

# CONNECTIONS

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## Year's End

by Richard Wilbur

Now winter downs the dying of the year,  
And night is all a settlement of snow;  
From the soft street the rooms of houses show  
A gathered light, a shapen atmosphere,  
Like frozen-over lakes whose ice is thin  
And still allows some stirring down within.

I've known the wind by water banks to shake  
The late leaves down, which frozen where they fell  
And held in ice as dancers in a spell  
Fluttered all winter long into a lake;  
Graved on the dark in gestures of descent,  
They seemed their own most perfect monument.

There was perfection in the death of ferns  
Which laid their fragile cheeks against the stone  
A million years. Great mammoths overthrown  
Composedly have made their long sojourns,  
Like palaces of patience, in the gray  
And changeless lands of ice. And at Pompeii



Remembering the good old days and looking forward to a healthy future!

The little dog lay curled and did not rise  
But slept the deeper as the ashes rose  
And found the people incomplete, and froze  
The random hands, the loose unready eyes  
Of men expecting yet another sun  
To do the shapely thing they had not done.

These sudden ends of time must give us pause.  
We fray into the future, rarely wrought  
Save in the tapestries of afterthought.  
More time, more time. Barrages of applause  
Come muffled from a buried radio.  
The New-year bells are wrangling with the snow.



# Kwanzaa

Beginning December 26 and lasting for seven days, Kwanzaa is a celebration of community, family and culture, established as a means to help African Americans reconnect with their African roots and heritage.

Here are some interesting facts you may not know about this annual celebration:

- Kwanzaa carries an universal message. Kwanzaa is rooted in African culture, however, people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds are welcomed to join in the celebration.
- Kwanzaa celebrated its 50th Birthday in 2016. The holiday was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate family, culture and heritage, and is modeled after the first harvest celebrations in Africa.
- 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.



## DECEMBER 2020 NATIONAL DAYS

12/1 - Rosa Parks Day

12/2 - National Day of Giving – #GivingTuesday and the McDonalds McRib sandwich returns today

12/6 - National Microwave Oven Day

12/7 - National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

12/12 - National Ding-a-Ling Day

12/14 - Monkey Day

12/16 - National Chocolate Covered Anything Day.

12/17 - Wright Brothers Day

12/21 - Winter Solstice – Day Between December 20 and 23

12/24 - Christmas Eve

12/25 - Christmas

12/26 - Boxing Day (Canada) and Kwanzaa starts

12/28 - Pledge of Allegiance Day

12/31 - No Interruptions Day



Yeah, that is a chocolate-covered pickle...

# Philosophy (and Religion):

## "Cogito, ergo sum"

We discussed *cogito, ergo sum* in philosophy class. *Cogito, ergo sum* is a philosophical statement, made in Latin, by René Descartes; it is usually translated into English as "I think, therefore I am".

Descartes's statement became a fundamental element of Western philosophy, as it purported to provide a certain foundation for knowledge in the face of radical doubt. While other knowledge could be a figment of imagination, deception, or mistake, Descartes asserted that the very act of doubting one's own existence served—at minimum—as proof of the reality of one's own mind; there must be a thinking entity—in this case the self—for there to be a thought.

We are all thinking entities and we are full of many thoughts on the matter! We love philosophical discussions!



## "They Say It's Your Birthday": Birthdays in Other Countries

In both Brazil and Jamaica, there are traditions that involve getting flour thrown at you. Jamaicans will sometimes be "antiqued," or covered in flour, on their birthday. Brazilian kids take it a step further and throw not just flour, but also eggs at the birthday child.

Canadians often get "greased" on their birthdays, which means their friends and relatives ambush them and smear butter on their noses. Apparently, this practice is for warding off bad luck.

In Italy, Argentina and Hungary, friends will pull the ears of the person whose birthday it is — one tug for each of their years of age.



### CH&S December birthdays:

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

# Vegan Cooking

by Chef Alison

For me, being vegan means not using products that harm or exploit animals or cause negative consequences for the environment. The word vegan refers to much more than a way of eating—it is a way of living. I practice ethical principles in my everyday life—from the food that I eat to the skincare products that I use.

Cooking vegan is easy and very versatile. Typically there are no more than five ingredients. A vegan diet is perfect for me and many other people; however, your nutritional needs may differ. Here are some healthy tips for all humans:

**1. Eat the rainbow.** Stay away from "white" foods, i.e., white rice, white bread, white sugar, white pasta, white potatoes. Instead, eat brown rice, whole-grain bread, natural sweeteners instead of sugar or corn syrup, bean/lentil pasta, and sweet potatoes.

**2. Drink plenty of water.** I try to drink one gallon of water per day. I start when I wake up, when I get hungry, and before I go to bed. According to Harvard Health <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-much-water-should-you-drink>, water carries nutrients and oxygen to your cells, flushes bacteria from your bladder, helps with digestion, and prevents constipation. Harvard Health recommends The daily four-to-six cup rule (32-48 ounces of water per day) for most healthy people. There's no one-size-fits-all answer as to how much water to drink; it depends on size, your health, and your activity level.

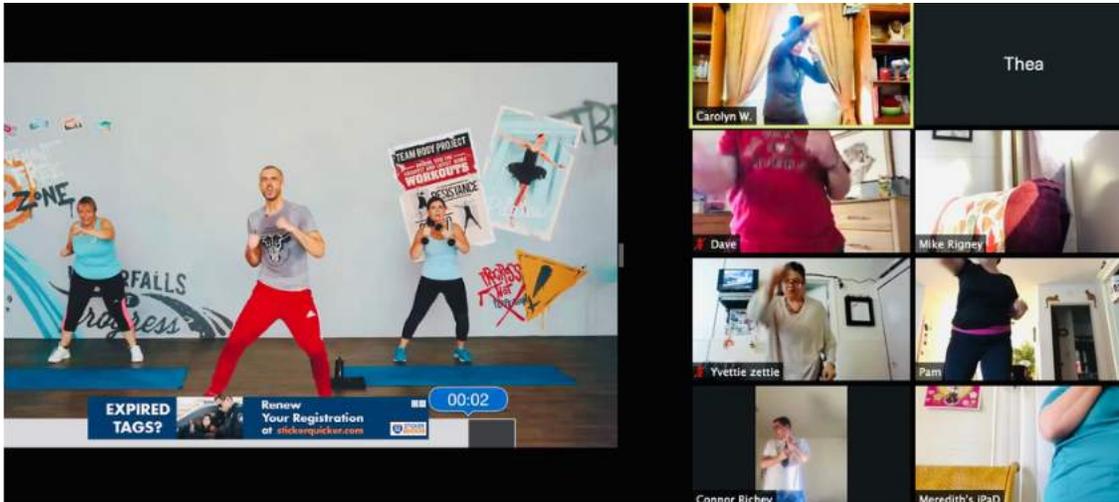
**3. Soups and smoothies are a great way to let your body take a break.** Soups and smoothies are already broken down in the blender (pre-digested) so your body doesn't have to work as hard to digest them.

**4. Leafy greens are amazing!** If you come to nutrition class, often you know we talk about leafy greens all the time!! According to the USDA website <https://www.ars.usda.gov/plains-area/gfnd/gfhnrc/docs/news-2013/dark-green-leafy-vegetables/>, dark green leafy vegetables are great sources of nutrition. Salad greens, kale and spinach are rich in vitamins A, C, E and K. These vegetables also contain antioxidants that protect cells and play roles in blocking the early stages of cancer. They also contain high levels of fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium. Add a cup of spinach to a banana and nut/seed butter smoothie and you won't even taste it!

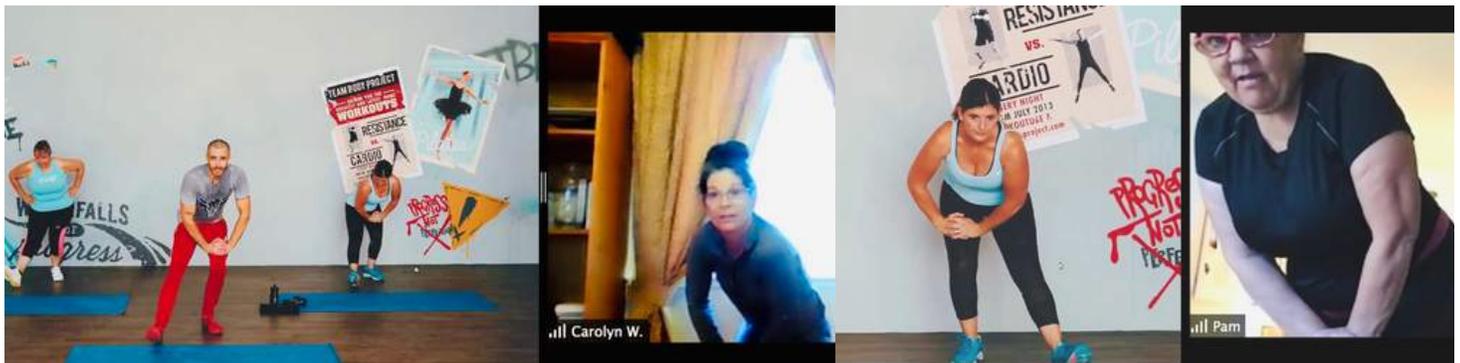
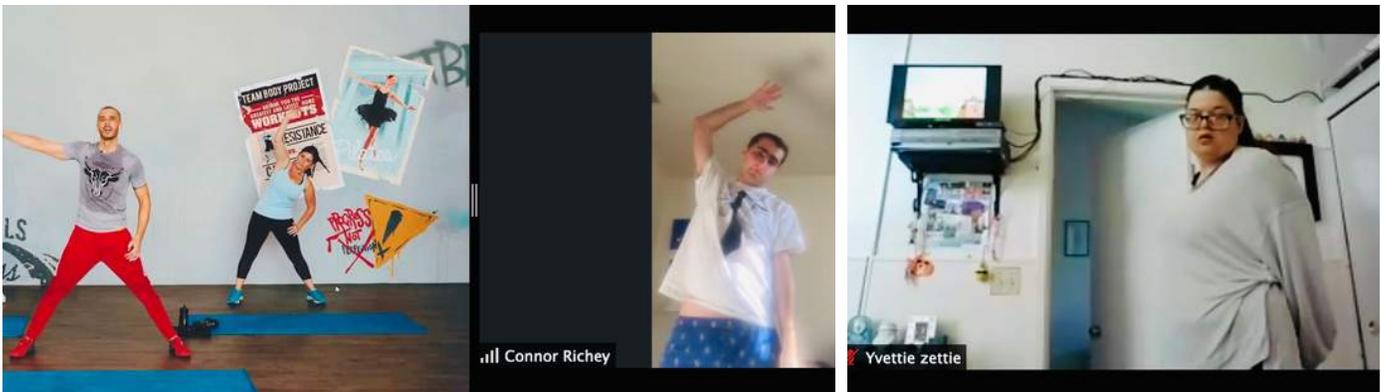
**5. Stay away from soda and store-bought fruit juice!** These items contain too much sugar! Even diet soda is not healthy. Instead, drink plain water, flavored sparkling water, or fruit-infused spa water that I showed you how to make in nutrition class.

**If you have a favorite dish that we have not made in class, let me know and let's see if we can make it vegan!!**

# We Fight Weight Gain!



Sometimes we do boxing workouts! Yes, we are lovers not fighters, but did you know that cardio boxing burns an estimated 350 to 450 calories per hour? Whew!



Cardio boxing can be a great addition to your fitness or weight loss plan. 3,500 calories = 1 pound of fat, so to lose 1 pound of body weight, you need to burn 3,500 calories. If you burn 500-1,000 calories a day and you eat a typical diet, you will lose about 1 to 2 pounds a week!

After burning all of those calories, we meditate for positivity, calmness, relaxation, and stillness. THEN we begin our day!

# Maths, Math, and Mathematics

Both *math* and *maths* are short for the word *mathematics*. Math is the preferred term in the United States and Canada. Maths is preferred in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and other English-speaking places.



Alison teaches long division, addition, and multiplication, above.

What does  $30 + 15 = ?$

## Christmas Island, Anyone?

Who needs a calculator? Not us!

Our students help Jen develop her cruising to Christmas Island knowledge class. As it turns out, Christmas Island is no Island of Misfit Toys!

Christmas Island is located in the Indian Ocean, around 220 miles south of [Java](#) and [Sumatra](#) and around 960 miles north-west of the closest point on the Australian mainland.

Christmas Island had a population of 1,843 residents as of 2016. The island is about 9 miles by 12 miles and offers 83 miles of coastline.

Another inhabitant of Christmas Island is the coconut crab. The coconut crab (*Birgus latro*) is a species of terrestrial hermit crab, also known as the robber crab or palm thief. It is the largest land-living arthropod in the world, with a weight up to TEN POUNDS. It can grow to up to 1 meter (3 ft 3 in) in length from each tip to tip of the leg. (See coconut crab on a coconut, picture to the right.)



Chris taught a class comparing different religions' beliefs about the afterlife. We learned that people throughout history and culture tend to have some strong ideas/opinions about what happens after we die.

Reincarnation is the concept that an aspect of a living being starts a new life in a different physical body or form after each death. It is a central tenet of all major Indian religions, namely Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

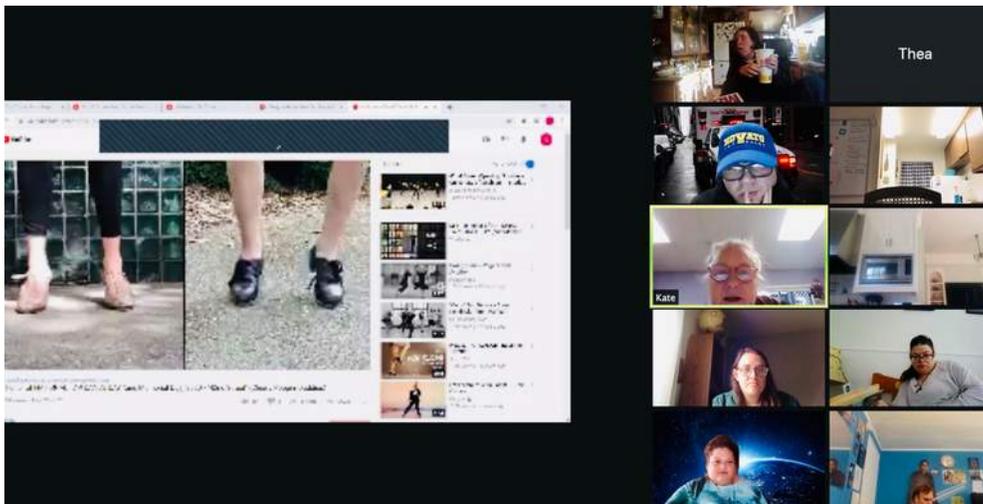
Some religions believe in heaven and hell. Heaven, the heavens, seven heavens, pure lands, Tian, Jannah, Valhalla (see painting *Valhalla* [1896] by Max Brückner to the right), or the Summerland, is a common religious, cosmological, or transcendent place where beings such as gods, angels, saints, or venerated ancestors are said to originate, be enthroned, or live. Hell, in many religious and folkloric traditions, is a place of torment and punishment in the afterlife.

All in all, it was a very interesting comparative class!

## The Afterlife



## Tapping Out



Bill "Bojangles" Robinson

Kate discussed the rhythm of tap dance during music class. Tap dance is a type of dance characterized by using the sounds of metal taps affixed to the heel and toe of shoes striking the floor as a form of percussion. It gained prominence in Vaudeville, then emerged into an art form and means of expression alongside the evolution of jazz.

The best-known tap dancer ever, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson was also the best known and the most highly paid black American entertainer in America during the first half of the twentieth century

# Check out our online class schedule

[http://communityhomesandservices.com/whats\\_new.html](http://communityhomesandservices.com/whats_new.html)



## Juniper Berries

Did you know that juniper berries are High in nutrients and powerful plant compounds?

Juniper berries are a good source of vitamin C. They are rich in essential oils and flavonoids that function as potent antioxidants and may help reduce inflammation.

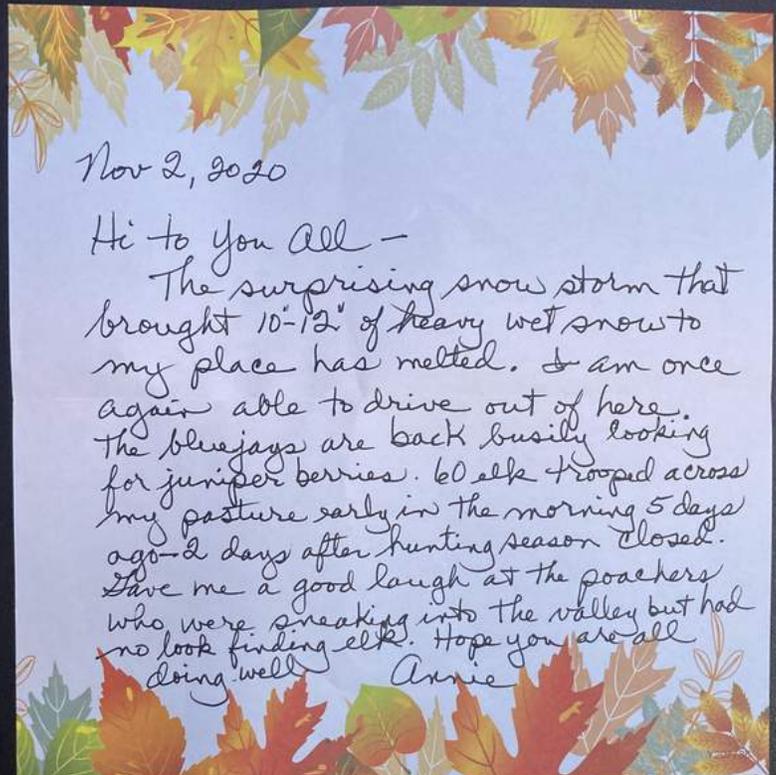
Juniper berries were used in traditional medicine practices to treat diabetes, and recent studies confirm that they may have antidiabetic properties. In one study, juniper berry essential oil demonstrated antibacterial and antifungal effects against 16 species of bacteria, yeasts, yeast-like fungi!



## Thank You For Your Compliments!

"I love your program... The services you provide are top-notch and stand out amongst the best I have seen, and I have been doing this for a very long time :D . I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with some of your staff, who I think are excellent--the program is inspiring!!" -- a support provider

## We ❤️ Your Support



Annie is the aunt of one of our students. She sends us a monthly donation along with beautiful stories about her juniper berry and elk-filled life in the country! Thank you, Annie, we love your letters!

# The McDonald's McRib Sandwich Returns on December 2nd!

by Jennifer Harter

Meanwhile in McNews...

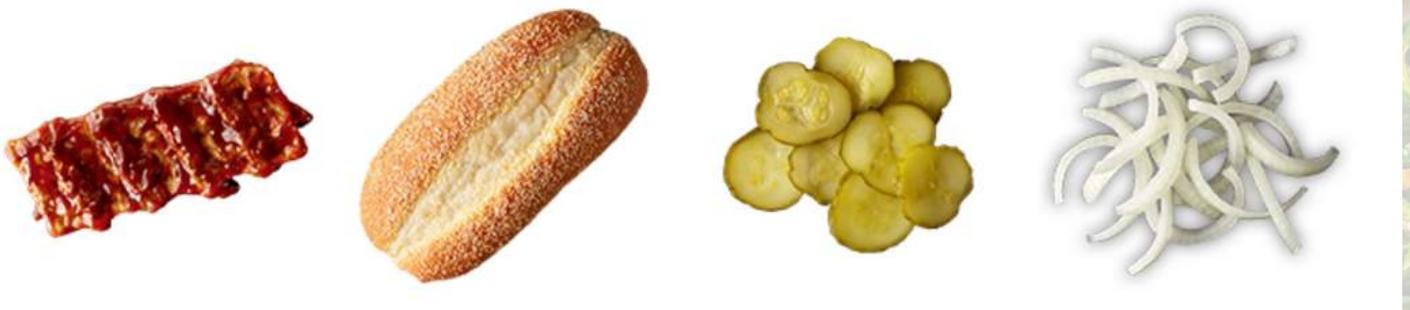
Mark your calendar McDonald's fans... The McRib is coming back nationally on December 2nd for the first time in nearly a decade.

Did we help summon it? It's possible. CH&S discussed the McRib in our Morning Conversation class, beginning with a tweet that had gone viral. The official McDonald's Twitter account tweeted: it's always "when is the McRib coming back" and never "how are you doing person who runs the McDonald's account."

Among our favorite responses was:

How are you doing person who won't tell us when the McRib is coming back?

Ingredients in the McRib®:

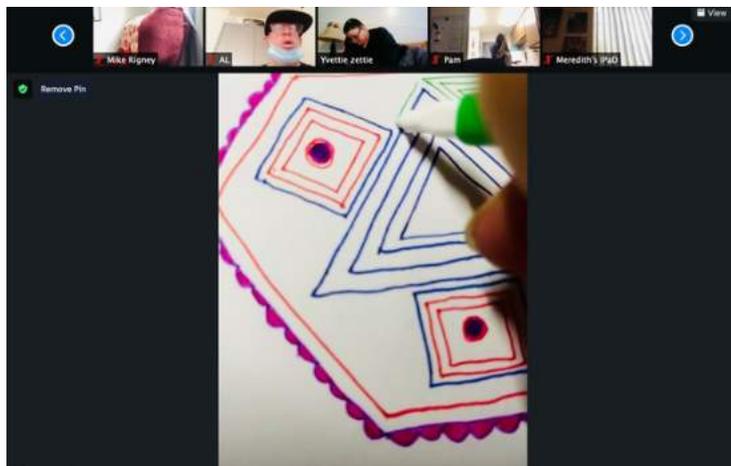


We took a vote and it looks like there are a number of us non-vegans who are looking forward to December 2nd after waiting A DECADE for this tasty temptation!

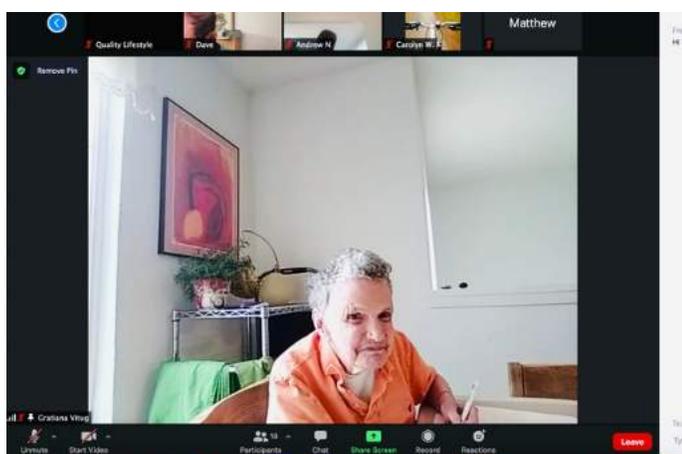
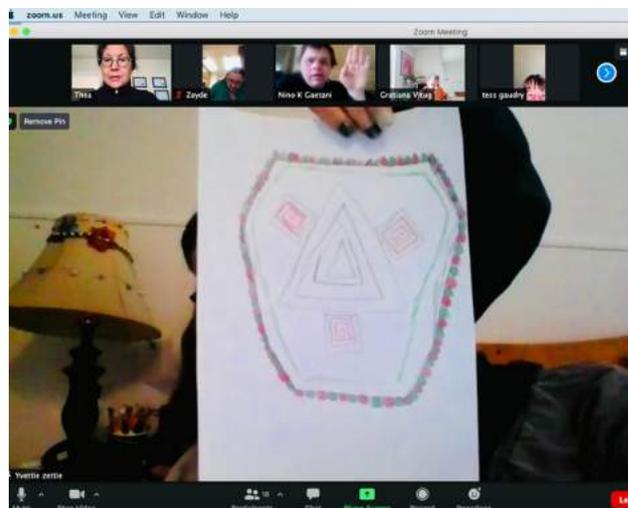
Are you a McRib eater?

Or not so much?

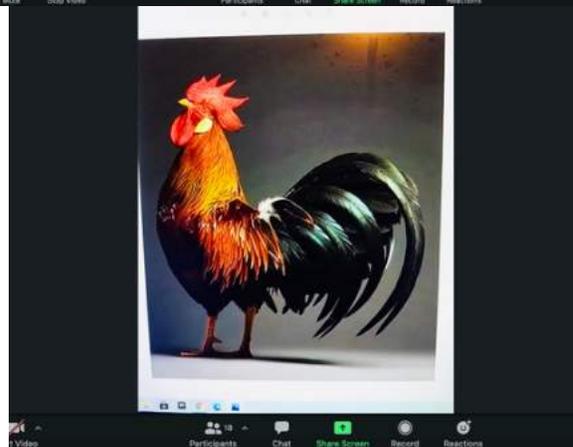
# Art Class: Mandalas Inspired by Nature



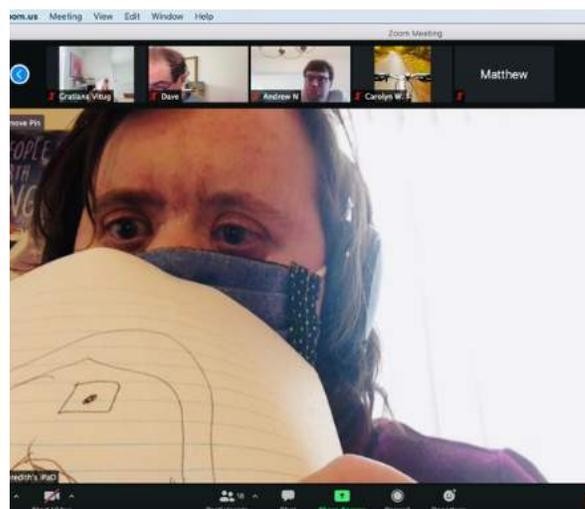
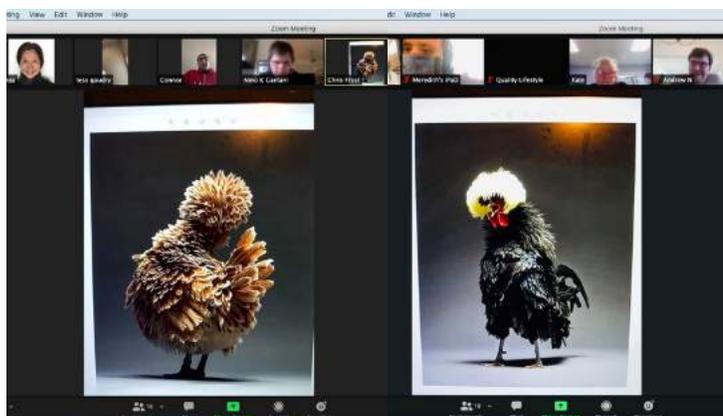
Chris taught us the centering and expressive art form of drawing *mandalas*. The word "mandala" comes from the Sanskrit word for circle. Chris taught us a free-form version because we love classes where we are free to express ourselves!



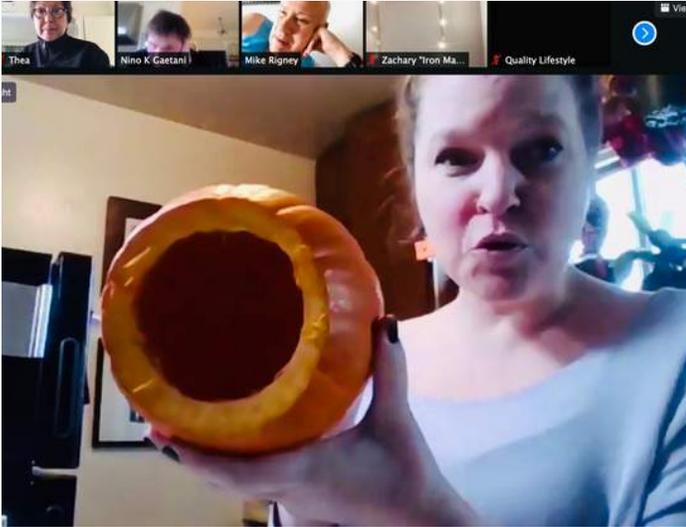
For inspiration, and to demonstrate variety, Chris showed us the diversity found in nature. When you think of a chicken or rooster, you probably picture something like this rooster (right), but check out these other chickens—there are so many varieties of "chicken" in this world.



Who knew chickens could be so beautiful and so different looking?



# Chocolate Cake IN a Pumpkin



Yes, this dessert exists and Jennifer was excited to show us how she experimented with a recipe she found online.

(Left) Jen cleaned out a fresh pumpkin and then made some chocolate cake mix. She poured the batter into the pumpkin and baked. (Below) Jen preps some pink cranberry buttercream frosting because it's the holidays and we all want a little EXTRA.

As it turns out, pumpkins are VERY nutritious! (No, we are not going to talk about the nutritional value of chocolate cake...)

In the US, pumpkin typically refers to *Cucurbita pepo*, an orange type of winter squash. While commonly viewed as a vegetable, pumpkin is scientifically a fruit, as it contains seeds.

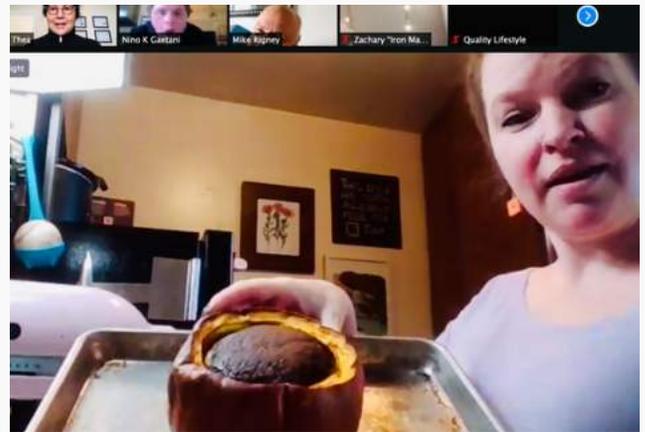
Beyond its delicious taste, pumpkin is nutritious and linked to many health benefits. One cup of cooked pumpkin contains 49 calories, 0 fat, 2 gm protein, 12 gm carbs, 3 gm of fiber, 19% of the RDI of Vitamin C, and 245% of the RDI of vitamin A!

Studies show that vitamin A can strengthen your immune system and help fight infections. Conversely, people with a vitamin A deficiency can have a weaker immune system.



Chef Kyle plated the slices with cranberry sauce and the pink buttercream sauce.

Verdict? Yum!



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Community Homes & Services

## Mistletoe

by Walter de la Mares

Sitting under the mistletoe  
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),  
One last candle burning low,  
All the sleepy dancers gone,  
Just one candle burning on,  
Shadows lurking everywhere:  
Some one came, and kissed me there.

Tired I was; my head would go  
Nodding under the mistletoe  
(Pale-green, fairy mistletoe),  
No footsteps came, no voice, but only,  
Just as I sat there, sleepy, lonely,  
Stooped in the still and shadowy air  
Lips unseen—and kissed me there.

# December 2020 Connections Magazine



The Mistletoe Seller by Adrien Barrère