



Hanukkah Through the Ages

Jared Lederman, Freshman
PHOTO MANAGER

Hanukkah dates back more than 2000 years to 156 BCE. It is a celebration of both the hard-fought battle between the Syrians and the Jews and the repairing of the temple which had been previously ransacked by the invaders. The story says a small army called the Maccabees only won the battle because of a miracle bestowed upon them by God. After the battle, the Jews rebuilt and purified their temple, and in celebration, they stated that the eight days following their victory were to be dedicated to that day. The holiday is sometimes referred to as the Festival of Lights because to celebrate their victory, the Maccabees lit the menorah they had put up in the temple.

Nowadays, the message is still the same, however, many of the traditions have changed. People still light menorahs each night and still play with dreidels, but the menorah is lit with a match instead of oil. Today, the menorah is brought inside for decoration and celebration, however, in the Maccabees' days, the menorah was brought inside to defend against attackers. There are also many customs that go along with Hanukkah now that were not mentioned

in the story; for example, we eat potato latkes and jelly doughnuts, both of which are cooked in oil symbolizing the oil used to light the original menorah. Another tradition is handing out chocolate coins known as gelt, which are used in a game with dreidels, the little tops that have Hebrew letters on the sides.

In my family, we follow many of those traditions, but we have some of our own as well. Each night of Hanukkah, each person lights a menorah. Another tradition that we have done is a Yankee Swap: all of our friends and family are invited, and it is a lot of fun. Despite these separate traditions, we do follow all of the classic ones mentioned above. The common Hanukkah tradition of giving gifts was never mentioned by Judas—that custom was implemented based on the Christmas ritual, and it is now part of nearly every Hanukkah celebration, including ours. Despite being considered a minor Jewish holiday, Hanukkah is always very fun, and everyone always enjoys seeing friends and family and eating good food.

Happy Holidays from Me and My Apathy

Kate Gardner, Junior
OPINION EDITOR

Open scene. I'm cutting the plastic netting from a Christmas tree with a cheese knife. I'm using a short, stubby cheese knife because I want to reduce the likelihood of my getting stabbed, or stabbing my sister. If I stabbed my sister, even two weeks in advance, it would probably ruin Christmas.

The point is, the older I get, the less emotional weight the holidays carry. As a kid, even in a household of heretics, there was the magic of getting reverse-robbed by Santa. It wasn't even just the traditions themselves that were exciting, but the feeling of them. In the days leading up to winter break, even the most mundane things were somehow better. I can't pinpoint the year my holiday spirit died, but somewhere between ten and sixteen, my excitement turned to apathy. And I have an idea of why:

The holidays are more often than not a time of well-intentioned mediocrity. Someone tries an ambitious, festive recipe that everyone else politely avoids. You buy someone a piece of cheap kitsch and open their expensive gift with yawning dread. If you're like me, the accumulated mounds of packaging make you think not of sleigh bells and joy but rather strangled wildlife. The inevitable conclusion: humanity is awful, especially Black Friday shoppers. Not only is humanity awful, but by eating Christmas cookies, you are somehow complicit.

And what about your acquaintances? If Acquaintance A gets something, then of course you have to get Friend of a Friend B something, too. If you don't vomit your life savings on even the most distant periphery of your social circle, you're the bad guy.

How about I illustrate my point? The aforementioned cheese knife, a Christmas gift, is a complete carbuncle, a stain on the world of cutlery. It's an object that says: 'Here, I'm trying to look cultured at a dinner party.' Or: 'Here, I don't actually know the distant relation I'm buying this for, but if I spend a little too much on something bland I will offend no one and still convey my deep filial love.' Sorry, distant relative, Gen Z snowflake here. I am offended by useless gifts. I'm also upset people feel that if they don't give gifts, they have failed their loved ones.

Adult Christmas should be more than a one night stand with capitalism. It's time we leave behind the excess consumption the holidays have come to represent. We can relieve the stress associated with gift giving. We can also cut down the waste we produce through shipping, packaging, and wrapping gifts. Statistically, the holidays make people feel isolated. Reach out. Just being present is the best gift of all.

Adults Mocking Teens and Children in the Media isn't New, But it is Wrong

Caroline Johnson, Junior
REPORTER

President Donald Trump's recent tweet about teenage climate change activist Greta Thunberg has sparked a lot of criticism and outrage, but it's not the first time an adult in a position of power has targeted a minor in the media. The sixteen-year-old, who is a passionate and powerful environmentalist, was declared Time's Person of the Year. Shortly after this was announced, Trump tweeted that her winning the honor was, "So ridiculous," and that she should "work on her anger management," telling the teen, to "Chill Greta, Chill!" Of course, being a minor doesn't make the opinions of young, public activists like Thunberg immune from criticism. However, a child or teen being in the public eye does not make them fair game for mockery or bullying, especially when it is done for an adult's own personal or political motives. Frequently, adults use children as a way to get at another intended target, as though it is a lesser evil to attack a minor rather than an adult, cause, or institution.

Not only have politicians targeted young activists, but more often than not, the children of political adversaries are targeted as a way of attacking their parents. In 2014, Congresswoman Elizabeth Lauten wrote a harsh tweet about Sasha and Malia Obama's attire and expressions during the turkey pardoning ceremony. Lauten told the two teenage girls to "dress like they deserve respect, not a spot at a bar," and that they should "try showing a little class," before throwing a not-so-subtle jab at her real targets: Barack and Michelle Obama. Her real intention was to use the girls to call out the Obamas for "[not] respect[ing] their positions very much, or the country for that matter." The girls were just exhibiting what most know as regular teen behavior at a long, boring, and utterly pointless event, and their laughable teenage eye rolling was turned into a political weapon. A similar scenario occurred in 2005 when the children of Chief Justice John Roberts were ridiculed for their outfits by writer and fashion editor Robin Givhan.

Since Jack and Josie Roberts were only four and five at the time, they were clearly not choosing their own Easter egg-colored, 50's-like garb. However, Givhan's article used the children and their clothes to paint their conservative-leaning parents as old-fashioned and snobbish. President Trump's 13-year-old son, Barron, has been subjected to very harsh derision since his father took office, especially on social media outfits like Twitter. To condemn the Trump administration policy that separated children from parents at the Mexican border, actor Peter Fonda tweeted: "We should rip Barron Trump from his mother's arms and put him in a cage with pedophiles." This is a horrifying message about an innocent child that went way too far in an attempt to get a political message across that had absolutely nothing to do with the youngest Trump.

Publicly insulting children and teens as a way of achieving some other political or personal purpose is an unacceptable practice that has become all too common, especially with the rise of social media. Taking on a minor instead of an organization, corporation, or public figure is an easier and less intimidating alternative to taking on a more powerful target, but that does not justify the practice. In fact, it's possibly more condemnable to insult a child than a powerful target, particularly when there are ulterior motives or a larger aim.

In nearly every school in America, there are large colorful posters reading "STOP BULLYING" and assemblies where students are supposed to learn to be more compassionate and accepting towards each other. However, adults constantly abandon these messages that they preach to youth in pursuit of their own selfish motives. In a society where this sort of behavior has become nearly commonplace, how can we demand that children exhibit mature traits like compassion when adults often don't? Can children really learn to be kind if adults often are not kind to children in public settings?

Impeachment: An Update

Sophia Piper, Junior
NEWS EDITOR

Soon after midnight, on December 16th, the House Judiciary Committee released a 650-page report detailing the charges that accuse President Trump of betraying the United States. He is specifically accused of "abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections." This refers to his alleged quid pro quo with the President of Ukraine, where he supposedly threatened to withhold aid if Ukraine did not investigate Joe and Hunter Biden. This led to two articles of impeachment: the first being the abuse of power, the second being the obstruction of Congress (this has connections all the way back to the 2016 Mueller investigation). At long last, the issue persisting since July—arguably, ever since Trump got the Republican nomination—is moving along.

With the House being majority Democrat, it is almost certain that Trump will be impeached on Wednesday. However, with the Senate being majority Republican, it is likely that he will be acquitted in January, barring more than two Republican senators turning against him. Trump has said he wants a lengthy and showy trial to not only clear him of all charges, but also to improve his image in front of the American people in hopes of winning the 2020 election. Yet most Republicans want the trial to be over quickly to avoid the very spectacle the President desires. The trial will begin on January 7th according to



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the plans of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. With opening arguments, rebuttals, witness testimony, questioning, and final arguments, there may be as many as 126 hours of trial.

Although it is more than likely that Trump will not be removed from office, the scenario in which he does get removed is interesting to think about. Mike Pence, easily more conservative than Trump, would assume the presidency. Pence, a self-described "Christian, conservative, and Republican, in that order," would not go over well with basically all left-wingers and even some right-wingers. He has stated that the legalization of gay marriage marks the start of "societal collapse," something that even President Trump disagrees with. Also, it would be wrong to assume that Trump would vanish off the face of the Earth. His Twitter, given he would have more time to tweet, would be crazier than ever; he would constantly be making appearances on news stations; he would probably write a few scathing books or start a YouTube channel. There is no situation in which Trump would accept a loss peacefully, but it doesn't mean that Democrats will stop trying.

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