



BIG BLUE NEWS



December 2025

Sleighting the News This December

How Christmas Is Celebrated Around the World

Alaina Bissell

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-



There are many ways to celebrate the holiday season around the world. In Costa Rica, people celebrate Misa de Gallo, which means “Mass of the Rooster.” This Catholic celebration begins at midnight on Christmas Eve and is followed by food and decorations. In China, Christmas is less religious and more focused on spreading cheer and love. Couples often celebrate, similar to Valentine’s Day, and people exchange Ping Guo, or “peace apples,” as symbols of kindness.

In India, Christmas is known as Bada Din, or “Big Day.” It is celebrated with food festivals, card exchanges, and joyful gatherings.

Coptic Christmas, celebrated on January 7, is more of a public holiday. Neighbors often give sweets, nuts, and money to one another.

In Poland, Christmas Eve is called Wigilia. Families wait for the first star to appear in the sky before enjoying a twelve-course meal. They exchange good wishes and sing carols together.

In Ireland, the holiday season lasts from December 8 to January 6. Families place candles in their windows to welcome good fortune, and the celebrations end with Little Christmas, when women are traditionally celebrated and cared for.



Upcoming Events

EVENTS

- Pep Rally- January 13th
- Newspaper Club - Resume meetings January 21
- Club Day- January 22nd
- Beta Club Meeting- January 23 (before school)
- Vending- January 21

SCHOOLS OUT

Christmas Break- December 22nd- January 7th



Magical Reindeer Food Ingredients

- Raw oats
- Festive sprinkles

Directions

Mix oats and sprinkles in a small bag. Tie with ribbon and add a tag. On Christmas Eve, sprinkle outside after setting out milk and cookies for Santa.

Santa’s Kitchen By his favorite elf-Ridge Mills “His Favorite Cookies”

- ¾ cup butter, softened
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 6 oz chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cream butter, brown sugar, and white sugar until smooth.
3. Mix in egg and vanilla.
4. Add flour, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt; stir until combined.
5. Fold in chocolate chips.
6. Drop spoonfuls onto prepared baking sheet.
7. Bake 8–10 minutes, until edges are lightly golden.
8. Cool slightly before serving.

Yule: The Holiday Before Christmas

Ash King

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)- When we think of Christmas, we often picture presents, cookies, movies, and family time. But did you know there were winter celebrations long before the birth of Jesus Christ?

Before Christmas, many people celebrated Yule, a festival honoring the winter solstice and the rebirth of the sun. Yule is a pagan holiday that began with the Germanic people and is still celebrated today by some groups, including followers of Hellenic Paganism, who worship the Greek gods.

Yule takes place on December 21 and focuses on reflection and the changing of the seasons rather than big parties. You may have heard of Yule in stories like *Harry Potter*, but it is a real holiday with a rich history. Happy Holidays, and thanks for learning a fun winter fact from history!

The Story of Santa Claus

Evie Keeler

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)- Long ago, there was a kind man named Nicholas who loved helping others. He didn’t want attention, so he gave gifts in secret—dropping coins through windows or leaving food on doorsteps. People knew someone generous was helping them, even if they didn’t know who. After Nicholas died, stories about his kindness spread across different countries. Over time, his name changed from Saint Nicholas to Sinterklaas, and eventually to Santa Claus. As the legend grew, people added magical details like flying reindeer, the North Pole, and delivering presents on Christmas Eve. cont. page 2



Hanukkah: The Festival of Lights



Ally Tackett

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-
Happy Hanukkah! While many people say “Merry Christmas,” I’ve been learning about Hanukkah and wanted to share some interesting facts.

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday also known as the Festival of Lights. It is an eight-day celebration and is sometimes called the Feast of Dedication. How cool is that?

Jewish families light a menorah, which is a special candle holder with nine candles. Eight candles represent the eight days of Hanukkah. The ninth candle, called the shamash, is used to light the other candles.

Hanukkah also includes delicious traditional foods! Some popular dishes are latkes (potato pancakes), jelly-filled donuts, and brisket. These foods are different from many Christmas traditions, but they are an important part of the holiday.

Many people around the world celebrate Hanukkah, and I think it is a very interesting and meaningful holiday. I hope you enjoyed learning about it. Happy Hanukkah!

Grinch Cookies

Evie Keeler

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- green food coloring (gel works best)
- Red heart sprinkles



1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In one bowl, mix the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
3. In a separate bowl, beat the butter and sugar until fluffy.
4. Add the egg and vanilla extract, mixing well.
5. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture.
6. Add green food coloring until you reach a perfect “Grinchy” green.
7. Roll the dough into balls, place them on a baking sheet, and gently flatten.
8. Bake for 8–10 minutes. Be careful not to overbake so the cookies stay soft.
9. As soon as the cookies come out of the oven, press one red heart sprinkle on top.

The History of the Candy Cane



Cole Morgan

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-

In 1670, candy canes were first created in Germany. A choirmaster bent hot sugar sticks into the shape of shepherds’ staffs to hand out to children. Later, German immigrants brought this sweet tradition to America.

In 1847, people in Ohio began hanging candy canes on their Christmas trees. During the 19th century, candy canes gained their familiar red and white stripes and peppermint flavor. As these changes were made, their popularity grew. Today, candy canes are enjoyed all around the world and are one of the candies most commonly associated with Christmas

The Story of Santa Claus continued...

Evie Keeler

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-

Today, Santa Claus is known as a symbol of kindness, generosity, and holiday joy. All inspired by a real person who simply loved helping others.



Gift Ideas for Everyone

Sadie Cobb

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-



Do you ever wonder what to get your friends or family for Christmas? Many people struggle with this, but you’re in luck! I’ve made a list of gift ideas to help make shopping easier.

Great gifts for family members include perfume or cologne, kitchen or grill items, wallets, and clothing or shoes. For friends, matching pajamas, accessories (like hair, nail, or clothing items), cozy blankets, or room décor are all fun options.

If you need a gift that works for almost anyone, consider gift cards, movie tickets, or a good book. If you’re feeling crafty, you could try a DIY project such as a picture frame with a special photo, a paper bouquet of flowers, or a crochet or knit project.

I hope this list helps you find the perfect gift for everyone on your Christmas list this year!



Teacher Spotlight

Olivia McCook

WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-

She started making art when she was just seven years old and even took private lessons in middle school. About five years ago, she got serious about her artwork, and some of her pieces have even been featured in fancy galleries!

Her favorite artist is Henri Matisse because of his bold, joyful colors. Mrs. Cranford loves to paint with teal, turquoise, pink, and warm neutral tones. She wants every painting to tell a story—so that when you look at it, you think, “Something dramatic definitely just happened here!”

An interesting fact: she names all of her paintings and sometimes writes a little story to go with them. Maybe one day she’ll even become an art teacher!





Headlines!!

More Than Music: The Choir Program



Christian McCauley- 2025 WHMS Combined Choirs
WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)

The choir program is a special place where students can come together to sing and express themselves. Being in choir gives many students the opportunity to grow, not only musically but also personally.

excited about making the program the best it can be and hopes to reach more of the White House community. She loves seeing students feel comfortable in choir and grow into themselves as people.

Ms. Hoefler also shared that all of the choirs have been exceeding her expectations, not just in music, but in how they support one another. Her main goal for the program is to help students develop a love and passion for music.

The choir program is a great place to be if you are looking to grow as a person and as a musician. All you have to do is take the first step and join.



Color Guard: More Than Just Flags



Cheyenne Neal
WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)

Color guard is a sport that is not very commonly known or talked about in the sports community. If you've ever been to a football game, the color guard are the people who perform with flags. However, it is much more than that.

Color guard—also called winter guard during the colder season—is harder than many people might assume. It is not only about handling flags, but also about learning dance routines that often require a lot of flexibility.

Winter guard and color guard are very similar, except winter guard does not perform with the marching band. Instead, they perform indoors and compete on their own.

What Is the Christmas Pickle?

Tanner Alestra
WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-

The Christmas Pickle is a fun holiday tradition. A pickle ornament is hidden in the Christmas tree or somewhere around the house for children to find on Christmas morning. The person who finds the pickle often wins a prize, such as getting to open the first present or receiving an extra gift. Finding the pickle is also believed to bring good luck for the coming year.

This tradition is said to have started in Germany and later became popular in America during the Civil War.



The town of Berrien Springs has even been named the “Christmas Pickle Capital of the World.”

According to legend, a German-American soldier was starving in a Civil War prison camp when a guard gave him a single pickle. The soldier believed the pickle saved his life, and when he returned home, he shared the tradition with others.

Movie of the Month

by HENSLEY BAKER



The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
Genre: Fantasy



The Herdmans are known as the worst kids in town. They are rude, mean, and always causing trouble. Nobody even knows where their mom is! So when they decide they want to be in the town's famous Christmas nativity pageant, everyone is shocked—and horrified. As the Herdmans take over the main roles in the beloved pageant, the townspeople expect disaster. But when the night of the performance finally arrives, the Herdmans surprise everyone and just might teach the town what Christmas is really about. This funny and heartwarming story reminds readers that kindness and understanding can come from the most unexpected places. 3

A Chilly but Fun 8th Grade Field Trip



Ava Ellis
 WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-
 On December 8, the 8th graders went on a field trip to the Reindeer Farm in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Students saw reindeer, bunnies, and even alpacas. The farm also featured a petting zoo, an indoor playground, a zip line, a basketball court, and many other activities.

Even though it was very cold outside, the field trip was enjoyable and a fun experience for everyone.

Basketball UPDATE

By Autumn Bruce
 On 12/04/25, WHM girls basketball played Macon County Middle School and won 32–26. The boys also won 40–30. Congratulations to both teams!
 The dance team was fabulous and on beat with great outfits. The cheerleaders were loud, energetic, and on beat too. Hope to see everyone at the next game!

Christmas Beginnings

Elaina Hendricks
 WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)-
 For the holidays, many of us celebrate Christmas. No matter how or where you celebrate, this festive season had to start somewhere.
 Around 27 BCE, during the Roman Empire, Romans celebrated a winter festival called Saturnalia. Later, the early Christian church adapted parts of this celebration and connected it to the birth of Jesus Christ. While December 25 is not believed to be Jesus’s exact birthday, it became a day of remembrance and celebration.
 Over time, traditions from Germanic cultures were also added. Many customs we still enjoy today—such as caroling, decorated trees, holiday feasts, and gift-giving—come from these early traditions.

Book of the Month

by HENSLEY BAKER



The Enchanted Sonata
 Genre: Fantasy, Paranormal



Clara Stahlbaum has her future planned perfectly. She expects to marry the talented pianist Johann Kahler and live a life filled with music. But everything changes on Christmas Eve when Clara receives a mysterious and magical nutcracker.

She is whisked away to an enchanted world filled with beautiful palaces, tricky fairies, gigantic rats, and a charming prince. Along the way, Clara must face a dangerous magician who uses music as spells—and question the future she always thought she wanted.

The Enchanted Sonata is a magical retelling of The Nutcracker that blends adventure, romance, and music into a captivating holiday story.

Book Feature: The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Student Spotlight



Cole Morgan is in 6th grade and his favorite part about school is hanging out with his friends. After school he calls his friends and plays games with them. He also hangs out with his girlfriend as well. His favorite thing

about Christmas is celebrating with his family that he hasn't seen in a long time and of course getting presents (DUH)! Cole wants to be a professional soccer player. He does chorus and band and he is also on the soccer team. Cole tries to do his best and is an awesome student at a White House middle school.

Happy Thoughts

BY LEIA NEWHOUSE

- SOMETIMES CHRISTMAS CAN BE DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE DIVORCED OR ABSENT PARENTS. IT CAN HURT TO THINK ABOUT IT, BUT HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO TAKE YOUR MIND READ A BOOK
- GO OUTSIDE AND DRINK SOME HOT COCOA
- WATCH A CHRISTMAS MOVIE
- BAKE SOME HOMEMADE COOKIES
- DO CRAFTS, LIKE MAKING A PAPER CHRISTMAS TREE TO PUT IN YOUR ROOM
- DECORATE A CHRISTMAS TREE EXACTLY HOW YOU WANT
- I'M SPEAKING FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE—IT WAS HARD FOR ME TOO—BUT I KNOW YOU CAN GET THROUGH IT. AND TRUST ME, MAKING HOMEMADE COOKIES IS SO MUCH FUN! I HOPE YOU ALL HAVE A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS.

Flame and Frost: A Christmas Awakening

Evie Scheel and Elise Waller
 WHITE HOUSE (Big Blue News)

Snow began to set as the town of Winterton prepared for Christmas. Kasai, a spirit of fire, roamed their streets, melting the snow piles as he passed. “I hate Christmas! All this joy is sickening.” He thought back to the days when he had once wanted to join everyone enjoying the holiday with family and friends. He was naive.

Khione, the spirit of ice, watched him from behind a tree. She narrowed her eyes, wishing he knew what Christmas felt like. She carefully walked over to the angry spirit, holding out her hand for him to take, hoping he would come with her to feel the spirit of Christmas. Instead, Kasai slapped her hand away.

“You’re all sickening me!”, he roared. Khione gasped, frightened by the intensity in his voice. “I’m not joining!” He walked away, leaving Khione alone. She opened her mouth but hesitated. Would Kasai ever listen? She shook away the doubt and grabbed his arm. He scoffed, pushing her hand away again.

“Kasai, you will experience Christmas! You may not care if you know of joy and celebration, carols, decorations, and time with people you love, but I do!” Kasai’s teeth clenched as Khione stepped forward. “Please! Just hear me out!” Her voice grew louder, desperate to show him what he had missed. Kasai’s eyes widened. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He sighed, then nodded reluctantly.

“Fine! Just quit your whining!”, he said. Khione shook her head in agreement. Both of the spirits walked together as the snow fell in white blankets. Fire and ice lit up Winterton as Khione and Kasai, flame and frost, hand in hand, found Christmas.