



MERRY ELFIN’ CHRISTMAS

Happy Holidays from Santa’s Little Spartans

GOOD NEWS

- ★ Madden Bailey has been accepted into Louisiana State University with a \$18,000 merit scholarship and Tulane University with a \$60,000 scholarship
- ★ Erin Roberts has been accepted into Dillard University and University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- ★ Kaitlynn Wilde has been accepted into Loyola University New Orleans with a Dean Scholarship, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Louisiana State University
- ★ Alyssa Narcisse has been accepted into University of New Orleans, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Mississippi State University, West Virginia State University, Jackson State University, Lamar University, Dillard University, Loyola University New Orleans with a merit based Loyola Scholarship of \$23,000 and Louisiana Tech University
- ★ Mckenzi Carter has been accepted into Millikin University with a Millikin Academic Excellence Scholarship
- ★ Jayaide Cosse has been accepted into Kent State University and Xavier University of Louisiana
- ★ Kayla Watson has been accepted into Paul Quinn College and offered the Stillman College Golden Ticket Presidential Scholarship
- ★ Jaeda Newton has been accepted into Millsaps College with a scholarship of \$108,000 and a Founders Grant of \$27,000, Louisiana State University, and University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- ★ Paige Reine has been accepted into Southern University and A&M College and Xavier University of Louisiana with a merit scholarship of \$10,000
- ★ Kaleigh Longmyle has been accepted into Loyola University New Orleans with a merit based Loyola Scholarship of \$23,000, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Jackson State University, University of New Orleans, and Morgan State University
- ★ Salmen High juniors and seniors donated 56 pints of blood! That saves 168 lives. Way to go hero Spartans!
- ★ 50 Interact Club members volunteered in Bay St. Louis, undertaking three community service projects. This event highlighted the “Service Above Self” motto!
- ★ Spartan Quarterback, Da’John Howard, has been nominated as Friday night Football Player of the Week for the second week in a row!
- ★ Senior guard Jayvarri Williams is a nominee for the [NOLA.com](https://www.nola.com) Northshore Prep Boys Athlete of the Week! He is also **Salmen’s Player of the Week**, with a stat line of 20 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists helped the Spartans secure a 74-56 victory over Willow School on 11/ 26.
- ★ Congratulations to the Seniors for winning the can food drive with over 232 cans!
- ★ Congratulations to our National Honor Society Officers:
President: Andray Smith **Vice-President:** Akayla McMooain
Secretary: Aabrah Abid **Historian/Public Relations:** Celeste Heard

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ★ **December 1:**
Girls Soccer vs. Hammond @Salmen 5:30 PM
Boys Soccer vs. Christ Episcopal @CE 5:30 PM
Boys B.Ball vs. Bourgeois @Salmen 7:00 PM
- ★ **December 2:**
Girls B.Ball vs. Booker T. @BTW 6:30 PM
Club Day
Leap Testing - Biology
(Regular Schedule)
- ★ **December 3:**
Girls Soccer vs. LB Landry @Salmen 5:30 PM
Boys Soccer vs. LB Landry @Salmen 7:00 PM
Leap Testing - Biology
(Regular Schedule)
- ★ **December 4:**
Girls B.Ball vs. Belle Chase @Salmen 5:30 PM
Leap Testing - English I and II
(Reversed Schedule 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st)
- ★ **December 5:**
Girls Soccer vs. Northlake Christian @Salmen 5:30 PM
Boys Soccer vs. Northlake Christian @Salmen 7:00 PM
Girls B.Ball vs. Hanville @Salmen 6:30 PM
Leap Testing - English I and II
(Reversed Schedule 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st)
- ★ **December 8:**
Girls Soccer vs. Hammond @Hammond 5:30 PM
Boys Soccer (JV) vs. Slidell @Slidell 5:30 PM/ 7:00 PM
Leap Testing - Algebra I and Geometry
(Regular Schedule)
- ★ **December 9:**
DE English III Fall Exam (4th Block)
Girls B.Ball vs. Destrahan @Salmen 6:30 PM
Leap Testing - Algebra I and Geometry
(Regular Schedule)
- ★ **December 10:**
PRISM Christmas Concert @Salmen 7:00 PM
Girls Soccer vs. Higgins @Salmen 5:30 PM
Boys Soccer vs. Higgins @Salmen 7:00 PM
Boys B.Ball vs. McMain @Salmen 6:40 PM
Leap Testing - US History and Government
(Reversed Schedule 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st)
- ★ **December 11:**
Girls B.Ball vs. Franklinton @Salmen 6:30 PM
Leap Testing - US History and Government
(Reversed Schedule 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st)
- ★ **December 12:**
Boys Soccer vs. Livingston @Livingston 5:00 PM
Girls B.Ball vs. South Lafourche @Salmen 5:30 PM
Boys B.Ball vs. South Lafourche @Salmen 7:00 PM
- ★ **December 13:**
ACT Testing @Salmen
- ★ **December 15:**
Girls Soccer vs. Lakeshore @Salmen 5:30 PM
Boys Soccer vs. Lakeshore @Salmen 7:00 PM
Girls B.Ball vs. McDonogh 35 @MD35 5:30 PM

- ★ **December 17:**
Final Exams
Girls Soccer vs. Pearl River @Salmen 4:00 PM
Boys Soccer vs. Pearl River @Salmen 5:30 PM
- ★ **December 18:**
Final Exams
- ★ **December 19:**
½ for Students - Make up for Exams
Boys B.Ball vs. South Plaquemines @Salmen 7:30 PM
Girls B.Ball vs. South Plaquemines @Salmen 5:30 PM
End of First Semester
- ★ **December 22:**
Boys B.Ball vs. St.Pauls @St.Pauls 2:00 PM/ 6:15 PM
girls B.Ball vs. Academy of Our Lady @AOL 6:00 PM
- ★ **December 22 - January 5:**
Winter Break - No School
- ★ **December 29:**
Girls B.Ball vs. West Jefferson @Salmen 5:30 PM
- ★ **December 30:**
Girls B.Ball vs. Landry @Landry 6:00 PM
- ★ **January 5:**
Senior Portraits

Weather Watch with Robbi: The Chill

BY ROBBI-RENEE' WILLIAMS



Brrrr, do you feel the breeze? With Christmas around the corner and Thanksgiving in the rear view mirror, temperatures are reaching their annual lowest. So, ladies and gentlemen, put up your Christmas trees and light your fireplaces, because winter is upon us.

Louisiana ranks as the second hottest state in the U.S., only beaten by Florida. This should come as no surprise to anyone who lives here. That being said, once winter rolls around it feels like a rarity to encounter cold air. Temperatures have been on a continuous decline since September, though it's been much too subtle to notice. This month however, we're finally reaping the benefits of the changing seasons. In December, expect 60-degree highs during the day and 40-degree lows at nightfall.

Typically, December is an extremely humid month in Slidell, Louisiana. This may come as a surprise when recalling how June and July felt in terms of humidity. But, when intense heat is deducted from the weather equation, humidity, while still high, isn't as noticeable. Relative humidity levels in December range from 83% to 84%, but the dropping temperatures makes for less oppressive air than that statistic may infer.

Fall was a dry season with less rainfall than previous and preceding months. Chances of precipitation are picking back up heading into December and 4-4.6 inches of rainfall is anticipated. The official range is only an estimation but precipitation in December rarely exceeds 8 inches or falls below 1.5 inches. In the beginning, chances of a rainy day sit at 25% and gradually increase to 30% by the end of the month.

Even Louisiana, one of the hottest places in the country, can get with the program for winter. By the way, I hope you've behaved this year. It's the holiday season and Santa is on his way. Savour this cold air all you can, winter is fleeting, afterall.

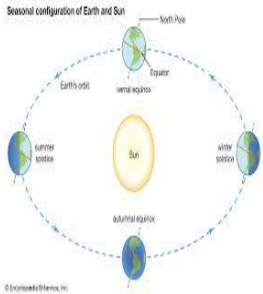
The Days of Darkness To Remember Rebirth and Renewal

BY JIMMY CHANZY

An event that marks the shortest day and longest night of the year. These certain events are caused when Earth's maximum axial tilt is away from the sun. The winter solstice will not just be an event of time but across the world it symbolizes death and rebirth across cultures. The winter solstice will not just be an event of

time; but across the world it symbolizes death and rebirth across cultures.

Winter solstice is when the shortest time of daylight and longest dark night of the year in a hemisphere is due to Earth's axial tilt. It happens when Earth's poles are tilted farther away from the sun. This marks the astronomical winter in the Northern Hemisphere and is a time of celebration symbolizing renewal, according to *National Geographic*. The shortest day in one hemisphere is the longest day of the year in the other. Historically, many cultures have observed the winter solstice with celebrations making the sun's return.



For millennia, civilizations observed the Solstice with different festivals and dinners marking the year's shortest day and the rebirth of the sun. Ancient God Norse celebrates Yule with bonfires and dinners to acknowledge the return of the sun and disappearance of darkness. In Rome, the solstice, called Saturnalia, was celebrated



with feasting for weeks, presents, and reversal of temporary norms. During the Iranian festival involving Yalda, families stayed sleepless all night, depleting red fruits like pomegranates to honor the sun and poetry. In China, the famous festival *Dongzhi* is a time for family get-togethers and dinners, with traditions like eating rice balls or dumplings to welcome the longer days.

At the occurrence of the winter solstice, cultures marked the appearance of the sun and the darkness of longer days with rituals focused on light. Different celebrations often involved starting fires and burning candles to honor the victory of brightness over darkness and to welcome warmth into their homes. In Persia, the celebration of *Shab-e Yalda* acknowledges the Sun God Mithra with family get-togethers to stay awake all night and eat fruits that are reminiscent of the dawn of time. Native Americans Hopi and Zuni religions performed the Soyal rituals, which involved dancing, prayers, and presents to help spirits to bring the sun back from its "snooze." In different parts of Scandinavia, the Feast of Juul, or Yule, involved burning wood as an homage to the returning sun, a practice that influenced many modern holiday traditions.

The Solstice will not just be an event of time but across the world it symbolizes death and rebirth across cultures. Ultimately, this



astronomical event marks the shortest day and longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, occurring between December 20th and 23rd. The event also signifies the celebrations of many cultures as a time of rebirth and renewal, welcoming the returning light, embracing themes of rebirth and

renewal as they often mark transitions from the longest night of the year to the gradual return of long days.

Is Winter a Stocking of Coal or Candycanes?

BY SARA MITCHELL

The first snowfall is always so white, fluffy, and quiet. It almost makes you forget about how cold it can get. What about the morning after? That same snow is now grey and slushy, lifeless from the constant crush of snowboots. Winter brings warmth by sitting near a campfire. The next thing you know, you're being hit by the cold realities of icy roads and heat bills.

Interviews provided insight on things considered "bad" about winter. According to Jaeda Newton the worst thing about winter is the cold weather and how you could get sick easily. Winter is more



of a "inside, sitting by the chimney" season. During winter most people would rather be warm and do indoor activities than being cold. Braving outdoor activities are only enjoyable if you like the cold or can withstand it. Jaeda was asked "Does living in Louisiana and not experiencing a 'True White Winter' to its full capacity affect your opinion on winter?" It does really affect her opinion because there are still fun activities

to do during winter. She also likes to be inside to stay warm, while watching movies and baking cookies.

Santa turned coal into candy cane. Let’s hop like reindeers onto the good things about winter! Salmen High student, Paige Reine believes the best thing about winter is enjoying the atmosphere and making memories - plus you’ll make more than you would in summer. Winter is a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities. In Louisiana not all days are super cold, sometimes it feels good to go out and have fun with family & friends. On the other hand, when the weather is really cold you're gullible enough to drink hot cocoa, watch movies, and bundle up. Seeing snow that every northern state gets is bittersweet since it's not seen often in Louisiana, it's a healing sensation for your inner child. Winter is truly a magical time, bringing both serene scenery and shared moments. Winter brings a different kind of joy that any other season could match.



Winter lures us into a cozy mock-up feeling of soundness with warmth of a campfire, only to leave us in shock by reality. As the days grow short and the wind takes a bite at your face. Will you clasp the comfort the winter season brings or will you focus on the challenges that lie at your icy doorstep? Winter is either a stocking of coal or candy canes.

Local Christmas Events

BY CAIRA FAVAROTH

What’s your favorite Christmas event? In New Orleans, they often have many different Christmas events. This gives people a chance to get in the Christmas spirit and enjoy the fun times with family and friends. Christmas in New Orleans gives people the feel of having a different/unique feel of Christmas and our traditions on how we celebrate the holidays. The city turns into a bright shining land



of wonder. New Orleans opens up a door for tourists to come visit and take a tour around which gives them the opportunity to experience everything like the bright displays we have all around.

Back in the late 1900s is when everything started. New Orleans had many traditions such as bonfires on the levee and The Creole Reveillon Feast. It became known to others and famous for its traditions. During this time New Orleans got many tourists. According to Academia.edu , “The success of the festival can be traced to the cooperation between the major constituents of the tourism industry such as the city government, the hospitality industry and the merchants and residents of New Orleans”. Christmas times then were more focused on hanging out with family and enjoying the good times.

During my childhood, Christmas in the Oaks was something me and my cousins loved going to. Seeing all the different lights they had made us excited, mainly because we often saw characters we watched and we liked how bright it was. Other than Christmas in the Oaks, they had a drive through event where you could take a ride to look at the lights if you didn’t want to get out of the car. This was really nice because some days it would be really cold. Not only did we go to Christmas in the Oaks but we also visited NOLA Christmas Fest which was held at the convention center and it started in 2013. It is very fun and filled with lots of things, even celebrities go to these events.

Currently, it is getting around Christmas time and all the events will be coming up very soon. Christmas in the Oaks which begins on November 28, and the NOLA Christmas Fest which begins December 20th are more popular events right now. There are more famous people coming down here as well as all of the local rappers. It has become more of an environment for younger kids such as teens because of the new artist this generation likes as well as the new time music. Many people enjoy all the fun things the NOLA Christmas Fest gives, such as the ice skating, rides, and the many different unique lights they have all around. The days we will be waiting for are November 28 and December 20th.



In conclusion, Christmas is a holiday of joy and happiness. New Orleans welcomes such a warmth and delighted feel. Christmas spirit is shown through fun activities and different events.

The Night Before Christmas

BY JAMIYAH TURNER

Christmas Eve is obviously the day before Christmas. This is a day when families do different activities. Reading this article will

highlight the different ways families celebrate around the world. There are people around the world who experience unsimilar Christmas Eve traditions. There are many ways to celebrate the day before a holiday. Conversely, some people only find it important to celebrate in certain ways. Furthermore, individuals show divergent ways of celebrating



Christmas Eve. To better understand why traditions vary, it helps to know when and how this day is recognized.

Initially, Christmas Eve is on December 24th of each year. This is known as the day before Christmas. This is celebrated as both a religious and secular holiday world wide. Moreover, people celebrate Christmas Eve based on their traditions, but there are many ways it can be celebrated. Such as attending religious events and doing services, decorating Christmas trees, and also spending time with their families. In some religions, they go to church services as a way to celebrate it, or they may light candles, go Christmas caroling, and nativity scenes. On the other hand, secular and cultural religions may stay inside and decorate the Christmas tree and decorate the inside or outside of their homes. Also time is spent on Christmas Eve, preparing huge meals, wrapping gifts, or watching Christmas movies. There are families with specific traditions where they open presents on Christmas Eve instead of Christmas Day. Conversely, Christmas Eve is celebrated to mark the joy and celebration of Christmas, to bring spirit into Christmas Day.

To begin, senior Nia Owens shared how her family celebrates Christmas Eve. When asked if her family has a tradition that is mandatory every year, responded by saying she and her family’s tradition is to wear matching pajamas and watch Christmas movies as the fireplace roasts. Next, Nia was asked, what does a normal Christmas Eve look like for her. Her response was putting up last minute decorations, cooking Christmas meals, and mainly spending time with her family. Activities that Nia does would be building gingerbread houses, listening to Christmas music, and eating dinner with her family. Nia enjoys spending time with her family on Christmas Eve, which definitely brings her and her family closer and creates a stronger bond as a family. In addition, one thing she wishes to do on Christmas Eve would be making sure all of her gifts from her to her family are wrapped nicely. She thinks that it is better to open all presents on Christmas Day for more excitement. Moreover, Nia says that her family does not wait until Christmas Eve to place the presents under the tree, her family puts presents under the tree throughout the month of December. Nia is encouraging and throwing out ideas for those who do not have any for Christmas Eve, she hopes she helps those who are in need of keeping their Christmas Eve active.

Next, Senior Kaleigh Longmyle shares a few responses on ways that she and her family celebrate their Christmas Eve. In addition, Kaleigh does not have a family tradition that is mandatory for her. She does not wish to have one. A normal Christmas Eve looks joyful for her. This is a day that she spends with her family, which she does fun activities such as making cookies and matching pajamas. Hence, Kaleigh enjoys spending time with family on Christmas Eve. Undoubtedly she says, “Spending time with my family brings me closer to my family because we are able to spend quality time with each other.” Also, she wishes to be able to do activities with her friends and family on Christmas Eve. Moreover, she does not think that it is necessary to open presents on Christmas Eve. Kaleigh says that her family does not wait until Christmas Eve to place presents under the tree. Her family normally has presents under the tree as early as November every year, which depends on when she makes her Christmas list.



Therefore, individuals show divergent ways of celebrating Christmas Eve. This can be used to show people the different

traditions of families world wide. Everyone has their own unique activities that are planned. Furthermore, consider this as a way to know that there is not just one tradition in the world. There is history behind each tradition, people may not just celebrate Christmas Eve for fun. It has a deeper meaning. There are many options of activities to keep a family’s Christmas Eve and tradition fun and active, that everyone would be able to enjoy.

The Warm Voices of Christmas Time
BY KALEIGH LONGMYLE

What gets you in the holiday spirit? Is it the smell of peppermints or the jolly voices ringing all around town? As holiday time comes near, everyone spreads their cheer. During Christmas time, there are tons of exciting things to do and so many beautiful songs to hear. People spreading their holiday spirit through their jolly voices of Christmas Carols ringing throughout people’s ears, experiencing the best time of the year!



You may be wondering, what is a common thing that happens during the Christmas Season? The answer to this question is Christmas Carols. You may be thinking in your heads right now that Christmas Carols are just people singing Christmas songs, but that is not quite true. Christmas Carols are actually considered a holiday tradition! People gather to sing and celebrate the holiday season, incorporating themes of joy, peace, and happiness. They first originated hundreds of years ago around the 14th century, serving as the perfect representation of English Medieval music. Christmas Carols are often seen in Christian places like church services, but they are also seen in various other sceneries. They once were used during ring dance performances as well, whereby dancers would dance and sing Christmas tunes. Christmas Carols are overall very popular, and they are performed amongst all areas around the World and the United States, especially in Northern states like New York City, where they are actually showcased in Times Square in substantial crowds.



In continuation, Christmas Carols vary from all over the world. There are multiple different types and styles of Christmas Carols. You may have heard some of the most famous Carols at least once in your lifetime. One of the staples is known as “Silent Night,” which originated in Australia in 1818, written by Priest Joseph Mohr, the melody formed by Franz Gruber. One of the lines begins with, “Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright,” which is loved by millions of individuals across the World. Although each Christmas Carol is not liked by everyone, most individuals prefer at least one, some none. Most actually enjoy them and believe that Christmas Carols spread excitement for the holiday season and add a touch of enjoyment before the Christmas season comes to an end.



To sum it up, Christmas Carols are an amazing thing to experience. Not only are they delightful to hear, they also bring joy and happiness throughout the World. They not only evoke nostalgia and happiness but they bring multiple communities together during the ice-cold holiday season and may also serve as an activity that brings generations together. Have you ever heard or participated in a Christmas Carol up close in action? If not, what are you waiting for, get in the spirit!

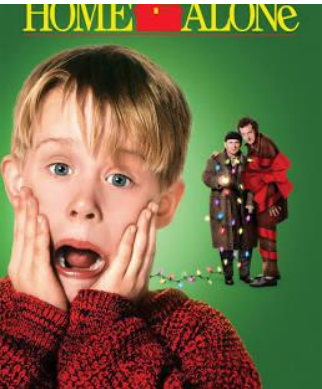
Tis’ the Season to Bing Watch
BY AMIYAH SHANNON

“The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing aloud for all to hear!” - *Elf (2003)* What better way to get into the Christmas cheer than singing, of course, but also watching Christmas movies? My gift to you this Christmas includes recommending Christmas movies, old and new! To many, Christmas movies play a big role in the Christmas spirit , which is why I’m here to help maintain that spirit in a short summary.

Looking for something new to watch? Released on November 14, 2025 on Disney+, *A Very Jonas Christmas Movie* features one of Hollywood’s favorite brothers, Kevin, Joe and Nick Jonas. In the movie, “The Jonas Brothers face obstacles as they race to get

from London to New York in time for Christmas,” according to Disney+. Lastly, if you are feeling romantic, watch *A Merry Little Ex-Mas*, a romantic comedy featuring Alicia Silverstone that was released on Netflix November 12, 2025. A divorced couple wants to spend one last Christmas together as a family but new flames and old feelings interrupt their plan.

If you are not feeling any of the recent christmas movies, here are some fan favorite Christmas movies of all time! Listed at number 1 is *Home Alone*, released in 1990. Before a big family trip to Paris , 8-year-old Kevin McCallister acts out and wishes to be alone with no family. Unexpectedly, his wish came true but not on purpose. His whole family accidentally left him at home, all by himself. His excitement narrows about being home alone once he realizes two con men plan to rob his house and he



is the only one there to protect home.

Another fan favorite featuring Jim Carrey is *How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)*. Based on the children's tale by Dr. Seuss, in this live action version of the Grinch, the Grinch who is played by Jim Carrey plans to ruin Christmas for the joyful citizens of Whoville. As he comes down from his mountaintop home with dog Max, he comes across something that disrupts his plan to steal Christmas, Cindy Lou Who, played by Taylor Momsen. This movie will also be played in theaters for its 25th anniversary starting December 12, 2025.



Again, Christmas movies play a big role in the Christmas spirit. I hope I was able to maintain this spirit with my recommendations. Therefore, if you are ever not feeling the Christmas spirit or if the new or old Christmas movies just aren’t doing it for you, come back to this article! Like I said, this is my free gift to you that doesn’t require anything back, so “Keep the change, ya filthy animal!” - *Home Alone (1990)*

The Heart of the Holidays: Memories That Bring Us Together
BY ESSIX CHANDLER

From the smell of fresh pine to the sound of family laughter, holiday memories hold a special kind of magic. Many of these moments come from familiar scents and sounds, while for others they come from time-honored family traditions. Through conversations with Mrs. Yates and John Do, we explore how sensory details and shared rituals make the seasons so memorable.

For Mrs. Yates, the holidays are defined by what she can see, smell and hear. She stated, “The smell of delicious food instantly brings back memories for me! My mom usually makes a turkey, along with tons of sides and desserts on Christmas. I love going to my parents' house early to smell the good cooking on holidays,” she shared. Also saying “My mom makes this delicious Italian bread as an appetizer for family gatherings. It is usually filled with cheese and vegetables, and it always reminds me of being home for Christmas,” These small sensory memories remind her that the spirit of the holidays lives in the details that bring warmth and nostalgia.



John Do's favorite holiday memories come from his family's long-standing Christmas tradition. "A holiday tradition me and my family do for Christmas is to always spend Christmas with each other and open presents after everyone is nearby" he shared. He explained that this custom started with his parents and was passed down through the years. "They are meaningful to me because of the moments I get to spend time with my family," John added. For him, these traditions strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories of togetherness

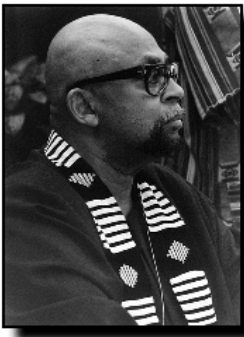


Holiday memories come in many forms: from the smell of pine to the glow of lights to the laughter shared around a Christmas tree. For Mrs. Yates and John Do, the holidays are about more than celebration; they're about connection. As we celebrate each year, it's the small and meaningful moments that make the holidays truly Unforgettable. As you celebrate this season, take time to notice the small moments: the smells, the laughter, the traditions. Those are the memories you'll carry for years to come.

Habari Gani: Kwanzaa

BY PARKER JACKSON

“We will never know ourselves if we do not know our history.” - Dr. Maulana Karenga. Kwanzaa was founded by Karenga in 1966. Typically celebrated on December 25th through January 1st, it was meant to commemorate the history and culture of black people. This holiday was built around the Nguzo Saba, also known as “The Seven Principles”. Kwanzaa was made to honor and have unity between African Americans during times of need.



Created during the Black Power Movement of the 60s and 70s, Dr. Manulana wanted to unite and empower African Americans after The Watts Riot of 1965. The significance of the Watts Riot was on August 11, 1965 when a young African American motorist named Marquette Frye, was pulled over and arrested by a white officer due to suspicion of driving while intoxicated. This caused a riot in urban areas of the North and West. Dr. Manulana felt and

saw the tension it created in black community of Los Angeles. He went into research, specifically researching in the African “first-fruit” harvest tradition to create a week dedicated to African practices and values. Kwanzaa originally comes from the Swahili phrase, “*Matunda ya kwanza*”, which means “first fruits”. Karenga developed the Nguzo Saba also known as Seven Principles that is centered in the philosophy of Kwanzaa.

The Seven Principles are in hand with the African values that were designed to strengthen communities, families and culture. These Seven Principles are: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Umija (CollectiveWork and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith). Starting with Umoja which is unity, this is to encourage unity in family, community, nation, and race. Kujichagulia is self-determination, this is meant to define and speak for oneself. Umija, the collective work and responsibility is to build the community and take the community's problems and try to solve them as best you can. Ujamaa is cooperative economics. This is to maintain and shop at stores from black small business

owners and to profit from them as a community. Nia means purpose. This is to build and develop the community and restore the people to their traditional greatness. Kuuba means creativity. This is to do as much as you can to leave the community greater and more beneficial. Lastly is Imani which

means faith. This is to believe that your people are greater and more victorious than the hardships they faced.

So, how do you celebrate this holiday? Well here's how, gather with friends and family, light candles on a kinara and start discussing the seven principles and how you can incorporate them into your everyday life. With the kinara make sure you use green black and red candles, which are the colors of Kwanzaa. With black representing the people, red represents the struggle along with the efforts towards freedom and rights, and finally green which symbolizes hope for the future to come. Try and make some African inspired foods like a popular dish fufu or Suya. And have large feasts called ‘Karamu’ for the next six days of Kwanzaa. Then engage in some cultural activities like music, dance, and learning your history. You could decorate your home with African prints and art. Or you can celebrate it with whatever is personal to you!

Dr. Maulana Karenga initiated Kwanzaa in the significance of preserving and keeping alive the culture and history of Black Americans. Created during the Black Power Movement, celebrated December 25 through January 1st. This holiday is in commerce of the Nguzo Saba aka The Seven Principles. As we enter Kwanzaa in the next couple weeks, you now know the meaning behind this

holiday. Maybe this holiday spoke to you, so try and honor it the best you can in whatever feels right to you!

Teacher Spotlight

BY JAEDA NEWTON

Get ready for a new era on the court! I am thrilled to introduce our new boys basketball coach, Coach Weinmunson, here in Teacher Spotlight. His vision and constant work ethic will take our team to a new level. Now lets dribble on and take a dunk into how he thinks this season will go and how he will improve the team.



Coach Weinmunson has landed here at Salmen as a new basketball coach bringing his very detailed, intense and caring coaching, but you already knew that lets travel... get it travel okay okay lets get into it. A self-described “God-fearing, humble, father, husband, athletic, competitive”, coach is ready to lead the team to their goal of 20+ wins and a run into the playoffs. With a coaching career that started off here at St. Tammany Parish in 2008, coach Weinmunson is a veteran who has coached for thirteen years at Mandeville High and a year at Hammond High. He even has a soft spot for baseball, having coached it for five years and even running a travel baseball organization! For him, the inspiration of becoming a basketball coach started very early; being the only child who "gravitated to basketball instantly”, stated Coach Weinmunson. It’s very inspiring that he still finds time to do the things he loves like golfing, singing, and being with his family.



After a summer of getting to know the team, he is all in. Reflecting on the time with the team, he noted, "We've been getting closer every day since summer." Coach Weinmunson is no stranger to the Final Four, an accomplishment he shared with his wife and cherished as a favorite memory. With a positive attitude and a proven track record of success, he is ready to begin a new chapter at Salmen, where he hopes to create many more memorable moments.

We’re all excited to see what coach Weinmunson can bring and change for the rest of the season. Traveling forward lets wish our basketball teams, both boys and girls, luck throughout their seasons. Try to even come support them at one of their home games! Well that’s all I have for you guys this month. Before we head out I’ve got a great idea for an NBA themed fast-food restaurant. I’ll call it Shake-Shaq.

Senior Seasons: Hoops, Highlights, and a Farewell

BY JAEDA NEWTON

With the sound of the crows set to return to the Spartans’ home court, seniors Jayvarri Williams and Marley McKnight are prepared for their most important season yet. Stepping into their final year, their focus extends beyond their own play to building something that will inspire the team for years to come. In this interview, I, Jaeda Newton, asked both players about their goals for this season, what they have been working on, and which teams they are most excited to face as they kick off their final season at Salmen.

Forget Thanksgiving vacation blues — Marley McKnight, is into his final high school season with momentum and one goal in mind:



winning a state championship. McKnight is not playing a personal favorite with opponents this year, he gave a simple “Everyone”. His competitive energy was high right from the start. For the season opener, he’s focused on getting a great start with the team or ‘his guys’ to start the season off. This same energy carries over to all the other games with the mentality and commitment to do whatever it takes to win. Before heading out on the court for one final time this season, Marley made sure to send a special message: “Shoutout to my momma.”

For Jayvarri Williams, the last season is all about achieving team success and showcasing the improvements he’s made to his individual game. When asked about his primary goal for his final season, he states, “Make a payoff run.” Jayvarri has dedicated a significant amount of time this offseason perfecting his jumpshot, a part of his game he feels he has seen the most development. Looking ahead into the season schedule, Williams is bringing and ready for that competitive energy against Slidell and Northshore. Ultimately, his immediate focus bringing that same energy as Marley is the first home opener, where he is determined to achieve one outcome: a win.



Well that's all, as the season continues the shared focus of both Williams and McKnight paints a clear picture of the Spartan’s senior leadership. Their ambitions go hand-in-hand: achieving a win is just the first step through a journey they hope to gain a deep playoff run or a state championship. They are determined to leave a legacy defined not only by their individual improvements– the refined jumpshot or the competitive energy–but by their collective success as a team. With their eyes locked on the goal and support that drives them, these two seniors are ready to give their final season everything they have.

Da’John’s Path to Success
BY MADISON KNIGHT

From Friday night touchdowns to major nominations across Louisiana, Da’John Howard is putting Salmen Highschool on the map, and his journey is only getting started. Junior quarterback Da’John Howard has quickly grabbed spectators attention, by his outstanding performance this season. This has led to him being one

of the most talked about athletes at Salmen High. His growing list of achievements not only reflects his dedication to the game, but also could open doors to different opportunities that could take him far beyond the field.

Moreover, behind every great play on the field is hours of hard work and determination. For Da’John’s

success didn’t come overnight. The consistency is paying off, Da’John has been nominated for Athlete of the week in Louisiana three times (Fox 8, WDSU, and Sports Illustrated) and has won the Manning Award three times. These nominations highlight his outstanding performance and respect he earned from coaches. Da’John admits that the road has not always been smooth, facing injuries, and tough losses along the way. “Learning the responsibilities of the quarterback was something I struggled with very often,” Howard shared, but his confident mindset and dedication helped him persevere through those difficult times.

A key part of Da’John’s journey has been the support and unconditional love he receives from his family, especially his dad and his siblings. His family is always spotted in the bleachers wearing his number, cheering for him. Da’John values his father’s relationship the most, as his dad has been there to lift him up and was there when he needed a shoulder to cry on. He feels extremely blessed for the strength and wisdom his father brings in his life. Da’John dreams of playing college football and hopes to soon take his talents to University of Houston.

As you can see, through his dedication and growing list of accomplishments, Da’John has built a foundation that could carry him far beyond the sport he loves. His commitment and perseverance have helped him achieve so much in the game he is passionate about. With his family’s support and his determination, he is prepared to turn these dreams into reality. If you see Da’John around campus do not forget to congratulate him and be sure to wish him good luck on his future!



Salmen vs. Chalmette: A Night to Remember
BY PAIGE REINE

The Friday night lights seemed brighter than usual as Salmen High said a proper farewell to its senior athletes, but this big game

was followed by the real story. After the heartfelt pre-game moments that honored the graduating class’s hard work and dedication, the Spartans played the Chalmette Owls in a key district game. This game was not just about taking a victory home; it was real proof of strong leadership and a moment that set the tone for the season.

The field was set Friday night for one of the biggest and special nights of the season—Senior Night. Under the flaring lights and the cheers of family, friends and classmates, our senior Spartans took over the spotlight before kickoff, each one getting a moment in front of the crowd. The energy in the stands was loud as you witnessed screams, the admiration from younger teammates and the seniors wide-eyed and beamed by all the love they have received, knowing they were being honored in style. With the band playing and the flags drifting in the cool night breeze off Lake



Pontchartrain, the Spartans showed their gratitude for years of commitment, sweat and heart. This pre-game event set the tone: it was a night where the entire school community came together, cheering their Spartans into battle against Chalmette.

And battle they did! This game had everyone on the edge of their bleachers. Facing the Owls, our very own Quarterback, Da’John Howard made several key factors throughout the game, not just for him but his brothers. During our first quarter, with Salmen in a 7-0 lead, a 5 yard trick-play touchdown pass was made as Rey’Sean Coleman (WR) handed off the ball to Howard for the score. Salmen fought for a resurgence; Raheem Scott (WR) with a 41 yard touchdown pass where he scored 14 points just before halftime. Soon after, Salmen tied the game with a picture perfect onside kick recovery from Isaac Plinski (K,P) and Camron Robinson (CB,RB,KR), setting the table for the show-closing rush. Salmen capitalized on the special teams turnover, recovered to regain possession. Just under a minute left in the game, Howard

read the field and rushed for a 24 yard run giving Salmen a win for their money! Not only did he get us a win, Tyree Burton (DB,CB) circled back with a game ending interception. The Spartans refused the lay down, as this was revenge for the 34-28 victory against the



Owls in November of 2024. Congratulations to our District Champions on their District 7-5A Championship and the 28-24 win!

In a Senior Night for the history books, the Salmen Spartans pulled off a truly cinematic comeback against the Chalmette Owls, securing the District 7-5A title and an amazing 28-24 victory! Congratulations again to our Spartan football team on their unwavering determination and heart, with special recognition to our seniors who made their final home game something to brag about. This was the season where they continued to fight, give, and prove you should never leave a Salmen game early—unless you *really* need to beat traffic, that is.

The Heart of the Sideline
BY SEVEN FERNANDEZ

“It’s time to get loud, it’s time to represent SHS what times is it”. It is time to talk about *The Spartan Cheer Team*. To have a strong cheer team it takes a good coach, growth and strong cheerleaders. Behind every stunt, cheer, and pep rally it takes a strong team and that team is Salmen High School cheer team. Without a doubt the cheer team has faced challenges but they did not get discouraged or let that stop them from shining as bright as they do now. Let’s jump into the story behind the cheer team!



If you didn’t know Mrs. Carter is the wonderful cheer coach at Salmen high school. Mrs. Carter is a Delta and she also goes by

“Queen”. She always has a positive attitude and is always smiling. Being a cheer coach is not something that is easy and some do not want to take on the job, according to Mrs. Carter. “I took the role of being coach because I’ve always loved to cheer and dance. Seeing young people shine not just on the sidelines , but as leaders, teammates ,and individuals makes my heart smile”. You can tell she has always had a place in her heart for cheer ever since she was little. “Being on a cheer team can be challenging and tough and that’s when your coach steps in during tough times, I remind the team that challenges build champions. I use encouragement, honest feedback, and plenty of team bonding to keep spirits high. I also remind everyone that we are a family, we win together, we struggle together and we always lift each other up”. She always tries to keep the team with a positive attitude and keep the spirits up even when times are tough. Overall, Mrs. Carter is the best person for the job. Nobody will fulfill the role of a cheer coach like Mrs. Carter does.

Being a cheer captain is not easy and you need somebody that is going to lead the team by example and that person is Sydney Ewing. I asked Sydney what was one of the biggest challenges she faced while being captain and she said, “One of the biggest



challenges is keeping everyone on the same page—balancing different personalities, energy levels, and motivations. It takes patience and communication to make sure everyone feels heard while staying focused on our goals”. While there are different personalities on the team Sydney still manages to

keep the team together. “Being captains is both rewarding and challenging. It comes with a lot of responsibilities—leading by example, keeping everyone focused, and making sure the team stays united.” said Sydney. With any sport you do or any team you are on you all will grow individually and as a team. Speaking about growth, Sydney said “My goal is to help us become more consistent, confident, and connected. I want everyone to not only improve their skills but also build strong teamwork that shows in our performances”. As you can see Sydney has some things in mind that she wants the cheer team to improve on and they will get there. A strong captain is what you need and Sydney demonstrates just that by being determined .

Now that you have read about the cheer team it’s not so bad, right? If it wasn’t for Mrs. Carter stepping up to the plate and taking on such a big responsibility the cheer team wouldn’t be where it is today. If the cheer team did not build a strong foundation we would not be what we are today. If you ever feel like being involved while you are in highschool then you should definitely join the Salmen High School cheer team.

Club Spotlight - E-Sports
BY KIERRA MCCOY

Do you like to play video games? Well, did you know Salmen has a club just for that? This month’s glimpse of school clubs is the ESports club! ESports is sponsored by Mr. Kyle and Ms. Leblanc. Playing video games at home is fun but playing games at school is possible as well. Learn about what ESports is, what you can participate in and what it can help you with in the future.



Firstly, ESports is a club at Salmen High School as well as many other schools. In this club, students can participate in things such as tournaments, gaming, and so on. ESports is a competitive gaming activity that students participate in during club days as well as after school. Students that are often involved in gaming at home can join the club and play games at school as well, shocking right?



Although ESports is a club for gaming, it can give great opportunities for the future that gamers may have planned. ESports gives students the opportunity to compete with other people, allowing them to build skills, explore different career paths within the ESports pathway and so

much more.

For the most part, the ESports club is run by both Mr. Kyle and Ms. Leblanc. Ms. Leblanc is responsible for coordinating as well as handling internships while taking care of the ESports club too. Ms. Leblanc had a student that approached her about sponsoring for the club. Every now and then she would sponsor, staying after school with students when the head sponsor was not available. She then became the head sponsor and currently sponsors the club today. For anyone who likes to play games and may want to join the club Ms. Leblanc has said, “It’s the only time you can play video games at school and have fun with all your friends in one place.” Ms. Leblanc encourages anyone to join although there will only be 15 official members.

Playing video games at home is fun but playing games at school is possible as well. At Salmen High School, there are lots of opportunities to choose from. The ESports club is only one of the few clubs offered at Salmen High School. If you love to play video games, then this might just be the club for you.

Voices of Tomorrow
BY PAIGE REINE

Beyond the loud cheers and the final spike, what defines a student-athlete? Perhaps a champion? As the fall sports season comes to an end, the start of the holidays draws a significance for all students. For most, it is a time for celebration and relaxation after the past few semesters. For student-athletes like our very own, Jada Grace Ibanez and Aabrah Abid, it is a moment to reflect on their achievements and share how these moments on the court merge over to the joy they embrace with families.



Jada Grace Ibanez and Aabrah Abid are both proving what it means to be student-athletes. Both young ladies were standouts for the 2025-2026 All-Academic Girls’ Volleyball Team, while maintaining perfect 4.0 GPAs throughout their high school career. They both excel in showing ambition, compassion, and aptitude on and off the court; embodied by the pride and excellence defined here at Salmen. What we are all wondering is how did these two girls manage a 4.0 GPA while competing in a high level sport, well it was a challenge. They both expressed time management and work ethics. Jada shared, “This skill dramatically improved my life so I have time for school, sports, and my own time with friends and family.” Throughout high school, they have come across many challenges; academically and with sports. A key lesson they share is to not let grades or difficult challenges downgrade you. Letting these things define you can eat you alive, causing you to lose your self-worth. Aabrah shares that she is more than just a grade or a score. “I am Aabrah.” Jada and Aabrah both have tackled many issues in life, volleyball and academic wise. The advice they gave to those wanting to be successful is to never procrastinate and manage. All while taking care of your physical and mental well-being. Jada shares when pushing yourself, it benefits you in the end. Spartans, be sure to use this advice as a key factor.

As the holidays approach, these girls are not just relaxing and kicking back. They are taking the initiative to reflect and celebrate all of their achievements with family and friends. Both girls share how their academic or athletic success connects to that feeling of gratitude. Jada expresses her gratitude towards her coach and teachers for shaping her character and allowing these opportunities to happen as well as the ongoing support. Aabrah shares that after



the passing of her father, she learned to not take life for granted and to be grateful that she is breathing and has loving people around her. Aabrah and Jada both share a common interest—food, family, and friends. They stated that it allows them to connect with the people they

love and share a moment together. Jada shared how whether it is eating or cooking together, having these gatherings with loved ones is something she adores. “Whenever I’m feeling sad, a shared meal always reminds me how grateful I am for my life.” mentioned by Aabrah. Sharing moments with the people around you and those friends who have become your family really is a bittersweet moment. Cherish those in your circle, as you are not always promised tomorrow with those same few.

As we close this moment out, Jada and Aabrah’s journey demonstrates the success of student-athletes as a result of dedication. We congratulate these girls on their achievements, while excelling in the classroom and on the court. They showcase admirable talent! As the holidays arrive, their stories give off a beautiful narrative; highlighting a balanced life between ambition and celebration. These stories are not just found through games or grades, but through traditions we share and the joy we cherish. Stay inspired, Spartans!

What is New Year's Eve?
BY NIA OWENS

Does the turning of a calendar page truly mark a new beginning, or is it simply a collective agreement to try harder? Coming into a New Year, people hope for a brighter future. People love to celebrate the beginning of a new year because it symbolizes new beginnings. However, this event did not become popular overnight. Lots of historical moments and events paved a way for everybody to celebrate the holiday we know today as New Year’s Eve, celebrated by fireworks.

Before time, in the seventh century, located in China. The tradition of lighting fireworks started. The meaning behind lighting fireworks was meant to scare off evil spirits, but also known as prosperity and good luck. Each different color in the firework corresponds to a variation of fertility, love, and health. Fireworks are used as a symbol of new beginnings and excitement. It is meant to bring good luck and for you to let go and start fresh!

However, today there are many different traditions that people do for good luck. Such as eating 12 grapes at midnight before the time runs out, which is a symbol of the 12 months to enjoy a lucky year. In other countries, like Greece, Mexico, and The Netherlands, a round cake symbolizes the circle of life. They would put things inside the cake such as trinkets or coins. On New Year’s Eve, people make resolutions to follow in the new year. People usually follow goals such as working for a healthy body, learning a new skill, or prioritize time. Most resolutions are centered on personal development. Learning more about the history of New Year’s Eve can help us understand New Year’s traditions and the meaning.

Overall, New Year's Eve, the last day of the year, is celebrated globally to mark the transition to the new year. Most cultures, using the Gregorian calendar, celebrate on January 1st. New Year's Eve is a time to look towards the future to see how to better yourself for next year, and make resolutions for a fresh start. This article is a reminder to make a goal for yourself to follow next year, to be a better version of yourself!

Meet the Editor - Jaeda Newton Legislating Her Own Future
BY KALEIGH LONGMYLE

Do you think that the things we experience as young individuals shape us? Do all the cherishable memories of childhood make a vital difference in one's future plans they have set forth to accomplish? Well yes, to Jaeda Newton, a 17 -year-old high school senior from New Orleans, Louisiana those questions are believed to be true. Jaeda is an outstanding student and she never fails to put her best forth effort towards anything she does. As she grows into an educated young woman approaching graduation, she has so many plans set for herself as well as her future and she has a lot of exciting things to conquer. Jaeda’s uplifting story is shaped around her euphoric childhood, her dedication to start her journey of becoming a young woman in the political world, and her aspiration in the everlasting field of law. Throughout her lively experiences, Jaeda demonstrates how growing up within a family that is very supportive and oriented pours into her strong ambition that opens the pathway for her vibrant future. From childhood nostalgia to growing into adulthood venturing off into her career, Jaeda Newton’s journey is an inspiring story to hear.

In continuation, Jaeda’s early years were filled with laughter along with an elated yet innocent enjoyment of her childhood. She

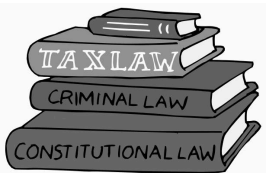
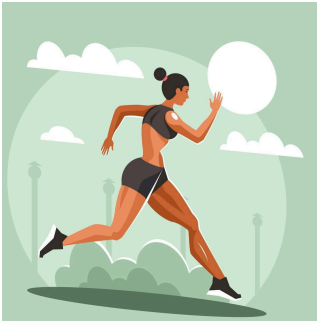
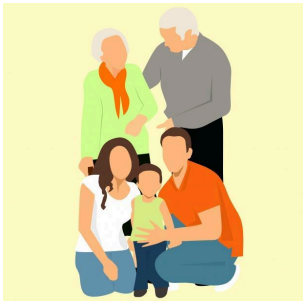
remembers spending time at parks, family gatherings, and sharing quality time with her cousins and siblings. One of her most cherished memories was shared with her cousins. This memorable moment was relived on a playful day outside with her cousins enjoying the delightful breeze, which draws her back to the time when they found her childhood dog that held the name of Boss. These moments, foreshadowed with heartwarming family bondings and playful times, stapled the beginning of her joy and faith towards what was yet to come in the future.

Currently, Jaeda enjoys building her athletic figure which she has held a part in since her younger years, such as her coherent involvement in track and field which allows her to express her love for sports and staying fit. In her downtime, she enjoys scrolling through Tiktok, watching tv shows, listening to music, spending time with her friends and utilizing her free time to relax her mind. Even though she currently isn’t in possession of a traditional job, that doesn’t stop her. Jaeda has an outstanding support system including her mom and dad that she is more than blessed to have alongside her. She also partakes in being a helping hand in doing things for them and her siblings from time to time in exchange for

rewards that are well deserved. She enjoys spending the currency received to express her fashion sense and beauty that plays a vital role in her value of self-confidence, self-worth, and self-care. Her role model is her god-dad, Jordan Jefferson, she further acknowledged “He is someone I look up to. Not only is he very successful he has a lot going on for himself. He also takes part in the career I wish to pursue,”which highlights his significant importance in her journey to success and her entry into the thriving career of law path she wishes to pursue, offering her guidance, and inspiration. She expresses her appreciation to additional family members as well that hold a special place in her heart and serve as her backbone and support.

Moving forward, Jaeda is ecstatic about the possibilities ahead of her. She hopes to attend Louisiana State University of Baton Rouge, Louisiana within the next year, where she plans to pursue her law studies to become a Lawyer. In five years, she envisions herself as a graduate from college, hitting milestones and beginning law school having interest in the criminology or entertainment field of law. Jaeda is openly willing to learn new things and shares interest in steadily advancing her future plans and goals.

Unequivocally, Jaeda’s journey shows how having a robust family foundation, power of ambition, and a support system can help a young woman growing into adulthood navigate the path from childhood to adulthood. As she gears herself for a turning page in her life, Jaeda advocates her peers as well as herself to hold value in their plans and goals and to never give up on what you want for yourself. Her story is a memorandum to all that ties ourselves to our roots, and most memorable moments spent as a child are predominant in shaping your future self.



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