

Merrimack Valley 50+

December  
2025

# Active Life

Season's  
Greetings

A Carol For The  
Season

Things to Do:  
Merrimack Valley  
Community  
Calendar

Free

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Merrimack Valley 50+

# Active Life

December 2025

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Merrimack Valley 50+  
**Active Life**

Published by Merrimack Valley Parent, LLC  
[www.merrimackvalleyactivelife.com](http://www.merrimackvalleyactivelife.com)

978-427-3676

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The holidays are again upon us as we ready ourselves and our families for the season ahead. Whatever your faith and set of beliefs may be, we are beginning the season of celebrating with our families and friends. Whether it be Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa that you observe, this time of year will

hopefully bring us closer together. We live in difficult times throughout the world and having a chance to reflect on our lives and what we believe in is an opportunity to look inward and find purpose. It is not all about physical gifts, although that exchange is an important part of the holidays. I believe

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**Family Favorite 2024**

## A Carol for the Season

by Gary Kalajian

that finding joy and contentment in our exchanges with our family, friends and neighbors is ultimately where we want to be. Being part of and celebrating common bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood provide a great opportunity to give of ourselves and feel the solemnity of the season. With all that we experience in our collective worlds every day, it is like a soothing balm to find a time where we can enjoy fellowship.

One of my favorite holiday stories is *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. To me it represents redemption of the heart and mind and provides great motivation for finding and celebrating the true meaning of the season. Dickens understood how difficult life was in mid-1800's England. There were great income disparities between the haves and have-nots. Child labor was rampant throughout society in order for lower income families to make ends meet. It was not uncommon for children to work in factories under the worst of conditions. Dickens himself worked in a shoe polish factory at the age of twelve. His father was sent to prison because of his debts. As a result, much of Charles Dickens' writing are colored by his difficult personal family experiences.

Suffering, hardship and redemption provide the backdrop for Dickens' immensely popular story. The central character, Ebeneezer Scrooge, exem-

plifies the cold-hearted miser who has shut himself off from society, all in the name of wealth and profit. He has shielded himself from past emotional injuries with his family and the former love of his life, Belle, to the point where he lets nobody in to his world. As a consequence, Scrooge does not believe in Christmas or in giving from the heart. To him, he has suffered too much and as a consequence, has shut himself off from society and his family. He even refuses to acknowledge his nephew, Fred, who visits Scrooge at the counting house to wish him Merry Christmas and to invite him to dinner with his family.

The magic of the story is in redemption, second chances and being able to see the world in an entirely different light. Scrooge undergoes this transformation after being shown his past, present and future selves by three spirits. Although at first, he refuses to acknowledge and believe his former and now dead partner, Jacob Marley, who visits him as a specter to warn Scrooge to change his ways or he will end up like Marley, roaming the earth in chains. Marley tells Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits during the night, to which Scrooge mutters "humbug" in disbelief. Scrooge refuses to believe this warning and goes to bed in disbelief.

Continued on Page 8

# Merrimack Valley Calendar of Events

## December



### Monday, December 1

HOLIDAY STRESS RELIEF MEDITATION WORKSHOP - VIRTUAL  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1 6:00—7:00 PM  
Zoom

The holidays can be really stressful. Participants will learn healthy anxiety coping skills, breathing techniques, and meditation that can be used on the go to bring more peace, connection, and joy back into the season! Class is 60 minutes with an intro, guided practice, then time for Q&A. Open to all levels and beginners welcome! This workshop is led by Amy Rutledge and will be held over Zoom.

Registration is required.

Amy Rutledge came to the study of meditation as a path toward personal healing after struggles with the effects of Lyme Disease as well as depression and anxiety and found that it helped her in ways when many other approaches failed. This led her to training as a Mindful Meditation Teacher at the Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science in Manhattan.

She has taught classes and led meditation exercises for a wide range of business and cultural institutions, from IBM, NACTO, and Jet.com (Walmart) to the Girl Scouts of America to public institutions such as the Los Angeles Public Library and Jersey City Public Library.

Ms. Rutledge brings to her classes and workshops a graciousness for the second chance that mediation has given her and a passionate desire to aid others with their suffering as she has similarly been aided. She has an expertise in Loving-Kindness/ Metta meditation and skills in leading meditation toward mindfulness, self-healing, self-worth and creative visualization. In addition to her skills with mindfulness and meditation, she has significant experience in the arts as an actress and producer, as well as experience as a ceramicist and owner at RoughWare

MITTEN TREE GLOVE DRIVE  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1—SATURDAY, JANUARY 3 ALL DAY Newburyport Public Library

Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Enjoy the warmth of giving this holiday season with Newburyport Public Library and the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center! In the spirit of giving, we are inviting our community to join us in the innocent joy

of useful gifting this season. Based off the book, "The Mitten Tree" by Candace Christiansen, community members are invited to bring donations of mittens, gloves, and other small winter wear items to the library. All donations can be placed on the lit tree in our lobby or in the drop box under the tree. With the help of the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, these small gifts of comfort will help the most vulnerable in our community to enjoy the warmth of the season.

#### About the Book:

The Mitten Tree by Candace Christiansen is the story of an elderly woman and the joy that she feels in surprising the young children in her community with warm mittens so that they can enjoy playing in the snow.

This title will be on display in the lobby or you can place a hold to enjoy a copy at home [HERE](#).

About the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center: The Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center provides comprehensive services to meet the complex needs of adults and children that have experienced domestic violence, at no cost to them. Their team of advocates, mental health counselors, and lawyers provide an integrated web of support as needs shift from crisis intervention to long term healing and independence.

All donations will be distributed by the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center to families in need this winter. Please do not wrap donations.

#### Gift Wrapping Station

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1—WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24 ALL DAY Reference Desk 2nd Floor Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950

Check a task off your holiday to-do list! This year we are happy to provide a self-serve Wrapping Station to all library visitors. All standard supplies are provided so that all you need to bring are your gifts and holiday cheer. If you are feeling adventurous, we invite you to try out some of our fun wrapping tutorials to create unique bows, bags, and boxes that will add a little extra pizzaz to your giving this year.

Supplies, including wrapping paper, ribbon, bows, and tape will be available for free while supplies last.

No appointments are necessary for this walk-in service.

### Tuesday, December 2

CHESS CLUB  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2 6:00—8:00 PM  
Milhender Room Haverhill Public Library

99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
Are you looking to challenge someone in a game of Chess? Drop by our monthly Chess Club! All ages welcome! We will have a few sets available for use, but we recommend bringing your own if you are able!

No Registration Required

CLASSIC MATINEES: ALL SNOWED IN  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21 10:00 AM—12:15 PM

Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
Join us in watching some of the best films where the snow doesn't want to let you go...today we watch *The Thing* (1982), rated R.

No Registration Required

CHRISTMAS MARKETS IN PRAGUE AND GERMANY (VIRTUAL)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2 2:00—3:00 PM Virtual Program Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Visit amazing Christmas markets in Prague and four cities in Germany. With very few international tourists and mostly locals enjoying good food, good friends, and a festive atmosphere, December trips are quite different from summer visits.

About the Presenter:

Gene Flynn is an Illinois native who has taught at the College of Lake County and Harper College, and serves on the board of the Institute for Continued Learning at Roosevelt University. He frequently gives travel presentations to libraries and senior centers around the country, and has traveled to more than a dozen European countries.

This program is presented in collaboration with the Tewksbury Public Library and is in partnership with a multitude of MA & NH libraries.

Virtual registration required. Register [HERE](#). Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/2517598673933/WN\\_SV51DQ-bRLeGMCL79tGHQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/2517598673933/WN_SV51DQ-bRLeGMCL79tGHQ)

A CHARLES DICKENS CHRISTMAS (VIRTUAL)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2 7:00—8:00 PM Virtual Program Newburyport Public Library,



94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Charles Dickens has famously been called "The Man Who Invented Christmas."

Inspired by the writings of Washington Irving earlier in the 19th century, Dickens wrote five Christmas novellas between 1843 and 1848 and over a dozen short stories between 1852 and 1866. Each of these—including the perennial favorite *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*—helped to shape how the holiday season is celebrated in Britain and America. This program explores these wonderful flights of holiday fantasy and their lasting influence.

About the Presenter:

Dr. Bill Thierfelder is a retired professor of Arts and Humanities, with a PhD in English Literature, an MA in Theology, and a BA in English with additional concentrations in music history and art. After teaching Second Grade for four years and High School seniors for six months as a replacement substitute, Bill spent the next 32 years teaching a variety of Arts and Humanities courses at several New York and Long Island universities and colleges, including St. John's University, Hofstra University, and Dowling College. He is currently docent emeritus at the American Museum of Natural History where he continues to give both Zoom and in-person presentations, work on special editing projects, and give tours. He also lectures regularly for libraries and educational organizations nationwide via Zoom. Bill's classroom, library, and Museum vocation have taught him that life is all about "making wings," hence, the name of his website: *Making Wings*. Indeed, Bill's philosophy—rooted in years of practical study and life experience—is simple: The most important thing you can do is to make wings for yourself and fly to places that fulfill your potential, that allow you to develop your unique gifts, and that open you up to a world of possibilities.

This program is presented in collaboration with the Groton Public Library and is in partnership with a multitude of MA & NH libraries.

Virtual registration required. Register [HERE](#). Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7517556208444/WN\\_3TEGFMj3RpyRPEq3qYPG2g](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/7517556208444/WN_3TEGFMj3RpyRPEq3qYPG2g)

Wednesday, December 3

VIRTUAL: 50+ JOB SEEKERS NETWORKING GROUP -- SECOND ACT CAREERS ("THINK-

ING OUTSIDE THE BOX")  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 9:30—11:30 AM  
Zoom  
This week's topic (December 3) is Second Act Careers. Register directly on Zoom HERE. This group is sponsored by approximately 50 Massachusetts public libraries. The Library 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group meets via Zoom on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, from 9:30am to 11:30am. Informal networking takes place from 9am to 9:30am and 11:30am to noon. If you are unemployed and actively looking, underemployed, seeking a new career direction, re-entering the job market after a long employment gap, or recently retired and looking for your "Encore Career," this networking group program is perfect for you! Remember, 85% of jobs are found through networking!

Join us in a professional forum for networking with peers in a safe and comfortable environment conducive to developing new relationships and developing skills and strategies to help in your career transition. Each meeting features a new topic. Meetings include a presentation and interactive workshop on topics relevant to career

transition, guest speakers, access to hiring managers, small group breakout rooms to network, and 1-on-1 coaching guidance. Participating on a regular basis will give job seekers the many tools and strategies needed for a successful job search. Each biweekly meeting is facilitated by Deborah Hope, MBA, PCIC, an experienced executive career coach. Deborah is a former Fortune 500 executive, investment banker and entrepreneur. She transitioned to executive coaching over 12 years ago. Deborah has coached with Harvard Business School Executive Education programs and the Massachusetts Conference for Women. She has been trained or certified in a variety of coaching models and assessment tools. Deborah has facilitated 50+ job seekers networking groups since 2016. RECORDING NOTE: This program will be recorded. All registrants will receive the recording via email within 48 hours of the program. Register using the link in the description.

FIBER ARTS GROUP  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 6:30—8:00 PM  
Milhendler Room Haverhill Public Library

99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Calling all fiber artists! Bring your current project(s) of knitting, crocheting, hand stitching, hand quilting, and embroidery, or whatever else, to work on in the company of other fiber arts enthusiasts! Instruction is not offered at this event but fellow attendees are always happy to offer advice when they can. No registration needed. Drop in at any point during the 90-minute block!

No Registration Required

COMMUNITY OF STITCHERS  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 6:30—7:45 PM Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913  
COMMUNITY OF STITCHERS

Do you have a sewing, cross-stitch, knitting, crotchet or other craft project you are working on? Bring it to a meeting of our Community of Stitchers where you can work on your project, get advice from your fellow creators, and show off your work! Our local stitching enthusiast and advanced knitter, Sarah Chapman, will be on hand at each meeting to help attendees with their projects. All experience levels are welcome - come enjoy a creative evening with us! No advanced registration required - walk-ins welcome!

No Registration Required

RECORDING NOTE: This program will be recorded. All registrants will receive the recording via email within 48 hours of the program. Register using the link in the description.

FIBER ARTS GROUP  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 6:30—8:00 PM  
Milhendler Room Haverhill Public Library

welcome!  
No Registration Required

**Monday, December 8**  
MAKER MONDAY AND ORNAMENT SWAP  
(IN PERSON)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8 6:00—7:30 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Join the Newburyport Public Library for some creative fun with Maker Mondays.

No Registration Required

99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Calling all fiber artists! Bring your current project(s) of knitting, crocheting, hand stitching, hand quilting, and embroidery, or whatever else, to work on in the company of other fiber arts enthusiasts! Instruction is not offered at this event but fellow attendees are always happy to offer advice when they can. No registration needed. Drop in at any point during the 90-minute block!

No Registration Required

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No Registration Required

RECORDING NOTE: This program will be recorded. All registrants will receive the recording via email within 48 hours of the program. Register using the link in the description.

FIBER ARTS GROUP  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 6:30—8:00 PM  
Milhendler Room Haverhill Public Library

Group!  
All levels are welcome! However, it may be best suited for those who have a basic knowledge of Spanish or above. Please note, this is not a class but it can be a great way to practice your Spanish conversational skills and connect with others who have an interest in the language. The group is led by a Spanish-speaking librarian and will meet every other Thursday at 5:15 PM for 1 hour.

This month we will be embracing the season of sharing by hosting a holiday Ornament Swap. Bring your old ornaments to share and grab a few new-to-you options for your home displays. The library will also be providing supplies to make your own miniature wreaths, a returning favorite from last year.

No registration is required for this program.

Miniature wreath crafts will be available while supplies last and are limited to one craft per attendee.

No Registration Required

MOVIE MATINEE: RED ONE (IN PERSON)  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12 2:00—4:30 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Join us for our Movie Matinees on Friday afternoons.

This week we will be screening "Red One" (2024) starring Dwayne Johnson, Chris Evans, and Lucy Liu at 2:00 pm. This movie is rated PG-13.

Run time 2 hour 3 minutes.

"After Santa Claus is kidnapped, the North Pole's Head of Security must team up with a notorious hacker in a globe-trotting, action-packed mission to save Christmas."

Come and enjoy the theater-like screen and sound system with fellow film buffs.

This free event will be held in the Program Room and all are welcome!

\*Please note that movie showings are subject to change with short notice. For the most current movie schedule, we recommend checking with the library directly.

The Library has assistive listening technology for individuals with reduced ranges of hearing that sends sound directly to a hearing device. Contact the library at 978-465-4428 ext. 2 before the program to learn more about this and other assistive technology options. Come and enjoy the theater-like screen and sound system with fellow film buffs. This free event will be held in the Program Room and all are welcome!

You don't need to bring any books with you! This program is for adults.

No Registration Required

**Thursday, December 11**  
GAME NIGHT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11 5:30—8:30 PM Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
Join us Thursdays for a night of board games at Haverhill Public Library! Strategic games, abstract games, filler games, complex and non complex alike, come and try out whatever you like. Feel free to bring your own games! All experience levels are welcome. No Registration Required

SPANISH CONVERSATION GROUP  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11 5:15—6:15 PM Director's Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA,

Note: After this week, we won't meet again until Thursday, January 8.  
Join our in-person Spanish Conversation

GRAND FINALE (2025)  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 2:00—4:00 PM Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
The finale follows the Crawley family and their staff in the 1930s. The entire house-hold grapples with the threat of social disgrace, with Mary in a public scandal and the family experiencing financial trouble.

The Crawleys must embrace change as the staff prepares for a new chapter with the next generation leading Downton Abbey. Directed by Simon Curtis. Starring Hugh Bonneville, Laura Carmichael, Phyllis Logan, Rob James-Collier, Jim Carter, and more.

Rated PG. No Registration Required

**Tuesday, December 16**  
PAPERCRAFTING AND CARD MAKING  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16 6:00—7:30 PM Milhendler Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
Join us for our Movie Matinees on Friday afternoons.

This week we will be screening "Red One" (2024) starring Dwayne Johnson, Chris Evans, and Lucy Liu at 2:00 pm. This movie is rated PG-13.

Run time 2 hour 3 minutes.

"After Santa Claus is kidnapped, the North Pole's Head of Security must team up with a notorious hacker in a globe-trotting, action-packed mission to save Christmas."

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You don't need to bring any books with you! This program is for adults.

No Registration Required

**Thursday, December 18**  
BEHIND THE CURTAIN: EDGAR DEGAS, THE BALLET & BEYOND (ART TALK SERIES)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 7:00—8:15 PM Zoom  
Join us each month to explore and appreciate different artists or artistic movements with Jane Oneail.

Registration is required; register via Zoom by clicking here.

This program is presented in conjunction with the public libraries of Chelmsford, Ashland, Groton, and Tewksbury and is funded in part by the Friends of the Amesbury Public Library.

This month's topic: Forget the Nutcracker, these are the ballerinas you want to see this December! Discover the captivating world of Edgar Degas, a master of Impressionism known for his intimate portrayals of ballet dancers and everyday Parisian life.

Through his innovative use of pastels and unconventional compositions, Degas captured fleeting moments with remarkable clarity and emotion. His works, ranging from elegant ballerinas to candid scenes at the racetrack, offer a unique glimpse into 19th-century French society.

Image: Edgar Degas. The Star, 1878. Musée D'Orsay.

About the presenter: Jane Oneail (pronounced OH-neel) is the founder of Culturally Curious, a company that curates and presents art appreciation programs for audiences worldwide. Jane holds a master's

in Art History from Boston University and a

master's in Education from Harvard University. Born and raised in NH, she has worked at some of the state's most esteemed cultural institutions, including the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, where she served as Executive Director, and the Currier Museum of Art, where she held the role of Senior Educator. Jane has also taught at the college level for more than a decade, most recently at Southern New Hampshire University. For more information visit the Culturally Curious website.

QUESTIONS ABOUT REGISTRATION?  
Contact the Reference Desk, 978-388-8148, option 2 / reference@amesburylibrary.org  
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM? Contact Stephanie Smith, ssmith@amesburylibrary.org, 978-388-8148 x607

FUNDING CREDIT: Thank you to the Friends of the Amesbury Public Library for funding this series!

Sign up for our e-newsletter and be among the first to learn about all of our programs and events.

Register Using Zoom Link in Description

Classics Book Group (IN PERSON)  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18 3:00—4:00 PM  
Milhendler Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA  
Join NPL's Classics Book Group! This group meets in-person from 3-4 PM on the third Thursday of every month in the Director's Room. Please call 978-465-4428 x2 if you have any questions or would like to have a librarian put the book on hold for you.

For the month of December, we will be discussing two plays by Henrik Ibsen, "An Enemy of the People," and "A Doll's House."

An Enemy of the People  
"When the physician [Dr. Thomas Stockman] learns that the famous and financially successful baths in his hometown are contaminated, he insists they be shut down for expensive repairs. For his honesty, he is persecuted, ridiculed, and declared an "enemy of the people" by the townspeople, including by some whom have been his closest allies." —Goodreads

A Doll's House  
"A groundbreaking play centered on the life of Nora Helmer, who navigates the complexities of marriage and identity in a patriarchal society. Set during the Christmas season, the play opens with Nora preparing for the holidays, reflecting the constraints imposed on her by her husband, Torvald Helmer, who views her more as a cherished possession than an equal partner. The narrative unfolds as Nora grapples with a secret from her past."

—Joanne G. Kashdan, Ebsco  
This week we will be screening "The Wife" (2017) starring Glenn Close, Jonathan Pryce, and Max Irons at 2:00 pm. This movie is rated R.

Run time 1 hour 39 minutes.  
"A wife questions her life choices as she travels to Stockholm to see her husband receive the Nobel Prize for Literature."

Come and enjoy the theater-like screen and sound system with fellow film buffs.

This free event will be held in the Program Room and all are welcome!

**Friday, December 26**  
Movie Matinee: The Wife (IN PRISON)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26 2:00—4:30 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Join us for our Movie Matinees on Friday afternoons.

This week we will be screening "The Wife" (2017) starring Glenn Close, Jonathan Pryce, and Max Irons at 2:00 pm. This movie is rated R.

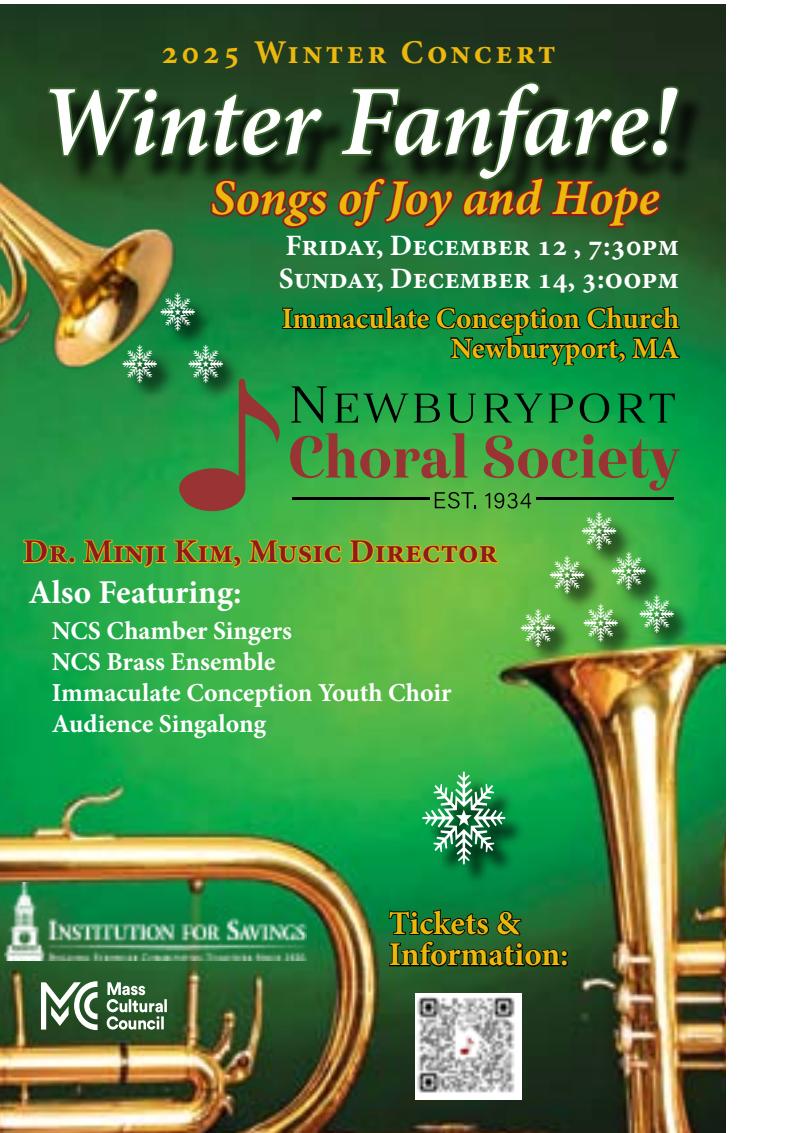
Run time 1 hour 39 minutes.  
"A wife questions her life choices as she travels to Stockholm to see her husband receive the Nobel Prize for Literature."

Come and enjoy the theater-like screen and sound system with fellow film buffs.

This free event will be held in the Program Room and all are welcome!

**Please send any events you would like considered for the Calendar of Events to**

**Editor@merrimackvalleyactivelife.com**



afternoons.

This week we will be screening "The Mountain Between Us" (2017) starring Kate Winslet, Idris Elba, and Beau Bridges at 2:00 pm. This movie is rated PG-13.

Run time 1 hour 52 minutes.  
"Stranded after a tragic plane crash, two strangers must forge a connection to survive the extreme elements of a remote snow-covered mountain. When they realize help is not coming, they embark on a perilous journey across the wilderness."

Come and enjoy the theater-like screen and sound system with fellow film buffs. This free event will be held in the Program Room and all are welcome!

No Registration Required

**Saturday, December 20**

Adult Craft: Make a Star Garland  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 2:00—3:00 PM  
Milhendler Room Haverhill Public Library  
99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
This program for adults is led by HPL staff. Make a dazzling star garland from book pages & craft paper! Please only register for one session.

When registration for our events fills up, interested attendees are often added to a waitlist. If for any reason you or anyone in your party is unable to attend, please notify the library at (978) 373-1568 as soon as possible so that someone else may have the spot. Thank you!

Registration for this event opens Monday, December 1 at 9:00 AM.

**Tuesday, December 23**

CLASSIC MATINEES: ALL SNOWED IN  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23 10:00 AM—1:00 PM  
Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830  
Join us in watching some of the best films where the snow doesn't want to let you go... today we watch The Hateful 8 (2015), rated R. No Registration Required

**Friday, December 26**

Movie Matinee: The Wife (IN PRISON)  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26 2:00—4:30 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950  
Join us for our Movie Matinees on Friday afternoons.

A Carol For The Season  
Continued from Page 4

The beauty of this timeless story is in the transformation that Scrooge undergoes after being shown his life by the spirits. It is heartwarming to see Scrooge changing his whole demeanor or after first shutting his eyes, mind and heart to the spirits who mirror Scrooge's world to him. For example, the spirit of the past reveals all that he lost because money was more important to Scrooge than love. And the spirit of the present who reveals to Scrooge the hardship of Bob Cratchit and his family, which has a particular and profound effect on Scrooge. This hardship is multiplied with the love Cratchit's family has for each other and their sickly youngest child, Tiny Tim, despite their lack of wealth. The clincher is when the spirit of the future reveals Scrooge's headstone in the cemetery as a final warning as to where Scrooge is headed unless he changes his ways.

To me, the magic of the Christmas Carol is in the belief that we all have an opportunity to grab hold of the present and give of ourselves to others, especially during the holiday season. Each of us have some regrets or things we would change about ourselves if we closely examine our past. However, the beauty of the story is the lesson that in the very act of giving to others we forget about our troubles or regrets from the past. It is a chance to provide joy and goodwill to our family, friends and neighbors, even if it is difficult to do. This exchange allows us to forget our own hurts and problems and provides us an opportunity to help others in need. The very act of greeting others and wishing them well during the holiday season can change not only the recipient of a genuine and warm reception, but also ourselves. It is contagious when we provide warmth and joy to others, especially during the holiday season.

The timeless story of A Christmas Carol is like perfect batch of warm chicken soup on a cold day. It is good for the heart, mind and soul. The message is universal and the ending is transformative. Dickens somehow knew how to move his readers emotionally with his writing throughout all of his novels,

this story in particular. The timeless tale of redemption of the heart and lives of people, will always resonate and move us emotionally. Scrooge tells us himself that he has changed his ways after encountering the three ghosts, when he says, "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year." This message is truly a great reminder for all of us as we enter the upcoming holiday season.

Photo by Gary Kalajian



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