




M.S.S.
Gazette

5th Edition





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Editorial

As we are about to step into another year, we find ourselves reflecting on our place not just within our communities or nations, but in the broader tapestry of existence. When we gaze up at the stars, the immense beauty of a spiral galaxy serves as a humbling reminder of the vast universe we inhabit. Against this cosmic backdrop, Earth—a small, fragile speck of life—hosts humanity’s shared struggles, achievements, and hopes.

We are a diverse species, marked by cultural, social, and personal differences that make us unique. Yet, despite these distinctions, we are bound together by a shared humanity. Across the globe, the same values resonate: kindness, compassion, and a desire for connection. Whether it’s through holiday traditions, community efforts, or even small daily acts of kindness, we seek meaning in togetherness. Much like the stars in a galaxy, our individual lives contribute to a greater whole.

But this interconnectedness also comes with responsibility. This past year, we have witnessed significant challenges—global conflicts, political shifts, economic uncertainty, and environmental concerns. These events are not distant headlines; they ripple through every aspect of life, shaping the world we inherit. As the editorial “Analyzing the Year” in this edition of the Gazette reflects, understanding the patterns in history and current events helps us adapt to change and prepare for what lies ahead. If we fail to pay attention to the world around us, we risk being overwhelmed by its complexity.

Yet, there is hope. Just as a galaxy is defined by the harmony of its swirling stars, we too can find balance and purpose through unity. A glance at human history reveals moments of incredible resilience, innovation, and collaboration—proof that when we work together, we can overcome even the most daunting challenges. Whether it’s tackling environmental issues, fostering inclusivity, or building stronger communities, the actions we take today can shape a brighter tomorrow.

So, as we begin a new year, let the stars above remind us of the vast potential within each of us. Though we may seem small in the grand scheme of things, the choices we make and the connections we build have a ripple effect. The universe teaches us that light, no matter how faint, can break through even the deepest darkness.

In the end, our collective story is what defines us. It is written not in the stars, but in the kindness we show one another and the effort we make to build a better world. This year, let’s resolve to write a chapter we can all be proud of.

Kuber V



Different Cultures and Christmas

By: Kuber V

Christmas around the World: A celebration of Traditions, and Culture.

Christmas, celebrated on the 25th of December, is a time of togetherness, joy, and traditions. While the essence of Christmas -love, generosity, and reflection - remains consistent, the ways in which cultures around the world celebrate this festive holiday vary greatly.

Each region of the world infuses its unique customs, flavours, and beliefs into the season, creating a global tapestry of traditions that are both diverse and enchanting.

Let's embark on a journey, to explore how Christmas is celebrated in different corners of the world.

1. United States.

In the US, Christmas is marked with grandeur and festivity. Homes and streets are adorned with twinkling lights, towering Christmas trees, and elaborate decorations. Families exchange gifts and share meals featuring roasted turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, and oftentimes pie. Inspired by Saint Nicholas, the iconic figure, Santa Claus is central to the American Christmas narrative, bringing magic to children who eagerly await gifts on Christmas morning.

Commercialization has also made Christmas synonymous with sales and shopping, with traditions like Cyber Monday and Black Friday kickstarting the holiday season. Despite the flashy exterior, the heart of Christmas in the U.S. remains in the family and the community.

2. Germany: The Origin of Many Traditions

Germany is the birthplace of many Christmas traditions that have spread worldwide, such as the Christmas tree, holiday markets, and the Advent Calendar. During Advent, families will light candles on the Adventskranz (Advent wreath) each Sunday leading up to Christmas.

The Christmas season officially begins on December 6th with Nikolaustag (St. Nicholas Day), when children leave shoes - instead of stockings - to be filled with sweets and small gifts. On Heiligabend (Christmas Eve) families gather to exchange gifts around beautifully decorated trees.

The holiday meal often includes duck, carp, or goose, accompanied by stollen, which is a rich fruitcake dusted with powdered sugar.

3. Philippines: The Longest Christmas Season

The Philippines is renowned for having the longest Christmas season in the world, beginning as early as September. The celebrations blend vibrant Filipino culture with Christian faith. One of the most iconic traditions is Simbang Gabi, a series of nine pre-drawn Masses leading up to Christmas Eve. Completing these Masses is believed to grant wishes.

Filipinos decorate their homes with brightly lit star-shaped lanterns called parols, symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem. On Nochebuena, families will gather for a feast featuring bibingka (rice cake), lechon (roasted pig), and queso de bola (edam cheese). The holiday extends well into January with the Feast of the Three Kings.

4. Australia: Christmas in Summer

Christmas in Australia falls during the summer, offering a unique twist to traditional celebrations. Instead of snow, Australians enjoy barbecues on the beach, outdoor picnics, and water activities. Families often gather for a meal of seafood, ham, and pavlova, a dessert topped with fresh fruit. Carols by Candlelight is a popular tradition, with communities gathering in parks to sing Christmas carols under the stars. Despite the warm weather, Australians embrace traditional symbols like Christmas trees and Santa Claus, often depicted in shorts and sunglasses.

Unity in Diversity

The ways in which cultures celebrate Christmas reflect their unique histories, beliefs, and values. Yet, at its core, Christmas remains a time to cherish loved ones, spread kindness, and find joy in the season's magic. Whether it's through lighting a candle, sharing a meal, or singing a carol, the spirit of Christmas transcends borders, uniting people in a shared celebration of humanity.

Analyzing the Year



By: Abel Biju

Now this might be a bit controversial, at least in terms of the implications, but history does have patterns; ones that we evidently can see after they happen. Look at the world right now, a lot of elections have happened. The world is in conflict, with many wars and tensions. Most notable (to us at least) would be the current Russo-Ukrainian War, and the Israeli-Palestine war/conflict (depending on current conditions), but there are many more, I mean dozens with varying levels of complexity and severity. Take for example the recent event in Syria, so much history is in it, and there are many factions (though most are united under something)

Look at the current situations going on in the world, across its various areas/aspects, such as economics, diplomacy, politics, quality of life, health, social norms and many more. What trends are there, what things are so interconnected because they have so many correlations that it can't be coincidental? Now, don't become conspiracy theorists, but do think about what could happen, what could change, and what may become reality in the coming days, weeks, months, and years.

The year is almost at its end, and a lot of stuff has happened during it, as well as the years prior. We can sit around (probably looking at our phones) and just barely acknowledge the events that happen around us. With this brief acknowledgment, there may come quick thoughtless decisions or a lack of actual "care" about what's happening. Or we can look at what's happening and predict what might happen. We can predict by looking at the patterns and trends of the world.

We each have different interests and talents, but as citizens, not of our country (whichever that may be) but citizens of our world, we should look at what's happening cause knowingly or not, we will be affected. Our carelessness may very be our downfall. We must be attentive and try to understand the world, for if we don't, we will be hit like a truck by what is essentially the chaos of this world.

The world is shifting, but not in ways that are unseen, we will all face change yet we will also see recurrences, and we can connect the things of the past with the things of the present. We live in a world of chaos, and we try to find order and if we can't we try to make it (which ties so much into many other things, mainly distinguishing between things, like what differentiates language from another, but that's another thing).

Sorry if I bored you, but us being careless will be our downfall or at least a part of it. We aren't the stars in a show and we depend so much on others, that we must see the patterns of the world and adapt accordingly.

Welcome to 2025!

January 15 - PAC Meeting in Library
@ 7pm

January 16 – **January 21** - Ministry
Assessments

January 17 - Mission's Rising Stars
@6:30pm at Clarke Foundation
Theatre

January 4 - Dry Grad Bottle Drive at
MSS Bus Loop 9am – 5pm.

January 6 - School Reopens after
winter break.

January 7 - International Pizza
Lunch in Gym A

January 23 - Term 2 Ends

January 24 - Semester Turn Around
– Students are not in Session

January 22 – **January 23** - Capstone
Presentations

January 27 - Term 3 Begins

For Grads:

December 18 - Grad Photo Retakes!
Please see grad email for details.

December 20 - Last deadline to submit grad quote + baby photo.



Scan me for Grad quote

Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour

By: Kuber V

Experience the magic of the Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour in Abbotsford

This holiday season, the Mt. Lehman community in Abbotsford invites you to get into the festive spirit with the Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour. Scheduled for December 16-17 and December 21-23 from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., this event is a unique opportunity to explore homes that have been featured in over 50 Hallmark Christmas movies.

A Hallmark Experience

Known as the picturesque backdrop for many Hallmark movies, the Mt. Lehman neighbourhood is a true Hallmark experience. During the tour, visitors are invited to experience the magic up close. The event also features live music and delicious holiday treats to complement the festive atmosphere.

Plan Your Visit

To ensure a smooth experience, it's recommended to purchase tickets in advance, as specific time slots are available and cannot be changed or refunded. The tour is designed as a walking experience within one country block, with transportation provided for those in need. Please note that photography is not permitted inside the homes, but there are numerous opportunities for photos outside and on decks.

Supporting a worthy cause

In addition to the celebration of the holiday season, the Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour has a charitable purpose. International Justice Mission (IJM), an organization dedicated to fighting human trafficking and modern slavery, receives all proceeds from ticket sales. In keeping with the community's commitment to making a positive impact, participants contribute to the movement to eradicate human trafficking by participating in the tour.

Event Details

- Dates: December 16-17 and December 21-23, 2023
- Time: 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- Location: Mt. Lehman Community, Abbotsford, BC
- Tickets: Tickets cost \$30 for general admission, \$28 for seniors (65 and older), and \$10 for children (5-12). Children under 5 are free.

Additional Attractions

The tour offers more than beautifully decorated homes. Throughout the neighborhood, visitors can enjoy the Christmas Café, Candy Cottage, and live music. Adding an interactive element to the experience, a QR code scavenger hunt allows participants to discover which movies have featured the homes.

Experience the magic of the Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour in Abbotsford

Join the Mt. Lehman community this December to celebrate the holiday season in a setting reminiscent of a Hallmark movie, all while contributing to a noble cause. Experience the warmth, joy, and generosity that define the Mt. Lehman Christmas Home Tour.

Source: <https://tourismabbotsford.ca/holiday-happenings-in-abbotsford/>

Shadows on the Snowbanks

By: Grayson Young

It was December 20th nearing Christmas time, and the festivity was going round fast, but darkness would soon fall upon our little town. Rhode Island winters are typically harsh, with this one being no exception. My name is Elaine Shepherd, and my brother Steve had a hobby of urban exploring, that is when he wasn't working at Petco. What happened was about nine days ago, and the police are currently doing all they can to investigate.

Steve decided to take his camcorder to the forest that bordered the infamous Arnold estate, the allegedly haunted house that tormented the Perron family back in the seventies.

The snow poured hard onto the ground the day he left. I tried protesting, but he was insistent - unfortunately, my brother was very stubborn. He did not come home that night, and Mom and I called him repeatedly. Several days went by since he had disappeared, and I feared for the worst. Two days ago, I could no longer bear the sorrow of not knowing where my brother was. So, I left, alone, to go to the Arnold estate, and try to find my Steve.

After about 45 minutes of driving in the harsh snow, I found the road that leads down to the now-vacant Arnold estate. It was recently sold to another owner, but they would not move in until winter was over. I drove my Bronco down the road, parked near the estate, and stepped out, my feet crunching under the thick snow. As I slammed the car door it seemed louder than usual, but that is when I realized the uncomfortable silence that permeated the area. I remember nearly jumping out of my skin when I heard what sounded like a whisper in my ear. I flung my head around in all directions, staring at the dark cloudy skies and the vacant tree line ahead. I tried my hardest to shrug it off, but I could not get it out of my head.

I fixed my coat and headed out toward the tree line. I remember seeing the sun getting darker in the sky as time passed, but my mission to find my brother outweighed my time management. As I crossed into the forest from the line, I swear I heard a twig snap. My eyes were then locked in that direction. I remember thinking, "An animal?" but no, it was no animal, because I began to hear a strange croaking sound like a person was making it in their throat. And then it was followed by a kind of giggling, not from a child, but from a grown man. They were deep, but loud, so loud that it was the only thing that I could hear in the dead silent woods.

Another branch snapped. This one was closer. I flipped around and saw a man, he was tall, around maybe 6.5 he just stared at me, unmoving, but I had an overwhelming feeling that he had an insidious agenda. The sound of the giggling had stopped at this point, and it was only me and him in an unbreaking staring contest.

I heard that same whisper as before and involuntarily jolted my head over to see what it was. I saw about a meter away was standing a child. A boy wearing an old school train cap, with overalls, and a baggy long-sleeved shirt. He looked up at me, and I felt my stomach fall. He was deathly pale, with no eyes, just black sockets. And his mouth dropped unnaturally wide to reveal what seemed like an abyss, toothless, dark, and unthinkable. A deafening scream came from the boy's mouth, as black liquid began to seep out of his eyes, nose, and mouth, dripping onto the snow.

He flung backwards into a bridge position, and contorted his arms and legs backwards, still shrieking like a wild animal. I could hear the bones shifting in his body, and at this point I ran for my bronco still visible through the trees. I turned and saw the boy crawling toward me at high speeds. His movements resembled a spider as he rapidly maneuvered through the snow.

I reached my bronco, parked on the road. I got in and slammed the door as hard as I possibly could. The boy flung up onto the windshield, and a giant black tongue shot out of his terrible maw. It left a trail of black slime across the snowy glass. I rammed my keys into the ignition and started the car. As I backed out of the road, he rolled off the windshield. I put the car in drive, pressed the gas, and ran him over. I heard the thud beneath my tires which was followed by an even louder shriek. I saw the boy run back into the tree line, carrying a limp arm behind him. I saw that standing along the trees were people, black figures watching in enjoyment as I fled.

I saw that one of them was my brother, Steve, dead just like the others. Now I know what happened to him. But it was not the closure I was hoping for.

Media Report

By: Ben

Jschlatt is a Youtuber who got popular over the pandemic for being a part of the DreamSMP, a Minecraft server hosted by the Youtuber Dream. In December of last year Jschlatt put out a cover of the song 'My Way' by Frank Sinatra, because at the time people were making AI covers of songs using Jschlatt's voice, and he thought it would be funny if he sung better than the AIs. Afterwards people started asking for a Christmas album and Jschlatt thought that making a Christmas album would be really funny. Jschlatt spent thousands and thousands of dollars to make this album, hiring an arranger, a composer, a vocal coach, and a bunch of musicians to make the backing instrumentals. He recorded this at the famous Sound Factory in Hollywood, California, the same place that artists like Doja Cat and Frank Sinatra himself recorded at! Jschlatt was actually able to use the exact microphone that Frank Sinatra used when he recorded his albums, truly completing the vibe.

His album is called A Very 1999 Christmas, which is a play on Frank Sinatra's, A Very Sinatra Christmas. The cover art of the album is a call back to Dean Martin's, The Dean Martin Christmas Album. The name is based around an inside joke of the Jschlatt fanbase, where in his videos he jokes about having committed atrocities in 1999, his birth year. But how does the actual album hold up?

Well! Happy Holiday is the fourth, and best song on the album. Happy Holiday is the most upbeat song on the album, which is what makes it so good, besides the music. The song embodies the feeling and spirit of the Christmas season, even making people who may not really care for Christmas feel that holiday cheer. The highlight for this would be at the 2:10 mark where the song really ramps these feelings up with Schlatt pushing his voice a little bit harder that really drives home the festive feeling. As for the actual music, Schlatt's vocals are simply perfect, smooth and velvety. This song lets his voice shine, showing off his range. His voice feels very round, like a rollercoaster, fluctuating a lot, which makes the song musically interesting and keeps you engaged. This song also has a backing choir which adds a feeling of community that you don't get with a lot of Christmas songs nowadays, and Christmas is really all about community. If you were to choose any song to listen to from the album, I would have to recommend Happy Holiday for its true Christmas feeling and the warm feeling it gives me.

Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Is the third song on the album and is another great song, being among the best renditions of the song. The song has this very cozy feel to it, like sitting in front of a fireplace with your friends and family. Schlatt's vocals contribute to this pleasant atmosphere, feeling like a drizzling of honey. The backing instrumental is very low-key, really complimenting his voice- the strings and flutes especially. The piano adds this level of jazzy class that just can't be replicated. Everything comes together musically to make this homey atmosphere ensuring this song will be played for years to come. The only thing I wish is that the song lasts a little longer. It sits at 1:56 and I think if it hit the 2-minute mark or maybe even just a little over, it would elevate the song; the song ends kind of abruptly and I wish I could savour the song for a tad longer.

Santa Claus Is Coming To Town is the first song on the album and is a definite classic. Its very jazzy and has an amazing horn section. The best part of the song is just near the end where he really pushes his vocals.

The Christmas Song is the second and my least favourite song on the album by far. It's a slower song, making me really tired, not to mention how it's been ruined by the "chestnuts roasting on an open fire" meme.

Baby Its Cold Outside is the fifth song on the album, another favourite of mine. While this may be a controversial song to cover, Schlatts voice just fits the song perfectly, and the instruments are beautiful.

White Christmas is the sixth song on the album, another slow one. It's a lovely song, and the more I listen to it the more it grows on me. It has a section with just the choir and that is my favourite part of the song.

It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year is the seventh song, and is a very jolly song, a shift from White Christmas. It fits right in with Happy Holiday, having a perfect Christmas spirit feeling, capturing the feeling of the holidays.

Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas is the eighth and final song on the album. Its again a slow song and personally I wouldn't have ended on this song, but this is still a great song to end on. It has a jazzy saxophone solo, which makes me happy.

The entire album is great, the effort Schlatt put into this album is evident and is shown in every song that you listen to. The album has this warm cozy feeling and, as someone who really hated Christmas songs, I can say that this album has made my heart grow three sizes bigger.

