

CONNECTION

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Community Homes & Services
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Chas Looks Back on 2022

2023 is approaching... or I should say Yikes!!! It's 2023 already! And, by the way, it also happens to be the Silver Anniversary year for CH&S!

I suppose I can start listing our accomplishments over the past 25 years or start laying out our visions for the next 25 years... but instead, I think I just need to speak from the heart.

I look at the daily dance we do, and I look at our many students and staff, some new, some who have moved on, and some who have been here for all or most of it... and I see people learning together, caring together, growing together, and bringing love... everything a community should be all about... not always easy, not exactly perfect... but rich, beautiful, and real!

For me, it has been a very goosebumpy road, to say the least. 25 years and counting!



A Holiday Panel Discussion

The holiday season can be overwhelming, or even depressing, for some. Darnell invited a panel of students and staff to focus upon and share favorite holiday things that bring comfort and joy. Here is her report:

What is your favorite holiday movie?

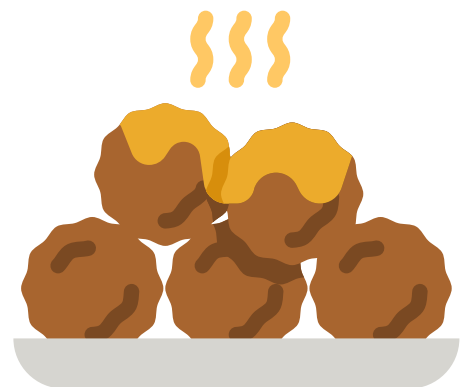
The clear winner was *The Grinch* with Jim Carrey (Zachary, Yvette, and Devlin). A runner-up would be *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (Justin and Martha). Honorable mentions go to *The Muppet Family Christmas* (Jennifer), *"Home Alone"* (Bruce) and *"The Polar Express"* (Colleen).

What is your favorite holiday song?

Again we had a stand-out song—"Jingle Bells" (Martha, Aiden, Iris, and Connor) take the top spot. Next is "Silent Night" (Cat and Nino). I was rooting for Adam Sandler's "The Chanukah Song," but I'm a weirdo. We had a vote for "White Christmas" (Devlin) and "Deck the Halls" (Andrew N.), and "You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch" (Zachary).

What is your favorite holiday food?

People overwhelmingly like turkey for the holidays (Cat, Martha, Justin, Devlin, and Yvette). Second place was cookies (Connor and Andrew N.). And we had some interesting variations with holiday bread (Iris), Ham (Zachary), noodles (Aiden), meatballs (Nino), Jennifer's famous Parker House rolls, and cracked crab (Bruce—yum!)





Darnell's Panel Discussion Continues

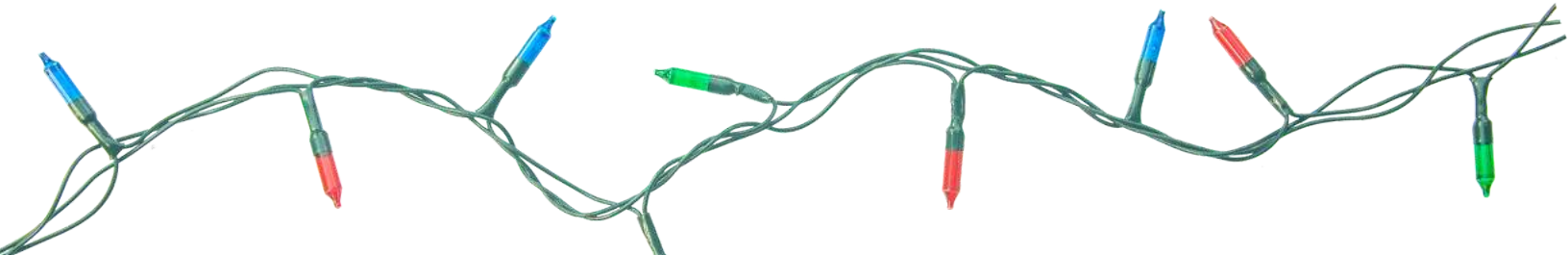
What is your favorite holiday tradition?

- Andrew, Martha and Iris like to open presents on Christmas day.
- Cat and Zachary love decorating the tree.
- Devlin and Colleen like spending time with loved ones.
- Aiden loves going up north—his grandmother lives in Orland, CA near Chico.



In MY view, this is the most important question. It is said that you cannot be sad and grateful at the same time. So reflecting on this question often can only do you good. **So, what are you most thankful for?**

- **Cat:** The clothes on my back
- **Connor:** My computer
- **Yvette:** Having a roof over my head
- **Aiden:** Having a nice time with my dad
- **Darnell:** My family, including my lovely new DIL
- **Jennifer:** My family
- **Colleen:** Family and friends
- **Bruce:** My health
- **Andrew N.:** That there are new Star Wars books out
- **Iris:** My brother
- **Nino:** Christmas food
- **Zachary:** Maria
- **Martha:** My new group home
- **Justin:** Everything!





DECEMBER 2022 NATIONAL DAYS

by Jennifer

Fruitcake Month
National Cat Lovers' Month

- 12/1 - Rosa Parks Day
- 12/3 - International Day of People with Disabilities
- 12/4 - **National Cookie Day**
- 12/8 - National Brownie Day
- 12/9 - **National Llama Day**
- 12/10 - Dewey Decimal System Day
- 12/11 - **National App Day**
- 12/12 - **Gingerbread House Day**
- 12/13 - National Cocoa Day
- 12/15 - **National Cupcake Day**
- 12/16 - Ugly Christmas Sweater Day
- 12/18 - **Hanukkah Begins**
- 12/21 - Crossword Puzzle Day and Humbug Day
- 12/24 - Christmas Eve
- 12/25 - **Christmas Day**
- 12/26 - **Holiday Break CLOSED**
- 12/31 - New Year's Eve



Weird: The Al Yankovic Story

A Movie Review

by Jennifer

Because Andrew is the foremost authority on the parody music of the one and only Weird Al Yankovic, we were all super excited to hear about the new biopic movie about Weird Al! After following news of its production closely, we held a cinema day (that turned into several days as technical difficulties abounded) to screen *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story* as a group. *Weird* was very much a parody of Weird Al's actual life, and many liberties were taken to tell an embellished story. Katie would have preferred a more factual biopic of Weird Al's life, particularly when making fun of pretty serious childhood traumas, and Connor says he did not think the movie was funny. Andrew appreciated the epic fight scene between Weird Al and drug cartel Pablo Escobar, which was an over-the-top parody of action movies. Nino's favorite parts were the smoochy-love scenes between Madonna and Weird Al. Cat totally rocked out to the many musical numbers of classic Weird Al songs, such as "Eat It", and "Like a Surgeon". Another particularly funny fight scene that had Jennifer cackling was a John Wick-inspired brawl in a diner in which Weird Al (played by Harry Potter himself, Daniel Radcliff, btw) kicks the butts of roughly a dozen thugs armed only with a dish towel while (and this is the hilarious part) some hard-core accordion music blares. While we can't say for certain it was worth fighting with the smart tv for three solid days to get through *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*, we're glad we were able to conquer our movie Everest and screen the whole thing, and recommend it to super-fans of Weird Al with a strong internet connection and/or a great deal of patience.

EGGS

We noshed on the world's most perfect protein—the egg. Here are some interesting egg facts:

- Harriet, a hen from the United Kingdom, laid the world's largest egg in 2010. Her astonishing egg measured 9.1 inches in diameter.
- The hen's diet determines the color of the yolk. Some producers feed natural supplements like marigold petals so that their hens lay eggs with brighter yolks.



- Chef hats traditionally have pleats equal to the number of ways that you can cook an egg.

- Brown eggs are more expensive because the hens that lay them are larger and eat more feed.
- To tell the difference between a raw egg and a hard cooked one, spin it. Hard cooked eggs spin easily, raw eggs wobble.
- If you drop an egg on the floor, you can sprinkle it heavily with salt for easy clean up.
- A hen turns her egg nearly 50 times a day to keep the yolk from sticking to the side.
- There are several reasons why commonly we eat chicken eggs instead of duck or turkey eggs. Chickens lay more eggs, they need less nesting space, and they don't have the strong mothering instincts of turkeys and ducks, which makes egg collection easier.
- Kiwis lay the largest eggs in relation to their body size of any species of bird.
- According to the Farmers' Almanac, eggshell colors have nothing to do with the flavor or nutritional value of the egg. Brown, white, and even blue and green eggshells are simply indicative of the breed of hen.
- Because older eggs have larger air cells, they're much easier to peel than fresh eggs.
- Even though many cartons promote that their eggs are free of hormones, this claim is nothing special. It's like saying that water is wet. That's because the FDA banned the use of hormones in all poultry production back in the 1950s. Therefore, no chicken eggs will ever contain hormones.

Reindeer Reigned Here

Joe's Knowledge Class



Q: Can you name all of Santa's reindeer?

A: No, they already have names!

Reindeer are well known as the engines that power Santa's sleigh on Christmas night, but what else do we know about them? Bert says they look like "Artie Antlers" - perhaps because of their famous headwear. "They have antlers, hooves, and a short tail" says Valerie, adding "They can only fly with Santa's help". So we know that they sort of look like deer, and that they rarely have illuminated noses or the ability to fly. But there's a lot more to these captivating critters than meets the eye.

Where do they live?

Reindeer love a chilly environment. They were first discovered living in Eastern Europe, Greenland, Russia, Northern China, Mongolia, and Scandinavia. They even used to live as far south as Idaho in the continental United States. Today they're really only found in Norway, Finland, Siberia, Greenland, Alaska, and Canada.

What do they eat?

Lichen! Lichen is a plant that grows on rocks and trees - sort of like a cross between moss and a fungus. Reindeer are actually the only mammals that can metabolize it, due to a special enzyme in their stomachs. They will eat leaves and grasses as well, when no lichen is available. They're also osteophagous, which means they sometimes eat their own antlers after they shed them.



Remain Near Reindeer

What about their relationship with Santa Clause?

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen are familiar names, especially in that specific order. The first Santa story that included his reindeer was called Old Santeclaus with Much Delight, published anonymously in 1821. In the story, Santa only has one reindeer to pull his sleigh.



Just two years after he was paired with a single reindeer for the first time, Santa Clause got seven more in Clement C. Moore's *A Visit from St. Nicholas* (1823). This makes sense, as the Jolly One would conceivably need more horse, er, reindeerpower to lug all those presents all over the world.

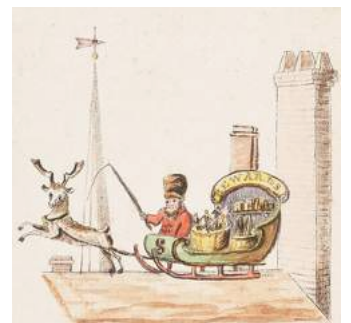
Rudolph came later. Robert L. May wrote the story of the young reindeer's promotion to the front of the procession for the Montgomery Ward catalog in 1939. The company wanted him to come up with a character for a coloring book, and what he gave them was an iconic character that would become an integral part of America's cultural lexicon. Don't forget the song! Ten years after Rudolph appeared in print, his story was told by Gene Autry over the airwaves, rising to No. 1 during the 1949 Christmas season.

A Visit from St. Nicholas

Clement Clarke Moore - 1779-1863



*...Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name; "Now,
Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! on,
Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!"*





CH&S December Birthdays



12/10 - David F. and Thea

12/16 - Martha

12/17 - Chris

12/30 - Phoebe

Elf Name Generator

**First Letter of Your
First Name:**

A-Bing
B-Blitz
C-Dash
D-Sprinkles
E-Flake
F-Frost
G-Jingle
H-Noel
I-Rudy
J-Snow
K-Garland
L-Peppermint
M-Cane
N-Cupcake
O-Shimmer|
P-Sparkle
Q-Holly
R-Jolly
S-Pepper
T-Sugar
U-Tinsel
V-Lollipop
W-Giggles
X-Bubbly
Y-Sneaky
Z-Snowball

**Month You Were
Born:**

Jan.-Gingerbread
Feb.-Sleigh Bells
Mar.-Red Nosed
April-Sugar Plum
May-Jingle Bells
June-Twinkle Toes
July-Candy Cane
Aug.-McClaus
Sept.-Elfis
Oct.-Merry Dancer
Nov.-Gumdrops
Dec.-Marshmallow

Cupcake Twinkle
Toes* wishes you a
Merry Christmas!

by Jennifer



*Nino

Do You Remember The Nightmare *Before* Christmas?



FUN



Tofu-palooza

Tofu is also called *bean curd*. It originated in China and has been part of Chinese cuisine for over 2,000 years. Tofu is prepared by coagulating soy milk and then pressing the resulting curds into solid white blocks of varying softness; it can be silken, soft, firm, extra firm or super firm. The mixture is separated into solid pulp (*okara*) and soy "milk."

Tofu has a subtle flavor (some people say it has no flavor), so it can be used in savory *and* sweet dishes. Tofu is a good source of protein and contains all nine essential amino acids. It is also a valuable plant source of iron and calcium and the minerals manganese and phosphorous. In addition to this, it also contains magnesium, copper, zinc and vitamin B1.

The English word tofu comes from Japanese *tōfu*, a borrowing of Mandarin *dòufu* meaning "bean curd, bean ferment." The earliest documentation of the word in English is *towfu*, in a 1770 letter from the English merchant James Flint to Benjamin Franklin.

We ate tofu three ways:

1. Raw with soy sauce and ginger (pic top right)
2. Baked tofu, and
3. Tofu-based savory sauce over cooked cabbage and broccoli—it's pure vegetable deliciousness according to those of us who had seconds *and* third helpings!. The recipe is on the next page.

Check out Harold eating veggies and tofu savory sauce (bottom left) and Thea handing out raw cabbage samples (below) while Joe cuts tofu into cubes (bottom right).



Savory Sauce (from The Spot, Hermosa Beach)

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup Almond oil; (or safflower oil) [I used walnut oil once: yum]
- 3/4 cup Water
- 1/4 cup Liquid aminos; (I use soy sauce) [bragg's liquid aminos are very tasty...try some of mine]
- 1/8 cup Brewer's yeast
- 1/4 tsp Kelp [never can find this; recipe doesn't suffer w/o it]
- 1/4 tsp Spike seasoning [herb/vegetable salt substitute] [Mrs. Dash is good]
- 1/4 tsp Basil
- 1/8 tsp Granulated garlic [I use garlic salt]
- 1-1/2 tsp Lemon juice
- 1 pkg. tofu, rinsed well (do not substitute Greek yogurt for the tofu, it will curdle when heated)

Steps

1. Blend everything in the food processor or blender.
Heat & serve over whatever.

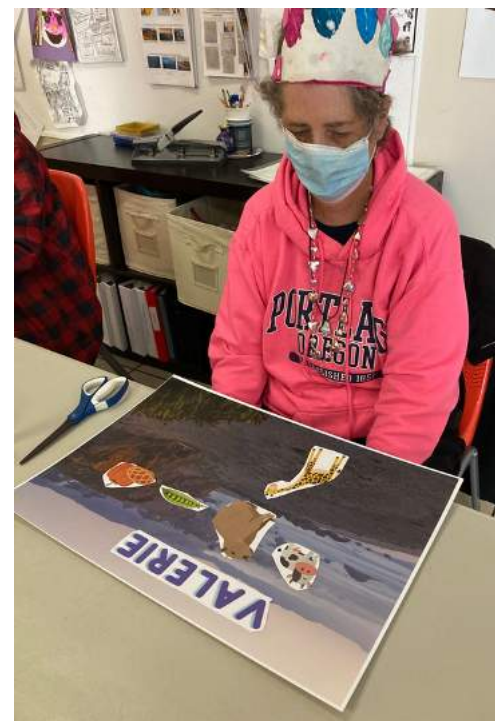


The Spot is a natural food, vegetarian restaurant. Most of the menu is available gluten-free, fat-free, non-dairy, or vegan. They make homemade bread, cornbread and desserts sweetened with raw agave.

They're in Southern California, so save yourself a long drive because many of their menu item recipes are available online. Check out The Spot webpage here: <https://www.worldfamousspot.com/about/> and this recipe on Copy Me That: <https://www.copymethat.com/r/ugKNBx6KA/savory-sauce-from-the-spot-hermosa-beach/>

A Place(mat) for Everything

We like to keep a clean table for our meals. So we combined collage and placemat making into one class. Check out our works of art!



The Nightmare Continued



There were games, chalices of blood, a raffle, sugar-free candy, and lots of fun!



Project Palooza

by Jennifer

Occasionally to get ourselves psyched up about all the projects everyone has in the works at Life College, we schedule a Project Palooza and get together as a group for a rapid-fire discussion of all the juicy project topics. Here is a sampling of our latest Project Palooza “jam session”.

Katie’s Dream Project: Have you ever dreamed of having a test at school and you don’t even know what the class is about? How about a dream where your teeth all fall out? Good or bad, dreams might have some meaning that our subconscious is trying to work out, and Katie asked everyone if they’ve ever had a recurring dream. Connor has dreams about past houses he’s lived in and schools he once attended. Iris has a recurring dream of being stuck in an attic. Martha and Yvette have both had falling dreams many times, and they usually wake up before they reach the ground. Darnell has an impending tidal wave dream she’s had for years, and Bruce and Jennifer both have recurring dreams of being chased by wild animals–Bruce by a bear in the woods, and Jennifer, inexplicably, by a killer whale on land.

Martha’s Fashion By Decade: When we read “We Dream of Space” in Literary Circle, which was set in the 1980’s, we had a blast with the fashion references–especially those of us old enough to have rocked them at the time. From poodle skirts and pompadours in the 50’s, crazy daisies and tie dye in the 60’s, and bell bottom disco-fevered fashion of the 70’s, we were all able to come up with so many looks by decade that we didn’t even need to consult the internet and pull up any pictures!

Nino’s Sweden Project: Nino, whose family is Swedish, always looks forward to a delicious Swedish Christmas, which features meatballs and gravy, lingonberry jam, and potatoes. Yum, Jennifer has had that at Ikea, another Swedish icon! Fun fact: It is illegal to name your baby Ikea in Sweden. (How much of a problem did that present to make it to the law books, do you suppose?) Abba is from Sweden, as is the children’s character Pippi Longstocking, and the companies Volvo, H&M, and Spotify. Swedish fish are a traditional wedding candy, and oddly are the exact same flavor as Sour Patch Kids, just without the sour coating! For geography fans, it is possible to stand in three different countries at one time in Sweden–Sweden, Norway, and Finland. And to bring it all back to food, as we so often do, we have a reference to our Hot Dog knowledge class, because Swedish hot dogs are a doozie–a hot dog surrounded by mashed potatoes, shrimp salad, lettuce, and fried onions, all rolled up into a wrap! Swedish Chef would be proud, and probably throw a rubber chicken or something.



Andrew's Corner

Mantises

The name of the order of Mantises is called Mantodea. The Mantises' forelegs adapted for catching and gripping prey. female Mantises are known to eat their mate after mating. A martial arts style based on the Mantis was created in Asia. Mantises are the most commonly kept insect as a pet.

Naturally occurring Mantises provide plant pest control for gardeners that want to avoid using pesticides. Mantises can turn their heads 180 degrees. Mantises also eat spiders, frogs, lizards and even small birds. The Mantises' unique body shape makes them easy to camouflage as leaves and branches. The mantises' green coloring helps them camouflage with plants. One member of the Mantis species is the ghost mantis, which camouflages itself as dead dried up leaves.

The Malaysian Orchid Mantis camouflages itself in white flowers. One Mantis species, the Shield Mantis, looks exactly like a leaf.



Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 23 years old. He likes comic books, video games, hiking, exploring new places with his mom.... and babies. He is an authority in all things Star Wars, Star Trek and great places to go in the Bay Area. He is currently learning Mandarin and loves to research and learn new things.

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of any size or kind.**

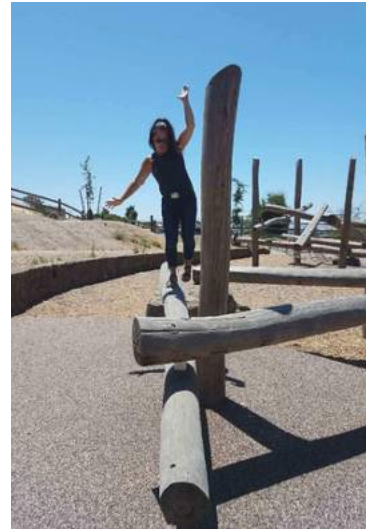
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Remember the Long, Warm Days of Summer?





A Snowless "Snowman"

Chris' Art Class

Who doesn't love building a snowman? Snow is such a versatile building material—you can scoop it up one handful at a time, scrape it into shape with your fingers, and even use tools to carve it.

Unfortunately, it is rarely cold enough in our area to snow, and when it does it usually melts too quickly for us to play in it. So we decided we would build a snowman out of cardboard and then paint it white to look like snow.

In order to make a snowman out of flat material, like cardboard or even paper, we traced this shape that I printed out onto some large cardboard pieces.

We plan to make a total of 9 of them, folded along the lines and taped together, to make a round ball shape. We made this ball of cardboard in 3 different sizes for the 3 pieces of a snowman and then stacked them on top of each other.

Then we plan to paint them all white to mimic snow and get some sticks to push into the center part for arms, and paint some black circles for eyes and a mouth, and then make a carrot out of orange construction paper for the snowman's nose. We even bought a black top hat, just like the one Frosty the Snowman wears!



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December 2022 Connection Magazine

**Happy Christmas,
Happy Hannukah, and
Happy Kwaanzaa!**