

How to stay occupied during the long nights of winter

Upon the arrival of winter, many people wonder about how to cope with dark skies and increased time spent indoors. Those who leave for work or school in the early morning and return in the evening may find they have little to no opportunity to see and enjoy the sun.

The transition to winter can be difficult. Certain biochemical changes take place in the body in reaction to less sunlight, and it helps to know about these changes should they prove problematic when winter hits full swing.

Many people experience seasonal affective disorder, often referred to as SAD. SAD is marked by increased sleepiness, depression, anxiety, irritability and lack of energy. Experts think that two specific chemicals in the brain, melatonin and serotonin, may play a significant role in SAD. These two chemicals help regulate a person's sleep-wake cycles, energy and mood. The short days and long hours of darkness in fall and winter may cause increased levels of melatonin and decreased levels of serotonin, creating the biological conditions for depression.

SAD also can inspire a craving for sugary foods or carbohydrates, which may be the body's natural way to stimulate more serotonin production or get an energy boost.

The following are some ways to feel more energized and upbeat despite the long hours of darkness.

- Spend as many hours as you can outside. When you wake up in the morning, open

the curtains or blinds and soak up the sun's rays. This can help you get some vitamin D and will also suppress melatonin production, which could make you feel drowsy.

- Invest in a light therapy lamp. These lamps simulate the rays of the sun and can be particularly helpful for those who experience SAD from decreased sunlight. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to get the exposure you need. Light therapy can improve mood and decrease other SAD symptoms.

- Continue outdoor activities. Even when it is snowy or dark, life should still go on as normal. Try to maintain normal recreational schedules, making time for outdoor activities. Fresh air can be revitalizing, and studies have shown that exercise can help to combat depression.

- Spend additional time with friends or family members. Routinely play host or hostess to friends and family. Hosting people in a social setting is good for the mind and can stave off feelings of cabin fever.

- Host activities that take advantage of the darkness. Kids can play a rousing game of hide-and-seek in the yard while their parents light a fire in the hearth or in an outdoor fire pit and warm up with mugs of hot chocolate. Play games of laser tag or give children glow sticks so they can still have fun outdoors.

Darker times are ahead, but people can make it through the winter months by planning activities that do not necessarily require sunlight.

KC-CASA new executive director

The Kankakee County Center Against Sexual Assault (KC-CASA) and the Iroquois Sexual Assault Services (ISAS) board of directors announced Tracey Noe as their newly appointed executive director. Noe is a 2002 graduate of Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School, received her bachelor's of science in business administration with majors of marketing and management from Olivet Nazarene University and completed the executive master's in business administration from ONU.

She brings extensive non-profit knowledge to her work at KC-CASA/ISAS. She volunteers as an ambassador for the Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce, is a public relations committee member for the United Way of Kankakee County and secretary of the Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra women's board.

KC-CASA/ISAS's goal is to



Tracey Noe

improve the quality of services to sexual assault and abuse victims, to assist in their recovery and to work toward the elimination of sexual assault and abuse in Kankakee and Iroquois counties.

For more information, call 1-815-932-7273 visit www.kc-casa.org. KC-CASA's 24-hour hotline is 1-815-932-3322; and ISAS's 24-hour hotline is 1-815-432-0420.

Anne Raymond Richard—early life and family recipes

by Laurel Soper

What was it like to grow up in a French Canadian family in the early 1900s? Many of these large, close-knit families lived on farms. Often parents spoke only their mother tongue, French. A strong Catholic faith imbued everyday life.

For Anne Raymond Richard, longtime Bourbonnais resident and wife of Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society founder Adrien Richard, growing up on a St. George farm in the early 1900s was a happy time.

Anne will celebrate her 105th birthday on Jan. 2, 2015. In a Nov. 20, 2000 interview, she recalls her childhood: "I was born in the St. George area and on a farm; my family life was a very happy one. There were no worries like today. I had cats and dogs, chickens, baby calves and everything else you would want...we each had our own work and there was no argument about that. We had to get it done. I had to bring in the baskets of cobs every night, so they could light the stove in the morning, to do the cooking."

Like many French Canadian settlers, Anne's grandparents came to this area for the prosperity that it promised. Since the 1830s, when Noel LeVasseur and Father Charles Chiniquy returned to Canada and told of the bountiful Kankakee River Valley, filled with wild game, plentiful water and fertile soil, French Canadians had left their homes to start a new life here. Anne relates: "In those days, you know, they had to come down the St. Lawrence into the lake and then from there a lot of them just had to travel from the lake to this area. In fact, that is the way Adrien's grandmother came in. She came from St. Lawrence, on the lake, and then from there she came in with oxen."

The Raymond family spoke only French at home, a common practice for those immigrant families, "We were all very French and spoke French. My mother and dad did not speak English. I think they understood and there were a few words, my grandfather did not speak any and, in fact, could not even write his name. I could not speak English when I went to school, which was very hard, but with time you learn and you find out that it is best you learn the English language. Which took me a long time, but if you have the English language you can make a living, otherwise you don't."

Farm families during that time sent their children to small, one-room schoolhouses. The Raymond children attended such a school.

"The little school was just about two blocks from our house, a little farm school. Sometimes there were 10 students and sometimes there were only three. And we had all the grades, you know. When you got too tired, you just laid on the big bench and slept awhile, while the others were having their grade. You learn a lot from each other and, of course, when we had recess everything went French. Everything that was speaking went French. The teachers did not like it, but we had teachers that did speak French and English so that was a big help."

French Canadian cuisine was earthy, hearty and simple. Food came to the kitchen straight from the barn or garden.

Here are three traditional French Canadian recipes from Anne's recipe files with her comments.

Gourtons

3 lbs. cracklings
1 beef kidney, ground
3/4 lb. fresh pork, ground and unseasoned

2 small onions, ground
salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients in saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Simmer 45 minutes to 1 hour. Cool slightly and skim fat off top. Store in small containers in refrigerator or freezer. Tastes best when warmed slightly.

"Well, we had cracklings, which we called groutons. In French that is made from the renderings of the lard after you butcher; you grind that up, very fine, then put onions or anything else you wanted, spice in it. We were very strong on spice. Then that becomes like a gelatin in there and you can eat it on crackers or toast, which is very good."

Boudin

Fresh strained pork blood
milk
fresh side pork, finely cubed
onions, minced
cinnamon, cloves, salt, pepper to taste

"That is what we call boudin. That's made from the blood of when we butchered the hog, and it's very good. You make it in a loaf pan or you make into sausage and then there were many other things that probably I don't remember, right off, and then in the morning she would slice some of that and fry it in the frying pan and we would have that with small pork sausage. It was very good."

Dressing

1 lb. pork
1 lb. beef
1/2 tsp. salt and pepper
2 cups water or broth (made from the turkey neck and parts)

Bring to a boil. Add 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, 14 ozs. croutettes and 1/2 tsp. cloves. Stir on low.

"Then of course, the dressing we made, this is an all meat dressing. They used to make it all pork. I make it half beef and half pork and you bring that to a boil, then all you do is add the breadcrumbs to it and then from there I put cinnamon and cloves in there and salt and pepper and that's it. No onions, no celery, nothing. It is just meat."

This time of year, we may wonder how the holidays were celebrated by the French Canadians who settled here.

Christmas was a quiet holiday, often celebrated with midnight Mass. It was not unusual for children to receive nothing more than some fruit or nuts. The Raymond family observed Christmas in this fashion: "Christmas was no Christmas. I would put my shoe by the bedroom door and I'd have an orange and an apple. That was Christmas."

New Year's was a time for family to gather together, enjoying good food and each person's presence to warm deep winter's chill. For the Raymond family, "Of course, all the cousins and everybody came and there was a lot of kissing and hugging. And then we had a big, big meal and they stayed all evening singing and playing cards or whatever they wanted to do."

This interview was part of the French Canadian Interview Project. Between 2000-06, students of the now-retired Kankakee Community College history professor, Dr. James Paul, recorded oral histories of several local French Canadians. Their stories, family photos and family trees are documented on frenchcanadians.kcc.edu.

In celebration of her 105th birthday, Anne's children will host an open house at Presence Heritage Village on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 1:30 to 3 p.m.



Photo courtesy of BGHS

Anne Raymond Richard, longtime Bourbonnais resident and wife of Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society founder Adrien Richard, will celebrate her 105th birthday on Jan. 2, 2015. The Josephine and Xavier Raymond family are pictured on their family farm in St. George, circa 1912. The toddler in the foreground is Anne Raymond, 2 years old.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history. Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March through December. Museum hours are 1-4 p.m., the first and third Sundays of each month, March through December or by appointment. For more information, visit bourbonnaishistory.org, [facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory) or call 1-815-933-6452