

PANTHERETTE

- SCHUYLKILL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL -

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Holiday Traditions

by Kaylin Loose '23

Merriam-Webster defines tradition as an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior. Every family has traditions, especially during the holidays. For some families, it's curling up with hot chocolate by the fire or taking a stroll to look at Christmas lights. Traditions are what make the holiday season so special.

Across the globe, different countries have different holiday traditions. In Germany, Austria, and Hungary, while Santa delivers presents to the nice children, a creature they call Krampus carts the naughty children off to hell. In early December, people in these countries roam the streets dressed as Krampus to scare the children. In Mexico, on December 23, a festival called "The Night of the Radishes" is held where artisanally carved radishes are sold for Christmas centerpieces. In Norway, they believe witches and evil spirits roam the night sky on Christmas Eve, and to deter these witches they hide brooms, their preferred mode of transportation. In Wales, there is a tradition of carolers carrying around a horse skull while wearing a bell-adorned sheet. After they sing they will then challenge the inhabitants to a battle of rhyming insults in Welsh. In Australia, they celebrate Christmas with beach parties attended by surfing Santas. In Venezuela, they rollerskate to early morning mass on Christmas day.

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Americans are not without our own holiday traditions starting with the *Macy's Thanksgiving parade*, followed by lighting the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lighting, and ending with *Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve*. In Leesport, a tradition many families hold dear is Christmas Village, where you take a stroll through lights

looking at all of the beautiful displays, sipping hot chocolate, and meeting Santa. Another tradition many cherish is watching Christmas movies, whether it's the old classics such as *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* or *Frosty the Snowman* or the newer classics like *Home Alone*, *the Santa Clauses*, and *Elf*. These movies bring us joy and put us in the holiday spirit. No matter the holiday tradition, they are designed to bring joy and love to all who experience them, and that is why we do them year after year and pass them on from generation to generation.

A True Gift

by Ashleigh Mask '25

When asking some of my classmates what they want for Christmas, I got a wide range of answers. These answers varied from technology, self-care, clothing, trips, food, and randoms. As we get older, we may start to lose focus on what is really important around the holidays. It is not the filled up stockings or shiny wrapping paper under your tree, but who sits with you around the tree. Family and friends are an amazing gift to have around this time. This holiday season, I believe we should spend more time with our loved ones than our new, flashy presents. There truly is no better gift than love and support from those close to you. Happy Holidays everyone!



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Student Gratefulness Survey

by Izzy Burch '25

It's the holiday season! The most festive time of year is upon us. Everyone is bustling about trying to make it to all their favorite holiday events and activities, scrambling to check off all the names on their gift list, and wrapping up any work that needs to be finished before break. It is definitely a jolly time, but it is also incredibly busy, and it is easy to lose sight of what is most important about this time of year. So, we have asked some SV students what they are grateful for this holiday season, and we hope to encourage you to be grateful too!

"That's a really good question... I am grateful to have money to buy gifts for my family members because I like seeing the joy on their faces when they open them because my love language is gift-giving and I spend a lot of time picking the right thing for everyone in my life!" -Mackenzie Bachman, Grade 10

"I am grateful for a supportive family- they really care about what I'm doing and they're always interested in my hobbies and activities." - David Johnson, Grade 9

"Friends I guess. The times that you get to spend with them and the new adventures that you get to have." -Jeremiah Caban, Grade 10

"Seeing my family." -A junior

"Family, friends, soccer, coaches, teachers- everybody really around me that supports me. And my girlfriend." -Noah Wamsher, Grade 12

"I am really thankful for all of my friends and family who have supported me throughout this year, and I am so thankful for COVID to be over so we can finally have things go back to normal this year." -Marty Welch, Grade 11

"I'm thankful for everyone that has supported me, especially the new people who have entered my life. This year hasn't been the easiest but they have been there to support me and I am grateful for that." -Lexi Wehr, Grade 11

"My family- I like spending a lot of time with my family." -A freshman

Mauna Loa Eruption

by Leiland Wisniewski '25

Hawaii is known for a lot of things such as delicious food, a variety of cultures, and tons of beautiful landscapes. With those beautiful landscapes comes something deadly: volcanoes. Personally, I find volcanoes to be beautiful and extremely fascinating. In another life, I am for sure a Geologist. Recently in Hawaii, Mauna Loa, the world's largest active volcano has erupted. It erupted the evening of November 27th. Since 1843, this volcano has erupted once every 5 years and has erupted 33 times since 1843. The public was understandably concerned. The people living there knew the hazards of residing near Mauna Loa like lava flows, earthquakes, volcanic smog, and even tsunamis. The biggest concern for when this eruption occurred was the possibility of it reaching the Daniel K. Inouye highway. This highway connects two sides of the island and tons of people use it, especially during the holidays. The lava was flowing around 25 feet per hour but thankfully slowed down before reaching the highway or any major communities. As of today, the volcano seems to be cooling down but a watch is still advised.



Holiday Recipes

by Madison Steingraber '24

Hot Chocolate Bombs

Sick and tired of boring hot chocolate? Try hot chocolate bombs! With an explosion of flavor, this recipe will never get old! These chocolate bombs are hollow chocolate spheres filled with dry hot chocolate mix and marshmallows. You place the cocoa bomb in a mug and pour hot milk over it, causing the chocolate sphere to “explode,” melt, and turn into a delicious cup of hot chocolate!



Snowball Cookies

True to their name, these seasonal cookies remind me of a good ol' snowball fight! But you won't want to throw them, you'll want to make them! These cookies are very simple, as they are mostly standard cookie dough with powdered sugar topping. If you want to go further, some recipes add walnuts or pecans!



Peanut Butter Blossoms

Many may think that these are not a “winter treat”, but they are definitely a classic! These cookies are famous for their chewy peanut butter dough, which is rolled in granulated sugar, and the rich Hershey’s Kiss that sits right on top. Grab your family, some friends, and make some memories while baking these traditional cookies!



Holiday Song Suggestions

by Savannah Derr '25

Have you ever needed to listen to that one holiday tune during the most wonderful time of the year? Well no need to look any further, you might find something worth listening to here.

If you like the classics, you should definitely listen to "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby or "Winter Wonderland" by Michael Bublé. Other songs you can listen to are "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" by Perry Como or a song we probably all know from its movie, "Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer."

If you like a more modern type of Christmas song, you should give "All I want for Christmas is you" by Mariah Carey or even "I am Santa Claus" by Bob Rivers. Other songs you can listen to include "Santa Tell Me" by Ariana Grande and "Underneath the Tree" by Kelly Clarkson.

Although there are definitely many more songs to choose from, you might just find an interest in one of these.

HIV/AIDS: The Crisis That Lingers

by Charlotte Baumgard '23

“We're all going to go crazy, living this epidemic every minute, while the rest of the world goes on out there, all around us, as if nothing is happening, going on with their own lives and not knowing what it's like, what we're going through. We're living through war, but where they're living it's peacetime, and we're all in the same country.” - AIDS Activist

Larry Kramer

Reigniting the fervor from relentless street protests, impassioned speeches, and chants of “Silence = Death,” World AIDS Day is recognized every year on December 1st. This day serves as a bitter and enlightening reminder of the indescribable destruction that the HIV/AIDS crisis imposed on countless populations throughout the 80s and 90s, especially the LGBTQ+ community. Though this day is undoubtedly conducive for reflection and learning, so much of our young population still lives in ignorance surrounding the calamity of the AIDS crisis and how it continues to affect our world today.

OVERVIEW:

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that is responsible for HIV infection. HIV can then lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency virus) which is the farthest and most deadly stage of HIV. HIV is spread predominantly through contact with blood, semen, and vaginal fluids. The virus attacks and subsequently destroys integral infection-fighting CD4 cells. Without these cells, one's body becomes unable to fight off certain infections and cancers. If left untreated, HIV/AIDS can result in a destroyed immune system.

The HIV/AIDS crisis absolutely ravaged the LGBTQ+ community. Due to the fact that it often appeared in homosexual men, the public developed a biting stigma around the disease that characterized it as “dirty” and only pertaining to gay people. In a famous quote, American pastor Jerry Falwell reflects the public's view, “AIDS is the wrath of a just God against homosexuals. To oppose it would be like an Israelite jumping in the Red Sea to save one of Pharaoh's charioteers.” This stigma caused politicians, media personalities, healthcare companies, and the general public to completely ignore the surging epidemic because it didn't affect them... it only affected the “immoral,” “sinning,” homosexuals. This ignorance and lack of treatment and research on HIV/AIDS caused a vast majority of LGBTQ+ populations to die... leaving future generations of LGBTQ+ people without older, wiser generations to look up to.

A VERY REFINED TIMELINE OF THE CRISIS:

July 3, 1981: The New York Times publishes, “Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals,” the first article about the crisis before the disease had garnered an official name or explanation

The term “gay cancer” began being used to describe the phenomenon.

May 11, 1982: The New York Times refers to AIDS as, “GRID (Gay Related Immune Deficiency),” adding to the already bustling stigma of AIDS being a “gay disease.”

September 24, 1982: The CDC uses the term “AIDS” for the first time and provides the first definition, “A disease at least moderately predictive of a defect in cell-mediated immunity, occurring in a person with no known cause for diminished resistance to that disease.”

March 14, 1983: AIDS activist Larry Kramer publishes a scalding essay entitled, “1,121 and Counting” detailing the irreversible damage the crisis as well as the public perception of it has placed on the LGBTQ+ community.

August 27, 1985: Indiana teenager Ryan White is refused admission to middle school due to his contraction of AIDS from contaminated blood products used to treat his hemophilia.

September 17, 1985: President Ronald Reagan mentions AIDS for the first time -- 4 years after the first reported cases.

October 2, 1985: Actor Rock Hudson dies from AIDS-related illnesses.

March 12, 1987: Larry Kramer officially founds activist group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) in New York city with hopes to place pressure on governments, pharmaceutical companies, religious institutions, and public health agencies to protect those infected with AIDS and those at risk of becoming infected with HIV.

March 24, 1987: ACT UP stages their first protest on Wall Street.

October 11, 1987: The AIDS memorial quilt first goes on display in the national mall in Washington, DC.

February 16, 1990: Artist and Activist Keith Haring dies of AIDS-related illness.

1992: AIDS becomes the leading cause of death for men ages 25 to 44 in the US.

August 1993: Federally funded research studies on HIV in women begin after years of women being barred from receiving AIDS diagnoses or treatments.

1993: *Philadelphia*, the first major motion picture about AIDS is released.

1994: AIDS becomes the number one cause of death for all Americans ages 25-44.

October 31, 1995: Over 500,000 cases of AIDS have been reported in the US overall.

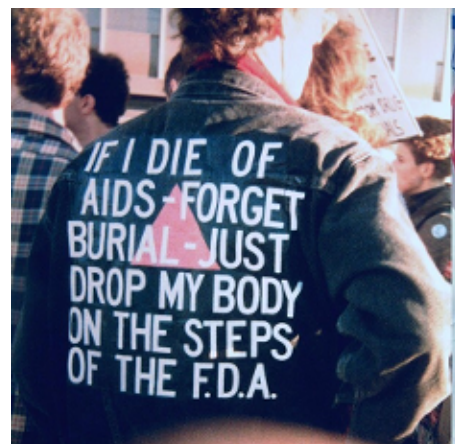
May 14, 1996: FDA approves the first at home HIV test.

“There aren't a lot of folks who continue to worry and be concerned about HIV and AIDS because of all the advances in medicine and policies. But sadly, AIDS is still here. The same groups of people who were stigmatized and were at highest risk then are stigmatized and at high risk now.” - AIDS Activist Betsy Shally-Jensen

It is impossible for the modern teenager to fully understand the nightmare that was the AIDS crisis. We've been raised in a world where the crisis has remained nothing but an afterthought, so unless we foster an incredibly palpable desire to research HIV and AIDS, we likely know little about it or its consequences. For the LGBTQ+ community during the AIDS crisis, life was war. Close friends died like dogs: it wasn't unusual to have to attend 3 funerals in a few months, protest after protest was staged with seemingly no outcome, the government and the doctors were not listening to you, preachers were saying you deserve it, you were trying to care for your dying friends while hoping the same disease wouldn't ravage you. It was pandemonium. The community was decimated by this virus. This lasted years.

The HIV/AIDS crisis is not over. 650,000 people died of AIDS related illnesses in 2021. There is no known cure. The devastating effects of the 80s crisis still ring throughout the LGBTQ+ community to this day. This is not an issue of the past.

To help combat these issues, you can keep yourself as informed as possible by continuously consuming documentaries on the crisis, talking about it and posting about it, and you can always donate to ACTUP New York on their website to help them fight against AIDS as well as MPox. The AIDS crisis is still alive but so is the fight against it.



Grace's Guidance

by Pantherette Staff

Dear Grace,

Hi, I'd like to know if you've been in a situation where you accidentally got a friend in trouble. After you get your friend in trouble, they stop talking to you. I wasn't trying to get them in trouble; it was a total accident. What do you do in this situation?

Dear Anonymous,

I can't deny it, but I've been in this situation recently. I felt guilty and upset and utterly miserable. I wanted to make everything better. In cases like these, you need to be able to take accountability for your actions and just accept that you can make mistakes. Every person makes mistakes. If that person couldn't find it in their heart to forgive you, then maybe they weren't suitable for you all along. Don't put yourself down about it.

Losing a good friend isn't easy. You need to be optimistic and tell yourself you can get through it. You can distract yourself with what you love doing or talk to the other people who care about you. There are plenty of other people that you can meet. Just remember to be optimistic and don't put yourself down.

Dear Grace,

I need help getting off the ineligibility list. I keep handing in my assignments, studying for tests, And doing everything I can. What can I do to be eligible?

Dear Anonymous,

Many of us have struggled with being on the ineligibility list at some point. To be taken off the ineligibility list, you must pass all your classes except one. You are most likely failing two classes or more. If you check sapphire and check which grades are the lowest, you can get those up to a passing grade (60% or higher).

Ask teachers for extra credit or do old work to improve your grades. Participation helps if your teacher adds that to your grade. You could train yourself to study or do homework by restricting yourself from doing anything you usually do until you finish studying. Ineligibility gets pulled on Thursdays so make sure you get all your assignments in by that time.



Winter Sports

by SV Sports Staff



Swimming

by Olivia Kraus '24 and Kalika Kauffman '24

Schuylkill Valley's swimming squad is coached by Kyle Campbell. The seniors this year are Emily Gao, Abigail Griesemer, David Kramer, Taylin Kimmel, Aryanna Kulp, Megan Raifsnyder, and Paige McKim. In previous years, the swim team was very successful. The girls' team won districts and states. With the loss of many previous players, they hope to build their team back up again. Aryanna Kulp claimed, "A meet I'm definitely looking forward to is districts to get a shot to 7 peat this year." Younger swimmers have big roles to fill this year. Emily Gao stated, "We have a very close bond and tend to share that mob mentality kind of closeness. We support each other and are always ready to take a team down." The boys' team is smaller but also has high hopes for this season. "Expectations for the season range drastically, but we all just look forward to making the absolute most of it. We hope everyone can go as far as they are willing to push themselves and we all will give the support they need to get there," stated David Kramer, the boys only senior. The team gets along well and always cheers each other on. Good luck to the swim team this season!



Cheerleading

by Natane White '24 and Charlotte Bourette '23

The cheer squad, coached by Coach Hohenadel, is looking forward to a great winter season. Coming off of a National championship at the Reach The Beach competition in February, the team has high expectations on and off the floor. Not only has their skill level improved, but so has their togetherness. "My favorite part is being able to bond with all my teammates. I feel that we have a very healthy bond compared to other years, and we all get along super well," said senior McKaylah Booth. Although the team has already made tremendous progress, they are still planning to reach higher. Senior, Sadie Lerch, said, "The biggest expectations that I have for our winter season is that the team as a whole continues to put in 100% effort. A big goal that I have for our team is for us to hit all new stunts." However, in order to improve as a whole, the team must strive to improve individually. "My strengths would probably be my stunting skills and motions, and my weaknesses would probaby be tumbling and confidence in my cheers and routines," said senior, Reese Gauby. Entering this winter cheer season, great things are expected from the squad. Good luck this winter!



Girl's Basketball

by Jacob Zimmerman '24

The girls' basketball team looks to remain on top of the division after an impressive 20-4 season. The Panthers have one returning senior, Isata Bah. The team is led by junior captains Natane White, Kalika Kauffman, and Juliana Stichter. Coach Bagenstose enters his 8th season as the Panthers' head coach. "A team effort is going to make us successful this year. I would describe us all as hard workers individually, but I think the key to our success is going to be us not only working hard by ourselves, but working hard together, as a team" said Natane White. The Panthers' captains have high expectations for the season, "The expectation for this season is to make the playoffs and have a winning record. We had a lot of success last year and we expect to still be a good team" said Kalika Kauffman. Leadership is important to every team, especially a winning one. "On the court I try to keep everyone's head in the game, try to keep the energy up even when times get shaky. Off the court, just trying to keep the team together, and do my best to stop any potential problems from happening between teammates," said Juliana Stichter. The Panthers are excited for the 2022-23 season!

Boy's Basketball

by Courtney Zimmerman '24 and Julia Missimer '24

The Schuylkill Valley boy's basketball team is excited to play this season after their tough season last year. To start off this season the boys won both games they played. Last year's seniors left big shoes to fill this upcoming season. This year's seniors for the 2022-2023 season are Mark Rajnath, William Johnson III, Elijah Houser, and Kelton Faulk who are leading the team to victory. "I like the atmosphere of the games and practices." Elijah stated after asking him what he likes most about being on the team. Elijah is expecting the team to go out every day with 100% effort to make it to both district and county playoffs. Senior Mark Rajnath, says that the team's connection and his relationships between him and his teammates is his favorite thing about being on the team. "I feel like I am a pretty well-rounded player. But, I know I can clean up plenty of things such as hitting free throws, turning the ball over, and defense on the ball," Mark added. He expects the team to win their division and have a nice playoff run. Best of luck with your remaining season boys!



Hockey

by Jordan Johnson '23 and Caden Moyer '24

The Northern Berks Hockey Team led by coach Brian Hiester is 3-3-2, 8 games into the season. The team is taking on a new challenge this season after last season going 20-1 and winning the championship. They jumped up to a much more difficult division, facing schools double their size, the team is ready for the challenge. The team is led by four Schuylkill Valley Seniors, Devin Unger, Nick Hyneman, Brock Dejesus, and Daymond Heister. This year the team is playing much tougher opponents. Senior Brock Dejesus believes "This league is a whole different level than last year. Over a full season last year we had 178 goals for and 17 against. This year will be nowhere near that. Every game will be close and we will have to work hard all year long. We hope to make the playoffs but there are no guarantees." The team will need to win tough games to make the playoffs this year. Brock said, "There isn't one game in particular but when we play big schools like Lower Dauphin and Cumberland Valley we look to show them that we can compete with anyone."

Wrestling

by Gabby Daubenspeck '24 and Emily Goetz '24

The 2022-23 Schuylkill Valley wrestling team is coached by Jeremy Smith. This year's seniors are Christian Davila, Caden Hummel, David Rhein, Mason Shelak, Jacob Stelluti, and Colin Stoudt. The team's biggest challenge this year will be defeating rival, Berks Catholic. Colin Stoudt communicated, "They have a solid team, so it will be a tough match." The pressure is on for the team to secure a place in playoffs this year, as they have not advanced in prior seasons. Despite the pressure from the competition and their history, the team is working exceptionally hard. Christian Davila has high hopes of achieving their goal of advancing to playoffs, stating, "We expect to have a good winning season with a lot of our wrestlers being able to progress postseason." Mason Shelak also expressed, "A team goal that I would like to accomplish is placing at least top 3 in our division." With a very competitive and intense team dynamic, the Panthers have great potential for a successful season. Good luck, Panthers!



Poetry Column

by Izzy Burch '25

Christmas Trees

by William Logan

How should I now recall
the icy lace of the pane
like a sheet of cellophane,
or the skies of alcohol

poured over the saltbox town?
On that stony New England tableau,
the halo of falling snow
glared like a waxy crown.

Through blue frozen lots
my giant parents strolled,
wrapped tight against the cold
like woolen Argonauts,

searching for that tall
perfection of Scotch pine
from the hundreds laid in line
like the dead at Guadalcanal.

The clapboard village aglow
that starry stark December
I barely now remember,
or the brutish ache of snow

burning my face like quicklime.
Yet one thing was still missing.
I saw my parents kissing,
perhaps for the last time.

