



A FEAST OF FLAVORS AND TRADITION WITH A DASH OF DICKENS

How 'A Christmas Carol' Rings in the Christmas Season

November has always marked the beginning of the most magical time of the year, and even as an adult, this hasn't changed one bit. Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday, but I also can't help but look forward to the Christmas season and all of the traditions I get to experience with my family. But before my family dives into reading "A Christmas Carol" together, we make sure to have a Thanksgiving celebration to remember.

While turkey is on most people's minds, I consider Thanksgiving my favorite holiday because it's a time I can truly slow down and appreciate all that I've been given. Gratitude has always been a significant part of my life and personal philosophy. I'll send Thanksgiving cards to all of my clients and partners in November to show my appreciation. Meanwhile, my family will also write gratitude notes each year to share exactly what we're grateful for. I firmly believe that it's almost impossible to be depressed or anxious when you're filled with gratitude. Of course, my family also loves digging into our turkey and the delicious tarte Tatin we bake (gluten-free for my wife).

Once Thanksgiving comes to a close, it's time for me to bring out our copy of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and read it aloud with my children. This is a family tradition my father used to have with me, and now it's a Christmas staple we carry on almost every year. We all look forward to reading the story, just a few chapters here and there. I'm always careful to

ensure that the final chapter is saved for Christmas Eve.

Every time, without fail, I'll shed a few tears as the story comes to a heartfelt close. I think when my kids were younger, they never noticed, but now, I'm sure they get a kick out of how much the story moves me. They also can't deny feeling emotional whenever we finish the story!

Aside from sharing the true spirit of Christmas with this beloved classic, most of our holiday traditions are centered around food. With a diverse array of cultures in our family, our dinners are certainly never boring! In the weeks leading up to Christmas, we cherish our Southern Italian heritage from my great-grandmother and eat pignolata, a delicious pine-nut-shaped dessert covered in honey. The tiny bite-sized treat can lead to eating a bowlful if you're not careful!

We also never forget to have a true New Mexico Christmas with posole and tamales on the day before Christmas Eve! For Christmas Eve dinner, we will head over to my wife's parents' house and enjoy a traditional Catholic Polish Wigilia feast. This includes herrings in white sauce, borscht, and plenty more. For my Italian



side, we'll also dine on baccalà, which is flavorful cod with pasta.

After dinner, the family will sing carols together, and one of my sons will play piano. Then, we'll drive to Old Town, where we can witness the countless luminarias lit with candles and placed every 3 feet to light the way for Jesus. For Christmas Day, it's time to head over to my parents' house and eat some incredible prime rib and Yorkshire pudding. Presents are opened, songs are sung, and endless laughs fill the home. Before all this, though, we start with the reading of "A Christmas Carol." There really is no better time of the year.

I wish you and your family a happy holiday, and I can't wait to see what 2024 has in store for my family and yours. Take care!

—Bert Parnall

Discover Albuquerque's Artistic and Cultural Wonders

From Ancient Artifacts to Contemporary Creations

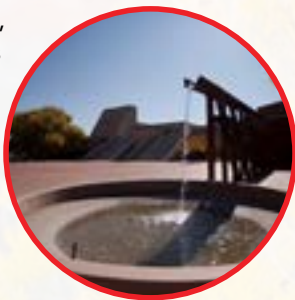
There's no need to cross state lines or country borders to find exceptional art museums. Albuquerque's incredible history and dynamically mixed cultures have allowed for some of the most fantastic art museums right here in our backyard. If you're unsure what to do this weekend, we recommend visiting one of these museums that will bring you a day of stunning artwork and unbelievable history.

The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC)

As the country's only national cultural institution dedicated to Hispanic culture, everyone should make the National Hispanic Cultural Center a must-visit. The center offers everything from visual, performing, media, and literary arts to Hispanic history and education.

The NHCC also includes traveling artworks, so you should be sure to check out the institution's latest collection throughout the year. Live performances also take place at the NHCC regularly!

The stunning fresco mural at the NHCC's entrance is worth seeing on its own, as it was created by the renowned artist Frederico Vigil.



The Albuquerque Museum of Art & History

Showcasing over 35,000 historical pieces and artworks, it's no wonder why the Albuquerque Museum of Art & History is perhaps the most popular destination in the city. With all of the artifacts at your fingertips, you can go back centuries of New Mexican history. What better way is there to spend your Saturday afternoon? Whether you head to the museum alone or with your family, you are bound to



have an incredible time looking at the endless collections of art in the heart of Old Town.

The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

Uncover thousands of years' worth of Native American history just in New Mexico at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. The institution offers the cultural history of various tribes and interactive exhibits that immerse you in history and personal interviews with tribe leaders sharing their culture. You can also discover the works of Native American artists, poets, and musicians displayed here at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Make the center your weekend destination to experience live performances, Native dining, and fine art created by Native artisans.



The Maxwell Museum of Anthropology

Located on the University of New Mexico campus, the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology can take you back all the way to prehistoric times with reconstructed cave dwellings, Ice Age cave art, sculptures, and other artifacts displaying the history of humankind. For pottery lovers, this museum will bring plenty of inspiration with its incredible collection of prehistory pottery. The best part? Admission to the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology is entirely free!



We hope visiting these museums and cultural centers will help you feel closer to our beautiful state and the communities that have thrived here for millennia.

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Bert's Italian Pignolata Recipe!

It's not Christmas without this Southern Italian classic: pignolata! For a larger serving, adjust this family recipe as needed. Simple and delicious, these tiny treats will be devoured in no time!

Ingredients

- 1 egg
- All-purpose flour
- Vegetable oil
- Honey
- Sprinkles

Directions

1. In a bowl, beat egg, and add flour until the dough won't take anymore.
2. Pinch off a bit of dough and roll it between your hands to form a long snake-like rope. Start at one end of the rope and cut into tiny 'pinon' looking pieces.
3. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the pieces a few at a time until they are golden and float at the top of the oil. Scoop them out of the oil and drain on paper towels.
4. When all pieces have been fried, heat honey in another saucepan and dip the fried pieces in the hot honey quickly and take out, put on a paper plate, and top with sprinkles!

A DOG'S INTUITION: *How Babu Saved Her Human From a Tsunami*

The tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011 was unimaginable; the natural disaster killed nearly 20,000 people in minutes. But amid the chaos, there was at least one tiny miracle: an 11-year-old Shih Tzu named Babu.

Tami Akanuma, an 83-year-old woman living in the coastal city of Miyako, had her typical morning interrupted by a 9.0 earthquake that shook her house roughly 200 yards from the coast. When it stopped, she breathed a sigh of relief, but Babu became extremely agitated. The small dog began frantically pacing around the living room, moaning, and jumping at the door. Though it was early for Babu's morning walk, Akanuma decided to appease her.

Sources differ on what happened next. Some say officials broadcast a tsunami warning, and Akanuma realized she must evacuate, while others state she knew nothing of the impending disaster. But everyone agrees that Babu jumped into action. She instantly headed for a large hill near Akanuma's home — the opposite direction of the pair's usual walk.

Akanuma did not dismiss the dog's instincts. Babu tugged urgently at her leash, running as far as she could before turning to her owner. Akanuma said Babu seemed to be encouraging her to move faster, and the dog ran ahead every time Akanuma caught up. Akanuma later estimated they walked more than half a mile in a few minutes.

Only moments after the duo finally reached the top of the hill, they watched an enormous wave wash over their home. The house was destroyed, but Akanuma and Babu escaped with their lives.

How did Babu do it? People have long suspected that animals can predict natural disasters, but the truth is elusive. Scientists agree that animals aren't psychic but disagree on whether something else might be at play. Some attribute the supposed phenomenon to the "psychological focusing effect," or a human tendency to emphasize one detail in our

memories while discarding others. But others point to dogs' heightened senses of hearing and smell, suggesting animals may be able to detect small atmospheric changes that humans can't.

No matter the explanation, Akanuma credited her dog with saving her life, and the two gratefully celebrated Babu's 12th birthday from an evacuation shelter only weeks later.



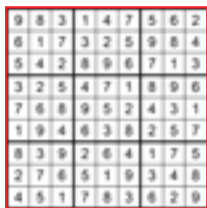
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If you are a medical professional or a lawyer practicing in another area of law, we welcome you to refer your patients or clients. We know you want the best for your patients and clients, and so do we. Call us today at 505-207-0144 or visit HurtCallBert.com for more information on our services.

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Smart Social Media

BUILD BETTER HABITS FOR YOUR TEENAGER'S BRAIN

Social media is a great way to stay in touch with friends and family, stay updated on current events, and cool off after work or school. But using social media has drawbacks, especially for the developing minds of teenagers. It's been proven to distract them, disrupt their sleep, and negatively impact their mental health.

Luckily, you can implement a few simple rules with your teens to make social media better for their brains.

Rule No. 1: No social media when they wake up.

When we wake up in the morning, our brain is still producing a lot of alpha and theta brain waves. These brain waves are associated with deep rest and an almost meditative state, making our brain more suggestible.

So, suppose your child uses social media and sees a post that may suggest negative

thoughts or behaviors. In that case, they'll be more likely to absorb and accept that information. Our brains balance out these waves 5 -15 minutes after waking, so it's a good idea for them to avoid using their device until then.

Checking social media first thing in the morning also triggers a fresh dopamine reward, creating a cycle of craving throughout the day that keeps your child constantly scrolling for more.

Rule No. 2: Keep notifications turned off!

The sound of a notification triggers our brains' stimulus-response behavior, which is why even you may become antsy when you hear your child's phone buzzing through dinner. This behavior is also driven by dopamine, meaning your brain

rewards you for responding to the stimulus, or in this case, the sound of a notification. And, just like the morning social media, it creates a habit of constantly checking our phones to receive more of the reward.

Rule No. 3: Limit aimless scrolling.

In a study of 460 participants, researchers found that aimlessly scrolling through social media resulted in psychological distress, decreased overall life satisfaction, and diminished mental well-being. If possible, give your children structured time on social media so their scrolling won't continue for hours. You can also educate your teen on these risks so they can hopefully break themselves out of endless scrolling when they realize it's happening.

