



READY AND WAITING: These Christmas stockings were not hung by the chimney with care, they were entered in the Homecraft division exhibits at September's Acton Fall Fair. — Frances Niblock photo



New ways to create holiday traditions

Much of what makes the holiday season so special are the traditions that people hold dear. While families have traditions that stretch back decades, there is plenty of opportunity to embrace new means of celebration to breathe new life into Christmas, Hanukkah or the season's other holidays. Chances are you're already hanging stockings or going carolling this

year. You can add some of these and modify as they fit for your family. **1. Feed the wildlife.** By trimming an outdoor pine tree with edible snacks you'll have a beautiful tree and one that benefits the wildlife as well. String peanuts and other nuts for the squirrels. Make little ornaments out of suet and string for the birds. Berries and corn can be enjoyed by all.

2. Create a photo Advent calendar. Make your own Advent calendar that has small doors that open up to photos of different family members. Or use a collection of children's pictures that showcase how they've changed as they've grown older. **3. "Adopt" a child for**

holiday gifts. Some post offices sponsor "Letters from Santa" events where participants can respond to one of the thousands of letters mailed to The North Pole. Or work with a local charity that organizes events to bring gifts to children in hospitals or in foster care.

4. Holiday story count-down. Every night in December watch a movie or read a story that tells an uplifting holiday tale. Use this as a method of counting down until Christmas. On the night prior, reading "Twas the Night before Christmas" should suffice. **5. Remember some-**

one who has passed. The holiday season is one made beautiful by lit candles and twinkling lights. Remember a loved one or a friend who has passed away by lighting a remembrance candle in his or her honour. It's a way this person can still be part of the festivities.

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