

Tusitala

Stevenson School
"Teller of tales"

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Community service day embodied best holiday spirit



By Jaelyn Newman

Thursday, December 14th became a new sort of Christmas for underprivileged people all over Monterey County with the help of Stevenson students. The school gave up half a day to run service projects for the needy, with each advisory group catering to a different area of society. With projects ranging from wrapping presents for soldiers in Iraq to baking cookies for mentally ill patients, no less-fortunate individual or family was left unaided.

Some advisories took the traditional route by wrapping presents for an adopted family. Senior Lilli Margolin said, "Our advisory adopted a family with Mr. Smith's in hopes of bringing holiday cheer to those who can't afford gifts." Between the two advisories, they bought and wrapped enough gifts to please even the most spoiled of children. The gifts included even practical options, like soap and food. Many other advisories, like Mr. Stevens', wrapped pre-

sents for deployed soldiers and their families, including books for Andrew Luksik's books for soldiers project. He plans to send children's books and tape recorders to deployed soldiers so they can read the story into the tape recorder and send it to their children at home: a bedtime story from the family member they miss.

Others worked on school grounds. Mr. Tretter's advisory beautified campus by planting new trees and flowers everywhere. Mr. McCormick's and Mr. Powers' collected, emptied and cleaned recycling bins. A group of students worked on the organic garden. Dr. Hammond, whose advisory worked knee deep in mud, explained the work, "My advisory is weeding, harvesting, and planting in the organic garden."

Other groups went off campus: to the lower school to teach kids how to play lacrosse, or to nursing homes, like Ms. Gibson's. Ms. Manspecker took her advisory and the choir to sing Christmas carols at another nursing home. Ray Kadri, a junior member of the choir noted,

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Nathan Krissoff '99 killed while serving with the U.S. Marine Corps in Iraq



By Courtney Killough

Nathan Krissoff '99 was killed in al-Anbar province in Iraq on December 9 while on active duty as a lieutenant with the U.S. Marine Corps.

Nathan Krissoff personified the ideal Stevenson student. He was "meticulous, motivated, and unbelievably smart," according to his former dorm master Sam Salerno. He excelled academically, held several leadership roles, and was an accomplished athlete, a musician, and a nationally ranked kayaker. He

seemed to be the guy who had it all and was going to make it far in life with whatever path he chose. In his senior polls he was voted "Most likely to surpass Bill Gates in fame and fortune."

Krissoff was an extremely motivated leader. He knew it was not easy being a leader but he had the determination and goals he believed were needed to be one. He adhered to the mantra, "If you're gonna do it, do it well!" With this motivation in mind, Nathan was able to excel as the president of the student body and Day Hall prefect.

Krissoff was also an excellent swimmer and a nationally ranked kayaker. Through his passion as a kayaker, he was

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Starbucks overreaches in effort to sate nostalgic holiday cravings

by Emily Kellogg & Jaelyn Newman



With the arrival of the holiday season comes a bizarre, unique array of new coffees at Starbucks. These innovative beverages consist of blends of coffee, milk, and various flavors, some with mouth-watering results, others less than satisfactory.

A clear favorite, the Peppermint Mocha scored five stars with its perfect blend of caffeinated coffee, sugar-full chocolate, and holiday peppermint. A great pick-me-up for your morning or a nice way to warm up at the end of the day, the peppermint mocha is the perfect drink for this cold holiday season. Whether it's snowing or foggy outside, the Peppermint Mocha will be sure to instill the holiday spirit into your day. Mary Azzopardi, freshman, agreed, "The peppermint mocha is the bomb!"

If your tongue craves flavors for a more exotic palate and a melted warm milk-coffee combo appeals, then the gingerbread latte might be for you. The first few sips taste a bit like a melted gingerbread man, but the rest of the latte is strangely milky and brings the holiday drink to a 3.5 star rating. Maria Sokova, junior, commented on its unusual



flavor, "It's kind of sweeter than what I usually like for coffee." When looking for a spicy holiday delight, you might want to pick up the cookie instead.

The Egnog Latte incites instant controversy among egg-nog lovers, and those individuals who find the holiday substance repulsive. Egnog fans are drawn to the promise of the latte, whereas those who despise eggnog are repulsed by the very idea. Jaelyn Newman was too terrified to even try the latte after smelling the peculiar eggnog and coffee mixture. However, even for eggnog lovers, the latte fails to impress. Sophia Mossberg, junior, uttered in disgust, "This is awful,

the after-taste is horrific." Therefore, the latte earned a dismal 1.5 stars.

A less caffeinated alternative, the Peppermint Hot Chocolate is a warm, sugary delight perfect for a chilly winter evening. As delicious as this drink is, its excessive sweetness makes for an unmatched sugar-high. What the drink lacks in caffeine, it clearly makes up for in sugar and by the last sip, you're sick to your stomach and bouncing off the walls. This sugar-rush earned 4 stars. Maria Nicora, sophomore, seemed to enjoy the intense sugar. "It's really good," she said. Our warning - only order a tall.

Long-range winter forecast: weather fit for ducks and surfers

By Jaelyn Newman

Only the ducks are happy with the current weather forecast. Of the ten days before break, eight were forecast to be cold and/or filled with dreary rain, including the weekend and travel days. With some heavy winds and temperatures between 40 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit, it looks as if Stevenson is in for a gloomy two weeks until break. For now, break out the scarves, down jackets, and hot drinks, but according to George H. Taylor, State Climatologist for Oregon, this won't last long. Taylor said this year will be full of "warmer temperatures, but more rain." Ray's Fearless Weather Forecast stated that this winter we should expect a light El Nino, meaning there will be a lot more wet weather to come.

Among the Stevenson

community, this stormy weather means well for surfers. The storms coming down from the north, and in from the ocean guarantee good waves for quite a while. But with waves averaging around twelve feet four times each minute, unless you know a lot about the ocean currents, keep a safe distance away from the water. For newcomers to the area, Pebble Beach and environs are known for rip tides, which even claimed a Stevenson student's life about 17 years ago.

Between the constant heavy mist and occasional down pour of rain, dry skies are miles away as students enter the winter midterm. On average, class attendance is lower this time of year due to gloomy weather which causes lethargy and sickness. Ray Kadri, junior, and Luis Mejia, senior, agreed. "It's definitely harder to get out of bed in

the morning when I just see gray out my window. I just want to curl back up and sleep all day," they voiced their similar sentiments.

The lousy weather seems to keep nearly everyone indoors, giving germs a stronger chance to spread. From the common cold to pneumonia and bronchitis, the health center has had its hands and beds full.

Although beautiful, Stevenson's trees and Spanish moss mean for even wetter pathways. They soak up water and drip constantly for days after the storms end. Talbott's two story design is perfect for efficient use of classroom space, but it also means getting dripped on by water coming off the roof and the railings. Boarders, ask for rain boots and umbrellas this holiday season and day students - get rubber floor mats.

Is race really an issue in shooting?



By Eleanor DeGuigne

On November 26, 2006, five police officers fired 50 bullets outside of a strip club in Queens, New York. One man, Sean Bell, was killed. His two companions were injured. Within hours of the news release, New York became frantic and angry. The victims of the gun fire happened to be black males. In most cases involving a minority victim, fingers point at the event and throw a racist/hate crime label on it. The situation became political when Al Sharpton and numerous other civil rights activists threw in their words of anger and dismay.

The reality of the situation is that it was hardly an act against civil rights. Left-wing news reporters saw the color of the victim's skin and immediately came to judge the details of the incident. It is surprising that in the 21st Century people are still coming to conclusions based on a person's race. Commentators are avoiding the facts of the case and choosing to ignore the honest motives that the police officers had in opening substantial fire.

The shooting took place

outside of a strip club that had been under heavy surveillance by undercover officers for reasons of suspected prostitution, drug dealing, and illegal firearm possession. According to police commissioner Raymond Kelly, a fight broke out in front of the Club and one of the victim's companions called out "Yo, get my gun." According to an undercover officer on the scene, Sean Bell then yelled, "Let's [explicit] him up." The undercover officer alerted nearby authorities by stating "It's getting hot on Liverpool for real. I think there's a gun."

After this report, Bell and his two companions got into their Nissan Altima car. Commissioner Kelly said, "It then ploughed into the front of the police minivan that had just turned south of Liverpool street. The driver of the Altima put the car in reverse and drove backward on to the sidewalk, slamming into a roll-down gate of the building there, close to where the undercover officer was located. The driver put the car into forward then rammed the police minivan a second time."

The shooting began after the men hit the police car for a second time. A 12-year police veteran fired 31 shots, while others followed. None of the officers had been involved in any shooting. The officers who fired their weapons repre-

sented a variety of racial identities. Two of the officers were white, two were black, and one Hispanic. This hardly supports racial motives.

The reality of the situation is that the victims of the fire gave the officers ample reason to question their actions. The men attacked a police car in an effort to escape a situation in which they were planning to draw weapons. Had the men opened fire or injured a civilian with their car, the police officers would be put to blame for not handling the situation with enough aggression and failing to contain suspects.

Pioneers for civil rights are an incredible force of men and women who have imposed influential and necessary laws in the United States. However, Sharpton need to focus his attention on acts that truly apply to their cause. The United States needs to divert its attention away from fictitious racial motives and towards commending the officers who risked their lives by opening fire on highly suspicious and potentially dangerous suspects. In a time of crisis such as the fight outside of the club, officers must act on behalf of the safety of innocent civilians, excluding the safety of those who are encouraging the conflict. For once, people need to stop looking towards authority for blame, and towards the true offenders.

Thefts on campus make us all reexamine our values



By Dru Wynings

Recently, it seems that the Stevenson campus has been plagued by a multitude of thefts. While Stevenson has always had an ongoing theft problem, to which the administration has reacted with automatic expulsions, during this holiday season more and more people have been affected by this misfortune. One of the great things about Stevenson is that there is a sense of community, but with actions like these that seem to never end, our "community" will

continue to deteriorate if we are forced to be paranoid about our possessions being stolen.

While this list does not fully encompass all of the items that have been stolen, it does give one a good sense of how pressing a problem we are facing. The list includes: at least six iPods, a laptop, an XBOX 360 (including connector cables and 3 controllers), hundreds of dol-

lars, checks, scholarships, many wallets, laptop chargers, CDs, clothing, Blue's Brothers glasses, food, and of course, the infamous vintage globe, complete with the USSR. This list is much longer than the actual stolen items because sometimes people think that what was stolen was lost.

Seeing the amount of items that have been apparently stolen is rather appalling. In actuality, most, if not all, Stevenson students have no reason whatsoever to have a need to steal something from anyone. Stevenson prides itself on its close-knit-community atmosphere, but as this trend continues, what will be made of our community? Will we be forced to become a community full of paranoia and accusations?

Brian Manley, junior, felt that with the theft of his globe, "trust within our community has been further undermined." It posed the question, "If we can't trust our own roommates and dorm mates, who can we trust?"

Reasons for problems on campus are the overall disregard for our community as a whole, but moreover, trusting

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Part of the problem is that so many people on campus are rather careless with their often-expensive possessions.

Student council plans 'adopt-a-boarder,' 'hunger banquet,' casino night in Jan.

By Bartell Cope & Katy Yu

As winter begins, Student Council is aiming to aid the less fortunate and share the Pirate spirit within the community.

This brief stint between Thanksgiving and Christmas is really busy and Student Council has been careful to schedule only a few well-placed events before January. We hope you got psyched with the spirit of giving during Service Day on

Dec 14th, and make sure to donate a blanket into your class's box in Merksamer and take your picture with Santa (a.k.a. Christian Pepe) in front of the Christmas tree on the 20th. Proceeds benefit the prom fund.

The weeks after Christmas break are when boarders are most liable to become homesick. With this in mind, as well as bridging the ever-cited boarder/day student gap, we are planning adopt-a-boarder day on the 17th of January. Boarders will be

able to visit a day student family's house on a school night for a home-cooked meal and some TLC without the worries of study hall. Boarders reciprocate the following Monday night by sharing their formal dinner (and curfew) with day students who want a feel of how the "other half" lives.

The "hunger banquet" on the 12th of January will call upon student and teacher volunteers to draw tickets from a raffle, the majority of which represent

poorer nations, and hence meager lunches. These individuals will be given one piece of bread, in an effort to remember the much more severe hunger endured daily by most of the world's population and raise awareness of the disparity between lifestyles in the U.S. and overseas, and the consciences of a few random lucky students will be tested when they receive take out from local restaurants to represent fortunate Americans.

Finally, try your hand at

poker, roulette or black jack on January 26th during Casino Night, an event that will begin to tie in the 007 theme of the Senior Class. This is shaping up to be an "evening out" atmosphere, so bring some extra money for hors d'oeuvres, know your (fake) martinis, and make a big winning at the high stakes table. Chips can be used to buy prizes provided by the Pirate Parent Club.

There you have it—a whirlwind of events awaits.

Lannytoons
By Lan-Anh Pham

Tusitala

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Digital photo courses to be offered soon



By Sarah Thomas

Since the Digital Age is devouring the tradition film industry like a starved animal, you would think that camera experts would be grieving the loss. However, this is far from the case. Stevenson's camera connoisseur, Cole Thompson, called digital photography "such a blessing - and a real improvement for folks who come from a background in traditional photography."

The advancements are striking. Production prices are cut because people no longer have to visit their local film developer to buy expensive prints. Everything is computerized. "Digital photography is so much more convenient: instant gratification," said Thompson. As the process of printing photographs speeds up, so does the number of pictures taken. Photographers can now take hundreds of pictures in a day and not have to worry about spending hours upon hours in a dark room developing photographs.

However, this wasn't always the case for digital cameras. Original digital cameras were slow and complicated to use.

Scholar, athlete and patriot Nathan Krissoff led in the classroom, on the field, and in student life

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able to experience new realities of life and push himself farther than he thought possible. He was a Tusitala staffer, and wrote an article on his two-week kayaking trip in Chile and the values he gained from this experience. "We forget sometimes that beyond our microcosm lies a far greater entity," he wrote. The realizations that Krissoff came to by the time he was sixteen were values that many people spend their whole lives trying to grasp. "My experience in Chile has given me perspective," he said. "It has allowed me to greater appreciate our comparatively comfortable lives, and it has sensitized me to the glory of the untouched lands I just left."

It was not merely what Krissoff did at Stevenson but who he was as a person that really set him apart from many high school students. "He was the kind of student who was mature far beyond his years. People couldn't believe that anyone could be that nice, have

Digital cameras have taken dramatic strides towards perfection, but in Thompson's opinion they "still have a little ways to go." Along with advantages come disadvantages of using digital photography. The work load is increased because the photographer has to go back and edit the copious prints. Photoshop, the program used by digital camera professionals to edit pictures, is quite intricate. The complexity is at first overwhelming to amateur computer users. Thompson said he was bewildered when he first used Photoshop: "Where do I start? How do I do this? That just about killed me."

Stevenson is catching up to the pace of the digital age. The plan is to offer within the next few years a class focused solely around digital photography. The class will be a combined effort between the art and photography departments; Stephan Pratt and Thompson are collaborating to fit the needs of the students. Thompson described, "It's designed to get more kids in the art department and out of the darkroom. We're overwhelmed and overused. We almost need a full time lab technician."

Although the digital age is moving fast and taking traditional photography down for the count, there is plenty to look forward to in the future.

so much integrity and perseverance," said his former teacher, William Hankinson. He was the type of guy who was never afraid to ask someone if they were okay when they seemed upset or drop everything to help someone in need. He was the definition of a leader. He had the gift of knowing when someone needed him.

"People couldn't believe that anyone could be that nice, have so much integrity and perseverance."

On his senior page of the yearbook his final thoughts were the following: "Perhaps, if I am very lucky, the feeble effort of my lifetime will someday be noticed, and maybe, in some small way, they will be acknowledged as the greatest work of genius ever created by Man." This was a very powerful quote that seems to have personified Krissoff well, with his mix of humility and ambition to do great things. Although his life was cut short, he lived it to its fullest capacity. He always did the right thing, including serving his country. His compassion and generosity are apparent through all of the great work that he did at Stevenson and beyond.

More than a full-time gig



By Jaelyn Newman

"I'm like a lounge lizard, although I'd rather not refer to myself as a reptile," joked Eddie Mendenhall, Stevenson's enthusiastic, individualist, music teacher. Since the age of four, Mendenhall has played classical piano, but when he was thirteen he was introduced to the world of jazz.

"My first teacher who exposed me to the world of jazz was Biff Smith," Mendenhall reminisced. A proud alumnus of Stevenson, Mendenhall went on to study at Berklee College of Music. From there, he returned to his Alma Mata as a music teacher.

Even his work here at Stevenson isn't enough to fill his appetite for music. Mendenhall spends his nights and weekends playing at local clubs and other venues. "I play around local jazz clubs...weddings and events and some concerts. My next biggest gig is Cabrillo College, in Santa Cruz with the ray brown big band thirty years concert and I just played at the jazz festival barbecue."

Overheard

"That really chaps my mug." —Mr. Henrikson

"That's like my worst nightmare, vague math books." — Andi Wang

"I want to be a woman of mystery when I grow up." — Chloe Noonan

"You know, if Inho was a pokemon he would be a mean one." — Andi Wang

"I like the baby ones. That way I can eat the tentacle!" — Tiffany Otto, about baby octopuses

"Why do I always get the crack!?" — Lan-Anh Pham

Do those who leave their valuables lying around share blame for theft?

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Obviously, the people committing the thefts should be held responsible. But part of the problem is that so many people on campus are rather careless with their often-expensive possessions. Why should you tempt a thief by leaving personal items lying around for anyone to easily pick up?

Stevenson has a strict honor code. For people to risk their position here at Stevenson

Advisory groups fanned out to do their small part to help others

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"All the residents started singing along with us. It was really cute!" Those advisories who could not secure a ride elsewhere traveled to the café louie louie to bag beans or make sand-



CHELSEA VERHASSELT PHOTO

Music runs through Mendenhall's mind all day long.

While Mendenhall enjoys playing solo jobs, he loves working in a group scene as well. "Playing solo gives me absolute freedom with the harmony, song form, and time feel. I enjoy that freedom, but when similar liberties can be taken with a few other cats like a bass player who really pulls or a drummer who really tips on the cymbals and tubs, then wuu-weeee...."

Bar and club life doesn't seem to entice Mendenhall though, who's married to his wife and job. "I tone them down a bit because they take a lot of time at night." He has his priorities in order and he knows that his work and family come first.

"This is a great job especially when the music starts to click. It is exciting to watch students become inspired to play and practice more."

Both in work and in play, Mendenhall really does enjoy jazz. He knows everything about the style and takes delight in every aspect of it. "Improvising is always different and fresh...Many circumstances affect the outcome like—who you're playing with, who you're playing for, what the groove is, what does the room sound like. When all of these are at optimal levels and there are no distractions, magic can happen—pure, unadulterated human expression and feeling."

"What about throwing up? That's gotta be a negative." — Daniel Hyun

"One day you'll say to yourself, 'That man had a profound influence on me. But I got over it.'" — Hincley, about himself

"I heard a butterfly when I vomited." — Mr. Hankison about Emily Dickinson

"This is not a skirt - it's a man-wrap." — Will Gieseler

"I hate people who can't read." — Grant Bradley

"I'm a daughter of the revolution." — Charlie Moffett

"I loved the Spice Girls in middle school - almost as much as my dad did." — Eleanor deGuigne

"David Benjamin has no soul." — Brian Manley

"When I die I want to be ground up and put in the soup." — Mr. Hincley "I'd eat it." — Charlie Moffett

"Your cat only likes you because you feed him." — Dru Wynings to Katharine Andrade "So, that's why I like people." Katharine

"Sarcasm never sleeps." — Chelsea Verhasselt

wiches that could be transported to homeless shelters later that day. Mrs. Keindl's advisory busily made sandwiches all afternoon, until they ran out of supplies, then they diligently helped the kitchen staff clean

up. Plans are underway to make this a tradition at Stevenson. The community service committee, hopes it will become a tradition.

A plague of carols Every symbol has its history



By Kat Cogert

It's the day after Thanksgiving. You're Christmas shopping in some department store where everything is overpriced beneath the green and red "Holiday Sales! 20% off!" signs. You're riding the escalator down to the seasonal Christmas décor section, and the speaker blaring above you transitions from Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer to Frosty the Snowman. The truth hits you like a snowball. You hate Christmas carols with a passion unmatched since Santa met Mrs. Claus.

What ever happened to small, angelic-sounding children singing calm songs of praise in honor of their faith? That was pleasant enough. It would bring at least some warmth to the below-freezing temperatures. Now what are these classic songs? It's more common to hear the lyrics changed for a commercial advertising Macy's big sale than to hear the actual songs.

Not only have we defiled these perfectly decent songs, but we've added new songs promoting ridiculous ideas like talking snowmen and neon-nosed reindeer. Those concepts make no sense whatso-

ever.

Currently, carols are more often used as marketing ploys than the means to bring cheer and warmth to the hearts of many. One can't help but wonder if the original songwriters would approve of this. Something tells me Melchior Franck, the writer of *Oh, Christmas Tree*, wouldn't have liked his masterpiece to be altered to *Oh, Shaving Cream* in order to advertise new seasonal red and green shaving amenities. Carols were not meant to inspire us to buy things.

Corporations are not the only ones to sully the reputation of Christmas carols. Our pop stars are to blame as well. That's right. Our idols can do wrong, and they have. Each Christmas album they release is an attempt to grasp at the rapidly fading spotlight that is their fame. Call it art if you must, but one can't honestly believe that French Canadian star Celine Dion sang *Feliz Navidad* because she felt a spark of inspiration to take up a Latin style of music. These artists, talented or not, are completely destroying decent songs to take advantage of you, the listener.

Of course, there's nothing we can do to stop this madness. It will undoubtedly continue until the end of time. We can only sit and suffer in the cesspool that is Christmas carol consumerism. The best anyone can do is bring an iPod when Christmas shopping.

Gaming for Xmas



By Charlie Moffett

As the holiday season creeps up, new video game consoles have everyone thirsting for a taste of the new generation of gaming. The latest releases from Nintendo and Xbox seem to appear on almost every Christmas wish list this year.

Previously known as the Revolution, the Nintendo Wii has emerged as the economical choice: with an original release price of approximately \$250, it is less expensive than other gaming consoles. Hot features include the wireless Wii Remote, a handheld game controller that can detect motion and rotation in three dimen-

sions. The WiiConnect24 also allows the Wii to update with much energy and receive messages through the internet. There are 6 million consoles released, and are selling out quickly. The games for the Wii are about \$50.

However, Sony has other gamers looking in another direction for their virtual pleasures with the Playstation 3. The basic price for the PS3 in the USA is \$500, but it also comes with 20 GB memory, Wi-Fi connectivity, and other various treats. Due to limited releases, the PS3 is a coveted commodity. It is in high demand and sends throngs of eager people surfing eBay for this console. Surrounding the release of this technological gem is a violent scene; customers have been shot, robbed, and beaten for either a spot in line or for the actual console. Although this gift is enticing, the actual quest to acquire it is dangerous.

By Kat Cogert

Some of our holiday season traditions are a little odd. Where did "kissing under the mistletoe" come from? Who came up with the idea of putting little electric lights on a pine tree? And what's the deal with candy canes? Surprisingly enough, all these strange holiday habits have perfectly reasonable origins.

Take candy canes. According to Benbest.com, they're actually German treats which originated in the late 1600s. They were first seen as straight white sticks. The famous cane shape was the genius of a choir-master who distributed the representations of shepherds' staffs who needed to keep young children quiet during Christmas Pageants. Neither the red and white stripes nor the peppermint flavoring came until the year 1900.

The dreidel was part of a popular gambling game way back when. It was integrated into Jewish study when Syrian-Greeks forbade the practice of

Judaism. It was a very sneaky move. If a group of Syrian-Greek soldiers found one of these forbidden study groups, they would assume they were gamblers, not wrongdoing intellectuals.

Electric lights were once candles that originated from pagan traditions. Edward Johnson was the first person to spread Christmas cheer in the realm of electricity when he lit a Christmas tree with a string of 80 tiny bulbs in 1882. The electric lights were more effective than candles: they were less of a fire hazard and would also last longer.

Wreaths first came around in old northern Europe. During the darkest part of winter, people would gather evergreen, form it into a wheel, and decorate it with candles. The greenery and the shape represented the continuity of life, and the candle light gave comfort to the people in the coldest part of winter.

Mistletoe is actually a parasitic plant. With that in mind, it seems odd that we would find ourselves thinking it to be ro-

mantic. However, ancient cultures considered mistletoe a holy plant representing love, peace, and reconciliation. Kissing under the mistletoe was a Roman custom. The church eventually banned mistletoe because of its adulterous history and replaced it with the wreath. Ironically enough, pagan pilgrims banned wreaths a few centuries later as a symbol of pagan sun worship.

Tinsel came from a German legend of a poor woman whose tree was covered in spider webs. The Christ Child was so saddened by her predicament that he turned the spider webs to silver. This inspired the decoration of trees with silver strips. Eventually, the silver strips evolved into fruits, pastries, candies, colored paper figures, tin angels, and other ornaments. The first traditional ornaments were sold in the United States by F.W. Woodworth. He made a fortune.

So you see, our traditions aren't quite that strange. With a little research, the holidays make just that much more sense.

Why Black Friday is so wrong



By Emily Hopkins

It's the day after Thanksgiving. You fell into bed last night around 10 pm after a long day of family, football, and a severe turkey coma. However, you wouldn't be getting full nights sleep. Your alarm is set for 3:30 am, which gives you just enough time to get up and make it to the nearest K-Mart before the doors open at 5:30 am. It's Black Friday.

Black Friday has been a holiday tradition for several decades. The day after Thanksgiving, stores open early and stay open late. Holiday sales begin and bargain searchers rush to get their shopping done as soon as possible. The crowds are incredible, and the amount of money spent increases each year.

Typical Xmas/Chanukah/Kwanzaa wish lists

By Charlie Moffett

Emily King: new cellular phone (BlackBerry) and a Tiffany diamond necklace with really little diamonds
Mr. Hinckley: A Wenger Alpine Swiss Rally Chronometer watch
Shams Hirji: Nintendo Wii
Daniel Rothberg: for Chanukah, a new golf bag
Charles Falor: A new putter and some money

Keith Johnson: Playstation 3 and perfect human title belt
Bentley Eidsmo: A Peter Hay golf membership
Alex Carl: clothes (especially underground shirts)
Evan Santos: Kei Ogawa
Kei Ogawa: Some rims for car in Japan
Lauren Mcleod: new iPod
Ted Minnes: iPod or cell phone
Marth Engh: World peace and a Mac book

Celeste Parisi: Mac book
Ali Kammerling: digital camera
Kat Cogert: Nerf

Gun
Emily Hopkins: nothing weird
AJ
Habing: A couple of blue bawls

