter hours of sunlight will compromise their chances to have fun. Even though particularly chilly thermostat readings or stormy conditions can hamper some plans, when people dig deeper they may find that even the coldest days present opportunities for enjoyment.

When winter begins, the following activities can make for an entertaining way to celebrate the arrival of the season.

Build a snow creation. Use the first significant snowfall of the season to organize a snowman, snowwoman, or snow-animal-making event or contest. Waterproof gloves are a necessary piece of equipment, as are buckets for moving snow, shovels, carving and shaping tools (which can be plastic cutlery), and accessories to dress up the final product.

Go sledding on the best hills. Sledding is a popular wintertime activity that doesn't require too much equipment. Sleds can be purchased at sporting goods stores or toy stores. Sledgers of all ages should consider wearing helmets to protect against injury if they will be

traversing especially steep hills.

Host a winter block party. Many cities and towns across North America participate in WinterFest events, which run the gamut from food and craft festivals to sporting events. Individuals can take cues from these type of activities and plan neighborhood festivals right on their streets. Neighbors can wheel out their fire pits or utilize outdoor propane heaters to keep spots cozy. Hot cocoa and cider stations and warm treats can keep everyone from feeling too cold. Electric slow cookers can keep everything from soups to chilis to stews warm and participants can enjoy a buffet of hearty foods.

Visit an ice rink. Whether a rink is indoors or outside, ice skating is a quintessential wintertime activity. Skaters of all skill levels can take to the ice and enjoy some exercise and laughs. Check local rink schedules to take advantage of open skate times when hockey games or practices are not dominating the ice.

Mark the winter solstice. The winter solstice, also known as the start of astronomical winter, is the shortest day of sunlight on the calendar. It occurs when either of the Earth's poles reaches maximum tilt away from the sun. In the Northern Hemisphere, this occurs on

December 21, 2023. Because there will be only roughly seven hours of daylight, take steps to make the fact that the sun will set at its earliest a little easier to swallow. Kids can run around outdoors with glow sticks, while adults can deck their homes in twinkle lights if they are not decorated for Christmas. Lanterns, campfires and candles can be lit, and everyone can gather outdoors to chat and socialize.

Winter begins on December 21, 2023, and there are plenty of ways to celebrate this fun, if sometimes frigid, season. ■



Season's Greetings

from...

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at

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Fun ways to spend the first day of the new year

New Year's Day marks the unofficial culmination of the holiday season, which some feel begins months earlier with Halloween. Retailers have had all sorts of party and decorative goods filling shelves throughout the holiday season, and much emphasis has been placed on celebrating with friends and family.

The revelry that comes on New Year's Eve is hard to match, particularly for those who attend lavish parties or venture to city centers to ring in the new year with others. While January 1 may be a bit more quiet, there are still plenty of ways to enjoy this first day of the year.

Plan a hiking excursion. There's a good chance you have not been out hiking for awhile, with your most recent venture having been a leaf-peeping trip. Enjoy the natural scenery during an entirely different season, with much lighter crowds at parks and on trails. If you've resolved to exercise more this year, hiking is a great start.

Host a relaxing brunch. With all the merrymaking the evening before, most people may need a little time to recuperate before heading out. Brunch is a great way to get people fed and help them shake off fatigue from a late night

of partying. With a focus on conversation and food, rather than dancing and drinking, this can be an intimate way to set the tone for the new year.

Queue up the movies. The hustle and bustle of the holidays can be exciting yet exhausting. Take an opportunity on January 1 to slow down for perhaps the first time in at least two months. Ask household members to choose their favorite films, then spend the day binge watching movies. Eat leftovers or order in so no one needs to leave the comfort of the sofa.

Adopt a new pet. Many charitable animal groups advise against giving pets as holiday gifts because the idea may be spontaneous and pets require a lot of care. For those who have been thinking of welcoming a pet into the family, this may be a good time to visit an animal shelter (if any are open) or peruse online adoption postings. The slow pace of the post-holiday months might be the ideal time to help an animal get acclimated to a new home.

Go shopping. It may seem like the average person has exhausted all of his or her shopping energy by this time, but post-Christmas sales are great ways to stock up on holiday decor for next year

at reduced prices. If stores are open on New Year's Day, shop around for ornaments, lawn figures, lights, and more at steep discounts. Then spend the rest of the day sorting and organizing holiday items and discarding those that have seen better days. ■



Holiday Word Search

Z	F	A	M	I	L	Y	I	U	G	N	I	K	O	O	C	S	E	H	M
M	U	S	I	C	D	F	S	S	K	W	A	N	Z	A	A	R	L	X	F
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APPRECIATION
 ATMOSPHERE
 BOXING DAY
 CANDLES
 CELEBRATION
 CHANUKAH
 CHEER
 CHILDREN
 CHRISTMAS
 COCKTAILS
 COOKING
 DANCING
 DECEMBER
 DECORATIONS
 DESSERT
 FAMILY
 FEAST
 FRIENDS
 GATHERING
 GIFT
 GUESTS
 INVITATION
 JANUARY
 KITCHEN
 KWANZAA
 MUSIC
 NEW YEARS DAY
 PARTY
 PRESENTS
 SHARING
 SOCIALIZE
 SONGS
 SURPRISES
 THANKFUL
 TREE
 WINTERTIME

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