

# The Connection

DECEMBER 2020



## May You Find Joy This Holiday Season

Despite the challenges of 2020, Runestone Telecom hopes you're able to end this year on a peaceful note, recognizing and celebrating the blessings in your life. May you strengthen connections with loved ones and help spread hope throughout the community.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and thank you for supporting our company. Here's to better days ahead in 2021!

### Contact Us

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Visit Us: [www.runestone.net](http://www.runestone.net)

### Holiday Observed

Runestone will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 24th; Friday, Dec. 25th; and Friday, Jan. 1st for the holidays. Trouble calls will be handled by our on-call technicians.



When you can't be together in person this holiday season, gather virtually instead.

With our high-speed internet, group video calls will go more smoothly and feel more festive. You'll also enjoy merrier online shopping, gaming, learning, streaming, and more.



**SIGN UP FOR NEW OR UPGRADED INTERNET CALL 320-986-2013.**

*Give your family the gift of faster internet!*

Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Certain restrictions apply. Contact us for details.

## What are the Most Popular Christmas Cookies in the U.S.?

Baking Christmas cookies is a cherished tradition and one that adds sweetness to the season. While there are many kinds out there, here are the five most popular:

### 1. Chocolate Peanut Butter Blossoms

Peanut butter cookies topped with Hershey's Kisses top the list of favorites in the U.S.

### 2. Gingerbread Cookies

Loved by both adults and kids, they combine traditional flavor with the fun of frosting and decorating the gingerbread people.

### 3. Thumbprint Cookies

These classics are made with a sugar cookie dough that's rolled in sugar and then indented with a thumb and filled with jam.

### 4. Snickerdoodles

Similar to sugar cookies, snickerdoodles are rolled in cinnamon sugar before baking. The source of their name is up for debate. Some say it's of German descent, while others believe it's simply a funny name without meaning.

### 5. White Chocolate Cranberry Cookies

These beautiful cookies look like Christmas, since they combine white chocolate chips with red cranberries.

**What's your favorite? Kent Hedstrom, General Manager/CEO of Runestone Telecom, likes Peanut Butter Blossoms the best. Andrea Koehntop, Marketing Coordinator of Runestone Telecom, loves her Grandma's cutout cookies with a touch of lemon and honey.**



## Review These Home Security Tips and Tricks

To decrease your chances of having your home burglarized, it helps to first understand the preferences of burglars. They tend to look for homes that appear unoccupied during the day, are dark at night, and display signs of wealth. Burglars also prefer homes that are secluded or shielded by fences or shrubbery. Most don't pick locks or break glass. Instead, they simply kick in a door, pry open a window, or take advantage of a homeowner's carelessness by entering through an open window or unlocked back door.

Once inside, burglars will start in the master bedroom looking for jewelry, cash, and guns. Next, they'll grab prescription drugs from the bathroom and pick up laptops, tablets, and smartphones on their way out.

**There are simple things you can do, many of which cost little or no money, to help protect your home. Perhaps you could implement some of these ideas next weekend:**

- Trim trees and bushes that may give someone a place to hide or unnoticeable access to your windows. Also install motion detection spotlights in your yard.
- Always keep your garage door down, even during the day. Having the garage door open invites thieves inside to look around.
- Keep your car keys near your bed at night. Should you hear any abnormal sound in your garage, you can press the car alarm panic button to scare away the burglar.
- Close your blinds and curtains, especially when you're not at home. This makes it more difficult for people to see if there's anything worth stealing and if your house is unoccupied.
- Partner with your neighbors. Join the neighborhood watch and inform each other of suspicious activities in the area.
- Get a safe for your valuables and hide it somewhere that's not easy to find.
- Be smart about where you put your spare house key. Burglars will look for keys near the door — under the mat, under a rock, or in a plant — before they break into your house. Either be more creative or leave your spare key with a neighbor you trust.



**Runestone Telecom offers security cameras to add even more layers of protection to your home. For details, call 320-986-2013.**



# Good Reasons to Set Up a Guest WiFi Network

When people visit your home, one of their first questions is likely to be, "What's your WiFi password?" If your response is to give them the password for your main WiFi network, you may want to think again. Revealing this information could pose a network security risk, since guests might accidentally download a malicious program or connect an already infected device to your network.

A better approach is to set up a guest WiFi network with its own password. A guest WiFi network is essentially a separate access point on your router, which allows visitors to access the Internet without compromising the security of your main WiFi network.

**In addition to this aspect of increased security, there are several other reasons for having a guest WiFi network, including:**

**You can create a simpler password for guests.** While your main WiFi network should be protected with a long and strong password, it's fine to make your guest WiFi network's password shorter and easier to remember.

**It's safer for your smart home devices to be connected to a guest WiFi network.** Smart home devices—from smart lighting and thermostats to smart locks and security cameras—are more vulnerable to being hacked than your home's computers with the latest updates installed. This means that if smart home devices are connected to your main WiFi network and get hacked, cybercriminals could gain access to that network and the devices and data on it. However, if you connect your smart home devices to a guest WiFi network, even if one of these devices gets hacked, the data available to the hacker will be limited.

**You'll have the ability to control bandwidth.** With a guest WiFi network, you can put a limit on the speed/bandwidth available to your visitors while you enjoy maximum performance and speed from your main WiFi network.

## Celebrating a Work Anniversary

This December marks the 25th work anniversary for Gary Ness at Runestone Telecom. Gary has always been a dedicated Network Technician, and we thank him for his years of service!



## New Members

- Cyrus**  
Litwiller, Jonathan..... 795-4022
- Elbow Lake**  
Austin, Kelly..... 685-6424
- Hoffman**  
Birdsall, Derek..... 986-2625  
Hansen, Angela..... 986-3032  
Lee, Ruby..... 986-2326  
Pearson, Beatrice..... 986-6238  
The Golf Den ..... 986-2044

## What Not to Burn in Your Fireplace

Make sure you don't burn the following items in your fireplace in order to avoid safety hazards:

**Christmas trees** – In addition to not being properly seasoned, the evergreen wood of a Christmas tree contains high levels of resin. This burns quickly and can pop, causing a risk of a chimney fire.

**Paper with colored print** – This includes wrapping paper, magazines, cereal boxes, and pizza boxes, which may release noxious, corrosive, or carcinogenic gases when burned.

**Plywood, particle board, or chipboard** – Manufactured wood products release toxic fumes and carcinogens when burned.

You can, however, safely use rolled-up white pages from old phone directories as fire-starters for your fireplace.

## Channel Contract Negotiations are in Progress

Runestone Cable TV strives to keep the cost of your cable service low while at the same time provide a variety of channels to you. We're currently in negotiations for these channels:

- Antenna TV
- Court TV
- Heroes & Icons
- Justice Network
- KARE
- KARE HD
- KSTC
- KSTP
- KSTP HD
- KVLY
- Me TV
- Quest
- REELZ
- Start TV
- This TV
- WCCO
- WCCO HD

If we don't reach an agreement with the owners of these channels, they'll go off the air on December 31st, 2020. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy your programming. There is nothing you need to do, because we're hard at work behind the scenes trying to come to an agreement to keep these channels. If anything changes, we'll let you know.

**Thank you for choosing Runestone Cable TV!**

## Jingle Bells Telethon

The 72nd Annual Jingle Bells Telethon will be aired on Runestone Cable TV Channel 6 on December 12th starting at 5 p.m. You can also watch the even live on the website: [www.jinglebellsalexandria.org](http://www.jinglebellsalexandria.org).



## A Beginner's Guide to Joining a Zoom Meeting

If you haven't been part of a Zoom meeting yet, you'll probably receive your first invitation soon. Use of the videoconferencing app has grown tremendously since the pandemic began—enabling work teams, community groups, families, and friends to have virtual face-to-face discussions.

Before we get to the specific instructions, it's helpful to understand a few Zoom basics. Each meeting has a unique 10- or 11-digit number called a meeting ID. The host has to create a meeting and share either the invite URL link or meeting ID with the invitees.

**The process to join a Zoom meeting is simple, but it does vary depending on the device you're using and how the host sets up the meeting. Here's how to join a Zoom meeting on a computer via an invite URL link:**

1. Click on the meeting invite URL link that the host shared with you in an email.
2. You'll be prompted to download and install Zoom when you click a link to join for the first time.
3. When prompted, click "Open Zoom.us."
4. Approve the request for permission to use your computer's audio and camera.



Once you're in the Zoom meeting, you'll want to make sure you can see everyone in the grid format (which resembles the opening credits of *The Brady Bunch*). Zoom calls this grid format Gallery View. To access it, click on "Gallery View" in the top-right corner of your screen. In addition, find the Mute button (which looks like a microphone) at the bottom of your screen. When you click on it, it will change into a crossed-out microphone and no one on the call can hear you. Click again to unmute and speak to the group.

To familiarize yourself with Zoom before participating in an actual call, you can join a test meeting at <https://zoom.us/test>. You'll see what the initial Zoom screen looks like and be able to check your appearance in Video Preview as well as test your computer audio.

**For additional details on how to use Zoom, including Quickstart Guides and Video Tutorials, visit <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>.**