

**UPCOMING INTEREST
GROUP MEETINGS**

Monday 1/16

Martin Luther King Jr 's Holiday
No classes scheduled.

Tuesday 1/17

10:00 AM English Conversation Practice
12:00PM Knitting for Everyone

Wednesday 1/18

10:00AM Infant and Toddler Playgroup
12:30PM Italian Conversation
7:30PM MIT Women's Chorale Rehearsal

Thursday 1/19

9:30AM Art Explorations
1:30PM English Conversation Practice

Friday 1/20

12:30PM French Conversation Group
2:00PM Advanced English Conversation

Monday 1/23

12:00PM Lunchtime Book Group
1:30PM Telling Lives: Memoir Writing
3:00PM English Conversation Practice

Tuesday 1/24

10:00AM English Conversation Practice
12:00 PM Knitting For Everyone
5:30 PM French Book Club

Wednesday 1/25

10:00AM Infant and Toddler Playgroup
7:30PM MIT Women's Chorale Rehearsal

Thursday 1/26

9:30 AM Art Explorations
1:30PM English Conversation Practice

Friday 1/27

2:00PM Advanced English Conversation

**IMPORTANT UPCOMING
DATES IN OUR AREA:**

| | |
|--------|---------------------------|
| Jan 16 | Martin Luther King Jr Day |
| Jan 20 | Inauguration Day |
| Jan 28 | Chinese New Year |

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Neighbors News

What's New in Neighbors News

Happy New Year Dear Neighbors! Our group meetings have started and will be in full swing next week, after the MLK Holiday weekend!

Please check the Neighbors [calendar](#) for up-dated information on start times of the

meetings. We are working on the dates for two exciting new events : "Celtic American Song, Story and Craic Night" and "World Springtime Celebration" demo fest! Harvard Neighbors is also in collaboration with the Office of Common Spaces for the Plaza Winter Fest! Starting January 20, you will be able to enjoy a range of outdoor



activities, special events, and food on the Plaza during Plaza WinterFest 2017. Free daily activities include:

Ice shuffleboard, outdoor bowling, and curling on three ice lanes, ping-pong, corn hole, and foosball. Food trucks throughout the day will be serving everything from tacos to pizzas to waffles, hot chocolate and s'mores making kits for sale from Harvard Student

Agencies. Fire pits for warming up in the afternoons and evenings on Thursday-Sunday. Daily activities will start at 12 pm to 8 pm. Fire Pits schedule is: Thurs & Fri 3:30pm-8pm, Saturday 12-8pm & Sunday 12pm-6pm. The fest will continue until March 10, 2017. Harvard Neighbors will team up with Open Spaces to bring you events catered specifically to our members! Stay tuned!

Here is one interesting idea if you love to sing and enjoy music! [The Greater Boston Intergenerational Chorus](#), an unique community chorus, whose 75 singers come from 25 Boston-area towns, welcomes all who love to sing from ages 10-110. They sing in many different musical styles: world, contemporary, traditional, jazz, classical, folk, novelty, gospel and more! Most importantly, they have a great



time together. Rehearsals, open to everyone without auditions, are Tuesday nights 6:30 to 8pm. The chorus will take new members after their concerts on January 17 at 7 pm and January 21 at 4 pm at First Parish Church, 35 Church St. Watertown. You are kindly invited to attend the concerts and have a great time!

New Year's Resolutions

It's New Year once more, the day that we all make a host of bad conscience inducing promises also known as common New Year resolutions. How long do you think you will keep them?

Many of the top New Year's resolutions are made by people who will keep them for exactly long as they are convenient, and the minute the resolutions become a challenge to keep they are dropped like a very hot pot being grabbed with bare hands.

Why is it that we have no more moral stamina than a noodle when it comes to keeping our resolutions? All of the New Year trivia sites (including Wikipedia) will tell you that only 8 to 12 out of every 100 people keep their New Year resolution for an entire year, and the sad or funny thing is that the number may well be less than that.

This New Year, make resolutions that you are going to keep. "I will break my other New Years resolutions within the first

week" is at least one that is accurate, as is "I will diet for two weeks and go back to eating pretty much anything I want after that".

If you can make it through even two months of keeping up with your resolution, you will feel much better about yourself. If you can make it through a whole year, you are a far better person than most! Our hats



come off to you!

Granted, there is no way to really count

how many people keep their top New Year's resolutions, but the concept remains the same: New Year's resolutions are made just for us to look good in front of our friends at New Years, and are quickly forgotten when they become inconvenient.

You will find that no one other than yourself will follow up on your resolutions, but as the immortal Shakespeare once said, "Please pass the bacon, I prithee." Oops, wrong quote. "To thine own self be true."

Be true to yourself this year, and only make resolutions that you are going to keep.

May this New Year be full of joy, may your resolutions last as long as your cravings for unhealthy food, and may you feel the magic of the New Year in your heart.

Let this New Year fill you with hope instead of cookies, with joy instead of ice cream, and with wonder instead of potato chips.

May the New Year find your waistline slimmer, your wallet fatter, your cholesterol lower, and your tolerance level higher!

Making History

25 Fun Facts From Presidential Inaugurations Past

Did you know ...

- ... in 1953 Texas-born Dwight D. Eisenhower was lassoed by a cowboy who rode up to him on horse.
- ... JFK's inauguration almost went up in flames when the podium caught fire as Cardinal Richard Cushing was delivering the invocation. Thank goodness his robes didn't light up, and Kennedy even managed a smile.
- ... one of the most awkward moments in inauguration history occurred in 2009, when Chief Justice John Roberts flubbed the oath during Obama's public ceremony—putting the word “faithfully” in the wrong place. It was a small slip of the tongue, but since it raised concerns that Obama may not have been properly sworn in, they repeated the 35 words, in the right order this time, in private the next day at the White House.
- ... But the prize for most botched oath goes to Lyndon B. Johnson, who took the vice-presidential oath during JFK's inauguration “without any mental reservation whatever,” instead of “without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion.”
- ... Jimmy Carter took his inauguration in stride when he walked from the Capitol to the White House in the ceremony parade (the only other president to do so was Thomas Jefferson).
- ... no one throws a party like Abraham Lincoln, whose



- inauguration was so wild, the police had to be called in.
- ... Thomas Jefferson, the Man of the People, Sage of Monticello, Apostle of the Constitution, and so on, was the first president to be sworn in in Washington, D.C.
- ... contrary to popular misconception, Theodore Roosevelt, not the dashing John F. Kennedy was the youngest man inaugurated, at 42 years of age.
- ... Ronald Reagan was the oldest man inaugurated, just 17 days short of his 70th birthday.
- ... Bill Clinton's second inauguration was the first to be live-streamed on the Internet.
- ... apparently Bill and Hill danced till they dropped during President Clinton's second inauguration, when they attended 14 inaugural balls—the most any president has attended.
- ... while some tickets for this year's inaugural ball are being scalped for as much as \$12,500 a pop, the 400 tickets to James Madison's celebration went for \$4 apiece.
- ... William Henry Harrison set the record for longest speech (100 minutes and 8,495 words), which he delivered sans hat or coat in the middle of a snowstorm. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, he died of pneumonia a month later.
- ... at just 135 words, the shortest speech was given by George Washington.
- ... the original G.W. was the only president to kiss the Bible as he was sworn in.
- ... Washington also ad libbed his oath, ending it with the words “so help me God” and setting a precedent for

- future presidents like Obama, who has requested the phrase be included in his oath.
- ... Theodore Roosevelt went off on a limb when he concluded his oath with the words “And thus I swear.”
- ... John Quincy Adams was the first of three presidents to eschew the Bible while being sworn in, opting to place his hand on a constitutional-law volume instead.
- ... John Quincy also broke the dress-code mold as the first president to be sworn in wearing trousers instead of knee breeches.
- ... an estimated 1.2 million people attended Lyndon B. Johnson's inauguration. President Obama drew a record 1.8 million in 2009.
- ... in 1909 William H. Taft was sworn into office as nearly 10 inches of snow fell in D.C.—a record for Inauguration Day.
- ... Franklin D. Roosevelt's second inauguration in 1937 was the rainiest to date (1.77 inches), though that didn't stop a stalwart FDR from standing in the freezing sleet for an hour and a half as the parade splashed by.
- ... James Buchanan's inauguration in 1857 was the first to be photographed.
- ... Robert Frost became the first inaugural poet when he spoke at John F. Kennedy's swearing-in. Richard Blanco, who is speaking Monday, will be the first gay Latino inaugural poet.
- ... the most expensive presidential inauguration was none other than Barack Obama's in 2009, with a bill of more than \$150 million, two thirds of which was financed by private donors.

Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year (Spring Festival) is a major holiday in not just China but also Hong Kong (officially as Lunar New Year) Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Mauritius, and the Philippines.

Here are some interesting facts about this important and popular holiday. The date for Chinese New Year changes each year. It always falls between January 21 and February 20, determined by the Chinese lunar calendar.

The holiday is oddly called "Spring Festival". Though in winter, Chinese call their New Year holidays 'Spring Festival' (春节 chūnjié /chwnnjyeh/), because 'Start of Spring' (4–18 February) is the first of the terms in the traditional solar calendar. Every Chinese New Year starts a new animal's zodiac year. A very old custom is to name the years by one of 12 animals in their zodiac cycle. For example, 2017 is a year of the Rooster. Many Chinese still believe in astrology and other New Year superstitions. People focus on priorities: making amends, reconciling with people, avoiding offence, and re-establishing old ties. They buy and wear new clothes, give gifts, and clean house. It is a festival for 1/5 of the world's population. It's China's winter vacation week, like between Christmas and New Year's Day in other countries. Schools in China get about a month off, and universities even more. China, Hong Kong and Macau, and nine other Asian countries have public holidays.

Billions of red envelopes are exchanged. These red envelopes with cash are given out from older to younger, from bosses to employees, and from leaders to underlings. It is a special New Year's bonus.

200 million Mainland Chinese travel long distances for these holidays, and it is estimated that there are 3.5 billion journeys in China. Tens of millions of people travel in other countries too. Traditionally, the 16 days from New Year's Eve until the Lantern Festival each had a special celebration activity.

The Lantern Festival: In the evening of 15th day of the first lunar month, on the night of the full moon, families gather for dinner and go out and see fireworks and light lanterns. Lanterns are put up for decoration, let loose to fly, and floated in rivers. Ice lanterns shine in Harbin: High-tech giant ones glow with beautiful colors. Thousands of traditional smaller ones are lit also. Xinnian Kuaile means "Happy New Year"! It is pronounced "sshin-nyen kwhy-luh".



Long Weekend Ideas

Here is an idea for your long weekend!

The [Hôtel de Glace](#), located only 10 minutes from downtown Quebec City, Canada and the only ice hotel in North America, is open from January 4 to March 26, 2017.

Hotel de Glace is the brainchild of Jacques Desbois who had read about the world's first Ice Hotel in Jukkasjarvi, Sweden in 1996. Five years later, Desbois erected the first ice hotel in Montgomery Falls, Quebec. Since then, over 700,000 people from around the world have visited the hotel, with 30,000 people experiencing the thrill of staying overnight.

Construction begins in early December once the temperature drops below zero. Over a six-week period, approximately 50 people work tirelessly to erect the annual hotel. About 30 of the workers focus on production while fifteen sculptors work to decorate the hotel and bring it to life. The snow is made on-site with snow blowers, as



the snow that falls from the sky is too dry and airy. The first step is to lay the foundation which must be at least 2-feet thick.

The snow is then blown over metal molds to give the hotel its unique shapes. Once the snow sets and hardens, the molds are removed and the Hotel de Glace is born. In addition to being a great windshield, the thick snow walls keep the Hotel de Glace well insulated. The ambient temperature varies only by a few degrees between -3°C and -5°C, no matter what the outside temperature is.

All beds have a solid ice base, with a wooden bed-spring and a mattress on top. Mattresses are covered with blankets, and people sleep inside arctic sleeping bags designed to stay warm in temperatures as low as -30°C. It is recommended that you slip inside your sleeping bag wearing just thermal underwear to keep humidity to a minimum.