

#EAGLE EYE

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Beary Merry Christmas

A teddy bear and a smiling face can make a big difference on Christmas Day.

By Shannon Daehnke,
Staff Writer & Dessi Gomez,
A&E Editor

The third annual Bears and Blaze event took place on Friday, Dec. 2 at the Mission Viejo Mall Build-a-Bear. From 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., SMCHS students gathered to make stuffed bears for homeless families. This event takes place under the charity called Beary Merry Christmas, founded by senior Sydney Fredette. After making around 160 bears, the students finished the night with dinner at Blaze Pizza, and these proceeds were donated to the charity.

"I started Beary Merry Christmas after my best friend passed away from cancer," Fredette said. "I wanted to do something to help kids in need in my community."

Fredette established Beary Merry Christmas when she was eight-years-old in memory of her friend Savannah Sachen. At first she started small by collecting Build-A-Bears from her friends to donate to homeless families during the holidays, but eventually this grew into the event known as Bears and Blaze. The production has increased from 12 bears the first year to over 2000 bears within the past 10 years.

"My best friend really liked Build-A-Bears and she would always have Build-A-Bear parties so that gave me the idea," Fredette said. "I just want homeless kids to have something that they can hug and love because their only present for the holidays is the bears we make them."

Fredette brought the Be the Change Club to SMCHS her sopho-

more year. Through Be the Change, students can get involved with the Beary Merry Christmas charity by participating in the Bears and Blaze event. After Bears and Blaze, the club holds another event to deliver the bears to the families at the motel home for the homeless.

"I have ambassadors that I recruit and train to carry the tradition on for me," Fredette said. "I told this girl I used to tutor about it and [now] she does it at my middle school."

Sophomore Sophie Getz has been involved with the Be the Change Club since fourth grade. She got involved through her sister, Hannah Getz, a good friend of Fredette's, since Fredette and the Getz sisters went to elementary and middle school together.

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Illustrations by Ivanna Rea

Dome sweet dome

Talon Theatre relocates to the dome.

By Margaret Driscoll,
Staff Writer

Since SMCHS's start in 1987, the Talon Theatre program has worked in the small black box

theatre and choir room for their plays and musicals. 29 years later, the administration came together to see that Talon Theatre gets more space to enhance their performances' scenes,

music and costumes.

The initial problem was the inadequate size of the black box theatre for the fall plays. Because it limits the size of the audience, the cast has to do

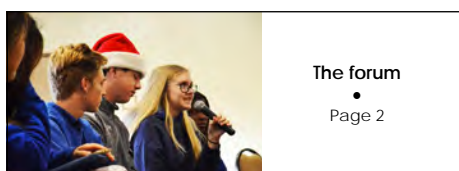
several more shows than needed. With performances in the dome, more people at a time will be able to see the show.

"It's really awesome that school is taking steps to bet-

ter the theatre program and will make this huge change for us," said senior Talon Theatre member Nikki Adhami.

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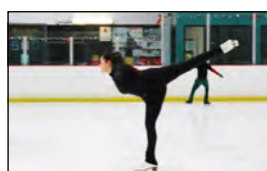
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The forum

IB Theatre students promote anti-bullying at a school-wide leadership meeting.

By Chloe Le,
Web Editor-in-Chief

It started with getting thrown in trashcans, dunked in toilets or shoved against lockers. Now it's evolved to uploading a post on social media that subtly jabs a "friend." But one must not disclose their identity because then that would be bullying.

If the action has the intentions to hurt someone else, it's considered bullying. And as time has gone by, bullying has grown up with students everywhere. It's easy to hear a story about bullying and think it would never happen at SMCHS, but bullying is a hard reality that affects SMCHS students on a daily basis.

The school addresses this problem time after time but sometimes the phrases "Don't bully" and "Be kind" don't resonate with students. Through forum theatre, IB Theatre students put together a performance on Dec. 7 for ASB, Peer Ministry and Link Crew in a creative effort to address the sensitive topic.

"Forum theatre is not a performance as much as it is a process,"



photo by Chloe Le

Speak out - Students at the meeting, like Alyssa Fujiwara, volunteer to share their own opinion about bullying.

said Director of Theatre Arts Amy Barth. "The audience watches a scenario played out about an issue such as bullying and then has the opportunity to transform the scenario by stepping in to a role as 'Spect-Actors' by doing something different to change the outcome."

Theater was specifically chosen by Principal Raymond Dunne to present a different, unique strategy in dealing with the situation of bullying.

"Mr. Dunne came to us because there's an influence where we can

act and express our emotions," said junior Hannah Loessberg. "Bullying is a hard thing to grasp and I think we were the right people to do it because we could actually grasp it."

Although the anti-bullying movement has been prominent throughout SMCHS like in Campus Ministry's Act of Kindness, the purpose of this performance is not just to inform students on the dangers of bullying but to also establish a more positive atmosphere around campus.

"It's really about promoting a universal kindness within the school because I think a lot of that kindness has been lost," Loessberg said. "There needs to be a universal unity which is our ultimate goal."

Bullying has been an ongoing issue and attempts to curtail it have been put in place, but the root of its problem stems from the students and their realization of the matter.

"I think a lot of SM students are close minded about bullying," Loessberg said. "No one thinks that

we have it but there are different extents of it and a huge issue now is cyber bullying."

Behind the technology, many students become oblivious to the consequences that come with posting a mean comment or subtweeting.

"When I started teaching, there was more physical bullying," Dunne said. "Now, with the computer age and these tablets, it has really changed bullying into cyberbullying. Students think 'It's anonymous, they'll never find out' but I've had discipline meetings with the deans and yes, we do find these things out."

After watching the forum theatre, ASB, Peer Ministry and Link Crew will ultimately be virtuous representations of SMCHS and shine an even brighter light on the school's motto.

"SMCHS is rooted in Caritas Christi," Barth said. "Sometimes we don't realize that small actions can make a difference both positively and negatively. We must do what we can where we are to make a difference. That is what this project is about -- to stand up to injustice on all levels and take responsibility for our words and actions."

Paws-itively generous



Time to decorate - Sophomore Sophie Getz dresses her bear.



Build to care - Senior Sydney Fredette and her team are the change.

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"My favorite part is going to the homeless motel and getting to see the kids pick out their bear," Getz said. "They're always so excited to get to pick out their bear; that's the best part."

Getz will take over for Fredette next year as President of Be the Change. She looks forward to getting more people involved in the club as well as the Bears and Blaze event.

"It's cool to see a community come together in support of this one idea of helping other kids, which I think is the purpose of the whole club," Getz said. "It's amazing to see people come to help who aren't a part of the club and they get to see what impact they make from making the bears."

Before the high school students build bears, the Be the Change Club also hosts events for fifth through eighth graders. There is also a scavenger hunt to participate

in throughout the mall.

"It's a really cool feeling and I think it's amazing how everyone can come together to do something like that," said senior Julia Ferrara. "It's so easy to just go and make bears but then when everyone works together it ends up being such a huge deal for other kids. It's really great that Sydney started the club so we can all just do something simple but make a bigger impact."

As Treasurer of Be the Change, Ferrara keeps track of the club's inventory and budget. Through this event, the club officers have realized the important role that making bears has in spreading Christmas spirit. They also enjoy the feeling of giving back that the event creates.

"It's a really interesting experience because as kids we don't really buy gifts for other people because we're not used to giving -- we're more used to receiving," said senior Gustavo Zertuche.

As Vice President of the club, Zertuche helps Fredette and senior Ashling Fitzgerald coordinate events. He also informs all the club members of upcoming meetings and activities for the club.

"The best part about the Bears and Blaze event is knowing that we can make someone's Christmas special and make them feel loved," Fredette said. "Getting my friends involved is always a bonus."

This year's turnout for Bears and Blaze was between 50 to 60 students. Fredette, Fitzgerald and Zertuche helped these participants get into the Christmas spirit of giving.

"I've been doing this for most of my life so I feel like it wouldn't be the same without it," Fredette said. "I've grown up knowing that giving is better than receiving and the feeling you get from giving to other people is way better than the feeling of getting a gift to me, so without this event it wouldn't feel like Christmas."

photos by Shannon Daehnke & Dessi Gomez

Native lands

Protestors win the recent dispute over sacred land.



Illustration by Ivanna Rea

By Allison De La Bastida,
Opinion Editor

It's sacred land where Native Americans find comfort--and also find oppression.

With a more spiritual connection to land than any other ethnicity, home is a right being ripped away from Native Americans among other daily challenges they face.

This is the mentality, and the emotional incentive, behind the months of protests that took place in North Dakota. Protesters argued against the building of an underground crude oil pipeline through sacred Native American land that, if spilled, could potentially harm their only resource of water, the nearby Missouri river.

The Dakota Access Pipeline Project (DAPL) is a \$3.78 billion and 1,772 mile-long channel in the process of construction in North Dakota. DAPL proposes to start from the oil-rich Bakken field in North Dakota, go through South Dakota, Iowa and end in Patoka, Illinois where it will meet already existing pipelines.

It is estimated to transport roughly 570,000 barrels of crude oil per day to refineries and markets in the Gulf and on the East Coast.

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Sometimes things that are made in good faith measures don't work out as planned.

~ Social Studies Department Chair Tessa Fleming

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Ironically, this pipeline is just seven miles shorter than the infamously proposed Keystone XL Pipeline that was rejected by the Obama administration after a seven year battle to build it.

While the main protesters are the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, (and a few other unidentified tribes that have joined along the way), environmentalists have also stepped into the fight against the creation of the pipeline.

"I think there's an added connection and concern because of what's happened with the Flint water crisis [in Michigan]," said Social Studies Department chair Tessa Fleming. "These questions about whether a water source is contaminated, what does that mean for people? No water was safe to use;

not for washing, for bathing -- really for any purpose. The environment is a concern now in a way it wasn't in the 19th century."

According to Common Dreams Breaking News & Views, almost 100 scientist signed a petition to abort the pipeline construction.

The open letter states that "we as scientists are concerned about the potential local and regional impacts from the DAPL, which is symptomatic of the United States' continued dependence on fossil fuels in the face of predicted broad-scale social and ecological impacts from global climate change."

Precautionary measures have been taken by installing oil spill detecting machinery, but this sensitive technology has not been reliable in the past.

According to Reuters analysis of the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration data, "over the last six years, there have been 466 incidents where a pipeline carrying crude oil or refined products has leaked. Of those, 105, or 22 percent, were detected by an advanced detection system."

Even those detected were all considered to be minor leaks. Controversy continues to arise about whether to risk the dependability of this technology, having six out of the 10 largest pipeline spills in the United States going undetected.

"If you look at the gulf oil spill BP, that was not only a direct impact on loss of human life but then it was this unstoppable oil, seeping into the gulf that had a wide range of effects," Fleming said. "Tourism was down, business was down, sea life was down. It's more than just having a 'slow season' -- your livelihood is affected. With innovations like these, there is always potential for something bad to happen. Sometimes things that are made in good faith measures don't work out as planned."

On Sunday Dec. 4, 2016 the protesters' voices finally reached the ear of the man in charge, as the Army Corp of Engineers announced that they would no longer be continuing with their original construction plan of building under Lake Oahe in North Dakota. Instead, they are seeking alternative routes for the pipeline.

Yet celebratory drums can't be beaten yet; protesters are still on site as the Army Corps of Engineers conduct a full environmental review of the lands before completely surrendering their plan.

"It's like that saying 'it's a stay of execution,' were they're basically like 'hey we're going to look somewhere else,' but the end result might be the same," Fleming said. "I think, in a way, it's just their way of prolonging it. It's a slight improvement, but it's still at the mercy of the results of the review and what else they find nearby."

With rumors of illegally continuing with the pipeline swirling since the protesters' win, it's sensible that protesters aren't moving.

"It's a small victory for Native Americans, but I think there is a reason the protesters haven't disbanded the area," Fleming said. "They are remaining in place even through those Midwest winters which, listen, are no joke. So, to them, the matter remains open."

R3novation

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With these changes for Talon Theatre, the question of what will happen to dance and pep squad members rises. The dome will be the permanent home for the theatre program, but leaves other programs in need of a place for practices and recitals. President Andy Sulick has proposed creating a dance studio on the top floor of the R building for dance and song teams.

"We are taking the current banquet center and putting down a permanent dance floor and moving all of our dance classes during the school day to this room," Sulick said. "Our dance and pep squad programs will be using this facility after school."

The members of Talon Theatre have made the best of this situation with the minimum space they had and are now getting a facility that meets their needs. In addition, dance programs are thrilled to get a new dance studio.

"This plan gives us as dancers



photo by Allison De La Bastida

Cue the spotlight - The dome undergoes the switch from dance studio to theater stage.

a bigger area to dance and benefits me with the space that we are getting because it will have mirrors on the walls and a larger area to dance," said junior dance team member Mia Ford.

The R3 remodel includes rolling mirrors to replace the current ones. Even with these new benefits, Ford and other members of dance raise

concerns about the inconvenience of the location.

"Moving the dance classes further away from the academic buildings could cause a hard time for us to make it to class after our dance period," Ford said.

In the long run, this plan will improve both the theatre and dance programs. It will expand space for

their practices and provide them with a permanent residence.

"It will be a new area for the freshmen to get used to but I like it," said freshman Talon Theatre member Garrett Webb. "We will have a large space to practice in so we don't have to learn big dances in small rooms anymore."

Administration unanimously

agreed that SMCHS has highly competitive theatre and dance programs and thus worked together to help them. For the spring musical last year, "Guys and Dolls," the actors didn't get into the dome until a few days before the real show.

Given these circumstances, it was important to administration to establish a change.

"We reviewed it with an architect and all of the logistics worked out," Sulick said. "We came to the conclusion that this was the best option for both programs."

After the dance studio is created, there will be protective tiles for the floors so that students and families can continue to gather for banquets and meetings, and R3 will remain the designated banquet room.

According to Sulick, the dance classes will move into R3 on Jan. 4, 2017, marking a new era for Talon Theatre, dance and pep squad.

"We are all excited that our performing arts program will have a facility that can maximize their talents," Sulick said. "The dance and pep squad programs will have a wonderful facility as well."

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Christmas 365

R.I.P to the 12 days of Christmas.

By Briana Ryan,
Staff Writer

When I blinked my eyes open on November 1, I reminisced of the previous night's spooky costumes, tricks and treats. However, throughout the day I realized that there was suddenly a greater evil to confront; the unrelenting Christmas Creep.

The holiday season, which includes, Thanksgiving and Christmas, erases any and all signs of Halloween almost instantaneously. Unfortunately, and to my dismay, all of the holidays and important festivities are trumped by the hype of Christmas -- spoiling the holistic experience of the holiday season that is supposed to involve more than solely hot chocolate and stockings.

The holiday season is a perfect time to reminisce about the year that has passed. It is also a good time to be grateful for everything God has blessed us with. Contrary to this take on the season, it seems as though Christmas has become an excuse for excessive gifts and advertisements.

As a child I always enjoyed the warmth of the Holiday season. As every youngster does, I spent all year anticipating the excitement and spirit that overwhelms Christmas. However, as years have passed, the original celebration of the 12 days of Christmas has transformed into the 25 days of Christmas and now perhaps over-

taking a whole two months of the year--ditching Thanksgiving and converting the holiday season into just the Christmas season.

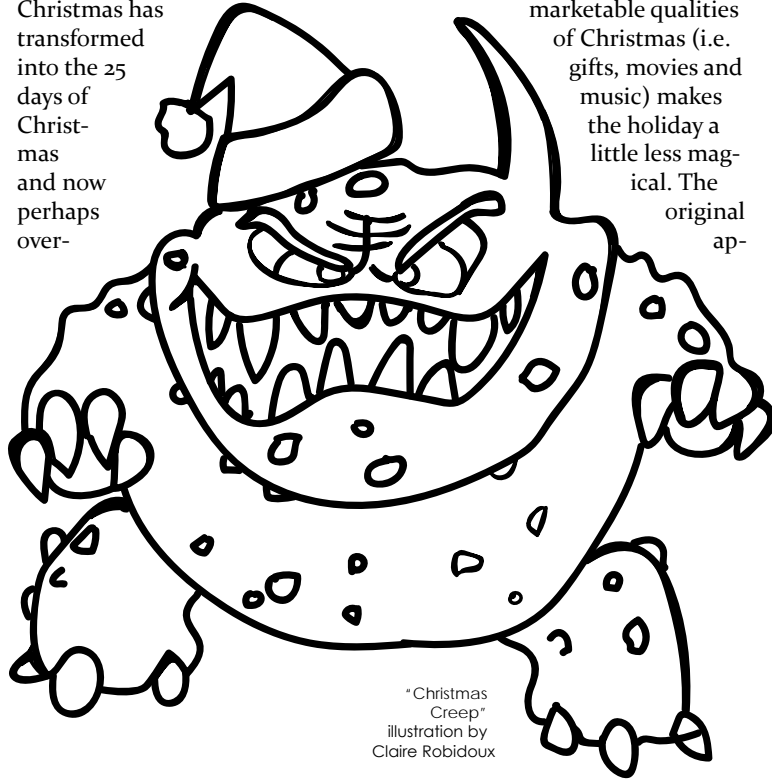
Don't get me wrong, I love The Polar Express as much as the next person, but the overemphasis that has been placed on the

marketable qualities of Christmas (i.e. gifts, movies and music) makes the holiday a little less magical. The original ap-

peal of family time, Christmas Eve mass and sitting on Santa's lap seems to have been lost. Corporations desire to make a profit has resulted in selling products earlier each year. Holiday deals, while convenient, begin way before their allotted time -- with Thanksgiving Day seeming to last no more than two hours before Target's black friday doors open to the masses.

Society has no objections to forgetting Thanksgiving, but what about other early holiday traditions? The Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte has been a staple since 2003, and my guess is that there would be a major upset if the worldwide coffee chain skipped over the fall drink, straight to the Peppermint Mocha that signifies Christmas for so many.

Label me a Scrooge for all I care, but I believe that taking the time to appreciate each holiday that makes the holiday season so enjoyable is an important aspect of the season itself. So in the future, take a moment to slow down the little Christmas train that runs around the bottom of the evergreen, at least until after Thanksgiving.



re-oh so many flavors

Does changing up the classic cookies for wild flavors still make it milk's favorite cookie?

By Devin Walsh, Staff Writer

Even though Oreo has had different variations on the well known cookie sandwich since 1912, new and different combinations of the classic dessert seem to keep coming out. So, the Eagle Eye staff and I set out to determine which one could win all our frosting-covered hearts

One early Monday morning, The Eagle Eye staff and I sat down to try all 13 different versions of the creamy cookies. The flavors included Peanut Butter, Red Velvet, Birthday Cake, Lemon, Cinnamon Bun, Mint, Triple Double, Pumpkin Spice, Peppermint, Candy Corn, Blueberry Pie, Oreo Thins, and Mint Oreo Thins.

As much as we love Oreos, this was not an easy task at 7:30 in the morning. However, we did come to some important conclusions, as of course, this was a very important matter.

Something the staff and I could all agree on was the fact that seasonal Oreos taste better when eaten in the season they were intended for. Think about eating a Pumpkin Spice Oreo on a hot day

in July. It doesn't sound quite as good as eating it on a cold autumn night, does it?

The limited edition Peppermint Oreo sparked controversy when comparing it to the regular Mint one. Depending on the person, peppermint and mint either tasted the same or incomparable. The thoughts I had on both was simply that the Peppermint Oreo was sweeter and more minty than the regular Mint Oreo. But where do the Mint Oreo Thins fall in all of this?

For those who haven't snacked on the slimmer treat, Oreo came out with a new deviation from the typical cookies in late 2015 known as Oreo Thins. Oreo Thins still have the same 71 percent cookie to 29 percent frosting ratio as regular Oreos, just a little less all the way around. So for those frosting lovers like myself, this might not be the treat for you.

When I tasted the Mint Oreo Thins it didn't taste like there was any frosting, just the hint of a flavor in between two thin chocolate cookies.

While you would assume this to be negative, it made the Mint Oreo Thins taste extraordinarily similar to the Thin Mint Girl Scout Cookies. I am very, very thankful these cookies exist because I do get sad when I have finally eaten my last box of Girl Scout Cookies in mid-June.

While each staff member had a favorite cookie flavor, we set our preferences aside when it came to praising the delicious flavor that was the Cinnamon Bun Oreo. We also agreed that it is the best morning Oreo (not that you're looking to eat Oreos at 7:30 like us.)

Although, not everyone loved the Candy Corn Oreos. There was a few people that really loved this flavor because they said it tasted like a really sweet Oreo. However, most people commented that it tasted too "fake," which I agree with because it tasted purely processed and filled with artificial sugar. Yet based on our earlier theory, it might have been the fact that is was the wrong season to be eating this Oreo.

My personal favorite was the Blueberry Pie Oreo just because it tasted almost exactly like a blueberry muffin, and who doesn't like a blueberry muffin? So, if you like blueberry muffins I would ten out of ten recommend the Blueberry Pie Oreos to you.

Yet when it came down to it, the staff voted peppermint the overall favorite. Whether it tis the season or the red limited edition frosting that swayed the staff it was the popular vote, trumping the other flavors by five votes. It wasn't a simple majority, but sometimes that doesn't always win the election.

Surprisingly, we even found out that a few people on the staff claim to not even like Oreos. Even though I still can't wrap my mind around that concept I could understand why. Oreos are not for everyone, especially when they have very unusual flavors.

Even with the amazing alternatives of peppermint or blueberry pie flavored Oreos I think the original flavor is still milk's favorite cookie.

Home for the holidays

While many enjoy a change of scenery for Christmas, I prefer to be home with my family.

By Dessi Gomez, A&E Editor

It's Christmas Break; finals are over and it's time for some well-deserved relaxation after working hard all semester. The time has come to squeeze in the last minute Christmas traditions and go to Target before all the cute decorations run out. For me, the ideal place for all of this to unfold is nowhere other than my own home.

Christmas feels like it's missing something when it isn't being celebrated at my house with my family and friends.

I can't fully enjoy Christmas if I'm not surrounded by the familiar decorations, the smell of magic cookie bars and the faint glow of my neighborhood's Christmas lights. I would feel very unsettled celebrating Christmas elsewhere without the comforting presence of the tree that my family and I pick out to decorate.

I understand that Christmas can still be Christmas even if celebrated abroad. And I also understand the idea of seeing a different area decked out in Christmas lights or celebrating Christmas morning somewhere other than home.

While eating a different Christmas dinner or observing other Christmas traditions does sound refreshing, I like to think of Christmas as an old friend and it



photo by Anthony Gomez

There's no place like home - Don't worry Pepper, unpack your suitcase because we're staying home for the holidays.

would be hard to follow my family's holiday traditions if we don't have our usual supplies to do so.

I love going to mass on Christmas Eve and seeing familiar faces, driving around my neighborhood

admiring the Christmas lights on different houses and having trouble falling asleep in my own bed because of the anticipation of Christmas Day. All these things would not be possible if I were miles away from home.

I wouldn't be able to wake up in the comfort of my room or run downstairs with my sister just to settle down in our usual spots on the couch in order to commence the day's celebrations. If I were somewhere else, I wouldn't be able to feel the warmth of the fuzzy couch blankets or drink my mom's home-made hot chocolate.

If I weren't home for Christmas, I wouldn't be able to look forward to celebrating Christmas dinner at my cousin's house with my mom's three siblings and the seven other grandchildren.

This would mean no laughing over shared memories or running around trying to keep track of our four crazy younger cousins. Christmas brings us all together, and a Christmas vacation couldn't replace that.

Although I would rather be out travelling for most of the year, the two exceptions are Christmas Eve and Christmas Day -- the two days that I look forward to being home. Home is where I learned to love Christmas, so home is where I want to celebrate Christmas.

Kiss me if you can

By Lauren Kesic, Copy Editor

Since my freshman year, I thought that New Year's Eve would be the most exciting holiday to celebrate over winter break. Although New Year's Eve signifies the end of our break, it's also the perfect time to get that magical midnight kiss... or so I thought.

Movies totally romanticize New Year's Eve kisses. It's unrealistic that you'll lock eyes with someone across the room, and with ten seconds left of the year you'll walk towards each other and lock lips while sparks fly as the ball drops in Times Square. I don't know about you, but I've never experienced, let alone witnessed, anything of that sort.

More often than not, people look forward to and sometimes jump through hoops for that random New Year's Eve kiss because movies portray the kiss as the best part of the night. But I think that New Year's Eve kisses should be just as meaningful as every other kiss. The motives behind a kiss should be intimate and genuine, not just to kiss and tell. Getting kissed at midnight may be fun in the moment, but that moment only lasts so long and before you know it, it's the new year.

The key to keeping the New Year's Eve kiss intimate is to know the person you're going to share that magical midnight moment with. Celebrating the new year by keeping the midnight kiss tradition should be done with respect for your morals and values.

In retrospect, maybe the one who deserves to kiss you just hasn't come into your life yet. The fact that you saved your kiss for the person destined to kiss you is special in itself. Embrace your patience to wait; be proud of not giving into the feeling of lust and rejoice in the fact that maybe between the start and end of 2017 you might find the right one to kiss at midnight.



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2016 did what

From sports, to politics, to entertainment -- 2016 has been a peculiar year.

By Riley Davies, Staff Writer

This year has been quite the year of events. Some historical, some absurd and some extremely unexpected.

To begin, Donald Trump is the 45th President of the United States. It was a shock considering that when he announced his candidacy, most took it as a joke doubting he would even make it through preliminaries. The most criticized candidate ever, is now the next president. After his election was announced, half the country it seems went into shock. Riots broke out all over the country, Twitter blew up with anti-Trump posts, and personally it was impossible to go anywhere and not have an encounter with someone who was affected by the election. The reality is that the electoral college elected Trump and nothing will change that. As a country we have to accept the outcome and move on.

Baseball's most loveable losers won the most prestigious title in Major League Baseball. The Cubs had not won the World Series in 108 years or been in the World Series for 71 years. Their victory also

led to the seventh largest gathering of people in human history. As someone who has watched fewer than five baseball games in her life, I was drawn to this historic game. 2016 was the year that ended the Cubs' losing streak, a victory some believed they would never live to see.

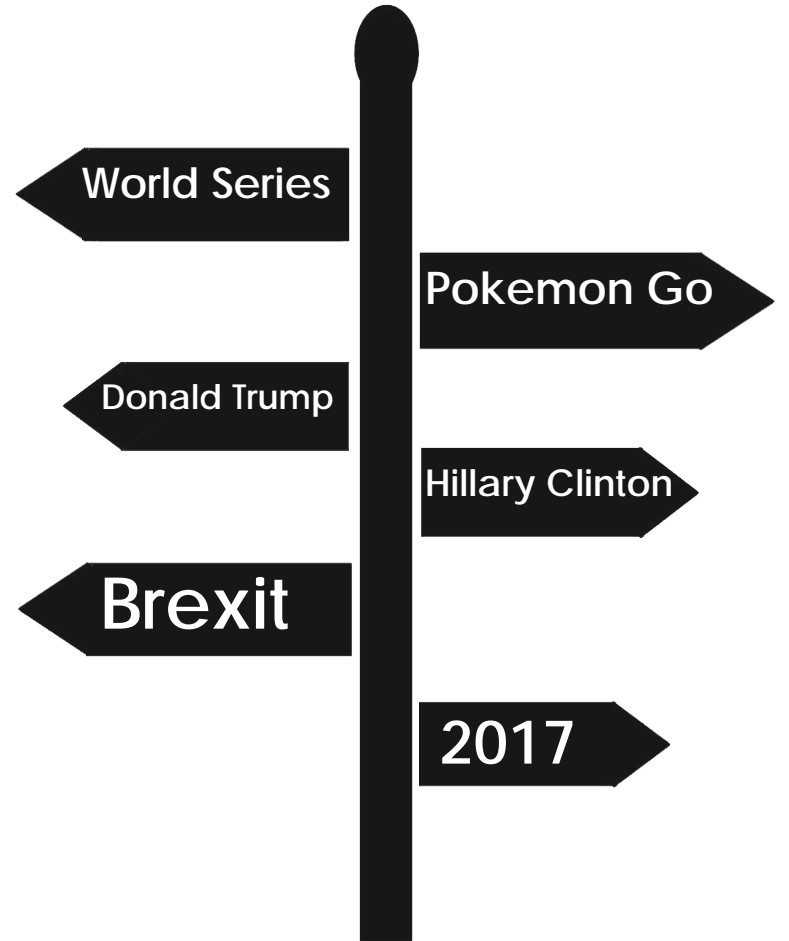
This year has also been historic for women. Hillary Clinton took the title as the first woman to earn the nomination for the Presidency of the United States. In the 240 years of the United States and the 96 years women have been able to vote in the United States, it took until 2016 for a woman to win the presidential candidacy. This is a fantastic historic happening that 2016 was able to bring about. This event is long overdue for our country.

In 2016, Britain decided that they would go rogue and exit the European Union. The 48 percent of unhappy citizens spoke out about this decision, arguing that the general population would not pass this referendum so they did not find it important to go out and vote. The greatest repercus-

sion of this vote however, was the resigning of Prime Minister, David Cameron. Britain leaving the EU is almost equivalent to a state seceding from the United States; something out of the norm.

The Pokémon Go craze was arguably the weirdest fad of 2016. "Pokémon hunting" became a thing. Just about everyone was walking around with Pokémon Go running on their phone hoping to find Pokémon to catch. This game brought a virtual world into the real world through a cell phone. It was hard to go anywhere during this craze without being asked one of two things, "Do you play Pokémon Go?" or "How many Pokémon do you have?". It was definitely strange to be driving down a street and see "Pokémon hunters" holding up their phones searching for Pokémon that only they could see through their phone.

2016 has been extraordinary, surprising, absurd and much more. As this year comes to a close, who knows what the coming year has in store. 2017 has some big shoes to fill.



For the sake of tradition

Wait, you burn a cake for Christmas?

By Jillian Baldwin,
Staff Writer

Christmas is all about family. It is a time to reflect and rekindle traditions to bring in the new year. I've been in too many discussions over Christmas traditions to know that my family's are out of the norm, but it wouldn't be Christmas without these crazy traditions.

My parents' first Christmas Eve as a married couple was spent flying to Houston. Once they arrived, they realized they hadn't gotten a Christmas tree yet. They desperately drove to a tree lot to find a remaining tree, but the pickings were slim. There were 2 scraggly looking trees left and my parents couldn't decide which one to take home because they wanted both to have a chance at being decorated.

They caved and took both home because they felt bad to leave one alone on Christmas Eve. Nowadays, my family has picked out a small tree for one room and a large tree for another room. I love decorating the two trees differently because one will look icy, with white and silver ornaments, while the other gets decked out in color.

While December 26 may be the designated recovery day from all the Christmas festivities, to my family it is almost a continuation of Christmas. Boxing Day is an English holiday that is celebrated on December 26. It is a day of thanks for all of the service workers and tradesmen. The little jingle that



Deck the trees - One out of the two Baldwin Christmas trees is already filled with presents.

kids learn is to give something to "the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker" such as money in a Christmas box, hence the name Boxing Day. It originates from the UK when servants who were given the day after Christmas to visit their families. They were given bonuses and gifts in a box

to bring back to their families. Though my family does not go around giving extra holiday cash to people (because no one really celebrates it in the states) we do wait and have Christmas dinner on Boxing Day, give each other small gifts in observance of being thankful, and bake cookies for the gate

guards in my neighborhood. I love that I get to talk to my grandma about her English Christmas traditions and Boxing Day memories when she was my age.

Everyone is familiar with the popular Christmas song "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" with the lyric that goes "come bring us

some figgy pudding." Well in my family's case, we won't leave until we get some (leave the holiday season that is.) Figgy pudding, or plum pudding, dates back to 16th century England but it comes from a much earlier dish that was made of sweetened meat pies and vegetables from the days of the Roman Empire in the U.K..

When my nana was growing up in England, she remembers that figgy pudding requires a lot of pre-planning and patience. Cakes were made mid-fall and then left to age and develop the signature spice they are known for. They are made of dried plums, figs and other dried fruits.

The tradition of burning the cake during Christmas dinner is a symbol that the smoke will "clear the air" for the new year. To set it on fire, my family pours a helping of brandy over the cake and then we take turns each year for who gets to light it. Once the flames are out, the cake has a nice smoky flavor and it is good luck to take a bite.

I look forward to it after every Christmas dinner and watching my nana singing a Christmas song in her slight British accent from across the table as the cake is all ablaze puts a smile on my face.

My family talks a lot about why we follow certain traditions. Though there are some obvious reasons, I asked my nana why we still observe Boxing Day in the States and burn a dried up fruit cake. She gave me a quizzical look and said,

"Golly, it's just tradition I guess."

Holiday (cup)troversy

Starbucks introduces a new spin on holiday cups.

By Riley Davies & Bridgette Singer, Staff Writers



Illustrations by Claire Robidoux

Every year Starbucks debuts a cup for the holiday season. However, these cups have not always been surrounded by the merry holiday spirit. In 2014, people began speaking out against the festive cups arguing they are only representing Christmas. Customers wanted to see a representation of not just one faith community celebrating a holiday during the winter season.

"I know that Starbucks had been putting on mostly Catholic sayings such as 'Merry Christmas,'" said senior Morgan Andersen. "But, I think it is extremely unimportant to worry about what is on the cup. I do understand that other religions have their own beliefs, but complaining about what is on a cup is kind of irrelevant in my opinion."

This controversy caused the design of the holiday cups to change in 2015. The solution was creating a simple holiday colored cup in red. Responses to this cup, however, were less than what the company hoped for.

"Starbucks introduced plain red cups in order to be more inclusive, recognizing that everybody has different beliefs, instead of solely

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A person's love of Christmas and everything that comes with the season should not be based on a disposable cup.

~ Starbucks employee senior Jenna Barber

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focusing on Christmas with lights and ornaments and whatnot," said Starbucks employee senior Jenna Barber. "People were saying that Starbucks 'removed Christmas from their cups because they hate Jesus,' which is just absolutely untrue. To be honest, my coworkers and I found that to be completely

ridiculous, because a person's love of Christmas and everything that comes with the season should not be based on a disposable cup."

All controversy aside, Starbucks has continuously tried its best to satisfy its customers and represent the holidays on its cups to the best of its ability. In previous years, the company and its artists have designed the cups. But this year, Starbucks turned the responsibility of the designs over to its customers. 1,200 Starbucks customers from all around the world submitted their designs to the company. From there, Starbucks selected 13 designs to be printed on the cups and used worldwide.

"I like this year's designs because there are multiple designs rather than the same design for each cup," Barber said.

All 13 cups are unique. They come from six different countries, highlighting different holiday cultures from each country. The cups have become a company tradition and do not seem to be going anywhere anytime soon. From now on, Starbucks Christmas cups will bring the world together more than tear it apart.

'Tis the longest season

The marketing world prepares for the Christmas season with a purpose.

By Chloe Le & Cristina Zapata, Co-Editors-in-Chief

Parents rush to purchase the newest products, children compile Christmas lists longer than tinsel and stores set up their Christmas lights and trees. It appears that the holiday season has arrived yet houses have just put away their jack-o-lanterns and spider webs.

The Christmas chaos follows soon after which rushes into the festive season, skipping major holidays such as Halloween and Thanksgiving. The marketing for the Christmas holiday is commercialized earlier each year which is known as Christmas creep. SMCHS's Director of College Relations Christa Crafts's background in marketing allows her to know the true reasoning behind commerce.

After earning her Masters in Communications Management, Crafts obtained her first job as a marketing manager. For five years, Crafts planned and organized marketing campaigns for the world of commercialism. With her knowledge of how companies use their marketing techniques, she understands why stores "deck the halls" weeks too early.

"If you're a store, your biggest seasonal success is Christmas," Crafts said. "If you don't do well, it reflects your stock price. The stores have their own goals and they're working on the [marketing aspect] of everything."



photo by Chloe Le

Merry marketing - Stores in the Mission Viejo Mall set up Christmas decorations early in attempt to promote purchasing before the start of the season.

When stores take down back-to-school decorations, marketers have already started to plan Christmas advertisements. As a result, the spotlight on Christmas overshadows the months in between.

"I went to the store [in early] November to buy Thanksgiving decorations but it was all on clearance," Crafts said. "It was in the back because everything was Christmas.

I thought if I want to decorate for Thanksgiving I have to buy it in October. So does that mean I need to buy some Christmas stuff now?"

The reason why companies rush to promote holiday products is simple: money.

"It's obvious that companies are trying to create a greater profit by advertising earlier," said senior and business student Christiana Tarazi.

"It's a good thing for them, but from our outside perspective all it does is take our focus away from the meaning of the holidays we just skip over."

In order for the Christmas creep to subside, there needs to be a middle ground in which both consumers and marketers establish a balance that shows respect for each holiday and doesn't destroy the

economy.

"I think the only thing you can really do is have control over your own spending habits," Crafts said. "You have to have control because if enough people do, then the stores start to notice and they'll change their behavior. But you can't expect them to change their behavior in the free economy unless the marketplace shows what it wants."

As a parent, Crafts believes this early advertisement robs people of the true meaning of Christmas.

"You start focusing on creating the scene -- buying presents versus enjoying what Christmas is about and enjoying the season with your family," Crafts said. "You think about checking things off a list instead of spending time with people."

While Christmas creep affects most stores and companies, SMCHS dedicates time for each holiday -- appreciating Halloween and Thanksgiving as well as avoiding the Christmas creep.

"The way we should do it is first give thanks, before the season of Advent starts," Tarazi said. "At SMCHS, we don't really start celebrating Christmas until after Thanksgiving, when we're allowed to wear Christmas socks and accessories. So as a school we give thanks first and then after that we start to celebrate the coming of Christ."

Wrapped up

Eagles spread holiday cheer through local charities and donation drives.

By Megan Forsythe, Staff Writer

As kids, the best part of the holidays was waking up on Christmas morning to finally find out what Santa Claus dropped off under the tree. However, now that students are a bit older and presents from Santa no longer have the same appeal, students can finally understand what made Saint Nick so jolly. The real joy of Christmas comes from giving and spreading the holiday cheer with friends and family. Students don't have to wait until Christmas to exchange presents and get in the holiday spirit. There's always more than just one way to give. Here's how SMCHS spreads charitable Christmas cheer.



Danke donates - Junior Lauren Danke generously makes gifts for children around the world through Box of Joy.

Box of Joy

For the Red Cross Club, Christmas started as early as October when they began to fill shoeboxes with gifts for underprivileged children across the globe. This year the club partnered with the organization Box of Joy to collect present-filled shoeboxes for families who cannot afford to give presents on Christmas.

boxes is seeing how much everyone cares about it and seeing the time and effort that people put into these boxes," said Junior Lauren Danke, Red Cross Club President.

Next year Danke hopes to increase students' and faculty's participation for Box of Joy so that they can double the number of boxes the club fills and families they help.

Wendy's Frosty Key Tag

The two dollar key tag from Wendy's will get you free Jr. Frostys for all of 2017, a delicious gift idea and a donation towards Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. With the help of the key tag, the foundation has helped over 10,000 kids and has found homes for more than 4,000 children. Considering California hardly hits cold temperatures, milkshakes all year is a perfect way to cool down and the coolest way to give back.



Frostys for Christmas - SMCHS students get free Wendy's Frostys for a year with their key tag



Socks for sale - Senior Sarvien Keighobad and her fellow Choc Club members pose with the Christmas socks they bought at the sock drive.

Choc Sock Drive

The Choc Club's 5th annual sock drive was held the week of Nov. 28th making selling \$300 worth of socks.

"The socks are really cute and I end up buying myself a couple pairs because I love [them] so much," said Choc Club President senior Sarvien Keighobad. "What makes it rewarding is the fact that you get socks but you also get to donate socks to the kids at the hospital."

The sock drive first started in 2012 and each year Choc Club members put in months of work to ensure the sock drive runs smoothly.

"From the outside perspective you just see us at the lunch tables selling the cute little Christmas socks," Keighobad said. "But there's work that goes in." Keighobad first submits paperwork to Mr. Darwazeh to get approval for the fundraiser each year, then

she assigns the Choc Club board members to lunches and then get club members to help out with the drive throughout the week.

Although the sock drive might be over, students can still donate to the hospital by contacting Keighobad to donate child appropriate gifts such as gift cards or G-rated movies. While students might not get any socks with this donation, making one of the kids' day at Choc is worth it.

NHS Book Drive

Nov. 28 through Dec. 9 National Honors Society (NHS) collected gently used books just in time for Christmas for children whose parents serve in the military. With her dad in the navy, service project coordinator for NHS senior Sabrina Torres, grew up seeing naval bases like Coronado fill up with military families and children during Christmas.

Torres chose Operation Help a Hero for NHS's members to donate to this year. However, all students were welcome to donate and help support local military families. The drive proved to be a success with NHS collecting hundreds of books. Thanks to the book drive, SMCHS students give back to those who have given so much to us by serving our country.



Bundles of books - With the book drive over, senior Sabrina Torres looks forward to giving the books to the children at military bases.



Shopping frenzy - Spanish teacher Nancy Sepulveda's classes go all in for Adopt-A-Family bringing in bags worth of gifts.

Adopt a Family

For the past 10 years that SMCHS has been working with Adopt-a-Family, students' and teachers' generosity has never failed to shine through. Spanish teacher, Nancy Sepulveda, along with her classes, prove that Christmas is not just a time of receiving but also of giving.

Despite working at the school for only the past three years, Sepulveda and her classes bring in incredibly large amounts of gifts each year.

"The more people bring in the more momentum there is," Sepulveda said. "Students put themselves in these other kids shoes

and then just provide amazing things."

Sepulveda is always surprised by how deeply her students get involved with Adopt-a-Family each year. From the actual donations to spending extra time after school and on weekends to help wrap all the gifts, Sepulveda's students have always been more than willing to give.

Last year Sepulveda's class brought in about 15 bags worth of gifts, a record she hopes to top this year.

"I had to have all the custodians [carry the bags] out and they looked like Santa Claus going down the hallway," Sepulveda said.

Starring Margo

Junior Margo Stallings takes the big screen.

By Cambria Miller,
Staff Writer

With nothing more than a small resume, dreams, and a passion for soccer, Junior Margo Stallings packed her bags and moved to sunny California in hopes of success.

Stallings put her dream to the test as she left her family and friends behind to pursue a career many dream of. She even left her name behind, going by Margo Quinn. While these were a difficult decision to make, Stallings decided to follow her passion for acting and tries to ignore her longing to be back home. With that, she continues day by day in the acting and modeling industry. At the age of 2 she began modeling and upon moving to California, she started acting. It all started out with vacation that became permanent.

"We packed some bags, brought my dog and never went home," said Stallings.

Traveling across the Southern part of the state to find the perfect school, Stallings mom insisted on a Catholic school and set their sights on Santa Margarita. Being submitted for auditions once or twice a week and traveling anywhere from LA to Brazil, Stallings is constantly worrying about her grades.



And action - Junior Margot Stallings dazzles the cameras on the set of her new movie, out in theaters in 2017.

"It is hard to keep up [with school work] but all my teachers are really flexible. They know I am not skipping just because," said Stallings.

Though their move was abrupt, every high schooler is anxious to make new friends as they come in to a new environment. But, Stall-

ings has had a harder time due to her career.

Most in the industry try for years to become an established actor. Margo landed her first movie within months of the move. Being cast as one of the main characters coming to theaters June 1, 2017, her peers were anxious to know how

she scored the role.

"People don't want to be my friend because of me. They want to see what they can get from me," said Stallings "some of them have been trying for so long."

Stallings is constantly trying to put her best foot forward now, as she did with every take for the upcoming movie, *The Sand dune*.

Aside from the silver screen, her best friends being in another state, and questioning the ones she has here, she faced a permanent ankle injury that has stopped her from participating in her second love.

Stallings had hopes of playing on SM's girls soccer team. Unfortunately, spring of freshman year was the last of her playing the sport.

"My ankle was bothering me and physical therapy wasn't helping so I had to have surgery to get my tendons tightened and I'm still recovering" Stallings said "I wanted to play in college but that's not possible anymore."

Acting was always a dream but not the only dream. Losing soccer sent Stallings for a loop and she pushed herself to do even better. With all that has happened to Stallings before and after her move, she keeps her head high and strives for her dream.

"I know that it's cheesy but when people told me that I couldn't do it. I tried even harder to prove them wrong" said Stallings.



Dear Eagles

By Saint Nicholas,
Contributing Writer

We've arrived at the season of giving once again. So, coming from a guy who is pretty good at this whole "giving" thing, I was wondering if I could request something from you for a change. I know traditionally you assemble your Christmas wishes on a piece of paper that you send my way, but just this once, I'm here to tell you what it is I want this Christmas.

As safe as I am in my little corner of the world up here in the North Pole, I know the rest of the world can be a scary place -- especially high school. The sad truth is that people can be quite mean sometimes. But the silver lining is that people can be quite nice too. So my life-long wish, Santa Margarita, is this: Be kind.

High school is not a time for bullying, teasing, mocking or anything that puts another human being down. It's a time to build each other up. You are one student body; you are one collective group. In essence, you are a team. My reindeer are a team. If you don't know their names then you need some serious Christmas education. But the point is, if my reindeer didn't work together, how would you get your precious gifts on Christmas morning? You wouldn't. No one wants a divided team -- work together, Eagles.

Acceptance is key, folks. You have all made mistakes, but news-flash, you've still got a spot on the nice list. Why? Because I accept you, flaws in all. Now this is not me telling you to start showering strangers with meaningless compliments or giving out free hugs. I'm just saying, if someone is smaller than you, younger than you, different than you -- don't push them away for those reasons. Be the person to accept them. Be the person to make their Christmas season a little more merry and bright.

Use your words and actions for good. I know my most famous quote is probably "Ho, ho, ho" or "Merry Christmas," but I use my words in good faith, and I hope you do too. Build people up with what you say, because tearing people down will not only land you a fat piece of coal on December 25, but it's just flat out uncool. And believe me, I know what's cool and uncool. Name another dude cooler than a guy who flies around the world in one night and never gets caught.

And that leads me to my next point. I am in charge of giving the entire world gifts. That's 7 billion people to take care. I'm just asking you to take care of a few. One simple kind gesture to a few other people is all it takes. Be kind, Santa Margarita. The world needs people like you in it to be the voice of kindness this Christmas season and beyond. Merry kindness to all.

Best wishes,
Santa Clause

P.S. Mr. Dunne, don't worry I'll get you that toy train you always wanted.

Moms in Prayer

SMCHS moms in come together through prayer ministry.

By Rachel Tetrault,
Staff Writer

Praise. Confess. Give thanks. Reflect with intercession. In one hour week meetings, the Moms in Prayer ministry gather in the Sacred Heart Chapel and pray to improve the lives of their children, school, community, and themselves every Thursday.

The Moms in Prayer (or MIP) ministry is an international mother ministry that has been around since 1985. Currently taking place in 140 different countries, MIP has been at SMCHS for 23 years.

The main purpose of MIP is to pray. With everyone coming together as one community, the ministry's prayers impact the schools where their children attend.

"MIP affects children and schools worldwide for Christ by gathering mothers to pray," said present leader of the MIP group at SMCHS, Patty Hamilton. "It is [MIP's] vision that every school in the world can be covered with prayer."

Hamilton has been a part of the MIP group for about 12 years

at SMCHS. Her main focus is to follow the guidelines in which the MIP ministry provides.

Each MIP gathering formats four simple steps for the members and every meeting: praise, silent confession, thanksgiving and intercession. The meetings correspond with the week's theme, which changes frequently. Some examples of the different themes would be God is Love, God our Creator, God is our Strength and God Reigns.

The goal of MIP is also to help mothers establish a new and stronger personal relationship with God through prayer.

"Prayer gives us the opportunity to grow our relationship with God," said Hamilton. "Time in God's presence gives us the opportunity to align with His will in our lives."

Being an MIP member for so long, Hamilton encourages other mothers to experience the same relief she has.

"In the many years of my experience with MIP, [a mother] can walk in to our prayer meeting with any number of worries, anxieties, and fears, but she will walk out with

a general 'ahh', of peace knowing that she covered the situation in prayer," Hamilton said.

Every meeting is confidential allowing mothers to feel safe and pray about their children and school freely without judgment.

To join the moms in prayer min-

istry, mothers with current attending students at SMCHS can meet in the Sacred Heart Chapel at 9 a.m. and participate in the session that ends at 10 a.m. every Thursday.

To learn more about this ministry, contact Patty Hamilton at patyhamilton@gmail.com.



Blessings - MIP members join together to bless prayer intentions located in the Sacred Heart Chapel

photo by Rachel Tetrault



Senior Bella Musto dedicates herself to ice skating.

photo by Dani Segovia

By Dani Segovia, Sports Editor

This is the season for hot chocolate, twinkling lights, Christmas movies and evenings spent ice skating at the Irvine Spectrum. Ice skating mostly comes around during the winter season, but for senior Bella Musto, the ice remains her home all year long. While most people ice skate twice a year, she ice skates twice a week, working towards becoming an ice skating coach.

Musto started skating at age 5 and skated competitively until freshman year. Her success on the ice has stayed with her throughout her growth as a skater.

"When I first land my axel, it [was] a huge deal and everyone [was] super excited," Musto said. "My coach gave me a dollar for

landing it and I was ten at the time so it was super exciting."

Musto's love for the sport has inspired her to pursue a coaching position. With this title, Musto will be able to help others practice the sport she loves and being a coach will open up future opportunities.

"I want to be a coach because ice skating is something that I have really enjoyed and I would like to share the sport with others and help them enjoy it too," Musto said. "I won't be a coach as my profession or anything like that but it makes a good part-time or summer job, while allowing me to continue ice skating after I finish high school."

Each week, Musto wakes up at 5 a.m. and heads to the rink. She sacrifices her late starts in order to

squeeze a practice in.

"Right when I wake up, all I want to do is sleep, but ice skating before school helps me wake up more and it gets my brain going," Musto said.

In order for Musto to reach a coaching status, she must pass a series of tests called "Moves in the Field". At the Aliso Viejo Ice Palace, Musto must face seven levels before she can call herself an ice skating coach. Once a month, Musto and fellow ice skaters who also pursue coaching positions, get the chance to show off their talent and advance in the increasingly difficult levels.

"I wanted to be able to finish the moves so I could coach at the end," Musto said. "I didn't want to give up now because I have worked

so hard to get here and it would be pointless just to stop so I just keep practicing."

Musto flew through the first four. Musto "stumbled" at level five, also known as the novice level. This took her the longest to learn and master.

"[The coaching process] can be really stressful," Musto said. "I get nervous and it's difficult to be able to skate as well during the test as I do during practice, which is frustrating. One time a girl completely wiped out during her test, but luckily that has never happened to me."

As intense as it might seem, the program is more than just training and working towards one goal. She still manages to enjoy her time

both on and off the ice.

"On people's birthdays at the ice rink they take you to the end of the rink, make you take off your skates, and have you walk across the ice in just socks," Musto said.

Musto is currently on level six. One more level and she will accomplish her goal she set out for herself after seven years of training.

"I'm so excited to complete the process," Musto said. "Passing the test will be such a big milestone for me as I have been working to pass these tests for such a long time."

When the hot chocolate runs out, the Christmas lights come down, the Christmas movies stop running, and the weather becomes warmer, one will still find Musto on the ice.

Early morning kooks

Seniors wake up before dawn for weekly surf sessions.



Suiting up - Before we head in to the cold waters of the Pacific, we put on our wetsuits to commence the hours we spend in our sanctuary.



Just keep surfing - Nothing stops us from getting in that water. Not even the thought of losing sleep because the feelings from surfing trump a good night's rest.

By Claire Robidoux,
Feature Editor

It's pitch black and unlike the rest of the SMCHS population, seniors Liana Edgar, Dani Segovia, Alex Barry and Claire Robidoux are far from the comfort of their beds. Instead, they work their way into wetsuits and dive into the cold waters of the Pacific Ocean at 4:50 a.m.. Abandoning cozy pajamas for a soon to be soaked wetsuit seems almost criminal, but for these girls their reasons are simple.

"We all like getting together in the morning to get better at surfing and to just have fun together," Edgar said. "It's spontaneous and freeing."

Barry, Edgar and Segovia have all been a part of the school surf team for three years. Barry began surfing when her mother's friend dragged her into the water with her - leading to the first moment when she stood up.

However for Edgar, surfing runs in her genes.

"My dad was a pro surfer, and it looked really fun like a good place to escape," said Edgar. "When my father passed away that's when I wanted to surf. I feel like the water brings a connection between him and I."

Although Edgar lost a part of her family, she gained a group of sisters from the early mornings and long tiring school days that followed each and every surf session.

"When we started surfing together, I was hoping for stronger friendship between all of us," Edgar said. "I can already see those friendships because we all love surfing, and we have so much fun together."

The group figured that the only time everyone could go was in the morning before school. The drive to school with the time needed to shower and change lead to an official meet up time of 4:30 a.m. at the San Clemente Pier.

"I honestly think waking up at 3 a.m. is fun," Barry said. "No one is out there and it's dark. It's crazy but calming."

Participating in morning surfs requires a lot of preparation. Going to bed as early as 6 p.m. is necessary to counter the lost three hours of sleep. Due to the early wake up time, everything needed for the day must be set and ready to go including: surf board, bathing suit, wetsuit, shampoo and conditioner, towel, charged Lenovo Yoga, uniform, lunch and anything needed for after school activities.

"I have around four bags I take with me," Barry said. "I always

drink a Monster when I get out of the water to wake myself up, so I don't fall asleep during class."

After every session at the pier, the girls drive 5 minutes down the road to a small café known as Ellie's Table to recharge before the six-hour school day. The café opens at 6 a.m., making it just in time to get out of the water and begin the day. It's a routine that everyone order the same food each time: Barry has Ellie's Cinnamon Roll, Segovia prefers Chorizo Ranchero & Eggs, Edgar orders European Coffee Cake and Robidoux eats an Almond Croissant.

"My favorite memory is [from] one of the first times we went," Edgar said. "We saw a shooting star and it was pretty cool because I don't think many people can say they saw a shooting star while surfing."

Despite the obstacles that stand in the way of the morning surfs, the girls find ways to make the most of the two hours in the water before returning to reality.

In the end, escaping to the water has provided each of them with experiences they will use to remember their years in high school. The early mornings offer them escape to a world apart from reality where there are piles of Ellie's pastries and shooting stars.

photos by Claire Robidoux

Basketbond

Senior Kaden Rasheed adjusts to his newfound leadership.

By Taylor Gather, Staff Writer

Older siblings -- there when you need them the most, and not there when you need them the most. This is what senior Kaden Rasheed knew to be true, until now.

Last year, the Rasheed dynamic duo dominated. Although this will be the first time since eighth grade that senior Kaden Rasheed won't have his older brother Noah by his side, he's confident in his ability to lead the team to victory like his brother had done in the past here at SMCHS.

"My role now is to help the younger players and show them what they're supposed to do, especially since I've already played for four years," Rasheed said. "I know what it takes to win a game, so if I give them the mentality they need to win every game, it should work out."

Just as his brother had inspired him, Rasheed ensures that his teammates stay focused and guides them so that they may be able to perform to the best of their ability.

"I just let them know that they should keep trying even if they make mistakes," Rasheed said. "I tell them to forget about their mistakes and focus on the next play because if they keep thinking about them then they won't play to their full potential."

Even though Rasheed has self confidence on the court, nothing compares to having Noah on the court with him.

"I'm so used to my brother being on my team that it's definitely a different dynamic," Rasheed said. "He always got me the ball, and we always knew where each other was going to be -- if I was in the corner he would already know that and I would know that he would pass me the ball. But now since he's not there I have to learn to get on the

same page as the other players like Noah and I did."

Although Noah is in college, the brotherhood that Kaden has with his teammates allows him to continue to share the close connection with them that he and Noah shared before, both on and off the court.

"We have this thing where we go bowling as a team and it's a really good bonding experience,"

Rasheed said. "Even though we're a brotherhood on the court, it's something different when you are away from all the basketball and just have fun doing something different with your team."

As captain, Rasheed works to bring the team together when it comes to sharing the same mindset and goals for the 2017 season. Rasheed stresses the importance

of putting in extra time and effort to achieve such goals.

"We've already played in over 40 games and have had a lot of practices," Rasheed said. "There are no days off, and we've even started to do hot yoga. I just want to make Noah proud by beating Mater Dei and winning CIF."

Along with improving the team's play, Rasheed looks to better his own game and has sacrificed a significant amount of his time in order to do so.

"I've been working hard with my dad and even got a new trainer," Rasheed said. "We workout every night for two hours, which really helps my game. I also went to Milwaukee, Las Vegas and Atlanta over the summer to play in the Adidas Gauntlet, where I played with teams from all over the nation for a chance to be exposed to college coaches. But since, all of my time goes to basketball."

Because of the numerous hours Rasheed takes upon himself to dedicate to basketball, he has developed his own unique style of gameplay and learned to stand out among others players.

"I think colleges are interested because I put something different on the table," Rasheed said. "Most people can only play defense or only play offense, where I can do both."

Despite Rasheed's individual abilities, he still looks to his 17 brothers for direction and encouragement.

"I depend on them to just give their all when they play and do whatever they have to do to contribute to the team and help us get a win," Rasheed said.

"I know they want me to do the same, and they inspire me to lead by example both on and off the court," Rasheed said.



Aim high - The varsity basketball team supports senior Kaden Rasheed as he takes a shot during a close game against Servite High School.

courtesy photo

On the move

Pearson Parker settles into a new home.

By Ian Gutierrez, Staff Writer

Even though he started this school year at a brand new school, junior Pearson Parker has never felt more at home. Having transferred from Servite High School, Parker is far from his familiar surroundings. However, SMCHS not only offered him the opportunities he desired, but also a sense of belonging.

"I chose SMCHS because it was the best fit for me academically," Parker said. "[It was] the best setting for me to grow as a high school student and was a larger school that would help me transition into college."

Although he is a new student, Parker feels that the move has been effortless.

"The transition in moving schools has been very easy because of how accepting SMCHS was to me," Parker said. "I have felt very welcome by the SMCHS community. The students are very positive and supportive and very inviting. The teachers have been very helpful with me learning the new technology. The school has helped me through everything that may have been different from my old school."

As a basketball player, Parker puts forth hard work and determination.

"[Basketball] has always been my passion and no matter how hard it has been at times, I feel unhappy without it," Parker said. "I love the competition of it. I found myself noticing the little parts of the sport that go unnoticed by others who don't love it. From the cracks in the court to the sound of the net."

Parker holds his own personal goals when it comes to his game and hopes that SMCHS will help him accomplish his dream of playing in the NBA.

"I have a desire to be the best player every time I step onto the court," Parker said. "I have to improve on some aspect of my game every day."

The SMCHS basketball team shows signs of great strength and Parker admires the way the team stands together. He has learned that they are a team who encourages each other to do better and work harder each day.

"It is fun being the new guy on the team, especially this team because of how great my teammates are and how close the team already is," Parker said. "I was accepted from the beginning and became a part of the team immediately."

Parker is grateful and thankful for all the help he has received from his coaches and new teammates, and he looks forward to the 2017 season.

"My expectations for this season is to lead my team to winning Trinity League and winning an open division CIF title," Parker said.

SMCHS has opened its arms wide to Parker, and he has embraced every moment of this new school year. For Parker, the struggles brought on by change have been overcome by the reassuring feeling that he is home.

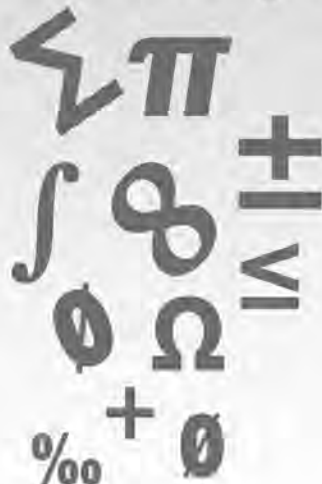
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Mind over matter

The boys varsity soccer team gets their head in the game.

By Ivanna Rea,
Managing Editor

The soccer field is a battleground for soccer players. They can have all the skills to get the ball in the goal, but without the proper mindset, lost battles can hinder their level of play.

For the second year in a row, boys varsity soccer has partnered up with human performance improvement expert Jim Madrid to develop a positive mentality both on and off the field. Madrid has also worked with SMCHS's CIF Division I girls volleyball champions as well as the Seattle Seahawks, Utah Jazz, Seattle Sounders FC and California State University, Fullerton athletics.

"What started out as a personal interest has become my professional passion," Madrid said. "I've been doing this since ninth grade. I was using the same kind of technology back then and that's how I got recruited into the hospitality industry when I decided to work for [motivational speaker] Lou Tice. I give him all the credit in the world for my professional success."

Madrid has been working in the positive psychology business for 27 years. Although he didn't go to college, his teachings have led him to become the CEO and founder of Advance Sports Technology, a program meant to supply athletes, coaches and leaders with the basics of mental toughness and positivity.

"I've met with, talked to, interviewed, worked with and taught alongside some of the brightest minds in the field of human performance," Madrid said. "I have athletes coming to me saying 'As a freshman you came in and worked with us and where I'm at today is because of you.' That to me is worth all the money in the world."

Madrid reached out to varsity boys soccer coach Wade Fraser and asked to work with the players. After only 10 minutes with Madrid, the team experienced improvements on the field.

"The boys love him," Fraser said. "Everybody on the team can play, but there's a mental aspect that not everybody gets. It could be the boys listening to a different voice, somebody who approaches things a little

differently, because the minute we started working with him, I saw a difference."

The team tries to meet with Madrid at least once a week, and so far the sessions have been helpful for senior varsity co-captain Chasen Brutocao.

"He isn't like any other coach I've had before," Brutocao said. "No coach has ever told me or the team to write down our goals or enforced a positive team environment. I've had a few club coaches and none of them have really preached on how to bring teammates up when they make mistakes."

Madrid's style of teaching stems from the collaborative research with well-known professionals such as Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman, a published author and psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania. He supplies athletes with techniques that train players how to stay positive and inspired to match their high level of play.

"I take fear out of the equation," Madrid said. "Do I demand and discipline? Absolutely. And what I see in coaches is that they're disciplined and direct, but I don't see their players playing out of fear. They play out of the love of the sport. Those are the people I want to work with."

Madrid assists players with setting goals. He claims that goals are essential in changing behavior and achieving the desired results.

"For me personally, he's helped me play better and have a better mentality," said senior varsity player Nick Tedesco. "Last year I wrote down goals and it actually helped so I hope that at the end of the season I'll be able to do that as well."

Even though Madrid's clients range from corporate America employees to athletes of all levels, his expertise regarding the mental and cognitive psychology help improve the leadership and confidence qualities that must be shown on the field.

"Soccer is a game of momentum," Fraser said. "When things don't go your way you have a tendency to think negative. Everybody on the team can play, but there's a mental aspect that not everybody gets. [Madrid] does a good job of coming in and teaching that mental aspect where I might not be as good at it."

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He isn't like any other coach I've had before. No coach has ever told me, or the team, to write down our goals or enforced a positive team environment.

— senior varsity co-captain Chasen Brutocao

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Confidence is key. Regardless of the sport or role on the team, it guides your mentality and it has the ability to make or break you. Madrid acknowledges this and tackles this topic by focusing on the root of the problem.

"The biggest question I get asked by coaches or parents is 'My son or daughter is lacking in self confidence, does this program work?'" Madrid said. "Yes it does. I have

athletes right now making five million dollars or more and guess what I help them in? Self confidence. People can always build on self-confidence and that stems from self-esteem."

Madrid's teaching hasn't just affected the players -- Fraser tries to learn from Madrid's words to better himself as a coach. He has begun to encourage his players to set goals before a game so they can

sleep on it.

"Change always starts with the leadership," Madrid said. "It always starts at the top. Whether it be in sports or in corporate, if I don't have buy-ins from the top, I don't get engaged with [the players]."

Madrid's distinctive words are what will remain with Brutocao as he helps lead the team in the upcoming season.

"[Madrid] really sets the tone when we meet with him," Brutocao said. "He makes sure that whatever we do in life, soccer-related or not, we're always focused and tuned in with no negative thoughts."

The team has a whole season ahead to work with Madrid. Regardless of how far soccer advances in Trinity League or CIF, Madrid's words are guaranteed to be instilled in the players.

"Any program that doesn't use him would be making a mistake," Fraser said. "He's done a lot of good for us and I can't wait to see how it pays off this year."

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A Charlie Brown new year

The Christmas show's cast and crew looks forward to the new year.

By Amanda Zou, Photo Editor

On Dec. 2, SMCHS' Performing Arts department put on the Christmas show, "A Charlie Brown Christmas." The show created a joyful atmosphere on campus and students now feel the Christmas spirit with them. As the Christmas season and new year approach, the cast and crew keep their wishes and personal goals in mind.

photos by Amanda Zou



Brian Reyes, Junior
(Charlie Brown)

I would like to be more proactive in schooling and in life and more observant. I want to be charging life head on without missing the little moments and experiences that happen every day.



Hannah Loessberg, Junior
(Snoopy)

I am excited to be a senior in Talon Theatre next year; it has its perks for sure but also comes with great responsibility. I can't wait to show incoming freshmen what I believe is the best part about this school.



Hannah Baker, Senior
(Assistant Director)

My goal is to really embrace the final moments of my senior year. I know that next semester is going to fly by, so I hope I can focus on spending time with my friends and be less stressed.



Garrett Webb, Freshman
(Assistant Stage Manager)

I want to go to a new level of my life and be able to put myself out there. I also want to make a bunch of new friends in and outside of theatre and make sure that everyone feels welcome here at SMCHS.



Lauren McNair, Senior
(Woodstock)

At the beginning of next year, I plan to work on the spring musical "Fiddler on the Roof." It is an amazing show and I am extremely excited to perform with my friends one last time before I graduate.



Leighton Holritz, Senior
(Stage Manager)

I am looking forward to making clove-orange decorations with my sister this Christmas because they make my house smell amazing for about a week and it's very calming after the stress of finals.



Olivia Brown, Senior
(Tech Crew)

For this Christmas and new year, I want tickets to the 1975's concert because I have never been to one of their concerts and I love their music. My goal is to go to as many concerts as I can in the future.



Jacob Ashely, Freshman
(Linus)

I'm looking forward to spending time with my family, especially my grandma who I haven't seen for almost five years. She is the kindest woman and I want to hear stories from her travels.



Griffin Webb, Junior
(Schroeder/ Head of Costumes)

My goal for my senior year is to know all of the fresh faces of the class of 2018. I know a few people but there are some really cool cats out there that I haven't gotten to know yet.



Faith Quigley, Senior
(Stage & Lighting crew)

In this upcoming year, I will tell myself to live in the moment, to the fullest and have fun. Do not worry too much because everything will work itself out the way it's supposed to.



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Let it glow

Local neighborhoods deck their houses for the holidays.

By Bridgette Singer and Rachel Tetreault, Staff Writers

With many weeks of preparation, flashing lights and endless rounds of hot cocoa burning the tips of tongues, many communities go above and beyond with decorations and lighting up neighborhoods to get into the spirit with their unique Christmas twist. These houses show another meaning of this holiday.



RSM:

Rancho Santa Margarita's Candy Cane Lane lights up each year and never fails to impress its many visitors.

People that live on Candy Cane Lane pass out cookies and hot cocoa to the crowds each year. While many houses are decked out in traditional Christmas lights, one particular house sets up an awareness campaign lit up with a banner that says NEGU (Never Ever Give Up) to help raise money for children with cancer.

"My favorite house from this street has to be the one that has the "NEGU" campaign in front of it," said junior Sophia Doss. "I love knowing that the kids [struggling] with cancer will have a smile on their face when they receive the Joy Jar filled with treats."

Ladera Ranch:

Ladera Ranch takes it to the next level of Christmas light festivities with houses on Mayville Place-known as "the blinking houses."

"I like seeing the winner of the Ladera Ranch lights contest because the houses do a great job of blinking to the music you listen to in your car," said junior Nick Parrino.

Mission Viejo:

The city of Mission Viejo has a special Christmas setup where locals can go and see Santa's workshop at the Mission Viejo Civic Center. If lucky, kids and their families might even be able to see Santa and receive a peppermint candy cane. Once Santa arrives, he will bring Christmas spirit by turning on the many holiday lights in

Mission Viejo.

"Going to see Santa at the library with my little brother is always a fun experience," said junior Ava Steensland. "He loves seeing Santa and all of the Christmas decorations. His favorite part of the night talking with Santa and getting to eat the peppermint candy cane after."

These neighborhoods blow up their electricity bills to please the public and community with their houses decked out for Christmas. Although Christmas is a time spent with families in your own home, visiting these houses really show another meaning of the experience you get from this holiday.

Sounds of the season

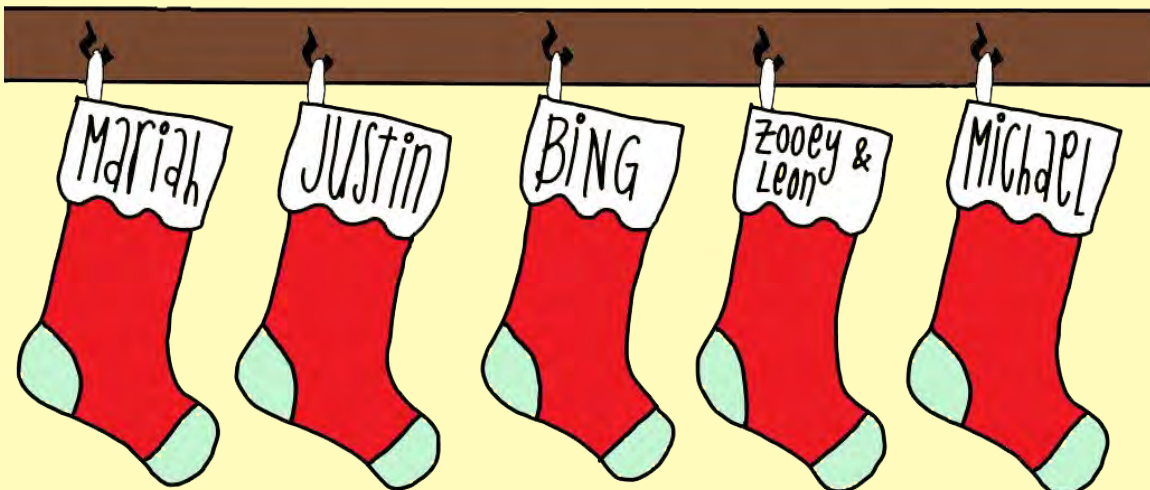
I don't want a lot for Christmas, just a good Christmas album.

By Amanda Moussiaux,
Staff Writer

There is no other way to embrace and celebrate the Christmas season without blasting music in your car or at your house. Face it, without Christmas music, the holiday would not be the same.

With every Christmas comes a Christmas album. Not to ruin the holiday cheer, but I think if I ever have to listen to Alvin and the Chipmunks, "Christmas with The Chipmunks" again, I might scream because their songs are ear piercingly catchy, on an annoying level.

Another interesting Christmas album I have recently come across, although it was released in 2008, the infamous Snoop Dogg had his own way of expressing Christmas in "Snoop Dogg Presents Christ-



SMCHS's Top 5 Favorite Christmas Songs:

1. "All I want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey
2. "Mistletoe" by Justin Bieber
3. "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby
4. "Baby, It's Cold Outside" by Zoëy Deschanel & Leon Redbone
5. "It's Beginning to Look a lot Like Christmas" by Michael Bublé

mas in the Dogg House." This one was rather interesting and is not one I would recommend when trying to get in the holiday spirit and sing along.

Many people, like myself, struggle to choose between Michael Bublé's album, "Christmas" and Justin Bieber's album "Under The Mistletoe." To some this choice is a no brainer. But for me, it is a constant shuffle between both.

For those country lovers, Brett Eldredge released his first Christmas album full of covers. His album, "Glow" has fans all over the country raving about it.

So whether you love the classics, screeching, rap or even some country music, there is an album for everyone. So grab some hot cocoa, friends, family and your favorite Christmas album and celebrate with cheer!

Sweaters 101

Discover the fashionable ways to get into the Christmas spirit.

By Hannah Prince,
Staff Writer

Some people express their holiday cheer through Santa hats and Christmas stockings. But from time to time, you'll find the scattered few that are decked out in an ugly fleece -- with obnoxious patterns and designs -- this is not a wardrobe malfunction.

"I love Christmas because of the spirit," said junior Drew Schlingman. "From parties to wrapping presents and a lot of ugly sweaters,

I am able to feel a refreshed sense of joy after a long semester."

As the holiday season is in full force, with Christmas music on the radio and houses decorated with lights, people are unlikely to go throughout town without noticing a strangely unique Christmas sweater.

The trend was ironically reinvented by Bill Cosby with his wooly pullover with an extravagant sort of mixed patterns and colors. But now, the "ugly sweater fever" is trending. Sweater-themed parties invite all generations to celebrate, be festive and show enthusiasm

about the holiday.

These tacky cardigan patterns range from reindeers to Christmas trees, even designs with goofy sayings, like "We're gonna party like it's my birthday," with a picture of Jesus imprinted. Whatever design someone could imagine, it probably exists.

"My friends and I [have a party] every year," said senior Margaret Jennison. "I've seen some pretty ugly sweaters and costumes. My favorite sweaters are the ones that light up or make noises, but the best are definitely the ones that are homemade."

Holiday enthusiasts such as Schlingman and Jennison, have traditions revolving around a silly sweater. It brings memories of home and childhood to them.

Christmas parties are a season-must, creating family and friend interactions filled with laughter and lightheartedness. Students, like junior Garrett Domier, celebrate every year with secret Santas and ugly sweater parties.

"The craziest outfit I've seen was a sweater made entirely of wrapping paper," said junior Garrett Domier.

The cozy, warm sweater might

be ridiculous, but it keeps the meaning of Christmas traditions alive. It unites a diverse population throughout the world.

"By wearing festive clothes, it shows my excitement for the season," said Schlingman. "The holidays should be spent with family and friends. Last year, my friends and I had a Christmas party and we all wore Christmas themed outfits."

'Tis the season for wreaths, bright lights, cozy pajamas and hot cocoa. It's almost Christmas, but don't forget the unique aspects of the holiday - bring out your ugly Christmas sweater - and celebrate.



Junior Matt Ury

"I love when my mom, Rhonda Ury, cooks her famous toffee and it's just scrumptious."



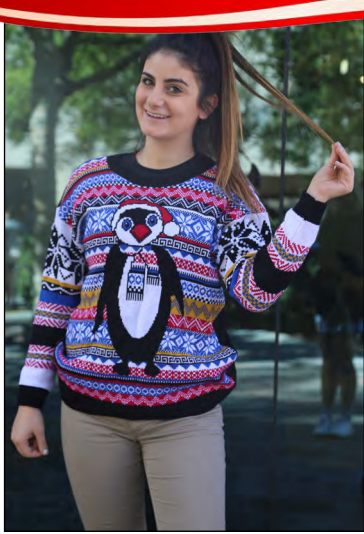
Senior Margaret Jennison

"I love driving around at night with hot chocolate and my Christmas playlist while looking at the best decorated houses."



Junior Drew Schlingman

"My favorite 'ugly' Christmas sweater is a snowman. What's better than a sweater that reminds me of Frosty the Snowman!"



Junior Natalie Abboud

"My favorite thing about this holiday is baking, candles, the weather and Christmas lights."



Junior Garrett Domier

"My favorite things about Christmas are spending time with family and hot chocolate."



Merry Christmas!

Love, your Eagle Eye Staff