

CONNECTION

Sharing the day-to-day learning experience
at

Community Homes & Services

PO Box 744, Novato CA 94948

415-408-3604

www.communityhomesandservices.com

Winter Weather Facts

Did you know?

THE SNOWIEST CITY ON EARTH IS IN JAPAN.

Aomori City in northern Japan receives more snowfall than any major city on the planet. Each year citizens are pummeled with 312 inches, or about 26 feet, of snow on average.

SOMETIMES SNOWBALLS FORM THEMSELVES.

Something strange happened in northwest Siberia: Mysterious, giant snowballs began washing up on a beach along the Gulf of Ob. It turns out the ice orbs were formed naturally by the rolling motions of wind and water. With some spheres reaching nearly 3 feet across!

WET SNOW IS BEST FOR SNOWMAN-BUILDING

Physics confirms what you've likely known since childhood: Snow on the wet or moist side is best for building your own backyard Frosty. One scientist pegs the perfect snow-to-water ratio at 5:1.

For more cold, hard winter facts check out

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/89881/15-surprising-facts-about-winter-weather>



The CH&S
online class
schedule

http://communityhomesandservices.com/whats_new.html

LOOKING BACK ON 2021, AND BEFORE

by Executive Director, Chas Abate

I am sitting here trying to write a look back at 2021 and all I keep thinking of is 1997. That's when my wife, Gail, and I, along with our partner, Juliette Pegueros, founded Community Homes and Services. Of course, those of you who knew the three of us could readily attest that there would be no CH&S without Juliette, our visionary and driving force.

Five years later, she passed away, barely into her 40s from ovarian cancer. How many times over the past quarter century have we said, "we can sure use Juliette now" as we weathered so many predicaments and as we made (and tried to learn from) so many mistakes? I've got to honestly say that among the top priorities in my life has been just to do her proud.

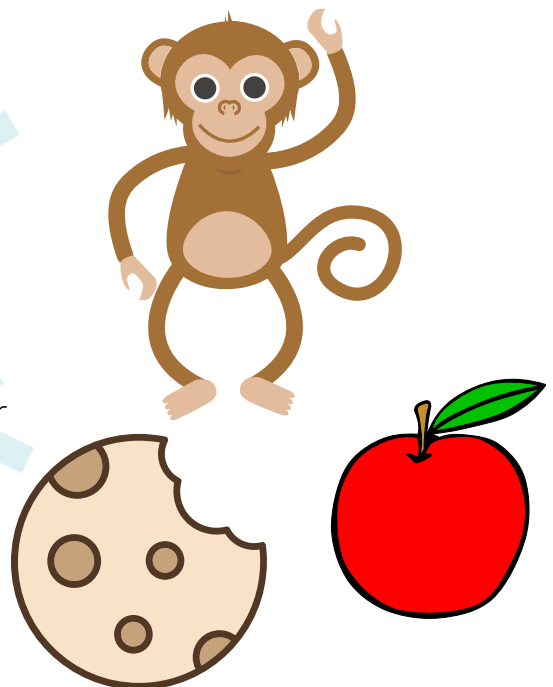


This brings us to 2021. If you go on our [website](#) and click [Newsletters](#), you can see vividly all of the back issues of this Magazine up to the present moment as we prepare enthusiastically for 2022. I am picturing Juliette doing just that, and I am seeing, once again, that big, beautiful, incomparable smile of hers.



DECEMBER 2021 NATIONAL DAYS

- 12/1 - **Eat a Red Apple Day**
- 12/4 - National Cookie Day and Jay-Z's Birthday
- 12/7 - National Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance
- 12/12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe Day
- 12/13 - Look skyward after 9 P.M. for a chance to catch a glimpse of the Geminid meteors.
- 12/14 - **Monkey Day**
- 12/17 - Wright Brothers Day.
- 12/21 - Winter Solstice—the astronomical first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and first day of summer in the Southern Hemisphere.
- 12/26 - Boxing Day (Canada, UK) and the first day of Kwanzaa.
- 12/27 - **Make Cut-Out Snowflakes Day**
- 12/31 - **Pledge of Allegiance Day** and New Year's Eve



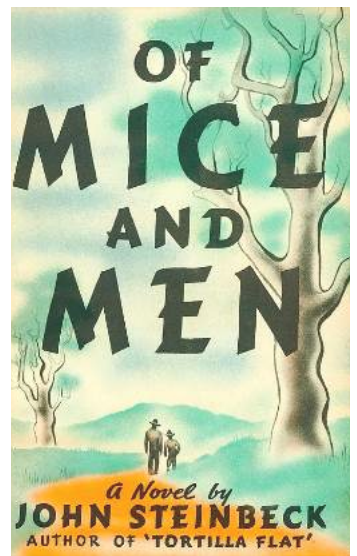
CH&S December Birthdays



12/10 - David F. and Thea
12/16 - Martha
12/17 - Chris
12/30 - Phoebe

12 Questions with Zayde

1. **Name/job title:** Zayde/Instructor and mom
2. **What do you want our students to know?** I want our students to know that they are very important to me and I am here for them!
3. **If you had to eat one meal every day for the rest of your life what would it be?** Mexican enchiladas (yummy!)
4. **Best book you've ever read?** *Of Mice and Men*
5. **What is your theme song?** "You Say" by Lauren Daigle
6. **Who is your favorite Disney hero or heroine?** Merida from *Brave*, and yes I would trade places with her!
7. **As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?** I wanted to be an immigration lawyer.
8. **What is your favorite time of day and why?** Evening because I get to sit on the couch with my husband and kids and watch a movie before going to bed.
9. **If you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?**
Abigail
10. **What fruit or vegetable would you most want to be?** I would be a strawberry.
11. **What is your favorite flower or plant?** Roses
12. **You have your own late-night talk show, who do you invite as your first guest?** My first guest would be Uncle Nino!



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of any size or kind.
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organization.



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Andrew's Corner

Sumo Wrestlers

Sumo is the Japanese version of wrestling and the national sport of Japan. The rules of sumo wrestling say that the first person who has fallen out of the ring or have part of their body outside of the ring loses the match.

The ring of the sumo matches are called *dohyo* which is made of clay and covered in a layer of sand. The reason all sumo wrestlers are fat is because they need to have a competitive edge against their opponents. Sumos usually get fat by eating

Chankonabe in massive quantities. Chankonabe is a type of stew. Ingredients in chankonabe include dashi or chicken broth, sake or mirrin, chicken or fish, tofu and vegetables such as daikon, bok choy and others. Sumos don't have breakfast in order to slow down their metabolisms and increase their appetites.

New recruits for sumo wrestling are scouted at the age of 15, straight from high school, and the recruits enter sumo for glory and wealth. There is an entire stadium dedicated to the sport of sumo wrestling called the *Ryogoku Kokugikan National Sumo Stadium*. The Ryogoku Kokugikan National Sumo Stadium also has a museum for the art of Sumo. The Ryogoku district in Japan is famous around the world as the center of sumo wrestling.

The heaviest known sumo wrestler is Orora Satoshi, a Russian wrestler from the kingdom of Buryatia (a region above Mongolia), who weighed 271 kilograms or nearly 600 pounds. Other places that host sumo wrestling include Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Fukuoka. The sport of sumo has roots in a religious ritual that took place in shinto shrines along with prayers for abundant harvest.

Early sumo was tougher than modern sumo because the early version included boxing and wrestling elements. The Japan Sumo Association, also known as the JSA for short, is the name of the sports governing body. The outfit that sumos wear is called a *Mawashi*. They wear a Mawashi so that they have fewer chances to cheat while wrestling. The reason sumos have to wear top knots, or *Chonmage* in Japanese, is because the hairstyle was originally a method of using hair to hold a samurai helmet steady atop the head in battle, and became a status symbol among Japanese society.

Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 23 years old. He likes comic books, video games, hiking, exploring new places with his mom.... and babies. He is an authority in all things Star Wars, Star trek and great places to go in the Bay Area. He is currently learning Mandarin, loves writing, and learning new things



Christmas Math

from [TeachersPayTeachers.com](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com) From the Pond



Santa has 10 gifts.
He drops 5.
How many are left?



Santa has 10 gifts.
He drops 6.
How many are left?



Santa has 9 gifts.
He drops 4.
How many are left?



Santa has 9 gifts.
He drops 5.
How many are left?



Santa has 8 gifts.
He drops 3.
How many are left?



Santa has 8 gifts.
He drops 8.
How many are left?

Homophones

Use the word *too*, *to*, or *two* to complete each sentence.

1. Kate and Jan went _____ a football game.
2. James said, "I ate _____ much ice cream."
3. Please pick up _____ gallons of milk from the store.

Kwanzaa

from [KidSparkz](#) at [Teachers Pay Teachers](#)

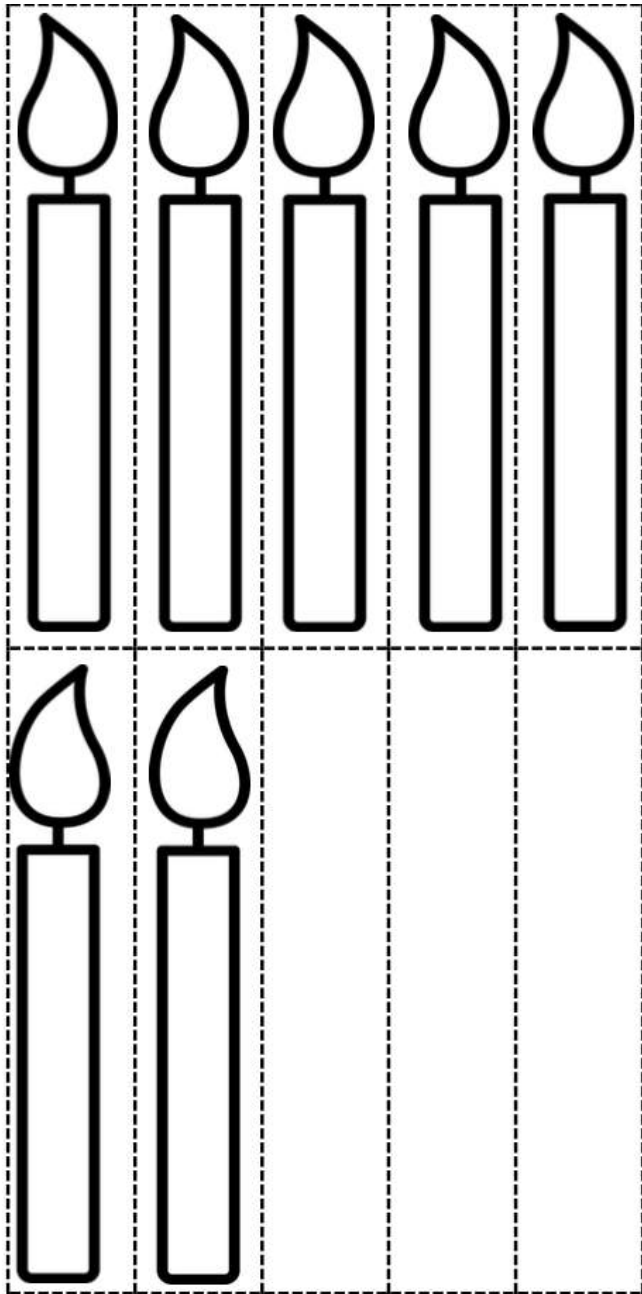
Did you know that Kwanzaa is less than 60 years old? Maulana Karenga, a Black nationalist who later became a college professor, created Kwanzaa as a way of uniting and empowering the African American community in the aftermath of the deadly Watts Rebellion. He modeled his holiday on traditional African harvest festivals and he took the name "Kwanzaa" from the Swahili phrase, "matunda ya kwanza," which means "first fruits."

Color then cut out the candles on the next page to and place the candles on the holder below.



Kwanzaa

from KidSparkz at Teachers Pay Teachers



Color, cut and paste the candles onto the kinara. There are 7 candles. Color one candle black, 3 candles red, and 3 candles green. The black candle goes in the middle candle holder. The red candles all go to the left of the black candle, and the green candles are placed to the right. With a real kinara, the black candle is lit on the first night of Kwanzaa. On successive nights, all the candles are lit, from left to right.



HAPPY KWANZAA

Kwanzaa facts:

- Kwanzaa is rooted in African culture, however, people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds are welcomed to join in the celebration.
- There are 7 Principles and 7 Primary Symbols that emphasize a unique set of values and ideals during the 7 days of Kwanzaa... also spelled with 7 letters.
- The first US postage stamp to commemorate Kwanzaa was issued in 1997. There have been 5 designs released since then, the most recent being in 2016.

Paint Pouring Art is SO MUCH FUN!



Thank you, Chris,
for showing us this
cool, fun, new art
form!

12/31 - Pledge of Allegiance Day



The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States is an expression of allegiance to the US flag and the republic of the United States of America.

The pledge was first composed with text different from the one used today, by Captain George Thatcher Balch, a Union Army Officer during the Civil War and later a teacher of patriotism in New York City schools.

The form of the pledge used today was largely devised by Francis Bellamy in 1892, and formally adopted by Congress as the pledge 50 years later, in 1942. The official name "The Pledge of Allegiance" was adopted in 1945. The most recent alteration of its wording came on Flag Day in 1954, when the words "under God" were added.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

*"I pledge allegiance to the Flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands,
one Nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

The colors red, white, and blue were thoughtfully chosen: Red symbolizes hardiness and valor, white symbolizes purity and innocence and blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.

1892 (first version)^[1]

"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

1892 to 1923 (early revision by Bellamy)^[2]

"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

1923 to 1924^[3]

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

1924 to 1954^[3]

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

1954 (current version, per 4 U.S.C. §4)^[4]

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

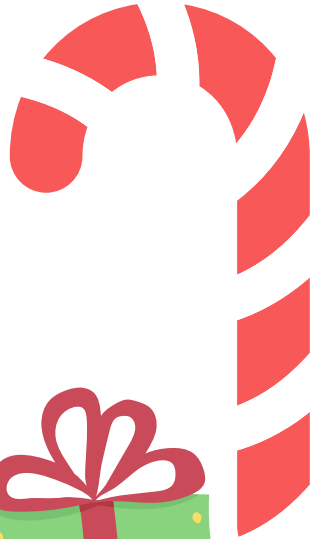
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_Allegiance

The current American flag design was not professionally made. Then 17-year-old high school student, Robert G. Heft, of Lancaster, Ohio submitted the design in a contest in 1958.

It was chosen out of over 1,500 submissions by President Dwight Eisenhower.

Holiday Cut Outs

Simply print this page, cut out the pictures, get a glue stick and some construction paper, and use the pictures to make your own holiday cards!





You Can Help!

We are still looking to hire people who are just right: intelligent, creative, stable, organized, funny, enthusiastic, personable, poised, dedicated, etc! Experience with teaching and/or developmental services and/or Positive Behavioral Support is a big plus. Work

hours are M-F, 8-4 pm. Submit resume and cover letter to cwalker@communityhomesandservices.org or call (415) 408-3604.

And we are still looking for a used car or van. All donations to CH&S are tax-deductible. CH&S is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. If you have an operable vehicle that you would like to donate, please call Chas at (707) 953-3852.



Darnell's class (Cat, Iris, and Andrew) discussed Christmas recipes from other countries and here are two of the yummy recipes they discovered:

Christmas Recipes

Aguony Pienas

(poppy seed milk)

In Lithuania, there is a tradition on Christmas eve to feast on twelve dishes, representing the 12 Apostles and the 12 months. One first takes the poppy seeds (a garden bounty in Lithuania) and scalds them in almost boiling water. Then you pulverize the seeds with a mortar and pestle or other such tool. It begins to give a whitish, milky water. Adding sugar or honey makes it nice and sweet. It is often served with crispy Christmas poppy seed cookies called *Kuciukai*. Here is the recipe for Aguony Pienas:

Cover about 2 cups of dried poppy seeds with boiling or nearly boiling water. Let stand 5 minutes. Sweeten some liquid, either water or milk, and pour over seeds to make a thin liquid. Pour over your cookies and eat like cereal.

Kuciukai cookies

- 1 cup self rising flour
- 2 cups ordinary flour
- 2 tbsp. Powdered sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/3 lb. Butter or margarine (2 sticks)
- 1 cup cold water (approx.)

Let butter or margarine reach room temperature (soft). Mix all ingredients. Knead dough, cool in refrigerator for 2-3 hours, or overnight. Roll into finger width strips, cut into inch long pieces, and bake on a cookie sheet in a 350 degree oven for 10-12 minutes (if you want them more crunchy than soft, bake for 15-17 minutes). Serve with poppy seed milk.



(Left) Is it just us or is this a Lithuanian Cookie Crisp cereal? YUM!





Here's a coloring page for people who don't like to color very much!

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"Frosty the Snowman" is a popular Christmas song first recorded by Gene Autry and the Cass County Boys in 1950 and later recorded by Jimmy Durante. It was written after the success of Autry's recording of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" the previous year.

The song recounts the fictional tale of Frosty, a snowman who is brought to life by a magical silk hat that a group of children find and place on his head. Although it is generally regarded as a Christmas song, the original lyrics make no mention of the holiday (some renditions, like that in the 1969 Rankin/Bass TV special, change the lyric "I'll be back again someday" to "I'll be back on Christmas Day").

Streamin' and Creekin'

by Joe Readell

I come from a little town in Central California. Sonora is nestled between the San Joaquin Valley and the Sierra Nevada mountain range, and accessible only by a windy two-lane highway, the town is somewhat isolated from the world. Sure, we had some excitement now and then. Several scenes from *Back to the Future III* were filmed on the outskirts of town, and Michael J. Fox even stayed in a cottage three down from where my family and I lived. There was a quaint county fair every July, a rodeo, and a homecoming parade that moseyed down Main Street in the fall. But for all its charms and quaintness, I can't think of anything I missed during my later city years quite so much as the streams.



A creek near Stinson Beach takes some Marin water out to sea.

Sullivan Creek ran along the property line behind our house. Ankle-high in some places, ten feet deep in others, the creek was a constant reminder of the changing seasons. In the spring, the honeysuckle vines would come to life and make their annual attempt to overtake the property. During the summer the creek would dry up and come to a near-trickle under the scorching sun, leaving all the crawdads and frogs competing for a place in the water. And every autumn the leaves would fall from the tall oak trees that lined the stream and dapple its surface with orange and brown reminders of the year gone by.



A Latticed Stinkhorn mushroom found on the banks of Arroyo San Jose.

The winter was the best though. After the rain, Sullivan Creek would rise and breach the banks that my dad and I built up every year with a backhoe. This was the creek's most exciting form. The frigid water that had its origins in the Sierra Nevada ice pack would change the backyard's landscape drastically. Sometimes we'd get a new sandy beach for a couple months. Sometimes there would be a landslide that pulled a part of our yard down into the water. No matter what happened topographically there, the creek was a constant source of entertainment, calm, and ever-budding life.

I've lived in Novato for about three months. In that short time our lakes, rivers, marshes, and streams have gone from nearly dry to overflowing. I've been keeping an eye on the little trickle that runs by my apartment building and feeds into Scottsdale Pond. In August, I thought it was just a dry ravine, but as

Streaming' and Creekin'

The flow continues...

the rain kept coming the water kept rising. It wasn't long before the muddy water filled the ravine completely. This awakened something in me that I'd long forgotten about: *Creekin'*!

So the basic idea of creekin' is just seeing what there is to see as far as Marin water features go. Novato alone is jam-packed with creeks! There's Arroyo San Jose, which flows down from the Indian Valley Preserve by Enterprise, Novato Creek, which runs northwest to southeast under the 101 freeway and all the way past Miwok Park, plus tons of others that I can't even find the names of. I like to find a good creek and follow it to see where it goes. You never know what you'll find.

Personally, my favorite part of creekin' is the wildlife. Sometimes if I'm lucky the creek I'm following will open up into a calm wide section where I can watch the water skippers. But they're not the only life that the creeks sustain. Creeks and their shores are popular hangouts for frogs, small fish, squirrels stopping by for a drink, and all manner of reptiles. If you're looking to see some wildlife, I can't think of a better place than a creek.

(Right) Novato Creek after the rain.

The Novato Creek watershed supports a diversity of communities— from mountainous and hilly headwaters to saltwater and brackish-water marsh along the bay. Despite being one of the driest drainages in Marin County, the watershed supports both rearing and spawning habitat for steelhead trout.

Check out a map of Novato Creek watershed's anadromous fish (steelhead trout and Chinook salmon):

https://www.marinwatersheds.org/sites/default/files/2017-05/W_Novato_Fish.pdf



Make sure to dress for the occasion when creekin' in November.



Steelhead Trout

Oncorhynchus mykiss



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December 2021 Connection Magazine



"Hope" is the thing with feathers

BY EMILY DICKINSON

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.