

The Bulldog Bark



Advisor: Ms. Dunham
Principal: Mr. Hauser

Your Middle School News Unleashed!

Winter 2023-2024

Christmas Around the World: How It's Celebrated



By **Ethan Binder**
Team 8 Barker

Christmas is a time for celebration and spending time with friends and family. It's celebrated across the world with such a difference in cultures that it's not strange that everyone celebrates Christmas differently. Even the holidays at this time are different depending on culture. With so many traditions, it's almost impossible to learn them all, but that doesn't mean we can't talk about some popular traditions from around the world.

Starting first with the United States of America. Many Americans, especially Christians, will go to church to celebrate the birth of Jesus

during Christmas. The majority enjoy Christmas so much they've made shops called "Christmas shops" that only sell Christmas decorations and toys all year round! People in America like to decorate the outsides of their houses with lights and Christmas decorations; they also sing Christmas carols. Another tradition is giving presents and Santa Claus.

The next country is Japan. In Japan, it is not a religious holiday or a celebration. Japan still has some traditions that are similar to America. They do send Christmas cards and give presents. Their biggest and strangest tradition is that the meal most people eat for Christmas is fried chicken. There is a theory that the tradition was caused by the KFC

ad called "Kentucky for Christmas."

The next country is Austria. Austria has many Christmas traditions shared with Germany, but there are still many unique traditions. Most towns will have a 'Christkindlmarkt' (Christmas market). During Advent, many families have Advent Wreaths made from twigs, ribbons, and four candles. In Austria, they have an evil version of Santa that is a monster called Krampus. Krampus's job is to punish children who have been bad.

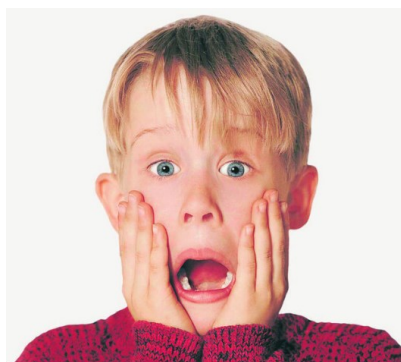
The next country is Mexico. In Mexico, Christmas is celebrated from December 12th to January 6th. Throughout the Christmas celebration, there are nine celebrations called Posadas. Posadas is a

BuzzFeed **QUIZ**

See Page 2, Around the World

Christmas Movie Trivia:
How much do you know?

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Around the World, Continued

Spanish word that translates to Inn. These celebrations represent how Joseph and Mary looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem.

The next country is Italy. In Italy, the most important way of celebrating Christmas is the Nativity Crib Scene. Nativity translates to the word Birth. The Nativity Crib Scene is a model of the birth of Jesus. The Nativity Crib Scene originated in Italy, but it is a tradition that has traveled worldwide.

The next country is Canada. Canada has similar traditions to many other countries. They send Christmas cards, open Christmas gifts, and spend time with friends and family, along with many other traditions. Even with the amount of traditions from other countries, there still are some Canadian traditions. One Canadian tradition is to send fir trees to Boston in the United States. This Canadian tradition is because of the United States helping during the Halifax explosion, and the tradition is their way to thank the United States.

The next country is Ukraine. In Ukraine, Christmas originally was January 7th, but recently it has been changed to December 25th, the day most other countries celebrate Christmas. In Ukraine, they have a Christmas meal called the Holy Supper that they eat on Christmas Eve. This tradition goes even further because you aren't allowed to eat the meal until the first star is seen in the sky. Another tradition is

the Christmas Spider. The tradition has you add a fake spider and fake spider web to your Christmas tree.

The final country is Australia. In Australia, Christmas is celebrated in the summer. The reason for this is that in December, the season for them is summer. Some people decorate their houses with branches of "Christmas Bush." In Australia, Christmas is in the summer, so many activities that are usually done in the summer in the United States, like camping, swimming, and hiking, are done during the Christmas season.

Christmas in every country is different. In several countries, some of the traditions are completely different from each other. On the other hand, some countries have traditions that are similar. Some countries even have worldwide traditions. Cultures around the world always have differences in traditions, so it is important to remember that there is more than one way to celebrate Christmas.



Streaming through Christmas:

Top Ten Christmas Movies to Watch

By Emma Stein

Team 7 Barker

Dive into the festive spirit with a cinematic sleigh ride through some of the most beloved Christmas movies available on various streaming platforms!



1. [The Polar Express 🚂](#) - [Hulu](#), [Amazon Prime Video](#), [Max](#)
2. [A Christmas Story 📺](#) - [Sling TV](#), [Hulu](#), [TBS](#), [Max](#), [Amazon Prime Video](#), [TNT](#), [YouTube TV](#)
3. [National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation 📺](#) - [Sling TV](#), [Max](#), [Hulu](#), [Amazon Prime Video](#)
4. [Home Alone 🏠](#) - [Disney+](#), [YouTube](#), [Sling TV](#), [Amazon Prime Video](#), [Starz](#), [Hulu](#), [The Roku Channel](#), [Philo](#), [YouTube TV](#)
5. [Elf 🧑‍🎄](#) - [Hulu](#), [Philo](#), [Max](#), [Amazon Prime Video](#)
6. [The Santa Clause 📺](#) - [Disney+](#)
7. [Jack Frost 🧊](#) - [Hulu](#), [Max](#), [Philo](#)
8. [Christmas With The Kranks 📺](#) - [Amazon Prime Video](#), [YouTube](#), [The Roku Channel](#), [Philo](#), [Sling TV](#), [YouTube TV](#)
9. [The Christmas Chronicles 📺](#) - [Netflix](#)
10. [The Grinch 📺](#) - [Fubo TV](#), [YouTube TV](#), [Hulu](#), [Freeform](#)



Christmas Tree Lighting at Victory Park

By Lucas Fenstermaker

Team 7 Barker

The Christmas tree lighting down at Victory Park was an amazing sight to see. Many of the trees were really astonishing to look at during the darker hours, with their pine needles being lit up by the dazzling lights. My friends and I went up there around 5:45 to get our pictures. If you either want to get pictures or just look at the lights that sparkle over the trees, I would personally say to go around 5:45 as it is late sunset.

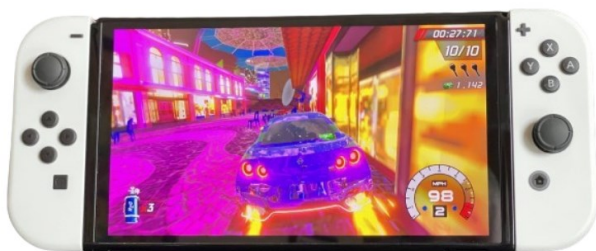


Top 25 Gifts of 2023

By **Reece Mankos**
Team 7 Barker

Have you wanted to buy something for a friend or a family member, but you can't find the right thing for them? Here's our list for the top 25 gifts this year.

- #1 Personal Reading Light
- #2 Leather Coin Pouches
- #3 Stanley Quencher H2.0 Flowstate
- #4 BOSE Soundlink Flex
- #5 Byredo Tree House Candle
- #6 Amazon Echo Dot
- #7 SpikeBall
- #8 Crosley Voyager Turntable
- #9 Homesick Candle
- #10 Baggu Duck Tote Bag
- #11 Kodak Luma 150 Projector
- #12 Wemore Weighted Blanket
- #13 Airpod Pros 2
- #14 Theragun Mini



- #15 Simple Digital Camera
- #16 Nintendo Switch OLED
- #17 Nimble Champ
- #18 Bombas Socks
- #19 Nike By You Shoes
- #20 Jewel Garden
- #21 See's Candy Build a Box
- #22 JBL Go 3
- #23 Knockaround Glasses
- #24 Anker Nano Power Bank
- #25 LifeStraw Peak Series Personal Water Filter



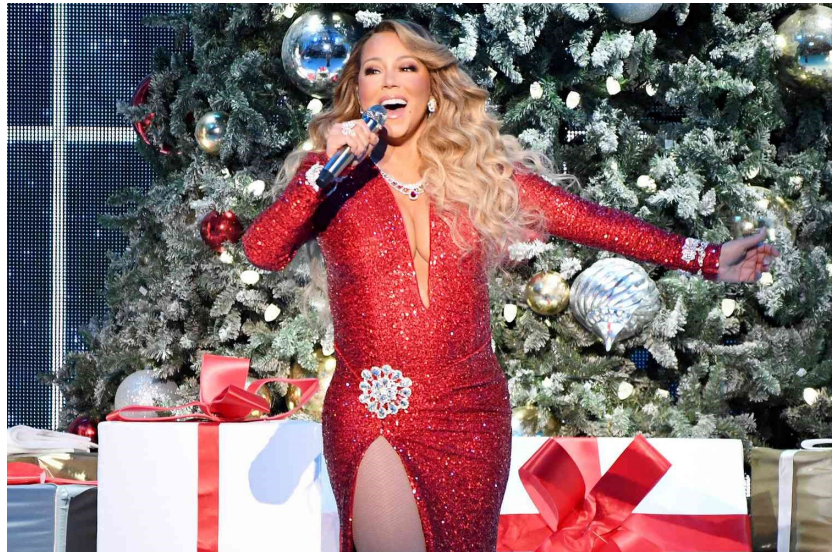
Behind the Holiday Artist:

Mariah Carey

By Casey Farkas
Team 7 Barker

This year's most popular Christmas song is Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You". This song has been a widely enjoyed Christmas song ever since it came out in 1994. This year, "All I Want for Christmas is You" reclaims the crown on both the Billboard Global 200 and Billboard Global Excl. US. charts. We all know that Mariah Carey can make good music, but have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes? Have you ever wondered what other interesting facts about Mariah Carey and her life are to be discovered? Well, if you have ever wondered any of those things, this article is the right place for you! Fun facts about Mariah Carey:

- Mariah's birthday is March, 27, meaning she turns 53 this year.
- Mariah was named after the song "They Call The Wind Maria" from the 1951 musical "Paint Your Wagon."
- Mariah loves Marilyn Monroe and even bought the actress' baby grand piano at an auction for \$600,000.
- In high school, Mariah was known for cutting class.
- Before becoming famous, Mariah went to cosmetology school in Manhattan.
- Mariah also worked as a waitress, even though she didn't do that job long before she quit, due to job complications with her name. Often when waitressing, people didn't know how to pronounce Mariah's name, and would forget it often. To solve this problem Mariah would come up with a fake name, like "Debby". The problem with this was that Mariah forgot the fake name she gave herself, and she wouldn't respond when people were calling her "name".
- Mariah used to be Brenda K. Starr's backup singer which led to her landing a record deal.



- The Fresh Air Fund named its Career Awareness Program "Camp Mariah" in honor of the singer who joined the fund's board of directors in 1994.
- Carey's support of the LGBTQ community won her the GLAAD Ally Award in 2016.
- Mariah is the only artist in history to have a No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in four different decades.
- Mariah has had more No. 1 hits than Michael Jackson and Elvis.

Information from: [insider.com/mariah-carey-facts-you-didn't-know-2020-12](https://www.insider.com/mariah-carey-facts-you-didn-t-know-2020-12) and [billboard.com/music/chart-beat/mariah-carey-all-i-want-for-chirstmas-is-you-number-one-global-charts-2023-1234433320/](https://www.billboard.com/music/chart-beat/mariah-carey-all-i-want-for-chirstmas-is-you-number-one-global-charts-2023-1234433320/)



Spill the "Tea" on Swifty

Brewing the latest on Taylor Swift

By Ella Van Norman
Team 7 Barker



Taylor Swift, the popular pop star, has been dating a famous Chiefs player, Travis Kelce. Let me give you the rundown of their relationship so far. Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce have been the "It" couple since Taylor was spotted at a Chiefs game in Arrowhead Stadium.

Travis went to Taylor's "The Eras Tour" concert in his home stadium before Taylor went to his game. He was hoping to see her, talk to her, and give her a friendship bracelet with his phone number on it. Fans have been going wild over the podcast "New Heights" where Travis states "I was disappointed that she does not do talks before or after the shows so I was a little hurt I didn't get to hand her one of the bracelets I made her." Travis then says that the bracelet he made her had his number on it. But even though Travis could not get the bracelet to her, the two have still been seen hanging



out from time to time after Travis's games. Taylor has been watching Travis's games and hanging out with him after each game. Travis Kelce has also been going to Taylor's events such as her Eras Tour concerts. He even has been pointed out in many of Taylor's songs and Taylor pointed at him while singing some lyrics that are

about and towards Travis. Taylor has been watching Travis's game with his parents and Travis watched Taylor's concerts with her father. Since then, Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce have been dating. "In the



grand finale of this celebrity love saga, it's evident that Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce have truly scored a touchdown in their romantic play-



book. From game days to concert nights, these two have been playing the field of love. Despite the missed connection with the elusive friendship bracelet, it seems the spark ignited, and now, Taylor and Travis are scoring points both on and off the stage. Looks like their relationship is hitting all the right notes, leaving fans eager for the next chapter in this whirlwind romance. Stay tuned for more tea on Swifty.



The Holidays of December

By Ethan Binder

Team 8 Barker

While Christmas is a very well-known holiday, it isn't the only holiday celebrated in December. In a world with such differences in cultures, it causes even the holidays that are celebrated at this time to be different depending on culture. There are many different cultural and religious holidays that some people might not even know about.

One of the first holidays celebrated in December is St. Nicholas Day. This holiday is to celebrate the birthday of St. Nicholas, a bishop that lived in the fourth century. St. Nicholas was born on December 6th. People celebrate by giving different foods and gifts to children.

Another holiday close to the beginning of December is Bodhi Day. The holiday celebrates the day the Buddha is said to have received enlightenment. The holiday is celebrated on December 8th. People celebrate this holiday by meditating.

Later in December, another holiday is celebrated. The holiday that is celebrated is the "Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe." This holiday celebrates Lady of Guadalupe, a saint in Mexico that symbolizes patriotism and devotion. Millions of pilgrims visit when this holiday is celebrated. This holiday is celebrated on December 12.

Later in December, the holiday Hanukkah is celebrated. This holiday is celebrated throughout a period from December 18th to December 26th. In this holiday, each night those who celebrate light a candle on a menorah that has nine candles. The eight candles are used to symbolize how one day's worth of oil lasted 8 days

during a battle between a small Jewish group and a powerful Greek. The holiday also celebrates the victory of the small Jewish group against the Greek army.

Even later in December, the holiday of Yule is celebrated. In this holiday, people celebrate the darkest day of the year. Through the festival of Yule, they mark the shortest day and the longest night of the year. This holiday Yule celebrates the length of day beginning to grow again. This holiday is celebrated from December 21st to January 1st.

Almost at the end of December, Boxing Day is celebrated. The holiday is celebrated on December 26th. This holiday is a British tradition to celebrate. It dates back all the way to when Queen Victoria ruled the throne. It was a holiday to ensure that the upper class gave servants a day off along with giving them a gift.

Another holiday almost at the end of December is Kwanzaa. It goes throughout December 26th to January 1st. This holiday is a week-long celebration that celebrates African-American heritage. It is a holiday that celebrates African-American culture. This Holiday is a way that unites

the African-American community.

Another holiday celebrated in December is Zarathosht Diso. This holiday is celebrated on December 26th. The prophet Zoroaster founded a religion 3,000 years ago. It has become one of the oldest monotheistic religions. The holiday honors the death of the Prophet.

There are many different holidays that are celebrated during December. There are even more holidays celebrated than just the ones I have mentioned. Some holidays celebrate religion, and others celebrate culture. No matter what holiday you celebrate, one of the most important things is to spend time with friends and family.



Winter Weather Predictions

By Lucas Fenstermaker

Team 7 Barker



The *Bulldog Bark* wants to know how you predict our winter will be this year. So far, it's been fairly mild—not too cold and no snow yet! What do you think will be? First, I will share my own prediction.

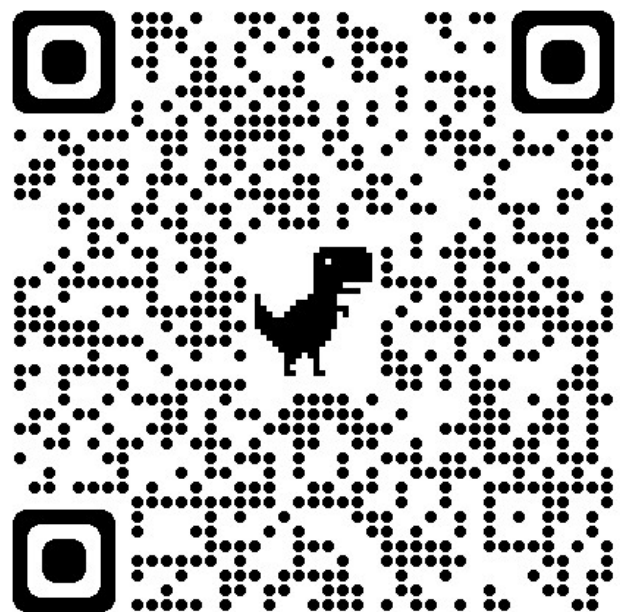
This winter I predict that we will get lots of snow and snowstorms. The reason I think that is because it's supposed to be an “El Nino” year meaning that it's supposed to be colder in the northern parts of the world and hotter near the southern parts of the year. I do doubt that any snow will fall on Christmas day, however, I do feel that we will be getting a grand amount of snow and snowstorms in early 2024. I hope that we do get a good amount of snow this year, so that I can go sledding with friends.

Since I have finished my prediction, you can start your own by scanning this QR code to send in your predictions on a Google Form, or you can click [here](#), and we will publish them in our next edition!

From Ms. Dunham: If you ever want some insight as to the probability of a “snow day” or any other weather alert, I suggest [Vogt WeatherWatcher](#) and [Lehigh Valley Weather Authority](#) for a heads up. In addition, I look at hourly weather on [Weather.com](#) for Slatington to confirm my own hypothesis.



From all of the members of the *Bulldog Bark*, we hope you have a wonderful and safe holiday season and winter break this year!



Scan here and
tell us your
predictions!

Behind the Clubs: INSPIRE Leadership Team

By Ethan Binder

Team 8 Barker

The Inspire Leadership Team is a faculty-voted group. Teachers nominate students that show the essential skills. These students will have many responsibilities throughout the rest of the school year. They will help plan events throughout the school year such as The Hula Day dance, Olympic day, and other events throughout the school year. This group will be given opportunities to show and grow their leadership skills. This group was formed because Mr. Hauser wanted more student involvement and leadership in our school's culture. When planning, they decided to make this club an enrichment group so the students could meet every week without having classes missed. Mr. Reinert volunteered to lead the group because he wanted to see more student involvement throughout the school year. When asked about how he felt about what the Inspire Leadership Team has accomplished so far, Mr. Reinert stated, "I am very excited about what the Inspire team has done so far; they are doing a great job at planning and making the Hula Day dance a successful and fun day. They are showing excellent leadership skills and the ability to plan and work well with others." When asked about what he is hoping this club will be able to accomplish, Mr. Reinert stated, "I hope that the students in this club become more comfortable taking on leadership roles. I also hope they will continue to develop their networking and teamwork skills. An-

other thing I hope is that these students are able to make a positive impact on our school both in the classroom and during our school events." When asking students in the club what they hope to accomplish, they stated, "I hope to be able to inspire other students to have fun and make school what they want it to be." Others also stated, "I want to be able to make the school a better place and a more positive environment." Another thing students stated was, "I want to show kids that everyone can make an impact in the school." While Mr. Reinert is leading the group, multiple other teachers have been helping out the school like Mrs. Frank and Mr. Reinhard. When asked about what she is hoping this club will be able to accomplish, Mrs. Frank stated, "I hope the group will be able to fulfill the dreams that students have for their middle school experience." When asked what he is hoping this club will be able to accomplish, Mr. Reinhard stated, "I hope they will be able to show how outstanding they are so everyone can see it." After seeing the opinions of people involved in the Inspire Leadership Team, the main thing they want to accomplish is to make the school a better place than what it already is.

BULLDOGS
INSPIRE
Innovate • Never Settle • Pursue Individuality and Responsibility Every day

Christmas Jokes 2.0

By Ethan Binder
Team 7 Barker

Get ready for a sleigh-full of merriment as we dive into a collection of Christmas jokes that are bound to sprinkle some joy and laughter into your festivities.

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? Frostbite.

What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney? Claus-trophobia!

What happened to the man who stole an Advent Calendar?

He got 25 days!

Where do Santa's reindeer stop for coffee? Star-bucks!

Why are elves such great motivational speakers? They have plenty of elf-confidence.

How do Christmas trees get their email? They log-on.

What month does a Christmas tree hate the most? Sep-timber!

What is a Christmas tree's favorite candy? Orna-mints!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck? A Christmas quacker.

How do the elves clean Santa's sleigh on the day after Christmas? They use Santa-tizer.

How do you know when Santa's around? You can always sense his presents.

Did you hear about the ski

BuzzFeedNEWS

Written and Created
By Ethan Binder
Team 7 Barker



**Christmas Movie Trivia:
How much do you know?**

**Click [here](#) for this edition's
Buzzfeed!**



trip? It started off fine, but it went downhill fast.

Why does The Grinch enjoy gardening? He's got a green thumb.

Do snow globes ever get scared? No, just shaken.

What should you expect at the end of Christmas Day? The letter Y.

Why can't Christmas trees knit? They keep dropping their needles.

Why can't you shock reindeer? They've herd it all.

What's a cat's favorite holiday song? "Here Comes Santa Claws."

Why did the snowman get detention? He was up to snow good.

How many letters are in the Christmas alphabet? 25 — there's noel.

What's the best present to receive? A broken drum; you just can't beat it.

Which Christmas carol is heard in the desert? O camel ye faithful.

How did Scrooge win the football game? The ghost of Christmas passed.

Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas? Santa Jaws.

What do fish sing at Christmas time? Christmas Corals!

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing — it was on the house.

Last Christmas I bought my friend a lie detector as a gift.

"Oh... I love it!" she said.

"We'll see," I said.

What do reindeer say before a joke? This one's gonna sleigh you!

What do you call a reindeer ghost? Cari-bool!

What type of Christmas dessert shouldn't you trust? Mince spies.

Did you hear the forecast for Christmas Eve? They're calling for rain, dear!

Why was the candy cane so expensive? It was in mint condition.

What do snowmen eat for dessert? Ice crispies.

Why did Santa get a parking ticket on Christmas Eve? He left his sleigh in a snow parking zone.

What is Santa's favorite kind of candy? Jolly Ranchers.

What do you call an elf that can sing? A wrapper.

What did Santa say to Mrs. Claus when he saw their Christmas tree? It looks okay, but you could Spruce it up a bit.

What is a Christmas Tree's favorite subject? Chemis-tree.

What does the gingerbread man put on his bed? Cookie sheets!

What did one Christmas tree say to the other Christmas tree? Light-en up!

What do you get when Santa becomes a detective? Santa CLUES!

What do you call a reindeer with bad manners? RUDE-olph!

What do you call a reindeer who wears earmuffs? Anything you want! He can't hear you!

What kind of photos do elves take? Elfies!

Why wouldn't the Christmas tree stand up? Because it has no legs!

Which of Santa's reindeer has the best moves? Dancer.

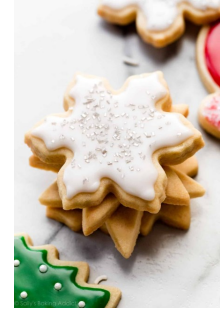
What's a sheep's favorite Christmas song? Fleece Navidad

Where does Santa store his suit? In his Claus-et.

What did one angel say to the other? Halo there!

Why does Scrooge love Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer? Because every buck is dear to him!

We hope these jokes gifted you with laughter, emphasizing that the season is about sharing joy with loved ones, bringing a warm and festive glow to your celebrations.



Christmas Sugar Cookies with Easy Icing

Yield: 24 3-inch cookies and 1.5 cups icing

COOKIES

2 and 1/4 cups (281g) all-purpose flour (spoon and leveled)
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 3/4 cup (170g) unsalted butter, slightly softened to room temperature
 3/4 cup (150g) granulated sugar
 1 large egg*
 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
 1/2 teaspoon almond extract (optional, but makes the flavor outstanding)

EASY ICING

3 cups (360g) confectioners' sugar
 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract (omit and replace with water for stark white icing)
 2 teaspoons light corn syrup*

4.5–5 Tablespoons (67–75ml) room temperature water
 pinch salt*
 optional: gel food coloring & sprinkles for decorating

1. Make sure you have allotted enough time (and enough counter space!) to make these cookies. The cookie dough needs to chill, the cookies need to cool completely, and the icing needs 24 hours to completely set. If enjoying right away and hardened icing isn't a concern, you'll only need about 3–4 hours to make these.

2. Make the cookie dough: Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl. Set aside.

3. In a large bowl using a hand mixer or a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar together on high speed until completely smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes.

4. Add the egg, vanilla, and almond extract (if using), and beat on high speed until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl and beat again as needed to combine.

5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix on low until combined. Dough will be relatively soft. If the dough seems too soft and sticky for rolling, add 1 more Tablespoon of flour.

6. Divide the dough into 2 equal parts. Place each portion onto a piece of lightly floured parchment paper or a lightly floured silicone baking mat. With a lightly floured rolling pin, roll the dough out to about 1/4-inch thickness. Use more flour if the dough seems too sticky. The rolled-out dough can be any shape, as long as it is evenly



1/4-inch thick.

7. Lightly dust one of the rolled-out doughs with flour. Place a piece of parchment on top. (This prevents sticking.) Place the second rolled-out dough on top. Cover with plastic wrap or aluminum foil, then refrigerate for at least 1–2 hours and up to 2 days.

8. Once chilled, preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line 2–3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Carefully remove the top dough piece from the refrigerator. If it's sticking to the bottom, run your hand under it to help remove it. Using a cookie cutter, cut the dough into shapes. Re-roll the remaining dough and continue cutting until all is used. Repeat with second piece of dough. (Note: It doesn't seem like a lot of dough, but you get a lot of cookies from the dough scraps you re-roll.)

9. Arrange cookies on baking sheets about 3 inches apart. Bake for 11–12 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. If your oven has hot spots, rotate the baking sheet halfway through bake time. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before decorating. No need to cover the cookies as they cool.

10. Make the icing: Using a fork, stir the confectioners' sugar, vanilla, corn syrup, and 4.5 Tablespoons (67ml) of water together in a medium bowl. It will be very thick and almost impossible to stir. Switch to a whisk and whisk in 1/2 Tablespoon (8ml) more of water. If you lift the whisk and let the icing drizzle back into the bowl, the ribbon of icing will hold shape for a few seconds before melting back into the icing. That is when you know it's the right consistency and is ready to use. If it's too thick (sometimes it is), whisk in another 1/2 Tablespoon (8ml) of water or a little more until you reach the proper consistency.

If you're tinting the icing another color, stir in the food coloring. You can pour some icing into different bowls if using multiple colors. When tinting icing, use only 1–2 drops at first, stir it in, then add more as needed to reach your desired color. Remember, color darkens as icing dries.

11. Decorate the cookies: You can dip the cookies into the icing or use squeeze bottles or piping bags fitted with piping tips (I usually use Wilton Piping Tip #4). Decorate your cookies as desired. If using the squeeze bottles or piping

tips, I usually outline cookies with icing first, then fill in the middle. If adding sprinkles on top of the icing, add them right after applying icing on your cookie.



12. Let icing dry/set: Feel free to enjoy cookies before icing completely dries. Icing dries in 24 hours. No need to cover the decorated cookies as you wait for the icing to set. If it's helpful, decorate the cookies directly on a baking sheet so you can place the entire baking sheet in the refrigerator to help slightly speed up the icing setting. Once the icing has dried, these cookies are great for gifting or for sending.

Cover and store decorated cookies for up to 5 days at room temperature or up to 10 days in the refrigerator.



doghouse fiction



SNOWMAN

Casey Farkas

Team 7 Barker

Why me? Why did I of all people have to be given the great gift of insomnia. It is so annoying. I have to be awake for work tomorrow by 5:30. And yet, here I am, at 1:06 a.m. staring at my bedroom ceiling. Not to mention, it's been inhumanly cold outside, making it nearly impossible to stay warm. I wake up a lot in the middle of the night, to the cold feeling rushing in through my closed window. It's especially cold now. I wrap myself tighter in my comforter and curl up into a tiny ball. I close my eyes and urge my brain to let me sleep. Just sleep, just sleep, just sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep. I repeat in my head. This is pointless. I glance at my phone screen, realizing it's now 1:42. I stare out my window, admiring the magical glimmer of the snow against the dark and endless starry night sky. It's probably been years since the last time I had played in the snow. I remember the days when I used to enjoy the fun times in the snow so much. I remember making snow angels, snow ball fights, and building snowmen. Building snowmen used to be my favorite part about the snow. I would make them over and over again until I was satisfied with the amount that littered my front yard. I roll onto my back and look up at the roof



of my bedroom once again. What if... No. Absolutely not. I'm a 26 year old grown man who lives alone and it is currently 1:58 in the morning. I'm not going to do it. Unless... The decision seems to have made itself as I crawl out of my warm bed and throw myself at my closet to find my winter coat. I'm going to build a snowman for the first time in...forever it seems. I grab my coat and zip it up before tugging on my winter boots and heading out the door. This feels so oddly freeing. I feel like I'm unlocking another part of my childhood with every sinking step through the snow I take. I start close to my doorway and start rolling the snow. I just roll and roll and roll. I don't have the slightest idea what time it is, but it doesn't

matter because I'm making a snowman. As the first ball gets increasingly bigger my heart soars with joy. Once I have deemed the bottom ball big enough, I roll it to the center of my yard, where just about anyone could see it. My neighbors may think I'm crazy, but I want everyone in this old and boring town to see my amazing snowman. Soon enough, I roll out the second and third parts

of my snowman and I lift them on top of the first one. It doesn't look great, I'm going to be honest, but it fills me with the utmost pride. I run my hand along it, going over the edges to ensure better structure. I quickly run back into my house and grab some snowman accessories. Of course, I don't have the normal stuff since I haven't even entertained the thought of making a snowman in so long, but I make do. I found some raisins, a baseball cap, a random scarf, and a pretzel rod. I rush back outside to my snowman and immediately start dressing him up. I use the raisins as eyes and a smile, I stick the pretzel rod into the center of its face for a nose, I wrap the scarf around its neck, and place the cap on its head. He looks great. All I need now are the

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arms. I scan the expanse of land in front of me and grab the two most similar sticks I can find. I place them where the snowman's arms should go and step back to admire my work. It looks like the most epic thing I have seen in a while. I'm super proud of the work I've done. I give my snowman one more pat on where I'm assuming its shoulder to be, before heading back inside to get any sleep I can before work. I leave my snow boots and coat on my front porch as I reenter my room. I flop onto my bed and pull the covers up to my neck. I reach for my phone to turn it on, but my hands are all clammy with cold. I look at my home screen and the clock tells me it's 3:00. One of my friends wakes up for work around this time. I'm not sure why, but my body is filled with eagerness to let someone know of my great snowman sitting outside. I go to my contacts and message my friend John: You know, sometimes insomnia can be a good thing

I just built a snowman outside because I couldn't sleep lol

I then, finally tired, lay my phone on my bedside table and shut my eyes.

Ugh, what is that? I have literally just fallen asleep, and now I'm awake again. I hear a loud shuffling kind of noise going throughout my house. I can tell it's outside my room, but it sounds like it's getting progressively closer. I sit up, stiffly, rubbing my eyes. I couldn't have been asleep for long, seeing as my alarm hasn't gone off yet. I

blankly stare around my dark room, finally able to make out what the blackened shapes surrounding me are. The shuffling continues, but I am too tired to get out of bed. After making that snowman, I am exhausted. I am lost in my thoughts for another second before being broken out of them by a pained groaning sound. As tired as I am, I guess I should investigate. What if it's an intruder? As the thoughts of what could possibly be making these noises fill my head, I start to panic. I throw my blankets off of me and crawl out of bed, letting my feet land on the cold floor. I walk towards my door slowly, avoiding any loud noises to signal where I am. I tiptoe to the door of my bedroom and lean my ear against it. I listen intently, waiting for something to let me know it's there. I suddenly notice my heavy breathing, and try to take control of it, but fail miserably. I listen for a few more seconds. Nothing. I finally build up as much courage as I can manage, and crack open my door. The door swings on its hinges with a slow creak. I slide out of my bedroom and into my unlit hallway. All the doors along the hall are still closed, and there are no lights on. Just how I had left it. I painstakingly walk down the hall, unsure of what exactly I'm trying to do. As I reach the end of the hallway, I hear the groaning noise again. I suddenly press my back against the wall closest to me and hastily turn my head in every direction trying to decipher where the noise is coming from. I'm looking to the left,

searching for the source of the noise, when my attic's ladder falls open from above my head. I'm assuming whoever or whatever I'm looking for must be up there. I hold on to the unsteady ladder and start to make the steep climb up to the attic. I can barely see, which isn't helping me make it upstairs in a silent manner. I feel chills running through my whole body as I constantly get closer to the top of the ladder. When I'm finally there, I stick my head into the opening of the attic, which is pitch black. I can't make out anything. I look around, trying to give myself a second to let my eyes adjust. Soon enough, I am able to make out the basic parts of my attic. I crawl up and onto the floor of my attic. I'm on my hands and knees at first, before I struggle to stand up through my quivering body. I look around, but nothing seems to be misplaced. Everything looks fine. Maybe I was just hearing things. I guess that's what will happen to you when you lack sleep. I chuckle to myself, thinking about how dumb this whole thing was. That's when I hear the familiar shuffling from before. I tense up, stock still. I feel paralyzed in place as the groaning that has been sounding throughout my house starts up again. As much as I don't want to see what's happening, as much as I don't want to know my fate, I have to. I have to look. I slowly turn my head around, searching the dark. I hesitantly rotate my body until I am facing the other direction. The old wooden floorboards

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whine beneath me as I change position. I stare in front of me until I see it. Red beady eyes, unblinking and staring into mine. They seem evil. The red eyes never leave mine as whatever body contains them moves forward

with the haunting shuffling sound. I can almost make out the tall, round shape of it. I still can't point a finger on it though. The figure shuffles again, close enough for me to view. As it makes its way towards me, I can notice what it is. My snowman. This can't be. What the heck is happening? I must be going crazy. My snowman flashes a toothy grin at me, showing me all the sharp spears popping out of its gums. My survival instincts finally kick in as I dive for the ladder leading out of the attic. I go to grab onto the side, but my hand fumbles and I start sliding

down to the floor. I land with a loud thud. My whole body aches, and my head is spinning. I look up into the attic from my spot on the floor, and see the same red eyes and sharp-toothed smile peering down at me from the top of the ladder. I scramble backwards on the floor, and gain the strength to rip myself off the ground and hurl myself towards my room. As soon as I'm inside

the safety of my room, I slam my door shut. I grab the chair of my desk and stick it under the door handle, making a makeshift lock. I then grab my phone and go to dial 911. I sit against the side of my bed, my legs against my chest



and my eyes wrenched shut. I hold my phone close to me as it rings once, twice, and then stops. I open my eyes to glance at my phone screen, to realize it has died. I reach for my charger and rapidly plug my phone in. Right as I do that, my door handle shakes at high speed. It gets increasingly faster and faster. Soon, there is a deafening banging against the door, as if someone is

knocking too hard. The whole door lurches forward every couple of seconds. With one more blaring thud against the door, it falls down, revealing the snowman with a demonic grin on its face. He looks at me devilishly

before shuffling over to me. I close my eyes tightly. Maybe this is all some messed up nightmare and it's not real. There is no way it's real. My eyes are swiftly opened again, as the snowman picks me up effortlessly and brings me close to his evilly smiling face. He starts stretching his mouth open an unnatural amount. His mouth just keeps getting wider and wider as my body brushes up against the cold snow that makes up his skin. My phone dings, and I look over to look at it. My phone is bright as it displays a text from John. The text reads: Bro, knock that snowman down right now!

Don't you know what happens if you build a snowman at night?

It's a death trap.

Go destroy it right now!

Sam?!

Sam!

Sam!?

SAM!?

My phone constantly dings with new messages as the snowman finally finishes opening his mouth, grins happily, and swallows me whole.

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WILLOW'S SNOW

Patience Nitz

Team 8 Barker

Willow's Snow: A short story about a young robot and her love for snow.

Willow has always loved winter, mainly for the snow. It's always fascinated her. Yes, she knew that snow could damage her due to it being frozen water, but the fact that it would gently float instead of just falling down. Though, she's thought about how to avoid getting snow in her cabling and circuits.

Today was the day to test her theory, since it was snowing outside and it was making blankets of white. She raced to her front door and got her equipment on; a heavy jacket, snow pants, boots, gloves, and a hat. Her face should be fine with her goggles, thankfully. She pulled them

down, and went outside to see the snow falling from above. She smiled, watching the snowflakes land in her gloved hands and melt. Willow ran out to her yard and

let herself fall into a small pile of snow, feeling it surround her as more gradually fell from the sky. After a few moments, she sat back up and tried something that was probably not a good idea; she stuck her tongue out to catch a snowflake.

She felt something cold on it for a second before it was just gone. Was... was that the snowflake? It seemed fine, even if it was just frozen water. She shrugged at the thought and stood back up to go to a different spot in her yard to relax



in. After what felt like a good hour or two, Willow went back inside and took off her equipment, now starting to feel that chill from the weather. Her

creator — or as she usually called them, her mother — was doing something in the kitchen. She walked over to her mother and tapped their shoulder, getting their attention. “Oh, there you are, my little tree. I was wondering where you wandered off to,” they said, giving Willow a pat on the head as they put her goggles back up.

“I was outside!” Willow exclaimed with a smile. “Outside?” her mother parroted with a tilt of her head. Willow nodded.

“Yep! But before you say anything I was fully dressed in snow attire so nothing got into my circuitry,” she said, leaning against a counter as her mother sighed out of relief. “Good, I’m glad nothing went wrong,” they said, handing Willow a mug with her favorite wintertime drink. “Hot copper!” Willow ex-

claimed as she took a sip. “I’m glad you had fun,” her mother said, drinking some coffee. “I am too,” Willow replied as she looked out the window, already excited for the next snowfall.

BULLDOG HAPPENINGS!



Foreign Language Club students learned to make upside down pineapple cupcakes for their



Pumpkin Rollin'

The National Junior Honor Society made nearly 450 pumpkin rolls (100 more than expected) in just two days to help raise fundraiser for the Senior Citizen Prom. Way to go!

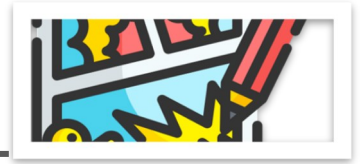




UGLY SWEATERS!



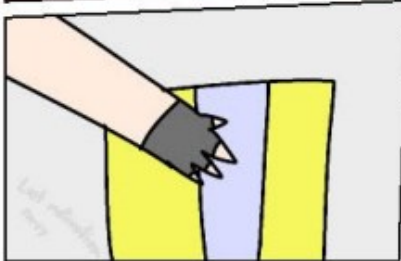
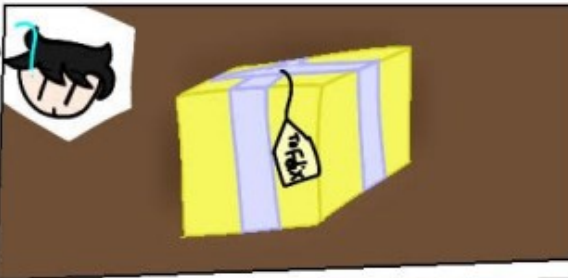
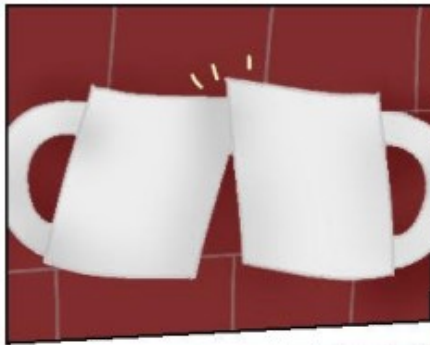
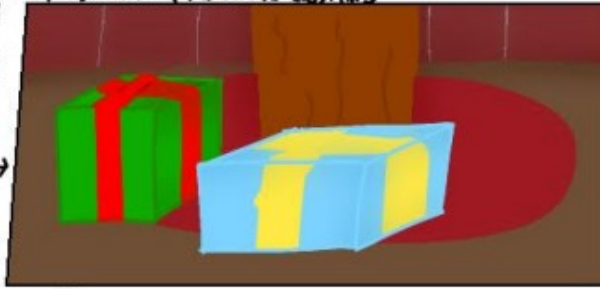
Bulldog Comic



By Patience Nitz
Team 8 Barker



Luci: I apologize for the lack of well everything



Norah's Corner



Digital illustrations all designed by Norah Lipsky using Procreate.

Letter from the Advisor

Season's Greetings! Wishing you joyful moments with your loved ones and a delightful blend of tradition and merriment. As we step into the winter of 2023-2024, let's heed the words of John Boswell, who once remarked, "Winter, a lingering season, is a moment to gather golden memories, embark upon a sentimental journey, and relish every idle hour." Take this holiday season and the ensuing winter months to cherish precious moments with family and friends, and don't forget to carve out time for yourself to reconnect with what and who matters most.



The *Bulldog Bark* continues to echo the voices of students at Northern Lehigh, and we invite you to join the pack! Whether you contribute to a single issue or more, your input helps represent all of us. If you have article ideas or an interest in writing, drop by the TIS office (across from the library) or shoot me an email at bdunham@nlsd.org. Calling all talented artists—consider featuring your artwork; we have ample space to showcase your skills!

A special acknowledgment to the 2023-2024 *Bulldog Bark* team for crafting yet another fantastic edition:

Ethan Binder, Casey Farkas, Lucas Fenstermaker, Norah Lipsky, Reese Mankos, Patience Nitz, Emma Stein, and Ella Van Norman

Wishing you all a joyful holiday season and a well-deserved break.

-Ms. Dunham