Christmas traditions brighten the holiday season

by Helena Ahn ’15

December is a busy month at Western Reserve Academy, with winter exams and winter break—all of this without mentioning the many musical performances put on by the WRA Music Department. One such performance, on December 5, was the annual Messiah Sing. “The Messiah Sing is performed to gather musicians to sing through parts of a joyful composition,” explains Midge Karam ’79, Chair of the Fine & Performing Arts Department. The Messiah featured soloists with a full orchestra, as well as other choir members dispersed throughout the crowd to sing the choruses. This year’s courageous soloists were Jun Sung Park ’12, Jack McKinzie ’13, Daniel Crowder ’12, Zach Zockoll ’12, Soo Bin Kwon ’12, Emma Leonard ’12, and Genevieve Bettendorf ’12. The audience was able to also sing with the choir during parts of the concert, which ended with a jubilant rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus. Karam confessed, “We attack the Hallelujah Chorus because it is just so much fun.” Ann Yu ’14 commented, “The Hallelujah Chorus is my favorite piece of the night, because everyone is so enthusiastic.” Everyone had a good time listening to the wonderful holiday music.

Toys for Tots program enjoys new success

WRA contributes 291 toys to Marine Corps program

by Jake Hutner ’13

Last week the Western Reserve campus was again host to a Toys for Tots drive, organized and run by the student organization R.E.A.C.H. Ethically Advancing Community Health (R.E.A.C.H.). Students were asked to bring in toys to donate to children in need this holiday season. In addition to bringing in toys, R.E.A.C.H. also sold candy canes this year to raise money for Toys for Tots. Traditionally there has been a competition amongst the four classes to see who can donate the most toys. This year, however, the organization changed the competition from the number of toys donated to the number of candy canes purchased. Audrey Brown ’13, a member of R.E.A.C.H., explained that the change was made because “[R.E.A.C.H.] didn’t want to have a competition with toys because they didn’t want students to buy a bunch of cheap fifty-cent or one-dollar toys just so they could buy more and have a larger quantity.” Andie DiBiase ’13 adds, “We felt that people were donating presents for the wrong cause. They would only do it for the competition rather than actually considering how many kids they were helping.” She also says of the quality of toys this year, “We have received better quality toys this year from not doing the competition.” Including the candy cane sales has been a huge success for R.E.A.C.H. Regarding the candy canes, Andie states, “Selling candy canes has really allowed us to raise more money than we hoped. We realized that people were upset about no toy competition between classes, but it turns out that changing it to the candy canes helped us buy just as many toys.” Both of the R.E.A.C.H. members were happy with the drive’s success. Overall, the WRA community was able to contribute 291 toys to Toys for Tots. 146 of those were collected in the library, while the other 145 were bought with the money from the candy cane sales.

Vespers, Messiah Sing traditions brighten holiday season

Photo by Suwondo

Edited by Suwondo

From left, choir members Joanna Olding ’12, Caroline Depew ’12, and Gen Bettendorf ’12 participate in Vespers.

Students set up decorations all over campus in an enthusiastic display of holiday spirit.

Photos by Suwondo

Morgan speaker promotes entrepreneurship

John Dearborn, president of JumpStart Inc., shares experience with students

by Max Forsyth ’15

On November 29, John Dearborn, President of JumpStart Inc. and father of alumni Jed ’03 and Mandy ’04, visited WRA as the twentieth Burton D. Morgan Speaker. He spoke to the student body and faculty about the capital growth of the number of entrepreneurs in Northeast Ohio and all across the United States. He began his presentation with a question: “Who here has had an idea upon which they thought they could start a business or knows someone who has had an idea?” After waiting for members of his audience to raise their hands, he then asked “Who has followed through with their idea?” Dearborn, in response to the lack of raised hands, said to his audience that “until you put your ideas into action and take the initiative you’ll continue to have just ideas.” He proceeded to encourage the student body to start taking risks and developing intricate plans for their dreams to turn them into a reality. Dearborn’s speech generated discussion from students and faculty alike. Faculty master Patrick Smith was motivated by the speaker to “think about what we teach, how we teach it, and what we can do in our classrooms to help prepare students for this facet of their professional lives.” It seemed to him that “learning about learning, good interpersonal skills, and developing the ability to be creative and somewhat adventuresome is critical to becoming an entrepreneur.” Although Daniel Crowder ’12 was skeptical about Dearborn’s inability to provide “measurable results” regarding the success rate of businesses sponsored by JumpStart over time, he said, “I’m not surprised that a growing number of students are interested in starting their own businesses sponsored by JumpStart Inc., shares experience with students.”

Assistant Head of School William Bugg notes that Dearborn’s speech generated discussion from students and faculty alike. Faculty master Patrick Smith was motivated by the speaker to “think about what we teach, how we teach it, and what we can do in our classrooms to help prepare students for this facet of their professional lives.” It seemed to him that “learning about learning, good interpersonal skills, and developing the ability to be creative and somewhat adventuresome is critical to becoming an entrepreneur.” Although Daniel Crowder ’12 was skeptical about Dearborn’s inability to provide “measurable results” regarding the success rate of businesses sponsored by JumpStart over time, he said, “I’m not surprised that a growing number of students are interested in starting their own businesses sponsored by JumpStart Inc.”
Positive potential for reading day changes

by Nathan Hulsay ’12

Exam week is here once again, and as always, the typical exam week study habits will begin to arise among the student body. Normally they range across the board from “go in and gut it” to carefully-planned study scheduling so that some time may be used as efficiently as possible. Regardless of this period’s study habits, everyone tends to anxiously await the “reading day” that precedes the first exam of the week. Things have changed since I was a student and while exams week now begin mid-week through the week, reading day has been altered and reshuffled. Of course at a glance like WRA, any amount of tampering with one of the few days of assured free time causes a stir. But of course what I mean by “free time is time to take a break from work so we can do other homework.” I know this certainly applies to me, and I’m sure it does to many others too. Luckily, it seems to have been changed yet again for our cherished reading day. As opposed to last year, where we had only five free periods, this year the yearbook had two. Hopefully this helped all those who needed the extra time to prepare for exams, which now start on a Thursday. This reading day is still, however, far from the way things were when I was a freshman at Reserve. We used to have the entire day free as a chance to get a little extra sleep before a week of hard work and stress—one last day to cram for that next day’s exam. Unfortunately, however, this was altered when it seemed too many students began viewing the reading day as a free day. While I do not dispute the fact that the majority of the student body does not use the day designated for study to its full potential, I have never gotten past the feeling that many students are being penalized who now have less time to not study. I suppose it comes down to how you view the shortened periods as needed-class review time or periods that could be better spent studying for the next day’s exam by yourself. Whichever way you see it, I have a hopeful outlook for this new change, but as always, we will just all have to wait and see.

The Black Friday affair

by Abigail Hermosilla ’14

It’s hard to comprehend the silly things we do as humans in this modern age, especially when it is at two AM and in the middle of Walmart. Mobs of sleep-deprived yet determined shoppers flocked from corner to corner, struggling to grab onto the few waffle makers and DVD copies of Inception that remained. This is a typical Black Friday: The shopping everything is on sale, everyone runs, stores and malls open in the wee morning hours right after a day of giving thanks for the non-materialistic things in our lives i.e. not waffle-makers. Oh, just their new layout by post that year. My personal experience with the pseudo-holiday includes drizzly stumbling through Hot Topic at three in the morning with hundreds blaring in my face and the force of angest-uppered teenagers shoving me to the ground. Other students at Reserve who participated in the shopping frenzy agree that this was like no usual trip to the mall. Tifany Wang ’13 said, “Well, when I went to Ross last year at two AM, it was super crowded and everyone was running everywhere. All the employees were freaking out because they had just been changed yet again for our cherished reading day which has been changed yet again for our cherished reading day which tends to anxiously wait the “reading day” that certainly applies to me, and I’m sure it does to many students besides those with good ideas based on their talents.”

Vespers

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Faculty member Joe DiBiase took away from the speech that “a good entrepreneur does not need to be an expert in everything, I guess I was there more for the atmosphere, I was just there for the atmosphere.”

Holiday Traditions

by Kyle Nelson ’14

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or another holiday, the middle of December is filled with excitement. Whether cramming for exams, or trying to fit in multiple trips to Carolhers per day, students around campus are doing as much as possible before heading home for break. Most of this excitement is due to the anticipation for the upcoming holidays, which students celebrate in their own unique way.

When asked how they spend their winter holidays, many students replied with the expected answers: enjoying time with family, attending church on Christmas Eve, exchanging presents with their relatives each winter, or lighting the menorah with their families. Trevor Lim ’13 said he was “looking forward to watching the NRA season start on Christmas.” Christmas isn’t the only holiday that students celebrate. In Belgium, we celebrate Saint Nicholas. Saint Nicholas comes on December 6 for our little cousins; they put their shoes by the fireplace and get chocolate and candy if they were good but coal if they were bad. My cousin also leaves carolers by the fireplace for the horse that Santa rides, Pauline Van Dijk ’13 said. Saint Nicholas Day is not only celebrated in Belgium, but throughout parts of Europe. Saint Nicholas arrives to the Netherlands by steamboat in late November and travels around Europe by horse. When giving presents, he is accompanied by his helper, Zwarte Piet. Victorias Boninger ’14 explained her family’s tradition: “it begins in the morning when we open our advent-calendar. We get a little present every day and...”

on the Nicholas day we gave them a bigger one. Then we go for lunch and eat a goose. In the late afternoon we go to the village, then St.Nicholas comes and all the children run to him and get candy.”

Max Rosenwasser ’13 explained his favorite things about the holidays and how he celebrates Hanukkah, saying “I love all the snow, sledding, singing, and high spirits of the holiday season. The aroma of great latkes rising from the frying pan is also irresistible. But what I love most, is lighting the menorah, everyone getting to do a candle, and seeing the faces of my family and friends as they light the fire.”

“Whatever your traditions are, the Reserve Record wishes you a safe and fun holiday season.

HOLIDAY SUPERLATIVES

10 Best Holiday Movies

Spirits are lifting as the holiday’s approaches quickly. Not feeling the holiday cheer yet? These movies may get you in the mood:

1. A Charlie Brown Christmas
2. Elf
3. Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas
4. A Christmas Carol
5. The Nightmare Before Christmas
6. It’s a Wonderful Life
7. A Christmas Story
8. Polar Express
9. Miracle on 34th Street
10. Home Alone
Athlete spotlight: Caroline Depew ’12

By Shivani Shah ’13

Returning varsity captain Caroline Depew ’12 has made a variety of contributions to the swim team. Due to hard sets and long meets, swimming can be a very demanding sport, but Depew ’12 still has an enthusiasm that ignites spirit in her teammates. Although the swim team had a rough start in the beginning of the season at the Solon Relays, Depew ’12 has an ability to always keep the team motivated. Her coach Michael Bonomo notices this, saying “Caroline contributes greatly as a leader and a swimmer.” On top of that, Bonomo also says he is proud of the hard work that Caroline has shown throughout her swimming career. Depew’s younger brother Jonathan Depew ’14 has also observed her efforts. He says that his sister is a “passionate young leader both in the pool and off the deck.”

Though Depew ’12 is a great leader and determined swimmer, she knows when to have fun. Her peers rave about how enjoyable she is to have on the team. “She is always happy,” remarks Hannah Wells ’13. Megan Barsella ’13 says, “Caroline is a great Captain, she makes practice fun and knows exactly how to make everyone feel better.” Fellow senior Wells says “she is a firecracker for sure.”

Looking ahead to the upcoming season, the team shows great potential. Bonomo predicts through hard work and dedication, Depew will continue to grow as a swimmer and make even more extraordinary contributions this winter.