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HOLIDAY HABITS: HOUGHTON PROFESSORS SHARE FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

VICTORIA HOCK ('23)

Houghton Professors have a variety of Christmas traditions with which they celebrate the Christmas season. The STAR asked professors to tell us about some of these. Here are their responses:

A favorite tradition of Assistant Professor of Accounting Elianna McHenry ('18) is one inspired by a Christmas movie:

"Every year on Christmas Eve, my siblings, siblings-in-law, nieces and nephews, parents, husband and I all eat Chinese food together because my dad's favorite Christmas movie is *A Christmas Story*. Some years we go out to a restaurant and others we order take-out and eat at my parent's house. It's one of my favorite days of the year because we are all together and sharing a



A fresh snowfall outside the campus center on Monday, November 29th.

COURTESY OF JOSIAH WIEDENHEFT

meal in a time when we are all so busy and don't do that very often!"

Christmas decorations are the focus of a tradition that Professor of Communication Douglas Gaerte engages in

each year:

"Over the years my wife and I have built a collection of wooden Christmas trees. We probably have 70-80 different trees, and over Thanksgiving weekend

we get them out of storage and arrange them on our fireplace mantle as a way of marking the start of the Advent season. When our children were younger, they loved unpacking them and set-

ting them up. Often the conversation would revolve around vacations where we had picked up a tree or remembering special friends who had given us a particular tree as a gift. Now my two granddaughters enjoy being involved in the fun."

Associate Professor of Old Testament Sarah Derck partakes in a variety of traditions:

"A Derck Christmas is thick with traditions, some we've inherited and some we've made up. One of our favorites is to go with friends up to GEVA Theatre in Rochester, and see a showing of *The Christmas Carol*. We also give pajamas on Christmas Eve, and then on Christmas morning before we open other presents, we read the Gospel stories of Jesus' birth from

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RAMPAGING CHILD CULTISTS REANIMATE SNOW GOLEM, THREATEN: "WE'LL BE BACK ON CHRISTMAS DAY"

JOEY SCHUNEMANN ('23)

Terror in Fillmore: schoolchildren with too much time on their hands dabble in the dark arts when a disgruntled wizard leaves behind a relic of power. When his discarded enchanted hat found its way onto the head of a snowman erected by the children in the playground, it seems to have put the spark of life into his cold dead heart. The magician stripped away the artifact as quickly as he discarded it, but the children could not abandon the taste of power that the moment had provided.

After reacquiring the hat and resurrecting their twisted monster, they blindly followed his reckless rage as he ran around town antagonizing police officers



Sketch provided by a witness - if sighted, this figure should be reported to the authorities immediately.

and destroying public property. Officer Prout, at the time taking a shift directing traffic under the broken light at four corners, was hospitalized after getting his whistle driven down his throat by the magic of the beast. He has since stabilized and attempted to answer a few questions from us earlier. "Tweet tweet,

whistle twoo." was all he could muster as a response to whether he felt the children's education was ruined by lack of parental guidance in the category of pre-elementary anti-demon training. The hospitalization of Prout allowed the beast to rampage freely, causing three other moderate to severe multi-car pile-

ups, and leading to four more citizens in critical condition.

After terrorizing the town center and disturbing natural traffic flow, this false imitation of life found his way to the train station to purchase a ticket to the North Pole, to prolong his life indefinitely in the cold of the frozen ice. Mr. Juniper, driven

mad by the creature's power, is being held in Buffalo General awaiting a specialty psychiatrist flying in from Boston Medical. Juniper has only been able to utter the repeated words "no money? no money?" without end while constantly miming the action of stamping the hundreds of requested connecting trains from Fillmore to the North Pole, only to be told that the creature had "no money" to purchase them with.

The beast and Karen, the girl it seems to have picked as its favorite, were seen stowing away on an unoccupied cargo train after which eyewitnesses claim they saw the train rear up and gallop off like a

See **FROSTY** page #2

Using Humor During Burnout



SAMANTHA GORSKI ('23)

It's that time of year again. The time of year when Christmas trees and lights start going up, along with the workload of seemingly endless deadlines. Perhaps you make cookies to procrastinate that paper you've been putting off. Watch Tik-Toks to forget why your laptop is open to the Moodle page. 'Tis the season, but make it finals edition. However you find yourself around early December, one thing is clear, burnout is real and it sucks.

Now, I know as col-

lege students we are all well-versed in identifying and handling burnout, especially around finals. There are many beneficial ways to help your body handle stress, such as practicing yoga, taking a hot shower, reading for fun, or spending time with friends. But every time a college student tries to tell me to "take time for myself," I resist the urge to reply sarcastically. Spending my normally scheduled homework time going on a walk will not help me calm down, and the thought itself is enough to

"Trying (and failing) to be funny is one realistic way that makes me feel better when everything around me seems to be falling apart."

don't have the time. At least, that's how it feels right now. So, I'm going to be 100% honest. The only thing that helps me is humor. Trying (and failing) to be funny is one realistic way that makes me feel better when everything around me seems

overuse of that phrase, typically said in times of crisis where neither Pitbull nor myself has anything decent to contribute to the situation. Adding humor to presentations by including an extremely small and random picture always incentivizes me to finish my work. Playing Russian EDM on repeat while I write forum posts gives me a nice chuckle. Or spending far too long in the dining hall making jokes with friends about finding ways around due dates and debating if a last-minute McDonald's run will do more harm than good. Either way, using humor as a coping mech-

anism is a rather healthy response to short-term stress and explains why our generation defaults to jokes when living through a never-ending global pandemic.

My point is, simply putting a smile on your own face sometimes can be enough. Find yourself funny. I promise no one will think you're weird for it. Unless, of course, you're laughing alone in your room upstairs with the lights off (shoutout to my roommate who has dealt with that occasionally). When the burnout is feeling like a little too much, laugh at the fact that you're young and overwhelmed in that stereotypical college-kid way. So, if carving out time to de-stress is your thing, I applaud you. But if not, crack a book and crack a joke. It might help you more than you think. ★

Sam is a junior majoring in Psychology and Inter-cultural Studies.

"If you're anything like me, that looks a lot like using the phrase 'Pitbull's been there, done that' as a healthy way to cope."

make me want to break down and cry. Maybe that's what works for you, and if it is, I deeply apologize for belittling the beauty of nature walks. But the truth is most of us

to be falling apart. If you're anything like me, that looks a lot like using the phrase "Pitbull's been there, done that" as a healthy way to cope. My friends can attest to my

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Matthew and Luke. We listen to the Carol Service from King's College, Cambridge, and cook a British Christmas feast."

Associate Dean of the Chapel and Adjunct Professor of Youth Ministry JL Miller's Christmas traditions invoke strong feelings of warmth and comfort together with loved ones:

"Each year on Christmas Eve we come home from a candlelight service to enjoy a large dinner and scrumptious dessert followed by everyone in the family getting new pajamas to wear for Christmas day. Once we slip into the new PJ's, we wrap up the evening by watching *The Muppets Christmas Carol*.

Director of the Writing Center Laurie Dashnau involves the Writing Center in her

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Christmas traditions: "About ten years ago I bought a mini-Christmas tree and small Christmas skirt for the Writing Center. Many colleges do not allow holiday decorations (in my case, complete with Bible verses on a few painted apples) to be displayed, so I'm heartened by the opportunity to share both holiday cheer and truth with students in this way."

As you can see, Professors at Houghton celebrate Christmas in a variety of ways. However you choose to celebrate, The Houghton STAR wishes you a joyous Christmas season and a wonderful New Year! ★

FROSTY from page #1

steel horse chugging on towards the north. Karen's mother has expressed concern for her daughter's life, who was wearing only a small dress when the beast kidnapped her to take her to the coldest place on earth. "She'll catch cold faster than a rabbit running from a wack magician" said Mrs. Schmidt, Karen's mother. Her father was unavailable for an interview.

Her friends are still ensorcelled by the lingering power of the creature, ensuring on-lookers that "[the monster] will be back on Christmas day!" They have been labelled legal terrorists by the state of New York and taken into custody to be charged as full fledged adults. "You just don't get it, Frosty is different, he's alive!" said Rick, one

of the twin ring leaders who have taken charge of the group's public response in Karen's absence. "Frosty" is the name that he says they christened the snowman with before he came alive, and that he accepted the name as his own, using it to strike fear into the hearts of his enemies.

The community is left in shambles and no one can find Professor Hinkle, the magician previously believed to be a cheap hack, though now known to be a partitioner of the

dark arts. We have been told that if you encounter Karen, Hinkle, or any other of the missing children who have yet to be taken into custody, contact the authorities at once, do not engage. For now, the only statement from the Fillmore authorities is "stay indoors on Christmas Day, and pray he does not find you".★

Sudoku Solution from last issue!

FROM SUDOKUOFTHEDAY.COM

7	8	6	5	1	2	9	4	3
9	1	2	4	3	6	7	8	5
5	3	4	8	9	7	6	2	1
2	4	8	1	7	3	5	6	9
1	7	9	6	5	8	2	3	4
6	5	3	2	4	9	8	1	7
3	6	7	9	8	1	4	5	2
8	9	5	3	2	4	1	7	6
4	2	1	7	6	5	3	9	8

The Argument for Decking the Halls



MOLLY BRIZZELL ('22)

If you're fairly active on social media, you've seen the October 31st to November 1st jokes. People change their lockscreens from something Halloween-themed to Christmas-themed, or they change their most-streamed song from Michael Jackson's "Thriller" to Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas is You." But these are all common jokes made to gain some laughs, attention, and shares.

In reality, the passionate Christmas fans can't mention anything

related to the holiday without a bold "What about Thanksgiving?" As it goes, to each their own. I, however, have an argument for those who often have to defend themselves when their Christmas decorations come out on November 1st.

There's another passion time of the year that directly precedes the holiday season: spooky season. This is centered around Halloween, a holiday that is typically a close favorite for people behind Christmas—and is on the rise in being a close competitor with the

"The Christmas season is based on celebrating the joy of Christ's birth, anyway; it would be advantageous to have a celebration of gratitude go hand-in-hand with that."

popular holiday. The hype for spooky season has always started on September 1st unanimously without argument.

September 1st is 60

*"So, do I have a problem with spooky season and celebrating Halloween early?
Absolutely not! Should that same principle be applied to the celebration of Christmas? Yes."*

days before October 31st. November 1st is only 54 days before December 25th. So, why do so many people have a problem with celebrating Christmas "early," but not Halloween?

As I mentioned before, the common argu-

ment is that Thanksgiving falls in between November 1st and Christmas, and thus it deserves its own celebration. But it's been commonly known and decided that Thanksgiving is an extension of Christmas-themed festivities. That's why Santa Claus appears at the end of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and why the Thanksgiving commercials always include the classic Christmas tunes. "Jingle Bells," one of the most famous Christmas songs, was originally written about Thanksgiving, yet it remains roped in with the Christmas classics.

Thus, celebrating Thanksgiving doesn't have to be in spite of celebrating Christmas, but instead a large and important part of it. The Christmas season is based on celebrating the joy of Christ's birth, anyway; it would be advantageous to have a celebration of gratitude go hand-in-hand with that.

Another common complaint about the November 1st commencement of Christmas celebrations is the music. It's understandable that people can get sick of

hearing Mariah Carey and Michael Bublé on repeat for almost two months—but I know people always have their favorite artists they keep on repeat year-round. I've seen all your Spotify Wrapped stories for 2021. I know you were in at least the top 1% of your favorite artists' listeners. I know that at least one Olivia Rodrigo song was in about half of the student populations' top five for the year. So, I think we can all tolerate a few months of jingle bells in the backtracks of Christmas classics.

Okay, in the words of Ms. Rodrigo, that was a little "brutal." But the point remains.

So, do I have a problem with spooky season and celebrating Halloween early? Absolutely not! Should that same principle be applied to the celebration of Christmas? Yes. While it's always up to you when or how you would like to celebrate any holiday, try to hold back the Grinch instincts within you when the Christmas decorations and songs come out on November 1st. You might find that your spirit of joy and gratitude multiply by tenfold when Christmas actually comes around.★

Molly is a senior, majoring in Writing and in Communication.

Have an opinion you want to share?

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SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be less than 600 words/

SUBMIT TO
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In Review

Die Hard (1988)

CALEB TIEDMAN (25)

Die Hard is a movie I have watched multiple times and never ceased enjoying. What was originally planned to be a typical action movie was changed multiple times throughout its production due to unscheduled inconveniences. Ironically, all those changes only helped to improve the movie, helping the director, actors, and movie in general gain fame and recognition from fans and critics alike. So much so, that it has left an impact on pop culture even today. I have, at this point, watched and enjoyed the movie many times, and each time I fall deeper in love with John McClane's Christmas adventure.

The 1988 film, directed by John McTiernan, is everything (and more) you could want from an action movie. The movie follows John McClane (Bruce Willis), a NYPD cop, who travels to Los Angeles on Christmas vacation to visit his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) at her Christmas Eve office party at Nakatomi Plaza. However, things do not go to plan, as the whole event gets held up by German terrorists, led by the intimidating Hans Gruber (Alan Rickman). When separated from the rest of the hostages, McClane must use his wits to stop this group of armed and dangerous men hellbent on robbing the Nakatomi Corporation.

There are just so many good things to go through when writing about this movie. The plot, from beginning to end, is filled with tension as McClane, for the most part, has no help outside of his own mind. Bruce Willis had only played in comedic roles before this movie, so he was not previously typecast as an action star. It was due to this factor that McTiernan chose him for the role: a perfect fit. McClane is not your typical white knight and holy hero, nor does he act like one. He acts like a normal person in a terrifying situation. He doesn't pretend to be cool, calm, and collected. Instead, he's real-panicking at first, but gradually playing with the hand he has been dealt. His emotion and range throughout only boost the performance.

Despite just being an action movie, the film does an excellent job in terms of character development. Due to Bruce Willis shooting other movies at the time, there were plenty of chances for side characters to get entire plot arcs and have wholesome conclusions, an element missing in many action movies. Then, there is Alan Rickman's magnificent performance as Hans Gruber. Similar to Willis's situation, Rickman started to be typecast in villainous roles after this film. Reginald VelJohnson and Bonnie Bedelia also deliver great performances.

Another surprising element is the humor interjected throughout. It isn't forced, but rather is tasteful and rare, so that each joke is genuinely funny. Another one of the better elements is that the whole story takes place in a single building, once again limiting the action and space where scenes could be shot and obstacles encountered. However, the movie works this out perfectly, by creating new obstacles and not letting the same setting become stale. Because of this, the movie feels incredibly real-

istic and plausible. You know it is a great movie when the most unbelievable detail is the seventy-four cent gas in California!

Overall, the movie is a great one, a classic 80's action movie, one that breathes fresh air into a genre that can become stale very quickly. It is a great time from start to finish, giving us multiple quotable lines, but none as notable as McClane's famous, "Yippee-ki-yay..." Well, let's just say that if you know, you know. I really love this movie and it is just a magnificent time! Now, the real debate begins... Is *Die Hard* actually a Christmas movie? I will leave that decision up to the readers.

Final Grade: A+

Holiday Photos

Thank you for your submissions!



DIAMOND LAMBERT (23)



RYLEE ARCHAMBAULT (23)



CATHERINE LYNIP (24)



CHYANNE BUSHYHEAD (23)