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Local Christmas house brings students cheer

Students find solace in the light display during a hectic finals season

Emily Jolly

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On a small street just off 9th Avenue, colorful lights dance across a rooftop, lighting up the night sky and drawing the eyes of passersby.

This very sight pulled Ursinus students Chloe Sheraden and Skye Gailing down the little street on their way home from Thanksgiving break last year.

“We saw their really bright Christmas lights and decorations and decided to check it out” said Sheraden.

What they found was a house and yard completely covered in Christmas decorations and flashing lights, with a sign out on the curb telling visitors to tune to radio station 92.3. The station played Christmas music while the lights flashed in correspondence with the music.

The house belongs to Jean and

Kimberly Krack, a couple who have lived in Collegeville since 1998. Jean Krack, the architect of the light display, has been fascinated with these decorated houses since childhood. When the couple lived in the San Francisco Bay area raising their two sons, he inspired a challenge for the best light display among his neighbors, with the entire cul-de-sac lighting up the neighborhood.

For the moving lights, Jean Krack was inspired by a light show in the tunnel between terminals B and C at the Chicago O’Hare Airport.

“As I was walking down the stairway to the tunnel I first heard this really interesting music then as I got to the bottom I saw how the entire tunnel had all these lights that motioned from one end to the other. The idea struck me that maybe we could figure out how to do that with the street lights,” said Krack.



Photo courtesy of Sydney Cope

Jean and Kimberly Krack’s festive lights display is referred to as the Christmas house by some students.

While the streetlight idea did not pan out, Krack now uses that same concept in the light show at his house. Through his inquiries into such displays, he was put in contact with a company in

Kansas City that does commercial displays, and were interested in offering their equipment for residential displays.

Krack explains that in 2002 he “bought several of their con-

trollers, radio transmitter[s] and some pre-programmed songs. Back then I also had three big trees [now removed] in the front

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Photo courtesy of Robert Varney

Sophomore service fellow Nyrobi Barnes attends the Giving Tree.

UCARE Giving Tree brings joy and gifts to local children

Courtney DuChene

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Ursinus students helped provide Christmas gifts for children in the ACLAMO Family Center after-school program during the annual Giving Tree gift drive the college held last week. The gifts, which are purchased by Ursinus students based on tags that give the child’s name and age, are given to the children during an on-campus holiday party that occurred on Saturday Dec. 2.

ACLAMO, which stands for Accion Communal Latinoamericana de Montgomery County, is a nonprofit that provides educational programs and social services

for families in Norristown PA. Turek spoke about the mission of ACLAMO and their after-school program. She said, “ACLAMO Family Center... provides educational programs, social services, and health access to members of the community. The children at ALCAMO’s after-school program range in age from 5 to 14 years old (kindergarten through 8th grade). The majority of families who participate in the program have moved to this area from Latin America, and their primary language spoken at home is Spanish.”

According to Katie Turek, the assistant director of UCARE, the Giving Tree tradition began in

2010.

“I honestly do not know where the idea initially came from,” she said, “but I imagine it was a combination of student initiative and community interest in partnering [with] the program. Ursinus students have volunteered as tutors and mentors with the ACLAMO after-school program for many years, and this project is one way we have been able to show our appreciation and support of the program in a different way.”

Setting up the Giving Tree and sending out emails to notify stu-

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yard and basically wrapped red, green, blue and white mini-lights in groups of four up each of those trees. Four colors and four groups created the 16 channels which is what the controllers are based on. So that was the start of it all.”

From there, Krack built up his collection of displays, with fighting snowmen, a train, and leaping arches. Around 2006, his neighbor asked to connect his lights as well, and now combined they have about 100,000 lights.

“Our biggest nuisance is squirrels. They will eat through the wires if they are in their normal migration path. Fortunately for me, with the removal of the three trees, I don’t have the issue anymore. [My neighbor] still has to keep his lights up off the ground a bit though,” said Krack.

Said Gailing, “I love the technical masterpiece that is the Christmas house. I love lighting design, so seeing someone coordinate lighting with music is super exciting.”

Since their first visit, Sheraden, Gailing, and friends

dubbed it the “Christmas house” and visit often.

“Last year, I went pretty frequently during finals week” said Gailing.

After enjoying their excursions to the house last year, both were excited for the reopening this year, and Sheraden even went straight to the house before stopping by her dorm when she returned to campus after Thanksgiving break.

Krack starts working on setting up the display in October, and works on the display every weekend, Veteran’s day, and the day after Thanksgiving, which is when it opens. The display runs through Jan. 1.

According to Sheraden, she goes “about 2-3 times a week, depend[ing] on mood and scheduling. I usually try to go with friends, but I am a lot busier than last year, so I have been going less. I always try to bring people who need a boost or those who haven’t seen it yet, so the times a week I go definitely vary.”

Both Sheraden and Gailing highly suggest visiting the house for a nice break during the stress of the final weeks of classes and

to bring some Christmas joy.

“I make sure everyone knows about the house and [should] go to it if they need relief from the stressors of college” said Gailing.

When approached for comment on the popularity of the house amongst some Ursinus students, owners of the house Jean and Kimberly Krack were delighted.

“We are thrilled that you and fellow students enjoy the display. I never considered that it could be a respite during those final grueling weeks before Christmas break,” said Kimberly Krack.

For those interested in visiting the display, Jean Krack mentions that “the lights run from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm. If it is raining or just recently rained, the show might not be on due to [the fact that] all that electric and water don’t mix and circuits get blown.”

He added, “Be kind and don’t play the music loud. Glen Farms is a quarter circle so people do not need to turn around in our neighbor’s driveways.”

Said Gailing, “I definitely suggest others should go. It’s such a magical site so close to campus!”

Sharing the story of the miracle of Chanukkah

Hillel student president, Jonathan Guba, retells the miraculous story of the Maccabees and Jewish dedication

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This week, Grizzly writer Johnathan Myers sat down with Jonathan Guba ‘19, president of Hillel, the organization dedicated to Jewish life on campus, in order to hear the story of Chanukkah. Chanukkah, which pays tribute to a miracle that occurred in 165 BCE, is a Rabbinic holiday because, according to myjewishlearning.com, the events that it commemorates occurred after the period of the Hebrew Bible. The story of the Maccabees, therefore, is not recorded in the Torah. It is recorded in the Catholic Bible, but the practice of Chanukkah as

a Jewish tradition was practiced before its recording. According to Religious Studies scholar Dr. Steven H. Werlin, the Chanukkah story was frequently passed down by oral tradition. It was told by parents and grandparents to children and the details would change slightly with each telling. In the spirit of that oral tradition, Guba retold the story for the Grizzly. Below is a direct transcript of Guba telling the story, edited lightly for clarity.

The story of Chanukkah [begins] a couple thousand years ago. There were a bunch of people, the Israelites, that were living [in Judea which was a

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Photo courtesy of Ursinus Communications

Wreaths adorn veterans’ graves in Arlington National Cemetery.

Alumni invited to wreath laying at Arlington National Cemetery

The event, held by the National Council in conjunction with Wreaths Across America, honors veterans

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The Ursinus College National Council is inviting alumni to participate in National Wreaths Across America day by laying wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery on Saturday, Dec. 16 as part of their Bears Give Back initiative.

This is the first time the National Council will participate in the annual wreath laying

event held by Wreaths Across America. The charity provides volunteers with wreaths to lay across the gravestones of veterans. This year, the D.C. chapter is holding the wreath laying at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, where over 400,000 soldiers and families lay at rest. All wreaths have been donated to the organization from sponsors worldwide. Since Arlington National Cemetery is a private location, the laurels

will be protected from any vandalism from the outside. The wreath laying’s purpose is to commemorate, give back to, and include all fallen veterans. Therefore, the Wreaths Across America association asks each person participating to pause and thank the veteran they stand over.

On the day of the event, a truck will enter the site with all

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the wreaths enclosed inside it. There will then be a ceremony to commemorate the fallen at 8:15 a.m. in front of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, close to Arlington's main gates. This will consist of a brief reflection on why the volunteers are there, what they hope to accomplish, and how to go about the process of laying the wreaths on the graves. Once the speeches are over, participants will proceed to the multiple truckloads of wreaths and begin decorating the cemetery with the wreaths.

"It's a large endeavor with thousands of wreaths and thousands of people."

—Lisa Bogdanski
Associate Directors of Alumni
Relations

Lisa Bogdanski, Associate Director of Alumni Relations and event coordinator, strongly encourages alumni to participate in both the event and the National Council. She said, "[Council members] are champions and local spokespersons for Ursinus College. They serve as hosts at events that build greater understanding and appreciation for the college and they help to develop a culture of giving."

She also described how the wreath-laying event fulfills the mission of the college's national council. She said, "The National Council is all about

volunteering and giving back, so this day will provide a lot of success for the committee. It's a large endeavor with thousands of wreaths and thousands of people."

Bogdanski went on to explain how Bobby Fong had envisioned the council. She said, "A priority for former president Bobby Fong was to engage alumni and parents in the life of the college. To achieve this goal, President Fong asked Senior Vice President for Advancement Jill Marsteller and her Advancement staff to establish the Ursinus College National Council."

The council was founded in 2012 and it has nine sectors located in California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The Council's Regional Club in Washington D.C., will participate in National Wreaths Across America Day.

The National Council is eager to be a part of this event, and anyone who wishes to donate or participate is strongly encouraged to do so. For any questions regarding the Council, contact Lisa Bogdanski at ucalumni@ursinus.edu. To ask Wreaths Across America for more information, contact Wayne Hanson, the Location Coordinator, at (877) 385-9504 or check out their website at www.wreathscrossamerica.org.

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dents is managed by the UCARE Service Fellows. Turek described the process of setting up for the event. "The tree is decorated with paper ornaments, each listing the name and age of a child . . . Ursinus students, faculty, and staff are welcome to come to UCARE and sign out one or more ornaments from the tree. They are asked to return each ornament with a wrapped gift for that child. The children receive their gifts at an on-campus holiday party that takes place in early December."

Turek explained how the Giving Tree process is different from the other volunteer opportunities that connect Ursinus with ACLAMO.

She said, "The process of donating to the Giving Tree is dif-

ferent from the other in-kind donation drives we usually coordinate (such as food drives, clothing drives, etc.), because each donor is 'matched' with an individual child and is given that child's first name and age. The care that goes into picking out a special toy for a child brings about a feeling of connection, even if you may never meet them in person."

Turek also said, "Personally, I appreciate the Giving Tree because it is an annual reminder of the generosity of the people around us and of what can be accomplished when many people come together for a cause. The Giving Tree is a unique way for college students and other members of the Ursinus community to connect with children and families in the area."



Photo courtesy of Suzanne Angermeier

Hillel house, the center of Jewish life on campus, will host candle lightings for Chanukkuah.

Chanukkah continued from pg. 2

part of the Ptolemaic Empire]. [Ruler of the Seleucid Empire] Antiochus III [conquered the Judean region of the Ptolemaic Empire]. Antiochus III followed the Greek / Hellenistic religion, and at first [Jewish traditions were respected, but then his son, Antiochus IV] . . . decided that [this] was heresy, and went into ancient Israel to stop [them] and implement his own religion. When he got there, he desecrated the temple [and] he killed the people who were openly practicing Judaism. Eventually, it [became] sort of an ultimatum that you converted to the Hellenistic traditions, or you were killed. A bunch of ancient Israelites went into the mountains and formed a resistance led by the Maccabees,

headed by Judah Maccabee and his father Mathias Maccabee. These Maccabees formed a small rebellion, and in the first miracle of Chanukkah, beat back the massive army of the Greco-Syrians.

After a long war of mostly guerilla tactics, the Maccabees came out as the victors of the conflicts, and were able to go back to the temple. When they got back, they found that the temple was desecrated. The Greco-Syrians had brought unkosher animals, pigs, through the temple, and had destroyed the vials of oil that were used to light the Menorah, the eternal fire that's supposed to signify God's presence. When they [searched] the temple, they found that there was only [one] vial of this sacred oil left, which was only enough for one day of light. They were

out of options. They lit the Menorah for that one day. The process of refining more oil was an eight-day long process [involving] finding the olives [and] distilling them, to make [the sacred] oil. So, they [began the] refining process, and [while undergoing that process] the oil that they found in the temple [miraculously] lasted for the entirety of the eight days, which is why Chanukkah is eight days long . . . and [why] the word Chanukkah means dedication."

Ursinus Hillel will be decorating the Hillel House (33 6th Ave) for Chanukkah and will be holding candle lightings at the Hillel house during the days, December 12-15, of Chanukkah that fall within the semester. Students who are interested in participating can contact joguba@ursinus.edu.

Emily Thomas, the Ursinus student site coordinator for ACLAMO, spoke about the experience of purchasing gifts and attending the holiday party. "I have bought presents both last and this year for particular kids I work with [and] any extra kids that needed them . . . [and] I have been to two ACLAMO Christmas parties! This year, along with Jamir Mallory, [the student cite coordinator for America Reads], and Jess Vadaketh, [another student site coordinator for ACLAMO] [I] was the event coordinator [for the Christmas party]. The experience of this party is one of the most important events for not only the kids but for the volunteers who work with these kids. They come onto campus, which they think

is crazy and cool, and then they spend three hours being kids."

She continued, "Often these kids don't have the chance to just be themselves and make crafts or run around and dance. The positive energy is so high and there are nothing but smiles!"

While the deadline to donate gifts has passed for this year, both Turek and Thomas mentioned what a positive experience donating has been.

Thomas said, "It not only helps [the] students, faculty and staff purchase gifts for these wonderful kiddos, but it is a gateway for [the kids in the ACLAMO after-school program] to see how Ursinus values community engagement, and how we as a campus tries to live that out."

Turek agreed and encour-

aged students to seek out other volunteer opportunities. "I would encourage students who feel inspired by their experience with the Giving Tree to consider volunteering at one of the many community organizations we partner with, whether that is the ACLAMO after-school program or another organization that serves children and families. College students have many gifts they can share with the community, and the tangible ones we collect for the Giving Tree are one small but meaningful way to give back!"

Students who are interested in volunteer opportunities at ACLAMO after-school program can email Katie Turek at kturek@ursinus.edu or stop by the UCARE office and speak to a service fellow.

Ursinus students celebrate the holidays

UC students and student organizations share their cultures' holiday traditions

Ana DerSimonian
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As winter rolls in, its long dark days are brightened by the celebration of the many diverse holidays that make up the holiday season. Ursinus College shares in that celebration. Students of many different cultures call the Ursinus campus home for the beginning of the holiday season, each commemorating their own unique traditions. Some of these students and student organizations have shared their traditions for the upcoming holidays with "The Grizzly."

On Friday, Dec. 8, Sankofa Umoja Nia will be celebrating Kwanzaa with the Africana studies department.

According to history.com, Kwanzaa was founded in 1966 by Maulana Karenga as a means to bring together the African American community. The holiday was created in response to a series of riots that occurred in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1965 that protested police brutality. At its heart, Kwanzaa is a celebration of African heritage, and is honored from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. A candle is lit on each day of Kwanzaa and gifts are exchanged on Jan. 1.

On each day one of seven principles are discussed. According to history.com, "These principles are the foundations of the culture and [are used] to bring . . . together the African American community."

These principles include, unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Although there is no one traditional way to celebrate Kwanzaa, the celebrations "frequently include singing and dancing, storytelling, and a grand meal," according to the website.

Vice-president of the Association of Latinos Motivated to Achieve (ALMA), Zonia Rueda-Juarez, celebrates Guatemalan Christmas traditions. She explained that it is tradition in Guatemala to spend time with

family on Christmas Eve and to eat a Christmas dinner composed of several traditional dishes, always including Guatemalan tamales. At midnight, everyone lights hundreds of fireworks to celebrate Christmas. It is custom for a prayer to be said around the tree. Following the prayer, presents are quickly opened.

"[Armenian church bazaars are] a good way to spend time with loved ones and to see family and friends."

— Nareen Babian
Ursinus Freshman

Hillel, the Jewish organization on campus, celebrates Chanukkah, also known as The Festival of Lights. According to history.com, the holiday commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple following the Maccabean revolt and victory over the Seleucid empire that had been oppressing the Jewish people. As part of the Temple's rededication, the people were supposed to light a menorah to be kept burning every night. Yet, there was only enough oil to keep the menorah burning one night. A miracle occurred and the oil lasted eight nights, enough time for the people to find a fresh supply of oil.

The website explained that "[Chanukkah] is celebrated by lighting the menorah, eating traditional foods, and exchanging gifts."

Chanukkah lasts for eight days, and on each day, a candle on the menorah is lit. It is custom to play with dreidels and to eat food fried in oil.

Nareen Babian, a freshman at Ursinus, celebrates Armenian Christmas, which takes place on Jan. 6.

"Armenian churches usually have church bazaars during the winter season where there is many Armenian food[s]. It is a good way to spend time with loved ones and to see family and friends," said Babian.

According to Babian, Arme-

nian Christmas is celebrated on Jan. 6 because it is the day of "the realization that Jesus was God's son."

According to holycrossoca.org, this tradition falls on the same day as Epiphany, a Western Christian tradition that celebrates the three wise men's first visit to Jesus which symbolizes the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, this day celebrates Jesus' baptism as an adult, which began his ministry and revealed him as the son of God. Armenian Christmas follows the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Babian also celebrates Christmas on Dec. 25, but on Jan. 6, she receives Armenian gifts, such as ornaments, necklaces with her Armenian initials, and Armenian fruits.

Babian said, "It's a good way to keep in touch with [my] heritage."

The South East Asian Student Association (SASA) celebrates the Chinese New Year, which is one of the biggest holidays in many Asian countries. President of SASA, senior Luna Kang, and junior Linwei Jiang, in charge of SASA's public relations, explained that their popular holiday is on Jan. 1 in the Chinese lunar calendar. In the U.S., which follows the sun-based Gregorian calendar, Chinese New Year takes place on Feb. 16.

"Families get together and celebrate a year of hard work and to wish for a successful coming year."

— Linwei Jiang
Public Relations Chair for SASA

"[During this time] families get together and celebrate a year of hard work and [to] wish for a successful coming year" said Jiang.

There are many festivities and traditions.

According to Kang, "People put Fai Chun on the doors. Fai Chun is a traditional decoration used during the holiday to



Photo courtesy of Sydney Cope

Light the candle of friendship this holiday season.

[create] a vibrant atmosphere . . . they [feature] couplets that express some wish for the New Year. The couplet is written on red paper, representing celebration and positivity."

Kang added, "We also have firecrackers. There's a legend that there [is] a monster, Nian, and at the beginning of each year it comes out and eats kids. Somehow, people found out that [Nian] is scared of the color red and loud noises. So, people discovered that if they make firecrackers wrapped with red paper, [Nian] will be scared away. That's why we [set off] firecrackers and everything is red. Little kids get 'lucky money.' Their parents and grandparents give them money and put the money in a red envelope and the

kids keep the envelopes under their pillows so that if [Nian] tries to come eat them, it will see the red paper and go away."

The sounds of small firecrackers followed by three big, loud firecrackers are believed to sound out the old year and sound in the New Year.

On Feb. 16, during the spring semester, The South East Asian Student Association plans to invite a lion dance group to campus as part of the celebration.

The Ursinus community is diverse, with many different holidays and traditions being celebrated within the community this holiday season. These varying traditions help to make the winter season a special time of the year for many within the Ursinus family.

Prepare your stomach for the holidays

The Grizzly editors share their favorite family recipes from the holiday season



Photo courtesy of Charlie DuChene

A collection of Christmas cookies courtesy of the DuChene household in Minnesota.

Lefse Recipe

Courtney DuChene

In large pot bring to a boil the following ingredients--stir to combine.

- 10 cups water
- ½ pound margarine
- 12 ounce can of evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- Butter, sugar and cinnamon for topping

Once ingredients have come to a boil and are all combined remove from heat and stir in 10 cups of potato flakes.

Cool mixture in a covered container overnight.

For this next part I recommend that you divide up the

potato mixture into fourths and mix small batches as you go. If you do it all at once the dough tends to get wet and sticky and hard to work with.

For each 1/4" of the potato mixture mix (with hands) in 1 ½" cup of flour (just to combine; don't over work). Divide mixture into balls--they should be about 1/3" cup each. Dust the outside with flour and set on place in cool spot.

Dough should be soft but not to sticky--if it is sticky you may need to add more flour (this will make the lefse tougher after it is cooked).

Rolling

Use a well floured pastry

cloth covered board. (I usually initially spread out about 1/4" cup of flour evenly around the board and work it in the pastry cloth).

Start with about two table-spoons of flour on middle of the board.

Take a ball of dough, flatten out like when you start pizza dough, and make into a round, thick disk--about 5" by 3/4". Making sure it is floured well on both sides.

Roll lightly out from the center of the lefse. Roll about five strokes, then pick up the lefse with the turner and fluff up the flower on the cloth with a butter

Peanut Blossoms

Emily Jolly

- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 48 chocolate kisses

Directions:

Cream shortening and peanut butter with sugars. Add egg and mix well; add milk and vanilla. Add dry ingredients. Shape dough into balls using a rounded teaspoon for each. Roll balls in sugar; place on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake at 375 degree for 10-12 minutes. Top each cookie immediately with a Hershey Kiss and let chocolate set up.

Italian Chocolate Chip

Cookies

Emily Jolly

- 4 cups of flour
- 2 eggs
- 4 teaspoons Baking powder
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

(rounded)

1 cup mini chocolate chips and/or

- 1/2 tsp cloves
- 1 cup nuts (chopped)
- 1/2 teaspoon all spice
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Mix all dry ingredients together. Beat eggs, then add oil, milk and vanilla. Gradually add dry ingredients and mix well. Add chocolate chips (and nuts). Mix well.

Roll into balls and bake in 400 degree oven for 12 minutes (I usually chill batter for an hour or so to make it easier to handle). When cookies are cool, frost with Chocolate Icing.

Chocolate Icing

3 cups confectionary sugar (powdered sugar) with 3 or 4 tablespoons cocoa; add 1 tea-spoon vanilla, 2 or 4 tablespoons milk until thin enough to spread. Let dry and enjoy!



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Happening on Campus

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Dining Services Holiday Dinner 4:30 p.m. Upper Wismer	#BearsMakeHistory Project Launch 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Bear's Den	"Argos Burning" by Arthur Robinson '17 7:30 p.m. Blackbox		Pancake Study Break 9:30 p.m. Upper Wismer	Final Exams	Final Exams

Happy Holidays vs. Merry Christmas

Johnny Myers
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As the holidays and winter vacations begin, liberal agenda-pushing Starbucks coffee shops and CVS pharmacies become bloody battlegrounds for the supposed ‘War on Christmas.’ ‘Tis the season for the annual debate: “Happy Holidays” or “Merry Christmas?” These words have become political. No longer are these statements about wishing others a happy end-of-December-season. It is a screening test for Democrats and Republicans. Employees at convenience stores are mandated by their managers to say “Happy Holidays” to avoid offending anyone. Meanwhile, customers who prefer “Merry Christmas” insist on their favored phrase, making a point to push Christmas as the only holiday that Americans celebrate. This ‘War on Christmas’ is a reaction to our country’s growing diversity in religion, culture, and politics. A diversity that Americans have not always viewed positively or championed vocally.

In my opinion, it is in everyone’s interest if we adopt “Happy Holidays” and refute “Merry Christmas” under professional and social conversation. To strangers who may not celebrate Christmas, it is an important sign of respect to use “Happy Holidays.” The season is not for taunting political views, but for celebrating holidays, spending time with family, and welcoming in the new year.

A core tenant of our government is the separation of Church and State. This principle is important for many Americans- it’s the foundation of our political governance. This country was founded, in part, on religious independence. That is, the freedom to celebrate any religion we decide for ourselves, without the interference or mandate of the government. This protects religious independence and autonomy. “Happy Holidays” is an appropriate, approachable way to wish another person benevolence during the holiday season without infringing on political

and religious rights.

Sophomore Andrew McSwigan spoke about the issue from his perspective. “I mean, fundamentally speaking as a Jewish person, I’m geared towards ‘Happy Holidays.’ That’s what I’ve been saying my whole life. I also appreciate that it’s more inclusive to those who celebrate other holidays. With that, personally speaking, I’m not going to feel any bad intent if someone said ‘Merry Christmas’ to me, because I appreciate where that’s coming from, even if the phrase is not being express[ed] as inclusively as it could be.”

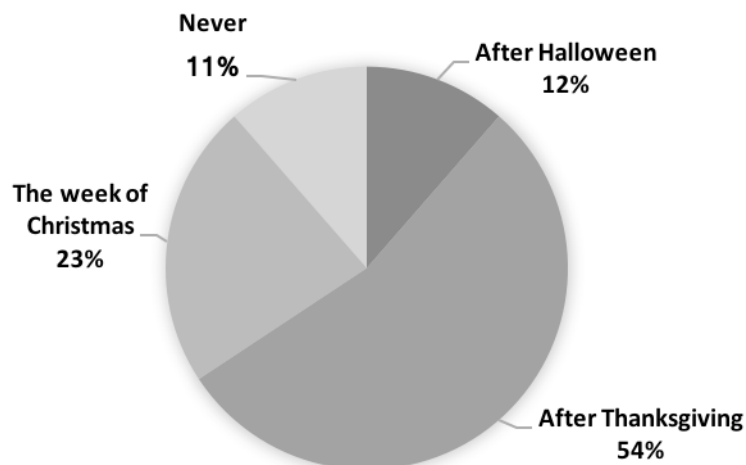
I initiated a discussion with a table I frequent in Wismer, asking what people tend to say during the holiday season. Most agreed that it’s important to respect other people’s beliefs. However, some of them also admitted to a preference for “Merry Christmas.” They argued that most people in America do in fact celebrate Christmas regardless of religious belief. So, for most of the people they interact with, it’s not a problem to use “Merry Christmas.” They know which friends do or don’t celebrate Christmas and tailor their greetings accordingly, otherwise “Merry Christmas” is the default.

I find some parts of this argument good and bad. It’s good to understand which friends celebrate which holiday, and what to say to each friend, based on what they prefer. However, it’s erroneous to think that everyone in this country celebrates Christmas. Diversity is our strength; it’s the reality we live in, but it’s a reality that sometimes is ignored or even just unnoticed. This is why it’s important to say “Happy Holidays”- because of the invisible level of diversity around us. I cannot speak for others on their preference, nor can I imagine the small yet accumulating annoyance of receiving a “Merry Christmas” as someone who doesn’t celebrate the holiday. However, I believe it’s important for us to be aware of our words going in to this holiday season in order to respect and include everyone as we enjoy the multitude of celebrations.

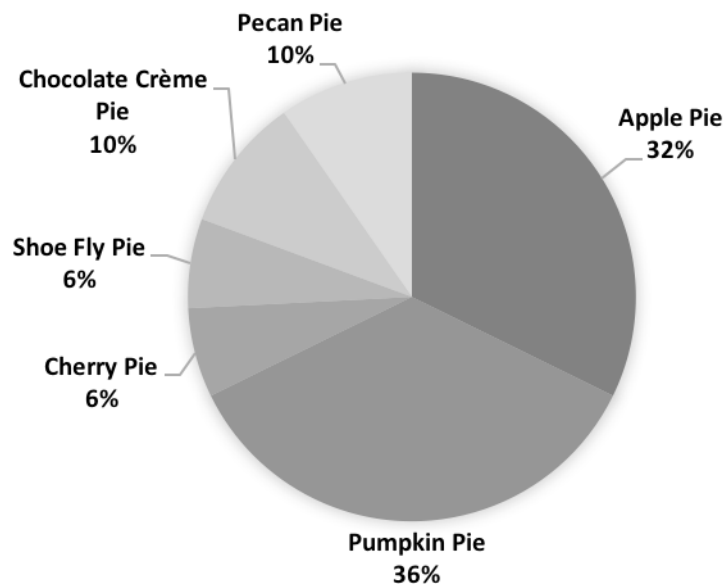
The Grizzly’s Holiday Polls

The Ursinus community shared their opinions on holiday topics by participating in polls posted on our various social media accounts. Here are the results:

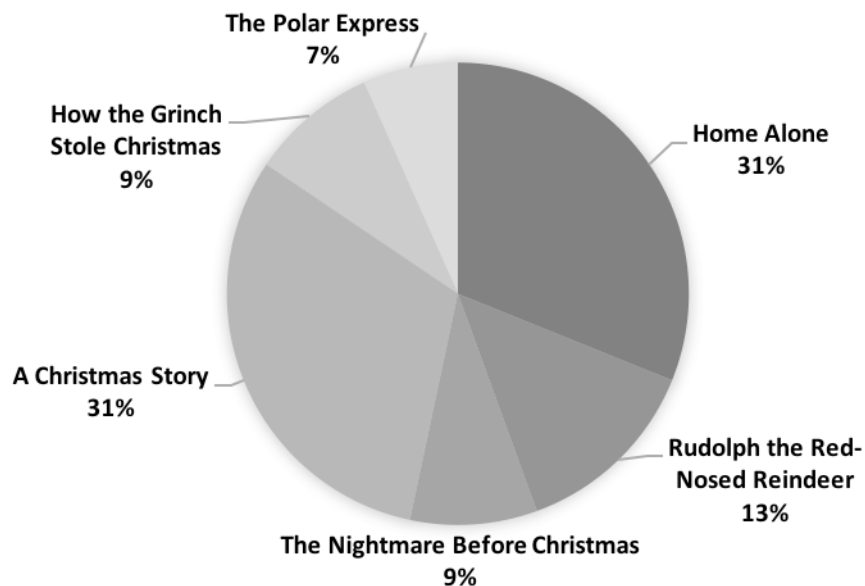
WHEN IS THE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR HOLIDAY MUSIC TO BEGIN PLAYING?



WHAT IS THE BEST HOLIDAY PIE?



WHAT IS THE BEST HOLIDAY MOVIE?



Swimming continued from pg. 8


know how hard the transition is from high school to college. I feel as though some of the upper-classmen have taken me under their wing and it has definitely helped me a lot and given me more confidence in my academics and athletics. I am eager to see what the rest of the season holds . . . I have never [swum] faster in [a] season than I have thus far. I think that the team's performance is phenomenal, I never expected to see such fast swimming so early in the season."

Baker, already a ten-time Centennial Conference champion, thinks the team could reach new heights this year.

"I think that so far this season we have been stronger than ever before. We came back from the summer hungry and ready to keep our Centennial title. We have been thrown tough practices, but they have only been making us stronger. I came into this season ready to race, but also ready to keep improving my strokes as much as I can in hopes to get faster. I have been happy with my in-season times so far, and I am excited for our mid-season taper in December. . . we will put all of our training to the test as we race for the Centennial Crown once again, swim personal bests, and get as many girls as possible into the DIII National meet."

The teams this year have been impressing Coach Feinberg since day one of practice.

Said Feinberg "A majority of both teams came back in terrific shape [which has] allowed us to set bigger goals. . . [I am] really happy with [the] work ethic, attention to detail and the culture they have created."



Have feedback on this story? Visit The Grizzly on Facebook!

Proficiently Efficient: Men's B-ball is 4-2

David Mendelsohn
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The Ursinus College men's basketball team has taken the Centennial Conference (CC) by storm with a 4-2 record to start the season. They took their first conference loss on Nov. 30 in a game against Franklin and Marshall College (F&M).

Assistant Coach Justin Klingman believes last year's playoff exit has motivated the team to take their games to the next level this year.

"I think the loss to Swarthmore in the CC Semi-final game [last year] motivated our guys to have a really focused and productive offseason. Our guys brought that continued focus to our preseason. Although we dropped our opening game [this year], the team's commitment to getting better and pushing each other every day in practice has had much to do with our success in the past three games."

Senior co-captain Brian Rafferty leads the team and the CC in assists with 5.7 assists per game.

Said Rafferty, "I would attribute the early success to all of the work we put in during the off-season and preseason. We have all been playing pickup and working out together since late May of last spring, so we were able to keep that chemistry going coming off of last year. . . The biggest surprise this season to me is just how deep we are. We have 10-11 guys who could see [significant] playing time throughout the course of the year. I think it is the deepest team we have ever had since I have been here."

Through the first six games, 10 of the players have averaged over five minutes played per game, and eight average over ten minutes. Four of them are averaging double-figures in points: Eric Williams Jr. (18.3 ppg), Zach Quattro (17.8),

Ryan McTamney (15.8), and Shane Stark (13.2), with Remi Janicot trailing not far behind with his average of 9.2 points per contest.

Sophomore Shane Stark was surprised by the team's scoring abilities. The Bears are scoring a whopping 89 points per game, placing them second in the Conference.

"I knew before the season we were a great offensive team, but I didn't realize we would be scoring so much every game," said Stark.

Another testament to how well the team shares the ball is their assists per game totals. They average 20.3 assists per game, leading the CC.

Stark leads the team and is behind only Gettysburg's Matt England in rebounding this year in CC ranks. He is proud of the team's unselfish attitude.

Said Stark, "[We have] great chemistry that we have on and off the court. No one on our team is selfish, and we all love to share the ball to score."

Another big factor in the team's success has been their elite level of ball control. Junior point guard Zack Muredda leads the CC in assist-to-turnover ratio, and the Bears have four men in the top seven in the Conference in that category: Muredda, Williams Jr., Matt Williams, and Rafferty.

After a tough loss to open the season against Staten Island College on Nov. 17 in the Rinso-Marquette Tournament, the team really bounced back.

"We didn't play with the energy we needed, but we learned from it," said Muredda.

Learn from it, they did. The very next day on Nov. 18 against New Rochelle, the team dropped 111 points in the 26-point victory, on the back of junior Eric Williams Jr.

Williams Jr. scored 37 points in the game, dropping 12 of his now Conference-leading 31 three-

pointers made this season, breaking the CC record in three-pointers in a single game.

Said Williams Jr., "It felt really good setting the record. Especially getting so close to it last year at the Muhlenberg game that went into triple overtime. It was great seeing my team react to me hitting threes. At the time I wasn't aware that I made that many threes. I just remember coming to the bench and a few of my teammates saying that I made 12 threes. All I [know] is that I felt like I couldn't miss and my team kept helping to create opportunities for me to get another shot off."

The team also broke their own record, hitting 20 such shots as a group. Ursinus leads the Conference in both three pointers made and three-point percentage, so not only are they making a lot of threes, but they are extremely efficient at doing so, going 47 percent from behind the arc as a unit.

Williams Jr.'s teammates were really impressed by his performance, calling it one of the most impressive performances of the year.

Said Muredda, "Eric Williams [Jr.] breaking the CC record with 12 threes [while making it look] easy [was awesome to watch.]"

Coach Klingman was also impressed by the results.

"Our record setting performance against New Rochelle was a nice confidence booster for our team after dropping our opening game. [Williams Jr.'s] 12 made threes were impressive to say the least. Our offense is predicated on ball movement and making plays for others, so once [he] got going our guys continued to feed the hot hand."

Coach Klingman also commented on the team's ball control and unselfish attitude.

"Ultimately, we have a very unselfish team and that was the case

against New Rochelle"

The team had 29 assists in the contest, the highest thus far this season.

The team rattled off two more victories against Haverford College and Widener College, scoring over 95 points.

The Bears had their next big test on Nov. 30 when they hosted F&M in a highly-anticipated game. Despite 25 points from Zach Quattro and a 14-point second-half lead, the Bears couldn't stop F&M's Conference points leader, Brandon Federici from finally getting hot down the stretch, downing the Bears, 77-69.

The team proved that they learned from the loss, again, when they came out Saturday and defeated McDaniel College in overtime, 83-77.

The whole team has high hopes for the rest of the season.

Said Coach Klingman, "We're going to continue to work on being a tougher team defensively. Our guys are really excited and definitely up for the challenge in taking on F&M, McDaniel and Swarthmore. We as a team tend not to focus on the result of a game, but more importantly on executing a game plan, playing with passion, and playing together. We believe if we do those things, the result of the game will take care of itself . . . Obviously, every team in the conference aspires to win the CC Championship. Our hope as a coaching staff is that we are playing our best basketball in February; we fully expect to be in the playoff hunt come late February."

Stark agrees that the team is prepared to continue their success for the rest of the year.

"We are taking it one day at a time and focusing on getting better every day. We are going into [each] game with the mentality to win and that's what we expect to do," said Stark.

Scores as of Monday, December 4, 2017

Wrestling	Track and Field	Cross Country	M. B-Ball (3-1)	W. B-Ball (2-3)	M. Swimming (4-2)	W. Swimming (6-0)
December 1-2:	December 2:	November 11:	November 30:	November 28:		
Petrofes Invitational (@Grantham, Pa.)	Diplomat Open (Lancaster, Pa.)	NCAA Mideast Regionial (@Big Spring HS-Newville, Pa.)	Franklin and Marshall Coll: 77 Ursinus: 69	Ursinus: 56 F&M Coll: 59	December 2:	December 2:
9th of 15 (61.0)	Results and recap can be found on the Ursinus Athletics website	Men: 22nd of 51 Women: 32nd of 49	December 2 (OT): Ursinus: 83 McDaniel Coll: 77	November 30: Bryn Mawr Coll: 43 Ursinus: 73	Ursinus: 99 #25 Swarthmore Coll: 163	Ursinus: 149 Swarthmore Coll: 113
				December 2: Ursinus: 53 McDaniel Coll: 49		



Photo courtesy of Dave Morgan/Stylish Images

The women's swim team continued their 35-meet CC winning streak with their win against Swarthmore on Dec. 2

UC's swim teams make waves

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damendelsohn@ursinus.edu

The Ursinus men and women's swim teams have kicked off their respective seasons swimmingly. The men are 4-2 after a pair of tough losses to Gettysburg College and Swarthmore College, while the women remain the portrait of success in the Centennial Conference with a 6-0 record.

Said senior co-captain Carl Christoph, "I think our season is off to a really good start. The first half has been good. We have had a lot of wins, which is nice to see out there. People are swimming well, they're swimming hard and fast," Christoph said.

Men's co-captain Colin McNamara says that the team has really

impressed this year.

He said, "The whole team has really stepped up. We have been doing a great job of getting behind each other which is essential . . . keeping our momentum going. From the beginning of the year, this team has been bringing the energy and turning that energy into some great swims. We are fighting all the way to the wall and these meets often come down to those split second finishes."

However, the season hasn't been completely smooth sailing for the men's team. The men took their first loss on Nov. 18 to Gettysburg in a tight affair, 147-115. This did not discourage the team, or the coaching staff.

Said Coach Feinberg, "I'm really proud of the effort our men's team

put forth not only in the meet, but in the weeks leading up to that big test. Gettysburg has a few athletes that will compete well on the national stage. I think what we showed was depth and the ability to compete with their elite athletes. We had our best meet of the year. The only thing I would change is to [have won] those touch outs. Every close race except one went their way. Those are the races we need to win in February. If they keep working this hard, that's exactly what will happen."

McNamara said, "Personally, I'm thrilled at how we swam with Gettysburg. I knew it was going to be a great meet and it did not fail to deliver. We swam out of our minds, and they just had a little bit more. To go toe to toe with such a Conference powerhouse sends a message to

the whole Centennial that Ursinus men's swimming is no joke. You really can't be mad when you take [a] top team in the conference to the brink."

Junior Clara Baker of the women's team praised the work of the men's team this year.

Said Baker, "I think that the men came in even hungrier than us, as they continued to move up in the ranks of the Conference last year. They have been hanging right with the tough competition and it is very impressive to watch the way they race with such enthusiasm, grace and determination. I believe that they are very close to joining us on top [of the Centennial Conference]."

McNamara says the men are certain to have their work cut out for them the rest of the way.

"The Centennial Conference has a lot of talent. I don't see a single meet on the schedule that will be a walk in the park. I think keeping this momentum going is going to be something that we have to work to do. I know we can do it, but keeping the initial momentum going all season isn't always easy," said McNamara.

Christoph agreed, "We have some big meets coming up in the second semester. [Franklin and Marshall] is always a close meet for us. We are always back-and-forth with them and are close in points . . . Washington College is also always a big challenge for us. It's always right before we start our taper at the end of the season and they always seem ready, while we tend to be beat down and ready for a rest at that point in time, so it will be a challenge to go out there and swim them, but I think we can take them on, give them a good meet, and get ready for champs after that!"

The men suffered their second loss Saturday to Swarthmore Col-

lege, ranked at #25 in the nation in the most recent poll. The men and coaches expected this to be one of the bigger challenges of the season.

In contrast, the women's team so far has dominated all their competition and is looking for a challenge. Many expected Gettysburg to be a tough meet for the ladies, but they eviscerated the Bullets, 184-78, and took care of business against Swarthmore in their closest meet thus far, 149-113.

"Our women have done a terrific job of stepping up and swimming well in our biggest meets. Gettysburg will be better in February at our Championships, but I think we will as well. We put a very strong line up together and it was good to see how dominant we can be so early in the season," said Coach Feinberg.

First-year swimmer Allison Thomas was excited by these results.

Said Thomas, "I think that the team has been preparing for hard meets since the first day of practice. We all cheer each other on during practice. It felt really good as freshmen on the team to dominate the 2nd ranked team in the conference. It was really awesome to see the team come together and cheer each other on."

Baker agreed, "We have been training very vigorously and were very excited for the Gettysburg meet. We were full of energy for each other's swims which really gave us a leg up, and we realized early that we had the upper hand. It felt natural as we out-touched them in the pool and we are looking forward to our future dual meets."

Thomas is very happy with how her first collegiate season has gone.

"I feel like my first season is going very well. The team supports the freshmen so much because they

See **Swimming** on pg. 7

Upcoming Games

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sat. Cont.	Sunday	Tuesday
Men's Basketball: 6 p.m.: @ #12 Swarthmore Coll.		M&W Swimming 4 p.m.: Golden Ram Classic (@West Chester, Pa.)	M&W Swimming: 9 a.m.: Golden Ram Classic (@West Chester, Pa.)	Women's Basketball: 1 p.m.: vs. Muhlenberg Coll.	December 19: Finals Week Begins	December 19: Women's Basketball: 2 p.m.: vs. Immaculata U
Women's Basketball: 8 p.m.: @Swarthmore Coll.						Men's Basketball: 3 p.m.: @Scranton U