

KOPERNIK LODGE

Newsletter

Vancouver Winter

The rain plays soft on glass and cedar green,

A quiet, silver city, rarely seen.

Mist cloaks the mountains, hovering low,

A gentle chill, but seldom white with snow.

The ocean breathes in shades of grey and blue,

And downtown lights reflect a warmer hue.

Bare branches line the streets in misty damp,

Reflected brightly by a passing lamp.

Coffee shops are safe and bright within,

Where conversations pause and then begin.

A winter season, soft and slow to go,

Wrapped in the magic of the Pacific glow

The Heart of Our Heritage: Life at Kopernik Lodge

In Vancouver's Killarney neighbourhood, there is a place where the air often smells of fresh barszcz and the hallways hum with the familiar Polish language. For over 50 years, Kopernik Lodge has been more than just a care facility; it is a living monument to the Polish-Canadian community's heart and history.

Built through the dedication of Polish immigrants, it was founded on a simple, powerful promise: that our elders should never have to feel like strangers in their later years.

The Power of Cultural Belonging

For a senior, culture is a form of medicine comes from being able to speak one's mother tongue—the language of childhood prayers, old poems, and family jokes. This linguistic and cultural connection is essential for the emotional and mental well-being of our residents, providing a sense of safety that transcends standard medical support.

Traditions That Feed the Soul

Life at Kopernik ensures that the sacred rhythm of the Polish year remains unbroken. The Lodge serves as a guardian of our most cherished customs, from the solemnity of Wigilia and the traditional sharing of the opłatek to the joyful celebrations of Easter and Name Days. Our on-site chapel remains a spiritual anchor, offering Catholic Mass providing the continuity of faith that is central to so many of our residents' lives.

When winter arrives, the Lodge is filled with the timeless beauty of Polish Christmas carols (kolędy). Singing these songs together is a highlight for many, as the familiar melodies of "Cicha Noc" or "Bóg się rodzi" bridge the distance between Vancouver and the homes of our youth, warming every heart in the room.

A Legacy Worth Preserving

By ensuring that Polish seniors continue to fill these rooms, we honor the founders who dreamed of this sanctuary. Our greatest hope is that every Polish person who wishes to spend their golden years within these walls will find a place here. We strive to ensure that the Polish spirit isn't just a memory of the past—it is a daily reality. It is found in the communal meals, the collective singing of carols, and the enduring strength of a community that looks after its own. Together, we are keeping our cultural flame burning brightly for generations to come.





*Merry
Christmas
Memories*





Memories of Christmas Past







When Krampus Comes to Town



December 4 was Santa's List Day, but throughout December, children worldwide were wondering whether old St. Nick has counted them as *naughty* or *nice*. Of

course, most fall somewhere in the middle. But tell that to Krampus. In the alpine villages of Europe, December 5 is celebrated as *Krampusnacht*, or Krampus Night. It's the eve before Saint Nicholas Day, and—says cultural historian Stefanie A. Babb—it's the night when a creature called Krampus (half Bigfoot, half devil) searches for all the children who've been naughty. This long-haired beast is thought to be Santa's twin brother and helper. The clanking chains and bells around his waist announce his arrival. The punishment for the naughty depends upon the child's degree of naughtiness. Some children are given coal or bundles of birch. But the naughtiest are said to be thrown into a sack and carried away to the Krampus' lair, where they're eaten for dinner.

Modern-day *Krampusnacht* activities involve men and women donning elaborate goatskin costumes and exquisitely carved wooden masks. Photographer Alan Taylor has traveled throughout the Alps—from Italy to Austria and Germany—capturing groups of people parading the streets in their terrifying costumes while dragging chains and carrying flaming torches. It's a common sight for homes to be decorated year-round with bundles of the Krampus' birch, painted gold, to remind children to remain well-behaved. There's even a horror movie that tells the tale of this devil beast.

It's the "nice" children who enjoy the big payoff on December 6, Saint Nicholas Day. It's named for the fourth-century bishop of Myra, famed for his secret gift-giving. Lucky children awake to find gifts and sweets, breathing a sigh of relief that there's a whole year before Krampus returns.

Shades of Calm

Coloring books are no longer just for children. Adult coloring clubs meet up at bars after work. Executives gather employees in conference rooms for impromptu coloring sessions. Just look at Amazon's Best Sellers list, which regularly features adult coloring books. Recent top titles lean toward cozy, bold, easy-to-color designs. While Johanna Basford's intricate *Secret Garden* remains iconic and beloved, selling over 21 million copies worldwide, current bestsellers favor simpler, hygge-inspired pages.

Why are adults so drawn to coloring? Research continues to support coloring as a form of stress relief. It promotes mindfulness and flow, engaging the brain in a soothing, focused activity that quiets anxiety. Clinical psychologist Ben Michaelis explains that the amygdala, the part of our brain responsible for our fight-or-flight response, takes a rest while we focus on coloring. Dr. Michaelis is such a believer that he both prescribes coloring to his patients and uses it at home with his own family.

Ringling Through History

Everyone singing "Jingle Bells" past holiday season may be surprised to learn it's a Thanksgiving song. The vice president of the Medford Historical Society in Massachusetts explained that the song's 19th-century composer, Medford resident James Pierpont, based it on a local tradition of one-horse open sleigh races through the streets of his hometown. When Pierpont moved to Savannah, Georgia, and became a pastor, he led his congregation in singing the song on Thanksgiving. They loved it so much they sang it again a month later on Christmas. Today, residents of Savannah share their ancestors' passion for the tune. They dispute that Pierpont wrote the song in Medford, and they claim it as their own.





Festive Harmony: Polish Choir 'Patria' Returns to Kopernik.

We were delighted to welcome back the Polish Choir 'Patria' for a special holiday performance at Kopernik. The group captivated our community with a beautiful selection of Christmas carols performed in both English and Polish. As always, their visit was a highlight for our residents, with whom the choir remains a much-loved favorite.



BINGO - ONE OF OUR MOST POPULAR COGNITIVE GAMES.

"Put your



thinking cap on."

"Myśl głowo,

kapelusz ci kupię"

MAGIC IN WORDS TEAM



**New record!
234 words!!!**

Pop Therapy

Do you enjoy the sensation of popping Bubble Wrap?

Why on earth do so many of us insist on popping those tiny little bubbles?



Professor of psychology Kathleen M. Dillon believed that the answer stems from the power of touch.

In ancient Greece, it was common for people to carry a smooth stone called a “fingering piece” or “worry bead” in their pockets. Touching or petting the stone created a calming effect. These stones, Dillon observed, are similar to Catholic rosary beads or needlework projects like embroidery or knitting in their ability to calm the mind. Dillon even went so far as to conduct experiments on her students using sheets of Bubble Wrap. As it turns out, students who popped the bubbles were more relaxed and more focused than those who did not pop. She concluded that releasing muscle tension in the hands reduces stress in the rest of the body.

Sealed Air Corporation, the maker of Bubble Wrap since 1957, has updated its packaging options in recent years. In 2024, the company introduced a new fiber-based wrap that provides cushioning while being recyclable and more space-efficient for shipping. The design is intended to protect products during transit and reduce material use, though the classic poppable Bubble Wrap is still produced for those who enjoy the traditional experience.

That’s good news for people like April Holliday, a member of an online group called “Popping Bubble Wrap.” She loves the material so much that she has even wrapped herself in a blanket of it. And if several YouTube videos are any indication, even raccoons would be sad to see the pop go out of Bubble Wrap. If you feel the urge to pop but don’t have any Bubble Wrap on hand, you can virtually pop the bubbles in a number of online games. Clicking a bubble and hearing the familiar popping sound is *almost* as satisfying as the real thing!

Trekkies Rejoice

This year, *Star Trek* celebrates an incredible milestone: 60 years of exploring strange new worlds.



Since its first broadcast in 1966, the franchise has captivated audiences of all ages with its stories of courage, friendship, and hope for a better future.

For longtime fans, the anniversary is a chance to reconnect with cherished memories. Special events are planned across the country, including fan conventions, commemorative exhibits, and even themed museum displays showcasing classic costumes and props. Streaming services will highlight favorite episodes and launch new series like *Star Trek*:

The Power of alphabet

So where did alphabetical order come from?

It’s a 3,500-year-old mystery that social scientist William Watt believes he has solved. The English alphabet, or at least letters *A* through *T*, were ordered by a Semitic scribe living in modern-day Lebanon or Syria around the year 1500 BC. Watt believes the letters were arranged according to where the sounds are made in the mouth. Similar sounding letters were separated so that children would not become confused in their learning. Letters *U* and *W* were added in the 16th century.

"Flip, stack, and savor the joy!"



At Kopernik, we do not just provide exceptional care, we also have a vibrant community spirit and very capable Residents. One of the ways to celebrate it was to get together and flip some pancakes. Picture the aroma of buttery batter wafting through the halls, mixing with the laughter of residents wielding whisks and fixing strawberries with playful determination. Our culinary maestros engaged in a symphony of united work creating tasty masterpieces. Whether seasoned veterans or completely new to the batter-mixing play, everybody had a part and participated with enthusiasm: measuring, mixing, flipping and ... eating. Beneath the lighthearted fun simmered a deeper purpose. The Recreation Therapy department created this recipe to go beyond just entertainment. This high-engagement activity offers significant cognitive, physical, and emotional benefits to Residents, including memory stimulation and improved motor skills. Beyond just preparing food, it serves as a multi-sensory experience that fosters a sense of community, nostalgia, and meaningful sense of purpose.





**LIFE IS
BETTER**



**WITH
PANGAKES**



"STACK UP THE JOY, SYRUP IT WITH LOVE!"



FUN TO MAKE AND FUN TO EAT!

February Aloha

For those dwelling in the northern hemisphere, February brings a chill to both the air and the spirit. Spring is just a month away, but who can think of spring when the snow's still falling? Drive away the chill on February 1 with Hula in the Coola Day.



Hula dancing is an integral part of Hawaii's Polynesian history and culture. The dance is far more than swaying the hips in a grass skirt; it's a ritual way to explain Hawaiian gods and goddesses, the history of the people, and the mysteries of natural phenomena through chanting, singing, and dancing. Hula has been performed during religious rituals, rites of passage, social gatherings, and even football games. So if you're looking to warm your spirit this February 1 with a little *aloha*, find a real *kumu hula* teacher. Ditch the grass skirt for one made of *kapa*, a traditional fabric handcrafted from the bark of the paper mulberry tree.

Since hula is Hawaii's iconic dance, the ukulele must be Hawaii's iconic instrument. In the 1900s, the ukulele became part of the musical backdrop to hula dances, so it stands to reason that World Ukulele Day falls on February 2, the day after Hula in the Coola. Famed Hawaiian musician Samuel Kamaka explained that the ukulele was first played in the islands in 1879 by João Fernandes, an immigrant from Portugal. His fingers rapidly strummed a four-stringed *braguinha*, which the native Hawaiians nicknamed *ukulele*, a word meaning "jumping fleas."

Perhaps no ukulele musician was as beloved as Israel "IZ" Kamakawiwo'ole. Raised in a musical family from Honolulu (his uncle was Moe Keale), he was exposed to entertainers like Don Ho and Palani Vaughan. His version of "Over the Rainbow" may rival Judy Garland's. It will, no doubt, be strummed the world over on World Ukulele Day.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Julita

Recreation Assistant
at Kopernik Lodge

Hi, my name is Julita.

I am a new activity aide at Kopernik L. I love my job and I am happy to be working at the Kopernik Lodge and serving everyone who lives here. I believe that together we will create a great family and many fantastic adventures await us in the future.





Polonez Polish Folk Dance Ensemble brings such joy to our residents. These visits are a powerful example of how music and traditional dance serve as "community medicine" for seniors.

The ensemble's performances, besides fun, provide several meaningful benefits for our residents:

Emotional & Sensory Engagement: The "colorful" and "vibrant" nature of Polish folk culture—from stately court dances to lively countryside routines—is designed to enthrall audiences and create an atmosphere of shared joy.

Cognitive & Physical Well-being: For many residents, familiar melodies and traditional costumes can trigger "muscle memory," leading them to sing along or even dance, which significantly improves their mood and sense of identity.

Vibrant Costumes: The group's authentic attire, such as Sukman with rich embroidery, fringe shirts with lace, and woven belts, provides a visually stimulating experience that helps break the monotony of everyday routine.

Poonez's high level of enthusiasm and dedication often turns a simple performance into a "co-created experience" that strengthens the bonds between residents, staff, and the performers.



Polish folk dances, recognized for their incredible energy, intricate steps, and rich tradition, are often considered among the best in the world. The five main national dances—Polonaise, Mazur, Oberek, Krakowiak, and Kujawiak—are celebrated for their vibrant, dramatic, and historic nature.



Good Deeds and Good Fortune

February 17 rang in China's new year, but preparations often begin weeks ahead of Chinese New Year's Day.



One of the most important customs is a thorough cleaning of the house. This ensures any bad luck built up over the past year is swept away. Similarly, one must not clean during the first days of the new year so as not to sweep away

any new good luck. Cleaning house also means it's time to take care of unfinished business; paying debts and resolving quarrels are all part of prepping for the new year.

Food is an important part of any Chinese New Year celebration, but most food must be prepared in advance, thanks to a popular superstition dictating that knives be put away on New Year's. Using a knife might just "cut off" the flow of good luck and prosperity to a home.

Perhaps the most important New Year's tradition is paying respect to ancestors. Celebrations can begin only after proper homage has been paid. On New Year's Eve, temples are often crowded with people bringing food, incense, and other offerings for their departed forebears.

Next door to China in neighboring Tibet, February 18 brings the new year, called *Losar*—Tibet's most important holiday. Drawing from Buddhist tradition, Tibetans believe good comes only to those who do good themselves. For this reason, *Losar* rituals include a focus on "virtuous attitudes," "virtuous actions," and thus, a "virtuous new year." For three to 15 days, depending on the locale, family and friends gather and celebrate by eating good food, telling stories, lighting fireworks, and playing games. Celebrations also involve donning one's finest clothes to visit temples and offer good wishes to the living, the dead, and the spirits of the enlightened. Since it's common to hurl barley flour, known as *tsampa*, as a spiritual offering, it may be a good thing their neighbors have a broom handy.

The Long Sleep

Karolina Olsson of Sweden became known as the "Sleeping Beauty of Oknö" when, on February 22, 1876, at age 14, she fell into a deep sleep and did not awake for 32 years. How did she survive?

Legend has it that family members diligently spoon-fed her sweetened milk each day.



Over the years, they sometimes observed her sleepwalking or crawling. Her family and much of her small remote village believed the girl bewitched. When Olsson finally awoke, she looked in the mirror and burst into tears. She hardly recognized herself. And yet, she seemed to have aged only to her mid-20s, when she should have been 46. Doctors examined her to find no lasting physical or mental damage, only that her mind was still that of a 14-year-old. Olsson had amazingly, inexplicably "hibernated," though today's doctors suggest she might have been in a state of catatonia.

KIEDY NIE MOŻESZ ZNALEŹĆ OKULARÓW DO CZYTANIA



When you can't find reading glasses



Baking programs are therapeutic, sensory-based activities designed to enhance residents' quality of life, stimulate memories, and encourage social interaction

Therapeutic Benefits

Cognitive Function: Following a recipe acts as a mental workout, requiring attention to detail, problem-solving, and sequencing.

Physical Dexterity: Repetitive actions like whisking, kneading dough, and decorating improve fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Emotional Support: The soothing nature of baking can reduce stress and anxiety, providing a sense of purpose and accomplishment when the final product is shared.

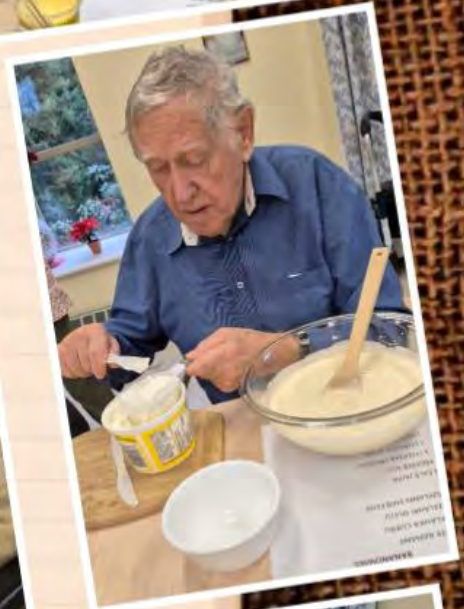
Memory Care: Familiar scents (vanilla, fresh bread) can act as powerful triggers for reminiscence, helping those with dementia recall happy times.




Baking Program



*Ingredients:
teamwork
and love*





" Bake, Share
and show you
care!"

Resolutions with a Twist



The holiday season is sometimes one of indulgence. After all, food and drink are a major part of many holiday events. By the end of the month,

many people are thinking of their New Year's resolutions. Recent surveys show that the most common resolutions include saving more money, spending less, exercising more, and eating healthier. These are also often among the most broken resolutions, so this new year, think beyond the ordinary. Try a wild, wonderful, or just plain weird resolution—something fresh and fun to help you stick with it (for a few months at least).

This year, quirky resolutions are having a moment. One example: the “buy nothing” challenge, inspired by the Buy Nothing Project. Participants vow to buy only necessities, reuse and borrow items, and shop secondhand. It's a creative, wallet-friendly resolution that also builds community spirit—lending books via Libby, swapping items through local groups, or borrowing instead of buying new.

Another trend gaining traction is turning your resolutions into a bingo game. A popular TikToker shared how she gamified her goals using a bingo card—mixing easy “base goals” and tougher “stretch goals,” and rewarding herself for each completed square. The gamelike format makes resolutions feel fun, manageable, and less intimidating.

Still craving silliness? A UK study found that lots of people are embracing resolutions like laughing more, setting “no lists” instead of to-do lists, taking a monthly spontaneous adventure (like exploring a nearby town), and putting their own happiness center stage. Whatever resolution you choose—saving money, laughing more, or playing bingo with your goals—the key is to keep it playful and personal. The best resolutions are about adding a little more joy to the year ahead.

Quiet Wins the Day

We live in the Digital Age, where computers allow us access to vast amounts of information and copious social networking. It's a nearly endless amount of distraction. Gloria Mark, University of California professor of informatics (the science of computer data), likens it to a candy store with unlimited offerings. As we know, an endless stream of candy is bad for our health.

What better way to ring in the new year than with No Interruptions Day on December 31? Research conducted by Mark and her colleagues shows that work interruptions cost us hours in productivity each day. But what of those who believe work itself is an interruption? Then you, too, can participate. Take time on the 31st to unplug and spend quality time with someone special—face-to-face, heart-to-heart.

Cable Cars That Could



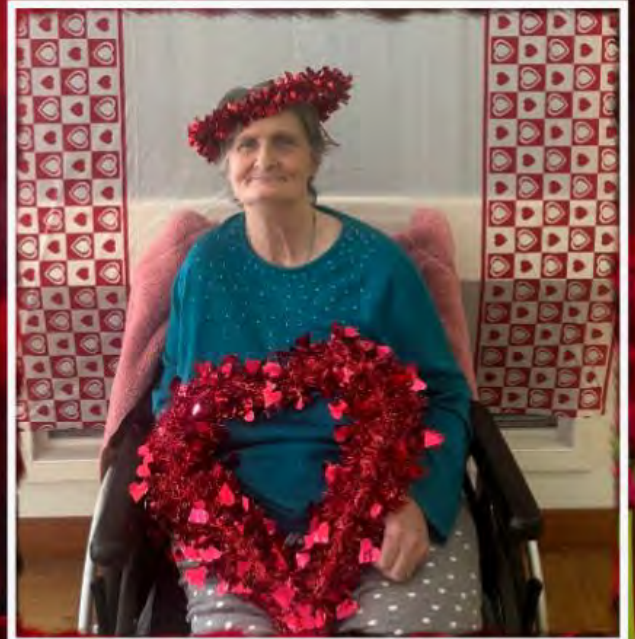
San Francisco's cable cars are recognized the world over. The modern three-line system debuted on December 22, 1957, when car No. 51 rang its bell, exited the Washington-Mason cable car barn, and pulled onto Washington Street.

But the story of San Francisco's famous cable cars really began when Andrew Smith Hallidie witnessed a horse struggling to carry a horse-drawn tram up a slippery, steep cobblestone street in 1869. Hallidie conceived a system using thick steel cables powered by massive steam engines. The trams would grip cables embedded in the roadway. As the engines moved the cables, the tram would be pulled up and down San Francisco's steep city streets. It's a system that has changed little from its first incarnation in the 1800s. Today, cable cars endure as a symbol of hilly San Francisco and a romantic slice of California history.

Valentine's Day Happy Hour



We appreciate our residents every single day, but today we're sending a little extra love. Happy Valentine's Day to the heart of our community! ❤️



HAPPY
VALENTINES
PHOTOBOOTH



Happy Valentine's

Day Memories



love





We were thrilled to welcome the Ukrainian Folk- Dance ensemble to perform for our Residents. Their passion and energy filled the room, creating a truly uplifting atmosphere. The residents thoroughly enjoyed the performance and shared overwhelmingly positive feedback afterward.







ST. PATRICK'S DAY Party

Happy St. Patrick's Day



Art of Appreciation



To some, letter writing might seem like a lost art. To others, it feels like an outdated ritual, made obsolete by email, texting, and social media. But research in

evolutionary psychology offers a different perspective. Studies suggest that expressions of gratitude and appreciation are deeply ingrained cooperative behaviors that help strengthen social ties. Even primates, for example, demonstrate a sense of reciprocity, engaging in a kind of “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours” exchange that highlights the enduring value of saying thank-you.

Leave it to the experts at Hallmark to offer tips on writing the perfect thank-you note. A thank-you note begins long before you sit down with a piece of stationery. First comes a careful tally of names: those in attendance at your party, those who sent you a gift, and those who were particularly helpful, caring, or kind.

A good thank-you note doesn’t have to be written on expensive paper with gold-embossed filigree. Emotion shines through in the voice of your written words. Charm is in the imperfection of your unique handwriting. Excitement comes in finding a hand-addressed envelope in a stack of junk mail.

Next, think about what you’d like to say. Be sure to spell the person’s name correctly and choose a greeting that fits. Begin by expressing your thanks. Then, share a few details about what the person did and how it made a difference to you. Let them know how it made you feel. To close, repeat your thanks. *Sincerely* is always a thoughtful way to end, but you can also choose something more personal, like *With love*, *Warmly*, *Many thanks*, or *Yours truly*. Decorum requires thank-yous within a week. However, a late thank-you is always better than no thank-you at all.

Dancing the Divine



Ballet is not only a beautiful and elegant dance form, but it’s also the perfect civilizing art, says ballerina, critic, and historian Jennifer Homans. Throughout its history, ballet has been used to refine the body, mind, and soul. Since its origins as a dance of wealthy Italians during the

Renaissance, ballet grew beyond the dance floors of the rich. To develop its fluid and balanced movements, choreographers used math and geometry, then taught by ballet teachers to their students. The dance was thought to be so harmonious and perfect that it was given religious significance. In their view, mastering ballet could actually improve the soul.

Dial a Smile

Some would argue that Ding-a-Ling Day on December 12 was a day to celebrate the kooky, off-the-wall ding-a-ling in your life. Well, those



ding-a-lings probably don’t know the real meaning of Ding-a-Ling Day. According to the *Chicago Sun-Times* newspaper, the Ding-a-Ling Club was started in 1971 by Franky Hyle of Chicago, Illinois. Hyle believed that city dwellers needed to be friendlier to one another. His solution was to spread cheer through the telephone lines. The mission of the club was to pick up the phone and dial a friend you haven’t seen or spoken to in a long time. Why the name *Ding-a-Ling*? Hyle looked up the word and found the meaning to be “one who hears bells in his head.” The name stuck, and so did his heartwarming method of “ringing” up old friends.