

The Christmas Spirit

Julius Batchelor
STAFF WRITER



The upcoming holiday season, which was once filled with joy, generosity, and a sense of community, has seen a noticeable decline in the Christmas spirit in recent years. This phenomenon can be attributed to a confluence of societal factors that have dampened the once alive festive cheer. The lack of the holiday spirit is mostly due to the commercialization of Christmas. As commercialization takes over, the true meaning of Christmas, which relies on the values of giving, love, and togetherness, often loses out to materialistic things. The number of commercials showcasing material possessions and the allure of offering lavish presents, may reduce the spirit of generosity and compassion that should define the Christmas season. In addition, the fast-paced nature of modern life causes overload and stress for many people during the holidays. The strain of preparing for the holidays and social pressures can lead to burnout and reduce the joy that comes with the season. (Continues on Page 6)

Kwanzaa

Zah-Kneyiah Brown
STAFF WRITER



Kwanzaa is a secular holiday that is celebrated from December 26 to January 1. The word Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase, “Matunda ya Kwanzaa,” referring to the first fruits or harvest festivals

found throughout the continent of Africa.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Maluna Ron Karenga, who created this holiday to reaffirm and restore African heritage and culture. Kwanzaa is mostly celebrated by African Americans. There are seven days, and they all have a meaning: Day 1 Umoja (to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race). Day 2 Kujichagulia (self-determination). Day 3 Ujima (collective work and responsibility). Day 4 Ujamaa (cooperative economics). Day 5 Nia (purpose). Day 6 Kuumba (creativity). Day 7 Imani (faith), which is the last (Continues on Page 6)

Diwali

Saanvi Talanki
GUEST WRITER

Diwali is an Indian festival celebrated throughout the subcontinent and by families carrying their Indian heritage abroad. The celebration centers around light triumphing over darkness, good triumphing over evil. To prepare for the holiday, people clean their homes and decorate with an abundance of lights. Traditionally, diyas - small clay “pots” with cotton wicks - are lit, along with brass stands with several divots for wicks. Additionally, people will often light fireworks to celebrate. In India, everyone from children to adults fill the streets, using sparklers to light fireworks in front of houses. This, however, is far from all the festivities. Diwali, like many other festivals, means that there’s going to be special food and gatherings. Sweets are a staple for Indian holidays, for Diwali, burfis - milk based, fudge like sweets - are especially popular. People will often bring some of these sweets to neighbors and friends as a gift. Meeting with neighbors and friends during any festival is common. People will get together in their new festival clothing to talk, eat, and often, pay respect to gods. Diwali is celebratory.



Op-Ed: Here's Why Humanity Will Fail to Save the Climate: Mitigation vs. Adaptation

Jonathan De Caro

POLITICAL WRITER



Climate activists today believe that if they can stop big oil companies; choke governments with green policies; hold every corporation at sustainability gunpoint; ban oil cars off the roads; and put a solar panel on every home, our world can mitigate our eventual climate expiration date. However, this thinking couldn't be more flawed.

Time and time again human history shows that the world often fails when attempting quickly and successfully to mitigate a world crisis. For example, there have been two world wars and a cold war. More examples include four worldwide pandemics. And, terrorists still thrive across the Middle East and Africa, according to the U.S. State Department. In addition, plastic pollution has doubled since global governments tried curbing it, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Global wars are raging from Ukraine to Israel.

We have failed to mitigate several of the world crises above. All of a sudden our world expects that climate change will be different? It has become comical to think that we can mitigate global crises at this point, even more so climate change and corporations have poured trillions of dollars into stopping climate change with results that still show increases in carbon.

Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) Senior Mita M. said "Many in my generation are scared of climate change like myself, it is an important issue of both the present and the future."

But this does not mean our environment is destined for peril. It simply means humans suck at mitigating. However, our society knows how to do one thing very well. It's what we've been doing for all of human history in the face of our challenges – adaptation. When the world was hit with disease, we adapted by creating vaccines. When populations expanded, countries made more food by creating better farming techniques. When humans needed to travel farther, innovators created airplanes and cars. Our world has always adapted in the face of challenges through innovation. But when it comes to climate, activists shut out adaptation.

Carbon capture technology, recycling, ocean cleanup robotics, levees, reforestation, coral reef bio-revival technology, and so much more are adaptive alternatives to climate change. Scientists have the technology and innovators are constantly making advancements every day to adapt to the climate crisis.

But trillions of dollars go towards mitigation strategies with little results that only end up sky rocketing the prices of gas and products, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). In fact, a decade of mitigation has left us with only more emissions.

Furthermore, the Center for Energy Solutions shows how mitigation creates significant increases in bureaucracy and regulation for businesses. Many government resources are wasted, and households are restrained with tedious "socially acceptable" behaviors.

In order to end the climate crisis, the world must lead with what has worked for thousands of years, what humans do best – adaptation.

Escalation in Israel-Palestine Conflict

Caly Estrada

STAFF WRITER

In the halls of the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE), the opinions of students regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict in the Middle East are diverse.

Past the headlines, their reflections offered new insights into the complicated web of historical, political, and humanitarian sides that make up this severe conflict.

Julian Surdyka, an AAE student with a deep interest in global stories, described his feelings.

“To solve the Israel-Palestine conflict, we need to understand and empathize with both sides,” he explained.

Surdyka’s empathy revealed the multi-sided nature of the issue, challenging individuals to outgrow one-sided narratives and embrace a detailed understanding of the historical losses and beliefs that have fueled the conflict for decades.

Myles Fournier offered a balanced perspective. “Israel has the right to exist and defend itself, but we must also address the legitimate grievances of the Palestinian people for a fair solution,” he said.

Myles’ insight recognized the double-sided mission of ensuring Israel’s security while also not neglecting the genuine concerns and aspirations of the Palestinian people. His words speak towards the need for an equal resolution that ensures the rights and aspirations of both parties.

Ariana Murray wondered about the cycle of violence.

“The ongoing conflict is a tragic cycle of violence, both Israelis and Palestinians deserve peace and security,” she stated.

Murray’s observation highlights the human toll of the conflict and re-strengthens the universal desire for stability, safety, and peace that goes above borders and nationalities.

Beyond these personal reflections, the Israel-Palestine conflict continues to unfold with serious consequences. Recent clashes in Jerusalem over access to religious sites, rocket attacks from Gaza, and Israeli airstrikes, have raised tensions, resulting in civilian deaths and raising concerns about the humanitarian crisis, specifically in the Gaza Strip.

As the world watches the disorderly events in the Middle East, the student voices at AAE speak out about the necessity of empathy, understanding, and a commitment to peace.

Circle Keepers Shapes Students’ Success

Aliyah Arthur

STAFF WRITER

Circle Keepers is a group of students that help their peers process specific issues in a restorative and confidential manner that provides long term solutions.

What happens during the circle is that we talk about conflict, emotions, and progress from previous actions that have happened to lead us into a circle. It happens during school hours in the Peace Center. We gather students together that may need reflecting on their action or what is going on around them that may reflect off their current behavior. This is important because in an effort to combat conflicts or talk about tough topics, the Circle Keepers program positively affects the school by assisting students in solving minor conflicts, hopefully to decrease the number of student behavioral issues.

For example, there was this group of friends who had a disagreement over a project they were working on together. They all had different ideas and couldn’t agree on how to proceed. It caused a lot of tension and arguments between them. But eventually, they realized that they needed to listen to each other and find a compromise. They ended up combining their ideas and creating something amazing. It taught them the importance of teamwork and communication.

Conflict can be tough, but it can also lead to growth and understanding. The point of sharing that story was to highlight how conflicts can sometimes lead to positive outcomes and personal growth. It’s a reminder that even though conflicts can be tough, they can also teach us valuable lessons and help us become better individuals.

After the group of friends found a way to compromise, they started working together harmoniously. They realized that by embracing each other’s perspectives, they could create something truly unique and special. Their project turned out to be a huge success, and they even received recognition from their teachers and classmates. The conflict they initially faced ended up strengthening their friendship and teaching them valuable life lessons about collaboration and open-mindedness. It was a powerful reminder that sometimes, conflicts can lead to positive outcomes and personal growth.

What positive impact does Circle Keepers have on AAE students?

“It helps get to the bottom of a problem that didn’t need to get too far in the first place and get into a physical altercation,” said Student Naz Minnifield.

The History of the Winter Solstice

Alexander Discua

STAFF WRITER

The winter solstice is a once-a-year event that will occur on Dec. 21, 2023, at exactly 10:27 p.m., according to National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), marking the astronomical end of fall and the start of winter. The event occurs due to the earth poles, the North and South poles, reaching their maximum tilt away from the sun, thus causing the shortest day and longest night of the year. This is the antithesis of the summer solstice, which was the longest day of the year and the shortest night, which occurred on June 21, 2023 at 10:57 a.m.

The history of the winter solstice goes as far back as the original Julian calendar back in 45 B.C., however, it was on December 25, rather than December 21, ordered by Julius Caesar.

Later, in 1582, the Gregorian calendar was created by Pope Gregory XVII to remedy the mistakes created by Caesar due to the Julian calendar having several key mistakes. Most notably, when England swapped to the Gregorian calendar in 1752, Benjamin Franklin went on record to say “It is pleasant for an old man to be able to go to bed on Sept. 2, and not have to get up until Sept. 14.”

The ancient Romans celebrated the solstice with another name – Saturnalia, celebrating the god Saturn, most known for the god of time. During that time, not only did quarrels stop for the celebration, but law and order itself would be suspended for the entirety of the time, such as slaves being allowed to eat at the table, and gambling was permitted. This was often seen as a time of freedom for both slaves and freedmen.

“While it’s not something I celebrate, it’s certainly interesting in a scientific point of view,” Ms. Meyers, the school librarian commented. “However, I do tend to realize that I’m much more tired during and after the solstice.”

Mr. Howe, the high school art teacher, had a different point of view.

“I personally prefer the summer solstice,” he said. “I definitely prefer the summer solstice over the winter, even in general. I’ve heard that in countries with much less sunlight, they’re a lot more depressed. I just prefer the summer.

New Year’s Resolutions

J’Veous Gonsalves

STAFF WRITER

A New Year's resolution is a promise to yourself to either start doing something to better yourself or stop doing something. New Year's resolutions have been around for 4,000 years, started by the ancient Babylonians, just in a different way.

Theconversation.com stated that the Babylonians usually pledged their loyalty to the king and made promises to pay their debts and return borrowed items to their rightful owners. They believed that if they kept their resolutions, the gods would treat them favorably that year.

Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) student Scott Dunnham gave his opinion on resolutions and why they’re important.

“Yes I make New Year's resolutions, in fact I make multiple. Some of my resolutions include doing better in school; helping my family by getting a job; and a more personal one is maintaining a good and steady weight. Resolutions are important so your life can have meaning.”

AAE Junior Sarah Boreland never misses the opportunity to make resolutions for the New Year.

“Of course I make New Year's resolutions each year,” she said. “My resolution is to continue going in life in every aspect. I think resolutions are important because it is important to vocalize your goals so you can accomplish them.”

Junior Richard Chandler, is looking for a fresh start in 2024.

“Yes I have multiple resolutions,” he stated. “The first is to be a better basketball player, and second is to maintain good grades so I get into a good college. They’re important because it’s good to start the year with a fresh start. A new year, a new you.”

Class of 2024 Bowling

Francheiri Serrano

STAFF WRITER



The graduating class of 2024 took a field trip to Spare Time Entertainment in Windsor, Conn. on Nov. 30. The seniors excitedly packed into school buses and left for the venue. When they entered the facility, wide neon alleys with 20 lanes welcomed them. All lanes were opened with unlimited rounds for two hours and you bet the seniors went all out.

“It was fun and I’m the best at bowling,” said Julius B.

Teachers had their own lanes to connect as a staff. Mr. Howe was in a competitive mood and scored up to 113 points. Competitions broke out all over the bowling alley and there were screaming, instigation, clapping, and more.

From the moment the seniors walked in, workers were prepping pizza for lunch. After a couple of rounds, the freshly baked pizza was placed on each of the sections for the seniors to grub on. At noon, the seniors were told that the arcade was open. Though they had to use their own money, it was fairly cheap, with most games priced at \$1.

Unfortunately, after 10 minutes in the arcade, the school staff announced that it was time for the seniors to return back to campus. The trip was a special time for the graduating class of 2024 to come together as a community and as a family, to create new memories with each other before going off into the world and starting their own lives.

AAE Families and Christmas

Sulo Adziovsk

STAFF WRITER

As the holidays and Christmas come around, CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) students and staff are getting ready to celebrate the holidays. The Aerospace community goes on break for two weeks in December. There are many activities that go on during the holiday such as ice skating, gingerbread house building and Christmas caroling.

Students of AAE shared what activities they are most interested in.

Brandon Bourne, class of 2024 senior said he looks forward to spending time with his family, friends and playing basketball, as well as eating the traditional Christmas food.

Jveous Gonsalves, class of 2024 senior said favorite activities during break are playing basketball, connecting with family and friends and spending time with his pets.

Shamany Cheng, class of 2025 junior favorite activities during Christmas break are snowball fighting, ice skating and Christmas caroling.

Scott Dunham, class of 2025 junior, said “I can’t wait for Christmas time, I get to relax from school, spend time with family and do activities such as gingerbread house building and eating all types of food.”

Many students have a common thing together here at AAE, they’re ready for a festive and upcoming winter break.

The Christmas Spirit

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Three teachers at the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering, gave different views on the lack of Christmas spirit.

“I don’t believe in the Christmas Spirit due to how everyone forgets my birthday right after Christmas and everyone forgets to get me gifts,” explained Mr. Priester.

There are various reasons why people are losing the Christmas spirit.

“I’m losing the Christmas spirit due to COVID and everything going on around me, such as inflation, getting older, and having less family around as often,” said Mx. Alive.

Mr. Pertesis stated that “Christmas just isn’t my thing, it’s not that I don’t have Christmas spirit, it’s just that I’m a cold person inside, while Christmas is about warmth and joy. It’s just kinda not my vibe if you can understand me.”

Kwanzaa

From Page 1

Seven candles in total symbolize each day of the holiday, as well as the African flag. It has three green candles, three red candles, and one black candle. Each day, you light one candle, starting with the black candle and then alternating from left to right.

Kwanzaa is celebrated differently each day, and there are many ways to do so.

On day one of Kwanzaa, which is “Umoja,” people may do a game night where they play bingo, or do a partnership where they use each other to try and get stuff without communicating and play all sorts of card games to symbolize being united.

Day two or Kujichagulia, is when you may do a word puzzle, challenging yourself and others in a race to see who can complete it first.

On Day three, Ujima, an activity that people may do is something like a puzzle where you all use teamwork to try and finish a puzzle in one night to symbolize collective work and responsibility.

On Day four, Ujima is a day where you give back to black-owned businesses and help our community by supporting each other.

Day five is Nia people who might write a letter to their future selves and write down things they want to accomplish or improve on to symbolize self-determination.

Day six or Kuumba is where you may draw, give back, garden, or just channel your inner creativity.

Lastly, day seven is Imani, which is also the day of the New Year. This day you can celebrate, say a resolution, and just gather with your people, celebrate you and all your accomplishments, and enjoy the company you keep. There is much more you can do.

Janel Smith said, “I did not know there was so much to do on Kwanzaa. “

Kwanzaa is a very important holiday in the African-American community because it is a time when you celebrate who you are and get a deeper dive into your ancestors and where you are from. It is a very joyful holiday that many people may not have any experience with.

Many people have heard of Kwanzaa but have not participated in the annual rituals.

“I started celebrating Kwanzaa last year and has learned so much in just one time and cannot wait to see what else I get out of it this year,” said a teacher at the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE), who asked to remain anonymous.

Jayliah Coleman, an AAE student said, for her, Kwanzaa is educational. “Kwanzaa is a great holiday that allows me to learn about another culture and gives me a second education on things I did not know about,” she explained.



Rosa Parks Day

De’Jiah Otero

STAFF WRITER

Rosa Parks Day doesn’t hold as much weight as the other black historical days, such as Martin Luther King Day (MLK Day), Black History Month, and Malcolm X Day – but people should remember Parks because she was a remarkable woman who changed lives forever.

Rosa Parks Day isn’t necessarily a memorial day but it is a day that celebrates the life and achievements of Parks, an important figure in the civil rights movement. On Dec. 1, we honor her bravery and pivotal role in the fight against racial segregation. Parks’ refusal to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in 1955 sparked a boycott that helped lead to desegregation. It’s a day to remember her contributions to equality and justice.

In addition to public events, educational institutions, like schools and universities, often hold special Parks-themed assemblies, workshops, and discussions. Students learn about her life story, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the impact of her actions. These educational activities are crucial in ensuring that future generations understand the importance of activism and empathy.

Bree Jones, an AAE student said she knew about Parks contribution but not the special day.

“No, I know Rosa Parks and what she did historically for this world, but I did not know she had a day dedicated to her.”

However, Naz Minnifield, an AAE student, said he knew about the recognition.

“I heard that there was a day dedicated to her, but I didn’t know it was on December 1. Nobody in school has ever celebrated it around me, like in school, or at home.”

Mrs. Canty, an AAE staff member, said that although she had never heard of Rosa Parks Day, the civil rights icon certainly deserves it.

Festival of Lights

Nazsere Minnifield

STAFF WRITER



The Festival of Lights, which is celebrated in many cultures around the world, is a powerful symbol of hope, joy and cultural identity.

One of the main reasons for the Festival of Lights’ esteem is its historical and cultural relevance. Diwali in Hinduism, Hanukkah in Judaism, and Christmas in Christianity, all have their own unique celebrations, which memorialize historical events that represent triumph over adversity, tenacity, and light over darkness.

The symbolism of light is crucial to the significance of the Festival of Lights, because light symbolizes wisdom, enlightenment, and the triumph of good over evil. Lighting lamps, candles, or other sources of light at these festivals is a symbolic gesture of dispelling darkness, ignorance, and despair in many cultural and religious contexts.

Therefore, light is a symbol for the positive energy that prevails in the face of adversity. It brings communities together by bridging linguistic, racial, and socioeconomic divides. People from many walks of life gather to celebrate, share joy, and deepen the links that bind them. As a result, the Festival of Lights becomes a unifying force that supports cultural heritage and traditions and emphasize family and community.

Families assemble for feasts, exchange gifts, and participate in customs passed down through generations. These events not only build family ties, but also foster a sense of belonging and shared heritage throughout the larger community.

Many Festivals of Lights take place during seasonal transitions, representing not just the victory of light but also the regeneration of life. This feature provides a spiritual dimension to the festivities, prompting people to reflect on the previous year, express appreciation, and make constructive plans for the future.

Rising Costs of College Tuition

Carson Mullings

STAFF WRITER

Due to increases in college tuition, the dream of obtaining a higher education may be out of reach for some students.

The primary reason for rising tuition is decreasing public investment. Because of state budgets cuts, public universities are forced to offset the reduction in government funding by raising tuition. This puts more student debt on the shoulders of students and their families. According to <https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing/highlights>, students who attend four-year in-state public colleges pay \$11,260, which is \$270 higher than in 2022-2023; students who attend out-of-state four-year public colleges, pay more than \$29,150 which is \$850 higher than in 2022-2023. Local students who attend two-year public colleges pay \$3,990, which is \$100 higher than in 2022-23. Students at nonprofit, four-year private colleges pay \$41,540 which is \$1,600 higher than in 2022-23.

Education has traditionally been seen as a path to success for individuals, regardless of their economic background. However, the increasing cost of tuition may destroy this dream.

Creating New Year Memories

Janel Smith

STAFF WRITER

As the countdown to the New Year begins, everyone is gearing up for a host of exciting and memorable activities to ring in 2024. From lively celebrations to unique and quirky things to do, there's something for everyone to enjoy as calendars are turned to the next page.

An Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) teacher said she planned to stay home and have a glass of champagne.

AAE student Zah-Kneyiah Brown said, "We are going to celebrate New Year's with sparkling cider and different appetizers from our culture."

Outdoor challenges for the more adventurous people on New Year's Day bring a series of activities designed to kick start the year with adrenaline and fun. From sunrise hikes to ice skating with the lights these activities offer a unique way to embrace the winter time.

Community Charity in the spirit of giving events are planned to coincide with New Year celebrations. Whether it's a charity run, a volunteer project, or a fundraising gala, locals are encouraged to start the year on a positive note by giving back to the community and making a difference in the lives of others.

Dinner parties are a way to bring together those around you who you love and want to cherish in the New Year. It could be simple or elegant, big or small. Serving appetizers or eating pizza with friends as you watch a countdown of the New Year.

Resolutions to become a better or different version of yourself. Arguably the most popular tradition for New Year's writing in journals to document your growth.

Last Minute Christmas Shopping

Sydney Clark

STAFF WRITER

Christmas Eve, also known as Last Minute Shopper's Day, is a gift for people who waited until the last minute to shop for presents.

Shopping centers, malls, online delivery services and even entrepreneurs experience pressure to deliver items for the holiday season. During this time, people rush to buy last-minute food staples and gifts for the holidays. Last-Minute Shopper's Day is more of a time frame rather than a specific event, because during this time, stores have extended hours, specials, discounts and deals.

Some Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) students admitted that they are victims of last-minute shopping.

Senior Angelina Wisdom, who typically shops late for her brother, said she usually gets him a game, gift card and cologne.

Tara Martindale, a senior, said she shops a few weeks before Christmas. However, if she forgets something or someone, she has to run out at the last minute to shop.

Junior De'Jiah Otero said she always shops late. Her go-to place to find gifts in a hurry is the mall, specifically Foot Locker and Best Buy.



Winter Activities

Justice Kitchens

STAFF WRITER

Throughout the winter, Connecticut has lots of fun places for families to go and enjoy winter sports, especially during holidays. Whether it is snow tubing, skiing, snowboarding or sledding, Connecticut has it all, even some activities year-round. In fact, Powder Ridge Mountain Park & Resort in Middlefield offers snow tubing year-round, so families don't have to wait until winter to do these activities. However, most activities begin in November, such as Winterfest, which Bushnell Park hosts annually in Hartford. Visitors may ice skate for free from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily until Jan. 7, 2024. Skate rentals and learn-to-skate classes are free. Children may also visit with Santa.

Some Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE) students shared the snow activities they participate in throughout Connecticut. Kate Bernier and Anya Djatiev visit Ski Mount Sundown in New Hartford, Conn. Djatiev described it as a family-oriented place to get exercise.

"Skiing is fun at Mount Sundown because it's a great family sport and a fun way to exercise," she said. "Skiing gives me adrenaline and it's exciting. It's a great winter sport!"

Bernier who snowboards, stated "I snowboard there because they have a wide variety of trails that fit all skill levels, and it's a great way to have fun when it's cold out."

Senior Mita Muralidharan, who ice skates at the South Windsor Arena, said "It's fun ice skating at the South Windsor Arena because it almost feels like [I'm] floating in air because of the wind blowing against you when you skate."

Hanukkah

Victoria Ortiz

STAFF WRITER

Hanukkah is a religious holiday for Jewish people, as well as a minor holiday. It is celebrated for eight days straight, but it doesn't always fall on the same days every year. Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah depending on a Hebrew calendar. This year, it falls on Dec. 7 to Dec. 15. Most Jewish holidays are celebrated because of something that has happened historically. But Hanukkah is not only celebrated by Jewish people. Anyone can celebrate Hanukkah. There is, indeed, a history behind it.

Marcy Steiner, a school secretary, at the CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (AAE), explained how Hanukkah started.

"The Maccabees in the days of the Roman, had enough oil in a temple that should've only burned for one day, but miraculously it burned for eight days and eight nights. So that's why Hanukkah is traditionally celebrated for eight days and eight nights."

Deana Edelstein, who is a sophomore at AAE, said many Jewish people are from Israel but she and her family never moved to that country. Edelstein is Russian. but she and her family still celebrate Hanukkah even though her family is not Jewish. And because of this her and her family have different traditions from traditions that Jewish people celebrate on Hanukkah.

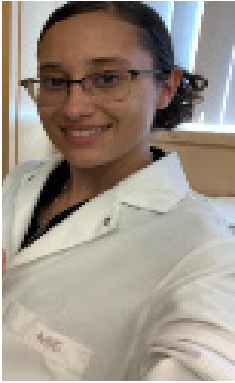
"We still do the gift giving, but not every single night," she said. "We usually do smaller presents every night, eventually leading up to one big gift on the last night. Every night we also light the Menorah. We also have traditional Russian foods, like beet soups or olive salads," stated Edelstein.

Beside people Jewish celebrating Hanukkah and people who are not even Jewish celebrating Hanukkah, there is also a group of people that are Jewish and don't celebrate Hanukkah at all.

Benjamin Tint, a music teacher at AAE, is Jewish, but does not practice faith.

"I don't celebrate Hanukkah at all," he stated. "I'm an atheist. I'm Jewish, biologically, but I don't celebrate Hanukkah. Jewish people are often recognized both religiously and ethnically. My parents were very big on celebrating Hanukkah when they were younger, but me growing up, never really believed in anything that was being celebrated. My family celebrates holidays and believe in God and I don't. I have my own strong beliefs on religion, but I also do not judge people who practice their religions."

Ana-Lois Davis



Ana-Lois Davis completed seven week of research as a Discovery to Cure intern last summer at Yale University School of Medicine. She worked under the mentorship of researchers and physicians in the fields of gynecological oncology and reproductive sciences. Her research consisted of a new therapeutic approach utilizing Antibody Drug Conjugate (ADCs) testing on High Grade Serous Ovarian Carcinoma (HGSOC) with an over expression of the Trop-2 transmembrane glycoprotein gene receptors they targeted in cell lines. When not in the lab, Davis attended weekly special speaker events with fellow interns. They learned more about the different medical professions in gynecology and reproductive sciences. She was allowed to scrub in, suit up, and go into an operating room to learn about and use the cutting-edge Da Vinci Surgical Machine.

Meanwhile, Davis is currently working as a Discovery to Cure Intern at Dr. Santin's Laboratory at Yale. Recently, her internship was extended to the rest of the school year. After school, she goes to Yale by train every other day and on weekends to continue conducting drug trials on ovarian carcinoma tumor cells. Next summer, she will return full time.

"I am looking to continue my summer research on "The Effects of Using Antibody Drug Conjugates to test cell Viability of Ovarian Carcinoma as a new Form of Treatment to Reduce the Dependence of the Cytotoxic Treatment Of Chemotherapy" that I am currently conducting at Yale as my upcoming Science Fair project for the remainder of my senior year of high school," said Davis.

Food Unites People During the Holidays

Brandon Bourne

STAFF WRITER

For thousands of years, food has been a way to get to people's hearts. Many family and friends have cultural and traditional foods as a way of bonding and for overall human comfort. Because humans rely on food so much, it is typically celebrated. During this holiday season, some Academy of Aerospace and Engineering students and staff shared their family's cooking traditions.

During winter break, many students said they eat foods that give off both a cozy and a cold theme. Even though many students may not celebrate Christmas, many families still enjoy many fabulous dishes. Staples like soul food and Caribbean cuisines are ingrained in minority households and are usually looked upon as more than holiday foods. Families see it as a way to build unity and to bond with each other for years to come. Food builds tradition and provide insight to other cultures.

AAE Senior Devon Nance said that winter break and food represents spending quality time with family and friends.

"Quality time with family shows how holidays can help bonding with family," said Nance.

Being of African American descent, he also likes to indulge in soul food, such as collard greens.

Manny Gonzalez and Deleon Malcom also said there's a connection between family and food during the holidays. Gonzalez said that food is what brings everyone together during the winter break from school, however, family bonding is more important than the food.

Hopefully, when the AAE community goes on break, every student and staff will enjoy their break with open arms, with not just food but with their loved ones.