

Everyday Matters december

Inspiring ideas for day-to-day living

BY DONNA PARIS



5 WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

1. BAKE A BATCH

There's nothing like a homemade cookie. And really, at what other time of the year is it OK to enjoy a few treats with your morning coffee? Cookies also make yummy, economical gifts.

2. SING A SONG

Kids are always singing, but as adults, we rarely do. Make this year's party a carolling one and you'll be rocking around the clock, especially after a few drinks.

3. WATCH THE CLASSICS

Get the snacks ready and turn on the tube or get out the DVDs. You can't go wrong with *It's a Wonderful Life* – or a cartoon classic such as *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*.

4. HONOUR THE SOLSTICE

Dec. 21 marks the winter solstice, when the days start to get longer and the nights get shorter. Many cultures recognize it as a time of rebirth with festivals, gatherings and other celebrations.

5. LACE UP

Dust off your skates, corral a few friends and head to an outdoor rink. You'll get some exercise and you'll feel exhilarated. Top the day off with a round of hot cocoa.

Having trouble feeling festive this year? Visit canadianliving.com/december for six ways to catch Christmas fever.

Mary Tidlund: A Living Bridge

When the oil company Mary Tidlund founded went bankrupt as a result of the oil bust of 1995, the Calgary native went through one of the darkest periods of her life. Tidlund, after all, had been on a roll. She was the first woman of colour to be president and CEO of an oil business listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

While she searched her soul for what to do next, she travelled the world, meeting women who were doing most of the work but not being paid, and who had no rights, she says. Tidlund's adoptive parents, who also

helped raise more than 40 foster children, had taught her early in her life that she should also give back. In 1998, she formed the Mary A. Tidlund Charitable Foundation to help the women she had met on her travels. One of Tidlund's proudest accomplishments: a micro-credit loan program in Angola that sees more than 7,000 participants accessing \$1 million. "I love bridging people who are not well funded," she says, "and watching someone who thought they couldn't do something, do it!"

– Susan McClelland

