

Culture: Christmas in Hawaii

In this issue of Obihiro Pioneer, Obihiro CIR Elaine from Hawaii (USA) will share with us what Christmas is like in her hometown!

Typical “American” Christmas

America is a big country! All across the states, classic Christmas movies and shows would run 24/7 on television. Although every show would have their own spin on the story, most Americans are aware of the typical Christmas timeline: On December 24th, Santa delivers the presents for the world’s children with his team of flying reindeer, in time for when the children wake up on Christmas Day (12/25).

Most of the familiar characteristics of America’s Christmas celebrations have spread throughout the world. With the exception of eating fried chicken, Japan’s celebrations are quite similar.

White? Christmas in Hawaii?

Hawaii, being summer all year long, our idea of a “winter wonder land” is different from the rest of the United States. After Santa is done sending presents to the children of the world, he and Mrs. Santa take a well-deserved break in Hawaii. On Christmas day, you can



Photo credit: Macdill Air Force Base

often find Santa out surfing or kayaking at the beach!

DIY Christmas Lights

Decorating your home for Christmas is a very typical activity for most American families, but Hawaii takes their home decorations to another level. Because it doesn’t snow in residential parts of Hawaii, families don’t need to worry as much when decorating their homes with outdoor Christmas lights. Heated neighborhood decorating contests have started in some parts of Hawaii!

Have a safe holiday and melekalikimaka (Hawaiian for “merry Christmas!”)!



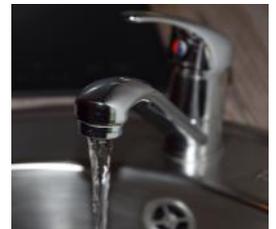
Photo credit: West Hawaii Today

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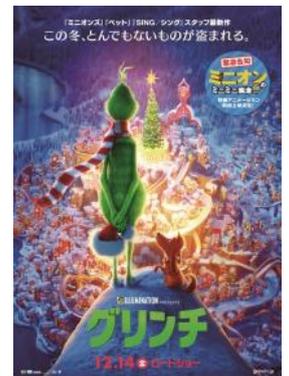
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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
12/8 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table 日本語講座 Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge Organized by the Tokachi International Association	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
12/12 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport.	
12/15 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	International Potluck Night (China) Meet local and international Tokachi residents while enjoying a dish from abroad. This time, Ms. Wenyan Ning, a CIR from China will introduce a famous stewed chicken and chestnut dish from the Shandong province of China called "liziji." Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) Please bring along a dish or drink for sharing. Organized by the Committee for improvement of the City	
12/2, 23 (Sun) 10:00-11:00	Fish Day 魚の日 Every month in Hiroo town (twice in December!), there is "Fish Day" during which fish and other ingredients taken from the sea are used to make healthy dishes native to the north. A variety of products are on sale for the event.	Hiroo Town Fisheries Cooperative Food Division 広尾漁協食品部(広尾郡広尾町会前2丁目79番地先) 0155-82-3202
12/9 (Sun)	Urahoro Product Fair うらほろ物産フェア Local produce and other products will be on sale.	Urahoro Chuo Kouminkan 浦幌町中央公民館 015-576-2181
12/9 (Sun)	49th Hiroo Hairy Crab Festival 第49回広尾毛がにまつり Enjoy the fresh seafood of Hiroo Town. There will be a hairy crab eating contest, a prize raffle, and more.	Seaside Park Hiroo シーサイドパーク広尾 01558-2-0177 (Mon~Fri) 01558-2-2111 (Sat・Sun・Holiday) http://www.town.hiroo.lg.jp/
12/22 (Sat)	Ecology Park: Enjoy the Short Day エコパ歳時記 短い日を楽しもう Come and join various activities held on this holiday: Kadomatsu Making 10:00-12:00 Make traditional Japanese bamboo decorations for the New Year. Up to 20 Parent-child pairs may participate.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp

Living in Tokachi: Winter Vacation Home Preparation

After a long year's worth of work, most use the year-end break to head home or go on vacation. Before you leave your Tokachi home for the holidays, here is some advice for keeping your peace of mind while away.

Drain your Pipes

Due to thinner home insulation and a lack of central heating, Japanese homes (apartments included) are often colder than their western counterparts. Especially here in Tokachi, where temperatures drop dramatically at night, draining your pipes over would be a good habit to keep. Even if you turn off your water source, there is still water left in the pipes. The water expands inside of the pipes and lead to bursting! This means replacing your pipes and covering any water damage that occurred (there have been many cases of water leaking into rooms below!). Every home is different, so double-check with your landlord on how to drain your pipes.

Just in Case...

In the case that you forget to drain your pipes or a particularly cold night comes along, there are a couple of ways to get the water running again without calling for a repair company.

DO NOT USE AN OPEN FLAME! Thawing must

be done slowly to prevent more damage. Wrapping the pipe with a thick towel and slowly pouring hot water onto the towel is the most common method. The towel holds the heat and



Photo credit: Pixabay

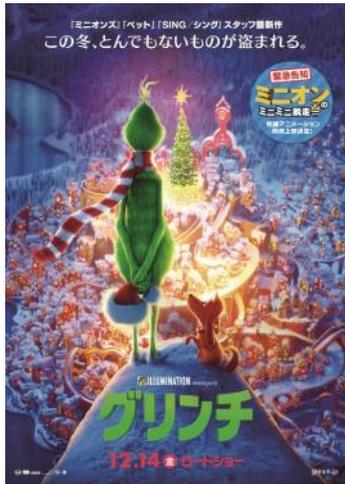
wraps the pipe to evenly thaw. Using dry heat, such as a hair dryer or heating your entire home may also help.

Keep your Heater On

While it sounds ridiculous to have the heater on without anyone home, many Japanese use this method to assure their home won't freeze while they're away. Consider keeping your heating on the lowest setting. This will prevent the pipes in your home from freezing. While it's not the cheapest method, it is definitely cheaper than replacing your burst pipes and water damaged items.

Stay safe and dry this winter!

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml



Title	Language	Dates
Venom	ENG/JPN	Until 20th
Bohemian Rhapsody	English	Until 20th
Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald	ENG/JPN	All month
The Nutcracker and the Four Realms	Japanese	All month
The Grinch	Japanese	From 14th
Ralph Breaks the Internet (Sugar Rush Online)	Japanese	From 21st

Don't Get Sick, Get the Shot!

The temperatures drop as we move deeper into winter. To shelter ourselves from the cold, many of us stay indoors much longer than in the summer. This leads to a higher chance of catching the cold, or worse, getting the flu. Let's make the most of the winter by taking some preventative actions from getting sick!

Wash your hands frequently

Simple, but effective is to keep your hands clean! Everyone uses their hands to touch everything. Thoroughly washing your hands after using the restroom, sneezing, etc. will help prevent the spread of the flu virus.

Get quality sleep

It's easy to stay in your nice and warm bed all day, but if your room is too cold, you won't be able to fall asleep very

easily. Invest in an electric blanket, wear extra clothes, take a hot shower, to help you get to sleep faster this winter. Getting a good 7-8 hours of sleep a night will help one from getting sick anytime of the year.



Photo credit: irasytoya.com

Get the shot

By shot, we mean the preventative influenza shot **インフルエンザ予防接種 infuruenza yobou sesshu**. The standard flu shot will cost around 2000~3000 yen. There are discounts for senior citizens (age 65 and over), high-risk individuals between the ages of 60 and 65, and middle school 3rd and high school 3rd year students. Please inquire your town's health department for details.

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

"Obihiro Pioneer" is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro International and Domestic Relations Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the International and Domestic Relations Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to the Editing Team at international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp.