

The Spotlight

December 2021

Vol. 70 Issue 3



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Song Of The Month!

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Christmas Light Displays You Won't Want To Miss

By Claire Wiggernhorn

With the holidays approaching, you may wonder where is the best place to see Northeast Ohio lit up.

During the winter, you may not think of going to the zoo, but the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is hosting Wild Winter Lights, presented by NOPEC. Between November 16th and December 23rd, guests are invited to walk or drive through the zoo to see the 50 foot Christmas tree, ice carvings, and live music. With over 1 million lights, this event will sell out fast, so make sure to order your tickets on the zoo website!

Seeing downtown Cleveland during the winter will sure warm your heart, especially when you see Cleveland Public Square Holiday Lights. These Hallmark-worthy picture ops are a great way to see downtown in all of its beauty. From November 27th throughout the holiday season from 1-7:30, you can see the lights in all their glory.

Back again, Magic of Lights at Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds is sure to be on every holiday lover's bucket list. Bring your pup for the show of

over 1 million lights, the newest LED light technology, and 200 foot light tunnel. This option is great for large families; with it being a drive thru event, you pay by the car. If you order your tickets by December 10th, tickets are only \$21 per car!

Is National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation your favorite holiday movie? If so, a trip out to Wadsworth may be right for you. At 173 Duane Lane, Wadsworth, OH, the 'Griswold House' is lit nightly with over 2 miles of lights. Starting November 26th until January 1st, this free attraction can get quite the crowd, so plan accordingly.

Just in North Ridgeville, you can stop by 34907 Cambridge Drive for a site to remember. With well over 50,000 lights, this house sure does light up the neighborhood. From dusk to 10 pm on weekdays and dusk to 11pm on weekends, this house is right around the corner from your home.

Staying in the community, you can stop by the Village Green on the corner of Columbia Road and Water Street in Olmsted Falls to watch the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony!



Christmas Activities: Overrated or Underrated?

By Katie Cleary and Hadley Allen

Christmas is often referred to as The Most Wonderful Time of the Year, but this is not always the case. Sometimes the festivity of this holiday season blinds us to the fact that what we're doing is mediocre at best. We have set out to acquire a list of the most popular winter activities to decide once and for all if they are overrated or underrated.

Making Amusing Gingerbread Cookies

This might seem childish to some, but last year we had a whole night dedicated to making fun gingerbread cookies, and it was so much more fun than you might have thought. If you really want to mix things up, you could just pick out random cookie cutters and try to make them festive. In our experience, this resulted in foot-shaped Christmas cookies. We aren't sure what was more concerning: the fact that we had -and made- foot cookies, or the fact that we gave them to the police station afterward as a gift of gratitude. Definitely Underrated.

Snowball Fights

This was a must-add to the list because these are the absolute worst. It's a very classic Christmas/winter activity that is just awful. Why would you want ice and snow hitting your face or going down your shirt? This snow will go everywhere and you're going to be so cold by the first minute into this. This might be the most overrated holiday or winter time activity of all time.

Walking Around, Admiring Christmas Lights

This one depends on who you go with. If you go with someone who is going to complain about how cold it is or how they can't feel their feet and let it ruin the night, then this sucks. But if you're going with someone who can laugh off the numb fingers and toes, then this is great. Walking around your own neighborhood just chatting and looking at the Christmas lights is such a

nice, relaxing activity. This is definitely an underrated activity.

Christmas Camping

This was something we didn't even know was a thing until we were doing some research for this article, and we have decided that this is a must-do. Apparently, you camp out under the Christmas tree with all of the lights on, watch holiday movies, and drink hot cocoa. This sounds like the cutest idea that we think is completely underrated, considering we didn't even know about it.

Listening to Taylor Swift's Christmas Single "Christmas Tree Farm" by Taylor Swift, incredibly underrated.

White Elephant Gift Exchange

This is certainly the most stressful activity on this list. Nothing is more stress-provoking than having to buy a gift and hope it's either funny or functional enough to be wanted. Then there is that awkward moment when people don't want your gift and no one fights over it. Or, the person who gets it just isn't happy and wants to trade immediately. These gift exchanges are certainly overrated.



Crumbl Cookies: Are They Worth The Hype?

By Audrey Helms

Earlier this year, Crumbl Cookies became a viral phenomenon on TikTok and people were driving hours to just get a taste. Now with the new location in Avon that opened on October 22nd, the so-called "best" cookies are only twenty minutes away. I decided that it was time to give them a try and see if the cookies are worth the hype.

Every Sunday on their social media, Crumbl announces the flavors of the week. They always have Milk Chocolate Chip, Chilled Sugar Cookie, and four to five additional flavors. When I visited, the additional flavors offered were

Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Muffin, Midnight Mint, Peanut Butter ft. Muddy Buddies, and Key Lime Pie. I spent \$11.50 to purchase the 4-Pack Box with the classic Milk Chocolate Chip, chilled Sugar Cookie, Key Lime Pie, and Midnight Mint.

Although a little expensive for just a cookie, the results were huge. After ordering from the app, I texted them when I was here and my cookies were ready within two minutes. You can also order them in-store and with the in-store kiosks. Upon receiving my order,

the cookies were much larger than expected. They were huge!

Milk Chocolate Chip: 4/5 The Milk Chocolate Chip was a soft and chewy simple chocolate chip cookie. Although it was simple, it was delicious. If you like a crispy cookie, then this wouldn't be for you. But if you're like me, this is the perfect soft and chewy cookie consistency.

Chilled Sugar Cookie: 2/5 The Chilled Sugar Cookie was a disappointment, to say the least. The cookie part was a basic vanilla base with almond-flavored icing on top. The icing was unexpected; it was almond flavor rather than vanilla, and there was far too much almond extract inside. Rather than a teaspoon per batch, it tasted like a teaspoon per bite. Frankly, if there was less almond flavoring the cookie would be good, but there was just too much.

Key Lime Pie: 5/5 The Key Lime Pie was a graham cracker cookie base with lime pie filling, topped with a dollop of whipped cream and a slice of fresh lime. This one was perfect. The texture of the pie filling was very creamy and not too sweet with the perfect hint of lime.

Midnight Mint: 4.5/5 The Midnight Mint was a chocolate cookie, like a brownie with both chocolate chips and mint chips inside. It was served warm. This one was very good! I liked that it was more like a brownie rather than a cookie. The mint chips were also a nice touch because they didn't overpower the chocolate in the brownie. It was the perfect amount of mint.

Crumbl Cookies would be a great holiday gift, whether it is a gift card or some cookies from that week. There is something for everyone! You can even purchase gift wrap when you order online. Overall, everything depends on taste buds and the flavors of the week, so go and try some Crumbl Cookies today and see if you agree with me!

Crumbl Cookies
1813 Nagel Rd Suite 300 Avon, OH 44011



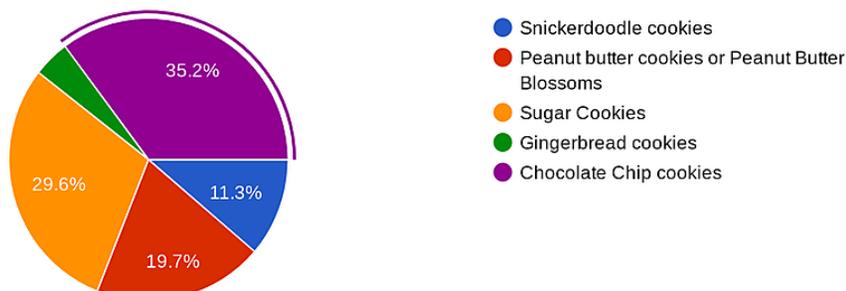
The Best and Worst Cookies According to OFHS

By Abby Guthrie

It's the time of year for fun winter activities, like baking Christmas cookies! This year I decided to make a survey, comparing the types of cookies I thought were the most popular. I asked students to choose their favorite cookie and defend their choices. I chose five different types of cookies: chocolate chip, gingerbread, snickerdoodle, peanut butter (or peanut butter blossom), and sugar cookies, along with a spot for any cookies that were not included in the survey. I decided to make a pie chart within the survey responses and chocolate chip cookies took the lead with 35.2% of the votes.

Junior Ian White confidently states that, "Chocolate chip cookies will forever be the best kind of cookie. There is literally no going wrong with a good ol' chocolate chip." Second place had sugar cookies at 29.6%. Senior Holly Robinson defends sugar cookies as being easy to decorate and delicious: "Sugar cookies are a classic, and they are typically frosted with royal icing. Some people are really good at decorating them!" Third place was peanut butter cookies at 19.7%. Fourth place was snickerdoodles at 11.3%. And lastly was gingerbread cookies with 4.3%.

Best Christmas cookies?
71 responses



Teacher Traditions

By Nora Barnard & Sam Gaba

When you feel the cool chill in the air, you know the holiday season is approaching quickly. Everybody has traditions, from finding the pickle on the Christmas tree to traditional Hanukkah foods. Here at OFHS, we have traditions too. We asked the teachers to share their favorite holiday traditions with us.

With a heartfelt tradition shared from the history department, Mr. Blake's family shows a perfect example of what Christmas truly means: a time to share with others out of the kindness of one's heart. He says, "Since Mrs. Blake and I live in Oberlin, and there's a college there with an international music conservatory, we have a tradition of inviting to Thanksgiving dinner a student (or students) who can't go home for the holiday because it's too far. For one student from Armenia, to whom we became particularly close, we ended up standing in for his parents at graduation." I am so glad there are people in the world like Mr. Blake and his family, who are willing to welcome others into their home if they have nowhere else to go.

Another very sweet tradition was Ms. Flanigan's from the science department. She said, "My favorite holiday tradition is Christmas dinner with my mom. Since I grew up with divorced parents, we always celebrated the holidays on our own schedule, in our own way. We usually go out to dinner a couple of days before Christmas and then go back to her house to exchange gifts. My favorite part is that we skip the traditional holiday food and instead try a new restaurant or type of food every year. It's a lot of fun and I look forward to it every year!" Being able to spend the holidays with loved ones is such a special thing.

Mr. Harbison, on the other hand, is all about the food. He first shared his Thanksgiving traditions. Even though Thanksgiving is over, it truly is a gift to read all about his extensive turkey cooking process: "My favorite Thanksgiving tradition is to cook turkeys in three different ways. First, I will deep-fry a turkey in peanut oil. This one usually serves as my appetizer. I will also smoke a turkey in my Traeger, which will also yield a most amazing smoked gravy. Lastly, I will cook a traditional oven-roasted bird to serve to my older, less adventurous relatives. From this turkey, I will make a turkey and rice soup, using pretty much everything from this bird but its gobble. At night, we watch the movie *Freebirds*, one of my son's favorite movies about a turkey that travels in a time machine back to the first Thanksgiving." After reading that, I could go for some turkey myself! Since this is the December edition, Mr. Harbison graciously shared his Christmas traditions with us:

"On Christmas morning, we always start with the stockings. My wife and I ensure that each stocking has three bizarre gifts, ranging from a can of pickled beets to a Shamwow. We often listen to Johnny Cash's Christmas album until he sings that song about 'his daddy killing a squirrel.' After stockings, we take a break and have cinnamon rolls before opening up our presents. I could actually go for a cinnamon roll right now, come to think of it."

From the math department, Mr. Vas shared how his very favorite holiday tradition switched from having the risk of dysentery to just focusing on the family. I'm not sure about you, but I would take family over dysentery any day! Mr. Vas said, "My favorite holiday tradition used to be taking the family out to a tree farm and cutting down our own Christmas tree. Perhaps it's because it helped me connect with my pioneer roots, but that also comes with dysentery so the romanticism of that tradition has worn off. Now, it's all about the food and the family. Mrs. Vas makes enough for 40 people. We only have 5 in the house, so I eat leftovers for a month."

Mrs. Budd, the band director, shared her list of holiday traditions as well: "As a kid, we always went to Tower City to see the beautiful decorations. My other fun traditions include setting up my house for Christmas as early as possible, listening to Holiday music like it's my job, driving around to see all of the holiday lights, playing Sleigh Ride!!!!, watching holiday movies as a family on Christmas Eve, spending the holiday dinner with my family, window shopping, watching the snow fall, and drinking mint chocolate hot cocoa."

Family traditions often play a large role in the holiday season, and by sharing such a private side of their lives with us, these teachers have made an emotional appeal to us all. Since the holiday season is about giving, gratitude, and kindness, we ask you to treat your teachers with respect and decency. Yes, school is difficult, especially when midterms are just around the corner, but teachers are people too.



Media Center Renovations: Part 2

By Samantha Poore

For those unaware, the media center is facing a makeover that should be completed by the start of 2022! Why? Well, it's no secret that the media center tends to be quite deserted these days, even though it underwent construction/remodeling in 2018. Therefore, the goal of this renovation is to encourage students to take advantage of the space by making it more welcoming and less bland. The biggest changes being made include themed fish bowls, an electric fireplace, and an abundance of student artwork that will be put on display. The possibility of a hot cocoa bar lingers as well but has yet to be finalized. To touch on a few of these upgrades, each fishbowl (study room) has been given its own unique theme: beach vibes and tides, exotic jungle(s), and world travel. In addition, the electric fireplace will sit where the two dusty bookcases

of forgotten books once stood. To complete the makeover, artwork will occupy the remaining wall space, concluding this homey style.



Katie's Cozy Corner

By Katie Cleary

Hello folks! This edition of Katie's Cozy Corner is going to feature some very homey classics to read while drinking this wonderful hot cocoa recipe.

A Wrinkle in Time- Madeleine L'Engle
You may or may not have read this one in school, but I'll recap it anyway. This book is about Meg and her younger brother Charles Wallace as they travel through time and space with the help of three quirky witches to save their father, a brilliant scientist, from evil. This little book will charm you with its very childlike charisma and light plot. This book has also been made into a movie (that I have, admittedly, not watched). I don't know about the movie, but the book is really good!

Peter Pan- J.M. Barrie
I feel like everyone already knows about this one, but if you don't, this story is about the Darling children and their fantastical journey through Neverland with Peter Pan. They get to join Peter Pan and his lost boys in their battle against Captain Hook. This book was also made into a movie, which just so happens to be my favorite Disney movie. It's an amazing Disney classic with a really beautiful soundtrack. The book is just as beautiful, bringing the familiar movie along with some unfamiliar plots exclusive to the book.

A Christmas Carol- Charles Dickens
I just had to put this on here despite the fact that I know almost all of you that are reading this hated this book in eighth grade. It is the Christmas season now, which means this book is back in. I know I don't need

to provide a short synopsis, but this book is about Scrooge Marley, a greedy man, finding the true meaning of Christmas while he travels through time. I highly recommend seeing this show at Playhouse Square as well.

Homemade Hot Chocolate Recipe- celebratingsweets.com

4 cups milk (preferably whole or 2%)
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
¼ cup granulated sugar
½ cup bittersweet or semisweet chocolate chips or chopped chocolate bar
¼ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

-Place the milk, sugar, and cocoa powder in a small saucepan

-Whisk constantly over medium heat until warm and not boiling

-When warm, add chocolate chips and whisk until they've melted

-Then whisk in the vanilla extract and pour into a cup

-Add any toppings you want

Enjoy!



Upcoming Winter Sports

By Ellie Phillips

Q1- What are you most looking forward to this season?

Q2- What game are you looking most forward to this season?

Q3- Who do you think is going to be your MVP this season?

Girls Basketball

The lady basketballers have a very tight-knit team and are ready for the competition of this season. Go out and support!

Paige Kohler Q1- "I'm looking forward to our competitive schedule and, of course, our trip to Arizona!"

Lauren Noernberg Q2- "Hmm that's a tough one, but I would say playing SJA at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse because it's a change of venue and the Cavs play before us!"

Sara Glover Q3- "Paige Kohler because she knows all the words to the *Pitch Perfect* soundtrack!"

Boys Basketball

Our boys basketball team is ready to dominate the conference this season. Everyone should go to the games to cheer on our boys!

Tyler Woods Q1- "The thing I'm most looking forward to is playing and working with my teammates for a great season."

Aaron Katitus Q2- "Practicing hard every day to prepare for a district championship."

Luke Dieckman Q3- "Definitely Charlie Ciolek, I think he will because he is one of the best basketball players I know. He's capable of doing things on the court that a lot of other people can't, and he's a great athlete with a ton of experience."

Wrestling

The wrestlers this year are looking forward to a season full of dubs and excitement. People should go watch them destroy!

Nathan Urry Q1- "Wrestling with my friends for the last time"

Blake Theriot Q2- "The Findlay tournament because it's the first one of the year."

Zach Johnson Q3- "Probably Nate Urry."

Girls Swim and Dive

This year the girls are ready to swim their way to victory. Let's go and support our lady bulldogs!

Lillie Katsaras Q1- "I'm excited for the meets to start! They are always very energetic and it will be even better this year because we can have spectators!"

Sarah Tomasch Q2- "Ummm I guess I'm excited to build our team spirit and make my senior season the best one yet!"

Allison White Q3- "It's me because I'm the best diver in the school ;)" *only girl diver*

Boys Swim and Dive

The boys are ready to swim and dive to be the SWC conference champs. Everybody should show their support!

Quinn Kennedy Q1- "I'm looking forward to bettering my scores and enjoying my senior season."

Sam Munoz. Q2- "I guess the Avon meet; they're always good competition."

Gymnastics

Our ladies are so ready to flip and fly their way to the podium. Everyone should support our girls!
Abby Schwecke Q1- "Senior night and team



bonding "

Erin Hofmann Q2- "Getting to know everyone and getting back to a normal competition season"

Carley Abbott Q3- "Mia Peltz because she's my queen."

Hockey

The boys are ready to skate their way to conference champs. We should all go out and root for OF!

Trevor Patton Q1- "I'm looking forward to playing in the tougher division and strengthening the bonds with my brothers."

Carter Zakel Q2- "100% Amherst."

Thomas Terrell Q3- "Trevor Patton, if he can stay out of trouble. He's a goon on and off the ice. He might lead the team in goals and penalty minutes."



A Look Into Judaism and Hanukkah Celebrations

By Hadley Allen

With the holiday season approaching, everyone is busy buying gifts, baking cookies, and hanging up wreaths. For many, the anticipation of Christmas is what's causing their festivity. However, Christmas is not the only holiday that takes place this time of year. Another is Hanukkah, an 8-day celebration in the Jewish faith that takes place most often between late November and early December. To gain some information on this unique holiday, I reached out to Rachel Newman, a junior and an active member of the OFHS student body. She was very enthusiastic and helpful when giving me an inside look into what it is like to practice Judaism, especially during this religious celebration.

Q1: What is Hanukkah, and what part does it play in your religion?

A1: Hanukkah is a holiday commemorating the Maccabees' victory over the Greeks and the restoration of the Second Temple. The Greeks prohibited the Jews from practicing their religion and made the Second

Temple a Greek temple. The Maccabees fought and eventually forced the Greeks out of Israel. They cleaned out the temple of anything impure when they found there was only enough pure oil to last for one night to keep the Eternal Flame lit. Miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days, which gave time to obtain more pure oil and keep the flame lit. That's why Hanukkah lasts for eight days.

Now religiously, it is a minor holiday. However, because it overlaps with the Christmas season, it has become one of the most celebrated Jewish holidays in recent times.

Q2: What are some of your favorite traditions and activities surrounding this holiday?

A2: "Jews are no stranger to traditions. (Trust me, I know!) Hanukkah's main tradition is lighting the Hanukkah menorah. There are nine spots on the menorah. One is for the Shamash which is the helper candle and the rest are for the candles that increase with the days of Hanukkah.

Interview continued on next page

(continued from previous page)

We say two blessings every night for the candles and for the miracle of Hanukkah. On the first night only, we sing a prayer thanking GOD for getting us to the special moment. Singing is also very common. In our house, we sing the Dreidel Song and "Hanukkah O Hanukkah" after we light the menorah. Then, we open presents. (Yes, we get presents for eight nights!)

It's not a Jewish holiday without good food, and Hanukkah has some of the best. We eat a lot of fried food to commemorate the oil. Latkes (which are my favorite) are potato pancakes. You can eat them with sour cream, applesauce, or ketchup. Sufganiyot are also eaten and they are jelly/custard donuts topped with powdered sugar. There's also Hanukkah gelt which are chocolate coins.

Of course, I cannot forget dreidels. They are spinning tops with four Hebrew letters on them: Nun, Gimmel, Hey, and Shin. There's a phrase associated with the letters. "Nes Gadol Haya Sham," which means, "a great miracle happened there." There's a game that is also played with dreidels that commemorates how the Jews hid their practicing of the Torah."

Q3: What part of this 8-day celebration do you and your family most look forward to?

A3: "Every night, my family lights the menorah, which is always something I look forward to. It's something that brings my family together. Jewish holidays are all about spending time with your loved ones and Hanukkah is no exception. However, I am an honest person so I love getting presents for eight days."

Q4: You've shared that you recently visited Israel. What was it like to experience a place that holds such important ties to your faith?

A4: "This summer, I did go to Israel and it was so incredible. There is not one word I can use to describe how amazing it was. Israel holds a special place in my faith and it was wonderful to

experience it with my camp friends. Seeing how Israel has evolved made it connect with me way more. I definitely experienced a deep connection with the land and it made me sit down and learn more about my faith. It was truly a memorable experience that I believe every Jew should have."

Q5: Is there anything else about your faith and its traditions that you'd like to share or elaborate on?

A5: "Being Jewish is one of the most important things in my life and it makes me so happy to know others want to learn more about it. One of the 613 mitzvahs we have is to educate people. When people want to learn, we teach them and that is my goal with this. I'm so happy people want to learn about Hanukkah. I'm so glad I got to do this."

I'm hopeful that this Q&A helped some learn more about a faith that is different from what they're familiar with, and I definitely learned a lot as well! I'd like to say a huge thank you to Rachel for the in-depth perspective on her faith!



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