

PONTIAC TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

The Chief Online

December Traditions

By Carlie Weaver

As Christmas draws near, we decorate our trees, make cookies for Santa, hang stockings, and sing Christmas carols. Children go to sleep hoping to hear the bells of Santa's reindeer. Many people hang wreaths on their doors. Gingerbread houses are made for snacking. Homes are covered in red and green or silver and gold. Christmas movies start to play the day after Thanksgiving as well as Christmas music. Christmas is often referred to as "the most wonderful day of the year." Grandma hangs up the mistletoe and kisses are exchanged among the family. Santa hats can be found near and far. Strings of popcorn are hung on the tree. Homes smell like pine and cinnamon. Tinsel lines the aisles of stores. Presents are placed under the tree, and everyone gets ready for the big day.

These are all traditions that most people involve in their Christmas experiences. While everyone knows of Christmas, not very many people know of the other December holidays. Some other holidays celebrated in December are Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Mawlid al-Nabi.

Hanukkah is an eight-day Holiday celebrated by people of Jewish ancestry or of the Jewish faith. This holiday shows respect for The Second Temple in Jerusalem. Hanukkah is also referred to as the Festival of Lights or The Feast of Dedication. Every day of Hanukkah, a candle is lit on the menorah. The candles are lit from left to right. Traditionally, fried foods are consumed on this holiday because oil is so significant. The most popular of which is a latke, a potato pancake. The only traditional gift of the holiday is small amounts of money. Gifts have become more popular in order to decrease jealousy in children of their Christian friends. A traditional game of Hanukkah is playing a gambling game called dreidel. Everyone bets coins, M&M's, or whatever else they can.

Kwanzaa is the first African American holiday and celebrates the African heritage and culture. It is a week-long holiday, celebrated from December 26th to January 1st. Similar to the Hanukkah, participants light candles; in Kwanza the candle holder is called a Kinara and it holds seven candles. There are three red candles on the left, one black candle in the middle, and three green candles on the right. Seven symbols traditionally used in this holiday are The Mat, The Unity Cup, The Crops, The Candleholder, The Seven Candles, The Corn, and Gifts. Kwanzaa was created to bring African Americans together to celebrate and give thanks for community.

Article continued on next page

December 2015

Inside this Issue:

New Teacher Report	2
FFA Update	2
Upperclass Acts	3
Music Dept.	4
Book Review	5
Movie Review	5
Warmth for Warriors	6
Collages	7

**Final Exams
Schedule
2015**

**Wednesday Dec. 16
Periods 1, 3, 5**

**Thursday Dec. 17
Periods 2, 4, 6**

**Friday Dec. 18
Periods 7, 8 & Make up**

New Teacher Report:



Mr. Coats

By Jeanette Wooldridge

This year at PTHS we have a teacher doing a lot of subbing, including a maternity leave for Mrs. Buchanan, and his name is Mr. Coats. Mr. Coats has been substitute teaching for the past year and a half and before that he was a personal trainer. In between these two periods in his life there was a complete year when he traveled the world, seeing sights and taking in multiple cultures. After this grace period, he decided to go into teaching because he loves being a positive influence, mentor, and coach. One thing that he did this summer was go to an Ed Sheeran concert just before Independence Day and watch fireworks set off just as "I See Fire" started playing. Mr. Coats wants to leave advice to PTHS students: "Do what you love, and love what you do." We hope that you have a wonderful time here at PTHS and happy holidays to you.

FFA Update

By Victor Johns

The FFA Chapter had a quiet November. On November 18th, Megan Lauritsen, Aaron Newsome, Andrea Newsome, Sara Dunham, Dallas Hones, and Cam Tickle played games at Evenglow with the residents. Candle sales have been going on throughout the month of November and ended on December 1. T-shirt sales have also been going on and were extended until December 4. The Section Agronomy and Dairy Foods Contests were held on December 2 at Prairie Central High School. On Saturday, December 5, members participated in the State Contest at the University of Illinois. We also have members preparing for the Ag. Sales Career Development Events which will be held later in the month. We held our monthly Chapter Meeting on December 9 and the theme was Christmas. Members wore their ugly Christmas sweaters.

FFA information can be found [HERE](#).

"Traditions" continued

Mawlid al-Nabi is a holiday that celebrates the birth of an Islamic prophet, Muhammad. While some Muslims do not participate, many celebrate this holiday by following in Muhammad's good deeds. It is also a tradition to share food with others while stories are told about the prophet's life. This holiday is also known as "The Birth of the Messenger Allah." Mosques and homes are cleaned and decorated for this holiday. In the past, parades and festivities have been held to celebrate, but, more recently, the Muslims have preferred to celebrate quietly.

Happy Holidays!



Student Survey:

"What I Want for Christmas"

- A new baseball bat – **Kye Comincioli**
- A Kitchen Aide mixer – **Dahlia Borrego**
- For my family to be together
– **Mary Kate Cupples**
- A foot massage – **Cheyenne Tulley**
- A coffee mug – **Matt Bates**
- \$\$\$\$\$ CASH FLOW – **Emma Burns**
- What she said – **Cody Germain**
- To stay at home drinking hot chocolate -
Morgan Venaas
- A unicorn – **Lucas Giovengo**
- A new laptop would be nice
– **Cassie Einhaus**
- Nothing – **Kyle Hodge**

Upperclass Acts



Suchi Patel

NICKNAMES: Such, Soup

ROLE MODEL(S):
my parents, Mindy Kaling

ACTIVITIES: Student Council,
Key Club, Captains, Tennis, NHS,
Pontio Staff, Spanish Club

FONDEST MEMORIES:
All four homecoming weeks.

3 MAJOR AREAS OF INTEREST:
Orthodontics, business, finance

PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL:
Attend a 4 year university with
degree in biology and eventually
become an orthodontist.

FAVORITE MOVIE: *Clueless*

MOST INSPIRATIONAL SONG:
"All Star" by Smash Mouth

FAVORITE TEACHER:
Coach Vogt

FAVORITE BOOK/AUTHOR:
Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?
(*And Other Concerns*) by Mindy Kaling

MOST POSITIVE MOMENT:
meeting my close friends.

PET PEEVES: When people take my
food without asking.

**WHAT MY FRIENDS WILL REMEMBER
ABOUT ME:**
How I laugh a lot and my sarcasm.

HOW WOULD I SPEND \$1,000,000:
Pay for college and give some to my
parents.

**IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A
DESERT ISLAND, WHAT THREE
ITEMS WOULD YOU BRING:** Unlimited
clean water, my phone (w/ wifi), a friend

LAST WORDS OF ADVICE:
"Have fun and do your homework!"

Victor Johns V

ROLE MODEL(S):
My parents and Father Adam Cesarek

ACTIVITIES:
Golf, FFA, C.A.P.T.A.I.N.S, *The Chief*

FONDEST MEMORIES:
Pontiac FFA being named the Model of
Excellence Winner in 2013.

3 AREAS OF INTEREST:
Sports, Agriculture, and History

PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL:
Attend either Joliet Junior College or
Parkland College and major in Ag.
Business Management or Crop Science.

FAVORITE MOVIE: *Backdraft*

MOST INSPIRATIONAL SONG: "I Don't
Want This Night To End" by Luke Bryan

FAVORITE TEACHERS/CLASSES:
Discrete Math with Ms. Janz and Dual
Credit Crop Science with Mr. Faber

FAVORITE AUTHOR/BOOK:
One on One: Behind the Scenes
by John Feinstein

MOST POSITIVE MOMENT:
Shooting a 41 on 9 holes at the
Livingston County Golf Invite.

PET PEEVE:
When people scratch their nails
on a chalk board.

**WHAT FRIENDS WILL
REMEMBER ABOUT ME:**
My nickname, being outgoing,
open-minded, hard-working, kind,
and helpful

**HOW WOULD I SPEND
\$1,000,000:** To pay for college,
buy a new truck, and on my family.

**IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A
DESERT ISLAND, WHAT THREE
ITEMS WOULD YOU BRING:**
My phone, water, and a hat

LAST WORDS OF ADVICE: "Enjoy
high school because it goes by faster
than you think and don't be afraid to
go outside your comfort zone."



Let's Make it all Christmassy Up in Here

By Matthew Birkett

Before we begin, let's give our recognition to the All-State Musicians selected for this year:
In the Chorus, we have Brandi Mueller; for Alto 2, Jeffery Elem; for Tenor 1, Logan Mies; also for Tenor 1, Alex Coan; for Bass 1; and Jeremiah Rowland for Bass 2.
In the Band, we have Danika Mayback on the Euphonium and Eric Campbell on Contrabass Clarinet.

Auditions for *Hello Dolly*, the school musical, occurred on December 1. Good luck to everyone that auditioned and we look forward to seeing you perform!

In upcoming news, the Music Department is hard at work making a musical Christmas season for us all. Friday, December 4, is the Madrigals Tour of Schools. The second week of December is half dedicated to our 49th Annual Madrigal Dinners, occurring through December 7-9. On December 13 is our Christmas Concert, when our Choral and Band departments will blend to bring you some merry Christmas cheer.

Click [HERE](#) for the Music Department's Website

Ask Lex and Sar

Dear Lex and Sar,

Last year, I got a present for my friend and she didn't get one for me. Also, one friend gave me a present and I didn't get anything for her. How do I avoid this awkward Christmas confusion?

Thanks, Christmas Chaos

Dear Christmas Chaos,

The holidays are already stressful enough, so to cut down on the stress of whether or not to buy presents-- just be blunt and ask your friends if they are planning on buying you one. If you and your friends are close enough to even think about buying each other presents, then you should be comfortable enough to talk about whether or not you are both planning on buying them. Or, if you have a big group of friends and are wondering who in the group you should buy presents for, suggest a gift exchange. Have all of your friends choose names from a hat and the person who's name they pull out is the one they will buy a gift for. Then you only have to worry about buying one person a gift and it could turn into a fun tradition you and all your friends celebrate for years to come. Just make sure you don't get too caught up in the gifting drama to enjoy the holidays.

XOXO, Lex and Sar

Music Review: "Purpose"

By Shelby Jennings

Struggling for purpose? You might want to take a listen to Justin Bieber's latest album *Purpose*. Released on Friday the 13th of November, this album has had no bad luck. It has already broken several records within weeks, including one 51-year-old record originally held by The Beatles. The record was for the most titles held on the top 100 Billboard charts by the same artist in one week. The Beatles had 14 songs on the charts, while Bieber was up there 17 times. There was only one song off of *Purpose* titled "All in It" that didn't make it. The album, featuring a catchy collaboration with the rising artist, Halsey, is home to the familiar singles of "What Do You Mean?" and "Sorry" which were both released prior to the album release.

More Music Review Pentatonix

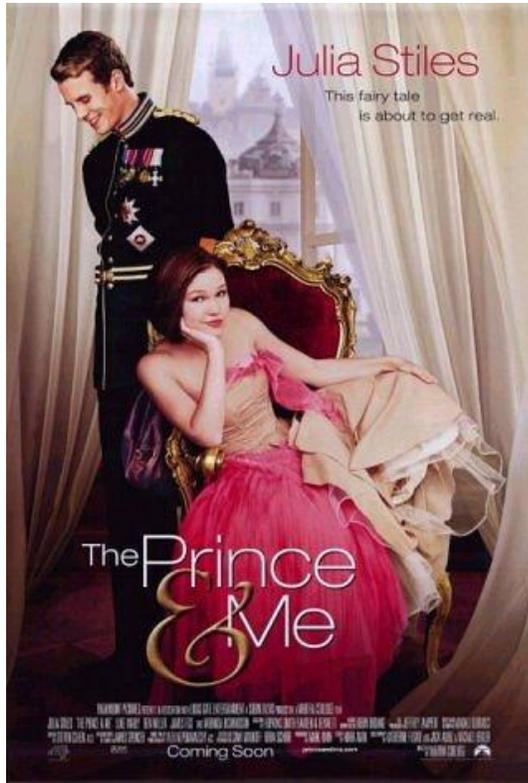
By Mary Kate Cupples

Pentatonix is an acapella group that has five people in it. They are all originally from Arlington, Texas. This acapella group consists of Avi Kaplan, Scott Hoying, Kirstin Maldonado, Kevin Olusola, and Mitch Grassi. They sing pop songs, Contemporary R&B music, and obviously Christmas music. In 2014 they came out with their most famous hit which is "Mary Did You Know." This hit the charts up and I would even come to school and I would hear people humming it or asking me if I have ever heard the song before. They are the most popular group to have recreated the tune. In December of 2014, it hit up the Billboard Hot 100 and placed number 26. It was on their Christmas album called *That's Christmas to Me*. The song was originally written by a Christian band, but they did an amazing job recreating the song.

Take a look and check out the song on their page on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmv1CLT6ZcFdTJMHxaR9XeA>.

Movie Review: *The Prince and Me*



Review by Carlie Weaver

The Prince and Me is a romantic comedy released in 2004. This movie stars Julia Stiles, Luke Mably, James Fox, and Miranda Richardson. Julia Stiles plays Paige Morgan, a focused pre-med student. Paige is a hardworking girl and between med school applications, her difficult Shakespeare class, and work; she is going to have a busy year. Enter Mably's character, Eddie. Eddie is the rebellious Prince of Denmark with a streak of drag races and flashy women. Eddie came to Paige's school to prove that he can take care of himself and take in the American college girls. No one at the Wisconsin college knows that Eddie is actually Prince Edvard of Denmark. Eddie is clueless of how to take care of himself and Paige cannot understand a word of Shakespeare, so they decide to help each other. Once Paige discovers that Eddie has no Thanksgiving break plans, she invites him to come home with her. Paige and Eddie inevitably develop feelings for each other. What will happen when Paige finds out Eddie is a prince? Will Paige give up her dream of being a doctor? Will Paige become the next Queen of Denmark? Will Paige and Eddie end up together? *The Prince & Me* is available on Netflix. I recommend it to girls and women ages eight to thirty. This is a great movie with an original ending that is not expected.

Book Review: *Within These Walls* by Ania Ahlborn

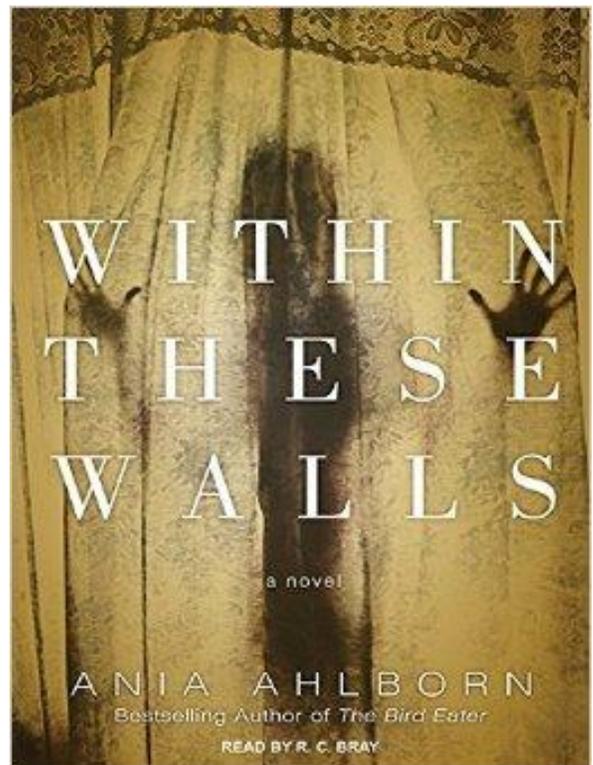
Review by Allyson Shoff

Within These Walls tells the story of Lucas Graham who has received his last chance to revive his writing career, but it means leaving his wife, possibly losing his child, and entering the home of one of the greatest mysteries: Jeffrey Halcomb.

This story follows Lucas Graham as he studies Jeffery Halcomb, a fictional cult leader that is similar to Charles Manson. This story also follows his daughter as she falls under the spell of the house. *Within These Walls* is written in two parts: the past and the present. The story also tells of Audra, Jeffrey Halcomb's last victim.

Within These Walls is a suspenseful story full of mystery and supernatural elements, with an eerie and creepy feel that stays with the reader long after the last page is finished. Most teenage readers will be able to relate to Virginia, Lucas Graham's daughter, as she struggles to find where she belongs in this world, desperate for even the slightest recognition. The entire story is well written and nicely thought out. The characters are fully developed and change throughout the story.

I would recommend this story to those that enjoy supernatural and crime novels. I would also recommend this story to those interested in serial killers. The average copy of this book clocks in at 464 pages, but it is a really quick read.

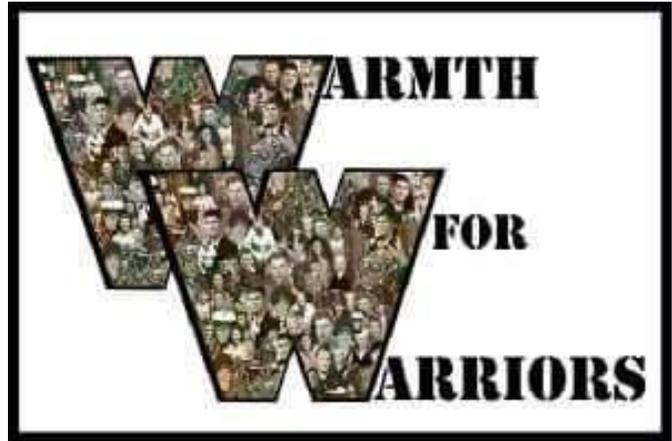


Visit the author's website [HERE](#)

One Stitch at a Time

By Allyson Shoff

Most people in this school know me as the girl who knits. While this describes me pretty well, I'd like to be something a bit more. I knit and crochet, making a little bit of extra money on the side, but it really doesn't mean anything to anyone else. However, I decided how to make more of an impact after our annual Veteran's Day assembly. Mr. Bohm's speech on remembering those who serve all year round inspired me to do some research. I quickly found Warriors for Warmth, a group of knitters and people who crochet who make and send hats, blankets, and Christmas stockings full of small gifts over to soldiers overseas and veterans in the US.



But one person can't make that many hats. I've made only three as of early December and I still have other projects I've committed to. I can't afford all the yarn either. So I need help. I'm already received several yarn donations of 100% wool yarn. Mr. Christie helped me host a knitting party after school on November 23rd where six students came and began to learn how to knit.



I'm still planning on teaching others how to knit, and I still can accept yarn donations. Only 100% wool yarn can be used to make hats for soldiers overseas, as synthetic material can be harmful if it melts.

Warmth for Warriors has donated over 40,000 handmade hats to United States veterans and soldiers since 2009. Along with handmade Donations, they also



accept cash donations to help with shipping and donations of small toiletry items such as small soaps, travel shampoo bottles, and toothbrushes/toothpaste

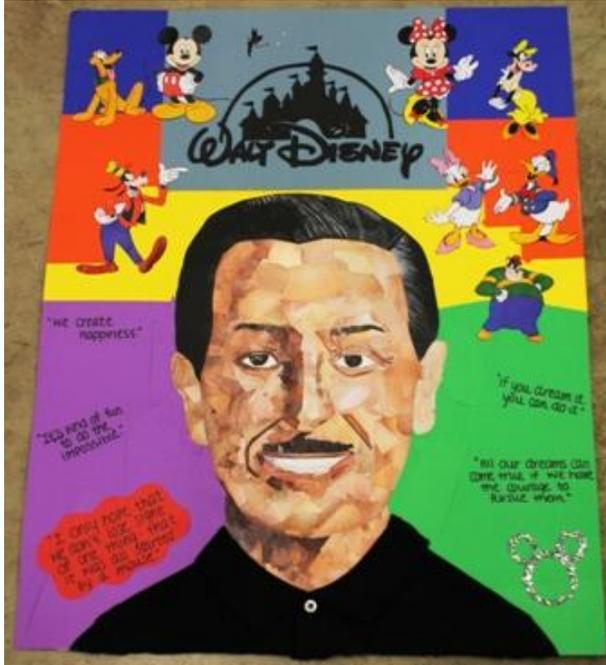
[Read more about Warmth for Warriors: http://www.warmthforwarriors.com/](http://www.warmthforwarriors.com/)

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From the Art Room: Collages



Above: Work by Owen Putnam

Left: Work by Bre Stadler

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays
from *The Chief Online*

