

HOLIDAY LIGHTS: ARE THEY WORTH IT?

YUANHANG ZHAO AND EMMA METOS

Holiday lights are common bombardment for the average American walking down the street beginning November 1st to about January 1st as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas rev up for the holiday shopping season. The lights are always on, but here is a question to ponder: How many watts of energy do we use in one week for Christmas?

During the month of December, the average American uses 3,000 to 5,000 watts of energy to run a household. Just using my laptop computer to type up a paper requires about 15 to 45 watts. Now, let's say Christmas is a holiday where everyone turned off those pesky electrical appliances and only left the Christmas lights on.

According to christmaslightsetc.com, "a 100-count string of incandescent mini lights runs at 40 watts."

Do we really only use one string of lights? Suppose each household used at least two strings of lights. That's going to be another 80 watts on the electricity bill. Out of those who are in the holiday spirit and celebrate Christmas, 68% of Americans string those holiday lights. According to a Gallup poll, 95% of Americans celebrate Christmas. That's 217,810,750 people who celebrate. 68% of 217,810,750 would equal to 161,711,310 people who put up Christmas lights. Crunching the numbers and assuming there are four people to a household would approximate to about 40 million households who string lights. 40 million households with all appliances on multiplied by 4580 watts per household would equal to 183,200,000,000 watts per day, or 183,200,000 kilowatts per day. As Americans, we waste 320,000 kilowatts per minute we leave a light on or turn on the electric heater for no good reason; this



Courtesy of Google

would add up to 460,800,000 kilowatts wasted in a day. The price of a kilowatt hour varies, but it varies; for example, Wyoming is 6.20 cents per kWh, but Hawaii is 25.12 per kWh. Besides this variation in cost, this still means a lot of money down the drain.

American households are not the only places stringing up the lights. Just look to downtown Salt Lake, and you will see another source of energy waste.

One mature tree at Temple Square requires 1,500 strands of lights, or about 75,000 lights. It takes 40 watts of power to run 100 incandescent lights for one hour, which means it takes 30 kilo-watts an hour to light one single tree, and with power costing 11.3 cents per kilo-watt hour in Utah, that means it costs \$16.95 to light one tree for one five hour week night, multiply that by the 24 days that the lights are on per year, that means one tree costs \$406.80 and requires 3600 kilo-watts of power, releasing 3.43 Tonnes of CO₂. However, most of the lights are light-emitting diodes (LED) lights which require only 4.8 watts

per 100 lights, meaning that an LED tree costs \$48.82 to run for the entire season and releases 0.41 tonnes of CO₂.

Regardless of festivity, the cost and environmental impact of the "Lights On!" event seems a bit superfluous and wasteful. One tree in a season uses enough power to release almost half of a tonne of CO₂ and costs about \$50, when the scale of the event is taken into consideration, that is an enormous amount of money and carbon dioxide. For the cost to light one LED tree, the city could

donate 100 bags of ramen, 24 14.5 oz cans of green beans, 25 cans of peanut butter, or 50 pounds of potatoes to help feed the hungry. Considering the Utah Food bank is able "to take each \$1 donation and turn it into \$8 worth of goods and services", it would mean, if given directly, the cost to light one LED tree would provide \$400 or one incandescent tree would provide \$3200 worth of goods for needy Utahns.

However, the lights are a huge tourist attraction for Salt Lake City, and the money tourists spend on their trip does get poured right back into the Utah economy. Tourists use public transportation, stay in hotels, eat at restaurants and shop, both at local retailers and large malls like City Creek, the LDS church-owned mall. Also, the LDS church does do a lot for the poor of Utah, and are huge supporters and proponents of food banks, homeless shelters and career opportunities for the poor.

Since we were still in elementary school, we have been told to "save electricity" and **(continued on Opinion Page, p. 4)**



NATIVITIES ADORN SALT LAKE CITY WITH THE "TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS"

SCOUT ASAY

As Christmas approaches, festivities sprout up around the Salt Lake Valley, including live nativities, which are reenactments of the birth of Christ and which often include livestock such as sheep, goats, cows, donkeys, chickens, and camels. These live nativities have been cropping up all along the Wasatch Front, with one in Draper and another in Liberty Park. One of the most popular is the "Nativity in the Glen", which is held the first Wednesday of December every year. The "Glen" is located in the Harvard-Yale

neighborhood, and like many sheltered parks when the holiday season rolls around, the park is cleared and prepared for the crowds, which are often upwards of 5,000 people.

The event is jointly run by the First Baptist Church of Salt Lake City and the Bonneville Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and has been in operation for roughly a decade. This year the Nativity In the Glen will be Dec. 4, 6-9pm. Hot chocolate and bread was served and live music performed in the Little Town of

Bethlehem. Visitors had the opportunity to pet the animals there, including a camel. Concourses of cast members of all ages were there to set the scene, with the baby Christ at the center of the event.

"That is the point," says Paul Richardson, who heads the organization of the event with his wife, Lesley. He continues, "We do this in celebration of Christ and His birth. We hope to bring light into people's Christmas season by reminding them of why we celebrate Christmas in the first place."

WEST WINDS OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ART TO THE COMMUNITY

EMMA METOS

West Winds Arts and Literature Journal is hosting their second open mic for all West High School students, alumni and friends to participate and enjoy.

The open mic will be held at Mestizo's Coffee House (641 West North Temple #700) at 6:00 pm on December 20th. Those wanting to participate in the open mic are encouraged to bring a written copy of their work for submission to the magazine. The open mic itself will be filmed for publication on the magazine's website, which will be up this spring.

Those wanting to participate can perform anything they would like, from music, to spoken word, to a reading of

a short story or even a presentation of visual art. Everyone is welcome to participate in the open mic.

If you cannot make it to this open mic, but would still like to join in, there is an open mic nearly every month hosted at various locations. If you would like to submit your work you can email West Winds your submissions to submissions@westwindsmag.com, anonymous submissions are perfectly acceptable. If you have any questions or comments about the magazine you can contact Emma Metos at Editor@westwindsmag.com, or drop by for a meeting every Tuesday afternoon in Mr. Packer's room (400).



West Winds Staff

TYPHOON DEMOLISHES THE PHILIPPINES

EMMA METOS

Typhoon Haiyan, known to locals as Yolanda, struck the Philippines in early November dissipating on November 11. As the second most deadly typhoon to have ever struck the Philippines, Haiyan claimed 4,200 lives and caused \$1.08 billion in damage.

Haiyan was historic in scale, with NASA experts stating that it may be the most powerful tropical cyclone to ever hit land. The storm was 370 miles wide and sustained winds of 195 miles per hour, with some gusts of wind reaching 235 miles per hour. At its height, Haiyan's storm surges, waves in the ocean created by a drop in air pressure, reached 17 feet in Tacloban, the largest city in central Philippines, and dropped 27 inches of rain on the island of Leyte. When compared to Hurricane Katrina, the 2005 disaster in New Orleans, which had sustained winds of only 175 mph, Haiyan is massive and incredibly destructive.



Courtesy of Google

Haiyan affected an estimated 13 million people, with 4.9 million being children and of those 1.5 million are under the age of five and at risk of acute malnutrition. There are 12,501 people injured, 1,186 missing and 4,200 dead. That is a United Nations estimate, the Philippine government has reported 3,637 deaths, two of which were American citizens. An estimated three-million people have been displaced, 70 percent of them are from the six neighboring islands of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo and Negros. There are 2.5 million people in need of food assistance, however there are "sever logistical difficulties" preventing aid says Tim Shenk, spokesman for Doctors Without Borders.

Massive damage in infrastructure has been sustained. With 494,611 homes damaged, 248,176 were destroyed in the storm. "In Guiuan town, every single roof has been blown off in a town of 45,000 inhabitants," says emergency coordinator Dr. Natasha Reyes of Doctors Without Borders, "Half of the city's hospital has been destroyed-no roof, destroyed electricity equipment... The wind destroyed the concrete."

375,795 people have received aid through food distribution and so far \$81 million has been contributed by donors such as the UN and other private sector organizations. If you would like to donate to the cause you can donate through Doctors Without Borders on their website, or text REDCROSS to 90999 to give \$10 to the Red Cross Disaster Relief.

OLYMPICS IN SOCHI

CHRIS CHEN



Courtesy of Google

Russia will hold the 22nd Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia in February of 2014. After defeating the bids from Austria and South Korea, this will be the first Olympics for Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. New traditions will be born next year and history will be made.

This year the Olympic torch has already made history. Three astronauts Koichi Wakata (Japan), Richard Mastracchio (USA), and commander Mikhail Tyurin (Russia) carried the Olympic Torch into space to the International Space Station. In the station, were two Russian Cosmonauts, Oleg Kotov and Sergei Ryazansky. These astronauts then proceeded to relay the unlit torch around the Space Station, and the torch spent over an hour in empty space before being returned to representatives of the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee.

Saturday, December 7th, a 101 year old table tennis player became the oldest torchbearer in Olympic history, carrying the flame for the Sochi 2014 Games through the Siberian City of Novosibirsk. The man, Alexander Kaptarenko, beat the previous record set by Dinah Gould, who was 100 when she carried the Olympic flame through the suburb of London in May of 2012.

Preparations for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi are still happening. Construction workers are still scrambling to get the athletes housing facilities done, but the 40,000 seat stadium for the opening and closing of the Olympics is not done either. The president of the 2014 Sochi Olympic Organizing Committee says that everything will be done by the opening date of the Olympics and that construction is still on track with the schedule.

The 2014 Olympics will take place February 7th to the 23rd. Ninety-eight events in fifteen different sports will be held.



Courtesy of Google

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DIGGING DEEPER INTO OBAMACARE

CAROLYN JANECEK

The dispute over defunding Obamacare has gotten out of hand. The situation has many citizens asking, "Why would anyone oppose a law that would eliminate healthcare discrimination?" Few citizens know the reasoning behind the GOP's adamant stance in resistance to the legislation and why they continue voting against it.

The immediate grievance conservatives have in opposition to Obamacare is the question of its constitutionality, concerning a section called the Individual Mandate. Under this legislation, citizens are required to purchase healthcare. If one does not want to buy healthcare, they must pay a fine called the Individual Mandate. In 2014, this fine will be either \$95 per adult or 1% of income, whichever is higher. The Individual Mandate also increases every year; by 2016 it will cost nearly \$700 per citizen or 2.5% of income to opt out of health insurance. The real question is, can the government force the public to buy a product? The Commerce Clause (Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution) gives the government power to regulate interstate commerce. In this situation, the government is not regulating the purchase of healthcare, but is requiring the purchase.

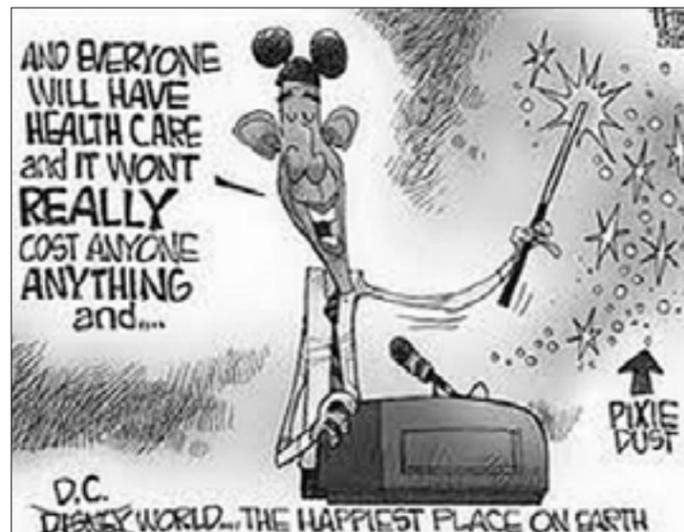
Obamacare was declared constitutional on June 28, 2012 in the Supreme Court case National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius by ruling that the Individual Mandate is a tax, which would be within the Federal Government's legal leeway.

There are multiple reasons why Republicans continue to vote against this legislation even though it was deemed Constitutional by the Supreme Court. Republicans feel there is still doubt in the ruling, as the definition of a tax is, "A compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions".

The Individual Mandate is neither an income tax, nor is it being added to the cost of a service. The individual paying the mandate is actually refusing a service. The thought process be-

hind the Republican's opposition is that the legislation is so disputable, even if the Supreme Court must try to make it work, it is by a stretch.

A more conservative reason for opposing Obamacare is the fact that the population hit the hardest financially will be young people, who do not yet have established careers and have the least need for healthcare. These young people, still paying off their student loans, will be the ones supporting the bulk of the legislation, while struggling to make a place for themselves in the recovering economy. The costs will include twenty-one new taxes and increased premiums on the healthcare. What's more is that the average, working American will have to pay for the citizens receiving welfare, and are under no obligation to present proof that they are, in fact, searching for a job.



Courtesy of Google

Obamacare focuses on covering the largest amount of people possible, rather than considering how it is all going to be paid for, and who will be paying for it.

None of these arguments are made in theory. Although not identical, Obamacare's goals are similar to socialized medicine. The Czech Republic, currently led by President Zeman of the Social-Democratic party, has a socialized healthcare system. That is, all health related procedures and checkups are covered by federal health insurance, and all medical practitioners work for the federal government. The Czech Republic has one of the best infant mortality rates in the world, and the overall health of its citizens is higher than average within the European Union. The system sounds ideal, right? In actuality, citizens can spend months waiting for a much-needed operation, and then receive less than mediocre care and it is not uncommon for doctors to accept bribes.

The GOP has its reasons for opposing Obamacare, and Republicans, like members of any political party, will defend their stance. Although the debate has sent our nation into a tumult, in the end, that is the process of democracy.

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YUANHANG ZHAO

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"turn off the lights", but society seems to ignore the reasons why we were taught to do so. One major reason is because of money. Every second you leave a light on, it will eventually end up on your electricity bill. Another reason for saving electricity is because the electricity you use normally comes from burning fossil fuels, leaving more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

From 1900 to 2000, the average temperatures in all seasons have increased by three degrees Fahrenheit. Three degrees may not seem like much, but our environment is what ends up suffering; recent data and research has shown our oceans have started warming faster than in the last ten thousand years. Whether global warming is real is up to the reader to decide, but our climate has changed vastly

in the last few centuries since the beginning of the first Industrial Revolution; according to Time magazine, "our coldest years may be warmer than the hottest in the past". Although Christmas may have significant turnouts for everyone, if we do not turn off our lights, our future generations are the ones who will have to deal with what we have caused due to our insatiable greed and carelessness.

West High's Unique and Festive Winter Holiday Traditions

ETHAN CONE-UEMURA

The holiday season is the time to relax and to celebrate the holidays with your family. The world has unique ways to celebrate these holidays, determined by their culture, religion, and race. Some of these holidays include Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Bodhi Day, and Christmas.

Traditions performed during Hanukkah are the lighting of the Menorah, which includes placing another candle on the Menorah after sundown on each of the holiday's eight nights, reciting blessings and prayers, eating potato pancakes known as latkas, and exchanging gifts.

Bodhi Day is a Buddhist holiday celebrated with the chanting of Buddhist text, study of the Dharma, additional meditation, and a meal of tea and cake. This holiday revolves around the day that Buddha reached enlightenment.

Kwanzaa revolves around seven different principles, each linked a day of the holiday, running from December 26-31. Those seven principles are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperation), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), Imani (faith).

Christmas falls on December 25 and celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Even non-Christians celebrate Christmas because it is a time to get together with loved ones. This holiday is celebrated by setting up a tree and putting presents under it to be opened on Christmas morning.

Although there are a variety of holidays being celebrated at this time of year, the underlying message to all of them is that this is a time that should be spent with loved ones.

NEW CHRISTMAS TOYS

JACK BROWN

Family shoppers and manufacturers see a shift in the apex toy for the average children. The rush for a new gaming system has replaced the rush for a new Elmo or Barbie.

Brad Tuttle of TIME magazine reports that there has been no pinnacle toy to cause a holiday shopping rush. This is a surprising market shift since last year Toys R' Us saw colossal sales and created a "Hot Toy Reservation" system. Even with the release of a new Elmo model, Erik Karson, a marketing professor at the Villanova University School of Business, comments, "Everything's gotten so fragmented and targeted in the marketplace." Karson continues "So you're just not going to have this big gotta-have-it toy." This shift may be due to the upcoming release of the X Box 1 and Play Station 4. This is a welcome change for manufacturers because of the difference in profit margin.

The one gift desired more than game systems is gift cards. 60 percent of Americans ask for gift cards for the holiday season, making gift cards the most demanded gift in America. This year, instead of large presents under the tree, people will expect more store credit to spend their hearts desire.



Photo courtesy of SFGate

National Honors Society gives back

CAIT IMHOFF

The holiday season is already here and students involved in National Honors Society (NHS) have schedules and calendars filled with community events and volunteer opportunities. Providing opportunities to work with everyone from little kids to other volunteers at the Food Bank, NHS hosts a variety of events promoting student involvement with the community.

NHS, in the spirit of giving, had several events planned for the month of November, including a cleanup at the Ronald McDonald House and involvement at the Special Olympics Gala at the Sheraton Hotel. All events were scheduled for one to four hours and took place after school or on weeknights. The last event scheduled for the holiday was a Thanksgiving race registration at the Food bank on the Nov. 27, the day before Thanksgiving.

NHS has already had two planned events for the festive month of December: a World AIDS Button Making Day and another Ronald McDonald Event cleanup. There are several opportunities to obtain hours planned for the holidays, including a gift sorting up at Primary Children's and several Shalom Salam Tikkun Olam events.

Members of the National Honors Society work especially hard during the months of November and December to give back to the community and help those in need. With their help, the holiday spirit spreads throughout West High and the surrounding community.



Courtesy of Google



CONSOLE WARS: ATTACK OF THE CLONES

COLE HARTOG

The fan boy war between Xbox and PlayStation has increased in both hostility and mud throwing. Over the summer both Microsoft and Sony released new information about their new and improved gaming consoles. Both companies are claiming better graphics, better processing speeds, higher quality graphics, and all of the stereotypical things the companies always promise with each new gaming console they release.



Microsoft released their new and improved gaming console with all of its features during the summer Las Vegas convention. Revealing the new rectangular shape of the Xbox One, as well as some of the features it will be supporting, caused an uproar with the Xbox fan boys. Microsoft announced that the Xbox One would require a "check-in" once every 24 hours with their servers to maintain game playing ability.

Xbox One would no longer have programming within its system to play older games. Nostalgic players would have no capability to play their old favorite games, unless you keep your old out-dated system. The constant need for the Kinect, audio and video capture device, caused

a dispute as well, as many people do not wish to pay for and own the Kinect (About \$170.00 tacked to the Xbox One price). The Kinect is always on, thus providing Microsoft instant access to any audio or video within range of Kinect. According to the User License and Agreements, you accept these terms when you use the Kinect. Microsoft can now pause a movie, only four people can watch at one time, until you agree to pay for additional viewers who may have walked into the room. Microsoft can also monitor brand name products used by players and then sell this information to marketing companies. Sony decided to use

the exact opposite approach of Microsoft and has slowly released information about the new PlayStation 4. Sony may have taken the motto, "slowly but surely" a little too far. Sony held a two hour conference where they announced they would reveal a new system, but never did. Many PlayStation fan boys felt deceived, and with reason. Avid fans sat through the two hour meeting, only to receive meaningless information. Players were enraged and defiant according to posts on Redit, Tumblr, and 4chan. Sony also revealed a non-compatible backwards playing system. Sony revealed their previously free service, PlayStation Network, would no longer be a non-gratis in their new PlayStation. This free service gave PlayStation fanboys a "one up" over Microsoft's expensive Xbox Live service. Like a Brony coming out of the closet, the "new reveals" caught fan boys by surprise. Many fan boys have secretly switched sides or

have taken up the habit of blindly internet post-fighting for their beloved system. All the disputing between the two gaming console giants, Sony and Microsoft, leaves an opening for Nintendo's newest system, the Wii U to fight to the top.

Courtesy of Google

WHICH CONSOLE IS THE BEST?

CHRIS CHEN

You are either an Xbox One fan or a PlayStation 4 fan. An Xbox One costs around \$500 and a PlayStation 4 costs around \$400. The PlayStation 4 had a rocky start. The DualShock controller for the PlayStation 4, had its R1 button sticking out after a couple hours of gameplay, making it defective. Sony reported that .4% of their PlayStations are defective and many people who won a PlayStation 4 via the Taco Bell contest could not properly turn theirs on. However, many of the applications it provides are free such as Netflix and Hulu Plus. Xbox One does not provide these apps for free, asking their buyers to buy a Xbox Live Gold Subscription. A twelve-month subscription to Xbox Live costs around \$60. The Xbox One is not compatible with any Xbox 360 game, leaving collectors in a shock. Many of the old school games can now only be played on an older system. According to IGN, a very popular gaming site, compared to the PlayStation 4, the Xbox One is less powerful with lower grade graphics processing unit and less ram than the PlayStation 4.

Despite the costs, the Xbox One can also be better in some ways. The Kinect, part of the system, can capture and place your personal facial expressions in the game, allowing you to feel like you are in the game. You can also stream their games or watch the games from other broadcasters using Twitch, a live stream website. Using the voice-activated technology on the Xbox One, you can open Netflix just by saying the name.

Which is better? The choice is up to the buyer.

CHRISTMAS IS QUICKLY APPROACHING

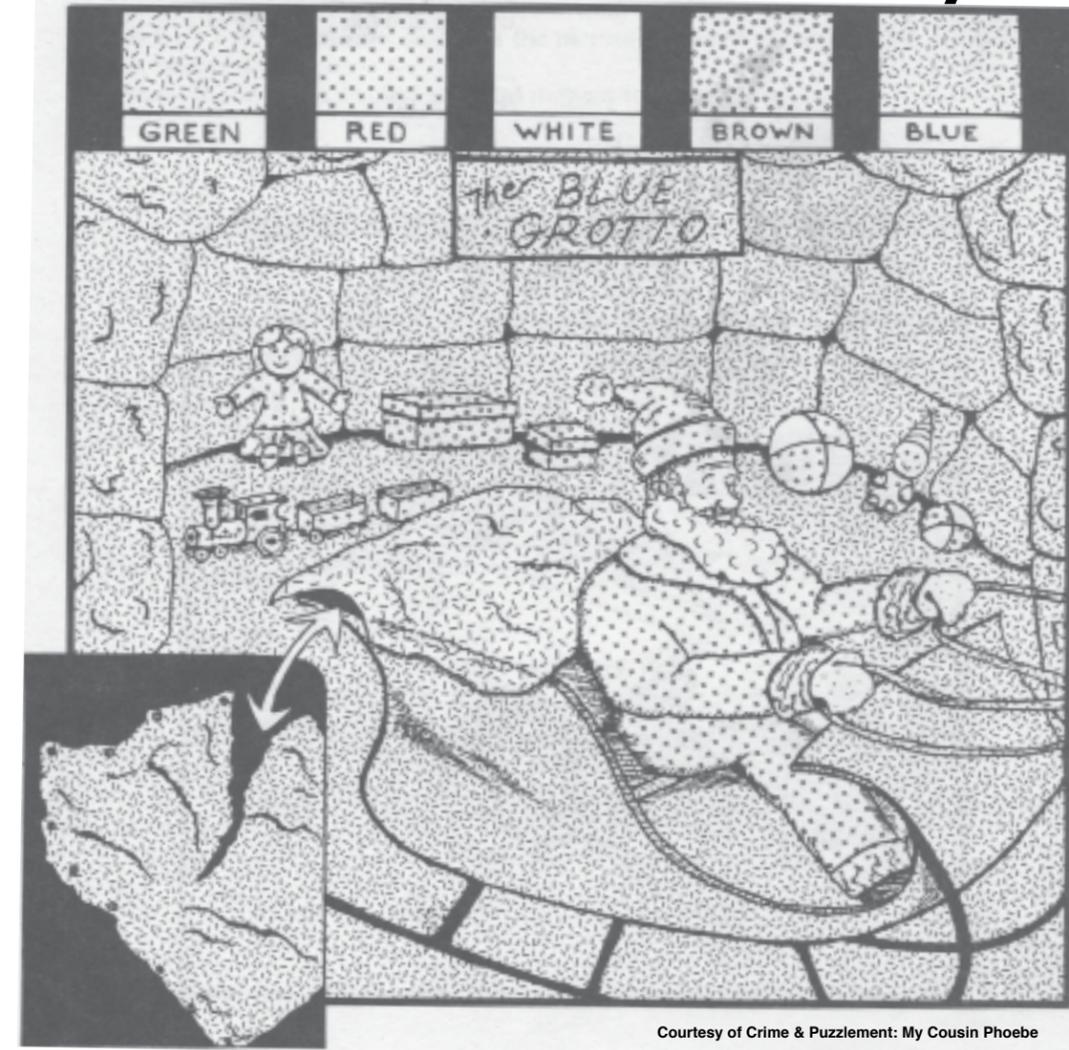
SCOUT ASAY

A long-running tradition, *A Christmas Carol* is back this holiday season for its 29th year at the Hale Theater. *A Christmas Carol* is a stage adaption of Charles Dickens's work of the same name. Incorporating a number of traditional Christmas songs, this play is not usually considered a musical: it is a play that happens to have some music in it. Performances will run Dec. 7 through Dec. 24, with evening shows Monday through Saturday, and, in addition, a matinee option on Saturday. Tickets are available, although some performances have almost sold out. The address is 300 S. 1400 E. in Salt Lake City

The Nutcracker, another traditional holiday performance in the Salt Lake region, returned Nov. 30 for numerous performances. There are afternoon and/or evening performances nearly every day of December, aside from Christmas day and a few others, and the show does not close until Dec. 29. There are performances in Salt Lake as well as Ogden,, but due to the renovations at Capitol Theater, the Salt Lake performances will be at Kingsbury Hall.

Elf, now a musical, will crown Pioneer Theater Company's winter season. Shows run Dec. 6 through Dec. 21, with weeknight shows starting at 7:30 and weekend evening shows beginning a half-hour later at 8pm. Saturday matinees are also an option, and on Christmas Eve day, the only performance will begin at 12 o'clock noon.

Bombs in Toyland



Courtesy of Crime & Puzzlement: My Cousin Phoebe

Martin Sloppentropper, owner of Sloppentropper's department store, had been having labor trouble. Early on the morning in which his Christmas display was due to open, he received a phone call warning him that a bomb had been planted in the toy department. He immediately notified the police, who were in the store when Sloppentropper arrived and saw what you can see.

The bomb, which had been placed on the sled in the Blue Grotto (as indicated by the arrow), had already been removed by the police. They were looking for clues when Sloppentropper showed up.

"Everything is supposed to be blue," he said to the toy buyer. "Who put that green blanket on the sled?"

The toy buyer pointed to the merchandise on the other side of the aisle. "It came from there," he said. "Whoever took it had the choice of any color he wanted- red, green, blue- they're all there."

Sloppentropper said "Ah!" and had no further ideas, but the police continued with their work.

First, they narrowed the investigation down to four suspects: the decorator who had designed the exhibit, the carpenter and electrician who had worked on the grotto last night, and the night watchman.

The decorator, electrician, and carpenter each said he'd been the first to leave. The police were left wondering who had planted the bomb and then turned off the bright lights required for their work. The watchman was no help. He said he'd been on the midnight to 8 AM shift, that he'd made his regular rounds, and that when he'd arrived the store had been dark except for the dim nightlights, so dim he'd had to use his flashlight.

The police were stymied until my cousin Phoebe came along. She'd been wandering around the store and, after seeing the crowd clustered at the Blue Grotto exhibit, asked a few questions, examined the sled, and aquired the information you have, on the basis of which she told the police who had planted the bomb.

Whom did she accuse, and why?

If you think you know the answer, come to Rm. 428. There will be one prize available for each grade. Prize will go to the first student of each grade to have the correct answer, so bring your student id.



MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

ETHAN YOUNGBERG

The morning announcements may be West High school's greatest brainchild because they give us important events and times, but they might just be a waste of time.

West has, over the past couple of years, been making a list of all the most important events, compiling them, and, just this year, the student body officers have been reading them over the PA system. West High school has been trying to get students involved and informed of all these events every morning at the end of the period. This strategy makes students listen, even though many students have found these morning announcements as merely another time to socialize.

The creators of the morning announcements have also used a number of other strategies to suck students into listening to them. This year the morning announcements have been stating random facts about unusual topics, called "the Fun Fact of the Day". Surprisingly, these facts have been known to make students listen more closely to the announcements while they wait desperately for the peculiar fact. Another strategy the school has decided to use is using student body officers to make the announcements. As students we usually respect the student body officers and when you hear Jackson West's voice or other officers on the announcements many people think, 'Hey it's

Jackson West! He's the senior president so whatever he has to say must be important!' The last and maybe the most effective strategy used to encourage students to listen to the morning announcements is having them at the end of first period. We have actually woken up by this time and are ready for our day. We have a greater chance of actually caring about something like school or the morning announcements when we are awake.

Although the faculty and teachers do their best to create effective strategies, they often backfire. Students often take advantage of this opportunity when they are not doing any classwork and will start to socialize with their peers. Some reasons you may not hear the morning announcements is if you are in a class like PE. After getting out of PE and standing around inside the gym it becomes difficult to actually hear the announcements; and almost physically impossible to listen to the speakers inside a gym or even in the entrance to the Tech Wing gym.

You may not care if the faculty and student body officers are trying to persuade you with all their strategies and incentives, and you may not even care about the announcements at all. Whatever your opinion is, the West High Morning announcements will probably go on for the rest of your time here at West.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTION

MATTHEW PARKER

A few weeks from now the world will celebrate the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. And as is tradition, many people resolved to change their lifestyles on that day. I am of course talking about New Year's Resolutions, one of the world's oldest and proudest traditions. . Even cavemen promised to lift more stones and tear down more wood during the annual Neanderthalian New Year's Celebration. New Year's Resolutions tend to be promises to improve people's lifestyles, most prominently health. Of course some of the most common resolutions include things like "exercise more" and "stop eating as much junk food"

However a tradition you of West High School may not know of is the Giving Up of New Year's Resolutions. The Giving Up of New Year's Resolutions is another incredibly proud tradition the world has held onto since the dawn of time. For you see, after Neanderthalian New Year's Day, the cavemen would stop lifting stone and tearing down wood and go back to playing Rock Stick Stone and I Spy a Rock. Similar things continue to happen around the world, albeit with far more advanced versions of exercise but far far far more advanced versions of distraction. The Giving Up of New Year's Resolutions is a tradition celebrated much in the same way of New Year's Resolutions, by doing absolutely nothing. The Giving Up of New Year's Resolutions is traditionally observed around January 4th or 5th, with some of the prouder observers of New Year's Resolutions not observing the Giving Up until around January 7th.

With such a proud history, only the most hardened, steadfast observers of New Year's Resolutions wouldn't want to celebrate the Giving Up of New Year's Resolutions. But if these observers somehow stand strong to avoid our proudest tradition, they can always celebrate it next year.

"WISHING YOU EXISTANCE"

CAROLYN JANECEK

The holiday season is nearing: the trees are dripping with lights, Target is selling pine-scented Febreze, and all of the greeting cards are blank.

During the month of December there is an unpleasant clashing of religious holidays such as Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, and the ever-elusive Boxing Day. Not many people are aware the United States Congress annually votes on what phrases will be acceptable to use during this controversial season.

"Happy Holidays" did not pass the rigorous series of tests this year. It was concluded that any Jehovah's Witnesses or atheists would run screaming if they heard the vulgar greeting one more time. Alternative drafts were outlined promptly:

- "Merry December" was the first to go, because the few people who follow the Roman calendar do not believe in December.
- "Jolly Winter" was quickly tossed as well; the entire southern

hemisphere would be appalled.

• "Happy Existence" was almost passed, until a Nihilist in the crowd objected, expressing quite angrily that existence has no meaning and therefore cannot be described with such an arbitrary term as "happy." There was an awkward silence amongst the representatives, and the nearly finalized papers were revised to read, "Wishing you existence."

The bill was signed, but soon the administration began receiving angry and threatening tweets about the change, all reading, "There is no such thing as existence. It's only our warped perceptions and inflated egos that lead us to believe that we have the privilege to exist."

The change was recalled, and it was ruled that no matter what you say, you will offend someone. You are advised to remain silent and come off as rude, rather than politically incorrect.