



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!



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**W**elcome to the December 2023 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by members of The Florida Youth Council! For this special issue of *The Noodle*, members of the FYC wrote about how their favorite holiday traditions. This allowed members to share what holidays mean to them, and how traditions have impacted their lives. We hope you enjoy learning about our experiences and our thoughts and opinions in this edition of *The Noodle!*

### Current Members:

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# Valuable Lessons in Christmas Movies


Holiday traditions can come in many forms. A holiday tradition is an act of acknowledging and celebrating a holiday in a meaningful way. For instance, some people bake Christmas cookies. Others might light a Menorah for Hanukkah. Regardless of the type of holiday being celebrated, people have their own types of traditions.

This year, I am most excited to watch some of my favorite Christmas movies. In general, I have always enjoyed watching movies. Whether it's at home or at a theater I always absorb myself in the plot of a film. However, Christmas movies can help teach valuable lessons to their audience. This is most prevalent in *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964).

In a nutshell, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* tells a story about a reindeer named Rudolph who was born with a red glowing nose. As a result, Rudolph's parents, the Donners, and Santa felt that Rudolph could not pull a sleigh like the other reindeer. To "fit in" his parents used mud to conceal Rudolph's nose to make it look "normal". This continued for many years, even when Rudolph clearly expressed that he did not want to cover it. However, while Rudolph was socializing with another reindeer, the mud fell off of his nose. The others laughed at him, and Rudolph ends up being expelled from Reindeer practice.



Similarly, Hermey, an elf in Santa's workshop, struggles to make numerous toys and falls very far behind. When he expresses to the Head Elf about why he is behind, referring to his passion in dentistry, this escalates the situation and all the other elves laugh at him. Therefore, Hermey tries to "fit in" by making dolls with realistic teeth instead of attending elf practice. However, this fails since the



Head Elf tells him that he will never fit in. As a result, Hermey is devastated and decides to leave

Sooner or later, both Rudolph and Hermey meet and relate by feeling like they are “misfits,” meaning they feel like outcasts. In correlation, they decide to flee Christmas town, eventually, meeting the Island of Misfit Toys.

In the end, the movie teaches that people should accept others for their differences. In other words, people should be treated respectfully regardless of their interests and/or appearance. This is especially true for the Island of Misfit Toys; who felt that they would never be loved as their counterparts. But at the end of the day, the Misfit Toys were given the love that they deserved; this was also true for Rudolph and Hermey.

In conclusion, I am most excited about is to rewatch Christmas movies this holiday season. Not only are they visually engaging, but they help to teach valuable life lessons to their audience.

*By Viv Banks*



## A Tradition Made Delicious

When I was younger, probably clear back to elementary school, my neighbor across the street used to make me pizzelles. If you are not familiar with them, they are large crispy cookies made in a pizzelle maker which is a lot like a waffle iron. To me they look like a snowflake but when I was little, I called them octopus cookies. I liked them because she made them with vanilla flavor. Other people I think make them with lemon or anise flavor. They were so delicious that a couple times I even asked her to make them for me outside of Christmas. They were the only cookie that I like that didn't contain chocolate. You can actually dip them in chocolate or drizzle them with chocolate syrup, or sprinkle them with powdered sugar, but with my sensory issues I do not like powdered sugar, so we leave that off.

Because I loved this traditional gift from my neighbor so much, I have decided to start my own tradition of making them for my friends and neighbors. I got a pizzelle maker last year after my neighbor moved into a nursing home and I found out they are not terribly difficult to make if you aren't a perfectionist. And since my wonderful neighbor who taught me this tradition passed away recently, I am hoping to honor her by making a few batches this year for friends, neighbors, and parties. Though in full disclosure, I will mostly just be supervising to make sure my mom does it right.

*By Serena Wetmore*







# Memories

The holiday tradition that I am looking forward to is Christmas because of all of the celebrations that I have had over the years. I hope to celebrate another wonderful holiday with my family and friends that we made together.

Another reason why I love Christmas is because I get to have a Christmas movie marathon all day have a lot of good food that we don't usually get any other time of the year. We even get to go to downtown Olustee Park for the celebration and festival that my town has every year. We can look at how much Lake City has grown. Everyone enjoys being together and enjoying the Christmas parade that also brings everyone together in this small town to celebrate the wonderful holiday as one instead of discriminating against people who have difficulty getting around.

The best part is to see all of the amazing decorations that have been put up on the street light poles and the trees in Olustee park. So if you happen to be in the Lake City area please come by and see the Christmas magic that you would love, and you will be saying; "Why have I not been here before now?" That is why Christmas is my favorite holiday tradition that I look forward to celebrating each year. Whether it's gifts, lights, festivals or more. Christmas to me is just the best.

*By Morgan Griffin*





## Celebrating PAL Day

My holiday tradition is to go to Pal Day in Saint Augustine, Florida, every first Saturday of December every year. Pal Day celebrates the service men and women who helped serve our country. I look forward to this day every year because my family goes to the alligator farm, the fort, and the museum. The first one I do is the alligator farm. I go with my lovely nieces and sisters-in-law and take pictures of the alligator or snake. Then we get lunch and spend time together and have fun and happiness. Next, we go to the fort, and you walk through the area where the people lived; now, they also have an area where you watch videos to learn about different things. Then, after the fort, we go to a couple of shops around the area near the fort. For the last thing, we go to the Ripley Museum and up to three floors of different objects. After that, we go to the museum store to buy something, and I always get something for my brother.

*By Leah Gorman*

## Thanksgiving

Holiday traditions are small things I hold dear to my heart. From the smell of macaroni pie Thanksgiving morning (that's Mac and cheese for those in the back, hahaha), to the smell of sugar cookies my mom makes every Christmas Eve. I enjoy seeing the next generation running around the house looking forward to the same cookies I always do.

Sometimes having a disability or any shortcomings that limit your independence or sense of self makes you feel like you lost or you need to do more. But sometimes starting from square one is your best bet. Remembering a time and looking forward to rekindling a time when you're the happiest is essential for all of our growth as individuals. Bake some cookies with mom, make a pie, or even create a new tradition. It's our job to make ourselves happy and in turn we can share that with those around us. Happy holidays everyone!

*By Shevie Barnes*

## Holiday Tradition



Well, it's that time of year again. We just finished Thanksgiving and now it's on to Christmas and New Years holiday season. With that in mind, I thought I'd share some of my favorite traditions I'm excited to experience again.

There are a lot of things that make this time of year a time to have fun and celebrate. For starters, and in my opinion the number one tradition I look forward to this time of year, is that it is the time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Also, it is usually starting to feel a little cooler in the air (but still not cold compared to other places). I look forward to seeing all the Christmas lights up around town. There are always several neighborhoods and one or two public places in town that put up a beautiful display of work. I enjoy listening to the Christmas music including the traditional favorites and a couple you may not have heard of. Tallahassee always has a winter parade, even if it doesn't feel like winter when it is held. Sometimes I go out to the parade but not every year. Why, you ask? It is because every year the city schedules the parade for the same day as the conference championship that my favorite team usually has a good shot at playing in and has actually already punched their ticket to the game this year. Lastly, I obviously enjoy Christmas Day itself. I enjoy everything about it: the presents, the food, and the visiting with my family and friends and watching my baby girl who is almost two open her presents and enjoy the day. All of these things are what makes me look forward to these timeless traditions this upcoming Christmas holiday season.

*By Derek Caraway*

# My Favorite Holiday Tradition

The holiday that I am looking forward to is Thanksgiving because that is when my entire family gets together and celebrates. We talk about what we have been up to and laugh the entire time. It is a lot of fun. We all make fun foods to eat like carrot cake, double eggs, ham, stuffing, and sweet potato casserole.

We sit down as a family to enjoy our food, along with watching some Thanksgiving movies. When we are all done with eating and watching Thanksgiving movies, we take a nap and rest. Sometimes we take a walk outside or take a drive to a store. We thank the Lord for all he has done for us.

I also like Christmas because my dad cooks a great breakfast, we watch Christmas movies, get together as a family, have some more food and interact. We turn on the Christmas tree and listen to Christmas music. We play some games like card games, *Farkle*, and *Life*. After all that fun we thank the Jesus for being the light of the world.



*By: Chelle Saniford*





## Going Skiing

What holiday tradition excites me the most? That is an easy question to answer! Every December, I travel to British Columbia, Canada, to ski at Big White Ski Resort. After three flights we arrive in Kelowna, rent a car, stop for groceries, and drive up the mountain to our condo. The enthusiasm mounts when our ears pop because we are at such a high elevation, pass the chairlifts, see the steep slopes, and watch the temperatures drop. It is only a 45-minute drive, but the anticipation makes it seem longer. I cannot wait to get there.

Skiing is my favorite sport. I love to work on my skills by turning right and left down the runs. I like the challenge of skiing through powder after a snowstorm. It is exhilarating. I ski around trees through the glades and find paths between the snow ghosts (snow ghosts are trees covered with snow and look like the tops of ice cream cones).



Skiing with friends is the most fun, especially around holiday time. Everyone is happy and joyful. Even Santa Claus is on his snowboard. We ski all day and into the night when the lights illuminate the mountain. I'll ski with my friends Rick and Len, Lana and Gail, and Simon and Sandy. We stop at Happy Valley for dinner. We warm up while we eat. After we eat, we get back out on the slopes and ski some more before the lifts close and we go home to rest. On New Year's Eve, we watch the fireworks right outside of our door. If I could, I would spend all my holidays at Big White!

*By John Howard Baldino*

# Family Traditions

My family doesn't really have any holiday traditions. Since extended family lives far away in different states, and close-by relatives work on holidays, it's been difficult to establish any traditions. This Thanksgiving, we are celebrating it on a different day so that we can get together with family. Tuesday will be our Thanksgiving at my brother's and his wife's house.

And Thursday will be Thanksgiving with just myself, Mom and Dad. When I was a little boy, my Dad's parents came to our house every Thanksgiving. And my Mom's parents came to our house every Christmas. For New Years, my grandparents would drive to Virginia and bring my cousins down to Florida to visit me while they were on winter break. Sadly, both of my grandfathers have passed away, and my cousins are married with families of their own.

It's November as I write this. Only my dad has his holiday schedule. My brother and his wife will get theirs just before Christmas. I will get my schedule just before Christmas. So there are no plans in the making for Christmas or New Year's Eve/Day. And we'll wing it once everyone gets their schedules. We try to put up the Christmas tree on Thanksgiving Day or the day after. However, this year we will be at my brother's house for Thanksgiving and Friday will be my first time working retail on Black Friday.





Our Christmas tree ornaments have a tradition. Every year, a John Kruk baseball card that has been made into a Christmas tree ornament gets placed on the tree. He was a baseball player for the Phillies. Craft ornaments that my mom, brother, and I made when we were children go on the tree too. Since Dad didn't make any when he was a child, there are Star Wars snowflake cut outs that he made several years ago. Sometimes our tree topper is a star, sometimes it is an angel. Other times, it's Darth Vader's helmet. There is no rhyme or reason as to which we choose. I guess it's whoever puts whatever on the top of the tree. The important thing about the holidays, whether we are together with extended family or it's just the three of us, is that we know we are loved.

*By JJ Humphrey*



## Holidays are Here... I Can't Wait!

It's been a crazy last couple years for the whole world. We had a pandemic that rocked the world and now we have countries attacking one another left and right. We don't have a lot of this to look forward to anymore these days and to me that's terrible. We are so stuck or distracted trying to keep up with current events that I feel like we've lost ourselves and our traditions. This year I'm going to go all out in bringing some old traditions for the littles to enjoy. I'll share a few.

My family has had a lot of holiday traditions through the years. Some very cookie cutter and some very unique. One of the ones I'm looking forward to bringing back is Jello and movies for the kiddos. When I was a kid, my family used to get all the cousins together and we would go shopping and we'd all pick our own



favorite flavor of Jello, then we went to the dollar store to pick a container to make it in. We all made our Jello at the same time. It was so messy but so very much fun. From grape, to cherry, all the way to lemon/lime. After we all made our Jello's, my aunt had a deep freezer and we would all stack our Jello in there and wait until it was done. We clean after and set up for the part two. You won't believe (or maybe you will) what my family got us with to keep us distracted.

Well, the adults at the time were very creative in keeping us distracted. My favorite thing they did which we kind of use a modified version with my nephews (hahaha)





is the “pick a movie and wait” method. All us cousins had to pick one movie and then narrow all those movie to about three movies and after each movie was watched, we were allowed to get up and check on our Jello to see if it was ready instead of asking every second. If we broke the rule. No Jello! It may seem harsh now, but we were some very hyper cousins, and some of us only saw each other in the holidays so get-togethers were nuts!.

I can go on sharing for days with you story after story after story about all the traditions my family has during the holidays, but take the time after reading this and remember your favorite tradition and how it made you or makes you feel. Make it your goal to reignite that tradition, make new memories, and cherish adding more beautiful ones.

Happy Holidays!

*By Josue Tapia*

**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**





# How Do I Become Part of The Florida Youth Council?

The Florida Youth Council is a group of youth (between the ages of 15 and 17) and emerging leaders (between the ages of 18 and 30) with disabilities or special health care needs that live in Florida.

The Florida Youth Council is all about getting youth and emerging leaders involved in self-advocacy, peer mentoring and other activities that will improve the quality of life for youth and emerging leaders with disabilities in Florida. The program empowers youth and emerging leaders to decide what issues are important to their generation, to discuss those issues in their state and local communities, and to develop strategies to address them.

We are seeking a group of enthusiastic, motivated youth and emerging leaders to participate. If you would like to take a leadership role in advocating for youth and emerging leaders in Florida, please visit The Florida Youth Council website at [www.floridayouthcouncil.com](http://www.floridayouthcouncil.com). The program is open to application year round.

We hope to hear from you soon!



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