

# THE BENT TREE

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CCSU STUDENT NEWSPAPER



## A Sad Farewell

By Redd Horrocks and Ashley Spillers

Over the course of *The Bent Tree's* life, it has seen many editors that have all brought something special to the newspaper. Sadly, *The Bent Tree* must say goodbye to one of our finest editors yet. Michelle Lawrimore has been the Editor-In-Chief of the paper for a year and is graduating with a degree in Psychology this semester. She has helped *The Bent Tree* rise to a new level that hasn't been seen before. Since Michelle took over, *The Bent Tree* has become a 12-page paper printed every two weeks on a regular schedule, whereas before we printed eight pages every four to six weeks. Michelle's talent has gone beyond just editing. Her organizational skills as well as her talent in writing and leadership have helped improve the quality of *The Bent Tree*. She has written many articles, both informative and fun, and provides many of the ideas on which our articles are based. Michelle has

always been energetic and good with problem-solving, with a wonderful attitude and a smile for everyone. She will not only be missed by the paper, but also by the whole campus. It is amazing and promising that someone who is not even studying Communications or Journalism can excel at running a newspaper successfully and efficiently. It just goes to show that writing articles is not major specific. *The Bent Tree* will not be the same without her input. Many people on campus with a sincere love of writing should follow her lead. Ashley Spillers will be taking over as Editor-In-Chief next semester, and though she has a hard act to follow, we know that she will continue Michelle's legacy and keep the paper improving, bringing us new ideas and more wonderful articles. We say a sad goodbye to Michelle, and wish her much luck in the future; she will be missed.

Good luck with everything, Michelle!  
*The Bent Tree* staff will miss you.



Michelle Lawrimore at the beginning of her *Bent Tree* career

## In My Experience Claiming Clayton My Own

By Michelle Lawrimore

When I was a senior in high school, I remember one day sitting in Spanish with three of the smartest people in my class talking about where we wanted to go to college. One of the girls planned to go to Stanford, the other girl planned to go to Georgetown, and the boy, who was the valedictorian of my class, intended to go to medical school at Emory. I shyly stated that I was considering Clayton State, and as I said it, I felt embarrassed by my seemingly inadequate choice. I struggled with that feeling for a large part of my senior year; however, many other factors came into play to make me finally realize that attending CCSU would be a smart choice.

The largest factor that helped me finally come to peace with my decision to attend this school was the honors program, complete with a hearty scholarship each semester. I did not realize then that the money was secondary to the relationships that I would cultivate through this close-knit group. Taking classes as a group was comforting in a way; we could study with other people who cared about doing well and we always knew there would be one class full of familiar faces each semester. Two of those familiar faces are still my best friends, Anika and Raechel. The honors professors are some of the most challenging teachers in the school, but they are

all kind people who wanted to see us succeed. Dr. Jackson and Dr. Welborn make boring subjects fascinating. Dr. Hatfield is the honors professor and advisor who has the greatest impact on the honors students. He truly cares about his students and he will advocate for us, especially his honors students, without resting until he has helped us fix the problem. Even though the honors scholarship was the main reason I chose Clayton State, the people in the program were my motivation to stay.

During my first semester I met many more people than just the honors students; I met a lot of new people in the free circuit training facility that we have, Smartbodies. The friendly atmosphere of this gym was unlike anywhere I had been before; I started a conversation with a stranger almost daily and left with a new friend. Somehow, I almost always ended up working out when the soccer players were in there, and I got to know a lot of them that way. It was a fun new experience to be around a new set of guys that were not afraid to flirt with a stranger. There was one mysterious stranger that I found adorable and intriguing at the same time. I didn't meet him that day, but I knew that I would.

When I was a freshman and sophomore, we did not buy our own laptops. We rented them from the school. They were not the best

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# Opinions

## Black Friday

When we say Jump, you people Jump

By Jonathan Gillespie

Next Friday sees the official return of the holidays, because next Friday is going to see the true meaning of Christmas in all its glory—rampant consumerism. It's that most wonderful time of the year when people pull themselves out of bed at three in the morning to go stand outside retail stores in anticipation of saving forty dollars on a quality gift from a highly refutable vendor like Sayakatek. Have you ever heard of Sayakatek? Don't worry about that—they won't exist long enough to honor their warranties anyway.

To say I've never been a big fan of the Holiday season is an understatement. Note the distinction there, however: I hate the *season*, I like the actual days in question, specifically New Year's Eve and Christmas Day, because they give me time with my family and my loved ones.

There are a lot of things wrong with the holidays, and a lot of it simply has to do with greed.

The first of these is what Christmas has become—a salute to a fat man handing us crap we don't even need. We have too much already. America is turning into one big barn of junk as people overbuy and overstock and over shop. If you don't believe me, witness the rise of rent-a-storage places in the past few years, or compare the size of the average home circa 1950's America to the average home of today. Ask a realtor what the number one thing their clients' request is, and you'll get "space" as the immediate answer. In fact, every subdivision emphasizes the

spaciousness of their homes, because it has become a more important criterion than the materials used to construct the home itself.

But who can blame these shoppers? These are the children of the baby boomers, who did themselves grow up in the era of prosperity (some would say self-entitlement) following World War II. They don't give their kids a few boxes of legos or dolls. Instead these parents heap on their children too many presents, heaping the boxes beneath the tree in such quantity that the family TV is almost blocked by the garbage (maybe that is the silver lining).

This is hardly surprising however. What are we to expect from a generation that would rather plug their kids into a video game console at home, or set them in front of a DVD system on the road? Kids are just an inconvenience for mommy and daddy, anyway. Might as well shower them with "love" at Christmas. One has to wonder if over-spending parents are compensating for some submerged guilt.

These spoiled kids will one day grow up into over-consumers themselves, continuing the cycle that has turned every holiday into a pre-packaged buying fest that stock owners anxiously await. The holidays have become such a season of spending that America's retailers now dangerously rely on the early winter period to meet financial goals. America's economy has too much invested in the outcome of store numbers during this period of time. Stock analysts and market

watchers anxiously await holiday numbers, which can have far-reaching results and impact the market for months.

The very core of this problem stems from what we've turned Christmas into. I respect the religious connotations of the holiday itself, but I find it sad that even some segments of organized religion have succumbed to greed as well. Yes, it is *greed* when you focus more on a fat man handing out gifts than you do on the Son of God. Christmas, or rather what religion has allowed it to become in their own homes, is one of those reasons that eventually turned me from faith and into atheism. Don't sit me down in a hall and lecture me about greed if you're going to let Saint Nick overpower the true meaning of Christmas. Nice thing to teach your kids—that presents are more important than the meaning you attach to the holiday. Than again, what meaning *do* you attach to the holiday when you do such a thing?

Now, I'm not saying every religious person is guilty of this misdeed—just those of you that let a fat man handing out presents force Christ into the back seat. You know exactly who you are. You're making the others look bad, you know.

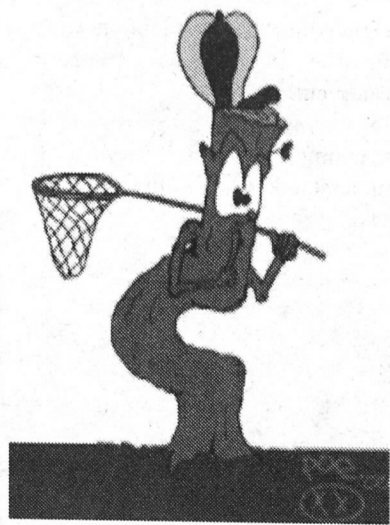
Some organizations actively oppose the excess that the holiday season has become. Chief among these are personal financial advisors, who are among the first to warn people about the dangers of dipping too deep into their credit during this time of the year.

Another group of wise individuals worth listening too is ZPG, an organization that attacks what they see as American material gluttony. As an example, the organization calls Black Friday "Buy Nothing Day", and encourages people not to buy a solitary thing that day, as a way of thumbing their noses at corporate America and as a way of trying to stop the ever-growing trend of waste and hyper-materialism in this nation. I intend to honor the holiday and encourage those of you that have the necessary willpower to do so as well.

Even so, if movements like Buy Nothing Day ever do become widely supported by Americans, we might find ourselves having a rough time re-defining what this season means to each of us, so grotesque have we distorted the meaning already.

One has to wonder in a post-avaricious America what our holiday would be like. Is such a thing even possible? Spending is a drug and buying is addictive, as we all know. Would the people that oppose smoking and alcohol have enough strength to repulse a 50% markdown sticker?

I think it's important to try, and I think it's important for us to teach our children to try. Maybe then we can learn to tear down the decorations of greed in our homes. Maybe then we can realize again that the most important part of the season is the people we spend it with, and save this Holiday from ourselves.



**"Shhhhhh!  
Be vehwy  
quiet. We're  
hunting new  
writers for  
the  
*Bent Tree.*"**

If you'd like to contribute to the *Bent Tree*, contact us at [Btree@mail.clayton.edu](mailto:Btree@mail.clayton.edu)

## YOUNG DEMOCRATS OF GEORGIA

A new Organization for budding Politicos of the Democratic Persuasion is being started. Meet new people who share your Democratic Ideals, help elect Democrats in surrounding Counties and the State, and let's get together and talk about what's going on in America and how we can help steer this blasted Hummer. No dues to join. Free food from time to time. Email us at [sgodfrey@ugaalum.uga.edu](mailto:sgodfrey@ugaalum.uga.edu) or call 770-383-9872 to register by phone. A meeting will be called as soon as 10 or more register. Then a student leader will petition for College Recognition.

# The Gospel According to "Jaw-Jaw."

By Bernard Asubonteng

Sir Winston Churchill, was one of the greatest wartime leaders Great Britain had ever given to the world. Not only was he a brave and calculated warrior, but also he was an excellent orator and more so understood the importance and the intricacies involved in global diplomacy. Ironically, the British elected him to lead their nation in a war— World War II—but during his Premiership, Churchill had always thought that war should be the last resort. Right before his country came under attack by Nazi Germany, he explored and exhausted all the diplomatic avenues before engaging in war. In fact, one of Churchill's famous quotes was: "To jaw-jaw is better than to war-war." What he simply meant was that debating issues and/or using diplomacy in solving conflicts is more superior to rushing into violence or resorting to war. I cannot disagree with him more, especially coming from a battle-tested world leader like Sir Winston Churchill. Indeed, Churchill's assertion over fifty years ago still rings true today. Everywhere around us there is news of more people resorting to violence or war to solve problems. Instead of talking or debating issues with a view to ironing out disagreements, many people will not hesitate to use violent means to address some petty disagreements like, "which particular sports team is going to the Super Bowl this year," or "Whose argument on a given issue is right or wrong." Lately, newspaper and other media news speak volumes daily about the fact that violence has become the order of the day in contemporary societies. It appears

"jaw-jaw" has been relegated to the passenger's seat; whereas, "war-war" has taken over the driver's seat. Many people of late can't use their "cool" heads to solve conflicts; rather they allow their emotions to determine the course of events. Take a closer look at the Middle East, especially the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Any time they decide to negotiate (talk) peace agreements, both Israel and Palestinian Authorities achieve a lot more for their people than when they embark on "war-war." For example, the body counts on both sides are reduced, at least in relative terms. Yes, the "jaw-jaw" concept may be slow and time-consuming; even some hawkish bureaucrats see it as a sign of weakness or appeasement, but consider the alternative—an indiscriminate cycle of violence. Talking about the cycle of violence brings one to the Iraqi war now underway. There are some schools of thought who strongly believe that the only way the Persian Gulf's geopolitical landscape can be stabilized is to uproot dictator Saddam Hussein and his cohorts via "war-war" from that part of the region, and everything is going to be alright. On the other hand, there are some schools that argue that Saddam's regime has already been crippled in the North and South for the past twelve years by the allied forces. Therefore, they stress that the UN sanctions with its attendant "jaw-jaw" should be left alone, since it is working. But no says our President, George W. Bush. In fact, he happens to belong to the first school of thought. As a result, in

the early part of this year, he leads this great nation to an unprovoked war in Iraq. No doubt military to military, no country on the face of the earth can afford to withstand America toe-to-toe. But is the military force alone an answer to the hydra-headed problems confronting the globe, more so if "jaw-jaw" can do the job? In most instances, experience has shown that using war (violence) to solve contemporary geopolitical conflicts has not been a success. It comes with a backlash and other unforeseen contingencies as our troops in Iraq are witnessing on a daily basis now. Certainly, our invasion in Afghanistan is justified, because those soulless guys who attacked this nation on September 11, 2001, plotted their despicable plans from there, according to some strong intelligence reports. Most importantly, Osama Bin Laden and his terrorist machinery are headquartered in that part of the region. Besides, the ongoing war in Afghanistan is a war of self-defense, which even the International law clearly justifies. However, the same cannot be said of the current war in Iraq. This is because almost all of the reasons given by the president why it's necessary to send our troops in harms way in Iraq have proven to be "not-so-true" by the Intelligence communities (CIA, British's MI5 etc). For example, the contention that Saddam has a Weapon of Mass Destruction—no hard evidence yet; also, Saddam was trying to buy uranium from Niger (in Africa) to develop Nuclear Weapons—not true; the former Iraqi leader can launch nuclear missiles within

forty-five minutes into any Western nation of his choosing—not true either. In addition, Saddam Hussein has links with *Al Queda*, that has also not been proven yet. It appears as if there was Intelligence snafu everywhere right before the war in Iraq. We all agree that Saddam is a merciless dictator; no reasonable person will dispute this fact. However, one can also argue that most parts of Middle East, including Asia, Africa and even North America (Cuba) are full of dictators. Are we going to attack all these dictators who maim and kill their citizens? Check this out: about fifteen of the nineteen hijackers are from Saudi Arabia, according to their passports. Why didn't our president attack the Saudis, but decide to "jaw-jaw" with their government? Fellow students, we are blessed as people who have a unique opportunity to study and learn within the confines of university walls, where critical thinking and dispassionate analysis of issues are the order of the day. Let most of us apply our critical thinking skills in a lot of pressing issues facing us every day, rather than jump into a bandwagon of "Everyone thinks it's the right thing to do; so I do also." On that note, my thanks go to Dr. Susan Henry for taking me through her Critical Thinking class about three years ago. I've learned a great deal since then in debating ideas, critically. Now I can think critically (logically?) and say that the ongoing war in Iraq in which our troops are getting killed every day could have been avoided through "jaw-jaw."

*In My Experience, Cont. from front page*

computers, and every other week I had a problem with my system. At first it was obnoxious, but then it began to work to my advantage. I was recovering from a recent break up when I was forced to make my first trek to the hub for repairs. To my delight, that adorable stranger from Smartbodies was my technician, and I found out that his name was Jonathan Gillespie. Luckily, my useless laptop gave me difficulties two more times that month, and I was able to get to know him a lot better. Timing was bad for both of us after that month, so we were just friends that gave each other butterflies for almost a year. My first homecoming experience was in the fall of 2000. I set up a booth to sell peanuts as a fundraiser for honors, so I got to sit in the shade all day. I met the members of an awesome local band, Dezeray's Hammer. The parade was lots of fun, and the banner that Anika and I had made won first place! It was a great day that got better when I saw my friend, Jonathan in a suit walking out with the rest of the homecoming court. After the coronation ceremony was over, he came back over to the booth area to

cool off and relax. He plopped down beside me and said hey, like he had not seen me in a while. We caught up with each other that day and I think we both felt a connection. That night, we met at the party that SLAC threw in honor of homecoming. It was a great party, complete with a large screen playing the music videos that went with each song and strobe lights. This was before the big pajama jam parties started, so the group at the party was not huge. It was so much fun though. We went around to every door in Clayton Place and personally invited all of the residents to the party. Some of them actually came. That was the fun and frustrating part about being in any student organization at CCSU; it was always difficult to recruit people for events and club involvement. It was nice because my peers and I have had an opportunity that other students will not have in the near future as the population of the school grows; we were able to mold the clubs that we chose to lead. It was frustrating, though, when we needed a lot of people for something. In spring of 2001, I had a class with an

enthusiastic newspaper editor named Kevin Dixon. He, like any other student leader, was eagerly recruiting members for his club of sorts, *The Bent Tree*. He talked me into writing an advice column called Dear Dilemma, and once I started attending the meetings, I knew I had found my niche. I have always loved writing, and for a while, I considered majoring in English. I was never completely satisfied with that idea, and midway through my sophomore year I figured out why. I loved psychology. The approval of the psychology and human services major was serendipitously timed with my discovery of my love for psychology. There was finally no question in my mind about my future career. I enrolled in one psychology class after another and was very impressed by the caliber of professors and the quality of classes in such a new program. I have had some amazing professors; in fact, every psychology professor that I have had has been a fantastic teacher. Dr. McCarty, Dr. Deering, Dr. Gannon, Dr. Stillion, Dr. Miller, Dr. Manning, and Dr. Hooper are the psychology

professors who have shaped my understanding of the human mind and have ignited my passion for helping others through counseling. I hope the other professors aren't jealous, but I must admit that Dr. Gannon was my favorite. Her Intro to Therapeutic Intervention class was a valuable base for the rest of the program, and her teaching style made it very easy to understand. She has the ability to give a clear and thorough power point lecture while keeping her students' attention by making jokes throughout each class. She's also just a really fun and cool person who cares a lot about her students. This attitude is actually very common among all professors at CCSU. The atmosphere of this school is very welcoming, and the campus is beautiful. The small population allows students to feel like they know almost everyone, but Clayton State is rapidly losing its small school reputation. This college is growing in size and in status. Choosing Clayton State may have seemed inadequate when I was a senior in high school, but as a senior in college, I now know that there was no better choice for me.

# Features



## Student Reference Desk:

### Where do I go...

#### To request a transcript or change a major?

The Registrar's Office, located upstairs in the Student Center, room 216.

Phone Number: 770-960-5110  
Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8 am to 7 pm; Wednesday & Thursday 8 am to 5 pm; Friday 9 am to 2 pm

#### To get an application for a friend?

The Admissions Office, located upstairs in the Student Center, Room 208.

Phone Number: 770-961-3500  
Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8 am to 7 pm; Wednesday 9 am to 5 pm; Thursday 8 am to 5 pm; Friday 9 am to 2 pm

#### To check on my financial aid status or pick up a FAFSA application?

The Financial Aid Office, located upstairs in the Student Center, Room 217.

Phone Number: 770-961-3511  
Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8 am to 7 pm; Wednesday & Thursday 9 am to 5 pm; Friday 9 am to 2 pm

#### To get a new LINX card or get back money a vending machine has swallowed?

The Linx Card office, located downstairs in the Student Center. Phone Number(s): 770-961-3686, 770-961-3687

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8 am to 5 pm; Friday 8 am to 2 pm

#### To pay for my tuition or other fees?

The Bursar's Office, located in the Administration Building, Office A-26. Phone Number: 770-961-3525

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 8 am to 5 pm

#### To start a new club on campus?

The Student Life Office, located upstairs in the Student Center, Room 226.

Phone Number: 770-961-3510  
Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8 am to 7 pm; Wednesday & Thursday 8 am to 5 pm; Friday 8 am to 2 pm

#### To take a career test or seek personal/career counseling?

Counseling and Career Services, located upstairs in the Student Center, Room 223.

Phone Number: 770-961-3518  
Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8 am to 7 pm; Wednesday 9 am to 5 pm; Thursday 8 am to 5 pm; Friday 9 am to 2 pm

#### To seek peer tutoring or take a makeup test from a professor?

The bottom floor of the Library in the Assessment Services/Testing Center. Phone Number: 770-961-3445

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 8 am to 8 pm

#### To gain help for my disability?

Disability Services, located upstairs in the Student Center, Room 214

Phone Number: 770-961-3719  
Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 8 am to 7 pm; Wednesday & Thursday 8 am to 5 pm; Friday 8 am to 2 pm

#### To pay my parking ticket?

Public Safety, located upstairs in the Student Center, Room 209  
Phone Number: 770-961-3540

#### To pick up the newest copy of the Bent Tree?

Downstairs in the Student Center, and various other academic buildings!

The Departments listed in this article are meant to help the CCSU students. Use this reference list to find the right department to answer your question or help you in some way.

## CCSU STUDENTS NEED...

### Laptops

NO-CREDIT-CHECK

NO-CREDIT-CHECK

**DESKTOP SYSTEMS**  
Also available from  
**Zero Down!**

Gamers start \$99 Down

**\$75 Down**  
**\$29 Month**  
Plus \$10 Insurance

New Laptops: \$771 - 1088  
(Total Paid after two years financing)  
[DVD/CDRW Combo Drives Available]  
\$75 Down \$29 Month 24 Months = \$771

**WorldNet Computer Services L.L.C.**  
Web: [www.worldnetcomputerservices.com](http://www.worldnetcomputerservices.com)  
Email: [worldnetcomputerservices@earthlink.net](mailto:worldnetcomputerservices@earthlink.net)

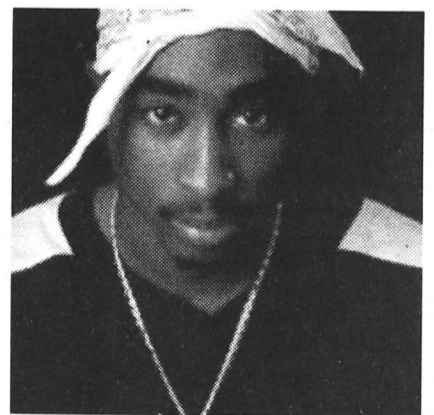
**706-692-0706 770-845-1885**

DISPLAYED LAPTOP  
**\$771**

## Tupac Resurrection: Again

By Sarah Morgan

I normally give every movie a chance but this time I have to draw the line. Tupac Resurrection: In His Own Words is nothing but a ploy to snatch millions out of moviegoer's pockets. I do not pretend to be an expert on the life of Tupac but I do know when enough is enough. Yes, I believe that he did a lot for music and it is sad that such mystery revolves around his death in September 1996. However, the fact remains that numerous "new" releases, soon to reach a total of seven, is doing nothing but preying upon the pocket books of his fans. From greatest hit compilations to collections of previously unheard material to tribute records, there has been no shortage of "new" Tupac Shakur releases since 1996. My main beef with the Tupac enterprise is the new movie his mother has released, Tupac Resurrection: In His Own Words. This movie pieces together old videos of Tupac to tell the story of his life. I wonder why this sounds so familiar to me, oh I know, because of A&E Biography that airs every night at 8:00 o'clock. If his mother cares so much for her son's fans as she claims, then why tell his story in this format. There



Tupac Shakur  
Photo courtesy of  
[google.com](http://google.com)

is no other reason than money. It is sad to say but I see no other motivation for his mother or any other person responsible for this movie. Yes, this movie is getting rave reviews and I do not doubt that it is not masterfully done. It just really annoys me that this is seen as original and inventive when it is so far from both. I am not saying that you should not see that movie; I am simply saying I do not like it. If this movie is for the fans then air it free on MTV, BET, or A&E biography.

# Decision 2004

By Patrick Harbin

With the next presidential election less than a year away, and the Democratic National Convention meeting this July, nine potential candidates have begun fighting for the coveted Democratic Party nomination. While each of them has built a loyal following, the polls show former Vermont Governor Howard Dean and Massachusetts Senator John Kerry as the two frontrunners. Even though they must first face a tremendous uphill battle, it appears that one of these two men will have the chance to go up against President Bush next November.

Two years ago, the idea that Bush would not be elected for a second term seemed ludicrous. With the military just beginning operations in Afghanistan and the entire country in a jingoistic fervor, Bush's approval rating soared to a record-breaking 92 percent. However, after two years of a slumping economy and with the U.S.'s current situation in Iraq deteriorating rapidly, the possibility of a new president in 2004 does not seem quite as shocking.

Of the nine candidates seeking the Democratic nomination, Howard Dean has garnered the most support. Dean's popularity with Democrats seems to stem from his public disdain for all things Bush. The cornerstone of his campaign, which also happens to be the most controversial aspect of it, is that Dean plans to repeal the

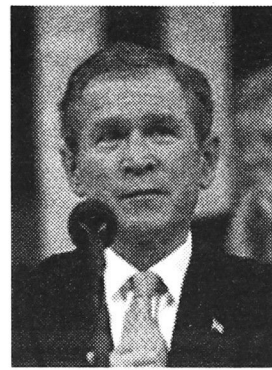
President's 2001 tax cuts. Like Al Gore in the last election, he claims that the cuts only benefit the top two percent of the population. In the place of tax cuts, Dean hopes to establish a universal healthcare system, stabilize and protect social security, and return the nation to the balanced budgets of the 1990's.

While Dean's biggest rival, John Kerry, also believes that Bush's tax cuts are unfair, he does not think they should be completely repealed. Not wanting to alienate undecided voters who may have received checks from those tax cuts, Kerry instead proposes that they only be rolled back slightly. His plan is to take the cuts away from the wealthiest people in society and funnel the money into initiatives like better pay for public school teachers, increased Medicaid opportunities for children and single adults, and job training for at risk youths. Despite his less drastic tax plan, Kerry still trails Dean in the polls by 14 percentage points.

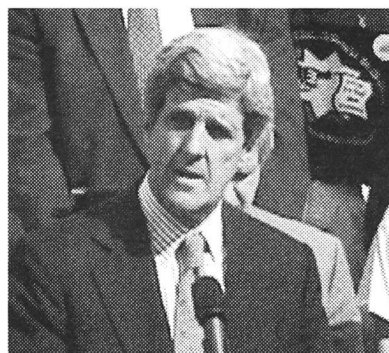
Realizing that the most effective tool in running a political campaign is money, Dean and Kerry have both opted out of public campaign financing. This move eliminates the \$45 million dollar spending limit congress placed on candidates after the Watergate scandal. Dean cites the need for a more effective campaign finance reform and the fact that Bush

opted out back in 2000 and again for this election as his reasons for not accepting public financing. Kerry, afraid that Dean's newfound unrestricted spending could hurt his own campaign, has also decided not to use public money. In an interview, Kerry explained that he cannot defeat Dean in the primaries with "one hand tied behind my back." With Dean having so far raised \$25.4 million and Kerry having raised \$20 million, they still have a long way to go if they hope to match Bush's expected \$200 million.

Although Howard Dean is currently ahead in the polls, there are still eight months until the Democratic National



Pres. George W. Bush  
Photo courtesy of google.com



Sen. John Kerry  
Photo courtesy of google.com



Gov. Howard Dean  
Photo courtesy of google.com

Convention. Also, with the Presidential primaries beginning in less than three months, Kerry could overtake Dean, or a completely different candidate could come to the forefront. Regardless of who wins the Democratic nomination, the much more difficult task will be convincing the American people that they need a new president. If they are unable to do this, then it makes no difference which candidate raises more money than the others.

More information about Presidential candidates Howard Dean and John Kerry can be found online at [www.DeanForAmerica.com](http://www.DeanForAmerica.com) and [www.johnkerry.com](http://www.johnkerry.com).

## "You're Just Like Your Mother!"

By Anna King

Most women will writhe in agony and disgust when this phrase is thrown at them. It's the insult of insults, you have (despite all your best efforts to do everything within your power to take the alternative route) become just like the one who drove you nuts when you were a teenager. Phone the press, it's an official catastrophe. I had a teacher once who used to say, "Start with what you know." This is what we do; we start (and continue) with what we know. We know our parents. Obviously ones behavior can easily be traced to those with whom you've spent the most time.

Because I decided a long time ago I'm never going to fit in completely, I realized that one reason that made me so different from my peers was my relationship with my parents. I admire and want to be EXACTLY like my mother. I've written before of my family and about my father. Now I plan to do equal justice to the one who's left behind to pick up the pieces.

First off, she has been right about every single guy I've dated and/or liked. They were all not right for me. The reasons she had ended up being the same reasons why it didn't work out. Somehow between the ages of 13 and 25 there seems to be a trust in your own supposedly infallible

judgment that makes you protest against listening to someone who "certainly doesn't know what they are talking about," even if they have 20 years of experience over you. It drove me crazy. But it's made me not settle for anything less, even if that means being alone.

She forces us to haul into school when we're sick but sometimes lets me sleep in when my job keeps me out late during the week. She makes me clean more each Saturday than anyone else my age I've met does in a month and expected me to be home right at 12:00 before I was able to drive past curfew. Not 12:01 or 12:00 and 30 seconds. I was home at 12. Period. She's made me haul a truckload of recycling materials up to the Jonesboro Recycling Center three times a month and sort them out by hand. I got yelled at if I TRIED to throw away a plastic milk jug. I said yes ma'am and no ma'am and wrote thank you notes. We are taught to make monthly tithes to any place we choose to. Most of us send our money to the hospice center my dad stayed at during his last few weeks. My whole family does charity runs to benefit organizations like that.

My mom left work the day I was born and has been at home ever since. She drives 5 kids to 5 different schools

and carpools with two of those, one going all the way to Fairburn. She grinds her own flour and makes her own bread and cooks dinner every night, not to mention makes me eat breakfast. She does laundry for three of the kids, us older ones have been doing our own since middle school. Both my 16 year old sister and I could run our own household if we so chose. My uniform has to be ironed, and I have to be on time for work. I never called in unless my life was in jeopardy. I don't comprehend life without working for what you want. And of course I was going to college. My mom got a part time job at Gap in Southlake Mall so she could get us discounts on clothing. The employees there know her as "Miss King" and recognize me when I walk in the store. She has cussed out people for talking about her kids but lets my friends come over at 12am when life at home gets too hard. She can tell you everything about her children and knows me better than I know myself. She talks to me like an equal yet also understands that I'm still not perfectly adult. She bears the brunt of the aftermath of my father's death in all of us. My mom lets my six-year-old brother wear her wedding ring because it reminds him of his daddy as he jokingly calls it "my precious."

(This kid's fascination with Lord of the Rings is a whole 'nother article!) She's told me as mad as we can make her, when she crawls into bed at night, she is grateful because we keep her going. She cries for my dad but lives for her children, she has the strength of an army, she is my role model. It's because of her that I didn't give up, it is because of her that I won't let life break me; instead I wish to make myself into someone like she is. Ask her for advice and you get a straight answer, if you don't want the truth don't ask for a lie. She exercises with me just about every day but still gets home by 2:45 so the two little kids don't have to get off the bus to an empty house. She made us get braces and forced us to brush our teeth. She married too young and said if I planned on doing so she wouldn't come to my wedding. Her mother passed away when she was 19. You cannot meet the lady and not admire her.

Knowing at this point most of us have heard it all about Christmas, I guess I'd just like to mention instead why I am grateful to have a family like mine these holidays, and every other time of the year. You say I act like my mother, huh? I only can reply, "Thank you. You just paid me the highest compliment ever."

# Entertainment

## Conversation Starters

By Linda Godin

Knowing what to say and how to ask questions can be terrifying at a party or office gathering. Some people come off as standoffish, not because they are a snob, or shy; they just don't know what to say! If you are one of these, take a look at the following list and pick out one or two to memorize and use during the holiday parties. You will be amazed at how easy it is to keep a conversation going, but you have to get it going first!

- If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?
  - What place do you want to visit most?
- If you couldn't do what you are doing for a living, what else would you do?
- When you get to heaven, what do you hope that God says to you?
- If you could interview anyone living or dead, who would it be?
- If you were allowed one question of God, what would it be?
- If you could start life over, would you choose to be a man or a woman?
- If you could be any animal, what would it be and why?
- Seriously, which do you think came first - the chicken or the egg and why?
  - Do you think there is life on other planets?
- If you knew then what you know now, would it have changed your teen years?
- If you could be someone else for a day who would you be?
  - What might you invent to make your life easier?
- What famous person would you like to live as for a day?
  - If your house were on fire (and you, your family and pets were all out safely) and you could only grab 3 things to take out, what would they be?
    - What is your earliest childhood memory?
  - If you were to describe the perfect marriage in a few simple sentences, how would you do it?
  - If you had to choose a meal that best represented your love life, what would be on the menu, and where would you eat it?
    - What would be the title of your biography?
    - If you wrote a book, what would it be about?
    - If you knew you'd be financially taken care of for the next year, what would you do with your time or where would you go?
      - What were your favorite cartoons?
  - If you knew you had 24 hours to live what would you do?
  - What would be on the soundtrack to your life? Or what kind of music would be the soundtrack to your life?
  - They say Alexander the Great kept a dagger and a copy of the Iliad under his pillow. What would be under your pillow?
    - Do you have any scars? Where did you get them?
  - It's Friday morning and a genie gives you \$5,000 in cash. On Sunday evening at 11pm any money you haven't spent will disappear. What do you do with the money?
    - If you could be invisible for a day, where would you go, and what would you do?

## Horoscopes

**Aries:** Events around the 23rd conspire to knock you from your high horse, but something surprising rides to your rescue. You have one more month to play before the Winter Solstice gives you an urge to hibernate.

**Taurus:** The Stars respond with the gift of contentment, leaving you cheerful but unmotivated amidst the mounting holiday frenzy. Near December 17th, you realize that you haven't been doing your part. Get moving! There's still time to make loved ones happy while pleasing yourself

**Gemini:** If you spend the holiday season traveling, constant variety may grow old after December 17th. Find your roots and settle in for the Winter.

**Cancer:** Uncomfortable issues heat up near the 23rd. If you were putting off a self-improvement program, this is the time to look at it again. It's okay to end the year at a slower pace and a lower volume. No one can deny that you've had your fun.

**Leo:** It's so easy to tune out what you can't control. When the Sun arrives in Sagittarius, your heroism comes to the surface again. Rise above the chaos to shine once more.

**Virgo:** You feel nostalgic for the past on which you recently slammed the door, although there's little chance of undoing what you did so energetically. On December 17th, however, you learn to appreciate the gift you gave yourself. If others could benefit from sharing it, don't hesitate.

**Libra:** You are unsettled throughout this season. Once you see the reason, you're free to make new laws and strategies. Nothing goes as expected between the Winter Solstice and the New Year. Take it as it comes, and enjoy yourself

**Scorpio:** There's nothing personal about it — even you have to follow the laws of the Universe. Get into the holiday spirit of sharing. In the final week of Autumn, you return to the calm, dutiful state in which you began the year. In your heart you know it's better this way.

**Sagittarius:** Your moment of truth comes when the Sun arrives in Sagittarius. A full month of adventure is now mandatory. Around December 17th, someone reminds you to slow down. Why argue? A little hibernation now would be like a beauty rest.

**Capricorn:** You come to realize how impressive and special you are. It's about time you realized it. Winter, your season of strength, has already begun when the Sun returns to your Sign toward the end of December. You know what to do again.

**Aquarius:** Drastic change is only natural. No matter how much you stir things up, though, real improvement may not come until the 23rd. Now that you have a little extra to get you through the end of the year, struggling against the established order no longer seems quite as necessary

**Pisces:** Thanksgiving was a reflective time, and bargain hunting saves your holiday shopping from extravagance. Shortly after the Winter Solstice, you recapture the magic that carried you through the early part of this past year.

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## Top 10 Excuses For Getting Out of a Date

By Linda Godin



10. I'm washing my hair. (The lamest excuse there is but hey, it works!)
9. My dog has been suffering from depression and I really think we need to spend some time together
8. I'm going to work abroad tomorrow but I'll be back in six months, why don't I phone you then?
7. My friend is going to be on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" and I'm her phone a friend and you know what these shows are like, they could ring at any time.
6. I have work commitments for the next 3 months but I will give you a ring at the end of it.
5. My mother is coming to stay for a few weeks so don't call me I'll call you.
4. I think I'm coming down with a cold, and I don't want to give it to you.
3. My horoscope says be wary of men ——— (make something up that sums him up) and that sounds like you, so I think things are best left alone don't you?
2. The football season has just started I'll call you after it has ended.
1. I don't think I'm ready for dating just yet.

**It's a Wonderful Life** - (3.5 / 5) stars 88/100 B+

One of the biggest staples of Christmastime entertainment is the film *It's a Wonderful Life*. Compared to other holiday films, the story is not necessarily a Christmas tale. However, it is one that encompasses hope, faith and jubilation – the very emotions that the holiday season is designed to invoke. The legendary Jimmy Stewart masterfully portrays the lead of George Bailey, the manager of his deceased father's Bailey Building and Loan Society. As a young man, he dreamed of travel and college, yet when his father passed on, his dreams were thwarted by the realization that he must follow his father's legacy. This sacrifice establishes his general sacrifice for the good of others. *It's a Wonderful Life* covers a multitude of emotions, ranging from the romance felt from his courtship of Mary (Donna Reed)

to George Bailey's despair as he views the state the world would be in if he weren't there. He contemplates suicide from his difficulties revolving around his life, until his guardian angel comes and comforts him with how much worse the world would be if he weren't there. This film is masterful; the acting, the emotion and the appeal all snag the viewer throughout the film. While it is not a movie revolving around the themes of Christmas, *It's a Wonderful Life* summons an emotional appeal that is the true power of the holiday. We appeal to the Bailey family, especially George, throughout its experiences while shedding tears during their hardships and smiling during their highlights. A fantastic film of determination and love, *It's a Wonderful Life* holds its place as an emotional film that draws up these sensations in all of us during the holidays.



*It's A Wonderful Life*  
Photo courtesy of google.com

**You are cordially invited:**  
**Join the gents of Sigma Pi and party for a purpose at "The Cram Session" on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 from 9pm – 2am in the Continuing Ed building. Two dollars per person or one toy per couple admission. Half of all proceeds go to Toys for Tots.**



*A Christmas Story*  
Photo courtesy of google.com

**A Christmas Story** (5 / 5 stars) – 100 A+

Imagine a Norman Rockwell painting of a wonderful Christmas family, surrounded with joy and the holiday cheer, as well as craziness and the typical holiday hustle bustle. *A Christmas Story* takes you directly into this family. The movie exists in a time and place that has disappeared from us where kids remain pure and innocent to Santa's grand plan. It is set in the 1950's in what could be Anytown, U.S.A. Peter Billingsly plays Ralphie, a young boy who desires nothing more than a Red Rider B-B gun for Christmas. Of course, his desire for the "mother of all Christmas gifts" conflicts with the stern rules of, you guessed it, the mother, while his father, wonderfully played by Darrin McGavin, seemingly acts apathetic to his desires. Ralphie sets out on a quest to win over his family, his teacher, and Santa Claus himself so that he may have his gun. The innocence and romanticism of the child's spirit is beautifully portrayed in this movie. It takes us into the world of a young kid during Christmastime. Throughout his

journey, he encounters tyrant bullies, the mystic powers of Little Orphan Annie's secret decoder pin, and the "harsh" punishment from parents. His little brother, Randy, stumbles along all wrapped up in infinite layers of clothing that his mother laced around him. This film is the perfect holiday film. Masterfully, the viewer is taken into this loving family and creates warmth about the season inside of us. Each of the characters is portrayed flawlessly, for we feel sympathy for Ralphie's childish desire for his B-B gun, we feel annoyance (yet understanding) towards the mother, and we feel that the father is the typical quirky father who loves his children, yet tries to make the audience believe that he is apathetic. Above all else, the setting is beautifully portrayed. The viewer is taken into the innocent world during the 50's that we all wish at some times that we could return to. *A Christmas Story* will have you laughing and joyously smiling during any Christmas occasion. As a story of hope, loving family values and holiday cheer, this film is by far the perfect Christmas movie.

# Entertainment

## Celebrated for What?

By Thomas Spurlin

Throughout the years, the structure of a celebrity revolves around one aspect - that magical element is talent. However, our ideals of a famous person are becoming more jaded and fogged as our society grows in superficiality. A select few of our celebrities are still acclaimed for their pure talent, such as Russell Crowe, Dido, Mary J. Blige, Bono from U2 and Jim Carrey. However, when a person is asked to name a few celebrities, these are usually not the first that escape their lips. Out come the shallow depths of our civilization's pop culture when the true list of the highest-ranking celebrities starts to come out. Sadly, what constitutes a celebrity consists of money, sexual appeal, and personal dramatic experience. And, then if there is room left in this cocktail of our modern celebrity, their talent might shine through.

Scandal surrounding certain people starts to raise individuals up as celebrities. Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez have been glorified as the king and queen of the media while they follow in the footsteps of Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. They are currently the most famous couple within print and television. Such a couple that is known as the highest acclaimed pair in the United States should be a wealth of talent and promise. However, it is only together that the two have been truly glorified as celebrities. Ben Affleck is, respectfully, a decent actor. His performances in Pearl Harbor, Chasing Amy and as screenplay author and actor of Good Will Hunting were all reasonable quality. Jennifer Lopez also has specs of talent as well. She contains a mish-mash of dancing abilities (which led her to be dancer on the show Living Color), as well as singing and acting abilities that were composed in such songs as "Love Don't Cost a Thing" and "Jenny From the Block". Oh, and don't forget that Jennifer Lopez is very well known for her enormous backside. Her legendary rear end has drawn attention from late-night comics everywhere, yet their criticism recognized her. She had her rump insured by an insurance company purely because it gains her such recognized attention. Even through these elements, neither of them is considered in the highly praised ranks of their professions. However, when Jennifer Lopez got together with Sean Combs (also known as Puff Daddy or P Diddy), her recognition rise. Surrounded by wealth and a musician with talent, her celebrity status started to establish, which carried over after their separation. When rumors started

to float about Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, no one could believe that these two were adjoining. Both attractive and somewhat appealing people, they draw each of us to watch their progress towards marriage, such as the tale of Jennifer's Rolls Royce engagement gift and the mammoth diamond on her finger. When the stories that swirled around their marriage started to accumulate into those of breakup and scandal (such as Affleck's strip club trip), everyone thirsted for more and more information about the couple. Why do we care, and why is it important? Two mediocre talents start to get together and talk about marriage and, suddenly, they stand center stage of our media. The truth is that when you strip away the scandal and the money, all you have is the star of Daredevil (a movie that got slashed by critics), the sub-par actress from Selena and The Wedding Planner, and the stars of the critically "acclaimed" film Gigli, which was deemed "really, really awful" and an "insult to manure". Personally, I think that both of these individuals have some level of talent, but I don't believe their acclaim is justified to be higher than other extremely talented singers and actors.

Another artist that relentlessly gets picked at for her reputation outweighing her talent is Britney Spears. Known as one of the most universally known performers in our culture, she has grown in popularity since her initial hit "Baby... One More Time". The first CD was a hit with the younger generation with entrancing hits that provoked children to play her music ... relentlessly. However, as she has grown older and more mature, her appeal with kids may have started to deplete. In retaliation, she altered her appeal and started to gravitate towards her physical prowess. She became known as the innovator of the female stomach's attributes of tonality and adornment with her piercing. Everyone lusts for her stomach. Also under speculation is the possibility of breast implants that enhanced her female form, which she says they blossomed overnight. Whether natural or created, her female form now appeals to men and women; men lust for her, and women lust for her attributes. Her relationship with N'Sync's Justin Timberlake also invoked her celebrity status. It seems very interesting how celebrities always seem to find ways to place themselves within the limelight. First, she advocates her virginity, then she splits from her boyfriend Justin, then she starts to associate with Australian actor Colin Farrell, a true



Images courtesy of google.com

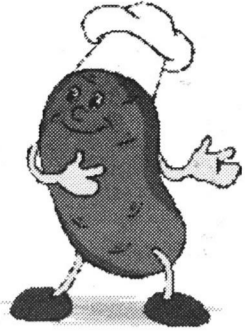
bad boy. Following this rumor, she then was caught kissing a married dancer. Of course, this is following her legendary "lesbian" kiss with pop queen Madonna. Notice how the most well known female artist is surrounded by a plethora of malign elements that scar her name. Scandal and speculation surrounds this pop star in a way that succumbs her talents. Much is the same for Mickey Mouse Club cohort, Christina Aguilera. She, along with and even more so than Britney, has an incredible talent. However, what was once a girl known for the "Genie in a Bottle" song is now known as the nipple-pierced "Dirty" woman. While her world isn't revolved around scandal involving other people, her popularity is acclaimed due to her sexual revolution as a woman. Both of these girls possess the goods that it takes to be a celebrity without their sex-driven whims that they have taken into their lives; however, they both incorporate this aspect (and make it publicly known) to draw even more attention.

Celebrities also maintain their status after their potential has been reached being plagued with negative scandalous activities. Take Michael Jackson, for instance. He has always possessed a certain talent that cannot be matched. Known as the self-proclaimed "King of Pop", he has issued such legendary hits such as "Billy Jean" and "Thriller" from his earlier years, and "Black or White" and "Bad" from his later years. As he grew older, he started to change physically, supposedly through plastic surgery. His skin began to turn pale and his nose changed shape consistently. Even after this, he still continued to maintain a healthy status as an artist. However, after he should have faded into the ranks of the retired celebrities, his scandal revolving around child molestation has kept him firmly in the public's eye. There was a time that he was labeled an international star, where people all over the world wept when he came to visit their countries. Now, instead of being deemed just a talented musician, he is under speculation of being a pedophile, which undoubtedly has scarred his name. Speaking of scarred names from scandalous activities, how could this topic be addressed without mentioning Anna Nicole? Anna Nicole Smith was a renowned model that appeared in Playboy and as a

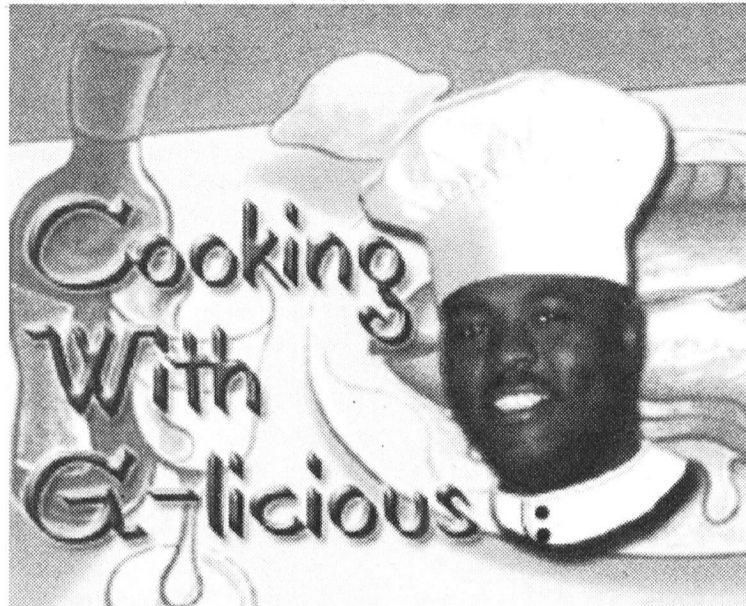
Calvin Klein model. In her heyday, she was very attractive and energetic. Then she married the elderly man, and it all went downhill. She grew "attracted" to a much older, extremely wealthy man named Arthur Brooks. After her marriage ended with his death, she fought vigorously for his inheritance while defaming her own name. She tried to make it seem as if she married him solely out of love, yet her diligence towards his money spoke otherwise. Her weight also ballooned during this process, which took away the aspect that initially established her celebrity status. Now, she has a reality television show that chronicles her foolish acts after the court cases. She has made a new career in her ability to act like an idiot in the real world on television. Both Anna Nicole Smith and Michael Jackson's desires for ridiculous things drove them to stay in the spotlight as the "Village Idiots" of our society that are famous for the weird and obscure scandals that surround their everyday lives.

While all celebrities do have some form of talent, those that solely have talent are not as highly regarded as those that are surrounded by sex, scandal, and monetary extravagances. Now there is a new group of celebrities who are famous just for being rich, such as Paris Hilton and Ally Hilfiger. Where is this country going if the people that we see as our stars are nothing but walking plastic, whether in the form of silicone breast implants or worn-out Visa cards? The talent is the key ingredient. It is no doubt that all of the celebrities regarded above have a level of talent. I just find it very odd that people who have even more talent aren't in the light more often. Does it truly take a sappy Award speech or a sexual rendezvous to highlight these people? Sadly, yes it does. It is much easier to report stories on people who are surrounded by the filth of gossip and rumor than it is with squeaky-clean celebs. Thank goodness for the faith in purity that Tom Hanks, Mel Gibson and the rest of the richly talented aforementioned names invoke for us. Talent and talent alone can still make one a celebrity. We don't have to go and have sex with a co-star, charge up hundreds of thousands of dollars in engagement gifts, or have plastic surgery to enhance the power of our sexuality in order to be a celebrity. But hell, apparently it wouldn't hurt.





# Food



***Gerald is currently studying for finals! Look for more G'Licious in the next issue of the Bent Tree!***

## **R'Eddibles Guide to Impressing People**

*Uhoh, not Christmas! Well, I guess I have a good Christmas recipe for you. This is a very very easy cake, and really hard to mess up! It uses ground almonds in place of flour which is good for flavor, texture, and of course it makes it a little healthier. A word of advice for cost, but whole almonds and grind them yourself in a blender or food processor. Don't be surprised by how I'm asking you to make it... just trust me!*

### **Redd's Clementine Christmas Cake**

Ingredients:-  
4-5 Unpeeled Clementines or 3 Large Orange. (About 1lb in weight)  
10oz Ground Almonds  
1C + 2 Tablespoons Sugar  
1 Teaspoon Baking Powder – Heaped  
6 Eggs  
8-inch Spring form Pan

Wash the clementines/oranges but do not peel them. Bring a pan of water to the boil and put them in it to simmer, making sure the water covers them totally. Allow them to simmer for approximately two hours and they will be all soft and squishy. Let them cool a little bit. Put all of the clementines/ orange whole into a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. In a bowl, beat the eggs and add the sugar and baking powder. Add the almonds a little at a time, mixing well. After all of the almonds are added, carefully stir in the pureed clementines/oranges. Take an 8-inch Spring Form pan and butter the sides, lining the bottom with wax paper. Pour the cake mixture in and bake at 375° for an hour. After the first 40 minutes, cover the cake with foil to stop the top from burning. You can leave this to cool in the pan and it will be a wonderful moist cake bursting with flavor. This is one of my all time favorites!

*Send in your own recipes! E-mail the Bent Tree @ [Btree@mail.clayton.edu](mailto:Btree@mail.clayton.edu)*

### **A CCSU play**

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*“A play about life after death, and love before” There will be “Afterplay” discussions with the playwright and actors after each Saturday performance.*

*Directed by Ed Hohlbein and Bethany Stillion*

*Starring*

*Kelly Foresman*

*Ed Hohlbein*

*Betty Mitchell*

*Bethany Stillion*

*Jason Vaughn*

*\$8, \$4 for seniors citizens*

*Clayton State Theatre: <http://a-s.clayton.edu/cstheater> 770-961-3460*

## **UNIVERSITY**

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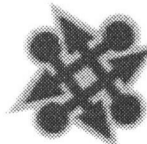
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# Holiday Special

## Tis the Season to Be Jolly: A History Of Christmas

By Thomas Spurlin

Thoughts of December 25<sup>th</sup> can be manifested into a flood of red, green and white decorations, tall pine trees adorned with intricate ornaments, and beautiful carols that speak of cheer and joy. Let's not forget a large, kind fellow with a white beard and a large, red sack filled with gifts. As far back as memory can allow, this time of year invokes such happiness in all people that will allow love in their hearts. But how did this day, of all days in the year, get to be called Christmas?

### The Origin of Christmas:

The word Christmas is from the Old English route "Cristes maesse", meaning Christ's mass. As is generally known, Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The birth of Christ is glorified in the Nativity story from the bible in which the Virgin mother Mary gave birth to the son of God. A bright North Star drew wise men to the baby in order to view the majesty of the son of the Almighty. However, December 25<sup>th</sup> may not be the actual date of Jesus' birth. The date was chosen by Pope Julius I during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in order to absorb the pagan Roman holiday "Saturnalia". From this celebration, the Christians adopted the idea of giving gifts to their loved ones. During the eighth century, this practice had traveled far across the world. At first, the practice of Christmas was celebrated in church, and then afterwards the practice turned into one much like Mardi Gras in downtown French Quarter. The less fortunate would travel to the houses of the wealthy and beg for their finest food and drink, which turned into the rich person's day to repay society with their kindness. Later on during the 1600's in England, Oliver Cromwell canceled this holy day when he and his Puritans overtook the country. Even when the Puritans journeyed to America in 1620, the holiday was not in practice. The English holiday still was not exhibited until after Charles II reclaimed the throne in England and declared Christmas a holiday again. Even in 1789, Congress was in session on December 25<sup>th</sup> during the first Christmas of America's history. The holiday was not made into a legal holiday until 1870. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the holiday began to be transformed from the chaotic holiday it has become into the family-oriented day that we now associate with Christmas. This day was glorified as a day that parents could shower their kids with affection and subsiding ridicule of having spoiled children. From this development of a holiday where parents could celebrate the birth of Christ, comes the celebrated holiday we know today for its lavish gifts and warm holiday cheer, as

opposed to the rash festival of drunken malice.

### Santa Clause:

Would you believe that Santa Claus is actually a monk? Truthfully, the origin of Father Christmas comes from a man of the clergy born in 280 A.D. This man was known for his kind deeds, especially for his ability to usher all of his inherited wealth to the less fortunate. In America, the idea of St. Nicholas as a celebrated figure appeared in the 1770's when a Dutch family was reported to be worshipping him under the name Sinter Klaas, the shortened Dutch name for the saint. The image of Santa was drafted in 1804 when John Pintard issued carvings of Sinter Klaas on wood at a meeting of the New York Historical Society. The images were depictions of the image that we craft today of the large man with stuffed stockings of treats hung above the hearth of a fireplace. The full image was crafted in 1881, when an Episcopalian minister named Clement Clark Moore wrote "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas". It illustrated the sleigh, the reindeer with names, and his overwhelming desire to deliver gifts for children. The idea of Santa being a "jolly old elf" comes from this work of literature. Embracing this beacon of joy and happiness, the Salvation Army started to dress their employees in "Santa suits" in the 1890's. Armed with bells, these men attracted donations in order to pay for the charity's free meals they offer the less fortunate around this time. Before long, stores were advertising the opportunity to see a "live" Santa Claus, and thus came the shopping mall Santas.

### Trees, Candy Canes, and Holly:

Three Christmas symbols that come to mind are pine trees covered with ornaments, a candied stick of peppermint, and a ring of prickly holly sprigs. Each of these items contains historical significance of some fashion. Why is it that homes that celebrate Christmas have indoor, green trees and halls that are decked with "boughs of holly"? The tradition dates back to ancient Egyptian celebrations. During the winter, evergreen plants were scattered throughout households in glorification of the sun god Ra. Wintertime, known as the "solstice", came about when Ra grew ill and couldn't warm the earth. Worshippers suggested the importance of the blooming green plants to signify their god's replenished health. In Roman culture, these plants that decorated homes to mark the Saturnalia holiday marked the budding growth of the plants after the wintertime. Throughout other cultures, the evergreen plants were consistently symbolic of the growth of life in the form of praise towards sun gods that spurs growth of plants in the spring. Interestingly enough, Martin Luther is credited through folklore as being the first to decorate a Christmas tree. The famed monk of the Protestant Reformation is thought to be responsible of lights in the Christmas tree from an experience he had walking through a forest. In order to illustrate the beauty of stars peering through the branches, he brought a tree indoors and lit candles upon it. However, the first Christmas tree was not recorded until the 16<sup>th</sup> century when German people were seen with fully decorated trees in their homes.

The American tradition of Christmas trees came much later, since it was made illegal to celebrate the holiday earlier in history. What really sparked the popularity of the Christmas tree was Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's portrayal around a decorated tree in 1846. The two were very popular leaders, and their appeal sparked the surge of trees in their subject's households. After this, ornaments and other decorations were being shipped all over the world, even to America. With the coming of electricity, we were able to safely portray the lights that Martin Luther wanted to display. Now, our holly wreaths can be symbolic of the holly crown that Jesus wore upon his head during his crucifixion, while the berries can be seen as droplets of blood from his brow. Also portraying the significance of Jesus, our delightful candy canes can be seen as a shepherd's staff or the letter J. Composed of peppermint, the staff illustrates symbolism throughout each of its components; the solidity of the cane represents the rock God's church was founded on, the white shaft represents the purity of Christ, and curved in a J shape to represent a shepherd's staff.

The history of Christmas and its celebratory elements stretch back to ancient times. With each passing year, tradition is solidified and reaffirmed in these acts. Tis the Season, everyone! Embrace the spirit of Christmas (or whatever holiday that you may celebrate) and become an innocent kid again, because there is nothing more magical than the joy that sparkles in one's heart during the holiday season.



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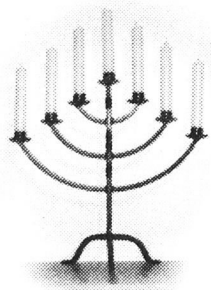
# Holiday Special

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## Hanukkah

From: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/5493/hanuka.html>

Hanukkah, which means "dedication" and is also referred to as "The Festival of Lights", is a Jewish festival which begins on the Hebrew date of the 25th of Kislev and lasts eight days, through the 2nd of Tevet. This year, that corresponds to November 30th through December 7th. Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees (led by Judah) over the Hellenistic Syrians in a revolt that took place around 165 BCE (note: Jews use BCE—Before the Common Era and CE—the Common Era instead of BC and AD). The victory in itself was considered a miracle, but Jewish legend gives an additional explanation for Hanukkah rituals, explained below. Once the Temple Mount in Jerusalem had been reclaimed, the Temple had to be rededicated. According to legend, only one jar of sacramental oil was found, enough for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, thus the eight days of Hanukkah. The most important Hanukkah ritual is the candle lighting. Jews light candles in a special candleholder called a "menorah" or a "hanukkiah". Each night, one more candle is added. The middle candle, called the "shamash", is used to light each of the other candles and it is lit every night. Therefore, on the first night of Hanukkah, two candles are lit (the shamash and the candle for the first night) and on the last night, there are nine lit candles. It is traditional to eat foods fried in oil during Hanukkah. Some common foods are potato latkes and "sufganiot" (jelly doughnuts). Another tradition is to play the "dreidel" game. A dreidel is a four-sided top. On each side is a different Hebrew letter: (peh), corresponding to the words in the sentence "nes gadol haya po" ("A great miracle happened here"). Of course, the miracle happened in Israel, so outside of Israel, the) for "nes gadol haya sham" ("A great miracle happened there"). The dreidel is used for a gambling game in which each letter represents a different amount of money (or whatever...) won or lost. Another common Hanukkah practice is giving gifts or "gelt" (money) to children. In Hebrew, "gelt" is called "d'mei Hanukkah". In Israel, Hanukkah is a very festive time. Schools are out for a week and there are lots of parties and special events around the country. We sing Hanukkah songs (like the one playing in the background), eat lots of fattening food and have lots of fun!



## Kwanza

From: <http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/holidays/kwanzaa/hist.html>

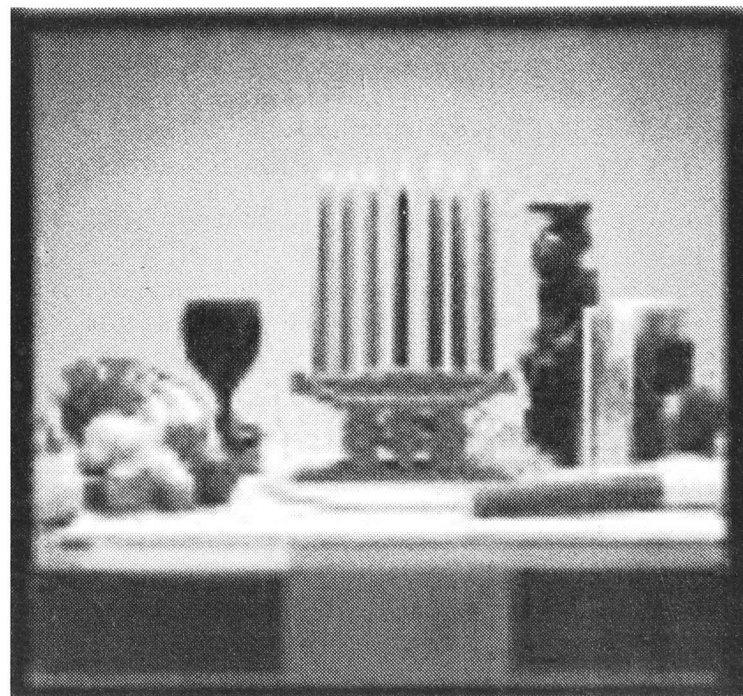
Kwanzaa is a non-religious African American holiday which celebrates family, community, and culture. It is celebrated for seven days: December 26 - January 1. Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chairman of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach, created Kwanzaa in 1966. After the Watts riots in Los Angeles, Dr. Karenga searched for ways to bring African-Americans together as a community. He founded US, a cultural organization, and started to research African "first fruit" (harvest) celebrations. Karenga combined aspects of several different harvest celebrations, such as those of the Ashanti and those of the Zulu, to form the basis of Kwanzaa. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits" in Swahili. Each family celebrates Kwanzaa in its own way, but celebrations often include songs and dances, African drums, storytelling, poetry reading, and a large traditional meal. On each of the seven nights, the family gathers and a child lights one of the candles on the Kinara (candleholder), then one of the seven principles is discussed. The principles, called the Nguzo Saba (seven principles in Swahili) are values of African culture which contribute to building and reinforcing community among African-Americans. Kwanzaa also has seven basic symbols which represent values and concepts reflective of African culture. An African feast, called a Karamu, is held on December 31. The candle-lighting ceremony each evening provides the opportunity to gather and discuss the meaning of Kwanzaa. The first night, the black candle in the center is lit (and the principle of umoja/unity is discussed). One candle is lit each evening and the appropriate principle is discussed.



## Yule

From: <http://www.geocities.com/lavenderwater37/yule.htm>

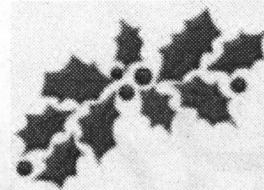
Also known as: Yuletide, Alban Arthuan, Winter Solstice marks the longest night of the year. It is from this point that the days begin slowly to become longer and longer. The sun is at its most southeastern point over the Tropic of Capricorn in the northern hemisphere and has no apparent northward or southward motion. In the time of the ancient tribes this was a time of celebration, for it meant the turning point of winter and the eventual return of spring. Yule is the time when we honor the Goddess for giving birth to the sun once more. It is the time when the Oak King is victorious over the Holly King. The Holly King represents death and darkness that has ruled since Samhain, and the Oak King represents rebirth and life. The waning (diminishing) sun is overtaken by the waxing (increasing) sun, thus the days become longer after the victory of the Oak King. Yule is a time when we do Rituals and celebrate the increasing daylight, to renew, and to see the world through the eyes of a child. Spells done at Yule tend to raise our spirits, and bring harmony, peace, and joy. During Yule we see the wisdom of past experience begin to glimmer. The experiences we yielded over the harvest season of the times gone past begin to be reborn as wisdom, new light, to guide us further down the Paths we have chosen. It is customary for Witches to decorate the Yule tree, and adorn the house with holly, ivy and pine. This is the eve when the Yule log from the previous year is burned in the fire. Symbolic of the newborn sun, each year's Yule log is of oak, charged in a Magic Circle and kept in sacred space the following Yule. This not only celebrates the oak and places it in a place of distinguished honor, but also ensures there will be fuel for the remainder of Winter.



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# Recipes

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## Tollhouse Pie

2 eggs  
1 cup chopped nuts (pecans or walnuts are best)  
1 cup softened butter (at room temp.)  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup all purpose (plain) flour  
6 oz. chocolate chips

Beat eggs until frothy; add brown sugar, sugar and flour. Mix well. Blend in melted butter and stir in nuts and chocolate chips. Pour into a Frozen 9 inch DEEP DISH piecrust and bake about 1 hour at 325°. (May take longer depending on your oven).

Let it completely cool before slicing.

ENJOY!!

Submitted by Pam Newton

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## Yam Casserole

1 lg. (29oz.) can Yams  
3/4 cup Sugar  
2 Eggs, beaten  
1 tsp. Vanilla  
1/4 cup Milk

Drains yams and mash. Place in casserole dish. Mix other ingredients with yams and smooth.

## Yam Topping

1/3 cup Margarine, melted  
2/3 cup Light Brown Sugar, packed  
1/3 cup Self-Rising Flour  
1 cup Walnuts, chopped

Mix all topping ingredients and sprinkle over yam mixture.

Bake @ 350 for 30-40 minutes.

## Crabmeat/Cream Cheese Dip

2 - 8oz. pkg. Cream Cheese  
1 T Pimento, finely chopped  
1 T Green Pepper, finely chopped  
1 T Onion, grated  
Pinch of Garlic Salt  
1 T Worcestershire Sauce  
1 T Lemon Juice

Mix all ingredients well. Press down to a 1-inch thick patty.

1/2 bottle Chili Sauce - Pour on top of cream cheese patty—cover well and completely.

1 cup Crab Meat, drained well - Place on top of chili sauce.

Cover w/fresh chopped parsley, serve w/Trisquit crackers.

Submitted by Karen Blackburn

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## Pineapple Casserole

### Ingredients:

1 (20 ounce) can pineapple chunks, drained  
1 ( 8 ounce) can crushed pineapple with juice  
1 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 cup white sugar  
1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese  
1 2/3 cups crushed Ritz crackers  
3 tablespoons butter, melted

### Direction:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
2. Combine the pineapple chunks and crushed pineapple with syrup. Mix together and pour into a 2 quart baking dish.
3. Mix together the flour and sugar, sprinkle evenly on top of pineapple. Cover with cheese, top cheese with cracker crumbs and drizzle melted butter on top.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 25 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes and serve.

Submitted by JoAnn Quattlebaum