



the stew

ISSUE 8.11 | DECEMBER 2017 | FREE

the
cooking issue

Featuring
Brice O'Neill
Pages 6 & 7

we speak

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On the Cover:

The ingredients for this Cooking Issue of The Stew Magazine are varied and *tasty*! Check out what each writer has brought to the table this month.

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Bon Appetit!

BY CRAIG SMITH

Cooking is the art of preparing food for consumption, with or without heat. That's the dictionary definition, but it also has a lot of other meanings. Cooking can also mean to manipulate, like the expression 'cooking the books' or it can mean what's going on, as in, 'what's cooking?'

I've had a very strange relationship with cooking over the years. Unlike our artist of the month who is absolutely obsessed with cooking, my obsession grows then wanes on a regular basis, and has, ever since I was a kid. When I was younger and in school, both my parents worked, and part of my chores was to start or cook dinner. My mom was pretty progressive and made sure that the boys of the family could clean, iron, sew and cook so they could be independent men when they got older. At that time, I was obsessed with cooking, and for fun I would read cookbooks and experiment, always asking my parents to buy different ingredients for my creations. My mom still talks about when I used to go to the strawberry farm in Salmon Arm, pick a few flats, then come home and turn them all into jam for the pantry. I think I was 12 or 13, because after 13 I was involved heavily with Cadets and didn't have time anymore. I remember spending an afternoon creating a gourmet meal, I'm pretty sure it was a type of fondue; I had not made nearly enough to feed six people, and my mom made the old standby of the 70s – Hamburger Helper – to supplement it. That's when the Scottish/North

American idea, that food is all about volume, hit home for me. My obsession dropped off right after that, and didn't surface again for many years. For the rest of my teen and military career, it was all about simple food and volume. Pot roast, meat loaf, lots of potatoes and pasta were the staples of the day.

My oldest kids' Mom and her family are German; they went through the tough times of WW2, and a lot of their lives revolved around food and cooking. Anything I ever gushed about, saying it was good, Oma made sure she had it every time we came to visit. It didn't matter how full you were, she wanted you to have more when you left, making sure you traveled with her cooking.

As I got older, it seemed like everywhere I went, people wanted to give me cooking or baking. Maybe it's because I looked like a good eater, I don't know. In a lot of cultures, the highest compliment, thanks, or respect you can pay to someone, is to feed them something you have cooked yourself. I once had an Indo-Canadian neighbour whose lawn I used to mow when I was doing mine, because it didn't take much extra time. Every time I did, my neighbour's wife would show up with something that she had cooked or baked as a thank you. I remember going to Bella Bella to photograph at the schools, and I had not been on the Island longer than a few hours before I was invited to a Potlach. I have never seen that much food before, as the whole community cooked and brought something to this party.



I'm pretty sure my mother-in-law is obsessed with cooking. Its not unusual to come home to a meal in our fridge, ready to be heated up for dinner! Unfortunately, she is highly allergic to just about everything, so doesn't get to eat most of what she cooks.

Some of my favourite cooking experiences have been with friends; whenever we go one couple's house, its like dining at a five-plus-star restaurant. Everything is cooked from scratch – no cheating with pre-made boxes. They are retired and when we have a night planned, it seems as though they spent the entire day cooking for the event. They do this all the time, not just for us, but for the multitude of friends they invite to their home. The evening starts with appetizers, then the salad – both are never the norm – the main course, then some fancy dessert. There is always a lot of food, and everything is cooked to perfection.

Whenever we visit them, I always go home with a new obsession to cook again. I start delving through my cookbooks, pull out my special pots and

dishes, and begin creating again. YouTube has been a great source of ideas. I watched tons of videos about making sushi before I attempted it. Believe it or not, I also watched many videos about making the perfect omelette before mine were consistently tasty.

I get excited about cooking, but then it disappears; sometimes because it takes so much time to cook from scratch. My wife has always called herself an 'add water and stir chef;' more to do with the fact that she has a high-stress job, and at the end of the day she just wants to eat, not spend an hour or two cooking from scratch. Unfortunately, my cycle of cooking is always reflected in my weight; if I'm cooking from scratch I will get smaller, and if I'm eating convenience food I will pack it on, no matter how much time I spend at the gym.

I think it's time to get into my cookbooks and start cooking again; I'm feeling inspired thanks to Brice, who I interviewed for this month's feature article. Tonight I'm thinking... chicken, linguini and a nice bottle of red. Bon Appetit!

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ingredients



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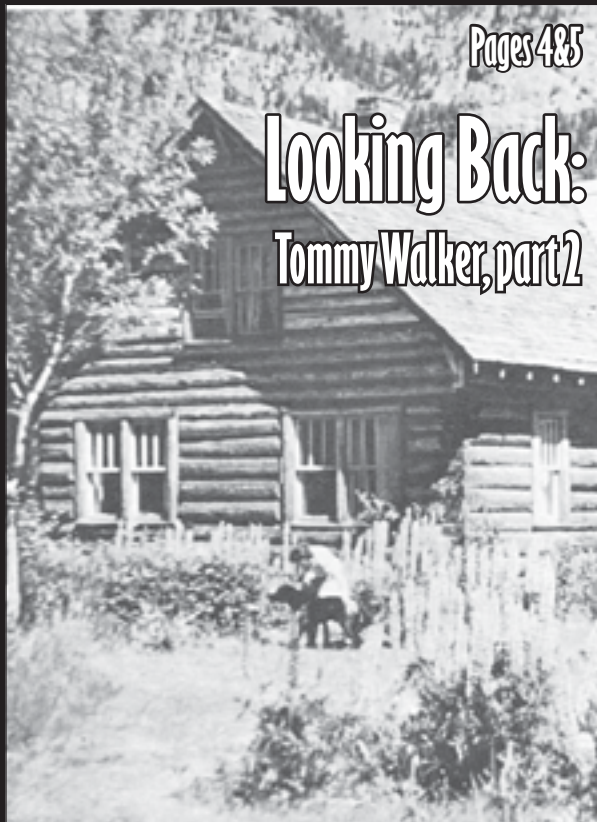
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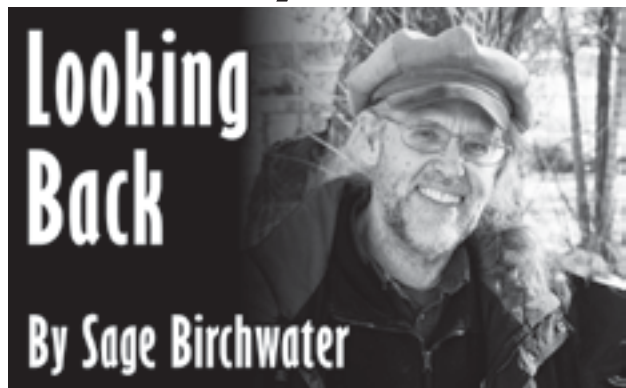
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hear

► Cless Pocket

Tommy Walker, part 2



Looking Back
By Sage Birchwater

In 1930, Tommy Walker and AJ Arnold built Stui Lodge near the site of an ancient Nuxalk village known as Stui. The smallpox epidemic of 1862 is no doubt responsible for the abandonment of this once great Nuxalk settlement.

It is no wonder this site, near the confluence of the Atnarko the Talchako rivers, was chosen for an important village because the climate was ideal. It was far enough from the coast to be out of the relentless downpour of the rainforest, yet the coastal influence

modified the frigid winter temperatures experienced a short distance away on the high Chilcotin Plateau. When it was -50° below Celsius at Anahim Lake, it might only dip down to -20° below Celsius at Stui.

As an added bonus, the dreaded winter outflow winds known as the East Wind, or Sps to the Nuxalkmc, would be far less severe at Stui than at the mouth of the Bella Coola River.

A third pleasing attribute was the year-round sunshine. Many locations in the east-west Bella Coola Valley

lose direct sunshine for extended periods of time during the dark winter months. Thanks to the north-south Talchako Valley, year-round sun rays hit Stui even during the shortest days of the year.

Before making his exodus to British Columbia, Tommy Walker worked as a brew master in London for several years. Once he got established at Stui, he put his beer-making skills to work. He and AJ Arnold constructed a small outbuilding next to the Gylenspetz cabin for brewing and sampling this frontier ale. They affectionately referred to it as the 'church.'

In May of 1931, Tommy Walker's mother and sister, Molly, arrived from England for a visit. Life in the Canadian wilds appealed to them so they both decided to stay.

Shortly after their arrival, Tommy made his first foray

into the high Chilcotin Plateau country when Andy Christensen asked him to do the census east of Stui.

In June of 1931, Tommy set out on horseback with Andy and Dorothy Christensen to do the census. Dorothy wanted to check out some property her family owned at Anahim Lake. They liked what they saw, and soon after that, she and Andy put down roots in the upper country and established Cless Pocket Ranch. It became one of the more successful ranching operations in the area.

For several years while their children were growing up, Andy and Dorothy would spend the summers ranching in Anahim Lake, and their winters in Bella Coola where their kids could go to school. Andy ran the family store there, established three decades earlier by his father, Adolph Christensen.

Doing the census gave Tommy his first real chance to look around the upper

country and see where people lived. He met Frank Render at Lilie Lake, Andy Holte at Towdystan, George Powers at Charlotte Lake, Lester Dorsey and Austin Hallows at Three Circle Ranch, Ulkatcho Chief Domas Squinas at Anahim Lake, and George Turner and Pete McCormick at Kleena Kleene.

He describes the west Chilcotin as the last stand of the great western ideology, where land could be staked and the frontiers of civilization pushed back.

Tommy's mother and sister settled into Stui Lodge, but soon his mother expressed a desire for a home of her own. Over the winter, Tommy went to work building her one.

"Winter was a good time to log and start building," he wrote in his memoir. With the help of a young Norwegian man recently arrived from Europe, he cleared a site next to the river with an unrestricted view of the mountains. Then, as

each round of logs was notched and laid in place, his Norwegian craftsman flattened the insides of the logs with a broadaxe. Soon the two-story structure with an upstairs porch was completed. By spring, they were able to move in.

The following summer of 1932, Tommy got his first look at the Rain-bow Mountains when Nifty Merkel took him on a horseback venture. He was so impressed with the scenic beauty of the multi-coloured lava peaks that he wrote a description of it for the London Times.

He doubted that his literary piece would ever be published, but to his surprise, it was. Then he got a response from a wealthy manufacturer of health foods, Richard Maurice, who expressed a desire to visit the country.

"He asked about a camping trip," Walker said. "We exchanged letters and he became my first trail-riding client."



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SHOP WHERE SANTA SHOPS!!



...continued from pg4

Something new was looming on the horizon that would have a lasting impact on the whole country. A civil servant in Victoria, John AE Collins, was spearheading a petition to have the government create a wilderness preserve, from Ootsa Lake to Bella Coola Valley.

Collins, a forest reconnaissance officer with the Department of Lands and Forests, was hired to do an inventory of the vast unsurveyed timbered areas of the Province. He was concerned for the future of this scenic strip of tableland beneath the eastern summits of the Coast Mountains. Its mosaic lakes and volcanic domes stretched 100 miles north from Tommy Walker's lodge at Stuiie to the Nechako drainage. Collins had the foresight that easy access into this natural treasure of wilderness would destroy it.

When Tommy Walker



took his British client, Richard Maurice, on an excursion through the Rainbow Mountains, Collins asked him to take notes and photographs. Their 200-mile epic journey followed the Nuxalk-Dakelh grease trails over the Rainbow Mountains to the Dean River, then looped back up the Dean River to Anahim Lake, and back to Stuiie following Chief Domas Squinas' route through the Precipice Valley.

That fall, the Walkers experienced a tragedy. On the seventeenth of November, 1935, fire destroyed the house Tommy had built for his mother. "We were left with the clothes we wore," Tommy recounted,



"Without even a toothbrush to clean our teeth."

Undaunted, Tommy started rebuilding in the spring, using a sawmill this time, to fashion the logs into timbers. By fall, they were able to move in. More than 80 years later, this beautiful building still stands as a legacy to Tommy Walker, with its own storied past.

In the fall of 1936, while Tommy Walker was guiding duck hunters in Anahim Lake, AJ Arnold returned to England on urgent family business. A few months later Tommy received a letter from Arnold saying he couldn't return. For the Walkers, this presented a problem because it was Ar-

nold's independent wealth that financed the operation of the lodge and made the payments on the land.

As luck would have it, Tommy Walker's fortunes took a turn for the better. Thanks to the lobbying of AE Collins, the Provincial Government announced the creation of a vast new 5,000 square mile Provincial Park encompassing the wilderness between Bella Coola Valley and Ootsa Lake.

It was to be named after the newly-appointed Governor General of Canada, John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir. On top of that, the Governor General and his wife, Susan Buchan, were going to visit the following summer to inspect this territory. Part of the celebration was slated for Tommy Walker's Stuiie Lodge.

A royal visit from the King's official representative in Canada created quite a stir.

The Governor General indicated he and his wife would enjoy a camping trip. Up until that time, the only trails through the Rainbow Mountains were those used by the Dakelh and Tsilhqot'in people descending the precarious switchbacks from the high plateau



country into the Bella Coola Valley.

At first, it was proposed that Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir would travel by horseback from Ootsa Lake to Bella Coola Valley. Then it was downsized to the regal party flying into Tanya Lakes and going from there by horseback to Stuiie Lodge beside the Atnarko River.

That's how it sat when several Ulkatcho families who lived in the region were asked to build more than 20 miles of new trails through the Rainbow Mountains. Bridges had to be constructed over creeks, corduroy laid through swampy sections, and switchbacks dug into the steep slopes. Andy Cahoose and Henry Jack were youngsters when they helped their parents transform their old trails into a backwoods highway.

For Tommy Walker, it meant employment for him too. "At least I had steady work for my pack outfit, carrying supplies to the road-building crew every week."

In the end, the trail-building efforts for the Governor General were all for naught. The cross-country horseback venture was

cancelled when a cavalcade of provincial politicians wanted to join the expedition. Lord Tweedsmuir's wish for a simple campout with his wife into the Rainbow Mountains never came to fruition.

After an official reception on the shores of Ootsa Lake in the northern part of the new park, Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir were flown directly to Bella Coola and driven up the valley to Tommy Walker's lodge at Stuiie. "There, enraptured by the wild mountain scenery, they enjoyed an intimate meeting with settlers of that remote region," he wrote. "The Governor General's standard waved from our flagstaff for five days," wrote Walker.

He said anticipation for the extravagant safari brought him a much-needed influx of cash and a well-graded trail into the Rainbow Mountains.

Lord Tweedsmuir also granted Walker permission to change the name of his lodge from Stuiie Lodge to Tweedsmuir Lodge.

Next month, join us again for the story of John Buchan Lord Tweedsmuir becoming Canada's 15th Governor General.

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flavour of the month



flavour of the month



Featuring Brice O'Neill

BY CRAIG SMITH

I look forward to reading the monthly articles submitted to The Stew by our long-time contributor, Brice O'Neill. His column "Out Of the Fridge" is always entertaining with a new recipe each month. Who better to interview for our cooking issue than our resident chef?!

Brice is a long-time resident of Williams Lake – all his life, except for his first two years of life in Squamish. In grade 11, he started working as a general labourer, painting houses and building fences. He said he was heading down a bad path

behaviour-wise, but got an awakening when he was in a bad car accident, two weeks after his twentieth birthday. Over the next while, he went through many major surgeries attempting to save his leg, badly damaged in the accident. He says that the doctors probably made advances in science when working on him, as they tried many new and experimental techniques. He finally came to the decision to have it amputated, and returned to Williams Lake to undergo physiotherapy.

Brice's first job when returning to work was learning how to cook for

Gord and Nancy Giesbrecht at the Rendezvous Restaurant on Oliver Street. A brief time later, he left and went to cook at the 150 Roadhouse. From there, his career took him to the Husky Restaurant, where he decided he wanted to apprentice as a Chef. He enrolled at Vancouver Community College, and for the next three years, commuted to Vancouver. He was tested three times a year with 'Black box cooking,' meaning you are given a box of ingredients and asked to cook something. His last year of schooling was all about business; finance and creating

menus. During his first year of school he stayed at the Husky Restaurant, but during his second year he moved to the golf course restaurant under Deiter Frank. Brice moved to Joey's Grill for his third and fourth year, before being offered the Sous Chef position at Signal Point Restaurant where he stayed for two years.

Now ready to be a Head Chef, he answered an ad for a Chef/Cook at New World Café. He was looking to slow down a little and thought a bistro coffee shop would be ideal for that. He laughs and says that Sue hired him right after he showed her his chef tattoos. The kitchen went from a residential fridge and stove to

the professional kitchen it is today. After a couple of years working together, Sue and Brice became life partners as well as business partners, and it's now been six years.

For anyone wanting to get into this profession, Brice says "You have to absolutely love cooking, or it will bury you. Live it, or do something else." He does live it. He volunteers tirelessly and a lot of it involves cooking. He teaches at both the Boys and Girls Club and the Elder College, where, in February, his class will be called 'Cooking for Seniors.' He does soup and sandwiches once a month for a local charity, as well as the annual Christmas Wish breakfast. Three

years ago, Brice ran for a position on the school board because he wanted to make a difference in his community; he was elected and now holds the position of Vice Chair. All his spare time is about volunteering and family. His two daughters can be seen working at the restaurant quite often as they have picked up Brice's work ethic.

As far as his future, Brice has thought about mentoring kids or possibly starting a restaurant management consulting business with his partner Sue, but says his crystal ball is broken and the future is unclear. Drop by New World Café today and try some of the tasty culinary offerings.



Culinary adventures



I was always drawn to Italy where all the wonderful natural foods are made into some of the world's most delectable dishes. There are many countries that, given the soil, sunshine, water, and the length of growing season, would claim the very same. I chose Italy simply because I discovered it is a wonderful part of my inherent nature. Recently, I had my DNA sent away for analysis and discovered that somewhere in my lineage there were also Italian and British ancestors. My parents would

have been amazed at this discovery, especially my Mother whose Father was named Manoli. Given time to think about this, I can see the Italian mannerisms in her – her love of music, food and general appearance. I write this article in memory of my wonderful Mother who lived to eat, and was an amazing baker and cook. Italy has some of the finest cuisine in the world. Thinking of the indigenous fruits, nuts, truffles, pastries, desserts, pastas, wines, espresso coffees, meats,

pizzas, and soups make me wish I was there right now! Each region in Italy has foods that are unique to its region. The northern part of Italy is bordered by the European countries of France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia. To add to this diversity, it is surrounded by the Ligurian Sea to the West, the Adriatic Sea to the East, the Ionian and Mediterranean Sea to the South. This tiny country boasts a population of almost 60 million, and is comprised of 20 regions. Olive oil is very much a staple in Italy, where it is mass-produced. There are many types of culinary olive oil, depending on the region that the olive trees are grown, and the process used to extract the oil. Spices and herbs may be added to the oil to give it a unique, individual flavour. Each region has its own local gastronomic dietary preferences. The regions



► Toni (Leisure Specialist), MJ (Owner), and Tanya (Corporate Specialist)

may be “close in vicinity” to each other but the cooks of each region insist that their cooking is superior to their neighbours. This pride is called “campanilismo.” Focussing on the culinary delights of a few regions, let me start with the Island of Sicily. Toni, a Travel Counsellor at All-Ways Travel, was born in Sicily and goes to visit often. Seafood is the predominant diet and the markets consist of freshly caught seafood, such as tuna, sea bream, bass, cuttlefish, swordfish. “You can’t get fresher than that,” she said. This region uses freshly homegrown vegetables – eggplant, peppers and tomatoes – supplemented with fresh herbs to make wonderful dishes. Traditional specialties include arancini, pasta alla Norma, caponata, and pani ca meusa. Desserts such as cannoli, granita and cassata finish a delectable meal. Typical of Sicily is a red, fortified wine similar to Port with the meals. The soil and climate of Sicily are ideal for growing grapes. Mount Etna, the volcanic mountain, makes the surrounding soil fertile with the best nutrients.

Now on to Campania, in Italy’s center. This region is the home of the pizza, which is traditionally cooked in a wood-burning oven. It is also known for spaghetti and seafood dishes such as peppered mussels, octopus poached in broth, marinated anchovies, salt and fried cod. Toni mentioned that the lemons and limes vary from very large to normal sizes, some specifically used for making limoncello liqueur – a favourite of tourists. This region is also infamous for the colourful and delicious gelato (fruit based ice cream). It is eaten alone or on pastry. To me the Tuscany region is the epitome and mainstay of Italian cuisine. This region is abundant with vegetables, black truffles, mushrooms, livestock for meat and dairy products and wild game and birds. Tuscan cooking uses the freshest seasonal ingredients, which makes the cooking very simplified; however, simplified can still be flavourful. The cooks make ribollita, a vegetable and bread soup, and pappa al pomodoro, a tomato and bread soup. The locals eat

trippa and lampredotto, which is the lining of a cow’s stomach smothered in butter. Although steak is uncommon in most regions – usually serving dried sausages of all sorts instead – the Tuscany region has a special breed of cattle (the Chianina) from which the famous steak “bistecca alla fiorentina” is made – much like the steak we’re used to. Although Tuscan cooking is not big on dessert, it does finish a meal with a bowl of fresh fruit or berries. Speaking of dessert, Toni says Florence is “dessert heaven.” Try some cantucci, an almond-flavoured cookie that is dipped in wine; an unbeatable pairing. You can sign up to learn the art of Italian cuisine in many regions of Italy. Montefollonico in Tuscany is just one option for learning the skills of traditional Italian cooking, as taught by the Tuscan locals. Students are immersed in the culture. Some other schools are Badia a Coltibuono in Chianti, Enrica Rocca in Venice, and Anna Tasca Lanza School in Palermo. Contact us at All-Ways Travel to arrange your own Italian culinary adventure!

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Cooking is an individual artistic expression, a way to create something amazing, a way to make a legal mess (after all, the kitchen is messy in the name of creating a really awesome meal). Cooking is so much fun for some of us, and a great big pain for others. I love to cook when I feel like cooking,

I try to measure and to follow a recipe, but I just can't do it, no matter how hard I try! I always have to deviate just a tiny bit, or a whole lot!

Sometimes I "mood" cook. If I'm feeling alive and healthy you will get a super huge salad, if I'm cold you get extra spice. If I'm feeling strong you will get a whole bunch of veggies.

When I think about relationships and cooking, I think "what a great way to be to-

gether." Cooking in the kitchen, at the camp or on the beach. I have two sons and a daughter, and all of us love to cook. Each of my sons started helping in the kitchen, baking and cooking when they were very young. My 5-year-old grandson and 2-year-old granddaughter also love to help in the kitchen. Every item that is added to the bowl or scraped out of the bowl has to be carefully scrutinized, taste-tested, and oohed

and ahhed over.

It is such a great way to be together, share ideas and create wonderful meals and memories. The kitchen, where the cooking happens in my house, is one of my favourite places; there is always something to do, to create, and to feel good about.

I come from generations of passionate cooks – my grandmother, my mother, my children – we are all so excited about cooking that it's hard to even give it justice by writing about it. Cooking is an experience, a science and sometimes even a ceremonial exercise. Cooking is such an important part of my culture that there are even books written about it (you know... cookbooks).

Happy cooking!



Art Gecko

Showing from **December 5th until December 30th** is Zentangle artist, **Vera Lehar**. Vera is originally from Czechoslovakia, and started line drawing at the age of 16 while attending the College of Pedagogy in the Czech Republic. Vera has taught kindergarten and worked in many daycare schools, eventually getting busier in life studying nutrition and other modalities of energy work, she has continued to draw. Vera's work began as black and white, but she has since started using colour with paint and chalk on canvas. Vera has lived in, and enjoyed the Cariboo for 11 years. The process of creating these designs is very relaxing and has become a meditation, not only in the doing, but in the viewing.

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Women's Contact Society

do



Recipe for community theatre



BY SANDI ALARIC,
WL STUDIO THEATRE

Ingredients:

A community that desires live theatre, a wonderful theatre space, keen members of the community who have a desire to volunteer hundreds of hours, various productions that will bring the community into the theatre, the viewing public – also known as an audience.

Preparation of ingredients:

1. Williams Lake is the best place to find this ingredient. This particular

community has a proven track record borne out by the box office sales. The Williams Lake Studio Theatre has recently offered online ticket sales; an innovation has proved to be a great success. Tickets for each production are available at Kit and Kaboodle and at the Open Book.

2. The theatre is located at the Glendale School. Working in conjunction with the Williams Lake School Board, Studio Theatre has created a one-of-a-kind theatre. They have recently installed new, comfortable seating for audience sitting and

viewing pleasure.

3. Collect community members from all walks of life who have an interest in the Arts and a desire to use their talents, no matter how big or small, to bring a director's vision to life. This will entail hundreds of volunteer hours for each production and thousands of hours over the course of the season. These hours are spent designing, building and painting sets, designing and sewing costumes, setting up sometimes complicated and intricate lighting and sound systems, working out functional and effective hair and make-up designs, setting up Front of House schedules, and stocking the necessary food and beverages for the pleasure of our audience. While all of this is going on in the background, cast members need to learn lines, memorize music and dance steps, and develop

their characters.

4. After an exhaustive process called 'play selection,' which usually takes place over a two-month period, the productions for the season are selected. The scripts are generally chosen for their ability to bring the viewing public (the audience) into the theatre. The last Selection Committee chose

a list that is guaranteed to please Williams Lake theatre-goers. We have just finished a very successful run of *The Woman In Black*. Next up are: *Anything That Moves* – a musical (Jan. 17-20, 24-27, and Jan. 31-Feb. 3, 2018), *Importance of Being Ernest* by Oscar Wilde (Mar. 7-10, 14-17, 21-24, 2018), and *Hand to God* – May 2-5, 9-12, 16-19, 2018.

5. The last, but most important ingredient of

this recipe is the audience. All the work, sweat and tears are geared towards those people who buy tickets and come into our theatre to laugh and cry with us. Without the people in the theatre seats, there is no point in all the hours and hours that all Studio Theatre members so willingly give.

Come out and play with us, and together we will create wonderful theatrical experiences to enjoy.

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Star Wars gaming controversy

BY RICHARD BUTTERS,
ADVENTURE GAMES

Last month a large controversy rose among video game enthusiasts regarding a specific game, Star Wars: Battlefront 2. The primary issue is that it takes an extreme amount of hours to unlock all of the game's content. Normally, this wouldn't be considered newsworthy, but all the character progression in this game can be bought with real money, subverting any kind of fairness in play. The total time to unlock all of the content crossed the 4,000-hour mark, or the modest sum of approximately \$2,100 USD. Naturally, these numbers are pretty appalling, and the gaming community let their displeasure be heard loud and clear.

The method of ob-

taining the upgrades via cash is called a 'loot box' (sometimes called loot crate, prize crate), and can range in price from \$5-20. These loot boxes contain a random assortment of in-game items, and sometimes to get the item or upgrade you might need to purchase multiple boxes. On the popular website Reddit, a user voiced his displeasure in having one of the most iconic characters, Darth Vader, be locked from use at the start of the game. An official representative of the company that published the game, Electronic Arts (or EA, for short), replied to the user saying the locked characters and upgrades we put in place to "...provide a sense of pride and accomplishment" for un-

locking them. This would be true, if not for the fact that anyone with enough money could just buy the characters instead. The Reddit community was quick to voice their opinions against this, almost immediately breaking the "most downvoted comment" record by a huge margin.

Many people feel that loot boxes are a negative aspect of the video game industry, and a large portion of them believe that

loot boxes should be considered a form of gambling. The habit of risking money to purchase in-game benefits heavily encourages a gambling-like mentality, primarily aimed at younger gamers. United States courts have ruled that loot boxes as they exist today don't count as gambling, due to the guarantee of receiving an item, even if it isn't necessarily the item you want. However, courts in Europe are starting

to have a stricter policy surrounding them, and this is a very good thing to hear.

Loot boxes are a predatory system designed at the fundamental level to target and ensnare young gamers into a mentality of repetitive spending to maximize the game developers' profits. These types of systems have absolutely no place in games not marked for mature audiences. The only way these kinds of practices will

ever get phased-out is if we speak loudly with our wallets above anything else. The only thing game development titans such as EA listen to is their profit margin. If we show them we refuse to support vicious, dangerous, and unethical routes to near-endless profit, then perhaps they'll start to listen. Stay informed with what your kids are playing, and make sure to support developers that love games, not just money.





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A recipe for success

BY ALEXIS FORSEILLE,
COMMUNITY FUTURES
CARIBOO CHILCOTIN

Starting a small business is similar to trying your hand at cooking a new recipe. If you are anything like I am, you may spend a considerable amount of time searching for a recipe that fits your plans. Similarly, when starting a new small business, you should begin by conducting market research.

Before selecting a recipe, you first need to ask yourself, "Who am I making this food for?" The answer may narrow your search from a recipe that the whole family would enjoy, to a dish that would make your grandmother proud. In the small business world, this would be considered as identifying your target market and

is the first step in market research.

Market research involves gathering information about your potential consumers. Your target market has its own identity with key demographic, geographic, and behavioural characteristics. Additionally, the research introduces you to your consumers' spending habits and gives insight into the market trends. In more depth, the analysis allows you to identify your consumers' specific wants, needs and preferences. Once you know who you will be aiming to please, you can progress to the next steps in your research.

Knowing how your recipe is going to compete with your Aunt's can make a difference in how you present your dish. The second step in your

market research involves a competitor analysis. You may choose to look up your Aunt's signature recipe to find similarities and differences to the one you have chosen. In business, your research will give insight into what your competition offers for products and services. By monitoring your competitors' advantage, you will be able to understand the areas where you can and cannot compete. By knowing your position within the market, you can figure out ways to set your product apart from your competitors. Your Aunt may have years of practice making her recipe, however you may choose to add an ingredient to change the taste and personalize it to your cooking style.

The last part of your research is estimating the

cost of all your ingredients and the revenue the dish will bring. While a dinner recipe may only bring in the revenue of satisfying relatives, a small business' revenue is much more valuable in assessing the viability of the business against the average costs of operation. You should include a forecast for the business in advertising, rent, wages, inventory, revenues and potential profits.

Once you purchase all your ingredients and create your new dish, you may want to taste test it before handing it over to your guests. Equivalently for a small business, you may want to test that people will buy your product or service, and at what value they consider it to be worthwhile to purchase. Before you invest your money any further, begin by testing your ideas on your family and friends. If everything is a success with them, take the next steps to plan a small-scale product or service test to analyze how your ideas compete within your target market. If all goes well, you can hand over your freshly made recipe to everyone you planned it for, knowing that they will enjoy it.

Conducting market research for your new small business can give you a recipe for success. The more research you do, the more prepared you will be for presenting your product or service confidently to your target market.



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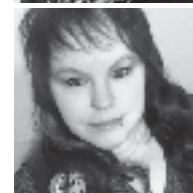
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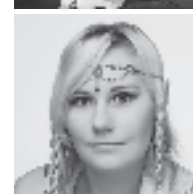
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W.L. Studio Theatre
Behind the Curtain

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On stage soon; *Hula Hoops & Halos*



BY BECKY STRICKLAND,
DIRECTOR, MARA-
NATHA PLAYERS

This December, come and take a step back in time to the 1950s and join us at Dudley's Diner, in the Maranatha Players musical, *Hula Hoops & Halos*. Betsy, a busy waitress at her family's restaurant, has no time for friends or dating. She longs to be like everyone else, but knows she must care for her family, since Pa passed away and Ma is so busy with her many gadgets. Her little

sister Scooter and the Junior League, are always in her way at the diner. Her brother, Stretch, never has time to help out, but instead spends time with his girlfriend and the basketball team.

Enter Angela, a tough talking teen rebel who recently died and has been sent back to earth "on probation" to earn her halo. The mission she has been given; to help Betsy and her family find happiness in who they really are. Through the trials and tribulations of teen antics, the story unfolds



► Destiny Watson (Doreen), Katie Isaac (Alice), and Samantha Martin (Louise)

through catchy tunes, great choreography and a touching story line.

The Maranatha Players are excited to once again be working on a show. Life at Maranatha Christian School is greatly impacted by the musicals we put together each year. The show involves approximately half of the students enrolled in grades

8-12. You can imagine how this shapes the culture of our school. Friendships are developed over the different grades, and the support for each other is always there. Our cast includes a diverse group of students with varying degrees of theatre background and abilities. As a director, I like to give any student the opportunity to

be on stage, and this leads to some amazing things. I love working with and challenging students to help them reach their potential and beyond. One of the key elements I hold in great importance is the idea of mentorship. For those in grade 11 and 12, I add on the element of working with new and younger students to help

them understand harmony, choreography, blocking and the many other parts of theatre. This helps to truly build a team feeling amongst the students.

Those on stage are also supported by a group of students who take a production class, which entails setting up the stage and seating, creating the sets and creating the ambiance of the foyer. This group works hard for three weeks to help bring the play physically to life. This year, our set is a 1950s diner, so it involved things such as painting street scenes, creating and painting cars, creating a soda counter, and so much more.

Hula Hoops & Halos will be on stage **December 7-9 & 14-15** at 7:00, and **December 16** at both 1:00 and 8:00. Tickets are now on sale at The Open Book; seniors and children 12 and under \$8.00, and adults \$10.00. We hope to see you all there!

The Maranatha Players proudly present
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Hula Hoops & Halos

Book by Jeffery Smart
Music and Lyrics by Scott Keys

ONSTAGE
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WILLIAMS LAKE & AREA

December 1 Hobbit House 18th Annual Xmas Open House, tax-free day, door prizes, snacks, 9am-7pm, 71-1st Ave. S.

December 1 OAPA Branch 93 Seniors Christmas Dinner, Sacred Heart hall, cocktails 5pm, tickets: \$18 advance only at Seniors Activity Ctr

December 1-2 Friends of the Library Book Sale & Not-So-Secret-Auction, Public Library, Fri 10am-1pm, Sat 10am-4pm, proceeds toward furniture for the "young adult" area in the library

December 1-16 3rd Annual Festival of Trees, bring a toy/food donation to receive a ballot, donations distributed to local charities, Signal Point

December 1-23 Salvation Army Kettle Campaign, volunteer: Sandra 250-267-1867

December 1-23 Winter Market at the Mall, local vendors, every Friday & Saturday 10am-4pm, Boitanio Mall

December 1-23 Santa Hours, Boitanio Mall, Fridays 4-7pm, Saturdays & Sundays noon-3pm, and Thurs Dec 21, 11:30-2:30pm

December 1-31 Operation Red Nose, safe ride home for you and your vehicle by donation, proceeds to local youth charities, 9pm-3am, 250-392-2222

December 1-31 Station House Gallery Christmas Market showcasing local artisans, open all month 7 days a week 10am-5pm

December 1,8,15,22,29 Friday Night Magic, Adventure Games 83C 2nd Ave S, 5pm

December 1,8,15,22,29 Adult Skate, Fridays 11am-noon, Cariboo Memorial Complex

December 1,8,15,22,29 Drop In Hockey, Fridays noon-1pm, Cariboo Memorial Complex

December 1,8,15,22,29 Drop-In Co-Ed Soccer, WL Secondary 7-9pm, info: willamslakesoccer.com

December 1,8,15,22,29 Live Music Fridays, CJ's Southwestern Grill

December 2 Christmas Dinner & Dance Party with BlueNote, buffet & live music/dancing, 19+ event, cash bar, The Point Banquet Room 7-11:30pm, tickets: Adventure Games

December 2 Winter Lights celebrations: Santa parade downtown 11am, Santa photos & caroling at the Potato House 49 Borland St. 11am-3pm

December 2 CIHL Hockey, Stampeders vs River Kings, touque/toy toss, Memorial Complex 7:30pm

December 2 1st Annual Junior Cadets Society Craft Sale, silent auction, refreshments, door prizes, Elks Hall 10am-6pm

December 2,9,16,23,30 Warhammer and Tabletop Games, Adventure Games 83C 2nd Ave S, all day

December 3 22nd Annual Hospice Memory Tree Celebration, music, refreshments, service & tree lighting, City Hall Chambers 3-4:30pm

December 3 Museum fundraising Tea & Bake Sale, Seniors Ctr 11am-2pm

December 3 CIHL Hockey, Stampeders vs Rupert Rampage, raffle, Memorial Complex 1:30pm

December 3,10,17,24,31 Sunday Morning Magic, Adventure Games 83C 2nd Ave S, 10am

December 3,10,17,24,31 Game Night, Adventure Games 83C 2nd Ave S, 6pm

December 3,10,17,24,31 Family Skating, 2:45-4:15pm, Memorial Complex

December 4 FREE Seniors Bingo & Refreshments, upper level Boitanio Mall 1pm

December 5 12th Annual Christmas Wish Breakfast, breakfast buffet by donation (monetary or new unwrapped toy), new location: Boston Pizza, 6:30-9:30am

December 5 Bloom 'n' Gifts' 5th Anniversary Celebrations, 83D 2nd Ave S

December 5 Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour, Gibraltar Room, Memorial Complex 7pm, tickets: Red Shreds or Memorial Complex, adults \$21, student/senior \$16

December 5,12,19 Duplicate Bridge Club, everyone welcome, Seniors Centre side door, 7pm

December 5,12,19 Story Time, free, puppet show, Library, Tuesdays 10:30am

December 6 WLIB Craft Fair, Elizabeth Grouse Gym, Sugar Cane, 10am-3pm

December 6,13,20,27 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps (Rocky Mountain Rangers), youth 12-18 gain new skills and meet new friends, Wednesdays 6:15-9pm, Legion lower hall, info: www.3064rmrangcadets.org

December 6,13,20,27 Drop In Hulahoop Workshop, Wednesdays 7pm, Arts Centre 90-4th Ave N

December 7-9,14-15,16 Maranatha Players proudly present a 1950s inspired musical "Hula Hoops & Halos," tickets: The Open Book

December 7,14,21,28 Just For Fun ladies singing group, supported by Women's Contact Society and Angelkeys Music Studio, everyone welcome, Anglican Church, Thursdays 7:30-9pm

December 7,14,21,28 Pokemon Thursdays, Adventure Games 83C 2nd Ave S, 3:45pm

December 8 Community Band & Friends Christmas Concert, City Hall Chambers 7pm

December 9 Holiday Shopping Party, samples of seasonal products, free gift wrapping, South Broadway Liquor 11am-5pm

December 10 Free Skate with Santa, dress in red & white, festive music, holiday crafts, Memorial Complex 1:45-3:15pm

December 10 McLeese Lake VFD Christmas Market, food & beverages, door prizes, McLeese Hall 9am-3pm

December 11 Drink and Draw, bring your drawing supplies, Dennys Restaurant 6pm

December 13 12th Annual Tubajohn's Christmas Concert, St. Andrew's United Church 7:30pm

December 15 Swim with Santa, Memorial Complex 6:30-8pm

December 16-17 Selfies With Santa, Sat 1-5pm, Sun noon-4pm, Realm of Toys, 35A 1st Ave S

December 17 Bikers Against Child Abuse (B.A.C.A.) meeting, public welcome, Big Brothers Big Sisters 200-369 Oliver St. 1pm, info: 778-412-9323

December 18 Good Food Box distribution day, Elks Hall 1-3pm, purchase your box prior to distribution day every 3rd Monday of the month: \$15/large box 250-392-4118

December 21 WL Writers' Group meets Third Thursday of the month 6pm, Art Centre 90-4th Ave N, new members welcome, info: Linda levpur@shaw.ca

December 24 Likely Christmas Celebration, service at Likely Chapel 7pm, caroling & tree lighting Likely Lodge 8pm-midnight

December 24 Board Game Night: The Grizzled, Adventure Games 6-9pm

December 27 Annual Cowboys vs Indians, Cariboo Memorial Complex 5pm

December 30 CIHL Hockey, Stampeders vs Quesnel Kangaroos, team spirit game, Memorial Complex 7:30pm

January 5-7 Rogers Hometown Hockey, info: www.willamslake.ca, www.hometownhockey.com/british-columbia/

QUESNEL & AREA

December 1 2nd Annual Sip n Shop Ladies Night at the Lodge, 1262 Maple Heights Rd 6-11pm

December 1-2 Pre-School Christmas Showcase, Gold Pan City Dance, 8am-5pm info: 250-992-2292

December 1-2 Museum Annual Christmas Sale, 9:30am-4pm

December 2 Santa Extravaganza, Spirit Square downtown 3-7pm, fireworks 6pm



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play

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December 2 RCMA
“Sounds of the Season” Open
Mic, Occidental 6:30pm

December 2 Lions Ga-
rage Sale, south end of Maple
Park Mall 9am-2pm

December 2 CIHL
Hockey, Kangaroos vs Rupert
Rampage, West Fraser Ctr
7:30pm

December 2 KIJHL hock-
ey, Wranglers vs Revelstoke
Grizzlies, South Cariboo Rec
Ctr 7pm

December 3 CIHL
Hockey, Kangaroos vs Ter-
race River Kings, West Fraser
Ctr 1pm

December 5,12,19
Karaoke with DJ KC, The
Occidental, Tuesdays 6-10pm

December 6 Good Cheer
Run/Walk, meet at Reason to
Run 5:30pm with donation

December 6 KIJHL
hockey, Wranglers vs Chase
Heat, South Cariboo Rec Ctr
7pm

December 9-11 Barker-
ville Old Fashioned Victorian
Christmas, 10am-4pm, info:
www.barkerville.ca

December 10 Christmas
Farmer's Market, Arts & Rec
Ctr

December 15 Night Ski
& Club Social, Hallis Lake
Lodge 8am-5pm

December 15 CIHL
Hockey, Kangaroos vs Wil-
liams Lake Stampeders, West
Fraser Ctr 7:30pm

December 16 KIJHL
hockey, Wranglers vs
Revelstoke Grizzlies, South
Cariboo Rec Ctr 7pm

December 16 Lions Ga-
rage Sale, south end of Maple
Park Mall 9am-2pm

December 16 Long
Table Holiday Dinner, locally
sourced gourmet 4 course
menu, The Occidental 228
Front St, 6-11pm

December 20 Christmas
Light Walk, donations to
food bank, meet at Reason to
Run 5:30

December 20 Rotary
Christmas Super Bingo, 668
Doherty Dr 7-10pm

December 23 CIHL
Hockey, Kangaroos vs
Williams Lake Stampeders,
West Fraser Ctr 7:30pm

December 28-29 Ice
Palace family fun: tobog-
gan run, skating through
the trees with Santa, games,
crafts, Twin Arenas 1-5pm

December 31 New
Years Eve Dinner & Dance,
Legion 8am-5pm

100 MILE HOUSE & AREA

December 1,8,15,22,29
Crib Night, Forest Grove
Legion Fridays 8pm

December 2 Breakfast
with Santa, Creekside
Senior Ctr 501 Cedar Ave,
doors 8:30am

December 2 Breakfast
with Santa, children's ac-
tivities, goodie bags, photo
with Santa, bring a non-
perishable food item, 108
Mile Ranch 9-11am

December 2 Eat Drink
& Be Merry, Interlakes
Community Ctr, doors
5pm, dinner 6-8pm, music
until 10pm, Interlakes
Community Ctr, tickets: \$5,
age 12 & under free, avail-
able at Rona & Country
Pedlar

December 2 Lone Butte
Christmas Craft Fair, hall
9:30am-2pm

December 2,9,16,23,30
Meat Draw, Forest Grove
Legion Saturdays 4:30-6pm

December 2,9,16,23,30
Alcoholics Anonymous
fireside family group, Satur-
days United Church 8pm,
info: 250-791-1937

December 2-3 Christ-
mas Market, crafts, baking,
preserves, Santa Claus, live
entertainment, 108 Heritage
Site, Clydesdale Barn 10am-
2pm

December 3 Christmas
Craft Fair, Forest Grove
Legion 10am-3pm

December 3 Safeway
Free Skate, everyone wel-
come, South Cariboo Rec
Ctr, 1:15-2:45pm

December 3,10,17,24,31
Alcoholics Anonymous,
Sundays 7:30pm, Health
Ctr (hospital rear entrance),
250-791-5286

December 4,11,18
Bingo, Mondays, doors
6pm, starts 7pm, super star
8:30pm, Community Hall

December 4,11,18
Alanon, Mondays 7pm
Health Centre (hospital rear
entrance) info: 250-395-
2532

December 4,11,18
Women's Drop-In Volley-
ball, Mondays 9:30am, Lone
Butte Community Hall

December 4,11,18
Public Curling, Mondays
6:30pm, Curling Club

December 4,7,11,14,18,
21,28 Cariboo Calico Quil-
ters, Monday evenings and
Thursday afternoons, base-
ment Creekside Senior Ctr,
info: Agnes 250-395-6127

December 5 Communi-
ty Band Christmas Concert,
Carefree Manor 7pm

December 5,12,19
Alanon Drop-In, Tuesdays
1-2pm, Community Health
Ctr (rear of hospital) info:
250-395-7676

December 5,12,19 Alco-
holics Anonymous, United
Church, Tuesdays 8pm

December 5,12,19
HUGS help us get slim,
Tuesdays 6:30pm, 6300
N. Green Lake Rd, info:
Charlotte 250-456-7504 or
Pat 250-456-2491

December 5,12,19 Car-
pet Bowling Club, Tuesdays
1-4pm, Interlakes Hall, info:
Kitty 250-593-4780

December 5,12,19
Community Band, all ages
and experience welcome,
practice Tuesdays 7pm
Christ the King Lutheran
440 Horse Lk Rd, info:
Dave 778-485-5560

December 5,12,19
Co-Ed Drop-In Volleyball,
Tuesdays 7-9pm, Peter
Skene Ogden gym, info:
Kersti 250-395-1353

December 5,19 Photo
Group, 1st & 3rd Tuesday
of the month, Bridge Lake
School, info: Larry 250-593-
4362

December 6,13,20,27
Eclectica Community
Choir rehearsals, United
Church 49 Dogwood Cres,
Wednesdays 7-9pm, info:
eclectica@100milearts.com

December 6,13,20,27
Bingo, g-ball, loonie ball &
progressive, Wednesdays,
doors 5:45pm, starts 7pm,
Lac La Hache Hall

December 6,13,20,27
Eclectica Community
Choir rehearsals, United
Church 49 Dogwood Cres,
Wednesdays 7-9pm, info:
eclectica@100milearts.com

December 6-20 Log
Cabin Quilters, 1st and 3rd
Wednesday of each month
Sept-June 9:30am-1:30pm,
Interlakes Hall 7592 Hwy
24, info: 250-593-4456

December 7,14,21,28
Full Contact Stick Fight-
ing, Thursday evenings in
Lac La Hache. Info: Renée
wlchick@hotmail.com or
www.coillmohr.com

December 7,14,21,28
TOPS Club, take off pounds
sensibly, Thursdays 6:30pm,
United Church, info:
Kirsteen 250-395-3344

December 7,14,21,28
Royal Canadian Army
Cadets, Thursdays 18:30-
22:30, 5530 Horse Lk Rd,
info: Capt. Kevin Seal 250-
395-1181

December 7,14,21,28
Alcoholics Anonymous,
Thursdays 7:30pm, 108
Community Centre

December 9 Eclec-
tica Annual Food Bank
Concert, admission by cash
donation, Bethel Church
2pm

December 12 Commu-
nity Band Christmas Con-
cert, Fischer Place 6:30pm

December 13 NYE
Adult Cooking Class,
making appies & snacks
with Chef Crystal-Dawn
Langton, PSO Home Ec
Room 6-8:30, pre-register:
250-395-1353

December 13 Compas-
sionate Friends, bereaved
parents support group,
2nd Wednesday of the
month, BJ's Donuts
7:15pm, 250-395-4417

December 14 Festival
of the Arts Christmas
Dinner, The Great Wok
6pm

December 16 Christ-
mas Bazaar, crafts, baking,
canteen, bannock, Canim
Lake Band Gym 10-3

December 22-23 11th
Annual Christmas Mad-
ness Adult 3 on 3 Tourna-
ment, rec and 40+ divi-
sions, team (9 skaters plus
goalie, 12 players max)
\$640, prizes, registration
deadline Dec. 18: 250-395-
1353, South Cariboo Rec
Ctr

December 26 Cottage
Prayer Meeting, every last
Tuesday of the month,
6715 Hwy 97 turn left at
the blue Travelling Work-
shop sign, 7:30-8:30pm,
info: 250-395-3743

December 31 6th An-
nual Bullarama & Dance,
NT Agriplex, Barriere,
6pm


Special Occasions in Style



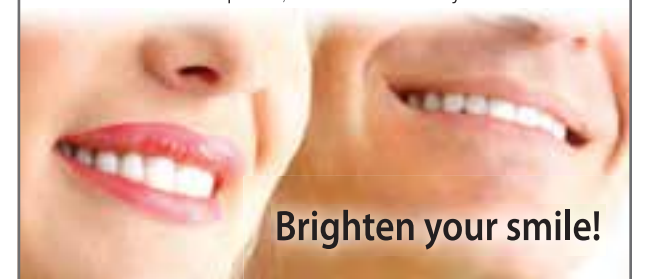
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SIGNAL POINT NEWS!

DID YOU KNOW?

Community organizations may be eligible for government community gaming grants to support their programs and services. Payments for approved grants are made throughout each government fiscal year, and the timing of the payments depends on the grant category / sector.

Last year approximately \$950,163 went back to the Williams Lake community and surrounding area from gaming dollars!

For a full detailed list of Gaming Grants paid to community organizations please visit www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/reports/#six then find Williams Lake on the list

DID YOU KNOW?

Signal Point Gaming is now a **High Payout Center for BCLC Lottery Game Prizes!** Claim prizes up to \$9,999.99 (see Signal Point Management for details, some restrictions apply).

Prizes \$10,000 and greater must be claimed at the BCLC office in Kamloops or Vancouver. Call 1-866-815-0222 for more info.

Come and support this great event and share in the Christmas Spirit!

How it works:

- 1) **Decorate a Tree:** local charities are challenged to decorate a Christmas tree for the Festival
- 2) **Vote:** guests who bring a food or toy donation will receive a ballot to cast a vote for their favourite tree
- 3) **Found Money Donation:** The top 3 voted trees will split Signal Point's Oct.-Dec. accumulation of Found Money
- 4) **Donations to Local Charities:** toy and food donations will be distributed amongst these local charities:

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centre association
Investing in kids

Canadian Mental
Health Association
Cariboo Chilcotin Branch

Boys & Girls Clubs
of Williams Lake

Williams Lake
Association for
Community Living
Women's Contact Society

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BINGO: Sat-Sun games at 3pm and 6:30pm • Mon, Thurs, Fri game at 6:30pm

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read

Cookbooks every home cook should own



A great cookbook is the total package: it has delicious recipes that work, beautiful photography, writing that inspires and intrigues, and, most importantly, it covers a type of food that people are excited to eat. A truly amazing cookbook earns its stains through frequent use, and can almost become a family member as it reappears year after year at birthdays and holidays. But some books are even more than that.



The Joy of Cooking, 75th Anniversary Edition, by Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker, and Ethan Becker

The Pretty-Much-Every-Recipe-Ever Workhorse. There are lots of offerings in the all-purpose category, and many of them are great. Standouts include *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman, a slew of titles from the gang at America's Test Kitchen, and Julia Child's *The Way to Cook*. But for our go-to, we went with the OG encyclopedic volume. After all, *The Joy of Cooking* has to be doing something right to stay in print for 85 years now.

The edition here is important. This 2006 publication is an updated version of the Rombauer family-approved 1975 edition—it preserves a lot of the voice that was lost in the 1997 edition. Of course, if you prefer a family heirloom edition with your grandmother's handwritten notes, who are we to argue?

Mastering the Art of French Cooking, by Julia

Child, Louisette Bertholle, and Simone Beck

The Ultimate Gourmet Classic. It is hard to overstate the impact this tome had on home cooking when it first came out in 1961. In addition to introducing the world to late national treasure Julia Child, it also opened American eyes to authentic French cuisine and sparked a national interest in gourmet cooking. Before this book came out, French food was something that only happened in fancy (read: expensive) restaurants and, well, in France. After this book came out, everyone was suddenly rushing to put boeuf Bourguignon on the table at their next dinner party.

Infamously full of complicated recipes; the entire plot of the 2009 film *Julie and Julia* hinges on this fact. But if you've been too intimidated to try out Child's masterwork, do know that not every recipe requires killing live lobsters or preparing complicated terrines.

Baking: From My Home to Yours, by Dorie Greenspan

The Sweet Tooth Satisfier. Dorie Greenspan's writing is so charming, her fans refer to her on a first-name basis. But do not be fooled by the friendly headnotes: these recipes are serious business. More than any other baking author we can think of, Dorie Greenspan's recipes work. You can lean on them hard when you need

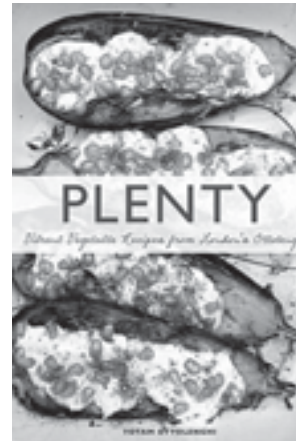
a cake or a batch of cookies to turn out well.

We picked *Baking* out of all of Greenspan's books largely because it's comprehensive. If we were only going to put one baking book in the canon, it couldn't just cover desserts. *Baking* tops out at a whopping 300 recipes, starting at the breakfast table. And while we love her collaborations with chefs like Julia Child, Pierre Herme, and Daniel Boulud, she's at her best when she's writing for herself. Yes, picking this book leaves a bit of a blind spot on our list when it comes to bread baking—Greenspan does cover brioche, quick breads, and biscuits—but in every other capacity this is the ideal baking book.

The Taste of Country Cooking, by Edna Lewis
The Ode to Southern Food. Before Southern food was trendy, before seemingly every restaurant across the country put pimento cheese on their menu and country ham became as prized as Prosciutto di Parma, there was Edna Lewis. Her work preserves Southern food culture, African-American food culture, and a way of American life that has all but disappeared. But as much as this book can be seen as an artifact of a vanishing cuisine, Lewis was also remarkably ahead of her time.

Lewis grew up in Freetown, Virginia, a tiny farming community established by freed slaves that revolved around the ebbs and flows of the growing seasons. Accordingly, her classic book is organized into menus by season, which was practically unheard of when it came out in 1976.

Lewis was also an excellent baker. As winning as her writing is—this is one of several volumes on this list that is just as good to read as it is to cook with. The biscuits are deservedly famous, and her pancakes are a common favourite.



Plenty: Vibrant Vegetable Recipes from London's Ottolenghi, by Yotam Ottolenghi

The Fresh Take on Vegetables. What is it about Yotam Ottolenghi? Every year dozens of British cookbooks are published in the US, but rarely do they make much of a splash. And yet when the Israel-born London chef's cookbook *Plenty* showed up stateside, it was a sensation. Who knew Americans would go bonkers for a book about vegetables?

But go bonkers they did. Maybe it's *Plenty's* Mediterranean take on fresh produce. Maybe it's a much-needed burst of colour in the pantheon of vegetarian cookbooks. Whatever it is, it was enough to propel Ottolenghi's next book, *Jerusalem*, into instant-hit status and to spawn a sequel to the first book, *Plenty More*. Suddenly, American home cooks were sprinkling fresh herbs and pomegranate seeds on their food with abandon, and you couldn't throw a rock without hitting a restaurant that served shakshuka, an egg dish featured in multiple Ottolenghi cookbooks.

Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking, by Marcella Hazan

The Italian Food Bible. Okay, technically this is two books in one: Marcella Hazan's *The Classic Italian Cookbook* and *More Classic Italian Cooking*. But when it comes to Hazan, we can't get enough. Before Hazan, Italian food in American was all red sauce and meatballs the size of your fist. It was Hazan who introduced Americans to the idea of

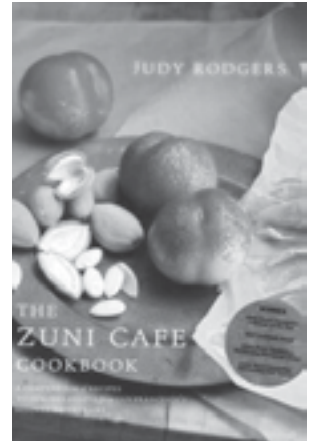
pairing pasta shape with sauces, encouraged using seasonal produce in Italian cooking, and started the craze for balsamic vinegar.

And then there's the tomato sauce. Described by more than one editor at Epicurious as a "magic trick," Hazan's four ingredient sauce is bewitchingly simple and incredibly addictive. This is a recipe so famous it could almost earn a spot on this list by itself—but thankfully, we have a whole body of Hazan's work to appreciate.

Momofuku, by David Chang and Peter Meehan
The Restaurant Book You'll Actually Use. There's so much home cooks can learn from chef and restaurant books, even if they never end up using the recipes. Thankfully, this is a book that is as usable as it is influential. It's not hard to argue that David Chang and *Momofuku* have had more influence on American food in this nascent century than any other entity, and it's visible in *Momofuku*. Recipes that seemed novel when it was published in 2009 now seem commonplace.

We also wanted to include a book with show-off recipes. *The Joy of Cooking* is great for when you need to know how to make meatloaf, say, but every once in awhile you really want to throw down and make an impressive meal. That is when we reach for *Momofuku*. Maybe not the intensive ramen recipe, but the bo ssäm, which is within reach for most enthusiastic home cooks. There are also remarkably easy recipes here: a whole section on quick pickles, for example, or a riff on a caprese salad made of cherry tomatoes, silken tofu, and shiso leaves, a type of Japanese herb.

In other words, *Momofuku* is the ultimate chef book: excellent writing about a supremely talented and influential chef, and recipes for almost any skill level. It's a pretty remarkable document.



The Zuni Cafe Cookbook, by Judy Rodgers
The Seasonal Cooking Manifesto. The late chef Judy Rodgers spent years writing these 500 pages, almost unheard of in a world of ghostwriters and PR-driven restaurant cookbooks. The result is a book that's a cornerstone of how many people cook today, with a heavy emphasis on technique.

One of the cookbook world's great, famed recipes is the *Zuni Cafe* roast chicken; a dense, five-page recipe legendary for its meticulousness.

Mexico One Plate at a Time, by Rick Bayless

The Intro to Mexican Cuisine. This book is an excellent introduction to Mexican cuisine. The recipes are not complex, but they are authentic: a launchpad to master before you head into further exploration, more complicated techniques, and harder-to-find ingredients.

This is also a great example of a book that explains why everything is done the way it's done. Bayless discusses the cultural positioning of each dish (this one is eaten at street fairs, that one is made for big family Sunday suppers) and explains why the food is prepared the way it is. He also provides notes for American cooks; it was written in 2000, so you should have better access to Mexican ingredients these days. Still, it's nice to know that you should avoid dried epazote and opt for fresh, or how to swap ancho chiles for guajillo (and vice versa).



The Key



Tasty Tidbits
By Paige Reinelt

...a short story continued from November's Stew Magazine

I shut my light off and wait for the dreams to come.

But I don't get any of the dreams. I get flashes. Flashes of the beach, the waves, the horse, of Chris. I feel the sand in between my toes if only for a second. I toss and I turn, but my dreams are nothing like they were before. It's almost as though the flashes are telling me that the dreams are saying goodbye.

I jolt up, sweat dripping down. Instinctively I reach again for the skeleton key, but it's not there. Again, it's gone.

"What?" I shout out. "No!"

I start searching my bed, praying that the necklace just fell off in the middle of the night, and maybe that would explain things. I lift up my blankets and search my sheets. I jump off the bed, and I search the floor,

throwing the blankets up so that I can see under my bed. The necklace is gone.

I run over to my bathroom and search the counters, the floor, anywhere that the key could be hidden. It is nowhere to be found. Tears stream down my cheeks as I grow frustrated.

"How could it be gone?" I cry. "This doesn't make any sense!"

Jayleen hears me, and knocks on my door.

"Luce? Lucy," she says through the door. "Are you okay? What's wrong?"

She opens my door and sees me sitting in the middle of my room, on the floor.

"What's wrong?" She asks again.

"It's gone!"

Jayleen sits in front of me, "What's gone?"

"The skeleton key." I cry.

"The necklace?"

"Yeah, it's gone again."

"Did you lose it?"

"No," I get up off the floor, wiping my eyes. "It's

just gone."

Jayleen hugs me, "Honey, it's just a necklace."

I hug her back. She knows the significance of the necklace. What it meant to me. But I remain quiet and let her think that she is consoling me.

I have to talk to Mary. I have to ask her why the key left me again. What was causing it to give me these dreams? What is the answer to it all?

"I have to get ready for work," I tell Jayleen.

"I thought you didn't work today."

I shake my head, "Oh right, well I need to go and see my boss for something."

Jayleen nods and leaves the room, "It's going to be alright, Lucy"

I am dressed and out the door in ten minutes. At the store in twenty, and I go straight towards that jewelry stand. And there, just like it was yesterday, hanging off the branch of the tree stand, is my necklace.

A wave of relief washes over me once more, as I take it off the stand.

"Lucy?" Mary's voice comes from around the corner. "What are you doing here today?"

"My necklace," I say.

"Oh," Mary's voice grows quiet. "Well, I'm sorry to tell you this, but if it is back on the stand, then it's no longer your necklace."

She gently takes the necklace from my hand



and hangs it back on the tree stand.

"I don't understand," I say, staring longingly at the key.

"I told you that it always finds its way home," Mary says, taking my arm. "It seems that the key has shown you everything that it needs to, and it has come back to be ready for the next person who needs it."

"That's it?"

She nods. I try not to be upset, but it feels like a part of me has been taken away.

"It'll be okay, dear," Mary tells me. "The necklace had a purpose in your life, to show you something. Now it's time to pass that on." She pats me on the back.

"Now go on and enjoy your day. I will see you here tomorrow."

I head back home, frustrated and confused. As I walk through the door, I am greeted again by my

roommate.

"Lucy?"

"Hi," I say, feeling slightly annoyed. "Didn't you have to work today?"

She nods, "Yeah, but someone from work wanted to switch shifts with me, and I am a little worried about you."

"I'm fine."

"Did you find the necklace?"

I wonder if I should lie to her again. She didn't believe me when I told her about the dreams, and I am sure that she wouldn't believe it if I told her that it magically reappeared at work. So I shook my head and told her no.

"I'm sure you'll find it eventually."

I nod my head.

"Hey, now that you are home, do you want to come to the Farmer's Market with me? There is this new recipe that I want to try, and I could use some fresh ingredients."

"Aw, you want to cook for me?" I try and joke around with her.

"Oh, I won't be the only

one cooking." She smiles. "I have got to get you to start cooking with me."

I laugh, and we turn around to head out the door.

We get to the Farmer's Market half an hour later, and start searching the stands for fresh vegetables. I look over and see a stand that sells strawberries, and my mouth starts to water.

"I'm going to get some strawberries, Jay," I tell her, heading towards the stand.

Looking at all the beautiful red fruit, I search for the ripest bunch, when the seller pops up from crouching below the stand.

"Hello there," He says, smiling at me.

I look at him, instantly recognizing Chris from my dreams. I'm taken back at first, taking in every feature. Yes, as corny as it sounds, this is the guy from my dreams. I smile instantly.

His smile grows bigger, "Have we met?"

~The End

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THE STEW MAGAZINE'S Monthly MIX



HOLIDAYS OF THE MONTH

- Dec 1 Eat a Red Apple Day
- Dec 3 Make a Gift Day
- Dec 4 Wear Brown Shoes Day
- Dec 6 Microwave Oven Day
- Dec 7 Letter Writing Day
- Dec 8 Pretend to Be a Time Traveler Day
- Dec 8 Official Lost and Found Day
- Dec 9 Christmas Card Day
- Dec 10 Dewey Decimal System Day
- Dec 12 Gingerbread House Day
- Dec 13 Christmas Jumper Day
- Dec 14 Monkey Day
- Dec 15 Free Shipping Day
- Dec 16 Chocolate Covered Anything Day
- Dec 17 Wright Brothers Day
- Dec 19 Underdog Day
- Dec 19 Ugly Sweater Day
- Dec 20 Sangria Day
- Dec 21 International Dalek Remembrance Day
- Dec 22 Date Nut Bread Day
- Dec 23 Festivus
- Dec 24 Eggnog Day
- Dec 26 Thank You Note Day
- Dec 27 No Interruptions Day
- Dec 28 Card Playing Day
- Dec 29 Pepper Pot Day
- Dec 30 Bicarbonate of Soda Day
- Dec 31 Make Up Your Mind Day

read



Ode to a Christmas cake

A POEM BY LINDA PURJUE

Oh, wondrous, luscious cake,
Monarch of holiday treats,
Filled with the glories of summer
And the love of celebration.

What a fine ritual
Each year in the middle of Fall,
To bring out the big earthenware bowl
And begin to fill it to the brim.

Raisins and currants,
Dates and sugared ginger,
Candied fruits and peels,
All are dumped with reverence into the bowl.

Into great jars of dried apples and pears,
Peaches, plums and cherries,
I thrust my hands and draw out
Masses of treasures from the orchard.

A cascade of golden-white almonds
Is sprinkled over all,
Then drenched in amber rum
To stew and mellow for the night.

When morning shimmers through autumn's gilding,
The pans are fetched from their corners,
Papered and oiled,
Ready to fill.
Flour, spices, butter and eggs,
Are beaten together
Then lovingly folded into the fruits,
Redolent with culinary wealth.

The batter is so thick that the wooden spoon
Must be abandoned and hands plunged in
To squeeze and mingle together
This ambrosia of the holidays.

Writers' Showcase

Short Stories by
the Williams Lake
Writer's Group



Into the pans the batter is scooped,
And tucked in with blankets of paper,
Then into the oven to patiently bake,
Ever so slowly to perfection.

Baked and cooled,
They are kissed once again by rum
Then wrapped in cloths and stored away
To age to sublimity.

Oh, Christmas cake, incomparable delicacy,
Brought out for favoured guests,
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do



Paste from the Green Lagoon

Have you ever tried to feed a kid Palak Paneer?

If you don't know what this (incredibly delicious) East Indian dish is, it's essentially spinach paste with cheese that will never melt. Sound appetizing? No? Try feeding it to anyone

that's still under double digits. Even most adults give it a nasty side-eye, but if you want a tasty meal that's also made with one pound of spinach, it's a great go-to.

That is until we sat down for dinner the other night.

I was strategic in my

table placement. Out came the butter chicken, directly between the two drooling kiddos. Followed by seasoned rice, with warmed garlic naan beside it, and the Palak Paneer sat in front of me with a decorative plate over it to "keep it warm."

Then we talked up dessert. I'm not much of a baker but my Oma's apple crisp pie is a pretty foolproof recipe, especially if you cheat and buy the premade crust. But really, how do you go wrong with butter, apples, cinnamon, more butter and flour?



Pint-Sized

By Jazmyn Douillard

The kidlets know it well, and they know no one gets a slice until they've at least given a good try at every part of their dinner.

They could smell the pie, but they're not dumb. They were eyeing up the mystery dish like it could hold a scorpion dipped in Buckley's. I knew there was no getting past it, so I didn't even try.

"Close your eyes and try it." It wasn't a request, and they knew it. One last look at the pie they knew was in the oven, then a few grumbles, then they reluctantly slid both plates across the table towards me.

On went a scoop of rice, followed by a scoop of mottled green sludge.

Hearing their plates as they shuffled back across the table towards them, I knew they'd get a whiff of garlic, lemon and a myriad of spices. Thankfully, spinach doesn't have much of a smell, so they didn't have much of an idea as to what lay beneath their noses.

"A big mouthful

each." Another gentle demand, but they were far less reluctant this time as each kid took a hearty scoop and plunged ahead.

Would you believe me if I said there were smiles, and oohs and aahhs? Okay, maybe it was just a surprised "mmm" but I'll take what I can get.

Until they opened their eyes, and a resounding, "EW! Mom what did you screw up?!" could be heard all the way down the block. Both kids poked and prodded but eventually gave it a second try. They weren't enjoying themselves as much as they did during the blind taste test, but eventually plates were cleaned of all but a little rice, and there were no leftovers of the butter chicken. (Guess who was eating Panak Paneer for her lunch the next day? Yup)

But they tried it, and reluctantly even kind of, sort of, liked it. I can say the pie was received much better overall though, despite my struggles with baking.

selfies with Santa!

Dec 16th 1-5pm
Dec 17th 12-4pm

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do

Do young people need life insurance?

Liquid Assets

By Adele McLearn

I hear many young people (millennials as they are called these days) make the statement that because they have no children or debts, they have no reason to purchase life insurance.

One fact that may be considered is that these two factors could change – the question is when?

There are several reasons why a millennial may want to consider purchasing life insurance now – before any of the above life changing events happen.

They are healthy now (hopefully!). If someone

has a medical condition or a lifestyle that would cause them to be declined for insurance or if they are accepted, may be rated – meaning that they will pay a much higher price than someone who does not have a medical condition or a less than positive lifestyle.

What does lifestyle have to do with buying insurance? If someone has quite a number of speeding tickets or has used unprescribed/recreational drugs, their lifestyle is one that is considered a much



higher risk to the insurance company. The higher the risk factor, the greater the chance of being declined for coverage or charged a much higher rate for premiums.

Just as your Credit Bureau looks and keep record of your spending pat-

terns – which determines your credit score – which determines who will loan you money and how much they will charge you – the Medical Investigation Bureau (MIB) keeps track of your medical history. For example, if you apply for life insurance and are

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A recipe for lifelong passion, and stew

Out of the Fridge

By Brice O'Neill



Cooking takes on a whole new meaning when you decide you are going to do it for money. As someone who has spent the majority of his adult life in a kitchen, food and cooking have become more than a way to avoid hunger/death. Cooking became a way of life for me, an outlet for expression, and a way to create. When people ask how long I've been cooking, I tell them that my Mom says I have been cooking since I could reach the top of the stove.

I asked some people

to tell me about their experiences as a cook, and surprisingly most of them agreed to allow me to write what they said in this column. The first one is Jose Santo, the chef/owner of Joey's Grill, a landmark in Williams Lake. "I started cooking when I was about 7 years old, helping my mom in the kitchen. In 1968, I started cooking professionally, and still make sauce and soups today, the way I was taught, the old-school, French Canadian way; real stocks made from scratch, fresh quality ingredients.

It's kind of sad that today's cooking is more about speed than quality; convenience over quality. I would really like cooking to go back to the way it was in the 50s and 60s." I should point out that I was fortunate enough to work under Joe as an apprentice and his signature is on my certificate of qualification.

The next person I talked to about cooking is the chef/owner of CJ's Southwestern Grill, Cathie Rossignol. Although she has had no formal cooking school experience, restaurants are in her blood, having worked in the industry for years before breaking out on her own. "This job is sometimes thankless. To make a career as a Restaurateur takes an ability to endure long hours in a very stressful environment. I think that cooking as a professional is becoming a thing of the past; there are

few people interested in it anymore." During the wild-fire situation in the Cariboo, Cathie stayed (literally, she and her cooks slept in the restaurant) to make food for the fire crews, other first responders, and even the prime minister!

The next person I asked was Kathy Turner, the Sous Chef at New World. MY Sous Chef. She started cooking at a young age as well, going from diners, to fast food, to corporate family restaurants. We still joke about the day she applied to work at New World six or so years ago. I scanned her resume and realized quickly that it looked a lot like mine – we had done a lot of the same kinds of cooking in the same kinds of places, and I knew I wanted to work with her, so I said, "Can you start in 15 minutes?" She laughed and said, "How about tomorrow?" When I asked her for some

thoughts on being a cook for this article, she offered me this: "Cooking is making people happy. We get to express our love through our food. Making food for family and friends is the most enjoyable thing for me." I think this resonates with anyone who makes food; we give pleasure to people. To see someone smile as they enjoy what you have created is such an amazing feeling.

Rob Hyde is a very good friend of mine who I met when he was beginning his adventure in the culinary world. I have been fortunate enough to stand beside him in kitchens and watch as he grew into a Chef. He is the Executive Chef of The Point Restaurant. Here is what he told me about being a cook. "Cooking for a living can be a tremendous experience. The fact that people enjoy something we created is quite rewarding. The great-

est value for me, though, is the friendships I have developed with my co-workers." This is especially poignant to me because I once had him tied up with duct tape and tossed into the trunk of my car – if that's not friendship, what is?

What recipe would a cook do for an article in The Stew Magazine's cooking issue, other than a **stew recipe**? Get some meat, beef, chicken, moose, rabbit etc. brown it off in a pot with some fat. Remove meat, add vegetables, onion, celery, carrot... you get the idea. Pour in a bit of liquid (beer, wine, cider, water, stock, whatever you like). Scrape up all the good bits that are stuck to the bottom of the pot. Pour in a bunch of stock, return the meat to the pot and add some potatoes. Bring just to a boil, cover and simmer until you're ready to eat it. Thicken as you like with whatever starch you prefer, and enjoy. Easy eh?

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The bread and butter of home renos



Let's face it. When we buy a home, we're making one of the biggest investments of our lives. Once purchased, the cash we infuse into our homes in terms of renovations is also a significant investment. It is important, then, that we make our choices wisely. By wisely, I mean choices that will maximize both our own enjoyment of the home, and also the resale value of the property. This, of course, raises the question of which renovations result in the best return of value. Here are, according to Genworth

Canada, 5 of the top value-producing renovations.

Number one: the cookery. Kitchen renos are among the best places to put your financial ingredients. According to a report in MoneySense Magazine, modernizing your kitchen can kick back as much as 87% of investment. One study conducted by Style Magazine states that a kitchen may return 100% of the cost of investment. That means that if you buy a \$200,000 house needing a kitchen upgrade, spend \$30,000 renovating it, you



may (other significant factors considered) raise the value of your place to \$230,000. That's awesome! One caveat: be sure you do your research before painting your kitchen the way of whim and fancy; consult a Realtor to find out what's "hot" in the market.

Number two (no pun intended): the loo. Like kitchen renos, a modern bathroom upgrade or full

addition returns between 75% and 100% of your investment. Genworth Canada reports that adding a second or third bathroom to your place is one of the wisest choices homeowners can make, in terms of renovation ROI. Like all renos, let your choices be made in accordance with market desire.

Number three: fixtures. This is a broad term de-

scribing all the little things that hide here and there throughout your house. The faucet, lights, countertops, window trim, etc., all fall within the fixture category. For those of us who live on a budget, paying attention to your fixtures is a great way to get good bang for your buck. According to Canadian Mortgages Inc., homeowners typically see 85%-100% return on investments they make in fixture upgrades. One tip: don't forget the "fixtures" under your sink. Plumbing and piping is a great upgrade to ensure value for a future buyer.

Number four: flooring. Of course! If the market likes hardwood, invest in hardwood. If the market likes carpet, invest in carpet. Just try to keep your flooring relatively uniform throughout the house. No, you may not receive 100% return for flooring, simply because not everyone agrees

on the value of certain shades and colours. You can, however, likely expect 75%-90% return on investment.

Number five: an income suite. This really should be number one. The return on investment for constructing an income suite is unique. You will almost always see a 100% return because of the future cash flow it promises to any buyer. To reasonably ensure a 100% return, however, you must build it according to current code. If City bylaws change, illegal suites can cost you big bucks!

Buying a house is a huge investment. Ensuring the improved value of that house is also a significant outlay. So, you want to be sure to cook with only the best when it comes to your home-reno investment choices. The five renos listed above will, according to this Realtor, help ensure you're "cooking with butter" when it comes to the overall value of your biggest asset.

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If I could cook...

Food for Thought

By Rita Corbett



Please don't tell Santa, or any of the other jolly folk who miraculously appear at my door during the holidays... I'm not so good at making cookies. But things have improved! The secret of not burning them was recently whispered to me – simply add a second cookie sheet under the

one with the globs of dough on it. But that wasn't the whole problem. Suffice it to say – if you come to my house in December, bring your own cookies – mine are a surprise that Santa would be better off without.

I recall an exciting meal my mother once made for us. She had

inadvertently put sugar in the cheesy rice dish instead of salt. We loved the first shocking bite, but that was the end of any savouring. If you salivate for lively dinner conversation, perhaps try substituting an item or two with exciting, irregular ingredients. Everyone makes well-intentioned mistakes, but a pattern of sugar for salt, salt for baking powder, or cinnamon for curry – no thanks! Not all surprises are delightful.

If I ever cook up something tasty, it will be because I stuck to the recipe. Relationships, organizations, governments and even recipes

call for accountability. Meanwhile, if I should encounter folks who are dipping themselves in the half-baked batter of self-centeredness, I could take my pancake turner and flip their thinking into place. Perhaps some extra time in heated circumstances could roast their selfishness into a genuine interest in others. Then intelligence would create heroes instead of scoundrels. But who would listen when my cookies are so bad?

If things aren't right, maybe it isn't the cookies. Maybe it isn't even the recipe. Maybe it's me, or just persistent thoughts of me-me-me. No wonder some recipes aren't working – we have misread, and reversed the proportions! What was once a

heap of moral principles and a pinch of tactful politicking... well, you get the idea. Though the aroma may be appealing, who wants a cookie where the flavour of baking soda reigns? I tried that once!

Switching some ideas back around might yet work. Could we simply return to original values when we mix, add, stir, and pour our decisions? Perhaps after a little time in the oven, we might then hear, "Well done."

There will be no white lies in a life of integrity. A differing opinion does not equal a hate crime. And the real violence is perpetrated on those who are baked into silence. There are no solutions when the conversation is confined to the freezer. If the little things are right, the big

ones will be, too. For want of a nail a horseshoe, then a horse, then a battle was lost. And maybe a nation or two.

If I could cook, I would whisk up trouble for those who cheat, those who lie, those who steal, those who selfishly regard their own collecting above the welfare of others. Take a lesson from Santa – he brings a bag full of toys, knowing that all he will get for his efforts are a few burnt cookies and a glass of milk.

The little things really are the big things. Let's sit down and talk. Let's cook up solutions openly and honestly, and above all – kindly. Most things shouldn't be broiled. But someone else would have to bring the cookies.

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All I want for Christmas is tech



I normally talk about all the new toys coming out for Christmas that makes any geek like me drool. I will get to that, but I wanted to touch on how technology is now helping us cook.

In the early days with just fire and a pot the menu selection was limited. Everything was some kind of stew or burnt meat or both. As we began to experiment, the cooking process became more sophisticated. Ovens were built with fires to heat top and bottom, allowing us to oven-bake our food.

Fast forward to the invention of the microwave which was discovered by

accident. The discovery is attributed to a self-taught engineer named Percy Spencer who, when working on radar technology, noticed that the chocolate bar in his pocket melted. Putting two and two together, he then specifically tried to heat things up. The very first experiment was popcorn; kind of ironic because that is the food most cooked in my microwave.

In my futuristic mind I foresee this scene happening soon. "Hey (Google, Alexa, Siri) I'm hungry." "What would you like for dinner Craig?" "Well, I'm thinking breakfast. How about

eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast." "OK Craig, I can do that." Now that loooooong wait of 10-30 seconds. "Your dinner is ready, Craig." "Thanks (Google, Alexa, Siri)."

People laugh at me when I say this, thinking maybe I've watched too much Star Trek, but I've seen many things from that show that are now a reality. So far, I have voice controlled my computer, my TV, my music and some of my lights; it's not totally inconceivable.

Before I run out of room, I should probably talk about the new tech coming out this year. Let's start with the obvious.

All the phone companies have new products and there is a rumour that Samsung has perfected the folding screen, so a foldable phone may be released in the next few months. I guess in some ways we are going a little backwards as we used to call them flip phones. TVs keep getting

better and better, and now technology such as 4k is common. TVs that used to cost thousands are now hovering at the \$500 mark. Virtual reality is becoming more and more commonplace, with the price of sets now down to a couple hundred dollars. If you have a good smart phone, you can get a VR case like the google cardboard which really is just that; cardboard with a couple of lenses.

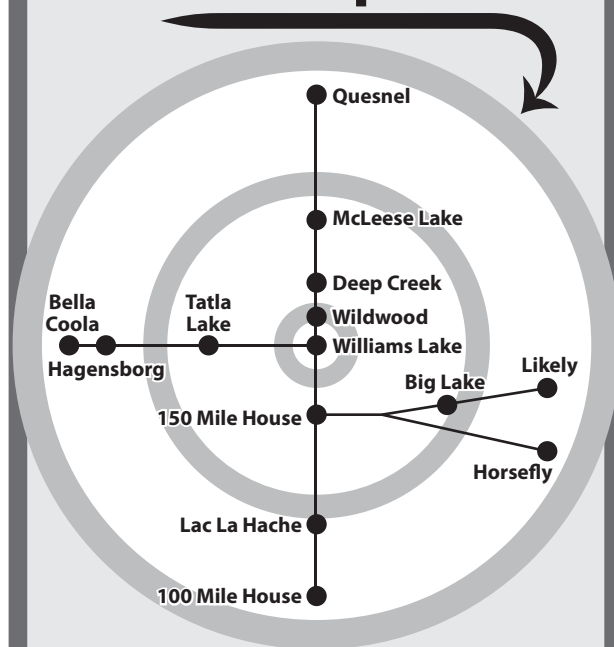
The big jump this Christmas is probably going to be personal assistants. Amazon is finally releasing Alexa into Canada at the beginning of December, after letting Google Home have the monopoly here for almost a year. The price point keeps dropping and a Google Home Mini was on sale for \$39.99 during black Friday sales. I have a couple of these devices, and my suggestion is to get one. If nothing else, it will solve the "who controls the TV remote" problem. If you're like me and have a universal remote controlling your entertainment system, you might have a frustrated spouse who gives up on watching the TV because of all the buttons. Get yourself a Google Home or Amazon Alexa, and marital bliss will sound like, "Hey Google, turn on the TV, play Grey's Anatomy on Netflix, volume at 50%."



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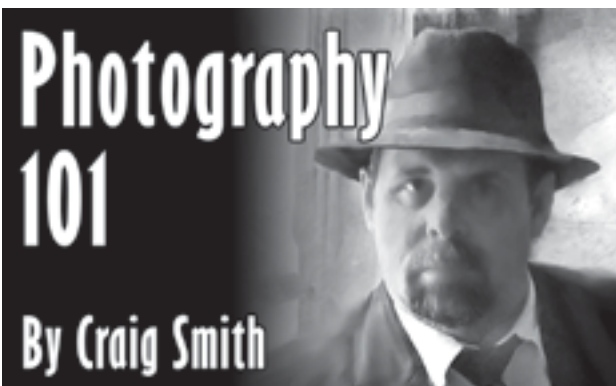
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Food photography tricks



How many times have you looked at an image of food in a cookbook or on a menu and drooled, only to have it not look the same or even look unappetizing when you have it put in front of you. There is a reason for it and believe me when I tell you, you don't want to eat the food that was photo-

graphed for those images.

After years of practice and a couple of courses by the best food photographers around, I can create those images that you have drooled over and today I'm going to let you in on a couple secrets.

Let's start with the photography of drinks – the ice cubes are fake.

They are actually plastic and if you think about it, studios before the invention of the flash used hot lights, so ice cubes would not have survived long enough to photograph. Second, all cold drinks will condense, but these aren't cold as the ice cubes aren't real, so now we have to create the condensation. We do that with a mixture of glycerine and water. This solution will drip a little after being sprayed on but will stick, allowing time for the photographs to be taken.

Now for something easy, like a hamburger. First the bun – it has to be perfect – the right colour, perfect shape and symmetrical. If the sesame

seeds aren't in the right spots, we glue some on. To give it the right sheen, we paint on some oil or spray it with hairspray. The lettuce and tomato get picked for colour and symmetry, and you have to go through a lot of produce to find the best ones. They get sprayed with a glycerine mixture to make it look fresh and shiny. The same will be done with the meat patty, if it's even real to begin with. It gets put on the plate perfectly, but doesn't look quite right – what's missing is the illusion that it is hot off the grill. Steam is very hard to photograph properly, as it really doesn't linger, so the alternative is cigarette

smoke piped into the burger to make it look like it was just served.

Some of the other tricks used are things such as a very liberal use of food colour when the real thing isn't colourful enough. Instead of milk for some cereal photography, white glue is used as it doesn't make the cereal soggy. Strawberries are made more colourful using lipstick. Instead of whipped cream on desserts or waffles, shaving cream is used because it stays looking nicer for longer, and unless you are eating it you can't tell the difference.

Mashed potatoes are often substituted for ice cream, and used as stuffing in various foods to add bulk. Shoe polish is used to create grill

marks on steaks, and a hair dryer and blowtorch are normal tools on a food set. Using motor oil instead of syrup, alka seltzer to create bubbles, soya sauce for colour and talcum powder are a few other tools in the food photographer's box of tricks.

Once the images are shot, you have photo editing programs to pump up the colour saturation, and even change the colour on parts of your images.

The next time the Instagram picture of your dinner doesn't look like the menu picture, keep some of these tricks in mind and remember that the actual food in the picture is totally inedible.

Until next time, happy shooting.

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Bored with your holiday movie selection?

Check out these lesser-known and non-traditional seasonal movie titles

Home Alone movie series, comedy/family, PG, IMDb rating 7.5/10

You may have heard of these movies, but have you seen all five? From the original *Home Alone* (1990), to the most recent in this franchise, *Home Alone: The Holiday Heist* (2012), you'll find loads of entertainment for the

whole family.

A Princess for Christmas, comedy/drama/family, G, IMDb rating 6.5/10

At the invitation of an estranged relative, a young woman travels with her niece and nephew to a castle in Europe for Christmas, where she unwittingly falls for a dashing Prince.



Krampus, comedy/fantasy/horror, PG-13, IMDb rating 6.2/10

A boy who has a bad Christmas ends up accidentally summoning a festive demon to his family home.

Black Christmas, horror/mystery/thriller, R, IMDb rating 7.2/10

During their Christmas break, a group of sorority girls are stalked by a stranger.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, animation/adventure/comedy, TV-G, IMDb rating 8.1/10

A misfit reindeer and his friends look for a place that will accept them.

Scrooged, comedy/drama/fantasy, PG-13, IMDb rating 7.0/10

A selfish, cynical TV executive is haunted by three spirits bearing lessons on Christmas Eve.

Northpole: Open for Christmas, fantasy, TV-G, IMDb rating 6.6/10

A successful businesswoman, Mackenzie, inherits her beloved Aunt's inn, and chooses to restore the hotel to its original grandeur, only to sell it right before Christmas.

Fred Claus, comedy/family/fantasy, PG, IMDb rating 5.6/10

Fred Claus, Santa's bitter older brother, is forced to move to the North Pole to help Santa and the elves prepare for Christmas in exchange for cash.

Arthur Christmas, animation/adventure/comedy, PG, IMDb rating 7.1/10

Santa's clumsy son Arthur gets put on a mission with St. Nick's father

to give out a present they misplaced to a young girl in less than 2 hours.

P2, crime/horror/thriller, R, IMDb rating 5.9/10

A businesswoman is pursued by a psychopath after being locked in a parking garage on Christmas Eve.



The Ref, comedy/crime/drama, R, IMDb rating 6.9/10

A cat burglar is forced to take a bickering, dysfunctional family hostage on Christmas Eve.

Hats Off to Christmas!, drama/romance, TV-PG, IMDb rating 6.1/10

Mia, the loyal and hard-working manager of her small town's Christmas hat shop, is blindsided when her boss of over ten years asks her to train his son.



Deck the Halls, comedy/family, PG, IMDb

rating 4.9/10

Two neighbors have it out after one of them decorates his house for the holidays so brightly that it can be seen from space.



A Christmas Carol (1951 starring Alastair Sim), drama/fantasy, IMDb rating 8.1/10

In this classic original, an old bitter miser is given a chance for redemption when he is haunted by three ghosts on Christmas Eve. Choose from the original black and white or the technicolour version.

A Madea Christmas, PG-13, IMDb rating 4.8/10

Madea dispenses her unique form of holiday spirit on rural town when she's coaxed into helping a friend pay her daughter a surprise visit in the country for Christmas.

The Muppet Christmas Carol, comedy/drama/family, G, IMDb rating 7.7/10

The Muppet characters tell their version of the classic tale of an old and bitter miser's redemption on Christmas Eve.

Silent Night, Deadly Night, horror/thriller, IMDb rating 5.9/10

After his parents are murdered, a tormented teenager goes on a murderous rampage dressed as Santa, due to his stay at an orphanage where he was abused by the Mother Superior.

Love at the Christmas Table, comedy/drama/romance, IMDb rating 6.5/10

A man realizes that his best friend since childhood is the woman that

he loves.

Christmas in Connecticut, comedy/romance, IMDb rating 7.5/10

A food writer who has lied about being the perfect housewife must try to cover her deception when her boss and a returning war hero invite themselves to her home for a traditional family Christmas.

The Year Without a Santa Claus, animation/comedy/family, IMDb rating 7.9/10

When a weary and discouraged Santa Claus considers skipping his Christmas Eve run one year, Mrs. Claus and his Elves set out to change his mind.

Mixed Nuts, comedy/drama, PG-13, IMDb rating 5.4/10

The events focus around a crisis hotline business on one crazy night during the Christmas holidays.

The Search for Santa Paws, adventure/family/fantasy, G, IMDb rating 5.8/10

Magic dogs and an elf team up with two children to rescue Santa who has lost his memory.

Prancer, drama/family/fantasy, G, IMDb rating 6.3/10

A farm girl nurses a wounded reindeer she believes is one of Santa's, hoping to bring it back to health in time for Christmas. Her holiday spirit inspires those around her, something her disheartened father is having trouble understanding.

Ernest Saves Christmas, comedy/family/fantasy, PG, IMDb rating 5.6/10

Ernest helps Santa Claus as he searches for his successor.

Christmas Mail, comedy/drama/family, TV-PG, IMDb rating 5.8/10

A mysterious woman who works at the post office answering Santa's mail captures the heart of a disillusioned postal carrier.

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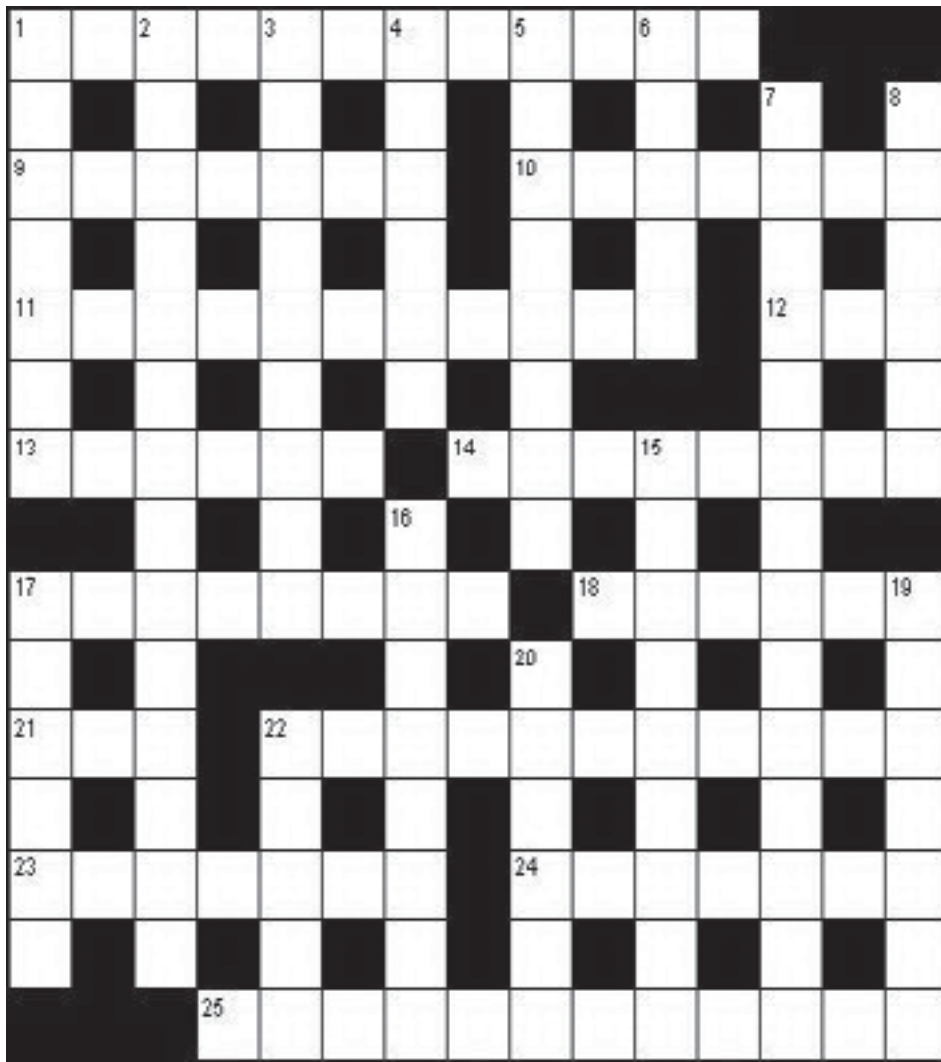
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ACROSS

- 1 Beaten by priest near church (12)
9 Bird-like, you might say with enthusiasm (7)
10 Board-maker, perhaps, smashing crate without hesitation (7)
11 Beheaded after moving cast-iron stocks (11)
12 Bit of old French bread like that taken to university (3)
13 Beverage taker suffering acute pain, initially (6)
14 Bats sleep outside dump, returning by 7 (8)
17 Butcher puts head of mutton behind port (8)



- 18 Branch office opening old city's mail (6)
21 Brunewald excerpt is original (3)
22 Bravery, as it were? (11)
23 Beyond rivalry that won't finish unsettled (7)
24 Being lower, secures river anchorage (7)
25 Blue, as it is made to be? (12)

DOWN

- 1 Bar having media get-together? (7)
2 Beatles song, unknown, spotted in hedge I take for recycling (5,4,1,4)
3 Big fish mostly heckle Irish paramilitaries (9)
4 Bash Street Kids' last engagements (6)
5 Blues guitarist's record you won't finish playing (2,6)
6 Bridge in musical to

- support singers (5)
7 Break point – purpose is essentially guesswork (14)
8 Beef and game (6)
15 Be there to embrace sailor's volte-face (4-5)
16 Bad-tempered, he'd rewritten a letter to linguists (7-1)
17 Bottomless pit, currently a source of bait (6)
19 Beer garden's bar missed out – failed to meet expectations (7)
20 Breaking the law with support of a Ukrainian region (6)
22 Bones of soldiers, dead ones (5)



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