

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

The Student Movement v. 106 (2021-2022)

Student Movement

---

12-8-2021

## The Student Movement Volume 106 Issue 10: Let's Get This Gingerbread: AU Celebrates the Christmas Season

Irina Gagliu

Grace No

Timmy Duado

Solana Campbell

Megan Napod

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/sm-106>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

---

**Authors**

Irina Gagi, Grace No, Timmy Duado, Solana Campbell, Megan Napod, Hannah Cruse, Nathan Mathieu, Andrew Pak, Jenae Rogers, Robert Zhang, Alexander Navarro, Elizabeth Getahun, T Bruggemann, Karena Lee, Gloria Oh, and Alyssa Henriquez

## Let's Get This Gingerbread

AU CELEBRATES THE CHRISTMAS SEASON



Photo by Peter Tumangday

# Humans

---

## HUMANS

# Christmas with President Luxton – Memories, Traditions, & Favorites!

Interviewed by: Irina Gagliardi [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Dr. Andrea Luxton

---

*Last week, we heard from AU students about their favorite Christmas memories. This week, I was fortunate enough to sit down with our university's very own president, Andrea Luxton, Ph.D. in English, who happily shared her thoughts and experiences during the Christmas season.*

**Do you have any favorite parts of Christmas in general, or perhaps, the December holiday season?**

Well, I love the Christmas season because everything's just a little more peaceful. But for me, especially, it's all about the snow. To me, snow means being warm with family and friends, so that feeling during Christmas is something I truly love.

The image of the nativity has also been very important to me. It allows you to think a little more about what it really means and what Christmas is about.

**What does Christmas mean to you?**

I've never really gotten into the commercialization of Christmas. It really has been for me a very spiritual time of year—a time to simply reflect on Christ but to do that in a setting with family or with friends. I love some of the poems that exist about Christmas—such as some of the well-known Christmas carols—and I think together, they frame what's important about life. I suppose that's where the meaning comes from for me; it's lovely.

**Do you have any favorite Christmas memories from over the years?**

When I go back to when I lived in England, growing up, we did a lot of Christmas caroling door-to-door and collected donations for a charity or for church. Going out with the group, traveling door-to-door, caroling outside the doors of homes, especially when there were young children to meet in a home, were all special moments. Sometimes we would even get invited into homes to sing as a group! I played the clarinet at the time, and if it wasn't too cold, I would sometimes take it with me to play as well.

Another memory I have is with an aunt who lived in the far west area of England, which is more like a dark moor. She lived in an old farmhouse really in the middle of nowhere, and sometimes I would go and spend Christmas with her. She would often find a Christmas tree somewhere way up on the moors that she'd want in her house, so she would wait for me to arrive so we could walk across the moors together. They were kind of undulating and bland, but we'd find this Christmas tree, dig it up, and carry it all the way back to her home—about a mile or so!

Another time, my aunt wanted holly, so we did this whole process again on this little, *very* muddy lane since you couldn't drive there. This spot had holly bushes everywhere, so we would cut down a bunch and bring it home to decorate with. When we would arrive back, there wasn't a lot of heat in my aunt's home. But there was this *huge* fireplace, so we would sit down by a warm fire and enjoy each other's company.

**Are there any holiday traditions that you continue now?**

I do have some involving decorations. One of the things I have is a Christmas village I collected when I first went to Canada about twenty years ago. It's a display with lots of different houses, characters, and snow. I always put it up every Christmas and it tends to stay up at least until the end of January! Other than that, since I've been moving around so often and spending Christmas with different people, I wouldn't say there's any one thing that I "must" do every year, but just having good company is very important to me.

**Do you have a favorite Christmas song or carol? Or perhaps a favorite Christmas movie?**

"It's a Wonderful Life" is one movie I *must* see every year! Even though I know what's going to happen and it's an older movie, I like to watch it every year.

As for carols, there is a lot that I like! In terms of the ones that I *love*, there's "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," and "Silent Night" is just one you must hear during the holidays, as well as "O Holy Night." Just from the beauty of the piece, "O Holy Night" may be my favorite.

**Do you have any special Christmas wishes or final thoughts that you would like to share with our student readers?**

I think in our current environment, my Christmas wish, not just for me, but for our whole campus, is related to another song I like. It comes from a poem by Alfred Tennyson in which he describes a lot of Christmas scenes. One of them is a scene for the new year which he goes into with a lot of grief. He is working his grief out in the poem "[In Memoriam.](#)" but then he gets to his vision of the new year. There's a part that goes "ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky," when talking about grief and pain, and there's this encouragement to "ring in" the new and all the possibilities of the next year.

Of all the things that have happened in the last couple of years, what particularly disturbs me most is the anger and hate that people have increasingly thrown at each other. On social media, the language people use, and the way others respond to things they don't like is just filled with threats of violence and aggression. And if I had a wish, it is that we use the message of Christmas—which is more about gentleness, giving to others, and caring—as something that we take in our hearts beyond Christmas and into the New Year. I hope that this spirit for how we treat each other becomes more apparent on an ongoing basis.

HUMANS

# My Christmas Wish...

Interviewed by: Grace No 12.08.21



Photo by Public Domain

---

*Holidays are right around the corner, and we are again reminded of all the blessings that we have in our everyday lives. It's also a season of gift-giving and wrapping presents for our friends and family, and so we have interviewed students around campus about their own Christmas wishes this year. Whether it is wishing for the well-being of loved ones or better sleep schedules, it's clear that Andrews students are all looking forward to Christmas!*

**Adasa Muñoz (sophomore, architecture)**

I wish for the year to be over, world peace, and ending world hunger. I also want my project for my studio review on Monday to go well, and to be done with.

**Karena Lee (sophomore, English and business administration)**

I wish for the happiness of my loved ones, and that I get to watch "Amphibia" over break.

**Alannah Tjhatra (junior, biochemistry)**

I wish that we have snow on Christmas and that I achieve all that I need in life. I also hope I get 8 hours of sleep every night.

**Nora Martin (sophomore, English and psychology)**

I wish for another set of Wilton's piping tips and a chew toy for my dog. An iPhone 4s would be nice too. Also, my back hurts and I want it to go away.

**Bailey Young (sophomore, business administration)**

I wish for a lot of sleep and good holiday memories with my friends and family. I also wish for absolutely delicious, piping hot soup.

**Abigail Kim (senior, psychology)**

I wish that we have better Lamson dorms. I also wish there were no more required co-curricular credits.

**Siobhan Conye (sophomore, speech pathology)**

I wish for good grades and more sleep. I want to have a Christmas like I did as a kid.

**Alice Lee (senior, pre-dent)**

I wish to pass all my classes and I want the Gazebo to open all the way.

**Abigail Cancel (sophomore graphic design)**

I wish that I get caught up on all my sleep and not have any sleep debt. I also wish to finish all my fun projects and for my sewing machine to magically fix itself!

**Erica Shin (junior, biology)**

I wish for the health and happiness of my friends and family! I'm fortunate enough to not need anything, and as I get older I realize that that's an incredible blessing.

**Heeyun Oh (senior, biology)**

I wish that my family and friends will be healthy and safe. Also, I want this Christmas to be restful for everyone who is tired and stressed during this year.

**Joshua Pak (senior, biology)**

I wish to have a Covid-free spring semester. Since this will be the third time that Covid has affected my spring semester, I hope that as a senior we will be able to return to normalcy before I graduate.

**Ethan Lee (senior, biology)**

I wish to make good memories with my friends and eat a lot of good food.



HUMANS

# Semester Reflections with Ian Freed

Interviewed by: Timmy Duado [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Ian Freed

---

*As the semester nears its end, we should all take time to reflect on the things we have accomplished, enjoyed, and how far we have come this semester. I sat down with Ian Freed (sophomore, business management) to discuss his reflections from this semester and his hopes for the future.*

## **What were some of your favorite memories from this semester?**

My favorite memory was the meet and greet for the SASA club. This was the first time that I actually got involved in something outside of class and was able to meet a good amount of people. I never really joined clubs before and this was a really

good experience, because being a community student, it's a little bit more difficult to meet people and do things outside of class. Apart from meeting new people I really enjoyed having access to the Wellness Center. It's always a great atmosphere there and working out with friends are some of my favorite memories here too.

**What was your favorite class, and why?**

My favorite class was probably Foundations of Info Tech. I found it fairly easy and it was cool to learn how to use so many different programs in the labs as well. I've known about programs like Excel for a long time but never really knew how to use them, so it was useful in real life. I have been using some of the features from these programs in other classes.

**What are some things that went well this semester, and what are some things that didn't work out too well?**

Some things that went well were classes and my social life. Throughout the semester I was able to get my GPA up and I started to make friends. Like I said earlier, it's sometimes difficult to meet people as a community student so I'm very happy things have gotten better in that aspect. I actually can't really think of anything that didn't go too well. Although this is my second year at Andrews, it is my first on campus and the whole thing has been a learning experience.

**What is something new you tried this semester?**

Something new I tried this semester was the Pulse groups for chapel. I did have chapels when I went to a Christian school in junior high, but it wasn't very personal, and unless you were doing music or something like that it was hard to get involved, but these Pulse groups made the experience more personal.

**What is something new you learned about yourself while being at AU this semester?**

I learned that I am in control of how I want a place or situation to affect me. I wasn't sold on Andrews at first, but throughout the semester I realized that this place is what you make it and I have to put effort into it as well. Similarly, when it comes to meeting new people and growing a social network, I need to put myself out there and show effort as well, because when I show effort, other people do too.

# Arts & Entertainment

---

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# AU's Christmas Playlist

Solana Campbell 12.08.21

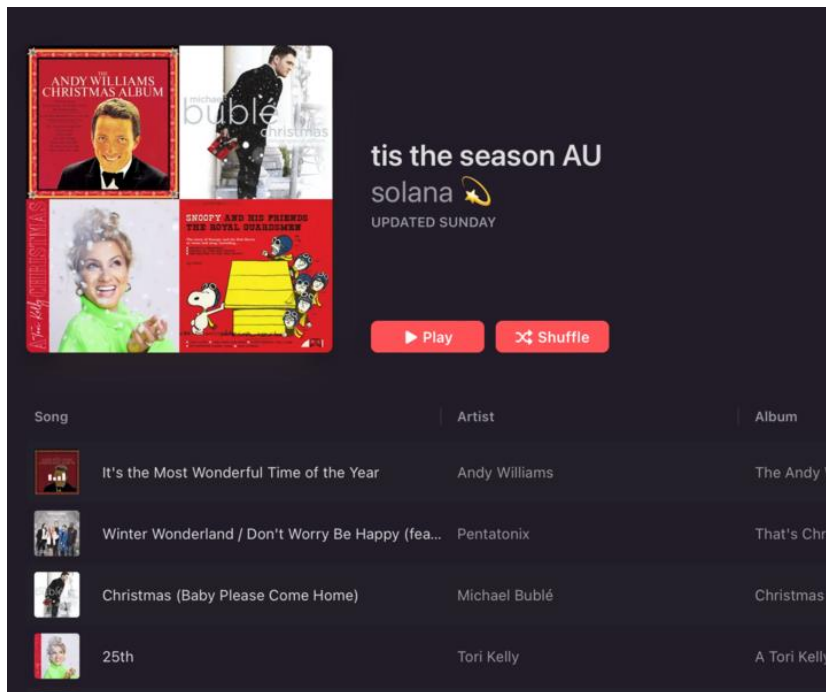


Photo by Solana Campbell

---

‘Tis the season to pop out the Pentatonix, curl up by the Christmas tree, and share mutual feelings of love and goodwill all around. This year, "The Student Movement" wants to give you your very own soundtrack to the Christmas season, with songs provided by your friends and yours truly. You can find this playlist on [Apple Music](#) or just pick your favorites to usher in a season of warmth and giving amidst the snow and cold. It’s time to ring in the most wonderful time of the year!

“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” by Andy Williams  
Kim Cardenas (senior, political science)

“Winter Wonderland/Don’t Worry be Happy” by Pentatonix feat. Tori Kelly  
Jea Erazo (junior, psychology)

“Christmas” by Michael Bublé  
Jaden Leiterman (sophomore, medical laboratory science)

“25th” by Tori Kelly  
Megan Napod (senior, speech-language pathology & audiology)

“Christmas in Blue Chair Bay” by Kenny Chesney  
Connor Scott (junior, mechanical engineering)

“It’s a Trap Christmas” by BeatsInMinutes  
Grace No (sophomore, English)

“Mistletoe” by Justin Bieber  
Lily Rodriguez (freshman, public health)

“Be Mine This Christmas” by Bryson Tiller  
Ian Freed (freshman, business management)

“White Christmas” by The Drifters  
Nathan Vietz (freshman, business)

“Wonderful Christmastime” by Straight No Chaser  
Timmy Duado (junior, communications)

“That’s Christmas to Me” by Pentatonix  
Matakala Muhwanga (junior, international business)

“Winter Wonderland” by Bryson Tiller  
Torrey Joo (sophomore, biochemistry)

“Snoopy’s Christmas” by The Royal Guardsman  
Nathan Mathieu (freshman, pre-physical therapy)

“This Christmas” by Chris Brown  
Mylon Weathers (senior, criminal justice)

“All I Want for Christmas is You” by Mariah Carey  
Nathan Gulzar (freshman, aviation)

“Miraculum (Instrumental)” by Lincoln Brewster  
Kaela McFadden (junior, pre-physical therapy)

“Happy Xmas (War is Over)” by John Lennon  
Jose Alegria (sophomore, nursing)

“Hallelujah” by Pentatonix  
A recommendation by yours truly.

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Creative Spotlight: Kayla Bruno (junior, psychology)

Interviewed by: Megan Napod [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Kayla Bruno

---

### What got you interested in photography?

I remember when I was in middle school and high school, every Sabbath after

church service, my friends and I would go outside and take pictures in front of the church building. It was such a fun experience, laughing with friends, posing for the camera and overall just enjoying the moment. Being a highly observant person, I would always be very aware of my surroundings, and if something caught my eye, I just took a picture of it. Then, my interest for photography started to become serious when friends from church and school were telling me to consider getting into photography because of the joy that I expressed while taking pictures for them.

### **Who or what inspires you?**

I am inspired by the beauty that surrounds me everyday, from the faces that I cross paths with to the gorgeous scenery that includes trees, flowers, the sun, the birds and all of God's wonderful creation. We can always find a glimpse of beauty in every single day, in good or bad events.

### **What do you enjoy most about photography?**

It is one of my creative outlets where I am able to express myself. I also love that I am able to capture a moment in time that can last forever. What I enjoy the most about photography is connecting with the people around me, whether it is my friends or clients.

### **What is your favorite thing you've shot? Tell me about the photo and the experience of it.**

My favorite photo that I have taken was from an engagement shoot that I did in the summer two years ago. It was for a couple from my church who I know very well. We went to Fort Tryon Park in New York City to do the photoshoot. I remember seeing this beautiful garden-like path with flowers and trees and I was immediately inspired, so I had the couple pose in front of the garden-like backdrop and shot this photo. The photo shows the couple looking madly in love with a beautiful forehead-to-forehead pose.

### **How do you see photography playing a role in your life and future?**

I will continue to pursue my hobby of photography and I would like to keep growing and improving my photography skills as well as doing more photoshoots. In the future, God-willing, I would like to become a licensed professional photographer who travels around the world taking pictures of different landscapes and individuals.

### **Where can people find your work?**

People can find my work through my VSCO profile

(kbrewvisuals: <https://vsco.co/kbrewvisuals/gallery>) and they can also connect with me through my LinkedIn [profile](#) for business or shoot inquiries.

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# The Conundrum of Christmas Movies

Hannah Cruse 12.08.21



Photo by Public Domain

---

Christmas is just around the bend and people everywhere are getting their houses and presents prepared for the 25th of December. Trees are being decorated, lights are blinding our eyes, and we're listening to the same 40 songs on repeat for the month. But out of all the traditions that could possibly exist, why is it that people are obsessed with cheesy Christmas movies? We have a whole channel dedicated to making us cringe (Hallmark - we're looking at you) and other streaming services (Netflix, why?) dedicated to stuffing us with all the disgusting romance you can feast on for the holiday season.

According to [Psychology Today](#), holiday movies are so popular because they feed the two types of happiness that people experience: hedonic and eudaimonic. The first (hedonic) is happiness that comes from pleasure and enjoyment, while the

second (eudaimonic) is happiness from events in your life that create meaning and purpose. When people see scenes of attractive people, caroling, food, and happy endings, it makes them feel fuzzy and warm inside, giving us hope in the holiday season of finding connections and maybe, possibly, finding romance. People like to feel good about themselves, and movies about finding princes and reconnecting with loved ones in small towns give them joy, for some reason or another.

Unfortunately for me, these movies just make me want to bang my head on a wall and wail for the state of the film industry. Maybe it's the fact that I am not a fan of romantic comedies in general or the over-optimism that the Christmas season brings; they just aren't for me. The way that every "ordinary" white woman can somehow catch the eye of the most eligible white bachelor (more often than not some type of royalty or rich person) is quite inconceivable to me; I would believe that historically, Captain Jack Sparrow did find Davy Jones' Locker before I would believe the majority of Christmas movie plot lines. And yes, I know that they aren't written for believability, but there has to be more of an element of groundedness to them, because people don't look that good after trekking in the snow in heeled boots for hours. To me, they are some of the worst films ever.

With all that being said, psychology or not, there are the few who do not feel the same joy while watching people get together in the most impossible of circumstances; and there will always be one less person watching them this holiday season, solving the problem of world hunger in their spare time.



# News

---

## NEWS

# A Very Merry Makarios Christmas Party

Nathan Mathieu 12.08.21



Photo by Meryen Gonzalez

---

On the cold night of December 4, silhouettes of people eating, dancing, and singing could be seen in Buller Hall. The partygoers were members of the Makarios ministry club, celebrating after their outreach event at Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día de Berrien Springs. “Makarios is a ministry on campus...made up primarily of Hispanics,” Grecia Castillo (senior, psychology and Spanish), president of Makarios, describes. “Our purpose is to go to Hispanic churches in the area...providing the churches with a different form of praising.” Planned by the “directiva”—or the officers of the Makarios club—the party itself signified the culmination of a semester’s worth of work of traveling to multiple cities and providing programs.

The Makarios Christmas party featured food—such as tamales, rice, and cupcakes—and several fun events, one of which was Secret Santa. Uniquely, the Makarios club

hosts a Secret Santa tradition where small gifts are given secretly throughout the semester. “The Secret Santa presents a way to get to know each other,” Castillo describes. “You give gifts to someone who may be a complete stranger and then you learn their interests and get to know each other beyond the surface level.” Then at the party, members bring a final big gift and reveal their identity to the person receiving their gifts. Open karaoke was also hosted. Members quickly gathered with their friends and performed songs such as "Feliz Navidad," "Mistletoe," and even George Michael’s “Careless Whisper.”

When members were asked if they enjoyed the event, Vany Carballo (junior, speech-language pathology and Spanish) said, “Yes, I enjoyed everything. [The Christmas party] provided an opportunity for those in Makarios to get together. It’s definitely what I look forward to every fall semester.” Gabriel Pontes (junior, pre-physical therapy), added, “I would agree [with Vany]. I liked everything. My favorite part was Secret Santa.” Hannie Casamayor (junior, biology) said, “I enjoyed the party. Karaoke was fun. I liked Secret Santa. I liked my gifts. They were cute! It was an exciting moment to see who got me my gifts.”

As the Makarios Christmas party concluded, members grabbed their phones and took selfies, sang and laughed together, and shared stories. Many talked about their adventures with Secret Santa, where they got their gifts, and the close calls throughout the semester. As the moon began to hide behind the nightly clouds and the December breeze skipped between the buildings, the members of Makarios departed, closer to those around them than when they had first arrived.

## NEWS

# Andrews Wind Symphony: Joy to the Season

Andrew Pak 12.08.21



Photo by Darren Heslop

---

Multicolored Christmas lights hung from the ceiling of the Howard Performing Arts Center concert hall. Audience members shuffled in from the back of the hall, filling the seats to an impressive turnout beyond the sparse numbers of previous post-Covid concerts. The Wind Symphony members warmed up individually with various excerpts of familiar holiday tunes in a cacophony of instrumental sound. The stage was set.

On Saturday, December 4 at 8:00 pm in the Howard Performing Arts Center, the spirit of Christmas wafted into the atmosphere in the form of music. Dr. Byron Graves, director of the Andrews Wind Symphony, strode onto the stage with a touch of red on his tux to celebrate his Christmas cheer, and the band stood up in respect of his leadership and musical prowess. He introduced the concert as a series of arrangements of familiar holiday tunes but in different settings. Without further ado, he raised his baton and launched into the first piece, “Festive Fanfare

for the Holidays” by James Curnow. A collection of popular tunes, it was a grand opening to the rest of the program.

Familiar Christmas vibes continued to fill the hall as more selections outlined the melodies of “O Holy Night,” “Away in a Manger,” “Ding Dong! Merrily on High.” A notable piece was “Lux Aurumque,” or “Light and Gold,” a well-known choral work composed by Eric Whitacre, that he had also transcribed for wind symphony. With its glorious swells and palatable dissonances, it worked well with a group of wind instruments that utilized the human breath just like a choir. The first half of the program concluded with a selection named “Joy to the Season,” a medley of even more holiday tunes. Eleanor Joyce (freshman, music education) says that “as a member of the percussion section, I loved this concert's repertoire. The vibraphone bowing technique in “Joy to the Season” and the complex rhythms in “We Wish You a Mambo Christmas” were such fun challenges!”

As the Wind Symphony returned after the intermission, Dr. Graves led out a Spanish bullfighting-style rendition of Jingle Bells in the “Jingle Them Bells!” with trumpet flourishes and dissonant intervals. Members of the woodwind section moved to the percussion for this selection to assist in an extended percussion ensemble within the larger band. With the added bells, chimes, and cymbals, it was beginning to sound a lot like Christmas.

A crowd favorite among the younger generation, “Symphonic Highlights from “Frozen”,” conducted by student conductor—and clarinetist—Jason Marquez (junior, music performance), launched to a rhythmic and driving rendition of the Disney classic. The medley included popular tunes “Do You Wanna Build a Snowman?”, “For The First Time in Forever,” and, of course, “Let it Go.” Regarding his opportunity to take the podium and impressive job directing the ensemble, Jason says “I waved my stick, and things happened magically.”

The following number was a fantasia on themes from the Nutcracker. Arranged by Julie Giroux in 2011, the piece had a modern take on the traditional music; it illustrated the daydreaming of various Nutcracker themes, then it shifted to an actual dream sequence of the listener being absorbed into the world of the ballet. Regarding the band’s performance of “Nutcracker Fantasia”—one of the longer pieces on the program—Samantha Cardwell (sophomore, music performance) mentions that “it felt so magical. The music itself made me feel like I was immersed into a whole other world. Especially the fantasy on the Nutcracker, since it is one of my favorite ballets.”

“We Wish You a Mambo Christmas,” with its Latin-American syncopated dance rhythm, drove the concert to a close. Near the end of the piece, the Wind Symphony surprised the audience by yelling “Mambo!” in a festive cheer. Regarding the concert as a whole, Ricardo Navarro (graduate, music performance) says “I think we were kind of cold, so coming together with the first piece, which was fast and energetic, it was tough to play together. But as the concert went on and we warmed up, it started flowing a lot better. The adrenaline of the concert brought some better results in general—musically speaking—in my opinion. The Mambo song brought such a great energy, and afterward, I got a lot of positive feedback from people.”

The concert was well received with a burst of applause and holiday spirit, as Dr. Graves himself noted “I do believe that’s the fastest standing ovation since I started teaching.”

## NEWS

# Winter Break Is Almost Here: Now What?

Jenae Rogers [12.08.21](#)



Photo by L. Filipe C. Sousa

---

Finals are fast approaching, and the semester is coming to a close. Soon, many students will be leaving Andrews University's campus to enjoy the holidays and winter break. However, there are several questions that need to be answered first: How do I leave campus if I do not have a car? What do I need to do before I leave campus?

There are several options available for students needing transportation before or after winter break. For one, the Andrews University Student Association (AUSA), and Student Life, is providing transportation from Andrews University to Chicago O'Hare Airport on December 16 and 17, as well as back to campus on January 9, at a price of \$30 per trip. To find out more information about signing up for a spot, visit [AUSA's Instagram page](#) or follow this [link](#) to their google form. Secondly, Andrews University's [Office of Transportation](#) offers rides to South Bend Airport, South Shore Train, South Bend Amtrak Station, South Bend Greyhound Bus Station, Benton Harbor Greyhound Bus Station, and Niles Amtrak Station. For rides from Andrews to a location, students should fill out the [Departure Request Form](#). For one back to Andrews from one of these locations, fill out the [Arrival Request Form](#). Trips to South Bend cost \$35 one-way, and transportation to Niles or Benton Harbor costs \$30 one-way. From there, students can travel to another airport or even all the way to their final destination. Finally, students can also make use of dorm Facebook groups ([Lamson & Meier](#)) to look for other students who may be willing to transport them or carpool. Please remember to wear a mask when flying or using any of these public transportation options.

Besides figuring out transportation, there are several other things that need to be done before leaving campus for winter break. While stressing about finals and other projects, it can be hard to keep track of everything, so here is a simple checklist of things to complete before leaving:

- submit an [overnight leave request](#) and wait for it to be approved
- return any library books or rented textbooks to avoid accruing fees
- check your mailbox and pick up any packages
- clean out your fridge and throw away any perishable foods
- make sure your window is shut
- throw away all trash in outdoor garbage bins
- unplug any electronics being left behind
- turn off any alarm clocks

- turn off the lights
- lock the door

Now you are ready to enjoy winter break. Safe travels everyone!

## Ideas

---

### IDEAS

# Master Your Sleep to Master Your Finals!

Robert Zhang 12.08.21

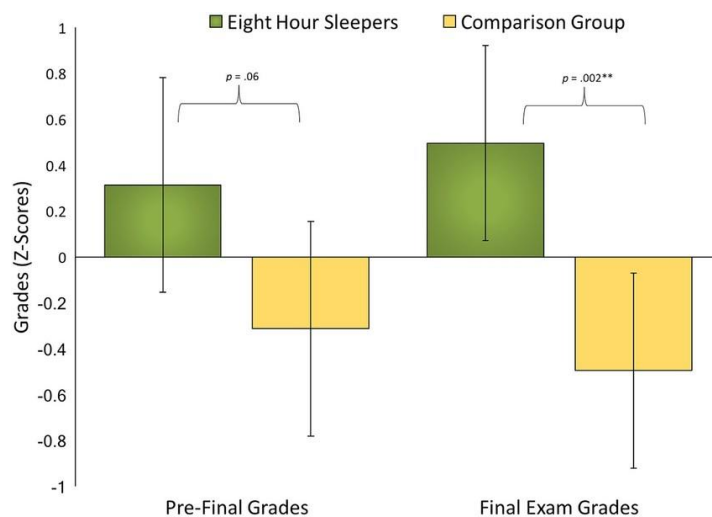


Photo by Michael K. Scullin

---

Important things should be emphasized three times, thus: sleep, sleep, sleep eight hours a day! Many people will ask, "why"? They say, "Of course I know that sleep is important, but I have an important exam tomorrow and I hope to get good grades." It is precisely because of this idea that the contemporary college student group is

classified as [one of the groups with the worst sleep quality](#). However, the truth of the problem is that, on average, bad sleep quality actually [reduces college students' test scores and](#) normal performance.

The [experiment](#) led by Michael K Scullin proved the above point. For well-known reasons, people are used to exaggerating their sleep time during surveys. So Scullin first put on sleep detectors for the volunteers, which screened out two groups of members. The experimental group consisted of people who slept for more than eight hours on average, while the comparison group consisted of people who slept for less than eight hours on average. The daily grades and final grades of each course of each participant in the experiment are converted into Z scores to facilitate statistics. The Z-scores represent the gap between a person's average performance and the final/pre-final grade, that is, if the Z score is zero, the person's performance will be as usual; a higher Z score equals higher performance than usual, and a negative score means lower performance in comparison.

As shown in the figure at the top of the article, participants in the trial who had more than eight hours of sleep performed significantly better than those who had less than eight hours of sleep. The subsequent interviews with the experimenters also proved this point. Many of them who stayed asleep for eight hours admitted that their brains were more "awake" than before.

Therefore, according to the conclusion, no matter how stressful and difficult it is to complete school or work, ensuring eight hours of sleep and a reasonable allocation of time is more efficient and healthy than staying up late and working overtime to catch up. In order to improve people's [sleep quality](#), Scullin also prepared ten tips when selecting eight-hour sleepers, which are listed below.

1. Only use the bed for sleep rather than for studying or entertainment (to associate the bed with sleeping rather than with alertness).
2. Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday, even on weekends (variability in sleep timing alters circadian rhythms; Phillips et al., 2017)
3. Avoid electronics near bedtime (blue light suppresses melatonin production and REM sleep).
4. Avoid caffeine and other stimulants at least 6 hr before bedtime (caffeine use delays sleep and can decrease slow wave sleep).
5. Maximize fiber and minimize saturated fats at dinner (high fat/low fiber dinners may decrease slow wave sleep).
6. If you cannot fall asleep in 10-20 min, then get up and leave the room. Only try



again when you feel sleepy (avoids associating the bed with not being able to sleep).

7. Avoid long daytime naps (long naps can make falling asleep at night more difficult).

8. Engage in aerobic exercise in the morning or afternoon (moderate intensity aerobic exercise improves sleep quality).

9. If you are ruminating at bedtime, then write out your to-do list or worries (writing decreases sleep onset latency).

10. Prioritize sleep and manage time better during the day, for example, by staying on campus after class to complete homework (if incentivized, students can sleep 8 hr, even before final exams).

More sleep is indeed a more efficient and healthier choice according to current research, and everyone should try to make it their own lifestyle choice. During finals week, the points made by Scullin seem to be more important because time is limited. Therefore, higher learning efficiency and appropriate learning time are naturally the top priorities. More calmness is also needed at this time, and more sleep can help you achieve all of this.

I sincerely wish all readers can arrange their time reasonably, achieve their own satisfactory results during the final days of the semester, and have a happy Christmas holiday. Sleep quality is closely related to a reasonable schedule, and making a change during the holidays can help you develop a good habit that will benefit you throughout your life.

## IDEAS

# Pollution and Progress: The Nuclear Dilemma

Alexander Navarro [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Lukas Lehotsky (Unsplash)

---

When it comes to energy production, nuclear energy is one of the more controversial sources of electricity used today, even though it accounts for a little under [20%](#) of electricity production in the US. In the US, the construction of new nuclear power plants is fairly rare. In fact, from [1977 until 2013](#), no new nuclear power plants began construction, although there are currently two new facilities under construction. Now, many old reactors are reaching the ends of their lifetimes and are being decommissioned; in fact, the Palisades nuclear power plant, which is about a half hour drive from Andrews University, is one such plant, and it is to be decommissioned this [spring](#). Given this, I think it would be profitable to take a close look at nuclear energy: how dangerous is it, what are some of its advantages and disadvantages, what are other countries doing with it, and should we be using it?

When many people think of nuclear power, I am quite confident that what comes to people's minds are two places, Chernobyl and Fukushima, where two major

nuclear power plant disasters took place. Thus, we would expect that there are quite a few deaths and health hazards associated with nuclear power. Thankfully, scientists have looked at the various types of power generation and have compared how many premature deaths are caused by each one. Taking into account the deaths from nuclear disasters, nuclear energy comes in at [0.07 deaths per terawatt-hour](#) (TWH) (for context, the US produces about 4,007 TWH annually). Comparing this to other methods of power generation, unsurprisingly, the number of deaths per TWH for nuclear power is more than wind and solar power, which come in at 0.04 and 0.02 deaths per TWH respectively. However, what is more surprising is how this compares to coal, which has 24.6 deaths per TWH, and oil, which has 18.4. This means that coal power is over 350 times more deadly than nuclear power.

The reason why people know about the nuclear disasters, why they appear all over the news when they happen, is precisely because they are so rare and unusual. Nuclear reactors have many safety measures built into them because when they catastrophically fail, it can be really bad. But catastrophic failures almost never happen.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the Fukushima meltdown was determined by a [commission](#) to have been preventable and caused by human error, as a result of mismanagement, and lack of safety oversight and training. When reactors are managed properly, like the vast majority are, they are actually one of the safest power options we have.

Besides their danger, one objection many critics of nuclear energy have is the difficulty of storing nuclear waste. This is indeed something that one has to deal with when nuclear reactors are developed. However, scientists and engineers have developed [many different solutions](#) for storing nuclear waste. For example, one commonly used technique is deep geological disposal, where the nuclear waste is put in multilayer, corrosion resistant tanks and stored hundreds of meters underground, where it can safely decay without risk of leaking. Other solutions include near surface storage facilities, where one prominent method includes storing tanks of nuclear waste in large pools of water. The water absorbs any nuclear radiation from the waste, allowing safe storage.

Now, if humanity wants to move towards entirely renewable energy, should we even be investing in nuclear energy? Why not just move directly into producing more solar and wind farms for energy? There are several main problems with solar and wind energy that make them hard to use as the exclusive sources of power, primarily being inconsistency and storage. The sun isn't always shining, and the

wind isn't always blowing, and as such, one can't control how much power one has access to.

For this reason, when one develops solar and wind power facilities, one also often needs to create large power storage systems to store electricity for "rainy days." While there are many power storage system solutions both currently available and in development ([the US recently invested \\$27 million in energy storage research](#)), having a steady source of power that is predictable and controllable makes both windless days and spikes in power consumption easier to deal with. In the US, that steady power production is currently mostly from fossil fuels, which accounts for [60% of US electricity](#). Thus, nuclear is a great alternative to fossil fuels as we work on transitioning to other renewable sources. Either way, even once the electrical grid goes completely carbon-free, there needs to be something that is a stable energy source, and, in my opinion, better nuclear than fossil fuels, since as shown before, it is both safer for humans and better for the environment.

So, given what we know, what should the US do? I think there are two possible responses to nuclear energy that are exemplified by Germany and France. Germany, in the wake of the Fukushima meltdown, has been moving towards a complete phase out of all [nuclear power](#). France, on the other hand, has been pursuing nuclear power as a primary energy source, even having up to 70% of their electrical generation coming from nuclear energy, although they are planning on reducing that to [50% by 2035](#). Germany currently uses fossil fuels for over [40% of their power generation](#), with renewables accounting for about 44%. France, on the other hand, only derives about [7% of its energy consumption](#) from fossil fuels.

Which way is better: to pursue nuclear power generation or focus on other renewable sources? Depending on who you ask, you will get different answers on what the best answer is, but I think, given what you now know, you will agree that nuclear power is a much better alternative to fossil fuels. Not only is it safer, but while coal produces [820 tonnes](#) of greenhouse gasses per gigawatt-hour (GWH), nuclear energy only produces 3. It is a consensus in the scientific community that every country needs to move towards getting rid of fossil fuels and moving towards green energy. Certainly, shutting down nuclear reactors for no other reason than the fictitious belief that they are more dangerous than other sources of power following disasters like Fukushima is not helping the problem.

Nuclear power is a proven method of generating electricity for use in our everyday lives, it is capable of being a stable source of clean energy to our power grids, and it

may be the best short-term solution as we still work on solving the problems involved in the widespread implementation of renewable energy sources.

The [French president, Emmanuel Macron, stated](#) that nuclear power is “the most carbon-free way to produce electricity with renewables.” It certainly seems to be a good option, but either way, every day we spend debating whether to pursue nuclear energy or not is a day in which we are delaying the transition towards more sustainable sources. In any case, we need to get over our fears of the past and look to the facts as we progress into a more sustainable future.

<sup>1</sup>Though accidents do occasionally happen, with the vast majority of nuclear reactors proper care is truly taken, as is exemplified in the rarity of nuclear accidents. Fukushima is an exception in that way, it is an unfortunate example where care was not taken. One can just as easily talk about how care is often not taken on oil rigs, or in coal mines, and probably also in building hydroelectric dams and other renewable sources. People cutting corners and not following regulations is something common to all areas. Since Fukushima, there has been significantly more oversight with nuclear power, so it is almost a tragic blessing, although it would be ideal if other power sources could have similar levels of oversight.

## IDEAS

# Should We Lie To Kids About Santa?

Elizabeth Getahun [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Dr. Z (Unsplash)

---

I never grew up believing in Santa, since my parents made the decision to make sure my siblings and I knew he wasn't real from the start. I had friends who believed Santa was real for many years, and while some kids who knew the truth kept it to themselves, I took it upon myself to liberate them from the lie they'd been living. Teachers and parents would try to maintain the illusion for other kids, and while I appreciated the sentiment, I cared more for truth than fantasy. Entering adulthood and looking back on childhood, I see how the decision of whether or not to lie to kids about Santa is more complex than what I had originally thought as a child. Many individuals view the belief in Santa as an imperative aspect of childhood and Christmas altogether. Many parents have fond memories relating to Christmas and Santa that they want to pass on to their children. Other parents believe lying to their children about a man with a white beard who brings gifts may

not be beneficial to their child, especially when they eventually come to learn the truth. This begs the question: should we lie to kids about Santa?

This is a common dilemma among parents during the Christmas season. Most adults don't want to be the whistleblower who spilled the beans and ruined Christmas for their child—or any other child, for that matter. But they also don't want their children to think they can't be trusted after lying about something like Santa. Blake Harper, from [Fatherly](#), shares statements from psychologist and parenting expert Dr. Justin Coulson, who believes that parents should simply tell their kids the unadulterated truth. He makes his argument by saying that in the same way that we can watch a film knowing it's fiction and still enjoy it, kids can also participate in Christmas knowing the truth about Santa while still being every bit as enthralled and excited about the holiday season. Dr. Coulson continues to explain the negatives of lying to kids about Santa by bringing up an integral aspect of the belief in Santa, which is wrapped around Santa's question "were you naughty or nice?" Dr. Coulson states, "when we use a coercive, manipulative strategy to get our kids to behave, we are relying on extrinsic contingencies by telling them to be good in order to get what they want. And once that motivation is gone, how do we know they'll still feel compelled to behave? It's morally, ethically, and scientifically dubious at best. Research shows that kids who are lied to by their parents are more likely to lie [themselves](#)."

An article by Judi Ketteler in [Time](#) shared Massachusetts Psychology Professor Robert Feldmen's thoughts on lying, as he studied the topic for years. Feldmen found that kids grow into lying from observing the behavior of their parents. However, there is such a thing called prosocial lying, which is basically a lie that benefits another person. Dr. Levine did some research on Asymmetric preferences for prosocial lies of commission and [omission](#), and her research supports the idea that prosocial lying can increase trust when someone has true insight into what the other person needs. This is an idea that parents utilize when battling the argument that lying to kids about Santa can be harmful, saying that prosocial lying can be beneficial and not detrimental to their relationship with their children within certain contexts.

There is an argument to be made that allowing a child to believe in Santa isn't necessarily lying to them. Wendy Thomas Russell wrote in an article on PBS [NewsHour](#) that "Seen in the right light, Santa is not a lie; he's a mystery. And it's up to each little boy and girl to unravel the mystery for themselves." She draws from "[Parenting](#) Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion"—



a [counterpoint](#) to Flynn's arguments—where Dale McGowan makes the argument that allowing kids to believe in Santa and figure out the truth is a rite of passage for young children. McGowan argues that it promotes healthy skepticism and allows kids to exercise their critical thinking skills. He uses his experience with his own son as an example, where his child asked him if Santa was real, and McGowan asked his child what he thought. His child responded saying he thought Santa was all the parents, and it was then that McGowan shared the truth with his child. Basically, the article communicates that it may be good to passively support the myth of Santa without exacerbating details of the myth or making overt statements that hurdles a child further into the fantasy. Allowing your child to engage in the myth while making sure they are exposed to evidence contrary to the myth—for example, multiple Santas in various establishments or less fortunate children who don't get presents—may be the best route to take when dealing with the issue of Santa.

Overall, I think we can agree that the choice to let a child believe in Santa or not should be made within the family by the parents. There are many resources out there that are accessible to anyone who may need guidance regarding this persistent issue in the parental community. Whether you should lie to kids about Santa seems to be dependent on the child itself. Some kids may not develop a habit of distrust or lying and may rather develop a healthy sense of skepticism and critical thinking, while others may use the experience to feed into the belief that it's okay to lie without understanding which contexts are not okay to lie in, and so on. This is why parents should make the decision after doing proper research, and should make their decision based on the knowledge they have of who their child is. Whichever route they choose to take, one thing is for sure: a child can have an immensely joyous holiday with Santa whether they think he's real or not.

Personally, I'm not big into the Santa aspect of Christmas. I wouldn't say there is anything inherently problematic about the idea of Santa, but the fuss can be a bit much. As a child, I enjoyed the movies about him and I even enjoyed going to see someone dressed as Santa and telling him what I wanted for Christmas—but it was merely out of Christmas tradition for me. In my household, my parents never allowed us to think he was real because they didn't want us to focus on greed or receiving during the holiday. Instead, they put an emphasis on giving. We would buy and wrap gifts for our neighbors and the less fortunate we knew in our community. Doing so became our tradition and those were the gifts that were under our tree. On Christmas Eve, we would go out to deliver them, and our



parents would also take us to the Salvation Army to volunteer for a couple hours. Since we're a christian family, they wanted the emphasis of Christmas to be more about belief in Jesus and the reason for his birth rather than about Santa.

In my opinion, you can learn to think critically or have healthy skepticism in the endeavor to figure out whether the miracle of Jesus' conception and birth was real or not. Coming into that belief changes a person's life a lot more than a belief in Santa. If I have kids someday, and they learn about Santa outside of the home, I will guide them toward the truth. I won't immediately burst their bubble, but I will make sure the emphasis and significance of Christmas for them isn't wrapped around Santa but around Jesus and the idea of giving.

## Pulse

---

PULSE

# A Yearly Theme Instead

T Bruggeman 12.08.21

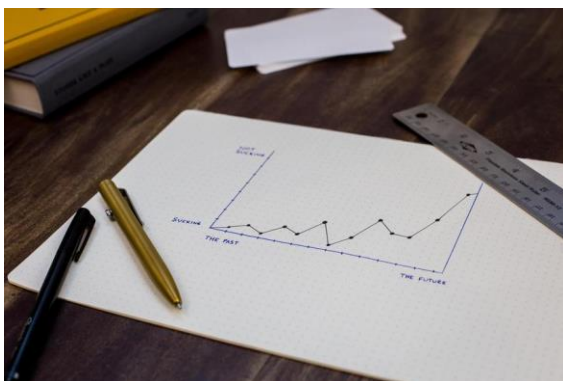


Photo by Isaac Smith (Unsplash)

---

With New Year's speeding towards us, I want to congratulate you on your successful continuation of all the New Year's Resolutions you made ever so long

ago last January! Ah yes, I can see it now: you'll wake up on December 31st after getting enough sleep, go to the gym one last time, waving to the desk worker you've seen twice a week for the last year. When you get home, you'll nobly refuse the pizza your family ordered for dinner and instead enjoy a delicious vegan salad. Oh, and you'll also call your Grandma; you'd never forget that. You'll watch the ball drop for the new year and a wave of satisfaction will wash over you for completing each and every resolution, just like you did last year and the year before, steadily improving yourself and your life bit by bit. Truly inspiring!

Okay, be honest with me, have you ever brought a New Year's Resolution all the way from January through to December? Maybe you have, in which case, I most certainly applaud you. But New Year's Resolutions are so famously hard to keep up that it almost seems to have become more common to set them ironically, and we groan whenever the hundredth and first person that day smugly tells us their resolution is to not make any resolutions. In this article, I want to present for your viewing delight an alternative, an idea that does away with the hopeless inefficacy and inevitable failure of resolutions: Yearly Themes.

But first, let's briefly examine why resolutions never seem to work. The truth is, changing behavior is very very hard, and it takes intention, commitment, and a fair amount of work. Resolutions fail precisely because they're *able to*. They generally consist of a goal we're working towards with a very clear failstate: go to the gym more—if we don't go to the gym more, we've failed. Now, let's be real, since changing our own behavior is so difficult, we're undoubtedly going to fail our resolutions every now and then, especially at the start. And the problem is that, once we've failed, we become far less motivated to start back again and keep going. Humans like streaks, and it feels almost pointless to go on once we break them. The other thing is that life happens. We get busy, we get injured, we get stressed, we have to move, we have to find a new job. A change in situation can often make resolutions impossible, making us fail through no fault of our own.

Therefore, instead of a resolution, allow me to suggest to you a Yearly Theme. A theme, unlike a specific resolution, is a broad stroke. It is some aspect of your life that you want to focus on throughout next year. It is a framework with which to make decisions, a north star to lead you right, a friendly reminder to do the things that are important to you. A theme can encompass many aspects of your life, and within it you can set individual aligning goals.

Let me give you an example to show you why themes are better than resolutions. Instead of “I will go to the gym x times per month,” let’s say you set the “Year of Health” as your Yearly Theme. The concept of “health” says a lot, but what it means to you is up to you. Part of it can be resolving to go to the gym more often, yes, but it could also give you the opportunity to think about your diet, maybe your emotional and mental health, even stretching to things like relationship health, if that’s something you want to focus on. What’s cool too is that it can adapt with you throughout the year. Perhaps you’re going strong at the gym all through January, but come February First you’re in a car accident and you get injured. You may not be able to run or lift for a while, but instead of falling into lethargy, you think about the Year of Health. Well, you can probably still stretch, maybe finally see what yoga’s all about, maybe do some pool aerobics. Or perhaps now’s the perfect time to think a bit more about your diet and try to improve there. Whatever you do, the point is you’re still on track with your theme, whereas your resolution would have floundered and died.

Another key thing themes do is remove the guilt of failure, because where resolutions are about crossing individual points, themes are about trendlines. Imagine you set the Year of Initiative: you want to be more confident, you want to apply for that internship; you want to travel; you want to be spontaneous. And then Covid hits. And maybe what the Year of Initiative means to you now is simply pulling yourself out of bed. Putting on clean clothes. Eating. Bringing yourself to reach out to friends on Zoom. Doing anything to keep yourself sane and alive. And maybe, at the end of the year, you come out technically worse off than you were going in. But maybe you also come out less worse than you could have been, and that’s still a massive success.

My theme this last year has been the Year of Metamorphosis, lovingly referred to as the Year of Leveling Up or the Year of the Butterfly. I came up with this theme last December largely due to imposter syndrome. Basically, I wanted to become the person that other people thought I was, and to an extent the person I wanted to be. And, to be honest, the first four months of the year I didn’t have the emotional capacity to even think about my theme or self improvement. But by mid-April, a number of things happened in my life, and my theme came to take on a related, yet very new, meaning. And that’s the beautiful thing about themes—as you grow as a person, they grow with you, and they shine a light on the next step you should take to continue growing.

So, as we come to the end of another semester and another calendar year, I encourage you—once exams are over and you get home and settle back into your own room for the holidays—spend the last two weeks of December with the idea of themes squiggling around the back of your head. Don't rush it—think about it, but try to let a theme come naturally to you (and pro tip, when the perfect theme occurs to you in some random moment, immediately stop and write it down because you will forget :P).

The themes I've personally set by the fireplace to warm for a bit are the Year of Care and the Year of Now—you can have more than one—but those may still shift around as the year begins its conclusion, we'll see. Whatever you decide on for yourself, I hope you choose to wake up in the new year thematically, and I hope you're able to leave next December a better you for doing so!

If you're interested in hearing more in-depth about yearly themes, I would highly recommend the video, [“Your Theme”](#), by YouTuber CGP Grey, and the episodes [#95](#), [#104](#), and [#110](#) of the Cortex Podcast.

## PULSE

# AUSA Christmas Light-Up

Karenna Lee [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Dawson Par

---

On the evening of December 1, the Andrews University Student Association (AUSA) ushered in the Christmas season with a tree lighting ceremony. The usual Gazebo tables surrounded the newly-lit tree, its lights twinkling between shimmery silver, gold, and crimson ornaments. As the night carried on, a warm optimism permeated the scene. Carols flowed through the Campus Center and the overhead lights were dimmed as the attending students embraced the Christmas spirit. They wandered towards the tantalizing aromas of hot chocolate and apple cider.

From the counter, the AUSA officers served the students an array of hot drinks. Fluffy whipped cream topped mini marshmallows melting in rich chocolate. Tea bags seeped in insulated paper cups, and people tore open packages of apple cider, stirring the sweet drink into the near-boiling water. Officers chatted with students and swapped stories from Thanksgiving break. From those who'd gone home for Thanksgiving to those who'd hung around campus, many had enjoyed a restful respite from the academic grind over the November holiday.

Warmed from the inside out, people drew towards the tree itself. Full-branched and gleaming, it offered attendees a lovely, seasonally-themed backdrop for polaroid pictures. Luke Drew (sophomore, medical laboratory science), the AUSA secretary, remained poised with a pastel blue camera. He snapped pictures of willing students. Beaming, students clung to their friends before the tree. They clipped the pictures to the branches after watching them develop, contributing to the collection of the evening's content faces. The candlelight flickered cheerily below, illuminating a small snapshot of our campus family. Ethan Emde (sophomore, finance) says, "Not only was it a chill environment, but it also allowed people to mingle and take photos with friends! I had a great time, and of course a cup of hot chocolate is always a great way to end the day." Along the same vein, Grace No (sophomore, English) remarks, "The hot chocolate was mid, but the decorations were at least A tier."

People gathered around the offered tables. Surrounded by friends, the hovering stress of finals was lifted for a moment. "It was a heart-warming experience to see people enjoying Christmas to come, and it was also nice to have a break from studying at the end of this semester," divulges Chaehyun Kim (junior, biochemistry). They sipped their sweet beverages, immersed for a moment in a picturesque winter wonderland. One attendee, Morgan Williams (sophomore, social work), shares that the event was "super cute," and it "really made the student center feel home-y."

In a sneak peak of the upcoming winter break, the Christmas Light-Up provided a laid back, comforting atmosphere. As Nora Martin (sophomore, English and psychology) says, “The lights were really pretty, and the vibes were immaculate.” Similarly, junior Nilah Mataafa (junior, accounting) comments on the evening’s ambience: “It was magical. And a lot of fun!” Overall, the night successfully welcomed the Christmas spirit onto the Andrews campus.

## PULSE

# Christmas Gift Ideas

Gloria Oh [12.08.21](#)



Photo by Public Domain

---

With only one week until finals are over, it is no surprise that students are looking forward to leaving campus and enjoying the glee of Christmas time. It is also a great time to reflect on the year of 2021. We can look back at how hard it has been for many of us, but we can also be grateful for those who have sustained us during difficult moments. Although college students’ budgets may be limited, finding affordable items to show appreciation for loved ones is totally possible. Here are a few ideas that you may consider as you shop for your loved ones during this jolly

season. (Also, don't forget to make use of your student discounts whenever possible!)

### **Personalized items (\$10~\$30)**

Club sweatshirts are not the only merchandise that you can personalize. A variety of items ranging from phone cases to photo books are available for customization. If you would like an affordable yet unique gift for your loved ones, consider a gift crafted just for them! Listed below are some items you might consider, and as well as their price ranges. If you have no idea where to start looking for your product, [collage.com](http://collage.com) and [Shutterfly](http://Shutterfly) can be good starting points. Photo books can also be made through Google Photos—a helpful resource if you actively use Google Drive. Google Photos provides two affordable options when creating a photo book with photos uploaded to your account. Softcover photo books are \$10 (7-in square, 20 pages, \$0.49/additional page), and hardcover books are \$20 (9-in square, 20 pages, \$0.99/additional page).

- Mugs (\$8~\$20)
- Blankets (\$20~\$40)
- Phone cases (\$25~\$35+)
- Photo books (\$10~\$20+)

### **Speaker (around \$30)**

Carols are a must to lift the mood during family gatherings and outings with friends. A speaker can be a great gift to meet that need, and it can also be a helpful tool that functions as more than just a music machine: many speakers can set up an alarm, inform you of the weather, check your schedule, and even read a Kindle book for you. One item to consider purchasing is [Amazon's Echo Dot](http://Amazon's Echo Dot) (4th generation) speaker, which is 40% off from its usual price (\$29.99 without tax). It also comes with 6 months of free Amazon Music, so whoever receives your gift can enjoy "Santa Baby" all the way into July! But there are many other speakers in a similar price range, so make sure you know the features of each before you make your purchase.

### **Warm indoor slippers (\$15~\$25)**

Christmas time can be a cozy season, but it can also get brutally cold—especially in areas like Berrien Springs. The cold season can intensify the risk of getting foot injuries for those who have numb feet, as it can take time for them to notice pain in their feet. If one of your loved ones often complains about their cold feet, consider getting them some indoor slippers. Not only are they practical, but they are also very affordable. You can easily find good-quality slippers within the \$15-\$25

range, both in malls and online stores such as Ultraideas and Rockdove. If you have a few extra dollars, consider sneaking in a pair of cozy socks to wear with the slippers!

### **Candle (\$10~\$20)**

Did you know that the sense of smell is very closely associated with our memories and psychology? Photos freeze memories, but scents can also bring back recollections and the feelings you associate with them. If you are going out for a Christmas date or shopping with your friends or loved ones, buy them a candle with a scent they enjoy such as balsam, cinnamon, or even open fire. They will be reminded of the happy memories they had with you whenever they light up that candle. Yankee candles and Bath & Body Works are some places you can buy the candles, but if you would like to look into a more affordable option, Target could be a place to start. But remember to be careful when giving candles to your fellow AU friends. No candle lighting is allowed in the dorm, so make sure they have your present packed into their backpack for home.

### **Letter**

Last but not least, give your loved one a letter filled with gratitude. Gifts can be a fantastic tool to show your appreciation, but words can express some emotions that gifts cannot. Dozens of good-quality Thank You cards and Christmas cards only cost between \$7~\$15—or you might already have some in your drawers that you saved from previous years. Remember, it's your thoughts that count.

As you prepare for the finals, I hope you may also spare a few moments to think about what has brought you through college and the people you are especially grateful for this year. It could be a professor or a TA who has helped you succeed in a course, a friend who was there for you in your lowest moment, or your parents/someone significant who has supported you a great deal. Whoever comes to your mind, I highly recommend showing your gratitude towards them by whatever means available to you. It will make their Christmas—and well as yours—warmer and more delightful. It can also make your college experience a bit merrier. So have that Merry Christmas, everyone!



# The Last Word

---

## THE LAST WORD

# The Positives of a Global Pandemic

Alyssa Henriquez 12.08.21



Photo by Tim Mossholder (Unsplash)

---

At this point in my academic career, Covid-19 has impacted three separate school years. As I process the effects that it has had on local, national, and global scales, I am struck by certain areas in which it has had positive impacts. This is in no way to diminish the immense death and suffering that it has caused, but it is to say that there are certain outcomes of Covid-19 that have not been entirely negative. The following is a mix of points—some humorous, others not—and whatever you take away from them, I hope that they will bring you a little bit of hope as we continue to persevere through this pandemic.

### 1. Environmental Impacts

Covid-19 has resulted in a number of positive outcomes for the environment. As the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) [notes](#), some positive effects have been the improvement of air quality in several cities, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, less water pollution, and less tourist traffic, which makes room for the restoration of certain ecological communities. An [IQAir](#) report specifically noted that air quality was improved in 84% of cities due to Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020. While certain [negative impacts](#) are also present, and have included an increase in medical waste and disinfectant disposal, the overall benefits are striking to observe. They underscore the power that mass movements have to slowly mitigate our damage to the earth.

## 2. Masks (Sometimes)

Alright, hear me out on this. I, like many others, love to see people's smiling faces. I am likewise troubled by phenomena such as [mask fishing](#), and I find it a lot easier to remember a person's name when I can pair this with their uncovered face. These are all fair points.

However, I have never felt quite so liberated to wake up in the morning, look at my tired, sleep-deprived face, and walk right out the door as I do now knowing that two-thirds of it are hidden. Also, I know I'm not the only one who has instinctively smiled at something that was not supposed to be funny, or let any sort of untimely facial expression slip, and been grateful that a mask has been there to conceal it. Masks are also great at keeping your face warm while walking around outside in the winter. Yes, there is winter gear specifically designed for this purpose, but there is nothing easier than walking outside after class and being instantly shielded from the Michigan winter by your personal protective equipment. While I cannot wait for the day when masks will disappear, some aspects of wearing them have been surprisingly convenient.

## 3. Scientific Advancement

The strides that the scientific community has made in the wake of this global crisis are nothing short of amazing. While science has become increasingly politicized in American discourse, I invite you to set all of that aside for a moment and think about something. The typical time that it takes to develop a vaccine is 10-15 years. Creating a Covid-19 vaccine in under one year is a feat that hinged on global collaboration, a flood of recent scientific advancements, and incredible, concentrated efforts on the part of scientists around the world. Because of advances in genomic sequencing techniques, scientists were able to discover the

sequence of the Covid-19 virus about [10 days](#) after the first cases were reported in China. What's more, the pandemic ushered in a [new era](#) of disease prevention—Pfizer and Moderna put forth the very [first mRNA vaccines](#) that have ever been distributed outside of clinical trials. Suffice it to say, the advancements in the scientific community have been incredible as of late, and they would not be possible without the collaboration encouraged by a global pandemic.

#### 4. Long-Distance Communication

In the summer of 2020, I partook in a Zoom call with over 30 members from my mom's side of the family. This included relatives that I hadn't seen since the one time I visited India in 2014, some of whom I wasn't sure I would see again before they died. Yes, platforms like Zoom existed long before Covid-19, but a lot of my older relatives weren't tech-savvy enough to use them. That is, until a global pandemic came along and forced us all to communicate over the internet or live in social isolation. Throughout the course of 2020, I found myself talking much more to people who lived far away from me, including relatives that I usually didn't see more than once a year. Maybe this has had something to do with our tendency to cling to one another in times of uncertainty, but whatever the motivation, the era of Zoom reunions has been really nice.

#### 5. Remote Work and Efficiency

Since March of 2020, some people have left the office and never gone back. They now save money and time due to eliminating their commute, and many have increased flexibility with regard to their work hours. Some worried that the onset of remote work would decrease productivity, but [research](#) has shown that productivity has actually remained stable. This trend in remote working has been perfect for people who wish to cut down on their commute times, want more flexibility in their work hours, or maybe even desire the freedom to move across the country. Unfortunately, remote work has not been available in every field, and many lower-income employees have not been able to take advantage of its benefits. Additionally, remote work does come with its own set of unique challenges—employees must learn to set boundaries to avoid working at odd hours of the night—but when done correctly, it can have immense benefits on an employee's health and lifestyle.

#### 6. Healthcare

The recent increase in telemedicine has ushered in exciting opportunities for underserved patients. While this method of care comes with its own challenges, such as not being able to examine patients in person, it has immense potential to increase healthcare access for those who face geographic and financial challenges. Virtual healthcare visits are valuable for people who live in areas with low concentrations of physicians, and they have an average [cost](#) of \$40-\$50 per visit compared to the average cost of \$136-176 for in-person care. Without the onset of a global pandemic, physicians would not have been forced to adapt to the world of virtual medicine in the same widespread manner as they did in 2020.

## 7. Stronger Communities

This one is crucial. While we have recently experienced immense polarization as a country, there have been invaluable instances of unity throughout the past two years—particularly within local communities.

When I first found out that Andrews was stopping in-person classes in 2020, I was sitting in the PMC chapel with a group of classmates. I still remember the way that we froze when the Provost made the announcement, our hopes of an extended Spring break morphing into a nightmare of long-term isolation. Several minutes after the announcement, one of my professors sent me a text: “Let me know how I can help you.”

The first response that students had was to flock together. I remember walking to the campus center after the town hall, people hobbling out of the Gazebo with bags of groceries; wide-eyed students huddled together in shock. Two days later, Andrews hosted a final vespers before everyone went home. There was a lot of crying, hugging, and other close-range activity that now provokes nervous laughter, but it was a powerful instance of unity in the face of uncertainty. Over one year after that initial shock, the unifying effects of the pandemic still remain. They manifest themselves in the various forms of unanimous change, fear, and hardship that we have all had to face—the collective mask-wearing, the awkwardness of class on Zoom, the way that professors and students alike have to wipe that annoying fog off their glasses. In spite of our collective frustration, we have all experienced difficulties that have inextricably drawn us closer.

-----

In the midst of all of the challenges that we have faced over the past two years, I want to end this year with the reminder that there are still things to look forward

to, celebrate, and be grateful for—regardless of the unpredictability of our circumstances.