Walking In A Caroling Wonderland

by Annaika Taneja

Every year, on the last day before winter break, the choirs of EBHS put on their best Christmas gear and sing favorite holiday tunes like “Deck the Halls”, “Frosty the Snowman”, “Dreidel, Dreidel”, and others. A favorite that has recently been added is Mariah Carey’s 1996 hit, “All I Want For Christmas Is You”, due to popular demand. These Christmas carols are sold for $2 each, where any student or staff member can choose one song to be sung for their friend in class. From periods 1-4, students from all periods of choir deliver Christmas carols in groups to every person it is ordered for.

Choir teacher Mr. Good, who came to EBHS in 2017, shares that this tradition is “great because not only is it a fundraiser for choirs, it’s also a great way to spread some holiday cheer.” After coming to EBHS, Mr. Good has continued the traditions more than happily, and admits that East Brunswick is the only school he knows that has these specific holiday traditions. Junior Lauren Choi contentedly describes her experience receiving a car during gym class last year, stating, “As I was leaving gym class, my friends in choir surprised me with a carol. As they were singing to me, a circle of people came to listen and everyone enjoyed it. I think you should definitely spend your money as this is something that brings joy not only for yourself but for others as well. I know junior year for me is very stressful and this is definitely a stress reliever during the holidays.”

Not all caroling is meant as a fundraiser, however. Each year Concert Choir, an audition-only ensemble, goes around to the elementary schools to sing holiday carols to all elementary students and teachers. This year, Concert Choir hopes to go on December 20th. Moreover, Choir students rehearsing carols EBHS Choir also performs at the East Brunswick Barnes and Noble in early December each year. On Black Friday, both Concert Choir and Bella Voce sing holiday tunes in the center of the Barnes and Noble, simply to attract shoppers and spread the holiday spirit. Last year, to promote the sale of Christmas carols, Concert Choir created its own video advertisement. This year, Mr. Good hopes to make the event even bigger and perhaps for a longer period of time during the day. The finale of the caroling, however, is at the end of the school day right before winter break. During this time, both Concert Choir and Chamber Orchestra come together in the middle of B-Hall to sing and play “Handel’s” together. Students from all classes come together to watch this spectacle. Former alumni also like to come back to East Brunswick High School to participate in this special event too. As the bell rings on the last day of school before winter break, the choirs have sung their hearts out, and holiday spirit will be a little more visible among all East Brunswick High School students!

This is something that brings joy not only for yourself, but for others as well!

-Junior Lauren Choi

Give Back This Holiday Season

by Devin Hecht

It’s that time of year again! The holidays are almost upon us, and many students are probably wrapping presents, filled with festive cheer. However, the holidays can also be a reminder that this is a time for giving, and for generosity. So, East Brunswick High School has initiated charity events to allow everyone to merriely celebrate the holidays. A toy drive has been created by East Brunswick High School’s English department to aid families throughout the district. Every year the toy drive ads over 60 underprivileged families, and “the event has been in existence for more than 10 years,” according to Ms. Rocha, an English teacher at EBHS. In any case, Ms. Rocha isn’t the only one in the English department who contributes. Ms. Domond of the English department reaches out to school nurses and collects the names of desiring students, and then asks clubs and organizations in the High School to sponsor a child. Students raise money, then go shopping for the family. Throughout its duration, the toy drive has supported over 600 families, and the program is not showing any signs of slowing down. Ms. Rocha’s goal is to raise even more money this year than last, but she admitted that “last year’s classes set the bar pretty high.” Hopefully this year East Brunswick can come together to give back to the community.

However, the English department’s toy drive is not the only charity that East Brunswick High School is participating in. There was a clothing drive that took place until November 27th that aided many people in East Brunswick, including veterans. The New Jersey Veteran’s Memorial Home is a “modern skilled care nursing home providing 24/7 quality healthcare,” according to the organization’s website. Students and members of the community donated men’s shirts and women’s socks to the New Jersey Veteran’s Memorial Home at Menlo Park. The people under their care are in need of clothing that East Brunswick High School will dutifully provide. Another program that East Brunswick High School is participating in is the annual Powderpuff game. Many students have probably heard of the game and looking forward to it, and the event is very beneficial to charity. The Powderpuff game supports the girl’s football team and male cheerleaders, and there is a bonfire following the game. Tickets are only 6 dollars. Even better, the price is reduced to 5 dollars with the donation of a can of food, and free if this year’s Powderpuff shirt is worn to the game. All proceeds from this event will be donated to Relay For Life; an organization that helps to fund cancer research. Powderpuff succeeds in bringing many different people from the community together, and school spirit is prevalent throughout the night. The bonfire gives students a chance to bond with their peers outside of class. All the while, money is being donated to an extremely important cause. Powderpuff is a truly remarkable event for East Brunswick.

The New Jersey Veteran’s Memorial Home in Menlo Park

The charity events that East Brunswick Public School is participating in will make the holidays a magical time for everyone.

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Eva (For):

It was a random Tuesday in December when I suddenly realized that I hadn’t heard from my Chiropractor in a while. I started to worry, wondering if he was ok and how his family was doing. A week passed and my anxiety only continued to grow. What if he was abducted? Even worse, what if he quit his job and became a professional drummer? The uncertainty was overwhelming.

Luckily, a week before Hannukah, I received his family’s holiday card in the mail. There he was, sitting in front of a crackling fireplace, hugging his wife and two children. I smiled at the picture of their border collie wearing a Santa hat, my worries alleviated. Same old Roofus!

Thanks to holiday cards, you never have to stress about where your acquaintances may be at any point in time. Holiday cards are people’s way of letting you know that everything is going to be ok. “Happy Holidays” indeed, Dr. Campbell!

Amasha (Against):

I love the holiday season! The lights strung up around town, people putting friendly neighborhood snowmen in their yards, the simple pleasures of hot chocolate and sugar cookies on a cold day-- it’s what I look forward to each year.

But holiday cards-- those high sheen, five-by-seven, professionally captured photos-- I do not love. And as an enthusiast of all things holiday, my dislike comes with good reason. Number one: you get holiday cards from people you barely even know. People who do not so much as bother to call or text all year long feel the need to reach out during the holidays, so they can remind you that they do in fact exist, and contrary to what you would think given their severe lack of communication, they care!!! Number two: holiday cards are an excuse to show everyone how well you’re doing. We get it, the kids are cute. Number three: the whole idea is creepy. People just have a picture of you and your family, lying around in their house. Perhaps even hung up on their fridge via magnet. And chances are, it will linger there far beyond the holiday season...

I love everything about the holiday season. But holiday cards, that’s going to be a no from me.
“I enjoy spending my holidays with my friends and family, as well as my dog. Winter is a great time for me, as I get to see my friends that are coming home from college, as well as distant family that I don’t see often. We talk, play games together, and exchange gifts. I also like spending time alone, listening to music or playing video games.”

Nathaniel Starr, EBHS Sophomore

“Right now I’m working on producing a beat pack that I’m sending out to several rap artists across the country. It’s an exciting project and I’m looking forward to getting placement in the future. I think the winter is good time for my own introspection. I like the cold weather, but I like how it forces me to stay inside sometimes and grind out whatever I need to work on.

Jacob Stern, EBHS Senior

“Something I’m most proud of this year, is my daughter. My daughter has overcome so many obstacles in her life this year, and been able to obtain a varsity letter in cross country. She has a form of cerebral palsy and has been through a lot of therapy in her life, and now she’s doing well in school...I’m looking forward to health and happiness for everyone in 2020.

Officer Dave Smith, EBHS Staff

“Hey EBHS! With the holidays just around the corner, the Assistant Editors-in-Chief of the Clarion want to personally wish everyone at EBHS a happy holiday and healthy new year. We hope you enjoy your time getting to celebrate traditions with your friends, family, and pets this Winter break. With that being said, here’s a look at how we plan to celebrate, and what we’re looking forward to the most:

- Caroline Serpico

“My favorite about Hannukah is getting to celebrate with my family and lighting the menorah. [Some of my favorite traditions,] during Hannukah are playing dreidel, eating latkes and brisket, having our family over, and lighting the candles. People once tried to destroy our people and our religion, but they couldn’t and we prevailed - so we celebrate that during Hannukah.

Sami Ginsberg, EBHS Senior

“Three things: hot cocoa, holiday movies, and presents. Nothing too special, but I appreciate every moment we get during the holiday break. As the temperature drops below 30 and we get in the holiday spirit, I find myself boiling hot milk and pouring in hot chocolate mix. Plop a couple marshmallows in if you’re feeling fancy, and you got yourself a delicious drink to stay warm. We also put on a holiday movie (Home Alone being one of my favorites) and enjoy our family time together, grateful we have time off from school and work. And as Christmas Day rolls around, I find myself perusing Amazon for the best presents for friends and family, choosing gifts for Secret Santa and holiday parties. The holiday season, spent in cozy clothing and listening to Christmas classics, is truly the most wonderful time of the year.”

- Serena Huang

“Our Reason for the Season

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“The holidays are a very special time of year for my family and I. While the season tends to have a hectic nature leading up to the holiday, just getting to spend the last and first weeks of the year with my friends and family makes any lost time worth it. For my family, the holiday season begins with a traditional gift from my Grandma; though my cousins and I are grown, she stills wraps up chocolate advent calendars and gives them to us on Thanksgiving. We unwrap them knowing full well what we’re getting, but the same joy of Christmas excites us everytime we see the familiar tradition. On Christmas day, my mom’s side of the family - about 20 adults and 4 kids - pile into my Grandma’s small apartment to celebrate. As she’s gotten older, it’s become difficult for her to travel anywhere. So, while it’s pretty cramped way to spend Christmas, it literally and figuratively brings us all together for the holiday that we look forward to so much.”

- Caroline Serpico

“When Chanukah is during the holiday season changes every year because it is based of the 13-month Jewish calendar. That being said, when it actually falls around Christmas, you really feel the holiday spirit. On Chanukah, we light the menorah every night after having spent the day either with family or friends enjoying the holiday season. But on Chanukah-Christmas, we wake up in our pajamas and meet family-friends for homemade waffles with ice cream and watch the NBA Christmas games. Then comes the shocking part...we go out for sushi instead of chinese food! Either way, nothing is more special than my family tradition as to how we spend out Christmas... whether it is during Chanukah or not.”

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That way, at least you have something.

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because your college apps are in. From
but it's no excuse to stop everything just
all the mind-numbing tomes you'll have to
Rubik's cube without directions, find a big
your time -- learn crochet, figure out a
real thing. So I suggest a hobby to bide
in doubt, I find that people always love a giftcard to
or interests to spark a good secret santa idea. When
chat with them and see if you can pick up any hobbies
get what they want at a place that gives them options!
Amazon gift cards if I don't have a specific one to go
someone they don't know -- gift cards! I like to give
Q: How to get a good secret Santa gift when you

Hynes: Think about what anyone might accept from someone they don’t own -- gift cards! I like to give
Amazon gift cards if I don’t have a specific one to go
with. It’s not personal at all, but they let the receiver get what they want at a place that gives them options!
If you want to personalize it, write their name in something on the card -- it’s fancy and if they notice, they may be superficially impressed with your penmanship efforts!

Eliades: Cry a bit if you need to, or vent it out to
a trusted friend or mentor. Give yourself some time to be bummed out about it, but then move on. Look at
some of the programs, activities, or opportunities at
the other schools you applied to, and get excited for those
new experiences you wouldn’t otherwise have had
if you had gone to a different school.

Also, as my mom told me, you are never stuck anywhere.
If you still feel like that top school is where you
are meant to be, set up a plan to apply again and
transfer. Use it as motivation to work really hard
while you’re at another school so that you can improve
your application for the next semester or next year.

Q: How to deal with senioritis once college apps are in?

Hynes: Everyone has to cope
with senioritis in their own way. It’s a real thing. So I suggest a hobby to hide your time and enjoy zero stress -- the season is crazy enough!

Eliades: Party planning is something I am SUPER passionate about.
Here is a very short version-

Choose a theme and level of formality (are you planning a casual ugly sweater party for your co-workers, or an elegant winter Wonderland cocktail party for your close friends?)
Plan out a menu that fits your theme, and choose recipes that can be prepared ahead of time. Try to have items that are out right away, and that can be left out for a long duration of the party so that you can spend less time hosting and more time enjoying the company.
Decide on the atmosphere you want to create (decorations, music, scented candles, etc) and layout your venue (your home, a small room at a restaurant, etc) using the decorations you are planning on using, and the food you are planning to have.

Finally, make sure that there is enough seating for everyone, and enough parking (if that applies)! They are little things that people remember if they don’t go well.

The Old Town Road to Success

by Aaron Zhu

At the 53rd Country Music Association Awards on November 13, where the motif appeared be dark, unassuming dresses, Lil Nas X unapologetically chooses to stand out. To do so, he is wrapped in shiny black leather: his shirt lined across his chest with lustrous, thin fringe and his boots shimmied dotted with crystalline studs. In appearance and behavior, he is outstanding, irreverent, and eccentric—which also describes his contribution to this year’s music scene.

Lil Nas X’s success is for now, short: barely a year has passed since he first released “Old Town Road” in December of 2018. Then, having paired an online hip-hop beat with lyrics that bear a duality that is both hip-hop and western—“Cowboy hat from Georgia (for instance), the artist thought little of his conception, other than that it was catchy. But in a now commonplace example of Internet volatility, the piece journeyed from SoundCloud to TikTok, where users incessantly mused over its enormous video-sharing potential and

made it go viral. By mid-April, the blazing popularity of the song had legitimized; it had reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100, where high-status artists like Billie Eilish and Camila Cabello were

and Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee’s “Despacito (Remix)” featuring Justin Bieber. Lil Nas X also won the Country Music Association Award for Musical Event of the Year for “Old Town Road (Remix)”

Eliades: Work/Life balance is important—
but it’s no excuse to stop everything just
because your college apps are in. From
experience, some schools ask for your quarter 2 or 3 grades. If you MUST fall
into senioritis, try to get as much work done during study halls as you can. Many
senior teachers allow for homework to be started in class—so use that time wisely.
That way, at least you have something.

Q: How to plan a good holiday party?

Hynes: Find friends who are having one of their own, plan to attend, and enjoy with zero stress -- the season is crazy enough!

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To Tech or Not to Tech...

by Yejun Kwon

As the holiday gifting spirit begins to creep in, many Americans have started thinking about potential gifts for their loved ones. Although everyone wants to think of themselves as master gift-givers, it doesn’t hurt to take a peek at what gifts are going to be the most popular.

To start off, a Disney+ subscription is a great gift (despite its lack of tangibility) for anyone who enjoys Marvel and Star Wars, with its critically acclaimed The Mandalorian. With Disney+, you’ll have a friend or family member who really wants to watch Game of Thrones or is a sports fanatic. The other gift that will be popular this season is the AirPods Pro. Despite a retail price of $249.99, Demis Zhang, a senior, believes that “the new noise-cancelling feature and customizability” of the AirPods Pro will “appeal to many people.” However, some complain about the lack of aesthetic appeal and awkward design in the newer model. In other words, make sure your giftee is a fan of the aesthetic and not just the tech.

The idea of the tradition is that it is supposed to be simple and original. No one is expecting the Secret Santa to buy expensive gifts for the recipient. The gift just has to be special and genuine. “I love the fact that with just five to ten dollars, I have the ability to make someone’s Christmas brighter by getting something I know they will cherish,” EBHS Junior Sandra Lee said.

With the special someone might be who gifted the $12.99 for Netflix’s $12.99 for their standard streaming plan. In order to further compete with Netflix, there’s a $12.99-a-month premium subscription for access to both Hulu and ESPN+ along with Disney+. Just in case you have a friend or family member who really wants to watch Game of Thrones or is a sports fanatic. The other gift that will be popular this season is the AirPods Pro. Despite a retail price of $249.99, Demis Zhang, a senior, believes that “the new noise-cancelling feature and customizability” of the AirPods Pro will “appeal to many people.” However, some complain about the lack of aesthetic appeal and awkward design in the newer model. In other words, make sure your giftee is a fan of the aesthetic and not just the tech.

Holiday Hallmarks

by Phoebe Su

As temperatures drop outside and holiday fever rise, students at East Brunswick High School share what they think are the best holiday movies and episodes of all time. The answers were a mix of old and new.

Senior Rachel Lobo, an avid Christmas lover, enjoys the Hallmark movie Christmas Under Wraps. In this movie, an ambitious doctor moves to an Alaskan town and unexpectedly finds love and happiness when she discovers the holiday secret. Personally, Lobo loves “Hallmark and Candace Cameron Bure” and believes that “there’s nothing better than a movie about both medicine and Christmas” – two of her favorite things.

Besides Hallmark movies, it seems that students also enjoy old-time classics like the 1990 film Home Alone. As the title suggests, the plot revolves around an 8-year-old boy, Kevin, who is grounded the night before a family trip to Paris. He awakes the next day and realizes that his family left him by accident. A Christmas wish to have the house all to himself soon turns into a disaster, and it becomes his job to protect the house. A favorite among the East Brunswick High School students, Home Alone is the perfect action-packed comedy movie to watch. There is even a whole series if you enjoy the first movie. Seniors Abiya Ngorr and Brenna Murphy both agree that “it is a nice family movie to watch” and that “it is so funny.”

However, if you prefer short episodes to a full-length movie, there are several options for you as well. Many students suggest the Friends Christmas episodes, which are packed with lighthearted humor. “The One With the Routine” episode takes you on an adventure with siblings Ross and Monica as they try to steal the spotlight with their poor dancing skills on the set of Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve. Another great holiday episode is “The One With the Holiday Armadillo” in which Ross tries to teach his son, Ben, about Hanukkah, but Ben is solely interested in all things Christmas.

With all the great old and new holiday episodes and movies out there, it is not too early to snuggle in with some blankets, make some hot chocolate, and flip on the TV.

NFL Midseason Review

by Rohit Narla

This year’s NFL season has been very entertaining, and exciting to watch. Many teams have improved since last year, and there have been certain players who have been making quite the impact.

Sophomore Steven Chase stated “Two teams that have been impressive are the 49ers and Ravens. Both teams have exceeded expectations, and have set themselves up for a Super Bowl run. The 49ers spectacular defensive has powered them to be the top in the NFC, and the Ravens are a big surprise due to Lamar Jackson’s dual threat ability, and now he is leading the way in the MVP race.”

Lamar Jackson has silenced his doubters, as many people thought he wouldn’t be successful throwing the football at the professional level. East Brunswick High School junior Ben Lipman stated “I’m disappointed with the Broncos this year, as they had a lot of buzz surrounding them, only to stumble out of the gate.” The Browns had come into the season expected to be a top team, as they had received new additions such as superstar wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr.

Meanwhile on the east coast, Tom Brady, at age 42, is still throwing plenty of touchdowns, and could earn another Super Bowl Ring for the New England Patriots. That is unless the Ravens, 49ers, Seahawks, New Orleans Saints, Kansas City Chiefs, Green Bay Packers can do something about it. There’s a lot more to come, but stay tuned to see how the season turns out!
Californians are Catching ZZZs

by Mara Zaki

As December 2019 arrives, East Brunswick High School eagerly anticipates the annual winter break. Whether they celebrate a religious holiday or just hope for snow, both students and teachers like the idea of turning off the dreaded morning alarm and cozying up in bed. But what if students had the luxury of sleeping in every day? Well, lucky Californian high schoolers just became the envy of students across the nation. Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 328 in October, a law stating “high schools will start classes at 8:30 am or after.” Research on the correlation between lack of sleep and teen health influenced this big change. According to various studies, adolescents experience a shift in biological rhythms which causes them to become tired later at night and sleep later in the morning. So the age-old argument of telling a teenager to go to sleep earlier just does not work.

Both politicians and school systems have been presented with the overwhelming amount of advantages this change brings. Research shows that later start times give students numerous health benefits, including lower rates of depression and smaller chances of getting into car crashes caused by sleep deprivation. Mrs. Alimonti, a teacher of psychology and sociology here at EBHS, believes that because of these advantages, change cannot come fast enough. She endorses the idea of later start times in East Brunswick, informing her own classes about the setbacks they face when they only get four to five hours of sleep a night. Mrs. Alimonti compares the human brain to a phone being charged: people do not “charge their devices to 50% capacity and expect them to last through the day... but we are doing that to our own brains.” She hopes other states will learn from California’s example and start adopting their own versions of Senate Bill 328. But how many people are willing to shift their own schedules for the sake of students?

Unfortunately, Governor Newsom’s decision to sign Senate Bill 328 has faced major opposition from some students, parents, and educational groups. A consequence of later start times is later end times, forcing commuting parents to find early morning childcare. Teens also grapple with the decision to find after school jobs, which would leave younger siblings at home unattended. Students at EBHS realize this as well. Junior Vinika Thadhani states that “As we approach college, we have all these extracurriculars and community service hours to complete... There are only so many hours in the day.” Sacrificing sleep may have its benefits, even if it may cost the mental wellbeing of the student body.

Although the change in California’s high school hours is quite monumental, it seems unlikely that other states will follow its progressive reform. Hopefully, as the nation moves forward it will examine the science and determine what is best for its youth. But for now, it seems like EBHS still has the wonderful and wintry holidays to look forward to. Definitely a great time to catch up on some ZZZs!

by Alefiya Presswala

The most wonderful time of the year is finally here. Stores and homes are decorated with bright lights, present are being wrapped, and everything smells like peppermint. East Brunswick, a diverse town filled with people of all different religious and ethnic backgrounds, celebrates numerous holiday cultural traditions and customs. Junior Ari Machutu described her grandfather, Harry, who assumes the role “Hanukkah Harry” annually. “My grandfather dresses up as ‘Hanukkah Harry’ every year, but he doesn’t celebrate Christmas, or even any of them, but in East Brunswick, it’s hard to keep excluded from the holiday spirit. No matter who you are, this is a wonderful time to count your blessings and have a little fun!”

Hanukkah, he added that although she doesn’t have any family traditions, at her temple, “there’s a huge menorah lighting ceremony where every family brings their own [menorah] and [they] all light them at the same time”.

Andrew Salama, a junior at EBHS, has a rather interesting custom that his family follows. “My family members own a pool in Canada. Every Christmas, everyone’s at the pool with the family and everyone’s in the swimming pool.”

Sophomore Rachel Garevich, who also celebrates Hanukkah, she and her family go out to get Chinese food every year on Christmas Day because those are the only places open. EBHS sophomore Noora Hirnessay talked about how she and her siblings receive oranges in her Christmas stockings each year. Sophomore Brianna Boen said that her mom has made cranberry chowder on Christmas Eve every year since she was little. Senora Useche, who comes from Venezuela, heritage, talked about how rushed she feels when it comes to her tradition. “During New Years, showing them down your throat because the seconds go by so fast. But it’s really fun.”

You may not necessarily celebrate all of these holidays, or even any of them, but in East Brunswick, it’s hard to keep excluded from the holiday spirit. No matter who you are, this is a wonderful time to count your blessings and have a little fun!
Since late September, Kanye’s fans have waited in anticipation for the release of his album, Jesus Is King. However, as the day finally arrived, there was still no album, and fans were left anxious and impatient. But after a month of mixed messages from the artist, fans were not let down by its eventual release on October 25. Jesus Is King features several other artists, including Céline, Ty Dolla $ign, Fred Hammond, and numerous producers. The album marks Kanye’s first album since his 2018 album, Ye, and is much more in store for his fans. The concert, Dr. Gopal’s orchestra students were not scared of the challenges facing them when they were given five new pieces to learn, as most of them have been playing for over six years. This was the last winter concert for the seniors in the EBHS orchestra, marking the beginning of the end of their time in the arts in East Brunswick Public Schools. Despite this realization, the senior class continued to work hard to make their last year count, appreciating the fun moments in Dr. Gopal’s personal favorite as well because it is “more upbeat and different than others we usually play.” While the rest of pieces in the lineup may be unfamiliar to some, the holiday classic “Sleigh Ride” by Leroy Anderson was also performed. The orchestra plays this beloved Christmas Carol every year, and has a special tradition where seniors can audition to select the piece. This personalized instrument list allows the students to really become immersed in the spirit of music and learn the skill of leading an orchestra to perform a piece.

MEET THE NEW KANYE
NEW MUSE, SAME MUSICIAN

By Julie Ham

Through titles like “On God”, “Use This Gospel”, and “Jesus is Lord”, Kanye West opens a new chapter of his music as it is apparent that he has committed himself to a newfound path of Christianity, and this motif is reflected in the rest of his album, Jesus Is King. However, between the religious references and Bible verses in his songs, Kanye’s genius lyricism and melodic instruments prove that he has much more in store for his fans.

Since late September, Kanye’s fans have waited in anticipation for the release of his album, Jesus Is King. However, as the day finally arrived, there was still no album, and fans were left anxious and impatient. But after a month of mixed messages from the artist, fans were not let down by its eventual release on October 25. Jesus Is King features several other artists, including Céline, Ty Dolla $ign, Fred Hammond, and numerous producers. The album marks Kanye’s first album since his 2018 album, Ye, and is much more in store for his fans.

Despite Kanye’s recent alignment with the Christian faith, Kanye still maintains loyalty to his unique sound: although his lyrics have adopted a new direction, there are little derivations to be found in his musicianship. By opening with gospel-esque music and closing with more heavy, auto-tuned tracks, he demonstrates to his audience that while he now believes “Jesus is Lord”, he remains the same old Kanye. This phrase holds true for junior Ethian Chin, who says that Jesus Is King “keeps the same feel and experience of old Kanye West music through its usage of 60s R&B samples.” Kanye’s albums were always enigmatic. Listeners could clearly hear his experimentation with different kinds of sounds and layering in the songs: the next song could never be anticipated because he always seemed to surprise. This unpredictability has garnered many fans of his highlessness. While some songs have a “distinct theme that causes them to have an ‘odd’ sound, that quality seems to be lacking in Kanye’s music.” In fact, his older albums, like Heartbreak, could potentially be re-released now and still fit in. Junior Aditya Ningthouf confesses that he “never seems to get tired” of Kanye’s music even if he grew tired of everything from the late 2000s to early 2010s.

Kanye’s continuity is also found in his whacky lyricism. As his song “Closed on Sunday” rings out with his words “you’re my Chick Fil-A,” listeners can’t help but chuckle as they are reminded of his eccentricity. His public persona has always been a thing of question; one of the most prominent displays of his “weirdness” can be at the 2009 Grammy’s in which he walked onstage during Taylor Swift’s acceptance speech. Kanye has always been at the forefront of the rap genre. His career has spanned over a decade, and fans and listeners alike are right to await what Kanye’s future will bring.
by Mary Elgaray and Siri Dasari

As the holiday season quickly approaches, companies are planning seasonal discounts and promotions in order to take advantage of increased customer turnout. Unfortunately, this year’s holiday season is cut short due to a delayed Thanksgiving. Thus, companies need to devise alternative marketing strategies to maintain their revenue. Some retail companies, such as Walmart, have decided to kickstart their holiday sales earlier this year in an attempt to model a normal-length holiday season. Other companies, such as Target, expanded their platform to accommodate shoppers’ needs and appeal to customers just before the holiday season. These methods, among others, allow the company to sustain its revenues, as holiday sales are critical to the overall income of a company. According to Bloomberg Businessweek, “consumers are expected to spend $1,048 each,” a 4% increase from 2018. The spike to boost their earnings just before the year’s end. Specifically, for Target CEO Brian Cornell, it means fewer weekends for holiday parties and less time to shop. Recently, he said that “every day counts” when discussing the length of the holiday season and issues related to a shorter one. Adding on to the worries of companies and shoppers, the Trump administration’s tariff on Chinese imports does not bode well for the upcoming holiday season. According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), the trade war with China has caused 79% of shoppers to worry about holiday gift expenses. Consequently, consumers will be more cautious with their spending, limiting the ideal profit earned by companies. Sophomore Sheza Bajwa and Sara Naik offer other possible marketing techniques. Naik emphasizes that it is in the companies’ favor to “advertise holiday products earlier,” so that companies expand their holiday sales time. Luckily, many companies have already began to extend their holiday sales earlier. In terms of marketing, this strategy is wise in maximizing profits, even in less ideal situations. In conjunction with Naik, Bajwa continues that larger corporations could “lower their prices,” in order to compete with other companies, as well as spread their advertising across multiple platforms. Regardless of the issues regarding the shopping season, the NRF projects a strong holiday season. NRF Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz observed, “significant economic unease,” but due to “job growth and higher wages, there’s more money in families’ pockets, so we see both the willingness and ability to spend this holiday season.” As a result, there is the potential for a stronger holiday season as compared to last year. NRF President and CEO, Matthew Shay, also contends that the U.S. economy is continuing to grow and consumer spending is still the primary engine behind that growth. This shows how companies can persevere in difficult business situations, such as a shorter holiday season.

by Dhanvi Shah

Holiday movies, especially recognized classics, have made iconic contributions to pop culture throughout film history. Most teenagers and young adults warmly think back to their first Christmas film like The Polar Express in school. As the holiday season comes around, members of all ages eagerly set out to relive the evergreen movies and find joy in them each time. This winter season, however, many sources of entertainment have switched from cable and the theater to streaming sources such as Netflix, Hulu, and Disney+. Netflix itself produced many new movies this season, leaving viewers with a plethora of options. Among the many new movies produced by Netflix this season, the most popular ones have been The Knight Before Christmas, Let it Snow, Klaus, and Arctic Dogs. Movies from other producers include Frozen II, Last Christmas, A Cinderella Story: Christmas Wish, and Noelle. The heavily publicized average of 75% on Rotten Tomatoes and has overall high approval from most consumers and common critics. Audiences seemed to find comfort from the cliches and relatability of another typical high school movie, as the film follows the stories of several teens who find love during the Christmas season. Many viewers believe that it may even possibly be the Love Actually to classic 2003 Christmas rom-coms of 2019. For younger children and families, Frozen II, Noelle, Klaus, and Arctic Dogs take the lead this holiday season. With Frozen II being the most well-known of these, critics are not as impressed with it as they were with its predecessor, Frozen (2013). They are also indifferent to Last Christmas, one of the more publicized movies of the season, IMDB rates both 7.3 and 6.6 respectively. The most impressive of family-friendly movies was Netflix Original Christmas rom-com, The Knight Before Christmas, which receives an impressive 98%, making it among the better-scoring family movies on the site. Sophomore Sophia Olakangil shared that although holiday movies are not her favorite genre to begin with, she especially dislikes Netflix and Hulu hallmark movies since “it’s the same plot repeated over and over again. It’s cheesy now.” Yet, seeing how younger children have not received exposure to movies labelled as “classic” by older generations, new movies are likely to have a greater impact on their opinions and become the new generation’s definition of the epitome of pop culture. However, according to most EBHS students, nothing beats the originals. When asked for their favorite holiday movie over the Instagram Q&A feature, EBHS students gave a variety of responses including Home Alone, The Polar Express, The Nightmare Before Christmas, and Elf, all movies older than the generation itself. The same sentiment is echoed by sophomore Emily Lildhar, whose favorite movie is “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.” For millennials, Elf is so funny and completely adorable! Many students share that the quality of older movies is stronger and more entertaining as well, in accordance with Lildhar. While many share the same views as Lildhar, Olakangil, and this generation’s definition of the epitome of pop culture has no doubt that any holiday movie is significant to pop culture history—even the new ones. Since each generation is susceptible to new judgements based on earlier exposures, the next icons in pop culture can sometimes be unpredictable.