

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PIONEER

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It gives us great joy at the Pioneer to present a special holiday edition for the very first time.

Together, we compiled our best holiday memories and our worst, along with helpful tips for getting through the holiday season in one piece.

In this issue, we share opinions on various holiday matters from weight gain to Christmas movies.

We hope you enjoy these articles as much as we enjoyed writing them.

Happy Holidays!

— The Pioneer Staff



From left to right: Andrew Bishop, Bryce Mcelhaney, Ethan Cooper, Jorge Krzyzaniak, Lauren Daniel, Jake McMahon, Candice A. Schafer, Ted Satterfield, Sue Hinton, Ronna Austin



Best and **WORST** CHRISTMAS MOVIES

Ethan Cooper
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I rarely review movies I don't enjoy. Why waste time bashing terrible movies when I can inform people of the good ones? Luckily today I have the opportunity to do both.

Top Christmas Movies

- The Apartment (1960)
A classic romance coated with delightful humor.
- A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965)
It wouldn't be the holidays without the song "Christmas Time is Here."
- A Christmas Story (1983)
Jean Shepherd's timeless tale of the everyday American family celebrating Christmas.
- Christmas Vacation (1989)
An honest story about the nightmares of hosting family reunions.
- Die Hard (1988)
A group of German terrorists are no match for one New York City cop.
- Edward Scissorhands (1990)
An old lady tells her granddaughter the story of why it snows every Christmas Eve.
- Elf (2003)
Hands down Will Ferrell's best movie.
- Gremlins (1984)
"Looney Tunes" collides with Spielberg's suburbanism. Chaos and laughs ensue.
- Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992)
Kevin's unlikely relationship with a homeless lady is genuine, meaningful and pure.
- It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
A fantastic fairy tale that'd make a stone cry.

Least Favorite Christmas Movies

- Christmas with the Kranks (2004)
Conform to the ways of your neighbors...or die.
- Deck the Halls (2006)
Osama Bin Laden's not dead. The United States Government has him kept in an underground bunker, tied to a Christmas tree, and he is repeatedly watching "Deck the Halls."
- Jack Frost (1998)
No, a snowdad is not better than no dad.
- A Miracle of 34th Street (1994)
Santa is God and gets Mom pregnant with the power of magic.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The assistant director of Christmas Vacation, Frank Capra III, is the grandson of the legendary Frank Capra, who directed It's a Wonderful Life.



Have a Very Movie Christmas

“Home Alone,” “Christmas Vacation” and “A Christmas Story” make top three list



Lauren Daniel
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Christmas movies hold a special place in our hearts and an even more important place on the TV guide schedule. When ABC Family's 25 Days of Christmas starts, I am tempted to watch a holiday movie every day, even if I've already watched it several times that year.

I can't choose my favorite Christmas movie, so I decided to give my top three.

Home Alone

The first movie that comes to mind when I think “Christmas” is the original “Home Alone.” I remember watching it nonstop with my cousins during the Christmas season at my grandma's house, watching it while putting up the tree with my family, and even watching it on road trips to relatives houses during the holidays. At one point, my brother and I could quote the entire thing, and I probably still

could.

“Home Alone” is hilarious from the time 8 year old Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) jumps up and down on the stairs yelling “I’m



living alone!” at the top of his lungs, to the time when he almost gets ran over by burglars Harry (Joe Pesci) and Marv (Daniel Stern) in their van, to the time where he sets up a house full of elaborate pranks to defend his home and ward off the “Wet Bandits.”

I think this movie made the child

in all of us want to be accidentally forgotten while our parents went on vacation so we could set up hot wheels and wait for robbers to break in and break their necks, order our own “lovely cheese pizza,” and create a zip line from our window to our treehouse.

Even though all the hijinks and humor create a lighthearted film, we forget the heavy underlying theme about the importance of family. At first, Kevin wanted to be alone, but after he gets rid of his crazy family, he realizes he wants them back. It's important to be thankful for the people you have and the time you get to spend together. Also, this movie taught us to always befriend your scary neighbors. You never know when you might need them to hit someone in the head with a shovel.

“Home Alone” teaches so many important life lessons while spreading Christmas cheer. Thanks, KEVIN!

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

It's become a Daniel family tradition to watch this movie before Christmas every year, and it's probably the funniest Christmas movie I have ever seen. As the years pass, I gain a new appreciation for this movie. The older I become, the more I realize my family is basically the Griswolds and how every family has these characteristics. While I don't have an actual Uncle Eddy who lives in an RV and my eyes have never been frozen because my dad made us go out in the middle of nowhere to search for the perfect Christmas tree, I would make the argument our family dinners often end up quite similar to theirs. Everyone has a dysfunctional family, but this movie taught us to treasure the crazy people that are related to you. Be thankful your aunt still knows the Pledge of Allegiance and a squirrel will probably not destroy your Christmas dinner. Don't forget, it's perfectly acceptable to be happy when your family leaves. If you need some comedic humor for your stressful Christmas, this is your movie.



A Christmas Story

This has also become part of the Daniel family tradition and is on my list of must-watch Christmas movies. “A Christmas Story” is another stereotypical dysfunctional family Christmas movie that captures family dynamics beautifully. You've got the crazy mom, the spoiled little brother who acts like a piggy, the bitter dad who falls in love with a lamp, and the average kid, Ralphie (Peter Billingsley,) who gets bullied



and only wants a Red Ryder Carbine Action BB Gun for Christmas. To be honest, I'm not sure what the moral of this story is, but it is definitely a Christmas classic. Don't shoot your eye out, kid.

Walking in a Weirder Wanderland

Christmas on Mars, strangest Christmas movie ever

Bryce McElhaney

Most could call Wayne Coyne, frontman of the Flaming Lips, a creative genius, or just a weirdo that somehow became famous. Throughout the years, the Lips have brought us some great albums – and some that aren't worth mentioning. One album in particular stuck out to me called "Christmas on Mars." After listening to it, I realized two things: none of the songs had any lyrics, which sounded strangely depressing, and what I bought was actually the soundtrack to the movie of the same name, which made me excited to see the movie. With track names like "Your Spaceship Comes from Within," "The Secret of Immortality," and "The Gleaming Armament of Marching Genitalia," I had to check it out.



I had no idea at the time that Coyne had produced, directed, and starred in a movie, so this all came as a surprise. And lucky for me, the soundtrack album also came with the dvd all for about \$12 at Guestroom Records.

The movie featured fellow Lips musicians Steven Drozd and Michael Ivins, as well as actors Adam Goldberg and Fred Armisen. From what I gathered, the movie's main plot was for Major Syrtis (Drozd) to lift up everyone's morale for Christmas as the first Mars-born baby comes into life – which doesn't seem like an easy thing to do when you're on a cold, isolated space station on Mars. All the while, you get the feeling that Major Syrtis has a terrible case of cabin fever

as he fumbles over his own words and repeats himself in a slow manner. The black and white film reminds the audience of the desolation of Mars' atmosphere, until a humble silent alien appears. The alien, of course, is Wayne Coyne in a wicked foreign space suit with antennas coming from his head. You can see the connection between the plot and the story of Jesus Christ, except this time the angel is an alien who's in a band from Oklahoma. To truly capture the strange emotions from this film, you just have to watch it for yourself. I will say after watching the movie, I couldn't help but ask myself "what just happened?" Overall, it was definitely the weirdest Christmas movie I have ever seen.



Christmas Bounty a big Miz-take

Jorge Krzyzaniak

There's one aspect of life that I feel should be more heavily featured in Christmas movies; wrestlers.

Last year, WWE studios blessed us with the made for tv, "Christmas Bounty" starring its own semi-superstar The Miz.

It's the timeless holiday tale of a former bounty hunter turned school teacher and back into bounty hunter. You can't fight your destiny but you can fight crime. Main character Tori (or Tornado as she was known before), is caught between worlds when true love competes with Tori's loyalty to family and to justice. Tornado will do plenty of wrestling—with her emotions when an old flame (Miz) resurfaces for the ultimate bust. Only one thing is clear; somebody's going down. Spoiler alert: it's the viewer.

WWE was too late to catch the wave of Jersey/guido infatuation that swept the nation before. Mikey Muscles has a strangely disappearing/reappearing New Jersey accent. There's relentless attempts to make leopard-print clothing a running gag in "Christmas Bounty." And there's a long running scene that's basically a Camaro commercial.

The climactic showdown in this film takes place at a wedding so guido it's in a warehouse with its guests required to hang handguns on meathooks near the coat check. The quasi-racist stereotyping in this film is awe inspiring.

"Christmas Bounty" was depressingly void of hand to hand fight scenes, which usually serve as

the best parts of any movie starring pro-wrestlers. We're 15 minutes in before the Miz even clothes-lines anyone in a fight that moves too quickly with too few wrestling moves.

It does deliver on some aspects that are crucial to wrestler's films.

The cast of characters is so over the top that you love them all.

Two of these characters are obviously inspired by famed TV bounty hunters Dog and Beth. They're scuzzy, poorly educated fringe dwellers with hearts of gold. So – like the real Dog and Beth, only with a lot more class and with hearts of gold.

And it hilariously explores the role strain between wrestlers (and wrestling fan culture) versus polite society; like in the scene where Tori timidly asks her dad if he owns any sleeves and he defiantly declares, "Ain't gonna do it."

Who hasn't been there right?

On a deeper level though, I think "Christmas Bounty" chokeslams a few of societies greatest issues.

In one scene, Tori stabs at a gaping plot hole by explaining that she'd been offered a really good teaching job just when things got too hot in the bounty hunter business. It's the best dialogue of the whole movie aside from the sleeve thing.



Maybe this is what's wrong with education in America; Jersey bounty hunters being offered all the good teaching jobs; an issue that we're going to have to really examine as a culture if we want children to succeed.

"Christmas Bounty" could have used more professional wrestlers, and less dialogue or could have been one

long, musical montage.

It's very loosely centered around Christmas but if you want to land a film on the prestigious steps of the ABC Family network you need a gimmick. "Teacher's Appreciation Day Bounty" might have worked better but I guess that's why I'm not in Hollywood. And for the record, neither is WWE Studios.

NORTH POLE PROPAGANDA



Photo Illustration By Jorge Krzyzaniak

Dispatch from the Christmas war

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I've heard the war cry. Brave men and women trudge into battle through the densest snow.

"The reason for the season," they shout with their fists full of dollars and shaking in anger.

They march defiantly, against all odds, right through the doors of the retailers they can still trust.

People are fighting mad. They have declared war on those who have declared war on Christmas.

The thing is—nobody has declared a war on Christmas. However, the frenzy over such nonsense has created the opportunity for attention and stellar media exposure for anyone willing to taunt the other side of a made up debate. So in a sense, we are creating some demand for a war on Christmas.

Here we've marked a holiday by encouraging children to worship a jelly-abdomened, jack-booted man in a ridiculous velvet suit/hat ensemble. We fill the air with songs of reindeer and their aeronautic exploits. Then we find ourselves absolutely insulted to find our city's streets and our retailers a little light on the sacred, religious iconography we expected to see placed so seriously and respectfully alongside these things. It seems as if we are going out of our way to find

things insulting.

Let's consider the power of a perceived war on Christmas from a marketing standpoint though. Theoretically, with enough of us frenzied over this, one could stick a Jesus fish emblem on their storefront, spit at the name of secularism and watch the profits roll in as the defenders of Christmas turn to them in defiance. People are, after all, (apparently) tired of businesses and organizations attempting to be sensitive to the existence of other cultures. It seems pretty fishy; like manipulation.

It just may be that there's some vested interest in keeping people feuding with one another. We are perhaps easier to control when we are scared and convinced that someone or something is attacking us; waging a war even. It is not an uncommon practice for manipulative groups or individuals to suggest that standing with them is a way to stand against the unseen enemy for those feeling otherwise frightened and weak.

There are some names that come to mind when I think of the phrase, "War On Christmas." It's as if these people may have something to do with the creation of the concept. Bill O'Reilly, the first name that comes to mind, claims that his show has "stood up for Christmas for the last 15 years, defending the holiday from secular-progressives."

Before anyone knew the dangers of "secular-progressives", the good saint Bill was there to sell us his books, explaining all the scary things that progress and compassion might do to a nation.

Then when we were all so worried and feeling alone, wondering how we would ever keep them from defaming Santa and sacrificing our virgins, he and his ilk were right there again, to sell us the instructions for defending our perfect, time-tested values. Bill O'Reilly is a "Culture Warrior" as one of his best-selling book titles suggests. "Who's Looking Out For You?" another of his groundbreaking works asks. Bill is. That's who.

People like Bill have had enough with the sensitivity being crammed down the throats of honest Americans. He's sensitive about people trying to be too sensitive to each other. Many long for the good old days when that kind of hogwash wasn't necessary; when men were men and drinking fountains were assigned by the pigmentation of the thirsty.

Those people will stand for it no longer. The nog-thirsty warriors are entrenched in the comments sections of every online news story, bravely waiting to feel insulted. Armed with all the latest in xenophobia and often thinly veiled racism, the defenders of Christmas are aching for combat.

Maybe this holiday season we could all just observe whatever we want however we want. Should one's spiritual faith not be perhaps the most profoundly personal aspect of their lives? If we truly believe something to be so absolute and so powerful, anyone else's view (or lack of opinion altogether) of it should be of little concern to us.

It's cold outside, let's chill out.

Jake McMahon
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A Letter to Santa

Dear Santa:

I know you're busy this time of year, overseeing the operations of Christmas and making sure your slaves are making the Samsung Galaxy cases just right. I know you get millions of letters - well, maybe tweets - a year, but if you could just humor me, I think my proposal here will work to our mutual benefit.

Most people want silly and frivolous things from you. They want new video games, new computers, the latest clothing. Some of the greedier kids even ask for ridiculous things like "heaters" or "a cure for their diabetes". Frankly, I'm above such material things. My Christmas wishes are simple, if not a bit abstract.

Item #1: I want a new social media site. Social media is great, since it allows people from all around the world to interact with ease. Every site has the same flaw, however; I have to read other people's opinions and details about their lives. I want a social media site where I can't see anyone else's posts, but everyone can see the funny and interesting things I say. I even have a name for the site: Kellr. Get it? Like Helen Keller.

Item #2: I want a remote-controlled mirror on the back of my car. When I push a button on my steering wheel, this large mirror will rise up out of my trunk, facing the car behind me. This mirror is to be used at night the next time some moron is tailgating me. If he has his normal headlights on, he will be a bit confused. If he has his high beams on, though, he will be blinded. He will either realize that he is ruining my driving experience and turn his high beams off, or he will die in a ditch. I don't have a preference.

Item #3: This request is extremely easy to carry out, and yet it can change the world. Baseball caps have been a clothing staple for decades. They varied in style, but they've always had a protruding brim with a trademark curve to it. A few years ago, a group of people decided to wear baseball caps with a completely flat bill. These hats also came with name-brand stickers that people would refuse to remove after purchase. I won't mention the group that started this trend, but it rhymes with, "Bouche rags". My request is this: When you're delivering your presents, if you come across one of these hats, simply tear off the sticker and bend the bill as hard as you can. When these people wake up to see this, they may be scared enough to stop wearing necklaces. Who knows?

Item #4: This one may be tough, but it's also the most important. You've somehow filled the world with love and good cheer year after year. You spread joy like Nicki Minaj spreads disease. There's something else, however, that I think you need to spread to people. It's called Sarcasm Awareness. All over the world, there are people that do not understand the concept of sarcasm. They are constantly angered and confused by the things people say ironically. Their mothers never bothered to teach them that when someone says something extremely ridiculous, it is usually deliberately satirical. This causes great frustration for people like me. Please spread Sarcasm Awareness to these unfortunate loudmouthed pinheads.

I know I'm asking a lot, Santa. But it's for the good of the entire world. It may seem impossible, but I know you can do this. Your powers flow through all of us. Make the world better again. Give Humanity what it needs to grow. You've always given better presents than Jesus. Please do it again.

Love,
Little Jakey

Illustrations by Jake McMahon and Morgan Jones



Here Comes Santa Claus... Maybe

Personal experiences from learning the truth about Saint Nick

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I was taught about Santa from the time I was born and believed in him until I was 12. So now you know I'm a huge dork. Anyway, it seems like most parents tell their kids about Santa.

I don't think there's anything wrong with telling your kids about Santa. It was a huge part of my childhood, and I can remember telling Santa what I wanted each year. As a kid, I was pretty skeptical that anyone could actually deliver presents all around the world, have time for cookies, and milk. The Santa Claus movies Disney produced certainly helped and made me want to believe in Santa, and my parents always told me I wouldn't get presents unless I believed, so I did. Santa bought the best presents and I was not about to miss out on those.

When I figured out Santa wasn't real, it was kind of disappointing. I had wasted around 8 years of my life looking like an idiot in front of everyone at school trying to convince them some old man comes into their house on Christmas eve, eats their cookies, and brings them whatever they want. But, because I had a little brother, I had to continue to "believe" for a few more years. I just got more great presents, I just knew where they were really coming from, and had a greater appreciation for the hard work my parents put in each year to make Christmas special.

The only negative side of Santa seems to be the side the media uses. He has become more of a promotional push than anything else. I think when this happens, we forget what the idea of Santa is really about - giving.

Thinking Santa was real did not leave me any emotional damage or childhood scars. I'm sure some people could make that argument, but there are just far bigger things in life to worry about.

As my dad says, "There's a little bit of Santa in all of us."



Candice A. Schafer
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When I first found out that Santa was just a huge lie, was when I was about ten years old. I was living in New York and I went downstairs to get some water and I heard a noise that sounded like paper. In my head I was thinking: "Is Santa here early? It's not even late yet. What if he stops by New York first?" So being naturally curious I decided to figure out where the noise came from.

It sounded like it was coming from the living room, so I craned my neck around the doorway from the dining room and I stopped dead. There was my aunt and uncle wrapping the

presents! Where was Santa?! Did he forget to come? Why were they doing Santa's job?! I don't remember how long I stood there completely dumbfounded until my uncle realized I was standing behind him. I was short...I still am, so it wasn't like I was towering over him.

My cousin's were a lot younger than I was. so they were still in bed. When my uncle noticed me, he turned and told me to go back to bed. I turned on my heel and left without question. I think at that point I had too many to ask just one. When I got back to my room, I still felt like I was dreaming. I have been betrayed!

The next morning, I still ran down the stairs like an idiot even though I knew who really wrapped the presents because hey, free presents. Who doesn't like gifts? My cousins were so innocent in the wild,"Oh-my-gosh-I-have-presents-I-need-to-open-them-all-at-the-same-time" look on their faces.

When they read, "From Santa" I grinned like a fool, but my aunts glare was enough for me to know not to say anything. So since then, as almost being twenty, I know there's no Santa, although it's fun to be someone else's Santa for the holidays.

Make the Season Brighter

Great places to see Christmas lights around town

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Automobile Alley Lights on Broadway

See more than 180,000 LED lights displayed along eight blocks from NW 4th to 10th St. on Broadway Ave. The lights are free to the public and will be on display from dusk until dawn through Jan. 1.

Yukon's Christmas in the Park

You can drive through over 400 displays across 100 acres to see over 4 million lights. Christmas in the Park will be held from 6 p.m. until 11 p.m. each day through New Year's Eve and is located in Yukon City Park at 2200 S. Holly in Yukon. Admission is free, and donations are gladly accepted. For more information, visit <http://www.cityofyukonok.gov/city-departments/parks-recreation/christmas-in-the-park/>.



Midwest City's Holiday Lights Spectacular

Take a mile long drive or walk through over 80 light displays



in Joe B. Barnes Regional Park located at located at 8700 E. Reno Avenue. Admission is free, and donations are gladly accepted. The Holiday Lights Spectacular is open from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. on weeknights and until 11 p.m. on weekends through Dec. 30. For more information <http://midwestcityok.org/holiday-lights-spectacular3>.

Chesapeake Energy Campus

Visit the Chesapeake Energy Campus located at NW 63rd & Western Ave in Oklahoma City to see over to see over 61,000 strands of lights containing 4.3 million LED lights. Drive through the campus or get out and take pictures by the brightly colored trees. Lights remain on from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 a.m. each night through the first week in Jan.

Chickasha's Festival of Light

Drive or walk through the 43 acre park with over 100 displays and visit the 16 story lit Christmas tree. Admission is free, and donations are gladly accepted. The Festival of Light is located at Shannon Springs Park, 2500 S. 9th St and is open from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 6 p.m. until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday through Dec. 31. For more information, visit <http://www.chickashafestivaloflight.com>.

OneMain Financial Bricktown Canal Lights

Christmas lights will be on display in the Bricktown canal through Jan. 1. Admission is free to the public.



Photos taken at Yukon's Christmas in the Park by Lauren Daniel/Pioneer.

Holidays

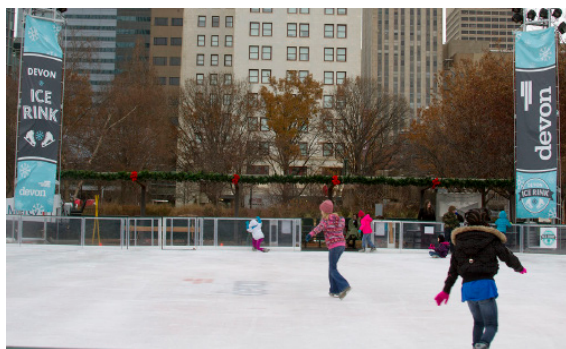
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Devon Ice Rink

The Devon Ice Rink, located in the Myriad Botanical Gardens at 113 S. Robinson in Oklahoma City has public skating, private parties, and special events throughout the winter. You can skate for \$12, includes skates, or \$8 if you bring your own skates. For 10 or more guests, it is \$8 per person, includes skates. To schedule a private party, call (405) 708-6499.

**Devon's Saturdays With Santa**

Each Saturday until Christmas, the Devon Energy Center hosts Saturdays with Santa from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. A new theme is given to the day each week like Whoville!, The North Pole, and Winter Wonderland. Children can visit Santa's workshop, create holiday crafts, send letters to the North Pole, ride the Devon's Polar Express, and send letters to the North Pole. Holiday characters will interact with the children, and visits with Santa are first-come, first serve, and are free if families bring their own camera. Free parking

is available at the visitors entrance on the northeast side of the garage. For more information, visit <http://saturdayswithsanta.com>.

Chesapeake Energy's Snow Tubing

In the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark, located at 2 S. Mickey Mantle Drive, you can slide down from the upper deck onto the field. A smaller slide also goes from a lower level onto the field. The Snow Tubing has five sessions each day at 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. from Dec. 20 through Jan. 4, 2015. However, it closes early Christmas Eve and

closed Christmas Day. Tickets can be purchased for \$12 per person for a 90-minute session. Riders must be 48" to ride the big slope, but those under 48" can ride the smaller slope. For more information, call 405-218-1000.

Free Water Taxi Rides

The Bricktown Water Taxi Rides are free from 6 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. on Thursdays through Sundays until December 28. Rides will not be offered on Christmas. Board the boats near Zio's under the Oklahoma bridge to take a float down the Bricktown canal. The event is completely free

Get Festive

Things to do in Oklahoma City
from before Christmas until
New Years Day



and open to the public.

Holiday Pop-Up Shops at Midtown

Visit the geodesic domes located at NW 10th and Harvey and shop 38 Oklahoma-owned shops and an urban Christmas tree lot. The shops are open Thursday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Dec. 21. It is free and open to the public. For more information, visit <http://www.okcpopupshops.com>.

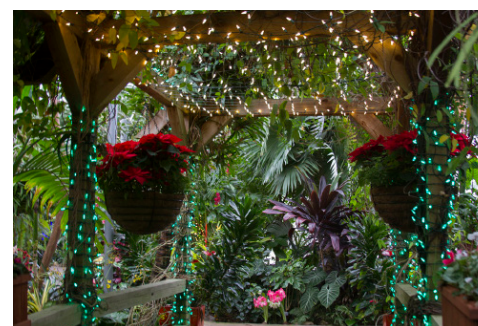
Winter Shoppes at Myriad Gardens

Enjoy holiday shopping from over 20 different vendors while in the Myriad Gardens located at 301 West Reno Avenue. The shoppes are open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. December 18 through Dec. 23. They are free and open to the public. For more information, visit <http://wintershoppes.com/index.html>.

**Crystal Bridge Tropical Conservatory**

Admission to the Crystal Bridge Tropical Conservatory located in the Myriad Gardens at 301 West Reno Avenue is free on Saturdays

from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. through Dec. 20 and from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Sunday



evenings through Dec. 28. Stay warm inside the conservatory while observing plants, watching light displays, and enjoying special holiday exhibits.

Santa's Adventure on the Oklahoma River

The Boathouse district, located at 725 S Lincoln Blvd in Oklahoma City, is hosting special events for the holidays from 1 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays through Jan. 4, 2015. The Santa Adventure Pass can be purchased for \$35 and includes the SandRidge Santa Zip, the Rumble Drop, the North Pole Climb, the Snow Bounce, the Candy Cane Rock Wall, Rudolph's Launch, holiday lights and music. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit <http://boathousedistrict.org/adventures/>.

Oklahoma City Ballet's "The Nutcracker"

This year, "The Nutcracker" performed by the Oklahoma City ballet will have

new sets and costumes. The ballet will perform at 7 p.m. Dec. 19, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Dec. 20, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Dec. 21, and at 7 p.m. on Dec. 22. There will be family activities before and after performances. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit <http://okcballet.com/performances/nutcracker/>.

Lyric Theatre's "A Christmas Carol"

Lyric Theatre will present "A Christmas Carol in the Plaza District. Tickets start at \$40 and the play will be showing through Saturday, Dec. 27. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit <http://www.lyrictheatreokc.com/2014-lyrics-a-christmas-carol>.

Opening Night 2015

Ring in the new year in downtown Oklahoma City with family activities, live music, and fireworks at midnight. The event starts at 7 p.m. on Dec. 31 and lasts through midnight on Jan. 1, 2015. Wristbands are \$8 and can be purchased online at <http://www.artscouncilokc.com/opening-night>.

For more information about holiday events offered in downtown Oklahoma City, visit <http://www.downtown-indecember.com>.

Photos by Lauren Daniel/
Pioneer

The DOs and DON'Ts of spending Christmas alone

Jake McMahon
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If you're alone on Christmas, you feel more alone than you could on any other day. This doesn't mean you can't enjoy yourself, though. As long as you stick to a few simple rules, your Christmas can be just as awesome as it would be with loved ones.

During Christmas, people really lose sight of the important things. Chiefly, solitude. Whenever family is around, you can never truly be yourself. Because of this, lonely Christmas is the perfect day of the year to not be ashamed.



Don't watch television for any reason. Television will be loaded with Christmas specials and commercials featuring friends and family having fun and exchanging gifts. The love and warmth radiating from your screen will assault you with reminders of your own loneliness. Watching television is a bad idea regardless of the date, but on a lonely Christmas, it's one of the worst activities.



Do enjoy all Christmas - themed foods. Regardless of what you think of Christmas, there's no denying the joy one gets when eating the treats that only arrive at this time of year. Being alone on Christmas is no excuse to deprive yourself of these wonderful treats. Munch on some gingerbread. Guzzle some eggnog. Put on some Bing Crosby, sip some cocoa, and be whisked away to a childhood where anything was possible. You can't get this kind of high in July.



Don't use social media. This is for the same reason as Rule 1, except instead of seeing strangers doing fun Christmas things, you'll see your friends and family doing Christmas things without you. Seeing that will sting too much, and everyone will be too busy to talk to you anyway. Besides, a day off of the internet never hurt anyone.



Do go to work if you can. If you work at one of the few jobs that actually gives you Christmas off, don't take it. Show up at work, put in your time, and you'll be distracted from loneliness for a solid eight hours. You won't be surrounded by friends or loved ones, but you'll be around people who are having just as horrible a day as you.



Don't go to the movies. It may sound like a great idea, since it seems like no normal person would go to the movies on Christmas. You'd think there would be no line at the concession stand. You would also be wrong. Against all common sense, Christmas is one of the biggest movie days of the year, and it is often the opening day for blockbusters. You won't get an entire theater to yourself, and you'll instead be a person who goes alone to the movies. Nobody will be staring at you or anything, but you will think they are.



Do everything you can't do with family around. During Christmas, people really lose sight of the important things. Chiefly, solitude. Whenever family is around, you can never truly be yourself. Because of this, lonely Christmas is the perfect day of the year to not be ashamed. If you have a hobby that you're embarrassed to tell your relatives about, take this opportunity to do it hard. Use this day to learn about yourself. Just remember, at all costs, to close the blinds.

Illustrations by Jake McMahon

Cards to confetti by: Candice Schafer

We've all gotten cards. Christmas cards can be a good thing at first, but then it seems as if you'd like to remove your address from everyone's mind when your mailbox is crying for help under all of the (mostly generic) Christmas cards.

Even though you'd rather get rid of at least some of them, do you ever feel slightly guilty when having to throw away the Christmas cards or any type of card for instance? There are other ways to reuse the cards for decorating. Growing up, my family had always made a wreath of the numerous amounts of Christmas cards that we had received that year. If there were any extra, we would tape them to the walls by the tree.

If you don't feel like using the cards to decorate, what else can you do with them? You could scrapbook them, collect the Christmas images and see who is buying the same cards over and over again, or you could just recycle them. Just as an in case, I would keep my cards around at least until the holidays are over.

What if a relative were to ask if you had received the card and wanted to look at it because it had a picture of some family member on it and you didn't have it? Not only would that possibly offend the relative or friend, it would probably make you feel bad as well. Try to think of a creative way of displaying them for guests to view during the holidays.

So the next time you feel like you are getting buried in cheesy Santa cards and you feel like you're about to shred every last one, hold it together, for a few more days. Then commence the shredding and colorful paper scraps. Hey, at least now you have confetti for a party.



A Christmas card miracle by Jorge Krzyzaniak

Photo Illustration by Ethan Cooper/Jorge Krzyzaniak

I have a new, best friend; a soul mate. He doesn't know how important he is to me yet but that doesn't matter. He will.

I'd never gotten a Christmas card before. I had never known the pure, simple, heartwarming joy that it is to receive one. Oh but now—now my spirit soars with the newfound friendship I found folded into that glorious, hand-printed envelope last week.

Having rarely received mail at my backwoods, utilitarian hovel, the size and shape of the envelope was unfamiliar to me. It was a quaint rectangle of robin's-egg blue. My name and address had been so lovingly bestowed upon it in a lovely, handwritten cursive. The return address was for a Chris Johnson in California, a name I'd never heard of (and have substituted for the purpose of this publication), but I could tell that I liked him already.

When I opened the envelope my eyes glittered like the embossed snowflakes upon the cardstock within.

"What is this?" I gasped.

I turned it over in my hands, almost bewildered. My fingers trembled as I opened the card and when at last I saw what was written inside, a lone tear of joy began to race quietly down my cheek as eager as I was to touch this magnificent thing. Beside the stain of my teardrop were the printed words, "Happy Holidays!"

Surrounding the printed greeting though was the thing most wonderful of all; the personal, heartfelt message just for me.

"Dear Jorge," it began, once more in the beautiful blue cursive that looked to have flowed from the pen as happily as the tear from my eye, "Big sales are going on now at Rudypooch Nissan this holiday season.



Come on in for the gift of savings." (Rudypooch Nissan is a fake name I've substituted to keep my friend to myself)

At the bottom, it was simply and affectionately signed, "— C." Because Chris and I are close like that now.

It's not so much what Chris said in the card. But the subtext was clear.

I rushed inside, placed my new card (my most favorite thing) on the mantel and sat down to

write my correspondence at once. I won't divulge all that was said but I will say that my letter was wrought with thanks, several promises to come see him right away and a lengthy, sincere and unbridled poem about Chris' (what I assume to be) tender lips framed within the topic of the lifetime of loneliness I'd experienced before receiving his card. I told him that from the tone of his card I could tell that he had once felt the

same but that never again would he feel the cold gnaw of solitude, for we could be together forever at last. (One might be inclined to call it a "manifesto" if we were to get caught up in the semantics of things but I assure you it was a deeply passionate one.)

I thought it best not to disturb Chris at work, so I circumvented the visit to Rudypooch Nissan altogether. And a little research on the old Google quickly revealed to me that Chris had accidentally put the address of some marketing division office for Nissan Motor Company.

"Oh," I'd laughed to myself, "That's so Chris." What a mix-up that could have been.

So, with a little more research (and spending a significant amount of money online), I was able at last to locate Chris' home address. My heart swells now to think of the journey to come and the look on my soulmate's face when he awakes early Christmas morning to discover under his tree the greatest gift of all — me.

Holiday Drinks by: Candice Schafer

During the holidays, there are three drinks in particular that I really look forward to drinking. One of those is Apple Cider. Nothing beats a cold day like a warm mug of hot Apple cider. Another thing that I really like to drink is So Delicious Mint Chocolate Coconut Milk. When you have Dairy allergies, some holiday drinks like eggnog and other dairy drinks can be rather uncomfortable to drink.

So Delicious specializes in coconut milk beverages as well as ice creams. Before you think it might sound gross, the milks are sweet and I actually prefer coconut milk ice creams over dairy. They are a lot creamier. So Delicious also makes Nog, which tastes like eggnog, Mint Chocolate which tastes like a minty chocolate milk and Pumpkin spice which tastes a bit like pumpkin pies. These are the holiday specials for So Delicious.

The last thing I really look forward to drinking, especially around the holidays is peppermint tea. Now this is a beverage that can be enjoyed any time, but it makes it a bit more festive to drink during the holidays. The peppermint reminds me of winter. The box for the tea around the holidays is also decorated in candy canes and snow so, that helps with the festiveness.



Holiday diets are for the weak by: Jorge Krzyzaniak



Illustration by Jorge Krzyzaniak

It's common that when we put the holidays within the perspective of fitness or athleticism, we look at this as the off-season. Like professional athletes sometimes do, we might be kicking ourselves for letting ourselves go in our downtime.

The gym might restrict its hours or our time will be so otherwise consumed that we'll miss a few workouts.

We'll eat sweets and richly succulent foods in the kind of heaping abundance we would normally have the sense to sidestep.

And we may even booze it up with thick drinks so bizarre they aren't even available during the rest of the year; Christmas ales, evergreen swizzles and the ever-mysterious and confounding eggnog.

By the time the New Years resolution kicks in, we find ourselves on a long road to recovery.

But maybe we're looking at it all wrong. Maybe it's time

to start thinking about our holiday season gluttony in a whole new way.

It's time we realize that the holidays are not the off season. Holidays are the main event, the big show, the all-out, sudden-death, championship series.

You've worked hard all year; watching what you eat, running incessantly on treadmills, pumping iron and sipping only clear liquors (like some sort of rich, white woman). What This is what it's all been leading up to. This is the moment we've all been waiting for. Christmas time baby!

It's time to eat hard or go home.

You think spiral ham is cut that way for decoration? Hell no!

It's made that way so you can grab it off the bone in fist fulls. That's what it's all about; game time. It's time to eat and drink like you never have before. You're getting new clothes for Christmas. It's time to stretch out those old ones.

This ain't no off-season. This is the real deal.

You've got to go for it. This is your Super Bowl; a super bowl full of eggnog or baconnog or whatever kind of fatty, booze soaked nog your heart desires. This is summer sausages and sugar cookies as far as the eye can see.

You can eat salad and skip desserts like some sort of third world citizen the rest of the year. This is no time for weakness. Right now it's time to belly up to the table and do what you've been made to do. Eat.

(Anyone who says they're full is officially off the team. We don't need that kind of negativity right now.)

How to combat the holiday hangovers

Illustration by Jake McMahon



The holidays are meant to be celebrated. But like anything great, a hearty celebration comes with its price. Monetary expenditures aside, the toll upon one's body must be considered.

By Jorge Krzyzaniak and Ethan Cooper

The cost of a stellar celebration is often pain and it can be quite awful. Riddled with intense nausea and a splitting headache is really no way to spend a Christmas morning or to begin a new year. We've spent years though performing the semi-scientific, painstaking research to nail down the best ways to overcome a hangover. Our findings have been listed below in no particular order.

Gatorade and Advil. Alcohol dehydrates you and you've probably screwed your blood sugar up pretty bad too. It spiked with the sugars in liquor to the point that it dropped terribly low at some point later. Gatorade's got what you need to put both of these back in line and since you poisoned your brain, you're going to need something for the headache. If we were smart or sober, we would have remembered to ingest this stuff right before going to sleep but instead we drank more.

Bloody Marys. Here we're operating on the old "hair of the dog" principle wherein a hangover can be overcome by adding more alcohol to it. The tomato juice in a Bloody Mary is just thick enough to disperse whatever alcohol may still be sitting in your stomach from the night before while also working to coat the stomach. It's also going to replenish some of those vitamins and minerals that your body used up partying. Some prefer something spicy when they're hungover to shock the brain out of its fog. The myriad of garnishes that may come with a Bloody Mary are an absolute bonus. A good, sympathetic restaurant might offer a Bloody Mary bar for the hungover masses on New Years Day, offering everything from bacon to pickled string beans with which to garnish your drink.

Menudo (The soup not the band). It's probably best not to think about what's in this delicious, Mexican soup if you're still a bit queasy, just know that it's hardy and it's magical.

Anything of substantial size and sponginess that's smothered in hot, white gravy; biscuits, omelettes, your mom...boom! BURN! Seriously though, it's important to fill your stomach with something big and absorbent enough to just soak up all the booze. The white gravy makes everything delicious and it has a magical, down-homey quality that helps you feel safe and warm.

Big, greasy burritos garnished with spicy slices of carrots. We don't know why, and logic tells us that it shouldn't be, but grease is very important to treating a hangover. Again, we're going for substantial and spicy here too.

Sleep. Everything else is just going to feel miserable for a while.

Sweat. Your body does everything it can to evacuate its toxins. I like to help mine out after a rowdy evening by encouraging it to sweat. By eating thousands of cupcakes through the years, Jorge has carefully conditioned his body to be able to achieve a state of basic sweatiness on command. There are techniques though to further the process. A little time in the sauna or just wrapped in blankets in a hot room might do wonders. Keep in mind that you are already severely dehydrated from boozing it up all night and you've got to replenish those fluids. For this, we recommend any American light beer.

Water/Hydration. If you don't have Gatorade and Advil, water will work just fine. After spending the night consuming several alcoholic beverages you can avoid a morning hangover by drinking an 8 ounce bottle of water before going to bed.

You should know also that your pre-party ritual is as crucial to your well being as any after care can be. We all know these holidays are coming. Rest up in preparation, prehydrate and fill your stomach with home cooked, well balanced meals if possible.

Know your limits too. If you don't drink often, don't expect too much out of yourself when you let loose this holiday season. If you very rarely or never drink, this is no time to sample all the types of booze available. Leave the important research to experts like us and stay safe out there.

New Years Eve song origin explained

Ethan Cooper

Photographer

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The song we all sing on New Years Eve at the stroke of midnight is called “Auld Lang Syne” which translated to English literally means “old long since.”

A more descriptive meaning of the title would be “times gone by” or “times long past.”

The song was written by Scottish poet Robert Burns in 1788.

Burns remarked, “The following song, an old song, of the olden times, and which has never



been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man.”

So Burns did not compose the complete poem but collected most the lyrics.

The tradition mostly started in 1929 when Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadian Band performed on New Years Eve at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City.

The bands performance was broadcast live over the radio on CBS.

At midnight the song they chose to play was “Auld Lang Syne,” an old Scottish folk song Lombardo had first heard from Scottish immigrants in Ontario.

Decades before Lombardo’s death in 1977, he and the Royal Canadian Band would go on to play the song at midnight on New Years Eve through radio and eventually television.

Don’t know the lyrics to “Auld Lang Syne?”

Traditional Song

Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And days o’ lang syne!

Chorus:

For auld lang syne, my dear

For auld lang syne,

We’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet

For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes,

And pu’d the gowans fine,

But we’ve wander’d mony a weary foot

Sin’ auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl’t in the burn

Frae morning sun till dine,

But seas between us braid hae roar’d

Sin’ auld lang syne.

And there’s a hand, my trusty fiere,

And gie’s a hand o’ thine,

And we’ll tak a right guid willie-waught

For auld lang syne!

And surely ye’ll be your pint’ stoup,

And surely I’ll be mine!

And we’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet

For auld lang syne!



Modern English Translation

Times Gone By

Should old acquaintances be forgotten,

And never brought to mind?

Should old acquaintances be forgotten,

And days of long ago!

Chorus:

For times gone by, my dear

For times gone by,

We will take a cup of kindness yet

For times gone by.

We two have run about the hillsides

And pulled the daisies fine,

But we have wandered many a weary foot

For times gone by.

We two have paddled (waded) in the stream

From noon until dinner time,

But seas between us broad have roared

Since times gone by.

And there is a hand, my trusty friend,

And give us a hand of yours,

And we will take a goodwill drink (of ale)

For times gone by!

And surely you will pay for your pint,

And surely I will pay for mine!

And we will take a cup of kindness yet

For times gone by!



Realistic New Year's Resolutions

Jake McMahon
Videographer
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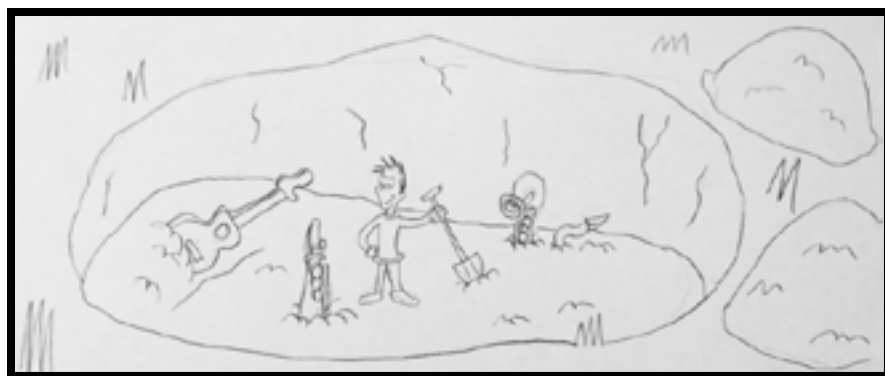
Around the start of 2015, folks everywhere will resolve to change something about themselves. Maybe they'll decide to diet and lose weight, or maybe they'll decide to exercise and lose weight. In rare cases, people don't make resolutions to diet or exercise at all, and instead decide to swallow a tapeworm to lose weight.

Weight loss doesn't get easier just because everyone's a year older. Because of this, "I will get less gross" is a useless resolution. Below are some resolutions that are much more realistic, and much more helpful.



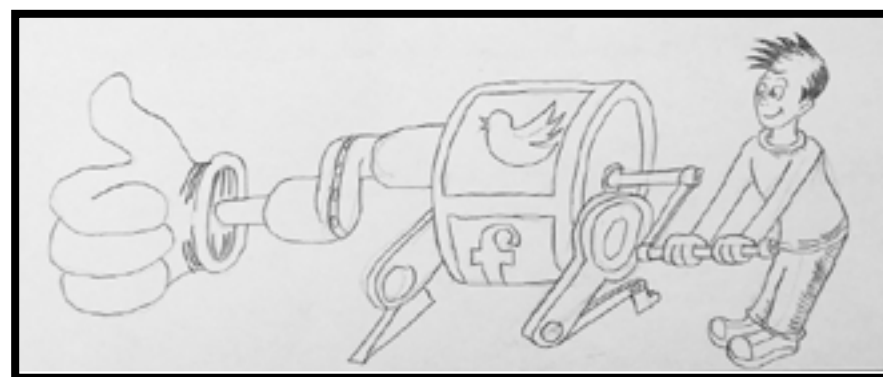
"I will only use words that I fully understand."

This little pledge will halt a gaggle of embarrassing scenarios in their tracks. If you spend your time around people that aren't as smart as you, you can throw fancy nonsense words around like confetti and nobody will notice. But when the day comes that you're trying to impress a gorgeous nursing student, you don't want to tell her how ostentatious her scrubs are. This resolution may take practice, but it does pay off. As soon as you think of a big word, make sure you know what it means. Try to think of a synonym for it. If you can't, save your powerful word for tomorrow after you look it up. It's simple, but effective. Just imagine, you could use 2015 to double your vocabulary.



"I will discover a new musician every week."

For some reason, knowing about obscure music makes a person cool. This is weird, because most things that make you cool are hard to do, like being beautiful or being the quarterback. Discovering new music is easy, though people treat it like it's as difficult as discovering new countries. Just get onto Pandora and let it whisk you away to worlds of music you would otherwise never listen to. Pandora claims that the "stations" you make will play music similar to the music you requested. In fact, it will literally trick you into listening to weird music completely outside of your genre. Even if you wind up hating the artists, you will be able to look down your nose at your musically ignorant friends. "Oh, you haven't heard of Sir Girard and the Poop Tones? Dude, you're missing out."



"I will like everything on Facebook and Twitter."

Liking things that other people say is an effortless task. It's literally as simple as clicking a button. It's not that you should like every advertisement and meme on whatever social media site you visit, but when someone posts a picture of a killer dinner they made or a poem they worked all night to write, it's wrong not to like it. Even if it's horrible, you should like it. It makes a difference to people. Artists have horrible self-esteem, so they will treasure your tiny act of kindness. And as an added bonus, they will start to be interested in the excerpts you post from the fantasy novel you're writing. You scratch their ego, they'll scratch yours.



"I will make something and give it to everyone who doesn't like me."

This one explains itself. This is for the people in your life that you're around constantly, but never really connected with. It's not someone you hate, but someone who isn't your friend that you'd like as a friend. This person is probably a coworker, and hopefully not your wife. If you're a musician, write them a song. Play it for them during lunch. If you can cook, give that person a casserole to take home. If you can paint, paint that person clad in armor and mounted upon a majestic steed. If you embroider chairs, give them a chair. When someone has physical evidence that you have thought about them, it's hard for them to dislike you. But assuming this doesn't work, and the person now finds you creepy, at least something is different in your dull life.

Illustrations by Jake McMahon and Morgan Jones