

# The Oracle

## Holiday Edition



**December 2020 - January 2021**



Some common themes among the holidays are customs,

traditions and wishes and the Oracle staff definitely captured stories dealing with all of these in our holiday edition!

have a lot of holiday traditions but we also like making new ones too. To kick things off, we usually set up the Christmas tree first, then decorate it usually in the month of December. Another tradition we practice is creating and making red and green paper chains for our tree. No Christmas can be complete without Christmas cookies that we bake every single year as a family. We always make sugar cookies and chocolate chip cookies. To spice things up, we plan on giving out cookies to our sweet elderly neighbors this year whom we met while trick-or-treating. The best tradition of all, as a family, is opening one Christmas gift on Christmas Eve. Me and my family love Christmas and we always have a blast together. These memories will last a lifetime and my suggestion to you is to create a tradition if you do not practice any and to make sure your loved ones share time together.

### **Christmas festivities at my house**

**Staff Writer, Keara Alberts**

Every year Christmas is a big deal for me and my family. We are very close and we



# A Christmas wish

Editor, Jenna Zawislak

Christmas is a magical time for many people. For Rochester's Volleyball and Track and Field Coach, Melissa Zawislak, Christmas is a time spent with family and a time for giving. Melissa and her family have many Christmas traditions. Every Christmas Eve her and her dad's side of the family gather for a Christmas Eve dinner. The dinner always consists of the same food, "stuffed shells, Italian sausage, salad, bread, and lots of cookies" she explained. After dinner the family always plays "the game" as she called it. Everyone brings presents in and they take turns rolling dice trying to get a 7, 11, or doubles. The game is a fun time for the whole family! A tradition she has with herself is that she always likes to be the last one to open a present on Christmas morning. Melissa stated, "I never necessarily cared if I got the most gifts, but I always tried to be the last person to open a gift." Melissa loves Christmas because people are in general kinder at this time of year. The spirit of giving in the Pittsburgh area with Make-A-Wish, the WDVE Rocks Children's drive and Stuff a Bus touch her heart. She loves the lights, the music, and the movies, but most of all she loves what Christmas is all about which is the birth of Jesus Christ. When asked if she could make anyone's holiday wish come true, Melissa had a heartwarming answer. She said she would make her close friends wish come true, which would be that her daughter could be seizure free. Her friend's daughter has Epilepsy, and her condition has significantly worsened over the last year. "She is having 3-5 seizures a day at times and has had up to 40+ in a week on a few occasions" said Melissa. Her daughter is actually having surgery shortly after

Christmas that will hopefully reduce the number of seizures she has. This little girl is "spunky and full of personality" stated Melissa. We are all praying for a miracle! Melissa's most special Christmas was spent in 2002 when she became a mom to beautiful twin babies. Christmas is such a special time for people in so many different ways. Melissa's is special because of traditions, family, and amazing memories that she has from past years. We hope that even with Covid restrictions that Melissa, her family, and every other family has a happy and safe Christmas!

**HOLIDAY WISHES  
FROM ALL ROCHY  
TEACHERS AND STAFF!  
=)**

**Let us be grateful for what  
we do have.....**

**BRONC TOMOCHAK, STAFF WRITER**

When I spoke via email with Mrs. Benedum, our science and English teacher in the high school, I asked her what her plans were for this holiday season? If you don't know already, most family gatherings are a no no, plus any company Christmas parties, most in person events are off. However, close relatives (people that live with you, people who you technically didn't invite but somehow got into your house, etc.) so this is a chance to get to know people around you. Many like Mrs. Benedum aren't inviting people over and when asked if she would

do anything new she responded with “Staying home will be new for us. It will be nice to spend Ellie’s first Christmas at home together.” It’s always good to look towards the positive like Mrs. Benedum. Just think about those who you can be with instead of those who you can’t.

## **POSITIVE VIBES COMING YOUR WAY!!!!**



Photo contributed by Jenna Zawislak

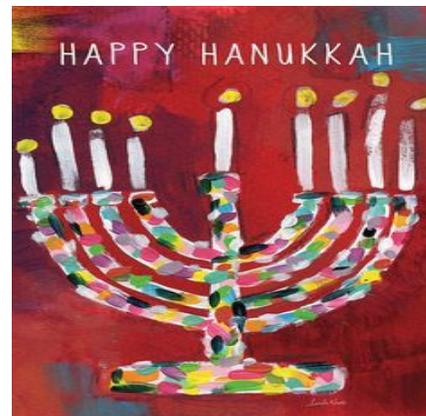


## **What is Christmas?**

Bronc Tomochak, Staff writer

What do you imagine when you see winter? Do you see the snow, maybe the Christmas lights

strung around people’s houses? However you see it many people don’t know why Christmas exists. I know what you think, “it’s on Jesus’s birthday.” Jesus was really born sometime closer between the 13 and the 19th of December. Christmas truly celebrates a Pagan holiday for the winter solstice, or more of a festival rather than holiday. However, people had nothing to celebrate for long periods of time and that’s why they had a festival. It showed the start of the hardest part of the year. No one really knows much about this holiday anymore because it’s older than Christianity, but what we do know is that it was the event Christmas was replaced by. The only question now is why did we replace that holiday instead of just making a new one?



## **Cultural Traditions**

### **Home for Hanukkah**

Ryan Zawislak, Co-editor

Many people around the world celebrate Christmas, but there is another celebration that occurs around the same time as it. This celebration is called Hanukkah. Hanukkah is an eight day celebration that occurs every December. It is celebrated by Jews and is meant to reaffirm the ideals of the Jewish religion. Specifically, Hanukkah celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem and the Jews triumph over their Greek-Syrian oppressors during the second century B.C..

There are many traditions involved in the celebration of Hanukkah. The main traction is the lighting of a nine-branched menorah. This menorah is called the hanukiah. On each night, a candle is added to the menorah. Once the ninth candle is added, it is used to light the rest of them. During each night Jews normally recite blessings and participate in a time of prayer. Other traditions of Hanukkah include exchanging gifts, playing with four sided-spinning tops called dreidels, and eating food items such as latkes (potato pancakes) and jam-filled donuts.



## Perelman's Potato (Pancakes) Latkes

### What you will need:

- 1 pound of large Russet potatoes
- 1 large onion
- 2 large eggs
- ½ C. all-purpose flour
- 2tsp. Salt

- 1tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. Black pepper
- Enough Veg. oil for frying

Scrub clean and peel all potatoes then cut into quarters.  
Grate potatoes into a bowl.  
Cut onion and quarter it to then grate into the same bowl as the potatoes.  
Transfer to a colander and squeeze all moisture out with a few paper towels.

Put back into a mixing bowl and add eggs, flour, baking powder and salt/pepper - mix until all the flour is absorbed.

Put oil ¼ inch deep into a frying pan and heat to med-high. Use your hands and flatten the mixture into patties then into the oil frying each side until golden brown (5 min) per side. Transfer to a plate so that you may enjoy it with sour cream or applesauce!



## Winter & Holiday Riddles

Contributed by Staff writer, Seth Cervi

**What does an elf study in school?**

**The elfabet**

**What falls but never gets hurt?**

**Snow**

**What do you call a snowman in July?**

**A puddle**



## **CHRISTMAS PLAYLIST**

Keara Alberts, Staff writer

**Last Christmas - Meghan Trainor**

This is a new version of Last Christmas sung by Meghan Trainor and has really cool added lyrics.

**Santa Tell Me -Ariana Grande**

Even if you are not an Ariana Grande fan this is a very recommended Christmas song.

**Underneath the Tree- Kelly Clarkson**

This song is very upbeat and loud which really helps me get in the Christmas mood.

**All I Want For Christmas Is You - Mariah Carey**

All I want for Christmas is you is a very traditional Christmas song, which is usually everyone's favorite. It's definitely one of my top favorites!

**Last Christmas - Wham!**

If you're really into the 80's here is a good 80's Christmas song for you. Wham! is a popular 80's duo mostly famous for their one song "Wake Me Up Before I Go Go!"

**I'm Gonna Kill Santa Claus- Danny Gonzalez**

This is not a very popular Christmas song but me and my family are obsessed with this one. This song is a parody of the Christmas movie "The Santa Clause." I recommend this song to people who love "memes".

**Jingle Bell Rock -Bobby Helms**

This is another very popular and traditional Christmas song, that you will always hear on the radio. This is a very good song to put you in the Christmas mood around Christmas time.

**Winter Wonderland -Michael Bublé**

This song Winter Wonderland is a slow, peaceful, and beautifully sung song. This is a really good song to listen to when coming home from slide riding all day and drinking hot chocolate.

**My final pick is Felix Navidad - Leon B**

If you would like to submit an article 250 words or less to be published in The Oracle, please email your submission with an original photograph to

[perelman@rasd.org](mailto:perelman@rasd.org) with "The Oracle" in the subject line.



**Fact: Erie, PA gets the most snow in the state with an average annual snowfall at 103 inches!!!**

Courtesy of Wikipedia



Free Stock Photo



Ms. Perelman's 1st night of Hanukkah!  
Photo contributed by Ms. Perelman



Photo contributed by Jenna Zawislak



Photo Contributed by Ms. Perelman  
Ornament made by Abi Hohman



## Lots of Fun For Everyone

Jenna Zawislak, Editor

The holidays are a time to gather with family and friends. For people with big families I have a holiday game for you. This game is fun for all ages and there is a little competitiveness built in. The adults from every individual family bring around 20-30 presents all wrapped up and put the presents in the middle of the room. Once all the presents are in place the whole family gathers around them. Two bowls with two dice in each of them are given to a person on each side of the room. If you roll a sum of 7, a sum of 11, or if you roll doubles (ex. Two 2s), you get to go

up and pick a present. Once the last present is taken, a five minute timer is set and the rolling continues. If you roll the numbers mentioned above you are allowed to go steal a present from another player. This is the aspect of the game that makes it competitive. My family has played this game every Christmas Eve ever since I can remember. My family is very competitive so things get a little crazy at this time. We all usually have our eye on one present and people steal it back and forth until the timer runs out. Once the five minutes are up everyone stops and we start opening the gifts. The presents can cost any amount of money, so some presents are very nice, some are presents that were in the game last year that got put back in as a joke, and some of the gifts are hilarious. Everyone in my family is a good sport about what they get and we all laugh about it together. One year my cousin's grandpa got a pair of women's underwear. We all had a good laugh about it and he took it like a champ. My family plays with about 20 people each year, but you can play with more or less. If you try this game out I hope you and your family have a lot of fun with it! I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and happy New Year!



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# RUSSIAN TEA CAKES

FROM STAFF WRITER: ABI HOHMAN'S  
GRANDMOTHER'S COOKING CARDS

PREP: 20 MINS BAKE: 10 MINS PER BATCH

- 1 STICK UNSALTED BUTTER, SOFTEN
- 1 STICK UNSALTED MARGARINE
- ½ CUPS CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
- ½ TEASPOON OF SALT
- 2 ½ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- ¾ CUPS OF WALNUTS, FINELY GROUND IN  
FOOD PROCESSOR OR BLENDER
- COATING 2 CUPS OF CONFECTIONERS, SUGAR

1. HEAT OVEN TO 400 F.
2. IN A LARGE BOWL WITH AN ELECTRIC MIXER BEAT BUTTER, MARGARINE, CONFECTIONERS, SUGAR, VANILLA AND SALT UNTIL BLENDED. ON LOW SPEED, BEAT IN FLOUR AND WALNUTS JUST UNTIL BLENDED.
3. ROLL TABLESPONS OF DOUGH INTO SMOOTH 1 INCH ROUND BALLS. PLACE 2 INCHES APART FROM EACH OTHER ON AN UNGREASED COOKIE SHEET.
4. BAKE 10 MINUTES OR UNTIL FIRM

5. TO COAT: PUT CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR INTO A WIDE BALL. ADD HOT COOKIES, A FEW AT A TIME, AND TOSS CAREFULLY TO COAT COOKIES. REMOVE WITH A SPOON TO A WIRE RACK TO COOL DOWN. WHEN COOL, ROLL AGAIN IN CONFECTIONERS SUGAR.



6. EAT AS YOU PLEASE.

**The largest gingerbread man** weighed 651 kg (1,435 lb 3 oz) and was **made** by IKEA Furuset (Norway) in Oslo, Norway in 2009. The giant **gingerbread man** was baked in one piece!  
**Courtesy of Guinness World Records**



Photo contributed by Jeremiah Gallagher

**compliment helping our neighbors.”**



Free Stock Photo - Pexels

**What do you hope that 2021 will bring????**

**Big Mama - “KINDNESS - people need to be kind to all - you never know what someone may be going through!”**

**Ms. Perelman - “I hope that 2021 brings much happiness to all of our Rocky students!”**

**Mrs. Haffey - “Hoping 2021 brings me a family vacation to the beach.”**

**Mrs. Kovach - “My hope for 2021 is that we all do one good deed everyday - it could be a**

## **FAMILY FRIENDLY**

### **CHRISTMAS FILM**

Ryan Zawislak, Co-editor

*Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey* is a Christmas musical fantasy feature released November 13, 2020 on Netflix. The film was written and directed by David E. Talbert. Stars in the film include Forest Whitaker, Madalen Mills, Keegan-Michael Key, Hugh Bonneville, and Anika Noni Rose. The film tells the story of inventor and toymaker Jeronicus Jangle (Forest Whitaker), who is about to release a groundbreaking new toy. However, his work is stolen by Gustafson, his apprentice, who uses it to become rich and famous. Jeronicus begins to lose his passion for toy making, especially after his wife suddenly passes. The film fast forwards at this point, where Jeronicus owns a nearly bankrupt pawnbroker shop and his no zeal to live life anymore. However, when Jangle’s granddaughter Journey comes to visit, life begins to be not so dreary after all.

I would rate this movie a 6 out of 10 overall. Personally, I do not enjoy musicals, but the soundtrack and singing was not awful and tacky like many musicals. The characters in the movie are very relatable, especially Jeronicus. Many people lose hope in life after unfortunate events, but Jeronicus shows that you can come back even better than you were before. Likewise, Journey exemplifies the idea that anything is possible when you work hard and have hope in what you do.



## Serbian Christmas Traditions

**Seth Cervi, Staff writer**

I have wanted to learn about Serbian Christmas for a while so I have done the research. This is what I have found. The Serbian's celebrate Christmas on January 7th. The reason is because when the Bible talks about Jesus's birth they are using the Julian calendar. The calendar we use today is the Gregorian calendar which is why Christmas is on December 25th. The Serbian Orthodox also tend to fast 40 days before the birth of Christ. The Christmas Eve dinner is meatless. Depending on the household, there might be bakalar with potatoes (codfish), tuna salad, or meatless sarma (stuffed cabbage). On Christmas Day the greeting is Mir Boziji! Hristos se Rodi which means "Peace of God! Christ is Born!" The response should be Voistinu Hristos se Rodi!, and that means "Indeed, He is born." In my research, that is what I found on Serbian Christmas.

## Holiday Treats

**Jenna Zawislak, Editor**

A staple during the Holiday season is delicious desserts! Around Thanksgiving, pies are more of a popular dessert. My family usually enjoys pumpkin, apple, and or cherry pie with ice cream after our Thanksgiving dinner. During Christmas we devour tons of delicious cookies made by people in the family. On Christmas Eve my grandma has dinner for our whole family and every individual family brings cookies that they made to share with everyone. One of the all time favorites of my family are peanut butter balls, or buckeyes. I thought I would share the recipe with all of you that are reading so that you and your families can enjoy them too.



Photo Contributed by Jenna Zawislak

## Peanut Butter Balls

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup butter, room temperature
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 1 1/4 cups crushed graham crackers
- 15 ounces semi-sweet chocolate (for melting)

### Directions:

1. In the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment combine the peanut butter and butter, mixing on medium speed until smooth.
2. Turn mixer to low and add in the powdered sugar and graham cracker crumbs, mixing until evenly incorporated. Mixture will be thick.
3. Using a small cookie scoop (about 1 tablespoon), portion out the mixture and roll into balls. Place them on a large parchment lined baking sheet. Place the baking sheet in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to chill.
4. In a medium bowl melt the chocolate in 25- second increments, stirring after each until smooth.
5. Using a fork, dip each peanut butter ball into the melted chocolate, tapping off the excess. Place back on the parchment lined baking sheet. Repeat with all balls.

This recipe was taken from [cookiesandcups.com](http://cookiesandcups.com). You can feel free to follow them for a delicious peanut butter ball, or you can put your own spin on it to make it your own unique recipe. Have an amazing and safe holiday season!

## Fun for the holidays

Jeremiah Gallagher, Staff writer

Have you and your family been looking for something to do this year around Beaver County?

Well because of this rough year one of our towns favorite festivals was canceled, but don't lose hope yet, because as of right now you can go to Kennywood for their very own light show. Kennywood's holiday lights will be open from 5 pm to 9pm through November 22nd until December 22nd. One other time is also going to be held on December 26th through December 30th. The best part is all of this only for the cost of \$18.49. Now, if you are wondering what all you will get for this great price well I'm here to tell you. This event is included with 2 million twinkling lights and decorated Christmas trees, holiday performances, Santa Clause, light shows, and some select rides depending on the weather. Or if you can't make it there, please enjoy the trees from the student's and staff's own homes!!!!!! We will not tell you who the owners are but maybe you can guess!!!

# Rochy's 1st Annual Staff and Student's Festival of Trees



**Did you know that the Elf on the Shelf was created by a stay-at-home mom and her daughters? Also, annual sales of the favorite elf top out at at 13 million per year!**







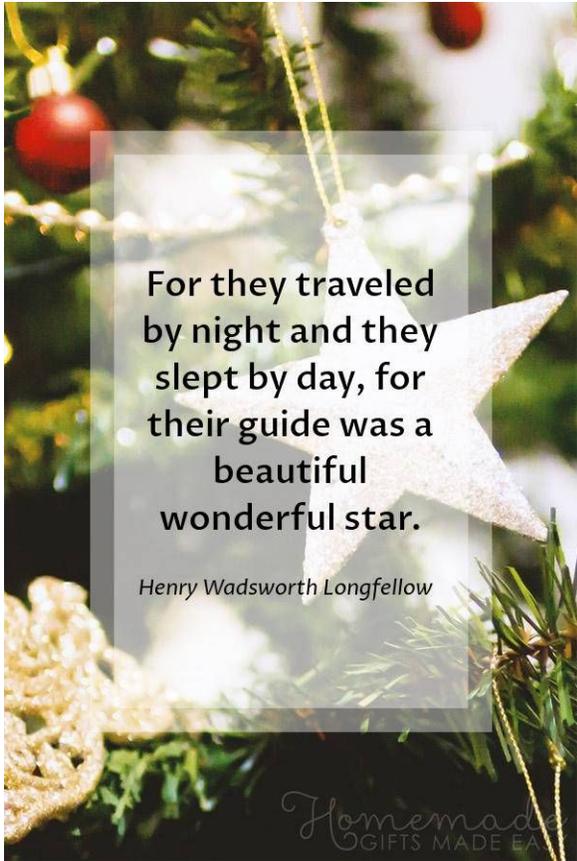


*Sending You  
Bountiful Blessings!*

Sending you Bountiful Blessings for this holiday season. May you feel Peace and Fulfillment in all that you do. May you be showered with Abundance in all its forms. And may Serenity follow you wherever you go. Have a beautiful holiday season filled with Love and unexpected Miracles!



*SaratogaOcean.com*



For they traveled  
by night and they  
slept by day, for  
their guide was a  
beautiful  
wonderful star.

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Homemade  
GIFTS MADE EASY

