



T H E

P R I D E

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Frost and Fun on the Lake:

Erie's Best Winter Activities



Credit: Erie Times News

By Madison Wolfram

The winter season is fast approaching and it can tend to feel dark and dreary. Why not try to fight off the winter blues with some enjoyable entertainment? Well the season of cold is Erie's prime time and it is filled with activities in or around the city that are meant to spark some joy during these times.

Junior Mercy Sanhtay enjoys ice skating at the Flo Fabrizio Ice Center located near the zoo: "It's a fun activity to do in the winter with your friends while still being indoors, away from the cold."

One activity that screams Christmas time is looking at Christmas lights. Go grab a coffee, hot cocoa, or any cozy drink, and head over to Asbury woods for their Winter Wonderland event. Here you will stroll a beautifully lit up boardwalk and enjoy a festive, twinkling display through the snow covered woods.

This experience starts up December 4, 2025 and is open to the public Thursday through Sunday from 5:30 to 8:30, with the



Credit: Ms. Parthenakis

exception of Christmas day.

If a walk in the woods does not ignite enthusiasm, maybe an adventurous trip seems ideal.

Head up to Peak n Peek for their winter season of activities. This resort is well known for its snow-related entertainment. They have 25 trails ranging from all difficulty levels for skiers and snowboarders.

A less physically demanding pursuit, that is more family friendly, would be their Lunar Lights tubing where you can ride down their 7 lanes under colors with great music!

Another sight oriented encounter is visiting Presque Isle to catch a glimpse of the unique ice dunes. This truly is a surreal experience to see the ice towering on the beaches of Erie. Although it is not permitted to climb on the dunes because they are hollow, everyone can enjoy them from a distance while admiring the popular sight.

Junior Silvia Kang enjoys sledding in her back yard, but many in Erie go to the hill inside Frontier Park where they can grab hot chocolate at Romolo's across the street.

One last obscure event to mention would be ice fishing on Lake Erie. This is a big hit in the city that attracts tourists. Calling all fishers willing to brave the cold, this could be the chance for a memorable experience unlike any other!

A prime location for ice fishing would be Presque Isle Bay, and it really fills up with people once the conditions are right. Always check FishErie.com before venturing to ensure safety and check regulations. If all is well, grab



Credit: New York Upstate

some gear, a tent, and a friend to spend some time on the ice.

Ms. Parthenakis, language arts teacher, says the bay is a great place to walk your dog: "Nala enjoys drinking out of the holes in the ice and surveying all the fish people catch."

The winter season can get depressing at times, but in reality, Erie is a great place to be during this period. There is so much to do and see that can take away those cold weather blues. Go explore the opportunities before they melt away!



Credit: ERIE TIMES-NEWS

NIGHTTIME Mysteries

By Merrey Sanhtay

Has there ever been a dream where you were being chased through the Amazon Rainforest by a celebrity and you suddenly fall off a ledge to your imminent death, but instead of dying you wake up in a cold sweat, confused? Dreams have a certain way of not making sense but what do they really mean and why do we have them?

Everyone dreams. According to a survey by Dreamwell, nearly 11% of people remember their dreams every night. Only 6% of people report never remembering their dreams. Of the 11% who remember their dreams, their dreams are often ridiculous and brushed off and never brought up again. However, what if their dream of being eaten alive by the Hamburgular

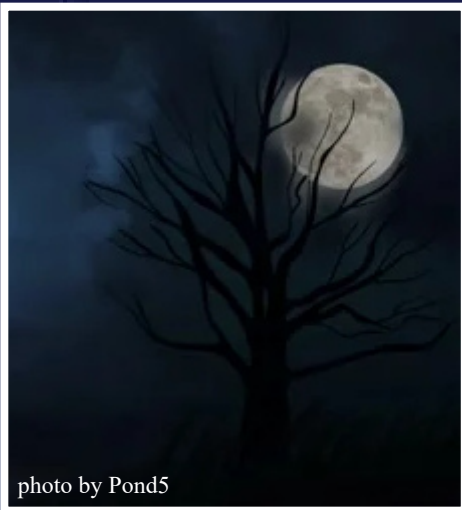


photo by Pond5

has a significant meaning?

To get to the bottom of this, we first have to ask, "Why do dreams occur?" There's not an answer that is true for everyone but there are many theories. According to verywellmind, "No single theory fully explains why we dream; dreams may help us with memories and emotions."

Some ways modern psychologists have helped interpret dreams by making theories. Sigmund Freud, a neurologist, states that, "Some dreams signify what people desire," while Calvin S. Hall, a psychologist, suggests that "some represent what people do and think in their waking lives are what they see in their dreams." But Hobson, a psychiatrist and dream researcher says it's "the brain's way of making sense of spontaneous neural activity that occurs during sleep."

Mr. Weiss, who teaches AP Psychology, says that many psychologists believe in Hobson



photo by Dream Dictionary

theory but, "The human desire to make meaning out of any situation carries over into the interpretation of these random neural impulses. In effect, we attempt to make a story out of completely non-connected activity in the brain during sleep. Regardless, the completely internal nature of dreams puts their study beyond the scientific scope of psychology."

Dreams are never the same, but there are some common ones. With how common these dreams are, there are interpretations of what these dreams/symbols could really mean. If you have ever dreamed of falling, whether it's off a high ledge, or just falling, this could indicate that you are hanging on too tightly to a situation in life which you could lose control over.

To piggy-back off of that, when falling from a great height which leads to waking up in a twitch instead of continuing our dream, this is showing that our minds do not know what happens after death, but know deep enough to feel the near death experience.

Another one would be your teeth falling out, if your teeth fall out in a dream and you aren't able to speak, this could signify that there's something you can't or don't want to say

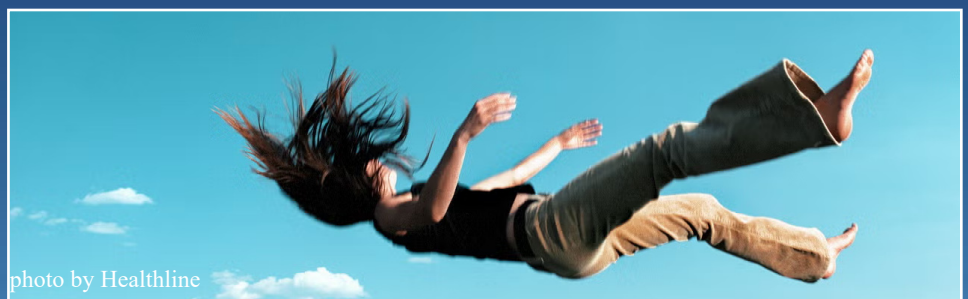


photo by Healthline

in real life.



photo by UC URVINE NEWS

A common one among teens, would be dreaming of someone you would never even think about, in a romantic way. Maybe this could be a sign that you think of them more than you acknowledge. So the next time you brush off your dream of being in a flying van above a New York dropping teeth from your mouth because you think it has no meaning, just remember that these dreams could have a deeper meaning and come to you when you least expect it.

Have a

Coca-Cola

photo by stickpng

Christmas

By Rachelle Messmer



Prior to 1931, Saint Nicholas wasn't actually the jolly red figure we know today. He had many other appearances, ranging from tall and gaunt to small and stubby, and was often depicted as an elf. He wore clothes ranging from Eastern Orthodox bishop robes in colors like blue, brown, and even green to fur coats. You could easily say that this guy had an identity crisis.

The reason behind why Saint Nick had so many different identities is due to his different origins. For example, Kris Kringle originated in Germany, often mistaken for Saint Nicholas, because of their similarities in gift-giving. Then there is Odin from Pagan mythology where he would ride a eight legged horse, Sleipnir. He would ride around and reward the children who would leave Sleipnir treats.

According to the Coca-Cola Company, inspiration for jolly Santa Claus came from the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas," where Saint Nicholas' washed-out colors and robes, evolved into a big, jolly guy in a red suit with a white fur and those big boots. His makeover evolved to make people comfortable with a guy coming into their house in the middle of the night.

From 1931 to 1964, Coca-Cola ads began running worldwide.

Shortly after the ads came out Coca-Cola's profits boomed as people saw the new face of Christmas. The kind, old guy's rosy cheeks appeared on magazines, stores, and billboards holding a Coca-Cola while delivering toys, hanging out with his reindeer, or playing with kids. These ads were so popular that Coca-Cola basically created Santa. You

could even see this Santa in ads drinking the famous ice cold Coca-Cola while reading the naughty/nice list. This version of Santa stuck with the certainty and warmth that lasts today.

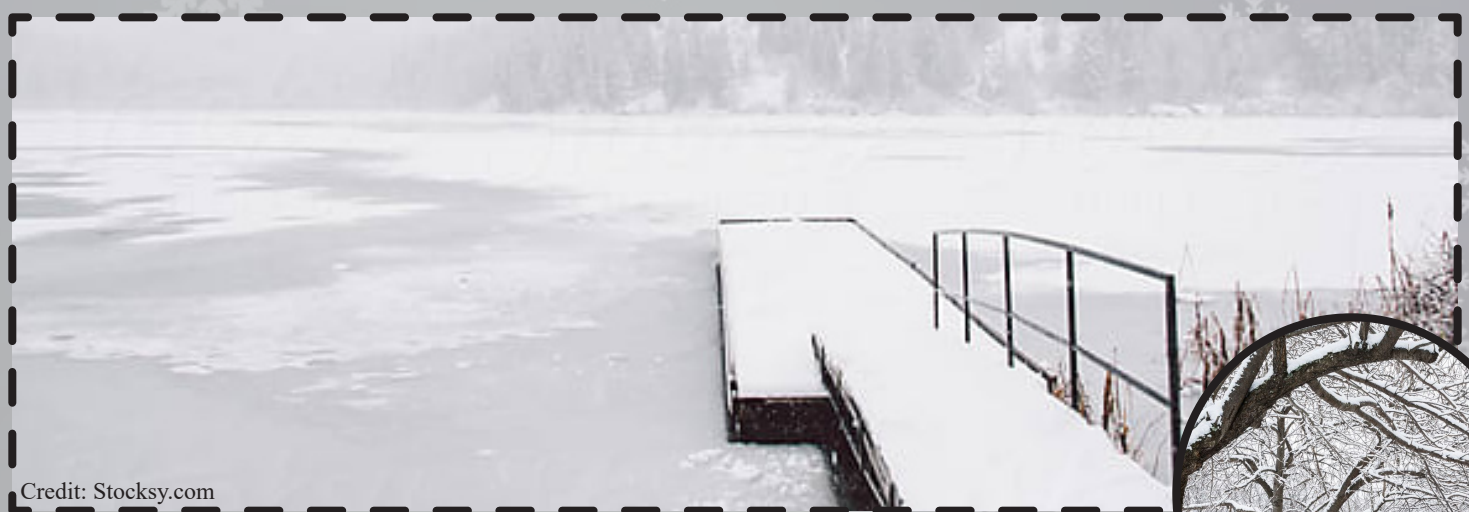
But, let's be honest, Santa has looked the same for so long, maybe it's time for a little makeover. Maybe Santa could be on vacation from a long night of delivering presents, where he is out in the Bahamas surfing, or maybe Buff Santa in the gym getting gains, drinking cookie protein shakes, and bench pressing large candy canes in a red tracksuit, maybe dancing Santa in ballerina shoes, taking on a new hobby with Mrs. Claus? The makeover options are endless.

The movie industry seems to be taking on Santa's makeover with versions of him as a young boy with father issues to Anna Kendrick stepping in when her brother steps aside in the family business. From his earliest looks to the latest depictions, Santa Claus will always be associated with warmth and giving.



photo by people.com

When Motivation Freezes Over



Credit: Stocksy.com

Credit: CNN

By Myles Rhoads

Winter - For some, it can feel like a wonderland; for others it's a living nightmare. The snow can make it feel magical, but the cold can be bitter and cruel. Ice covers the roads, and snow keeps us in. This is why the winter quarter feels like it never ends.

School during winter can feel like the world is turning upside down. The second quarter is usually when classes start to pick up. The high of summer vacation has worn off, and as winter approaches, things get as nasty as the weather.

Days shorten, temperatures drop, and it feels like time slows down. For juniors and seniors alike, it's time for the SAT or ACT, but for most students, classes start to move faster.

As the daytime starts to fade away, so does students' motivation. The glimmer of the

new school year freezes away and stress starts to thaw out in its place. Deadlines start to pile up and grades start to matter. And suddenly school goes from catching up with friends and sharing schedules to tests, projects, and college prep.

Day to day things like morning routines and even your own social life start to change. It gets difficult to wake up when it's freezing cold and dark outside, with a wind sharp enough to cut through clothes. Planning activities with friends gets hard when there's snow piled up outside. For students who walk to school, they have to endure the frigid temperatures and trudge through snow, and for us Collegiate students, that usually means uphill.

Responsibilities start to build up more than the snow banks, and suddenly it feels like everyone is expected to move faster while everything around slows down. Winter isn't just a long test of academic capability, but how resilient students are.

The surroundings around us start to become more and more monochrome. White snow all around, overcast skies, icicles hanging from roofs, and the trees that were once flourishing with colors are barren.

Winter is an entirely different beast than summer, and the changes start to take a toll on how students feel. Every day feels like a repeat of the last: wake up, bundle up, go to school for the entirety of the day, and when you're finally home the sun is already setting.

But as draining as winter is, it builds something quietly. Students learn discipline and

how to keep trekking when things feel heavy. Winter forces us to find our own ways to stay motivated and create our own warmth, even when the world doesn't reflect it. That time your friend slipped on ice, or you hit your brother in the face during a snowball fight, even when the snow piled up so high you thought it was night! There are ways for us not to feel cold, even when we feel that's all there is to be.

And when winter finally thaws out, there's a feeling of relief. The days get longer, mornings get brighter, and weather gets warmer. Getting through the winter quarter isn't about just making it to spring break, it's a test, and every year we pass.



Credit: Yale Climate Connections



Credit: ABC News

HOW DOES SANTA AVOID GETTING CAUGHT?

Credit: Adobe Stock



By Jadier Rivera

We all know that Santa Claus visits the United States every year on his sled pulled by magical reindeer. As a magical being, Santa would likely avoid capture with his magic and his ability to fly faster than most modern transportation.

Every year he also trespasses on private property and risks damage to people's chimneys and roof. At least a few kids must have set traps for him over the years to be able to get even a glimpse of him, and yet he was never caught or even seen transporting the presents. That means that he might have a way to avoid being seen by the children or adults.

He may also have a way to avoid setting off alarms and disabling cameras with his magical powers. St. Nicholas also knows when we're sleeping for some reason, and, of course he must use that ability to also avoid capture.

To be able to avoid being seen while crossing the oceans, Santa must be able to use a sort of device the elves have built to help their boss escape sight. Santa could also have a way to avoid any kind of air traffic that may come his way like avoiding planes that may collide with his sled or drones that might spot him.

Maybe he has gotten caught, and he has a memory wiper that can instantly make someone forget he even existed, like that movie

in which men wore black suits. Santa would use that when he couldn't avoid being caught.

Of course, these are all hypotheticals, and there are a lot of ifs when it comes to Santa, so I sent the man a letter asking for an interview so he could answer the questions asked here.

When asked about the avoidance of ICE, St. Nicholas responded, "Originally I'm from Turkey and I have a passport, but since I'm breaking into people's houses I usually avoid the police and I.C.E with the alien technology and fairy dust. I do sprinkle fairy dust everywhere, but the computer processors don't wanna jam up the fans." This proves the existence of magic and alien tech.

He also said, "Most Countries with underdeveloped tech are of no concern. Israel's Iron Dome however, is a problem and the elves and Mrs. Claus, who has an engineering degree from MIT, have

worked on technology that blocks it. I know Trump is considering the Golden Dome and the elves are preparing for that with a combination of fairy and alien technology." It seems these elves are essential in avoiding capture as they make all this equipment for him to be able to avoid highly effective mobile air defenses.

Then there is the problem of air traffic (birds, planes, the random drone), "That's tricky, you know, the radar can be dealt with, but usually people can talk themselves into thinking I'm something else." These answers provided me with enough evidence to conclude that Santa was heavily reliant on his elves and the magical items like the fairy dust to escape sight and that the elves were brilliant minds that could keep up with the new technology of today.

Santa refused any more questions about how fairy dust is made and disappeared in a puff of glitter.



Credit: Wall Street Journal



Credit: Parents.com

Digesting Delightful Winter Traditions



By Cassie Geiger-Herman

The most common winter traditions around the world include ice skating, midnight mass, ugly sweaters, Three Kings Day, and decorating Christmas trees. Though these are all fun and dandy activities, some people like to shake it up a little.

A fascinating Christmas Eve tradition originating with the Dutch entails kids stuffing their shoes with hay and carrots for “Sinterklaas’s horse,” and in return, the children hope to receive gifts by morning according to Minted. Ava Kerchansky, a junior, says: “We put our shoes under the tree the night before St. Nicholas Day, with no hay or carrots.” Not only does she carry out the shoe tradition, she also celebrates St. Nicholas Day held on December 6th.

Minted notes that in Italian households, families have a feast every Christmas Eve, enjoying seven different seafood dishes, consisting of fish, eels, squid, clam, and mussels from all around the world. Senior, Maddison Barner, celebrates this tradition, explaining, “Before Christmas we cook seven different fish from all of the seven seas.”

For example, some families have unique celebrations like hanging a pickle ornament on the Christmas tree and finding it on Christmas morning. Whoever finds it first gets to open their present first. The mystery of where this tradition comes from, still unknown.

Though heritage and traditions differ, people from all around the world find ways to celebrate together. Consider trying something different during the Holiday season, like the Japanese tradition of ordering a KFC feast or the Ukrainian tradition of decorating your tree with artificial spider webs.

EXPLORING THE EVENTS THAT DEFINED 2025



photo by CNN



photo by Wikipedia

By Advik Joshi

Violent storms, a new president, and constant wars are just a few of the major headlines of 2025.

In January, President Donald Trump got elected for his second term as president. January also saw many severe weather events like wildfires and earthquakes. A 7.1-magnitude earthquake hit Tibet. The Gaza conflict reached a ceasefire but Israel said that Hamas violated the ceasefire and Hamas says that Israel violated the ceasefire. and the situation in Ukraine escalated.

Jadier Rivera who is a junior says "It is very unfortunate for both sides because war is never one sided" when asked about the Gaza war.

In February, a North American storm complex caused deadly flooding in the United States. According to disasterphilanthropy.org, the floods killed over 20 people. The Trump administration banned transgender women in female sports in the United States. The U.S. initiated peace talks between Ukraine and Russia. Zara Lachlan from England became the first person to row from Europe to South America.

In March, the Gaza war continued and Israeli air strikes and other military action

caused over 69,000 deaths. SpaceX launched NASA's Spherex observatory. In politics, Mark Carney replaced Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada.

In April, a sightseeing helicopter crashed into the Hudson River killing all six people on board. John Korir and Sharon Lokeid won the men's and women's Boston Marathon Race. According to utilitydive.com, Boston became the first city in the United States to require new buildings to emit zero carbon emission from the first day they open. Chicago's mayor, Brandon Johnson, said that Chicago's city facilities have switched to 100% clean energy.

In May, a ceasefire was initiated between India and Pakistan after a period of military escalation. The US and Saudi Arabia signed a \$142 billion arms deal. The United Nations (UN), announced 2025 as the International Year of Peace and Trust.

In June, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda struck a peace agreement. A devastating aircraft accident happened in India involving a Boeing 787 dreamliner. The plane only made it a few hundred feet into the air before losing all engine power and crashing into buildings in front of the runway. US citizens protested in the "No Kings" protest in all 50 states.

In July, Chelsea won the FIFA club world cup. Scientists in Sweden and China made a breakthrough using gene therapy where they injected a healthy gene into patients, and it improved their hearing. Baltimore, Maryland reported the lowest number of homicides in 50 years.

In August, Chengdu, China held the 2025 world games. There was a landslide in Sudan which killed over 1,000 people. Beijing, China held the first humanoid games, which are the olympics for robots.

In September, the Nepali government collapsed due to protests. The U.S military conducted a strike against a boat from Venezuela that was thought to have drugs. Sébastien LeCornu was sworn in as the new prime minister of France.

Farrel Battle, a sophomore, said "They had the right to protest but they took it too far by setting fire to the government buildings" when asked about his opinion on the Nepali government collapsing.

James Tamang who is a freshmen said "The military used such a destructive force even though they didn't know the boats had any drugs on them" when asked about his opinion on the Venezuelan boat airstrike.

In October, the Yorkshire program removed barriers from rivers for fish migration. Israel and Palestine initiated a ceasefire. Peru's president, Dina Boluarte, was impeached amid accusations of failing to address the country's rising corruption. Continuing attacks against alleged Venezuelan drug dealers, the U.S military launched an airstrike on a boat killing four people. Israeli hostages were released after two years of fighting. Also some of the Palestinian prisoners were released.



photo by WomenInSport

Winter Adventures Await in Erie



By Na'Kylah Tate

As snowflakes drift over Lake Erie, the city becomes a peaceful winter escape filled with beauty and warmth. The streets sparkle with fresh snow, and the cold breeze carries the scent of hot cocoa and comfort food from local cafes. Erie's winter charm shines through in both adventure and relaxation.

In every corner of the city, there's something magical waiting to be discovered, making Erie the perfect place to embrace the season and create lasting memories. Whether you love outdoors or prefer staying warm inside, Erie has something for everyone during the winter season. People can take in the snowy beauty of Presque Isle State Park, where frozen trails and icy views of the lake make for a perfect walk.

winter treats. Stop by Casa Cafe or Lucky Bean for their fresh baked goods and hot coffee or enjoy a bowl of soup at The Brewerier At Union Station, where the warm, rustic setting feels like home.

When downtown, step inside Ember + Forge for a cup of locally roasted coffee and a view of snowflakes drifting past the windows. Erie's small businesses and cafes create a cozy atmosphere that makes winter days feel extra special.

Erie's winter calendar is filled with events that bring people together. In December, the Downtown D'Lights celebration turns Perry Square into a sparkling wonderland of holiday lights. Families gather to see the Festival of Trees at the Bayfront Convention Center, where

beautifully decorated trees light up the season for a good cause. The Erie Zoo Lights Event is another favorite, as visitors stroll through glowing paths, sip cocoa, and meet animals under twinkling lights.



Photo by Peek'n Peak



Photo by Erie Reader

If you're feeling adventurous, grab a sled and head to Frontier Park or Harborcreek Community Park for a fun afternoon in the snow. For indoor fun, stop by Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park to warm up, or spend the evening ice skating downtown at Erie Insurance Arena. Don't forget to visit Peek'n Peak Resort just outside the city for skiing, snowboarding, and cozy fireside moments.

After a day of snowy adventures, nothing beats warming up with some of Erie's favorite



Photo by Medium



Photo by Erie Times-News

And when the holidays are over, there's still fun at The Winterfest at Frontier Park, where ice sculptures, sledding, and warm food make the cold feel inviting. These events remind everyone that winter in Erie isn't something to endure, it's something to celebrate.

Erie is all about enjoying the little moments that make the season special. It's a time to bundle up, have fun, and make memories with loved ones. No matter how chilly it gets, Erie's winter always finds a way to warm hearts.

Photo by Peanut Blossom



Tracking Santa's Helper: The History Behind Elf on the Shelf

By Mariam Kanj

Every holiday season, thousands of families buy and welcome a small elf into their homes, also known as an Elf on the Shelf. This tiny figure has become an important Christmas tradition across the world; however, do people really know how an Elf on the Shelf even became a tradition?

Senior Lola Valenti says, "I don't know the history behind the elves on the shelves but I did have an elf and I think her name was Coco. One time for her morning prank, he took a chocolate kiss dump in a tupperware container, it was hilarious."

As stated by Duluth Pack Reports, a couple years later in 2004, Carol and Chanda decided to share their special tradition with others. They both collaborated to write a book known as *The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition* about an elf who visits children from Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve. They also included a small elf doll with the book, allowing other families to bring this tradition into their homes.

At first, most publishers weren't sure that this idea would be a success, so Carol and Chanda decided to publish it themselves. They started a company called CCA & B (also known as "Creatively Classic Activities and Books"), and then sold the book at local stores and fairs.

This idea quickly became so popular that tons of families had loved the idea of an Elf on the Shelf. Over time, children would start searching the house to find where their elf had moved overnight.

Photo by The Elf on the Shelf



According to CNBC News, the idea of an Elf on the Shelf originally came from Carol Aebersold and her daughter Chanda Bell. When her daughter Chanda was growing up in the 1970s, her family had a tiny elf doll that would watch her and her siblings during the holiday season. Every night her mother told her that the elf would fly back to the North Pole to report to Santa about the children's behavior throughout the day and then return to a new spot in the house. Carol thought this was a fun way to remind the kids to be on their best behavior before Christmas.

Photo by The Elf on the Shelf



Photo by The Jolly Christmas Shop

Senior Kenzie Voto says, "I had an elf on the shelf when I was younger, it was super creepy and it used to be beside my tv next to my bed almost every night."

Over the years, Elf on the Shelf grew into a worldwide tradition. These elves now come in different clothing styles, sizes, and skin tones. There are even movies, musicals, and others created based off of this tradition. What had started as a family's small holiday tradition, soon became a big holiday classic worldwide, and continues to grow every holiday season.

HOW DIFFERENT CULTURES CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

By Ali Abdulzahra

The world celebrates Christmas in a variety of ways differently worldwide, with some cultures enjoying unique food like KFC in Japan or panettone in Italy, while others have traditions like the “Burning of the Devil” in Guatemala or roller-skating to church in Venezuela. Many European countries have Christmas markets, while the Philippines decorates with star-shaped lanterns called parols.

According to WhyChristmas.com it states that Mexican Christmas festivities center around “Las Posadas,” a nine-night re-enactment of Mary and Joseph’s journey, which concludes with a celebratory party and piñatas. Gift-giving typically occurs on Epiphany Eve (January 5th), delivered by the Three Wise Men. It is a tradition where children leave grass and water for their camels and place shoes out. Epiphany is a Christian holiday, also known as Three Kings’ Day or Theophany, celebrated on January 6th by many denominations

Additionally, according to

Photo by Bibiana Palacios



Deutschland.de German families prepare for Advent which is the season of spiritual preparation in the Christian church that begins the liturgical year by lighting candles on a wreath, and the season features unique characters, like the kind St. Nicholas and the devilish Krampus (Evil version of Santa). Traditional treats like stollen (sweet bread) and intricately carved decorations are prominent parts of the celebration.

Sophomore Shaun Vanette says that his family celebrates Christmas differently because they are from Germany. He says that they open their presents on Christmas Eve. In Sweden, the season begins on St. Lucia’s Day (a Christian feast day celebrated on December 13th that honors the legend of St. Lucia, a 3rd-century martyr) when the eldest daughter serves as the “Queen of Light,” (St. Lucia or Santa Lucia). The main celebration and gift exchange typically take place on Christmas Eve rather than Christmas Day.

According to WorldRemit.com the Philippines are known for one of the longest Christmas seasons: starting in September, Filipino traditions include the Giant Lantern Festival, featuring “parols,” symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem. Families gather for the “Nochebuena” (Spanish name for Christmas eve) feast on Christmas Eve and attend Midnight Mass.

According to selectitaly.com In Italy, some gifts are exchanged on Christmas Day; the main tradition involves the good witch Befana (A folk character in Italy who delivers gifts to children) filling stockings with sweets on Epiphany Eve (January 5th). Traditional nativity scenes are essential decorations, and sweet panettone bread is enjoyed by many families.

According to studyaustralia.com In Australia, Christmas falls during the southern hemisphere’s summer, and many Australians celebrate outdoors with barbecues, often spend-

ing the day at the beach. Festive meals may include both traditional turkey and salads or ice cream to suit the warm weather.

According to connectbrazil.com Brazil’s Christmas Eve is the most important day of the year, marked by large family gatherings for a late-night feast and attending the “Missa do Galo” is a special Christmas service celebrated in many Latin countries like Spain and Brazil (Rooster’s Mass) at midnight. Children leave a sock outside the house, hoping Papai Noel (Santa Claus) will exchange it for a present.

According to timeout.com Japan’s Christmas is a secular, commercial holiday, focused on romance and happiness, where couples exchange gifts and enjoy a festive atmosphere. A unique and widespread tradition, stemming from a 1970s marketing campaign, involves eating a meal from KFC on Christmas Eve.

According to howstuffworks.com In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church celebrates “Ganna” (An Ethiopian Game played during the holidays or using sugarcane.) on January 7th, following the Julian calendar, which involves attending church services in traditional white attire. The day often includes playing a traditional game similar to hockey, also called Ganna.

According to thethinkingtraveler.com Finally, in Greece, instead of a tree, Greeks traditionally decorate a boat, though trees are also common, and some families keep a fire burning to ward off mischievous goblins (“kallikantzari”) during the 12 days of Christmas. Most children receive gifts on St. Basil’s Day (January 1st) or on the Epiphany (January 6th). In conclusion, across the world, Christmas celebrations are rich and diverse, reflecting a variety of cultural customs and traditions that highlight local heritage, family, and universal themes of joy.



Photo by: Addis Ababa

How to Build the Best Gingerbread House

By Mika Paw

The atmosphere here in Erie is beginning to get festive with families bringing out decorations, preparing for the snow, and buying presents. Among these holiday traditions, the most competitive has to be building a gingerbread house.

This tradition began in Germany, and when German immigrants moved to the United States of America, they brought the practice with them. According to The Guardian, "The tradition of decorated gingerbread houses began in Germany in the early 1800s, supposedly popularised after the not-so-Christmassy fairytale of Hansel and Gretel was published in 1812."

But why exactly is this such a popular holiday activity today? It's because of how

competitive the activity can be. There are many ways people approach this activity, whether they're simply participating with their family or friends, or if they're in a gingerbread house building competition.

If you are feeling the temptation to do this with your friends, here are some notable ingredients and hacks:

Firstly, some important ingredients are thick royal icing, pasta or pretzel rods for support, lightweight candy and/or graham crackers. According to Grier, a finalist on Season 2 of Food Network's Haunted Gingerbread Showdown, other useful ingredients are powdered sugar, ice cream cones, candy canes, sprinkles, and nuts. These are all helpful for the structural integrity of the build as well as making sure whatever is applied is not too heavy on the structure.

When assembling the gingerbread house, it is important to start off with a strong base. It also helps to start by pre-decorating the pieces of the house so hard to reach areas are easier to grasp. As the panels are put together, let the glue, or icing dry before adding another, making sure it is stable.

A'Naja Barney, junior, says, "A quick good hack is to use a lot of icing. Do not be shy, and when the icing's on, lick your fingers and press the icing in place, then remember to lick the excess icing off your finger."

It is also essential to plan ahead of time, ensuring there is a clear vision instead of just diving straight into building without a clear image. "Your goals building a gingerbread house are to sketch your designs and details to coincide with your budget and supplies," says Mrs. Keyes, the ceramics teacher at Collegiate.

With all these tricks in mind, everyone can be confident in making the sturdiest gingerbread house in town without the headache.



Photo by Chealsea Bay

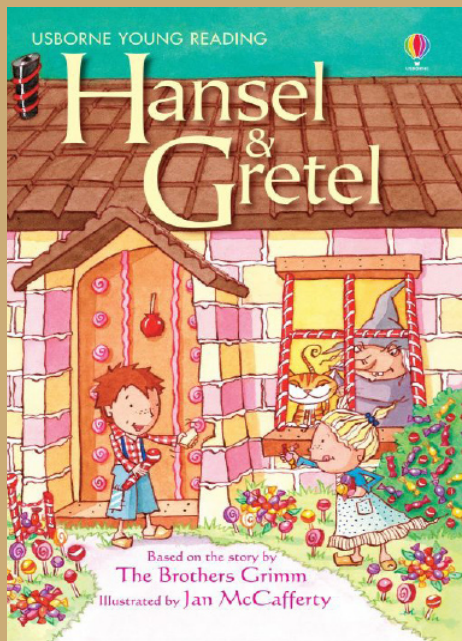


Photo by Usborne



Photo by Sam Merritt

Roblox - The Gift That Keeps on Gaming

By Ava Kerchansky

During Christmas time, not everyone is able to get out of the house and enjoy hot cocoa with friends, or get together with family to cut down a Christmas tree. Everyone either is too busy with wrapping gifts, or they don't want to drive in the many feet of snow that Erie gets yearly. So, what are some things you can do while cooped up inside?

Teenagers nowadays still play Roblox in their freetime, their solution to boredom is games.

Senior Phyllisha Anderson, says that she loves to play "Play or Die." This game consists of going into a game show and proceeding to go to a multitude of mini games in order to survive. Some may play this game with a group of friends to share holiday memories with others, so even though the snow or lack of transportation may keep you from your friends, you can still play online games with them.

Senior Maddison Barner says that, "Playing welcome to Bloxburg during the game's Christmas update is peak." The original concept of the game is to work and roleplay; however, most people work a lot and just build

houses, and during the Christmas season, there are more features for furniture as well as baking recipes. Plus, the entire map is blanketed in snow.

Junior Caylee Herrington says "Not just during Christmas time, but Two Player Steal a Labubu is the most fire game on Roblox during every holiday and season throughout the year." The game features a base where there are slots for your Labubus with a conveyor belt and you have to wait for a rare Labubu.

Junior Alissa McCarthy believes, "Royale High during Christmas time is so fun to play." In Royale High, you play with others in a school to learn in order to earn XP and receive diamonds, which helps to buy clothes to decorate avatars.

With all of the Roblox games listed, it's likely people will find a game to play this holiday season when they no longer want to wrap gifts or listen to Christmas music for 24 hours a day. Sometimes, we all need time for us to just let loose, and Roblox is the place for that.



Photo by: Bloxburg.wiki fandom



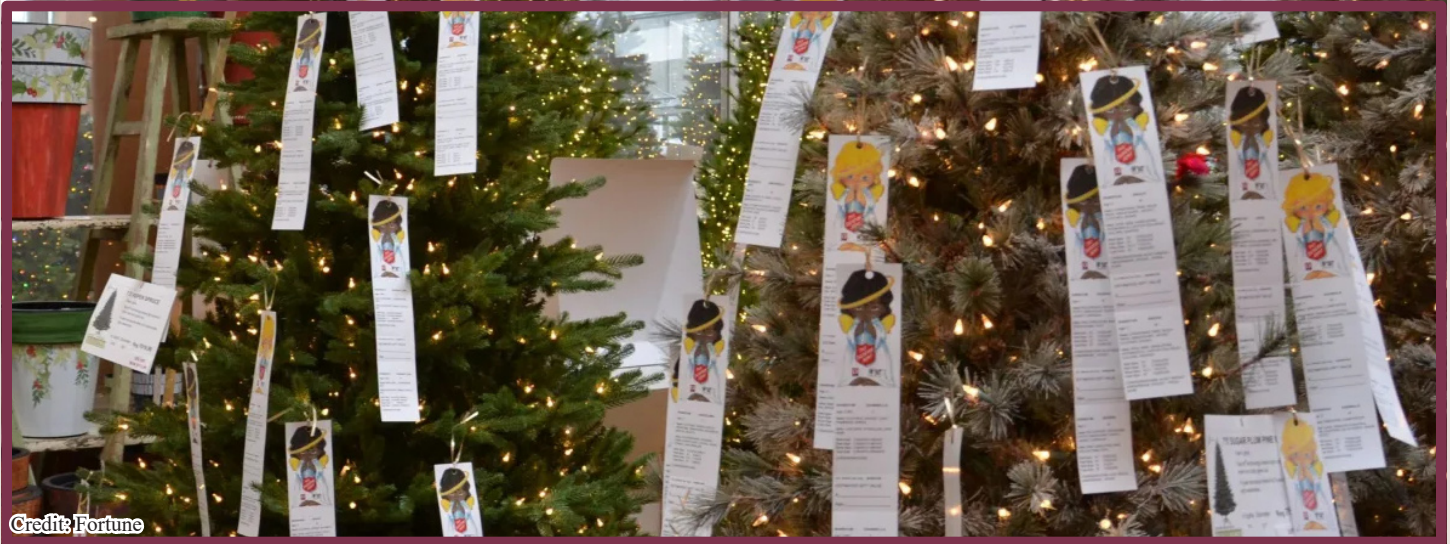
Photo by: Wallpapers.com



Photo by Amazon



WHAT DOES JROTC ANGEL TREE DO FOR THE COMMUNITY?



Credit: Fortune

By Hussain Abdulzahrah

The Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps hosts something called the angel tree from November through December. During this time they set up a tree with custom, handmade ornaments. People who can't afford to buy gifts for Christmas can write on the back of these ornaments what they want for Christmas.

Then JROTC takes these handmade ornaments with requests and hangs them up on the Christmas tree. Then people from the community can take as many as requests they want and go buy them for the people and put them around the tree.

Collegiate sophomore Ali Abdulzahra says he enjoys helping people and he

contributes as much as he can to help those people's wishes come true.

According to The Salvation Army, every child deserves to experience the joy of Christmas morning. The Salvation Army Angel Tree program helps provide Christmas gifts for hundreds of thousands of children around the country each year. Once a child or senior adult has been registered and accepted as an Angel who purchases gifts of new clothing and toys their Christmas wish list is shared with donors in the community.

After almost all the requests are gone JROTC puts out more when there are a lot of gifts around

the tree JROTC collects and sorts them. When they have all these gifts sorted they give them to The Salvation Army deliver these gifts to all the people who have requested it.

The JROTC and The Salvation Army have been working together for years now and they both agree that every kid deserves to get a gift during Christmas. The Salvation Army's Angel Tree program has been in existence for over 44 years and is a national program.

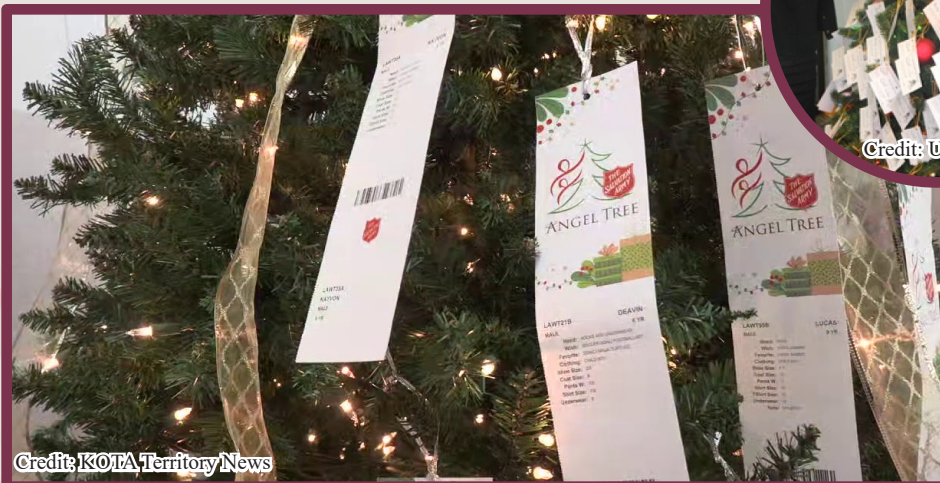
The Collegiate Academy JROTC in Erie, PA, has been working with the Angel Tree program for over a decade. This partnership involves students and staff purchasing, wrapping, and labeling gifts for families in need.

According to Sergeant Watson he says that they have been working with the Angel Tree program for over a decade now. Sergeant Watson says that he enjoys doing this every year because he gets to help out the kids that unfortunately do not receive any gifts for Christmas.

These gifts prices may vary depending on what the kids request. The average price range would be around 20\$ - 40\$ but it could be cheaper or more expensive. If the gifts were not all bought and there is still more around the tree left Sergeant Watson would go out and use his own money to buy the remaining gifts for the kids.



Credit: U.S. Army



Credit: KOTA Territory News