

# The Buccaneer

Red Bank Regional H.S. / Student Newspaper / Dec. 22, 2023



*We wish each other “Happy Holidays!” — with an S! — and mix the occasional menorah (or really, hanukkiah, but more on that later) in with our classroom Christmas decorations, but when it comes down to it, what do we really know about the other celebrations that take place this time of year, the ones that don’t involve manger scenes or a guy in a red suit? Here, The Buccaneer takes a closer look at some of these less-heralded holidays.*



**HANUKKAH | Dec. 7 - Dec. 15**

## 8 fun facts about the Festival of Lights

BY LILI APPIO

**8. THE STORY:** The story of Hanukkah is a rather simple one. In about 200 B.C., there was a lot of fighting between the Jewish people and the rulers of the land they were living on. The Jewish

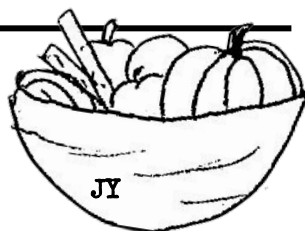
SEE HANUKKAH, PAGE 20

**KWANZAA | Dec. 26 - Jan. 1**

## A holiday for heritage

BY MAX ANSELL

Many people may not know the niche holiday Kwanzaa; however, the celebration has a rich history that dates back to 1966. Kwanzaa is the brainchild of Maulana Karenga, an American



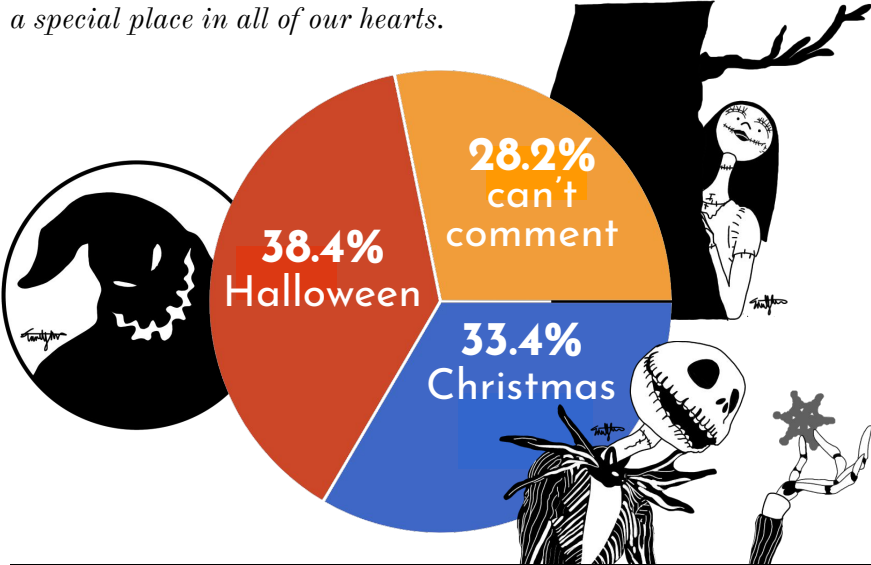
SEE KWANZAA, PAGE 22

# THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

## Christmas classic or Halloween haunt?

BY KATELYNN PARKER

*“The Nightmare before Christmas” was a claymation movie by Disney in 1993 about a skeleton, Jack Skellington, deciding to do his own version of Christmas. This movie is beloved by many fans, but one debate rages on: Is it a Halloween or Christmas film? The RBR community is split, but one thing is for certain: this movie has a special place in all of our hearts.*



Results are based on a survey of 323 members of the RBR community polled during the week of Dec. 11. 76% of respondents identified as students.


## CLEARLY CHRISTMAS!

- Christmas is in the title! Plus Santa Claus is in it. Debate over?
- The film is about how Christmas is so infectious that other holidays want in!
- Cheery songs like “What’s this?” and “Making Christmas” (Some may argue “Making Christmas” is more creepy than cheery, but I won’t elaborate on that.)
- The ending of this movie is very similar to any Christmas movie: There are snowball fights, snow angels being made, a classic “Ho ho ho!” from Santa, and an overall festive spirit.
- Finally, the whole point of the film is tied to the very core of Christmas. The film tackles essential yuletide questions, like: What exactly is Christmas? Why are people obsessed with it? What is the “right way” to celebrate it?



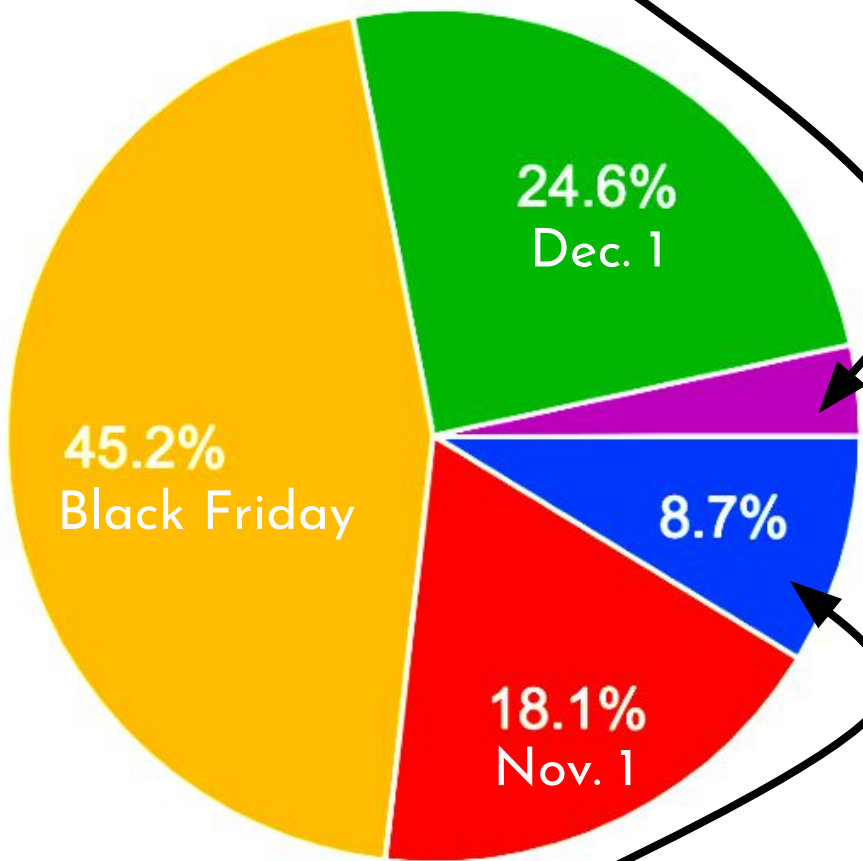
## HALLOWEEN ALL THE WAY!

- Directed by Tim Burton, the guy who is known for his eerie films — so of course, the movie has a ghostly vibe to it.
  - The main setting is Halloween Town, so most characters are Halloween-related: monsters, witches, skeletons, bogeymen, etc.
- If this movie was made to represent the holiday season, you would think we would see more of Christmas Town. Yes, Santa appears, but even he has been Tim Burton-ified.
- The protagonist, Pumpkin King Jack Skellington, takes over Christmas Town. If this was a Christmas movie, wouldn’t the king of Christmas Town be seizing Halloween Town and not the other way around?
  - Soundtrack staples like “Kidnap the Sandy Claws” and “Oogie Boogie’s Song,” only get play in October — never at Christmastime!

**Q:**

When is the appropriate time for businesses and individuals to start celebrating the holiday season?

Christmas Eve (or the night before Hanukkah or Kwanzaa)



It's never too early – celebrating before Halloween is fine!

# Christmas in July?

## ~~Not soon enough!~~

BY SYDNEE BOWDEN

*TOO SOON!*

When do you think Christmas celebrations should begin?

Although November is considered the month for Thanksgiving, it has been recognized that on Nov. 1, many people take down their Halloween decor and replace it with Christmas lights, trees, wreaths, etc. In fact, Mariah Carey's holiday hit, "All I Want for Christmas," begins climbing the charts every year on the first day of November.

However, there is also a large population that waits for Thanksgiving to pass first, then begins the Christmas season after. For example, a lot of Americans put up their tree and begin decorating the weekend following Thanksgiving. Many of these people feel that if they

started celebrating earlier, they would get bored with the Christmas songs and ornamentations by the time the holiday came around.

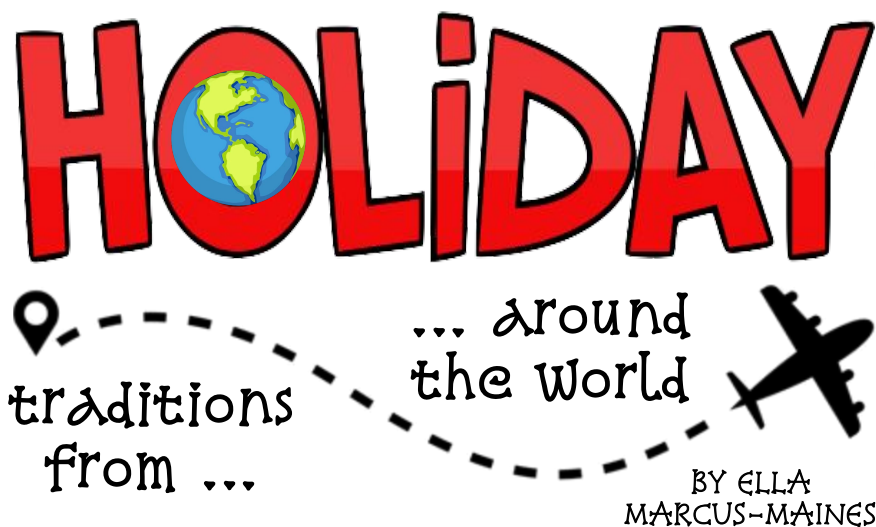
This topic of when Christmas celebrations should start has been debated for many years with no ultimate solution of when — just personal preference!



# HOLIDAY

traditions from ... around the world

BY ELLA MARCUS-MAINES



The idea of Christmas brings thoughts of joy, coming together and love to many Americans who celebrate the holiday.

Many associate Christmas with winter festivities, choosing a pine tree to decorate one's home, or purchasing gifts for loved ones and friends. Numerous families carry on traditions around their home, such as baking cookies and hanging stockings above the fireplace. Many American children wait for Santa on Christmas Eve, filled with excitement for what is yet to come.

The concept of partaking in

Christmas traditions and spreading cheer at this time of year is not unique to Americans. However, the lore of Christmas and the ways in which it is celebrated internationally are not identical when one compares different cultures across the globe.

Many countries around the world include a darker fragment in their retelling of the joyful folktales that surround this holiday. In Austria, a ghoulish tale is told of Krampus, counterpart to St. Nicholas, an evil creature who searches out misbehaving children in the

SEE WORLD, PAGE 7

WORLD, FROM PAGE 6

## Unique Christmas customs abound, from Austria to Japan

lead-up to Christmas.

In contrast to Austria's legend of evil, many people in Norway believe witches fly around on the Eve of Christmas to spread mischief. As witches are heavily associated with flying on broomsticks, many Norwegian folks will stow broomsticks away, in hopes that no witches will bring trouble to their home.

Not only are dark folktales told in various countries around the world, but unique Christmas traditions are also celebrated by others.

In addition to ornaments and stars, in Ukraine, spiderwebs are used to garnish Christmas trees. This tradition comes from the legend of an old widow who was not able to afford Christmas decorations for her children during the holidays.



SEE WORLD, PAGE 8



WORLD, FROM PAGE 7

## Forget cookies – try caterpillars!

Luckily, spiders were said to weave beautiful webs all over her home, bringing joy to the family on Christmas morning. Who would have thought that spiders would be considered lucky in Ukrainian culture?

Many countries incorporate eccentric foods into their holiday feasts. In South Africa, it is said that enjoying fried caterpillars on the Christmas Eve brings good luck in the year ahead. In Japan, KFC fried chicken is typically favored during the winter holiday season. This comes from a Japanese marketing campaign aired in 1974: *Kurisumasu ni wa*

*Kentakkii*, which translates to, “Kentucky for Christmas.”

Japanese customers — most of whom didn’t celebrate the Christian holiday — flocked to what was then a brand-new foreign fast-food chain, and the tradition of bringing home a “party barrel” of fried chicken for Christmas dinner is still widely celebrated today all over the country.

As Americans kick off our Christmas celebrations this weekend, it is interesting to explore the uniqueness of different cultures and how they embrace the Christmas spirit.



COURTESY OF KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN

Thanks to a successful 1970s ad campaign, KFC is now a yuletide staple in Japan.



## I SMELL SNOW | Emma Krzycki

I smell snow

I smell the diesel of the car going by

I smell the wet dog

I smell the ladies' perfume, Chanel No. 9

But most of all

I smell snow

The soft afterglow of the night

The fluorescent glimmers of lights

Snow casts a blanket

Over the cold and desolate skies

I see snow

I see the lights

I see a family caroling outside townhouses

I see it all, but most of all

I see snow

*snowflake illustrations by Sophia Kurdes*

## PEANUT BUTTER BLOSSOMS | Emma Krzycki

- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup creamy peanut butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted butter (room temperature)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup light brown sugar (lightly packed)
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar (for coating cookies)
- 11-oz. bag Hershey's Kisses



1. In a medium bowl, whisk flour, baking soda and salt. Set aside.
2. Using a hand mixer or stand mixer fitted with paddle, cream peanut butter, butter and both sugars on medium-high until well blended.
3. Add in the egg, milk and vanilla extract. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.
4. Reduce the mixer speed, gradually adding the dry mixture until completely blended.
5. Place the cookie dough in a well sealed food container, or tightly wrap the top of the mixing bowl with plastic wrap.
6. Chill for a minimum of 1 hour.
7. After dough has chilled, line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats, adjust the oven rack to the second level mark (just above center), and preheat the oven to 375° F.
8. Using a spoon and clean hands, shape the cookie dough into 1-inch balls, roll in granulated sugar, and place about 1½ to 2 inches apart on lined baking sheets.
9. Bake for 7 to 8 minutes
10. Remove from oven and place a milk chocolate kiss on each cookie, pressing down gently to create the crackly cookie edges.
11. Return to the oven and bake for 2 minutes longer.
12. Cool cookies on baking sheet for 5 to 10 minutes before transferring to a baking rack to cool completely.



EMMA KRZYCKI / THE BUCCANEER

**BUC BEAT |** Voices from the halls of RBR  
Q: Who was your Top Artist of '23?



**FRESHMEN**

“Future.”

— *Capri Hicks*



**SOPHOMORES**

“Kanye – it’s controversial, but it’s the truth!”

— *Sofia Pia*



**JUNIORS**

“Childish Gambino.”

— *Sophia Bald*



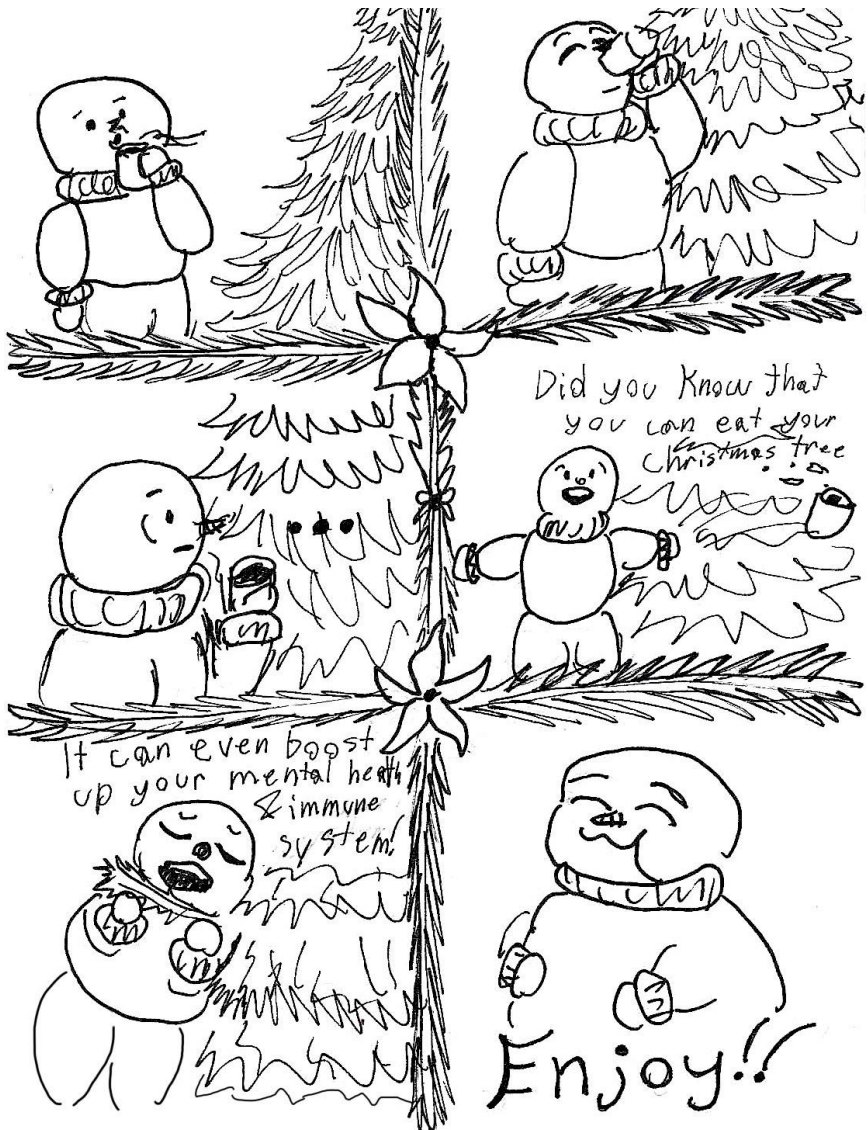
**SENIORS**

“Taylor Swift – she’s my favorite artist.”

— *Carolyn McCallion*

“The Beatles.”

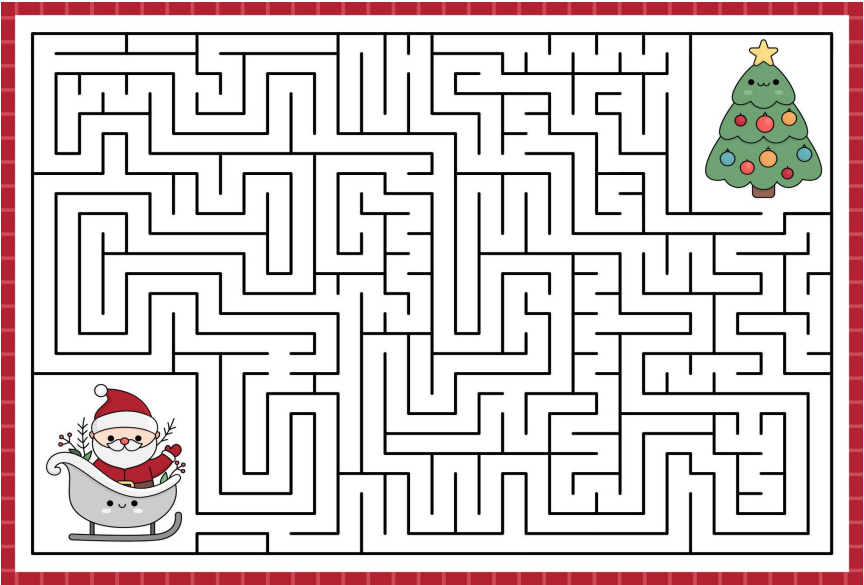
— *Abby Murphy*

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT | Ash Pena-Martinez**

**⚠ While fir, spruce and pine trees are technically edible under certain circumstances, we here at The Buccaneer do not endorse consuming holiday decorations of any kind.**

CELEBRATIONS | Kira Ashton-O'Connor

1. S E E N V R A Y W E E	
2. W A A Z A N K	
3. S R C T H S M I A	
4. U A K H H A N K	
5. A E D Y W Y S A E R N	
6. L A I D W I	
7. S I T W S O E R E T I N C L	
8. R Y A G I E S N T D H K E	
9. Y I G D X O B A N	





WINTER BREAK | Kira Ashton-O'Connor

E E D Q S B I F G U V K C E D  
B P R E T Y R C F G S M P C A  
E O I O C I A G I B V X O H Z  
H H H U E E N D N C Z O A T D  
W K D N W A M X I I L X D F O  
X I D O M H F B U L D E U E W  
W S N W X V A Y E R O D G K S  
F S O T X P M J M R J H E A E  
P N K M E O I A K O L Q E L B  
S Q W M C R L N Y C P F N F S  
Y T S O R F Y U U M A H B W X  
S W E A T E R A H H H L V O F  
Z X N F B D P R N H U E I N W  
N B C Q X P C Y B N I L B S D  
X J N C H O C O L A T E H M C

December	frosty	hot chocolate	joy	snowman
family	holidays	icicle	sledding	sweater
friends	hope	January	snowflake	winter



WORD SCRAMBLE  
ANSWERS  
(PAGE 14)

1. New Year's Eve / 2. Kwanzaa / 3. Christmas  
4. Hanukkah / 5. New Year's Day / 6. Diwali  
7. Winter Solstice / 8. Three Kings' Day / 9. Boxing Day





# CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

BY EASY JACK PORTMAN

**START:** School has just finished, and you look forward to a long and restful winter break. Just as the sun sets, a light flurry sprinkles down from the sky. You jump for joy, as this vacation is looking more and more like a classic winter scene by the second. As you settle in for the night, you have to decide how you want to spend tomorrow, your first day off:

- \* Do you want to start decorating for the holidays?  
**Go to #1.**
- \* Do you want to go sledding?  
**Go to #2.**
- \* Or do you want to spend a few hours perfecting your hot cocoa recipe? **Go to #3.**

**OPTION #1:** You begin by searching through the attic, looking for the box marked HOLIDAY in big Sharpie block letters. You find it and heave the weighty cardboard down the stairs and out onto your front lawn.

First, you set up the inflatable snowman. Second, you lay strips of dazzling tinsel across the bushes and trees, each line a different color. Third, you dig the string of lights out from the bottom of the box and climb a rickety ladder up onto your roof.

The tiles are slippery, and you hold on tight while you string the lights across your

gutter. Just as you seal the last of them on, you hear a loud thump and realize the old ladder has fallen. Oh no, you're stuck on the roof! What will you do now?

- \* Do you want to jump down and try to land on the soft, snow-covered bushes?

**Go to #4.**

- \* Or do you want to wait up here until your parents get home to help you down?

**Go to #5.**

**OPTION #2:** You find your sled leaning against a wall in your basement. You pull it out and meet a few friends on the corner of your street. You all walk a few blocks over to the park with the biggest hill in town, chatting and making each other laugh.

By the time you get there, the snow is thick and powdery, perfect for sledding. You climb up the hill and watch as one of your friends slides down with a "Woohoo!" Another follows with an exclamation of joy. You step forward and mount the sled, beginning to slip down immediately. At first, it is

exhilarating, and the cold wind whipping past your head feels wonderful. Then, you begin to feel shaky and as though the snow has gotten too slippery. Suddenly, you hit a clump of dirt, snow and sticks. Your sled goes flying up into the air before you crash down hard. Pain jolts up your leg. Oh no, you must have broken it! While your friends help you get home, you must decide:

- \* Do you want to spend a few hours perfecting your hot cocoa recipe? **Go to #3.**
- \* Or do you want to get started on your homework? **Go to #6.**

**OPTION #3:** You carefully assemble all the ingredients from your pantry: The cocoa powder must be perfect, the sugar delectably sweet, and the milk creamy and warm.

You begin by making a classic mug: just hot chocolate, no extra flavoring. It is delicious and warms you up just right.

Then, you try making one with mint flavoring and some candy canes as decorations.

This one is also delicious.

Third, you make one where you have one pot of dark chocolate-flavored milk, and a second, white chocolate-flavored. You marble them together in one cup and add a helping of chocolate chips of the same flavors. This one is unbelievably good!

You make a few more cups of each and serve them to your whole family, as you all settle in for a holiday movie night.

**THE END!**



**OPTION #4:** You position yourself directly above the pillowy plants below and take a leap of faith. Down, down, down you go, and suddenly, you land with a hard *thump!* Landing on the bushes was maybe not the best idea, because not only did it hurt your leg, but now your body is covered in branch scratches. You manage to limp your way inside, but now you must decide: What do you want to do with the rest of the day?

- \* Do you want to spend a few hours perfecting your hot cocoa recipe? **Go to #3.**
- \* Or, do you want to get started on your homework? **Go to #6.**

**OPTION #5:** You sit on the roof for hours. Fresh snow begins to fall, and shivers creep through your heavy jacket and make your teeth chatter. You feel your nose running.

Eventually, your parents pull up to the house, the sun nearly setting. They shriek in confusion when they spot you and reposition the ladder, helping you climb down. You

were out in the cold for so long that you got sick and are now bedridden for the rest of winter break. Better luck next year!

### THE END!

**OPTION #6:** You pull out your backpack and assemble all of your assignments in meticulous order of importance.

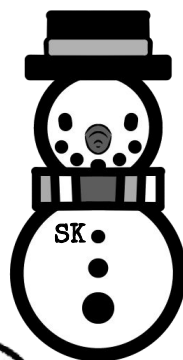
First comes the handwritten essay for English class. That takes you a few hours, but by the end, you feel proud of the points you made. Then, you fill out a sheet of math questions to practice the lesson you're learning. Then, you study some flashcards for the science exam you have the first day back at school. Finally, you read a chapter from your history textbook and take some notes, getting ready for the new unit.

It was a bit of a slog to get through, but you feel much better being all done and ready to enjoy the rest of the break, spending time with family and friends.

### THE END!



RTJ



RTJ



HANUKKAH, FROM PAGE 1

temple in Jerusalem — a city in present-day Israel that is considered holy in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths — was looted and briefly converted to pagan worship. When the Jews won back their temple, there was only enough oil to keep the temple lamp burning for one night. Miraculously, though, it burned for eight. Ever since, this has been celebrated in a holiday spanning eight nights, in which a candle is lit for each night.

**7. PRESENTS:** Gift-giving was not originally part of Hanukkah celebrations, but American Jews — who grew up with a lot of exposure to Christmas traditions — adopted the practice in the early 1900s to make sure Jewish children didn't feel left out.

**6. SPELLING:** Many people don't actually know how to spell *Hanukkah*. There are multiple ways to do so, the reason being

that *hanukkah* is a not an English word. Rather, it comes from Hebrew — the language of Jewish religious texts — which uses a different alphabet, with sounds that are different from English ones. When Hebrew words are transliterated into

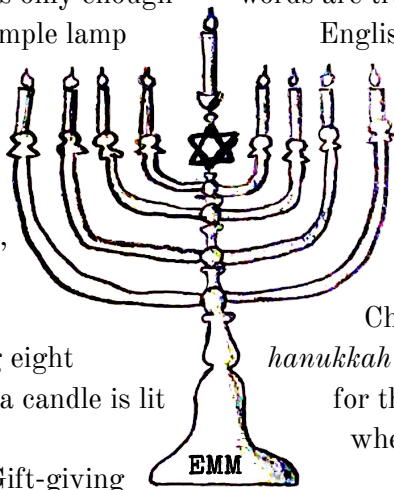
English, multiple spellings

can be used to achieve the proper sounds; the two most common for this holiday are Hanukkah and

Chanukah. In Hebrew, *hanukkah* means “dedication,”

for the historical moment when the Jewish people took back control of their temple and rededicated it to their own religious practice.

**5. DREIDEL:** This is a gambling game played during Hanukkah in which a spinning top marked with Hebrew characters (the top is a *dreidel*; the game is *dreidel*) is spun by each player, in turn. Whichever letter the dreidel



## HANUKKAH, FROM PAGE 20

lands on determines how much *gelt* (in the form of chocolate coins) the spinner takes from the pot or puts in.

**4. HANUKKIAH:** A common misconception is that the candle holder used during Hanukkah is called a *menorah*. While this is technically true, as hanukkiahs are a type of menorah (“menorah” simply means “lamp” in Hebrew), the typical menorah used in the ancient Jewish temple was a seven-pronged candelabra, whereas a hanukkiah is a nine-pronged candle holder of a similar shape. The reason a hanukkiah has nine candles is because eight of them represent the different nights of Hanukkah, while the ninth candle is called the *shamash* (helper) candle, used to light all the other candles.

**3. FOOD:** Some of the most commonly eaten Hanukkah foods are fried items like

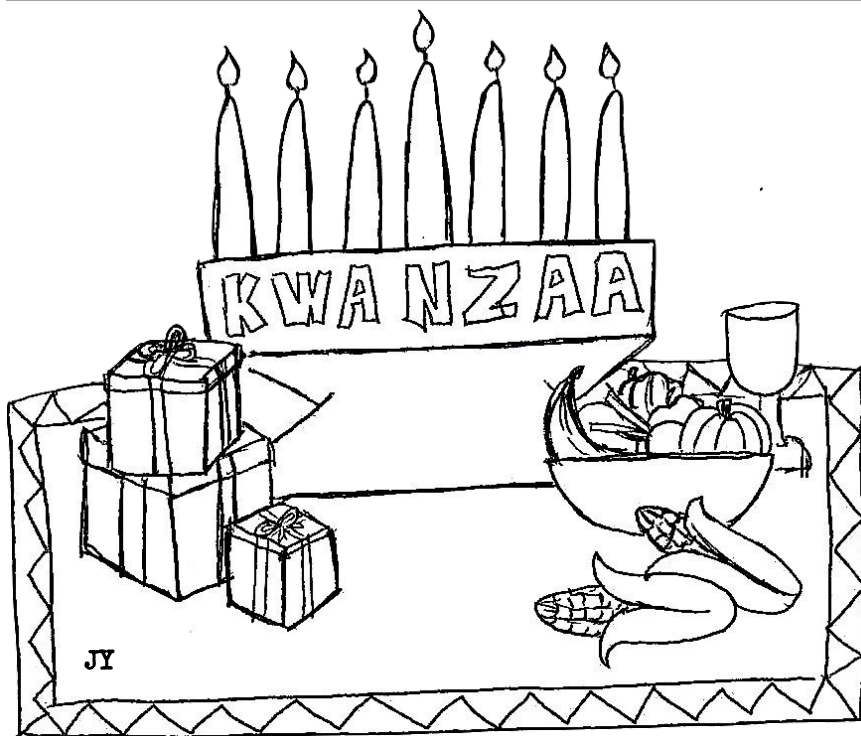
*sufganiyot* (jelly donuts) and *latkes* (potato pancakes), which represent the oil that burned in the original Hanukkah story.

**2. TIMING:** Like many Jewish holidays, Hanukkah does not span the same dates every year. This is because Jewish holidays follow a different calendar than the one used in day-to-day life. Generally, though, Hanukkah falls sometime in December.

**1. IMPORTANCE:** Despite its status among non-Jews as probably one of the most well known Jewish holidays, Hanukkah is far from the most important in the Jewish religion. It’s a fun holiday that stresses community, but it has gotten to be more well known because of its proximity to Christmas. Still, though, Hanukkah has become somewhat of a major celebration for American Jews and, thus, is important to learn about.



**BY THE NUMBERS:** When polled last week, 88% of RBR staff and students said they knew little to nothing about Hanukkah, while 5% celebrate themselves.



KWANZAA, FROM PAGE 1

## Kwanzaa colors match African flags

activist who saw a need for increased realignment with African heritage within the Black American community during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s.

Kwanzaa was planned, therefore, as a secular holiday meant to celebrate Black African heritage rather than a particular religious tradition.

The holiday takes its name from the Swahili language, one

of the most widely spoken on the African continent, and its symbolic black, red and green flag is reminiscent of many modern African countries' flags adopted in the post-colonial era, such as those of South Africa, Kenya, Sudan, Libya and Malawi.

The black in the Kwanzaa flag provides representation for

SEE KWANZAA, PAGE 23



KWANZAA, FROM PAGE 22

## 7 principles promote unity, legacy

Black people, while red symbolizes their struggle and the blood shed in the name of freedom and progress. Green stands for the hopeful prospect of a rich future of peace, love and happiness.

Kwanzaa champions seven specific principles:

- Umoja (unity)
- Kujichagulia (self-Determination)
- Ujima (collective work and responsibility)
- Ujamaa (cooperative economics)
- Nia (purpose)
- Kuumba (creativity)
- Imani (faith),

These values are embodied by candles — three red, three green and one central black one — placed in a Jewish-style candelabra called the *kinara*.

Some of the other common Kwanzaa practices include

the singing of traditional civil rights-themed songs, dancing and playing of music, a dinner featuring symbolic foods and with guests wearing traditional African clothing, as well as the crafting of handmade gifts to represent the principles of Kwanzaa.

Recent estimates of how many Americans observe the holiday vary from the hundreds of thousands to upward of 12 million, or about 3.6% of the country.

Since Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, it is celebrated separately from — and, often, in addition to — Christmas or Hanukkah. Kwanzaa honors Black African racial and ethnic heritage, much of which was thought to be lost, but a revival of such themes sees America's cultural diversity flourishing.



**BY THE NUMBERS:** When polled last week, 82% of RBR staff and students said they knew very little about Kwanzaa. Another 16% had never heard of it.

CHRISTMAS CAFÉ | Pluto Rigglesman

