



The Gata Data

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Christmas at STA



The Origins of X-Mas

BY: Saniya Smith
Gata Data Reporter

Christmas is celebrated on December 25. It is a religious and sanctified holiday that has impacted cultures globally for hundreds of years. Christians celebrate this day as the anniversary of Christ's birth. He is a spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of the religion. Well-known Christmas customs include gift exchanging, attending church, and decorating trees. Christmas has been a federal holiday since 1870.

Dating back to ancient Rome, Romans celebrated a holiday called Saturnalia, an ancient festival to praise their mythological god Saturn. Originally celebrated on December 17, Saturnalia was extended to three and seven days. The date has been connected with the winter sowing season, which varies from October to January in modern Italy.

Gift-giving, feasting, and a hearty celebration in December could describe either Saturnalia or Christmas, has evolved even further from its pagan roots and even its deeply Christian ties to become a time of joy around the world as families come together and celebrate the year that has passed.

Christmas can originate from many different religions, cultures, and societies that have celebrated holidays in nonidentical practices, the ability to create different experiences by including characteristics of syncretic religions shows how collaboration alongside the search for seasonal cheer all comes from various backgrounds.

Christmas isn't just about jolly St. Nick; it is about celebration, gift-giving, and genuine love. The next time you recite a fable about Christmas, don't fail to mention the different cultures that contributed to this wonderful holiday.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



From your Gata Data Staff

Ask Allie

BY: MICHAEL MUMPHREY
Gata Data Reporter

Dear Allie,

Despite all of the Christmas cheer going around, I feel like I can't absorb the happy spirit lately. I'm always tired and grumpy, and I feel like nothing matters. I've avoided going to Christmas parties with friends and my grades in school have dropped. The thing is that this isn't the first time this has happened to me, it's been happening since I was twelve years old. I want to be happy and social this time of year like everyone else and I want to pass my classes, but I just feel like it doesn't matter anymore. What's wrong with me?



Signed, a Blue Christmas Gator

Dear Blue Christmas Gator,
Nothing is wrong with you, rest assured! What you are experiencing is a common mental health condition that many people experience called SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), more commonly known as seasonal depression or, in your case, winter depression. Unlike regular depression, it occurs at a specific time of year and can have multiple

influences.

One of the main causes for winter-pattern SAD that may be affecting you is a lack of vitamin D due to shorter winter days causing you to stay inside more. Vitamin D is important for your body because it stimulates muscle movement, nerve connections, and immune system functions, which is likely why you feel so down and tired all of the time;

your body doesn't have what it needs to move! If you have enough motivation, try going outside and performing physical activities while there is still sunlight outside. It doesn't have to be anything strenuous, a simple walk around the block will do just fine. This should help with your mobility and your mood, as exercising releases a chemical called endorphins, a mood booster. If you are unable to, speak to your doctor about prescribing a Vitamin D supplement which will make up for what you don't get during the day.

Has a traumatic event occurred in your life that happened around this time, perhaps? Another cause of winter-pattern SAD is a traumatic experience. This is because external conditions, such as weather or temperature, can bring back painful memories of an event, causing one to feel depressed. If this sounds like you, talk to someone! Your friends, parents, and teachers care so much about you and would be more than happy to listen to your feelings. If you have trouble expressing your thoughts, I would suggest writing them down on a piece of paper and reciting them. Telling someone you trust won't cure the problem, and it is a difficult thing to do, but it will ease the burden and can lead you to sources of professional help. Speaking of, therapists are another great resource for you to navigate your negative thoughts. Partaking in psychotherapy can help shift one's mindset into thinking more positively about things and can help rid habits that worsen depression. Your therapist may also recommend you take an antidepressant to assist in this treatment as it changes how the brain produces chemicals that affect your mood, like serotonin.

Overall, I want you to realize that you are not alone! Over 6% of the population report feeling depressed at Christmas time, with a whopping 64% stating that their depression worsens around the holiday season. It's completely valid to feel these emotions, but you can't let them impact your enjoyment of life, especially around what is arguably the most wonderful time of the year. Remember that you are loved and that you deserve to be happy and successful (especially in school!!). But most importantly: realize that you are not alone and that there is, in fact, hope for your future. You can break out of this cycle, just take it one step at a time. Have a Merry Christmas!

-Allie Gator

Kwanzaa: Exploring different Traditions

BY: CHAD HERBERT
Gata Data Reporter

December is the time of holiday cheer for everyone to come together as one and celebrate this festive season. Most of us will be out celebrating Christmas, or some of us might be celebrating Hanukkah, but there's another holiday that some of us might not even know of or know of its importance to black culture; I'm talking about Kwanzaa (also known as Ngzuo Saba), an African American/Pan-African holiday that celebrates family, community, and culture. Created in 1966 by African American Studies professor Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa is a seven-day cultural festival that begins December 26th and ends January 1st, Karenga has said that the goal of the holiday is to "give black people an alternative to the existing holiday of Christmas and give black people an opportunity to celebrate themselves and their history, rather than simply imitate the practice of the dominant society." During the holiday, families and communities celebrate by sharing a feast, honoring their

ancestors, and celebrating African American culture. Each day represents one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The main intent for these principles is to see how you can incorporate them into your daily life and set goals and intentions for the coming year based on these principles; for example, the 1st day, Umoja, is about uniting and striving to maintain that in your family, community, etc., while the 3rd day, Ujima (collective work and responsibility); is about working together as a community and helping each other with our problems. Families who celebrate Kwanzaa decorate their house with the primary symbols of Kwanzaa, such as the Kinara (The Candle Holder), which is symbolic of African roots/heritage, and the Mishumaa Saba (The Seven Candles), which is a set of black, red, and green candles that symbolic of the Seven principles, the people, their struggle, and hope for the future.

ST. AMANT HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS PRESENT

Sing We Noel

MONDAY | DEC 16 | 7:00 PM

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
FRENCH SETTLEMENT

Free Entry
Doors open at 6:30 PM



OPINION

Must watch Christmas movies

BY: LIBBY WILKINSON
Gata Data Reporter

The Christmas season is a joyful time filled with lots of baking and movie watching. In honor of Christmas, here is a list of the top 5 classic Christmas movies that are a must watch.

1. How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000) - In this live-action movie, the grumpy Grinch who lives in a cave on Mount Crumpit decides to try and ruin the Christmas spirit for the Whos down in Whoville. He successfully sneaks into the town and swipes everything Christmas related. However, after an encounter with the people of Whoville, the Grinch's attitude changes towards Christmas.
2. Home Alone (1990) - Kevin McCallister acts out the night before the family's holiday trip to Paris, resulting in his mother making him sleep up in the attic. The McCallisters leave for the airport without Kevin, leaving him home alone. Kevin runs into two con men planning to rob the McCallister residence, allowing his excitement to sour he realizes he must protect the family home.
3. The Santa Clause (1994) - Scott Calvin was watching his son on Christmas eve when he heard a noise on the roof. As Scott goes to investigate, he startles the man in the Santa suit, in which the man accidentally falls off the roof. Scott then puts on the suit and is then transported to the North Pole, where an elf explains that Scott must take over the role of being Santa before christmas. Thinking it was a dream, Scott brushes it off. However, he soon learns to realize he has a lot of work to do after him spontaneously gaining weight and growing a white beard.
4. The Polar Express (2004) - Chris (aka Hero Boy) grew up being skeptical of Santa Clause's existence, one night a magic train known as the Polar Express stopped outside of the boy's house. Growing curious, Chris went out to investigate and was invited by the conductor to board the train that was heading towards the North Pole. He reluctantly climbed aboard and was greeted by lots of other children. After an eventful train ride, the train arrives at the North Pole in which the boy finds a bell in which he can only hear ringing once he begins to believe.

5. ELF (2003) - Buddy was raised to adulthood by elves. Not understanding that he doesn't fit in, he takes a trip to New York, in full elf uniform, in search of his real father. After finding his father, Walter, he rejects him mistaking him for a christmas messenger and sends him to a department store, in which the manager mistakes Buddy for an employee. Buddy overhears that Santa will be at the store and decorates in preparation. However, when "Santa" arrives, Buddy realizes that it's just a man dressed up in a suit and starts a brawl in the store. In which Walter bailed Buddy out of jail, got a DNA test and realized Buddy was in fact his son. Over the course of the movie, they work on building their relationship and Christmas spirit.



Top 10 Christmas Songs, Ranked

BY: CHANCE GOMEZ
Gata Data Reporter

List:

- 1.All I Want For Christmas Is You- Mariah Carey
- 2.Last Christmas - Wham!
- 3.Rockin Around The Christmas Tree- Brenda Lee
- 4.Jingle Bell Rock - Bobby Helms
- 5.Run Run Rudolph - Chuck Berry
- 6.Holly Jolly Christmas - Micheal Buble
- 7.Santa Tell Me - Ariana Grande
- 8.Sleigh Ride - The Ronettes
- 9.It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year -Andy Williams
- 10.It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas - Micheal Buble

Description:

Christmas music is a huge part of the traditional Christmas season. This traces back to as early as the 13th century introducing some of the most popularly known Christmas carols such as the "12 Days Of Christmas" and "O Christmas Tree" and others. Many huge Christmas hits have been released since such as "All I Want For Christmas Is You" and "Last Christmas" and others. Many classic Christmas movies have also included Christmas hits such as "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" and "Frosty the Snowman".In 2024, Christmas music continues to be a staple of the winter season everywhere you go.



PHOTOS BY GETTYIMAGES

DATES TO REMEMBER

SAT DEC 14 - BB FUNDRAISER (BREAKFAST WITH SANTA)

MON DEC 16 - CHIOR CHRISTMAS CONCERT AT ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL

WED DEC 18 - 3RD AND 4TH BLOCK EXAMS

THURS DEC 19 - 1ST AND 2ND BLOCK EXAMS; EARLY DISMISSAL

FRI DEC 20 - EARLY DISMISSAL; LAST DAY OF 1ST SEMESTER

MON DEC 23 - START OF XMAS BREAK

TUES JAN 7 - START OF 2ND SEMESTER; STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL



White Elephant vs. Secret Santa

BY: HEADLINE
Gata Data Reporter

There are many Christmas traditions such as family game night, watching movies, baking cookies, hanging up stockings, elf on the shelf, going to see lights, and caroling. Some of the most popular games during the Christmas season are White Elephant and Secret Santa. While both are meant to share the same Christmas spirit and give gifts to your loved ones, a rivalry about which one is better to play at gatherings grew.

White Elephant is a gift exchange where each person takes a turn to choose a wrapped gift or steal from someone who has already chosen their gift. They choose the order by selecting a random number. Whoever selects number one has to pick a random gift and can open it. Once everybody has a gift the person who started the game is allowed to steal from someone else or keep their gift. Once a gift is stolen three times, the gift is stuck with the third person. By the end of the game, each person has a random gift.

Secret Santa is a game where a group

of people select random names and must keep it a secret until the big Christmas party. Each person buys for their specific person gifts

under a price limit. Depending on how the group decides to play it, they can get smaller gifts and secretly give them to their person

throughout the week leading up to the party and then give a larger gift at the party. At the end of the gift exchange, you find out who your Secret Santa was. The gifts often feel more personal since they were specifically bought for one person.

White Elephant and Secret Santa both provide gifts to the ones you love. However, gifts in Secret Santa can make someone feel special and seen more than in White Elephant. In Secret Santa, the person is getting gifts specifically for them and often has a more personal effect. White Elephant gifts are randomly selected and could be more special or needed by someone else in the group. White Elephant may be more fun for a group if they decide to do gifts that are meant to be funny but if a group is looking for something more personal then Secret Santa is the way to go. In the end, the games that are played at holiday gatherings are meant to be specific for one's family. Some families may enjoy White Elephant over Secret Santa or it may be the other way around.

