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The Ultimate Holiday Gift Guide

Monica Brutto
December 1, 2023
Wright Life

Gift giving can be one of the most stressful tasks of the holidays. Whether you are buying for a loved one or for a white elephant exchange, here is the ultimate gift guide to help make the holidays a little bit easier.

For the tech-obsessed

Voice Assistants and Home Security

Voice Assistants, such as Amazon’s Alexa and Google Home, and home security devices, such as Ring doorbells, can make the perfect gift for your technology fluent loved ones.

Kohl’s and Amazon have the Amazon Echo Show 5 (3rd Gen, 2023 release) on sale for $39.99, while Walmart is offering the Google Nest Hub (2nd Gen) for $59.98, 40% less than the original price.

Kohl’s is offering great Black Friday deals on Ring doorbells, perfect for those looking to add more security to their home. Although the Ring doorbell requires a separate subscription to be able to save the videos and photos from the camera, Kohl’s has it listed at $54.99.

Unique gifts for computer geeks

Buying tech gifts for those whose world revolves around technology without breaking the bank can be tricky but not impossible.
Raspberry Pi Robots make great gifts for tinkerers and aspiring engineers. Amazon offers a wide variety of options ranging in affordable prices.

Another great gift for technology lovers is a programmable keyboard, like this one from Amazon.

**For the spa lovers**

Sometimes the best gift to give someone is the gift that they would not choose for themselves. While gifting self-care can be challenging, these items make taking care of our loved ones (and ourselves) easier.

**Personalized baskets**

The best way to give spa day gifts is to put together a basket full of self-care items. These items can be face masks, candles, blankets, perfumes, lotions, shower steamers and more.

All these items can be easily found in any store and customized to a loved one’s needs. Make sure to include items with their favorite scents and their favorite snacks as an extra treat.

**Home spa**

Home spa gadgets are a great way to gift a spa day without breaking the bank. Amazon has a cheap but reliable message gun perfect for athletes and gym-goers. Target has a great Black Friday deal for a heated foot bath coming in at $20.99.

**For the kids**

Finding the perfect gift for kids that is not being delivered by Santa is a challenging task. Luckily, with the right deal, finding toys and devices that are kid- and parent-approved is easy.
**Legos**

Legos make the perfect gift for kids of all ages and adults. Although Legos can be pricey, they have a little something for everyone. From Harry Potter to the Eiffel Tower, Legos are the perfect gift for entertainment during the cold winter months.

**Devices**

Designed for 3 to 7 years old, the Amazon Fire 7 kids tablet is the perfect kid-proof parent-controlled gift. The tablet can take a beating while delivering educational entertainment to the little ones. Kohl's has a Black Friday deal coming in at $54.99.

Tamagotchis are making a comeback. These little digital pets make good stocking stuffer or white elephant gifts and are perfect for teaching responsibility to young children. Amazon has Tamagotchis starting at $19.99.

**For the dads in your life**

Whether it is a real dad or a friend with dad vibes, buying gifts for them is the most daunting task of the holidays.

**Personalized clothes**

From a favorite sports team to a favorite quote, ordering personalized clothing is a great way to show someone that you care. Esty has local shops and small businesses that do personalization, but be careful to check the sellers’ reviews and shipping information.

**Subscriptions**

Subscription boxes are the gift that can keep on giving every month of the year. Universal Yums offers a gift subscription box full of snacks from around the world. They offer different levels of boxes that can be prepaid from one month up to 12 months.
Foot Cardigan is another gift subscription box that can be prepaid and delivers up to two pairs of socks per month. Foot Cardigan also makes custom sock orders perfect for any dad in your life.

For the whole family

The best gift to give is the gift of experiences and memories. Family outings can be the perfect way to create memories and spend time with loved ones. This can include travel, concert tickets, sporting events and hands-on activities. This is a great way to personalize gifts and be creative.

Most Anticipated Book Releases in December 2023

Grab a cup of hot chocolate and cozy up with some new releases from this month.

“The Curse of Penryth Hall” by Jess Armstrong | Dec. 5

Who does not love a mystery for the winter months? In this tale, heiress Ruby Vaughn has to return to the one place that she swore she would never visit again, Penryth Hall.

After the hall’s bells ring for the first time in 30 years because of a death in the fortress, Ruby, her ex-best-friend and an author/curse breaker must decode the lore of the curse to prevent the next murder.

“Flores and Miss Paula” by Melissa Rivero | Dec. 5
“A wry, tender novel about a Peruvian immigrant mother and a millennial daughter who have one final chance to find common ground,” the HarperCollins description of “Flores and Miss Paula” reads.

For a book about grief, secrets and forgiveness, Rivero’s December release is the perfect selection to cozy up and delve into.

“This Spells Love” by Kate Robb | Dec. 5

For the friends-to-lovers stans, this spellbinding romcom is a perfect winter read.

“When Gemma Wilde gets dumped by her long-term boyfriend, she reacts the way any reasonable twenty-eight-year-old would: by getting drunk with her sister, kooky aunt, and best friend, Dax, and performing a love cleansing spell to forget all about her ex,” the Goodreads description of the novel reads.

But after casting this spell, Gemma wakes up in an alternate reality that is not as beautiful as she had hoped or imagined. To reverse the spell, she must get a kiss from a now near-stranger, Dax. Can she reverse the spell, or will her newfound love for Dax keep her rooted in an alternate reality?

“This Cursed Light” by Emily Thiede | Dec. 5

“This Cursed Light” is the final book in The Last Finestra duology, following Alessa after she saved her island from destruction. Her bodyguard-turned-lover, Dante, thinks the gods are not satisfied yet, though.

“When the gods reveal their final test, Dante and Alessa will be the world’s last defense. But if they are the keys to saving the world, will their love be the price of victory?” the MacMillan Publishers description of the book reads.

“The Paris Housekeeper” by Renee Ryan | Dec. 26

“The Paris Housekeeper” is set in Paris in the 1940s when the city is overtaken by Nazi Germany. The lucky ones are able to flee, but housekeeper Camille Lacroix
must stay to support her family, forcing her to work with an American Nazi sympathizer.

Everything is not as it seems in this novel about ruthlessness, empathy and heroism during one of the darkest times in world history.

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**News Roundup: Week of Nov. 27**

Alexis Lewis  
December 4, 2023  
News

From local happenings to national topics and global events, here is the news worth knowing from the week of Nov. 27, 2023.

**Local**

**Explosion at Ohio auto repair shop kills 3, injures 1 other**

On Tuesday, Nov. 28, an explosion at an auto repair shop in Hillsboro, Ohio, killed three people and injured one other, according to an Associated Press release. The explosion sparked a fire that spilled smoke into the air for hours. The cause of the explosion is still under investigation.

**National**

**Henry Kissinger dead at 100**

On Wednesday, Nov. 29, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger died at 100. Kissinger worked under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.
Kissinger won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 for helping negotiate a ceasefire in Vietnam, according to his Nobel Prize organization profile.

**Sandra Day O’Connor dead at 93**

On Friday, Dec. 1, Sandra Day O’Connor, the first female justice on the Supreme Court, died at the age of 93.

“We at the Supreme Court mourn the loss of a beloved colleague, a fiercely independent defender of the rule of law and an eloquent advocate for civics education,” a press release from the Supreme Court reads.

**National College Football Playoffs set**

On Sunday, Dec. 3, the College Football Playoff committee selected Michigan, Washington, Texas and Alabama to compete for the national championship, according to a press release from ESPN.

No. 1 Michigan will play No. 4 Alabama and No. 2 Washington will play No. 3 Texas on Jan. 1. The National Championship game will be on Jan. 8.

**Global**

**2023 breaks climate records**

According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2023 has broken climate records. Greenhouse gas levels, sea surface temperatures and sea levels have risen, and other impacts are extreme weather and low levels of Antarctic sea ice.

“We risk losing the race to save our glaciers and to rein in sea level rise. We cannot return to the climate of the 20th century, but we must act now to limit the risks of an increasingly inhospitable climate in this and the coming centuries,” WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a statement.
SGA: Neurodivergence and Disability Center, Gun Violence

Britin Frazey
December 4, 2023
News

The Wright State University Student Government Association held its weekly meeting this past Tuesday, Nov. 28, to discuss a possible new staff member in the Neurodivergence and Disability Center and to hear from a speaker about gun violence.

Neurodivergence and Disability Center

SGA’s Director of Student Organizations, AJ Allen, pitched the idea of hiring an Assistant Director of Neurodivergence and Accessibility at some point in the future.

The Neurodivergence and Disability Center is located in the Culture and Identity Centers. It currently does not have an assistant director, and students and faculty are beginning to voice the need for a full-time staff member who will be able to fulfill these duties.

Allen introduced the resolution that she wrote on the subject for its first reading.

Vice President of BSU speaks about gun violence

Tréyah Gray, the vice president of the Black Student Union, came to the meeting to speak on her perspective on the recent gun violence in the area. Gray noted the most recent Beavercreek Walmart shooting on Nov. 20 that was racially motivated, as well as other such crimes and acts of violence. Gray discussed the feelings that this causes, especially for minority groups.
Gray also mentioned the gun violence protest on Nov. 29, which she was involved in the planning of. She urged students to attend to show support for the cause.

**Rowdy bobblehead award**

Madisyn Crabtree, director of student affairs, passed the Rowdy bobblehead award back to AJ Allen at this meeting. Crabtree explained that Allen has been very helpful, and the two have been working closely together.

“I really appreciate having him back,” Allen said about the Rowdy bobblehead.

SGA will meet again on Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 8 p.m. in the Student Union Atlantis A/B room.

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**Antics with Ashley: Grandma and Hot Topic**

Ashley Hainzer  
December 5, 2023  
Antics with Ashley  
Wright Life

My grandma was a fierce woman. I am sure that if you asked my mom, she would have a million stories about how my grandma was as a mom. She was such a strong-willed woman that she fought until the minute she took her last breath last August. As a grandmother, she was soft, loving and full of life. There were times she had no clue what we were even talking about or what we were doing, but she would still be there with a smile and an “I love you.” There are many stories I could give in my 20 years of knowing my grandma, but my favorite story about her was the first time that she went into Hot Topic.

**Picture it...**
Picture it: August 2013. Little Ashley is in the throes of her weeaboo and emo phase. My sister had her birthday on Aug. 9, and my grandma gave her money to buy some items at the mall. She went to Hot Topic. My birthday was on Aug. 19, and I wanted to go to the mystical mall at Fairfield Commons too because at that point, I had only ever been there three times in my life. I also wanted to do whatever my sister did.

Sure, Springfield had a mall, but the Upper Valley Mall was essentially a ghost town, and this was a cool, shiny mall that I had only been to a few times. Mom usually said it was too far away, so it became a special occasion activity.

At the time, I remember thinking, “When I grow up, I’m going to move closer to the mall” (oh, how irony works).

So sure enough, Aug. 19 rolled around and all five of us—my mom, Julia, Patrick, Grandma and I—hopped in our small silver car and set forth to the promised land of bad body image issues and anime merchandise.

There is one thing that is very important to this story. My grandma was a God-fearing Christian woman. She would try to go to church every Sunday, and when she could not, she would wake up bright and early with a fresh cup of Pepsi (with extra ice, of course) and watch her TV preachers. She was also bound to a wheelchair later in life.

With that being said, she had heard of Hot Topic, as it was three of her granddaughters’ favorite places to shop. Whenever Grandma would visit the mall with us, she would stay outside of the Hot Topic. We would walk back to the opening and show off what we might purchase, and she would give her approval or criticism. To my knowledge, however, she never ventured inside the store. She would say the store was cramped and loud, and she would have more enjoyment out there and getting a mini fashion show.

So imagine on that fateful day, my mom goes to park my grandma in her usual spot.

“Actually Mindy, I think I’ll go in with you guys,” Grandma said.

My mom asked if she was sure, and my grandma confirmed.

“I’m buying her clothes. I want to help her pick them out and see if they fit. Besides, I’m curious,” Grandma said.
So in went my God-fearing granny. We were slightly afraid of what she would think of the actual inside of the store, and to say she was flabbergasted was an understatement. I think it took her a second to get accustomed to her surroundings, but after that, she fully enjoyed the experience to say the least.

Hot Topic stores were notoriously dark and cramped, but sure enough, my grandma pushed herself throughout the store to follow me around to look. I remember there being a few times that my mom had to step in and redirect her or temporarily push a display a little for her to get through (she would put it right back), but she followed. She went through with us and helped pick out some items.

I would point out merchandise from my favorite shows, then I would have to explain the shows to her again. Then, depending on the show, I would probably hear an “I don’t know if I like that very much.” But she was still there, listening and attentive with a smile on her face.

“All right, I think it’s time we get out of here. I can’t move around in here well enough,” Grandma said as we checked out.

I remember afterward we went to the food court for lunch. She was happy that she got to go in and was talking with all of us about how the store had a lot of things she did not understand or agree with, but she enjoyed herself.

We went up to get utensils after putting down our food. Grandma was left at the table for a split second to guard the food and purses. I remember being the first one to come back to the table and there she was, praying to God, thanking Him for letting her be able to make it through Hot Topic to be with her granddaughter on her birthday.

At the time, I thought it was a little funny. To see my poor, wheelchair-bound grandma praying to God, thanking Him for escaping that store of satan. Since I have grown up, I realized that it was a thankful prayer. I am sure there was relief in there—this is my grandma we are talking about, after all—but it was gratitude. She was able to come in with us.

That day she had bought me a musical not-50s style dress with matching music-themed hair clips. She also got me a few of those cheap pins at the front that used to be 50 cents that were either really cool and from your favorite show or said
something like “Come at me bro” or “SWAG,” and we swore up and down that it was cool, but now that we are all adults, we can agree we all looked like dorks with those on.

Afterwards, she went into more stores with us that she would not normally go into. It was not until we hit Spencer’s that she reached her limit for the day.

My grandma was always like that. She was the least judgemental person I know. Whenever I get sad, I think of this story, and it reminds me how much she loves me. I will always remember the time my grandma went into a Hot Topic with me.

Every Starbucks Holiday Drink, Ranked

Britin Frazey
December 5, 2023
Wright Life

This year, many people’s favorite coffee chain, Starbucks, gave us a new holiday-inspired drink. Of course, this means it is time for one person’s opinion on all of the holiday drinks based on taste, festivity and vibes.

11. Signature Hot Chocolate

Usually, a simple hot chocolate is just the thing to get the holiday spirit going, but not at Starbucks. There are so many better options, and honestly, this drink has never been good comparatively. It comes out very bitter, which can be fixed with some simple add-ins, but then it IS no longer the “Signature Hot Chocolate” that Starbucks advertises. Ultimately, it is best to steer clear and spend your money on one of the many other (better) options if you are looking for something festive.

10. Hot Chestnut Praline Latte

9. Iced Chestnut Praline Latte
These drinks are good and all, but they could so easily be more festive. There is nothing all that special about them. Even though they make tasty drinks, this list is of the best Starbucks holiday drinks, and this one just does not give much in terms of the holidays. Everyone loves some good chestnuts roasting on an open fire, but that taste is really subtle. Next!

**8. Peppermint Mocha Frappuccino**

**7. Peppermint Mocha**

Simple but timeless. These would definitely fall higher on the list of someone who enjoys the taste of coffee more; however, if you are in need of a caffeinated pick-me-up to get through any part of the upcoming holidays, this is a pretty tasty way to go about it. There are better options, but a simple peppermint mocha is classic and respectable.

**6. Caramel Brûlée Latte**

Doesn’t it just sound delightful? Caramel is not the first thing that everyone thinks of when they think of holidays, but for those who do think of caramel as festive or for those who just love caramel year-round, this is a tasty drink that is perfect for on-the-go.

**5. Peppermint Hot Chocolate**

Nostalgia may or may not play a part in this drink being ranked as high as it is, but regardless, this drink is a classic. Simple, festive, warm and delicious, this is always a great drink for taking a walk when it is cold out or doing some Christmas shopping. Chocolate and peppermint just belong together, specifically in a Starbucks red cup.

**4. Sugar Cookie Almondmilk Frappuccino**

**3. Iced Sugar Cookie Almondmilk Latte**
This drink never sounded particularly appealing, but upon first trying it, it is actually delightful. It tastes exactly like a sugar cookie that has been dunked in coffee for a little bit of extra energy. It is even topped with sprinkles! What more could you want?

2. Gingerbread Oatmilk Chai

1. Iced Gingerbread Oatmilk Chai

Whether you reach for the hot or iced version, this delicious new drink is the perfect example of why Americans love Starbucks so much. There is always a new recipe that only Starbucks can create, and this year, this holiday drink is a prime example. It tastes exactly like a creamy gingerbread cookie, yet somehow far better because to be honest, gingerbread itself is not all that tasty, but this drink most certainly is.

Regardless of which drink you reach for or which holiday you celebrate, enjoy!

Raiders Open HL Slate with Victory Over IUPUI

Adam Campbell
December 6, 2023
Men's Basketball Sports

The Wright State University men’s basketball team returned home after going 2-1 in the Gulf Coast Showcase, defeating IUPUI in its Horizon League opening game.

A slow start

The Raiders entered Wednesday with a 2-4 overall record, looking to extend an 11-game winning streak over the Jaguars.

The game started particularly slow for the Raiders on the offensive side, as Wright State did not find a basket through the first three minutes of the game. The slow
start, however, would not be an indication of how the rest of the game would go for the Raiders.

“To start the game, we weren’t very good offensively. It was a slow start,” Head Coach Scott Nagy mentioned. “It’s hard to believe we got to 103 [points], but I thought we did a really good job against the zone.”

Although the Raiders missed their first six shot attempts on the night, they would close out the first half converting on 20 of their final 29 attempts.

The Raiders used two separate runs to break the game open through the halfway point, leading 43-28 at the break and shooting over 57% as a unit.

“We just have a lot of players that can score the ball,” Tanner Holden said. “We have a selfless team, everyone is looking out for one another and playing to each other’s strengths.”

**Second-half explosiveness**

The Raiders continued their offensive explosion into the second half, shooting over 65% in the back half of the game.

Five Raiders reached double figures en route to the 103-74 victory over the Jaguars.

Holden finished with 26 points on the night, his best performance since dropping 37 points during the 2022 season against Bryant in the First Four round of the NCAA tournament.

Brandon Noel followed up his dominant performance from the Gulf Coast Showcase that found him on the all-tournament team with a double-double, scoring 17 points while adding 10 rebounds.

“We’ve got some big, strong guys. We need to use that to our advantage,” Noel stated.
Trey Calvin, the HL preseason player of the year, added 15 points of his own in the conference opener, and Drey Carter recorded his first double-digit performance with the green and gold, adding 12 points.

**Takeaways and looking ahead**

The Raiders’ biggest flaw on the night was the amount of fouls committed against IUPUI. The Jaguars had 36 free throw opportunities, converting on 28.

“That is an unreal number, and we cannot let that happen,” Noel added.

The Raider victory was the first 100-point performance since a 103-71 victory over IUPUI last season. The Raiders extended their winning streak on the Jaguars to 12 consecutive games, moving the WSU record to 3-4 on the year.

WSU traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina, after the win to take on the Davidson Wildcats. The Raiders fell 73-82 and will now return home for the next four games to close out the non-conference schedule.

The Raiders will be back in the Nutter Center to take on Bethel on Thursday at 7 p.m. Viewers can watch the game on ESPN+ or listen on WWSU 106.9 FM.

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**Ranking the Top 30 Christmas Movies**

Britin Frazey  
December 7, 2023  
Wright Life

Christmas movies are an important part of the holiday season for many people. Arbitrarily picked from the hundreds of holiday films that exist, here are some classic and equally-lovable niche 30 Christmas movies ranked from worst to best. (Spoilers ahead!)

**30. “Falling for Christmas”**
In this Netflix original movie, Lindsay Lohan portrays an heiress who falls off a mountain and gets amnesia. So, of course, she wanders to a nearby cabin and befriends Chord Overstreet. “Befriend” means that she quickly falls in love with him. There is also a hilarious cartoon villain of an ex-fiance and a cute young daughter.

29. “Love Hard”

Nina Dobrev plays the part of a journalist who only writes about her dates, which always go horribly wrong. Eventually, she meets the perfect guy on Tinder. He is funny, nice and attractive, so she impulsively flies across the country to spend Christmas with him. It turns out he is a catfish, but they end up becoming friends as she reverse-catfishes the boy whose photos were used until she falls in love with her catfish.

It sounds awful, and it is, but the couple is cute. Also, the title is a play on the two leads’ favorite Christmas movies: “Die Hard” and “Love, Actually.” It gets bonus points for that.


This sequel is clearly a cash grab only worth watching out of severe loyalty to the series. The film also suddenly introduces superstitions and ghosts when neither of these were present in the first two movies. But, at the end, there is a baby!

27. “Snow Buddies”

Movies in the “Air Buddies” series are always adorable. The main squad consists of five golden retriever puppies who are siblings, and in this movie, they befriend Santa’s dog. This movie has magic and puppies, and really, what more do you need for a heartwarming Christmas film?

26. “Let it Snow”
Netflix’s attempt at a teenage version of “Love, Actually” can best be described as a solid attempt. There are cute couples, a lady in a tin foil hat, a star-studded cast and a baby pig. It is a cute enough movie, and there are many silly shenanigans.


While the new character of the wedding planner is an interesting addition, this movie generally keeps a lot of the charm of the first one while also shoehorning in a lot of tension between the leads and the betrayal of one of the royal family’s advisors, giving an element of mystery as to why this small, fictitious country is going bankrupt.

24. “The Princess Switch”

Vanessa Hudgens plays the two leads who are distantly related doppelgangers. One is a baker, the other is a duchess. You will be shocked to hear that they switch places for a few days, so the duchess can experience the kingdom she is about to marry into. The duchess then falls in love with the baker’s sous chef, and the baker falls in love with the duchess’s fiance.

23. “The Holiday Calendar”

Kat Graham plays a photographer who is gifted her grandmother’s old advent calendar, which ends up having magical properties. Each morning, she gets a tiny figurine gift, which foreshadows something important that will happen that day. It also leads her to a random love interest, until she eventually realizes that she is in love with her childhood best friend.

22. “Good Luck Charlie: It’s Christmas”

Characters that children already know and love from the Disney channel are headed out to visit family for the holidays when the two of them get separated from the rest. Of course, you probably know what happens next: shenanigans, family and the true meaning of Christmas.
21. “Scrooged”

Bill Murray makes an excellent, sarcastic 1980s Scrooge. This movie is an entertaining version of “A Christmas Carol” with a once-modern twist. It is entertaining, funny and clever, and it stars Bill Murray, so it is bound to be a good time.

20. “A WowieBOZowee Christmas”

This niche film is a short movie made for kids. It takes on the more religious side of Christmas but mainly focuses on family. This family has taken in a jolly green bear as one of their own, and that bear alone is the reason this film is ranked as high as it is. He takes the two children on adventures sledding and making pancakes.

19. “Polar Express”

Such an iconic film where kids are all taken from their parents’ homes in the middle of the night to ride on a train, drink hot chocolate and go to the North Pole. However, if they lose their tickets while on the train, they will be either kicked off or forced to do child labor. More importantly, though, it teaches children about friendship.

18. “The Santa Clause 2”

Did you know that if Santa does not have a wife, then kids everywhere can not get presents? Neither did Tim Allen until the start of this movie, so he makes a robotic clone of himself, which will later turn evil, and puts the moves on his son’s principal.

17. “Single All the Way”

Another Netflix original, this time with two roommates who pretend to date so that one of them does not have to admit he is single to his family. They drop this ruse pretty quickly, and the two of them both bond with the first guy’s hilarious, chaotic and loving family, which includes Jennifer Coolidge. The two men end up admitting very late in the film that they are in love with each other.
And yet, still, history will say they were roommates.

16. “A Christmas Prince”

A journalist lies to the royal family of a small country, saying that she is a tutor for the princess. Under this false identity, she is welcomed into the family, getting close to the young princess and vaguely handsome prince. They fall in love, and she uncovers a lot of juicy details about the royal family, which she now feels a part of.

As funny as it would be to play up the mystery of what she will do in this situation, you already know that in the sequels they get married and have a baby, so it is obvious that they work things out.

15. “Four Christmases”

Reese Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn play a couple who have been together for years at the start of the film. They lie to their families, saying they are doing charity work in a tropical country when they plan to have a vacation. When their flight is canceled and they are shown on TV, they decide to visit all four of their divorced parents’ houses.


Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet swap houses for Christmas after they have both reached low points in their lives. While staying at each other’s houses in different countries, Winslet falls in love with Jack Black and befriends an elderly man, and Diaz falls in love with Winslet’s in-movie brother and befriends his two young daughters.

13. “A Christmas Story”

Another movie that is simply a classic. From the pink bunny suit to the Red Ryder BB gun, this movie is hilarious and has something for everyone. There are leg lamps, bars of soap in children’s mouths and fist fights. Somehow from all of this, there are good themes of family and love, even when things go wrong and they have to eat at a Chinese restaurant on Dec. 25.
12. “Christmas Vacation”

This one stands apart from the crowd because, unlike most the others, this one can be deeply uncomfortable to watch around your family. Regardless, it is a classic and hilarious, both in the dialogue and in the many shenanigans that take place through the course of the film.


Charlie Brown’s holiday specials are always wonderful. This film is no exception, and it could be said to be the best example. Look no further than Charlie Brown’s iconic yet pathetic Christmas tree, which spreads a beautiful message of acceptance for even the sparsest of evergreen trees.

10. “Barbie: A Christmas Carol”

With the Barbie Renaissance that we are currently in, you may or may not be surprised to hear that Barbie portrays Scrooge in this movie. There are a lot of adaptations made so that the format of the classic “A Christmas Carol” can fit into the early 2000s Barbie animated movie themes. These changes make for a very lovable film that gets across the same message of the spirit of Christmas while leaning more toward strong female friendships. Also, Barbie has an adorable cat that joins her in Christmases past, present and future.

9. “Rudolph”

Claymation is always a good choice for children’s movies. This film expands on the classic character of Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer. In case you do not know, he has a very shiny nose, and all the other reindeer laugh and call him names. This is a story of him setting out on a quest and being a hero.

8. “The Santa Clause”
What better way to start a family-friendly movie than with the unintentional murder of a beloved magical figure? Seriously, Tim Allen causes Santa’s death at the beginning, which, in this universe, means that he will be the next Santa. Ignoring the implications that all Santas are historically replaced by their killer, this film is adorable, including magic and themes of family and belief.


Widely regarded as the worst one in the trilogy, “The Escape Clause” is ranked first out of these three movies, starring Tim Allen as Santa. Something about Jack Frost as a villain and a young red-headed girl turning him good again with the power of a warm hug just screams that this is an amazing Christmas movie.

6. “Die Hard”

A controversial choice but one that feels correct. Bruce Willis takes on a group of terrorists and wins with the help of a few other way less heroic characters. He walks barefoot over broken glass to save his wife and a bunch of strangers right before Christmas and has a bunch of iconic one-liners.

5. “Home Alone”

Nothing captures the true spirit of Christmas like a slightly neglected child setting elaborate traps to trick two stupid burglars. The resourcefulness and mischief of this young boy are endearing, hilarious and somehow inspiring.

4. “Love, Actually”

A wonderful and heartwarming film showcasing many different relationships between a large group of people who mostly do not know each other but are all connected. It is a nice, cheesy movie with an extremely star-studded cast and so many romantic subplots that one of them is bound to make you giggle and kick your feet.

One of the best Christmas movies of all time and the best “Grinch” movie by far. Jim Carrey captures the spirit of the role throughout the film, whether he is in ‘evil’ or ‘kind’ mode. This is a hilarious take on the well-known Dr. Seuss story, which adds a lot of lore to the universe.

2. “Noelle”

Anna Kendrick as the daughter of Santa? Yes, please. This film is charming, containing themes of kindness, love and individuality. The main character is Noelle, the daughter of Santa. After his sad passing, Noelle’s older brother is supposed to take over but runs away right before Christmas. This sets up a quest in which Noelle discovers that she is beginning to inherit the classic powers that every Santa has had for generations.

Even better, this is a Disney+ original film, so it is now canon in Disney that Anna Kendrick is Santa.

1. “Elf”

This now 20-year-old film needs no introduction. To put it simply, this movie has all the ingredients of a great Christmas film: magic, candy, romance and family. Will Ferrell and Zooey Deschanel are an unlikely but iconic pair in this uplifting flick, which is nostalgic, fresh and evergreen, like a Christmas tree.

While this list may be a little controversial to some, it helps provide movie ideas for your next Christmas movie marathon!

Raiders Battle Louisville in NCAA Tournament, Fall in Four Sets to End Season
This past Thursday, the Wright State University women’s volleyball team took on the No. 2 Louisville Cardinals in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament.

**Coming into the game**

The two squads had met earlier in the season, where Louisville captured a four-set victory.

The Raiders returned to the NCAA Tournament for the second straight time this year, looking to find more luck than last year’s loss against Georgia Tech.

**First-set win**

WSU came out in the first set and played very well, stunning the Cardinals with a 25-22 opening-set victory. Callie Martin and Sam Ott led in the set, each recording four kills.

The set victory marked just the fourth set on the season that Louisville dropped to a non-power five conference, with the first coming earlier in the season against WSU.

“I think we had a lot of energy,” WSU setter Katie Meyer stated. “Every time we got a lot of energy, they started to crumble a little bit, so that gave us some confidence, and I think that helped us push through the first set.”

**Remainder of the game**

In the second set, WSU continued its strong start, going back and forth with the Cardinals. Eventually, the Cardinals rallied behind its home crowd to pull out a 25-18 set victory.
WSU came out in the crucial third set looking determined, starting out with a 6-2 lead. The Raiders would continue building on that lead, going up 11-5. The Cardinals used two separate three-point rallies to pull ahead of WSU and ultimately claim the third set by a score of 25-20.

In the fourth set, Louisville got off to a 14-8 lead, making it difficult for Wright State to stay above water. The Raiders were able to battle and bring the score within four points at 20-16. Unfortunately, the rally was short lived with the Cardinals claiming the fourth set 25-20.

**Reflections on a historic season**

Wright State fell in the opening round of the tournament, ending its remarkable 2023 season.

“I couldn’t be more proud of our group,” Head Coach Travers Green mentioned. “We got a lot of respect from people in the stands for how we played, and that is all you can ask for as a coach.”

The dynamic trio of Katie Meyer, Megan Alders and Callie Martin led the Raiders this year.

These three players changed the narrative that surrounds the WSU program after claiming four Horizon League titles and four NCAA Tournament berths in a five-year span.

“When we came in, there was an expectation of getting better every season,” Alders said. “I hope that we left a good legacy for the girls that come in and they know they can do this and they can dream as long as they have a big heart and go out there and ball.”

For Martin, the first round match was a full-circle moment, as she is a native of Louisville. Martin always dreamed of playing in the KFC Yum! Center in front of her friends and family.

“I started my career and ended it in the same city,” Martin said. “That was pretty amazing having all my family and friends there. It was very special for me.”
Although the Raiders fell in the first round, the team has a lot to be proud of, as they repeated as HL champions for the first time in program history and competed very well against one of the nation’s best teams in Louisville, showing that the Raiders can hang with any team out there.

The team will now head to the offseason and prepare for next fall, as they look to claim three consecutive conference titles.

“Attack on Titan” Final Episode: A Review of the End of a Ten-Year Saga

Emily Mancuso
December 8, 2023
Pop Culture

On Saturday, Nov. 4, the action-packed last episode of the end of the highly anticipated “Attack on Titan,” or “Shingeki No Kyojin” as it is known in Japan, finally aired. How did the highly controversial manga conclusion work on the big screen? (Warning: Spoilers ahead.)

Overview and anticipation

“Attack on Titan,” created by Hajime Isayama, is a Japanese manga series that has captivated audiences worldwide. The story unfolds in a world where humanity resides within enormous walled cities to protect themselves from gigantic humanoid creatures known as Titans.

The fourth season took a dramatic split from the straightforward human versus monster narrative, as did other preceding seasons, with the final and fourth season exploring themes of racism, war, genocide and the grayness of morality.

Part one shifts from Paradis Island to their mysterious neighbor across the sea (Marley), who seemingly hates them for nothing more than their race. It explores the militaristic struggle and the cast’s infiltration into the country.
Part two sees plans formed and carried out as characters must decide between an unstable “peace” with the threat of a partial “rumbling” (the release of colossal Titans across the world) or a full rumbling, which would erase the threat of invasion but devastate and complete genocide for the entire world.

Part three sees Eren Yeager choose the latter, with his friends and former enemies forced to fight against him as they choose to save the world.

The fourth season, split between parts between 2020 to 2023, had fans frustrated and excited for the epic 85-minute conclusion.

In this review, I will be exploring the ending controversy and storyline, character development, themes and symbolism, animation, pacing, soundtrack and the impact of such a long-winded yet influential series; however, I will never be able to touch on everything that needs to be said in this brief review.

A brief review

The manga ended in April 2021, giving plenty of time for manga readers to pick over and criticize the endings, causing anxiety for many anime-only watchers. The conclusion of many? The ending was bad and poorly written. The reasoning for this varied widely.

The reactions of manga readers leaning toward dislike had a lot to do with pacing and over-analysis. When readers are given only a few dozen pages at a time with the storyline not carefully polished and edited by animation directors, of course, the pacing is going to feel off and sometimes rushed to manga readers. And with such a long and beloved series, there is going to be some controversy over the ending whether it was lackluster or great just because so many eyes were on it.

Storyline-wise, one reason was that it was too dramatic of a shift for the series. Some viewers reflected that they were confused whether they were even watching the right anime and that they were expected to care and be interested in characters they had never met.

However, I believe this to be a well-done move on Isayama’s part. Viewers are forced into a perspective that is not the one they have been conditioned to expect,
reflecting the real world in that it shows the world from all its angles. Much like the real world, we are forced to make untrue assumptions about these new characters that are once again proven untrue or skewed. They are not just enemies but people just like the cast we have come to know and love.

In regards to the final episode itself, the surprising controversy about the storyline came from the fact that Eren’s friends and former enemies come together to save the world. In any other anime, this may have been seen as an expected and even “excellent” ending as characters come together for a common goal.

This was not the case for everyone, however, as some fans believe that, by Eren not flattening the entire world, it completely kills the purpose of the show and leads to an unsatisfying ending.

I think that much of this disappointment stems from disappointment in Eren’s character arc. Eren Yeager simply was no longer the mysterious “alpha” type of character that many fans idolized. The final episode showed him as the 19-year-old kid he is: one who cried and was tormented by his choices. The shattering of this ideal of “pro-rumbling” fans shattered their view of the ending, steeling themselves against anything positive to say about it because they felt scorned by this development.

However, I think this is the near-perfect conclusion of Eren’s character arc before his death. He is shown to be human and capable of complex emotions. Despite his killing of eighty percent of the world, he is not some psychopath everyone would believe he is based on his actions.

And despite horrific actions, his friends still care for him and mourn his death, completing their own character arcs as they too are shown to be morally gray and complex. This hammers home the AOT theme that nothing is quite as it seems.

**Some changes**

Despite this, I think there are a few things in the main storyline I would alter. During the final episode, the freed Eldians from the internment zone and the Marleyan military get into a minor scuffle, which they resolve by realizing that, simply, “racism
is bad.” Years of indoctrination and racism are not going to go away overnight, making this aspect of the story unrealistic.

Additionally, I would have liked to see more of the main cast and the impact the story has had on them. One of the main themes of “Attack on Titan” is that conflict is cyclical and will never end, and yet we are only briefly introduced to the impending next war and its impact.

The characters also seem unrealistic in the fact that they all have happened to come together for one common cause and seem relatively unaffected by the conflict they have endured. To show the theme of conflict, it would be best to show internal conflict emotionally and external conflict among the remaining cast.

Overall, the epilogue at the end does show hope for the future and that maybe, someday, we will be able to come together as one. Until then, we must keep moving forward.

And, as someone who disliked a lot of the ending in the original manga, I actually think the final episode did a great job of wrapping up the storyline. The pacing is polished to fit with the action of the ending, and seeing the story from above as one rather than installations makes the ending more comprehensive.

Hajime Isayama himself has said that the anime is the “final vision” of the story.

The few changes made include embellishment of the impact of the “rumbling,” which shows a more rounded view of the conflict. There is also Armin’s reaction to Eren’s crime being much more visceral, showing more consistency to Armin’s character and obviously condemning the genocide while still mourning the loss of Eren as a friend. This change is probably the biggest alteration, as their conversation is expanded upon and themes and characters are made more clear.

The third change is Eren’s crying in the manga seeming much more pathetic in the manga, but the anime changed this to show he is complex rather than pathetic. In the epilogue section, one of my main criticisms of the manga ending was clarified more to show what the cast plans to do going forward and the current political stance of the island. Scenes in the anime were also slightly changed in order to help flow and not break from the story, which had previously left some fans feeling frustrated. This included the perspective of Queen Historia.
And my personal favorite change: the great expansion of the ending sequence in the far future. The ending theme shows Paradis as it goes through the decades and goes forward in technology but also experiences devastation and war. The cast has not wrapped up all conflict in the world with their sacrifice like most animes do. Conflict is cyclical just like in the real world.

And the final scene has fans left wondering for potentially years to come: Does this insinuate the Titans are coming back?

**Final thoughts**

The animation and soundtrack were also excellent, making the final episode worth the wait. The music struck a careful balance between fan-favorites and new work in a way that was not overwhelming and only added intensity and variety of emotions. The singer of the ending theme being Mikasa’s voice actor was the cherry on top, an excellent send-off to the story.

The animation, especially the action, was expanded and sequenced much better than the manga. It made fans thankful to Mappa Studio for the wait despite their impatience. There was no jarring, sometimes poorly done CGI to take you out of the story like in previous seasons. It was a perfect pairing between story and medium.

Overall, I would rate the final episode 4.75 out of 5. As previously mentioned, I cannot go into what all influenced my decision in this brief review, but I hope all the viewers enjoyed it as much as I did.

But if you did not, check out the fan-made ending, “AOT no Requiem.” However, if you were like most anime-watchers, you are wondering why manga readers were so upset at such a great ending and will be joining me at the Attack on Titan afterparty with exclusive behind-the-scenes looks and anime dialogue never seen before.

Thank you to Hajime Isayama for such a thought-provoking story and the crew at Mappa Studio for such a great adaptation. I hope that I can continue to discuss the anime that crashed Crunchyroll servers multiple times and claimed the hearts of millions. Shinzou wo Sasageyo!
Opinion: “Midnight Memories” is the Best One Direction Album

Katelun Combs  
December 8, 2023  
Opinions  
Pop Culture

Harry, Liam, Louis, Niall and Zayn. These five guys, now grown men, had once made up one of the biggest boy bands across the globe. From their most-known hits of “What Makes You Beautiful” to “Drag Me Down,” there is a song that everyone recognizes from the band.

During their time together, One Direction recorded a total of five albums, and they will be ranked here accordingly.

5: “Up All Night”

The album that started it all but obviously not comparable to what was yet to come. The debut album contains the familiar “What Makes You Beautiful” and “One Thing.” Despite being on the bottom of the list, the wonderful album is still one of nostalgia and bittersweet memories.

Top three songs: “Moments,” “More Than This” and “Same Mistakes.”

Best lines: “If we could only have this life for one more day / If we could only turn back time.”

4: “Take Me Home”

The second album to be released and the first album that introduced me to the band. This album reminds one of the innocence associated with youth and the freedom and carelessness that accompanies it. This album will have one reminiscing of the good times and thinking of their first love with the fan favorites of “Live While We’re Young” and “Little Things.”
Top three songs: “Last First Kiss,” “Rock Me” and “They Don’t Know About Us.”

Best lines: “People say we shouldn’t be together / We’re too young to know about forever / But I say, they don’t know.”

3: “Made in the A.M.”

Now to the final album recorded, “Made in the A.M.” This album created an emotional ending of an era, as the band decided to go on an indefinite hiatus shortly after its release. Unfortunately, the album is also missing Zayn’s distinctive vocals after his early departure from the band. This album contains a reflection of the band’s time together and the memories they created among one another and with the fans through the fan-favorites “History” and “A.M.”

Top three songs: “If I Could Fly,” “Infinity” and “Love You Goodbye.”

Best lines: “How many nights does it take to count the stars? / That’s the time it would take to fix my heart.”

2: “Four”

Next up, “Four.” The fourth album contains the fan favorites of “Steal My Girl” and “Night Changes.” The album also contains the love song “18,” which left fans asking Niall “what exactly is a chonce?” The joke that surrounds the unique pronunciation of the word ‘chance’ continues to live on, just as the admiration for the album does.

Top three songs: “Fool’s Gold,” “Stockholm Syndrome” and “Where Do Broken Hearts Go.”

Best lines: “I’m the first to admit that I’m reckless / I get lost in your beauty and I can’t see / Two feet in front of me.”

1: “Midnight Memories”

Throwing it back a whole decade to 2013, when One Direction posters littered bedroom walls, the “One Direction: This Is Us” documentary film hit theaters and the
best One Direction album was released. The third album contains the fan favorites of “Best Song Ever” and “Story of My Life,” but those are not the only songs worth mentioning. Every song from the “Midnight Memories” album deserves to be listened to and thoroughly appreciated. There is not a single song worthy of deeming skippable, therefore making it the best album ever.

Top three songs: “Happily,” “Something Great” and “Strong.”

Best lines: “The script was written and I could not change a thing / I want to rip it all to shreds and start again.”

Regardless of which album one considers to be the best, the Directioner fandom created by the mutual admiration of the band has proven to be everlasting. The friends made, the laughs and smiles shared, the sense of belonging fulfilled and the memories created will always be worth keeping close to our hearts and cherishing throughout the remainder of our lives.

Despite the band members going their separate ways, they have each found success within their solo pursuits, as the Directioner fandom continues to support their idols.

As the One Direction fan base remains loyal listeners and even continues to gain new followers, one can only hope that a surprise reunion tour may be announced one day. Until then, may Directioners never forget where they belong or where they first felt at home.

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News Roundup: Week of Dec. 4

Alexis Lewis
December 11, 2023
News

From local happenings to national topics and global events, here is the news worth knowing from the week of Dec. 4, 2023.

Local
Kyle McCord enters transfer portal

On Monday, Dec. 4, Ohio State quarterback Kyle McCord entered the transfer portal, according to an ESPN press release. McCord was with the Buckeyes for two years behind the starting quarterback, C.J. Stroud, who now plays for the Houston Texans; McCord was the OSU starting QB throughout this past season.

“I’m extremely thankful for my time at Ohio State. Playing in the scarlet and gray was truly an honor,” McCord wrote in a post on X.

National

UNLV shooting

On Wednesday, Dec. 6, a gunman killed three and critically wounded another at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, according to an Associated Press release. The gunman had previously worked at East Carolina University before unsuccessfully seeking employment at UNLV. The gunman died in a shootout with police.

Big MLB moves

On Wednesday, Dec. 6, the San Diego Padres traded Juan Soto to the New York Yankees, according to an ESPN press release. Soto joins the talented Yankee outfield composed of Aaron Judge and Giancarlo Stanton.

On Saturday, Dec. 9, Shohei Ohtani agreed to a 10-year, $700 million deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers, according to an ESPN press release.

Global

Mounting Israeli offensive in Gaza
Overnight into Thursday, Dec. 7, Israeli forces struck southern Gaza in another strong offensive, according to an Associated Press release.

The United Nations Security-General, Antônio Guterres, has called for a humanitarian ceasefire.

“The parties to the conflict—and, indeed, the international community—face an immediate and fundamental responsibility: to stop the inhuman collective suffering and dramatically expand humanitarian aid to Gaza,” Guterres said in a U.N. press release.

**Galactic**

**NASA announces Greenhouse Gas Center**

On Monday, Dec. 4, the National Aeronautic and Space Administration unveiled the United States Greenhouse Gas center, which will serve as a hub for data collection, information technology, missions and other work to protect the environment, according to a NASA press release.

“NASA data is essential to making the changes needed on the ground to protect our climate,” NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said. “We’re bringing space to Earth to benefit communities across the country.”

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**SGA: New Director of Inclusive Excellence**

Britin Frazey  
December 11, 2023  
News

On Tuesday, Dec. 5, the Wright State University Student Government Association held its weekly meeting to welcome a new director of inclusive excellence. It was the last SGA meeting of the semester.
**Director of Inclusive Excellence**

SGA voted and unanimously approved a new Director of Inclusive Excellence, Steven Truong, who was welcomed to take a seat at the SGA table.

This seat had been vacant since the previous director resigned earlier in the semester.

**Rowdy bobblehead award**

AJ Allen, director of student organizations, passed the Rowdy bobblehead award to Ariana Ellis, the chief of staff. Allen said that Ellis was very helpful while working together on budget reviews.

Ellis accepted the award happily, and all of SGA called for her to give a speech.

“The semester is almost over,” Ellis said. “Thank you for just being a nice group of people that I get to continuously see every week. I like coming here.”

**(Almost) a record time**

After the meeting adjourned, some SGA members discussed what a brief meeting it was. With the meeting being only seven minutes long, they thought for a moment that they had set a new record. They soon remembered that a previous final meeting of a semester was only five minutes long.

SGA will not meet again until the beginning of next semester.

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**UAB Spreads Holiday Cheer with Make-and-Take Cookie Jars**

Katelun Combs
December 12, 2023
Wright Life
Wright State students were eager to create their own cookie jars courtesy of the University Activities Board.

**Getting festive**

On Thursday, Nov. 30, students seized the opportunity to get a jump start on their holiday baking as they filled glass jars with the dry ingredients necessary for making delicious chocolate chip cookies.

UAB’s Director of Campus Events, Emelee Porter, shared the inspiration behind the event.

“Everybody loves cookies, and it’s getting close to the holidays, and who doesn’t want some nice Christmas cookies right before break?” Porter said.

Porter also expressed that the turnout was much larger than UAB had originally anticipated.

Students had to wait as UAB members made a grocery run to pick up more ingredients, as UAB had quickly run out. The hosts apologized for the wait, but the students stayed patient and understanding of the delay. After all, the wait would be worthwhile.

“There’s nothing better than a warm chocolate chip cookie,” UAB President Lexi Ricker said.

Now that students have the dry ingredients needed to make their sweet treat, all they will need to add is an egg, butter and some vanilla to their cookie mix (and turn on a Christmas movie and make some hot cocoa as they bake). Ooey-gooey goodness will be ready in as soon as nine minutes.

**Spring events**

The UAB Director of Marketing, Ali Smith, provided some insight on the many events students can expect to take place next semester.
“We’re doing a lot more of these make-and-take events. We want to make things accessible for people on campus, so a bunch of free stuff. Everyone loves free stuff, so it’ll be nice. And then we have some bigger events, like April Craze and Winter Fest. That’s gonna be taking over the entire Student Union, which a lot of people come out and enjoy, so I’m excited for those two,” Smith said.

Ricker also explained a few of the new events that will take place, as UAB has been fleshing out some fresh ideas for the upcoming year.

“We’re doing a lot of movies. We’re having a Valentine’s Day “Pitch Perfect” type of thing that we want to do, or you can paint vinyls. There’s a lot of new things that we’re throwing. We want to do a make-your-own-pizza and watch “Ratatouille” night because National Pizza Day is the ninth of February, so we have a lot of cool ideas coming out,” Ricker said. Students interested in participating in these events can visit UAB’s Engage page.

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**Queer Prom 2023: Enchanted in a Forest of Color**

Aaron Cline  
December 13, 2023  
Wright Life

Students and families danced under the twinkling lights during Rainbow Alliance’s Queer Prom on Dec. 2. The theme of an enchanted forest enticed attendees with decorations of mushrooms, flowers and more.

**Set-up**

The executive decision was made to decorate the room for prom at 10 a.m. so that students would have time to prepare for the Chosen Family Feast as well as the prom itself. The cabinet, as well as other members of Rainbow Alliance, came together to set up decorations, such as the waterfall and flower arch.

Rae Carson, a member of the Rainbow Alliance cabinet, talked about how setting up was an enjoyable experience.
“It was so much fun, there were many funny moments to be had,” Carson said.

Soft lights lined the walls, and mushrooms, moss and flowers were scattered onto every table by the time Rainbow Alliance finished decorating. Students did an excellent job preparing the prom site for guests.

With decorations complete, students left to prepare for the next part of the night: the Chosen Family Feast.

**Chosen Family Feast**

Many members of Rainbow Alliance took their seats in the Endeavor Room to celebrate the LGBTQA+ Center’s Chosen Family Feast, which started two hours before Queer Prom.

Intentionally planned shortly after WSU’s Thanksgiving break, Chosen Family Feast was a Thanksgiving and winter-themed dinner for queer students and their chosen families and close friends.

Attendees were offered craft supplies, such as paint and markers, to decorate winter-themed canvases and coloring pages to entertain themselves as they ate traditional Thanksgiving food, including cheesecake, chicken, mashed potatoes and vegetarian alternatives.

The Endeavor Room was filled with laughter and chatting as families ate and enjoyed each other’s company, and the time for Queer Prom rapidly approached.

Greene County Health and More Than A Hug set up stands outside of the prom location. More Than A Hug is a volunteer organization of parents who stand-in for queer people who may have a rocky relationship with their blood family; they also provided hugs and goodie bags to attendees. Green County Health had bags of information for students to take and also provided safe, confidential HIV testing during the event.

**Prom itself**
The theme of an enchanted forest was prominent from the moment students stepped through the arch of vines and hand-made flowers.

Queer Prom started off with a short speech from Rainbow Alliance President Alex Stone, who thanked the attendees for coming before advertising the club’s fundraising opportunities during prom: song requests and raffle tickets.

Song requests went for $2 while raffle tickets were $1 each. Students who bought raffle tickets could place them in a variety of jars for a chance to win items gifted to the organization by fellow clubs as well as outside organizations.

According to executive board members Kay Bell and Ash Sword, the gift baskets came from local businesses, such as The Neon movie theater and Dark Star Bookstore, as well as other organizations, including Greene County Health.

Abilities also offered an assortment of items, and one of the prizes was a series of paintings from Sword.

Attendees danced to music under the colorful lights and conversed at tables as they waited for the prize winners to be announced. Isabella Taylor, one of the many students who attended, was excited to express how she felt during the event.

“It was very slay,” Taylor said.

When the time came to announce winners, the music died down and cabinet and executive board members went up to randomly pull a ticket from each jar. A round of applause went out for every prize, and those who won multiple prizes were kind enough to offer their other winnings to different students.

Rainbow Alliance hosts meetings every Wednesday at 6 p.m. in the Culture and Identity Centers. Students are encouraged to attend.

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**Final RISE Tour of the Semester Explores Forensics**

Emily Mancuso
Students of all majors gathered in Fawcett Hall on Dec. 1 to take part in the final RISE tour of the semester, studying blood spatter, fingerprinting, deviant behavior and more in the forensics-themed exploratory event.

**About the RISE tours**

The RISE tours, which are intended for Honors student exploration but are open to all students, do not just focus on forensics. Previous topics include a nursing simulation, a microelectronics lab and a physiology tour. These tours, including forensics, were well-attended, numbering at least 15 attendees each time.

Dean Shu Schiller of the College of Graduate Programs and Honors Studies originally proposed the RISE tours, which are now mostly operated by the student advisory board for the college. Students propose ideas during meetings and organize the tours from connections with professors and instructors they already have a relationship with.

At the tours, attendees are informed about opportunities and fields of study at Wright State University that they may have not otherwise known about.

“[Honor students] might not be aware of or might have forgotten about doing a departmental honors thesis. This opens their eyes on what they could do as their projects because then they can get to see various different things, find out what they are interested in, maybe make connections with different professors or graduate students that are at different stations,” Rahul Shah, the treasurer of the student advisory board for the College of Graduate and Honor Studies, said.

Shah also hopes attendees learn more about the over 100 graduate programs WSU has to offer.

The forensics RISE tour was refined based on student feedback from previous tours, such as having a timer for switching stations and extending the length of the tours from an hour to an hour and a half.

**The forensics tour**
The tour began at 3 p.m. in Fawcett Hall, a hotspot for forensic studies with its ample lab equipment. The cohort of instructors was highly decorated.

Dr. Dan Krane spoke first and talked about his professional career at Wright State. Dr. Krane worked on well-known cases, such as Casey Anthony and the Unabomber, with DNA testing and is now the CEO of Forensic Bioinformatics.

“I think [DNA evidence is] now more reliable and more robust than it was 30 years ago, and that it wouldn’t have been if we hadn’t had a small number of people who were really holding proponents of DNA evidence at the onset and continue to hold proponents of DNA evidence to high standards today,” Krane said.

Krane helped make some of the stations a reality. There were five stations: social disorganization theory and crime statistics, forensic DNA profiling, forensic odontology, blood spatter analysis and fingerprinting. Each group of three to six students spent approximately 15 minutes at each station run by either a professor, faculty member or student.

Dr. Tracey Steele is an associate professor of Sociology specializing in gender, sexuality and criminology. Dr. Steele hosted the social disorganization theory and crime statistics station. Students discussed surprising crime statistics and analyzed images for deterrent infrastructure against crime.

“The relationship, for example, between age and crime, it’s actually an inverse relationship, and if we walked everybody up from about the age of 70 to the age of 25 to an island somewhere, crime would almost be eradicated [on the island],” Steele said.

Environmental Sciences Ph.D. student Robin Richardson-Coy hosted the forensic DNA profiling station. Students mathematically calculated the likelihood of a DNA match by comparing two DNA profiles.

Kayci Johnson, a Biological Sciences masters student, led the forensic odontology station. Students bit into an emptied candy wax container to analyze their bite marks and learned more from Johnson about the field of forensic odontology.

Robert Hunkeler is an adjunct faculty for Sociology and Anthropology and works with the Montgomery County coroner. Hunkeler manned the blood spatter analysis and fingerprinting stations. Students saw how blood reacts to different surfaces,
how to determine whether a substance is blood and how to properly lift and fingerprint.

The tour ended at 4:30 p.m. with a follow-up survey available to further improve the RISE tours.

Dr. Karen Lahm was also instrumental in organizing the tour but could not attend.

Shah hopes to have RISE tours each month of the next semester. The student advisory board is currently considering an MBA-centered RISE tour. Honors and graduate students receive emails for RISE tour sign-ups.

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**WSU Community Discusses Free Versus Hate Speech**

Ashley Hainzer

December 14, 2023

News

On Dec. 4 and 5, various Wright State University departments participated in a community talk about free speech and hate speech and how these affect Wright State University.

**What is free speech?**

Free speech falls under the First Amendment and is when someone can say or do what they want in reason.

“It’s one of your rights as an American to free speech,” Sean Culley, vice president of Legal Affairs and General Counsel, said.

The First Amendment allows free speech to be expressed in any public space. The word “public” is very important in this context because if you work for a private entity, you have to keep their standards in mind.
“It’s important to recognize that you can have consequences for the things you say. While certain things may not necessarily be considered ‘hate speech,’ you may still get in trouble because it may not follow the rules for the company,” Daniel Palmer, government affair specialist at WSU, said.

What is hate speech?

The idea of hate speech is considered a slippery slope. With how the First Amendment is written, very little can necessarily be considered “illegal hate speech,” since there is no legal definition of hate speech.

“Speech can be hateful. Someone can say something or do something nasty to you, but if they are not harassing you, using fighting words with you or threatening you, legally they aren’t doing anything wrong,” Culley said.

All the speakers agreed that those were adequate guidelines that fall under hate speech. The term “fighting words” was a point of contention at the talk, however.

“Well, it’s so subjective honestly. What might be considered ‘fighting words’ to one person might be a joke to another. There is no law really on what is considered ‘fighting words,’” Stephanie Allen from Student Legal Services said.

The overall definition of hate speech that the group landed on was “anything that a reasonable person would consider a threat.”

Free speech at WSU

Students are able to express their free speech on campus. The current demonstration policy, University Policy 1260, protects student voices while placing limits on unprotected speech, such as obscene or defamatory speech.

Officer Kurt Holden, director of Public Safety, pointed out that Wright State Police is there to protect individuals who are engaging in free speech activities.

“We may not agree with what is being protested, but the whole idea of us being there is to protect all parties and make sure that students are following what they are supposed to do,” Holden stated.
There have been many demonstrations on campus, including a recent gun violence protest on Nov. 29.

“I think it’s nice that we are able to speak freely. I think it’s important to our college experience to be around many ideas. [WSU] allows us to discover the truths of the world and form opinions,” Apidae Collins, a Chemistry major who was in attendance, said.

If a student or faculty member feels that their First Amendment right is infringed, they can file a report with the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct or the Dean of Students’ office

Gun Violence Protest Brings Awareness

Ashley Hainzer
December 14, 2023
News

The topic of gun control is a hot-button issue that is facing our country and affecting more and more people. After recent events, Wright State University students held a protest supporting gun restrictions.

Background

According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, shootings of all kinds are on the rise, including unintentional, intentional and interpersonal violence. Numbers have jumped in the year 2023 compared to previous years.

On Nov. 20 at the Beavercreek Walmart, four people were injured when a gunman walked into the store and opened fire. Following the Beavercreek Walmart incident, WSU students held a protest against gun violence.

The protest
The protest was on Wednesday, Nov. 29, in the afternoon. Students stood outside Hamilton Hall and chanted to bring awareness to the issue of gun violence.

“I saw some people out in the corridor in front of Hamilton Hall. They were chanting,” Joshua Buescher, a Social Science Education major, said. “They had a decent turnout given the protest topic.”

Students stayed out for a few hours before turning in. In those hours, they made sure their voices were heard.

Protesting at Wright State

WSU has a policy, University Policy 1260, that harbors the idea of free speech, meaning anyone can come and protest things that they see as injustices.

“It is not the proper role of a state institution of higher education to attempt to shield individuals from free speech, including ideas and opinions they find offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical or wrong-headed,” the school policy reads.

The Student Union and Recreation Director and Interim Dean of Students, Eric Corbitt, made a statement about free speech on campus.

“We must harbor these ideas of free speech,” Corbitt said. “The current policy is as long as it is in an outside area and doesn’t impede on official university business, it’s acceptable.”

Students at WSU are able to protest if they feel the need to do so as long as the protest follows the rules of Policy 1260.

“I like the policy. I think it’s important that everyone is well-heard and able to assemble if need be,” Buescher said. “I feel like it’d be against the law to not let us do it, but it’s still nice the school is open about it.”

Awareness
Overall, the protest was done to bring awareness to this issue and demonstrate student voices. The protest showed community leaders that students want to put an end to gun violence and make others more aware of gun safety.

“Free speech is one of the most important rights that we, as Americans, have. It is imperative for us to use it in appropriate ways,” Corbitt said.

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Premier Health Partners with Wright State to Become an Academic Medical Center

Alexis Lewis
December 15, 2023
News

The Wright State Board of Trustees met on Dec. 15 and approved an increased partnership to transform Premier Health into an academic medical center with five priorities.

Affiliation milestone with Premier Health

As an extension and more comprehensive joint vision of Wright State University and Premier Health, the two groups have enhanced the existing agreement from 2021 for a long-term, strategic partnership with five priorities.

The Dean of the WSU Boonshoft School of Medicine will also act as the Chief Academic Officer at Premier Health. This role will be a dual-reporting position that is recruited at a national level.

Miami Valley Hospital will be recognized as an academic medical center that integrates education, research and clinical care to the region.

The WSU College of Health, Education and Human Services will improve the integrated care for patients at the hospital.
Miami Valley Hospital, Upper Valley Medical Center and Atrium Medical Center are sites where the clinical training will expand and develop in allied health.

Growing and enhancing the clinical faculty in these partnerships will help improve the community health of the Dayton region, according to WSU President Dr. Sue Edwards.

“This alignment creates synergies. Those synergies enhance not only what is taught in the classroom, but they advance the delivery of medicine and promote more clinical research,” Edwards said.

Michael Riordan, president and CEO of Premier Health, said that this partnership will bolster both the mission of Premier Health and WSU, making the partnership beneficial to the Dayton community.

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**Board of Trustees Approves College of Business Reorganization, Discusses First-Year Seminars and Transcript Withholding Policy**

Alexis Lewis  
December 15, 2023  
News

The Wright State Board of Trustees met on Dec. 15 and approved the plan to reorganize the Raj Soin College of Business and approved other resolutions, including amendments to the transcript withholding policy.

**Raj Soin College of Business reorganization plan**

The board approved the reorganization plan of the Raj Soin College of Business to merge and consolidate assistant programs and faculty from six to two programs to increase interdisciplinary interaction.
First-year seminars and fall break

Dr. Subhashini Ganapathy, the faculty president, provided a report to the board, highlighting the approval of the core proposal resolution to align with Ohio Transfer 36 and to ensure smooth credit transfers between public institutions in Ohio.

The new core will include a three-credit first-year seminar course.

“[First-year seminars] lay the groundwork for equitable academic achievement across the board through the integration of academic guidance, community building initiatives and skill enhancement,” Ganapathy said.

The senate will develop policies to implement these procedures and changes in the spring semester.

Ganapathy also highlighted the senate’s work with the Student Government Association for a fall break, which the groups hope to start implementing in fall 2025.

Student trustees highlight activity on campus

Student Trustee Madisyn Crabtree highlighted the administration’s 3 Rs—recruitment, retention and relationships—by showcasing the work of the Student Involvement and Leadership Center, Greek Life and student athletes.

“Studies have shown that student involvement is positively related to academic performance, cognitive development, well-being, leadership and multicultural awareness,” Crabtree said.

Student Trustee Chris Jenkins highlighted the Future Actuaries Club, which helps future actuaries come together to improve and grow academically and professionally.

Transcript withholding policy
A resolution from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee will amend the transcript withholding policy. Starting July 1, 2024, the university will not withhold the official transcript of a student after providing financial counseling for outstanding balances.

**Enhanced partnership with Premier Health**

The board approved an enhanced partnership with Premier Health to transform the hospital network into an academic medical center. For more information about this partnership, read here

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**“It Was a Bad Day to Shoot Bad”**: Lady Raiders Fall to Bowling Green on Education Day

Adam Campbell  
December 16, 2023  
Sports

This past Tuesday, the Wright State University women’s basketball team returned home to host the Falcons of Bowling Green in front of a record-breaking crowd.

**Coming into the game**

Wright State entered the match after defeating Eastern Illinois last week. Coming into Tuesday, the Raiders held a 5-0 record at home, marking the eighth time in program history the team started 5-0.

The Falcons came into Dayton in the middle of a gruesome road trip. BG took on No. 4 Iowa before traveling to Dayton. BG would go on to play the No. 1 ranked Gamecocks of South Carolina after its showdown with the Raiders.
Tuesday’s game set records, as it was the highest attended WSU women’s game where 7,574 fans attended. Over 7,000 of those fans were elementary and middle school students from Miami Valley schools.

“It was an unbelievable atmosphere out there. Thank you to all the kids that were cheering for us,” Head Coach Kari Hoffman stated. “They did their part. It was a bad day to shoot bad. I think our players could hear them, could feed off their energy. It was a fun environment and a record-breaking crowd is really cool to play in front of.”

**A slow start**

It was a slow start to the game for WSU, shooting just over 22 percent from the floor in the first quarter.

Trailing 11-2 in the first, WSU mounted a hard fought comeback to bring themselves back within three points with a 13-10 score.

The second quarter did not bode well for the Raiders, getting outscored 13-4 before the break. The Raiders were unable to hit a three-point shot in the second, going 0-5 from deep.

The Raiders came out strong in the third quarter, converting on over 66 percent of its shots. WSU was able to draw within 12 down the stretch.

Morgan Sharps of Bowling Green scored 13 of her 16 points in the third quarter to help propel the Falcons to victory.

Bowling Green would take down the Raiders by a final score of 69-48.

**Takeaways**

Layne Ferrell led the Raiders with 16 points on the day, marking her sixth game this season in double figures. Rachel Loobie added 14 points to go along with six rebounds, a steal and two blocks, going up against bigger post players.
“Obviously, I’m not the biggest body, but I feel like staying consistent and showing up ready to work, it’s more of a mindset thing over a body thing,” Loobie mentioned. “I’m down there trying my best and working hard.”

Bowling Green marked the final destination on the revenge tour for WSU, as the team found much better success this year against opponents who the team struggled against just last season.

“There is a big mindset difference,” Loobie added. “This year, the mindset has changed from ‘we could win’ to ‘we should win.’ We have worked really hard all summer, all preseason, to prepare for this.”

The Raiders will travel to West Virginia to take on the Mountaineers on Dec. 18. The game will begin at 10 a.m. and will stream on ESPN+.

WSU will return home on Jan. 5 to begin its Horizon League slate against Milwaukee.

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**A Heartfelt Farewell to The Wright State Guardian**

Adam Campbell  
December 16, 2023  
Letter To The Editor

As I sit down to write this farewell letter, a wave of emotions engulfs me, realizing that my journey as a Sports Reporter at The Wright State Guardian is coming to an end. Graduation day is just around the corner, and I find myself reflecting on the incredible experiences, challenges and growth that this role has brought into my life.

It feels like it was just yesterday, March 12, 2022, when I first joined the staff at The Wright State Guardian. After not getting involved on campus for over two years in my college career, I took a leap and decided to apply to become a sports reporter not knowing how much it would transform my collegiate experience.

My initiation into The Guardian coincided with a significant moment—covering the WSU men's basketball First Four matchup in the 2022 NCAA Tournament. It was after my first assignment that I fell in love with this organization. The Guardian would
also allow me to travel to Terre Haute, Indiana to cover an NCAA baseball regional
tournament, and Louisville, Kentucky to cover an NCAA volleyball tournament.

Growing up, I had always dreamed of getting involved in sports media, and The
Guardian was my first taste of what the field had to offer. This newfound passion for
sports reporting opened doors beyond The Guardian, leading me to join WWSU
106.9 FM, where I held the position of Sports Director and engaged in play-by-play
commentary and podcasts over the radio.

The Guardian, with its unique challenges and opportunities, allowed me to analyze
sports in a way that I never could before. I learned to set my bias to the side and call
it as I see it, which was initially challenging.

In my tenure at The Guardian, I had the pleasure of covering various teams at Wright
State, witnessing their endeavors for success both on and off the field. Wright State
is blessed with athletes and coaches who are not only devoted to on-field success
but are also kind individuals always willing to support me along my journey.

To all the athletes and coaches at Wright State, I want to express my heartfelt
gratitude. Thank you for generously giving me your time, whether after the most
exhilarating wins or the most heartbreaking defeats. Your openness and cooperation
made my job not only possible but immensely fulfilling.

If I wrote a personal thank you to everyone who made my experience here a great
one, this story would go on for a very long time. However, there are a few particular
people who must be in this.

Makenzie Ciero, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to join this organization.
You took a chance on me when I had zero prior reporting experience. I will never
forget how nervous I was coming to my interview where you offered me a position.
From there, you became a good friend of mine and continued to help me easily
transition in the journalism field with excitement and motivation.

Noah Kindig, thank you for being my first mentor at The Guardian. My transition to
this group was that much easier with you leading the way and helping me prepare for
when the position became mine after your graduation. We have shared so many
moments together, from the NCAA Tournament where I first met you to my final
broadcast with you at DayAir Ballpark where we got a glimpse of what the
professional side of the field felt like.
James Naylor, thank you for teaching me the importance of professionalism. I learned many valuable lessons from you that helped me become more unbiased in my storytelling while also watching you tackle several stories that were extremely difficult to manage. You are strong, and I know you will continue to do great things in the journalism field.

Dylan Collison, thank you for always being an open set of ears. Your prior experience at The Guardian benefited me when I came across times of struggle and uncertainty. You have always motivated me to be great at both The Guardian and WWSU. I will always relish the fun times and the stressful times we shared together that helped both of us become better versions of ourselves.

Alexis Lewis, thank you for providing empathy in my time at The Guardian. You are an amazing leader, journalist and friend. I know you will achieve so much in your remaining time at The Guardian and beyond. You helped make The Guardian a safe place, one that was fun even in the most trying of times.

Future Sports Reporter, relish every single moment. Embrace every victory and learn from every defeat. The sports world is an everlasting story, and The Guardian will give you an opportunity to add to it.

As I get set to graduate, I carry all of the memories, lessons and friendships with me as I prepare to write a new story. Thank you to The Guardian family for making this more than a newsroom. It was a home to me, a place for tremendous growth and so much more. I wish all of you the best, and may the stories continue to unfold.

With gratitude,

Adam Campbell

Sports Reporter, Class of 2023

News Roundup: Week of Dec. 11

Alexis Lewis
December 18, 2023
From local happenings to national topics and global events, here is the news worth knowing from the week of Dec. 11, 2023.

**Local**

**Ohio Senate approves House Bill 68**

On Wednesday, Dec. 13, Ohio state senators approved House Bill 68, which bans gender-affirming healthcare and prevents transgender people from participating in women's sports.

**Wright State enhances partnership with Premier Health**

The Wright State Board of Trustees met on Dec. 15 and approved an increased partnership to transform Premier Health into an academic medical center with five priorities.

As an extension and more comprehensive joint vision of Wright State University and Premier Health, the two groups have enhanced the existing agreement from 2021 for a long-term, strategic partnership with five priorities.

For more information, read here.

**National**

**Republican Party calls for chairman’s resignation**

According to a press release from the Associated Press, the Republican Party of Florida suspended Chairman Christian Ziegler while police investigate rape accusations against him. Lee County GOP Chairman Michael Thomason and Gov. Ron DeSantis, among other leading officials, have called for Ziegler's resignation.
Texas wins NCAA Women’s Volleyball Tournament

On Sunday, Dec. 17, the Texas Longhorns defeated the Nebraska Cornhuskers 3-0 to win their second consecutive NCAA Women’s Volleyball title. Madisen Skinner and Ella Swindle led the team to the victory.

Global

Israel-Hamas war updates

On Wednesday, Dec. 13, nine Israeli soldiers were killed in an ambush, according to an Associated Press release. Earlier last week on Tuesday, Dec. 12, the United Nations voted by a large majority for a ceasefire, according to a press release from the U.N.

On Saturday, Dec. 16, the Israeli military mistakenly killed three Israeli hostages, according to an Associated Press release.

“The three Israeli hostages who were mistakenly shot by Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip had been waving a white flag and were shirtless when they were killed, military officials said Saturday, in Israel’s first such acknowledgement of harming any hostages in its war against Hamas,” the release reads.

WSU Fall Dance Concert Features Diverse and Original Student Choreography

Emily Mancuso
December 18, 2023
Wright Life
On Dec. 8 and 9, dance majors performed original choreography to selections from 21 Savage to Paul McCartney on the Festival Playhouse stage.

**Backstage**

The student-run concert was only possible with those backstage. The fall dance concert itself has been a Wright State University staple since Head of Dance and Associate Professor Gina Walther joined WSU in 2006.

In combination with Ashley Pabst, Gina Walther served as faculty.

However, the concert was still mostly student-run, with student coordinators and producers Brianna Chan, Lexi Wilson, Emma McCaslin and Audrey Lee. Julia Dipaolo served as stage manager, calling all of the lighting and curtain cues.

“Our entire crew working in the front of the house as well as backstage were students in our program. Some of the crew danced in their pieces then pulled the ropes for their peers. The show was a very successful group effort,” Walther said.

**Concert and dances**

These students contended also with a bigger venue, expanding from the previous Studio 170 space, which only held room for 82 patrons, to the Festival Playhouse, which holds 250 patrons.

Most of these seats were filled during the Friday and Saturday performances. Unrestricted by dance form and music, students performed a wide variety of work and dance forms. For example, Emma Cole performed to “Don Quixote” while Chan and Wilson performed to “Gold Digger” in the finale.

Overall, the dancers repeated 20 dances on Friday and Saturday. The uniqueness of the concert and the quality of the dancers stood out to Walther.

“I watched all the technical rehearsals Monday to Thursday and two performances and could watch it again. There were subtle details and growth in our students that made watching it satisfying on many levels for me personally,” Walther said.
While Walther and the student producers met mid-fall semester to plan the concert, artistic processes varied greatly for the performing students. Some took months to perfect their fall concert choreographies, while some only took weeks.

Sophomore dance major Emma McCaslin prepared a performance of “My Baby Shot Me Down” by Nancy Sinatra a few weeks before the concert, choreographing the dance personally.

“It was very stressful, but I see this piece as almost like my baby, and it was just a very fun experience to be able to do a dance to words and be able to hit every beat,” McCaslin said.

With feedback from the dance department and fellow dancers and fall concert performers, Carly Hanson, Audrey Lee and Hannah McGuffey helped McCaslin perfect the performance.

Senior dance and arts management major Natalie Nagy, alongside partner Oliver Foster, performed “Partners in Crime” by Jay Z and Beyoncé. Both started preparing the hip-hop piece at the beginning of the semester, collaborating to create the original choreography.

“It’s always a little nerve-wracking getting in front of people, but once you get out there and just start doing your thing, you don’t want to leave, you just want to get back out there. It was a lot of fun, a lot of adrenaline pumping,” Nagy said.

Before the start of the performances, attendees were encouraged to donate to the Student Dance Fund, which, according to Walther, helps support bringing in guests and other needs of the Dance majors and minors.

The next major dance concerts are the Emerging Choreographers concert at the beginning of February and the Spring Dance Concert.
From Wednesday, Dec. 6, to Friday, Dec. 8, thousands of Daytonians came to the Dayton Arcade, an over $100 million restoration project, for a holiday-themed week celebration, including dance performances, small business vendors, caroling and more.

The Arcade

Thousands of hours and millions of dollars were spent renovating the scene now called the ‘Dayton Arcade,’ comprising nine main buildings mostly built around 1902. The Arcade functioned as Dayton’s central marketplace until around 1980.

The current space includes the Innovation Hub by the University of Dayton, 110 apartments, two restaurants and an art gallery. Future additions will include a Hilton Garden Inn and marketplace retail space.

The Arcade provides the centralized community space that Dayton was missing.

“It’s such an opportunity for connection. We were missing that with COVID-19, and to allow local arts groups and entertainment and vendors, it’s just a great event and we really like it,” Megan Dunn-Peters, the Arcade community director, said.

Over the three days, just over 8,000 people came to enjoy the Holly Days.

Holly Days

While the Arcade continues to grow and expand, this year’s event comprised the rotunda area and the “Tank,” a planned event since the second Holly Days concluded last year.

And compared to the last Holly Days, Arcade restaurants like Gather by Ghostlight and Est! Est!! Est!!! were open for business.

When most think of the Arcade, they think of the beautiful Rotunda, the Arcade’s signature high arcing dome. Beneath its glittering glass was the main market
space. 38 vendors and nine food trucks offered everything from cheesecake to homemade candles, just a small fraction of the Arcade’s master list of 300 vendors for events.

Flanked by Christmas trees and lights, to the side of all of these vendors was the performance space.

Performances in the Rotunda included Lyn Morton, the Miami Valley Dance Company, character meet-and-greets with Anna, Elsa and Olaf from “Frozen,” Anna Marie, Alyssa Hanson, the Gem City Ballet, Jimmy and Jack, Kyleen Downes, the South Dayton Dance Theater and a community carol with Jeff Powell, Lisa Hanson and Mark Hanson.

A quick run to the Rotunda’s side will result in a visit to “The Contemporary,” a connected art gallery space. During Holly Days, attendees could stop by and view “The Hold Belly,” a series of physical art installations by Shon Walters.

Until Jan. 14, visitors to The Contemporary can view Walters’ art pieces composed of unconventional materials, such as bird nests, ash, locust thorns and more.

The hallways and entrances of the Rotunda and down into The Tank had even more vendors selling items, such as photography prints, stickers, Ohio-themed Legos and more.

The Tank, the downstairs event space under the rotunda, could be accessed from the artistically graffitied subway-like entrance from the street or a quick trip downstairs from the rotunda.

Kelsey Haver, a graphic designer, lettering artist and small business owner of The Daisy Market Co., is one such vendor. Haver’s original artwork is used for stickers, tea towels, t-shirts, greeting cards and more.

“My brand is stationary, so a lot of paper goods and lifestyle accessories. Everything in my shop is designed by me, so it has some elements of original artwork,” Haver said.

Haver would love to join Holly Days again next year but also sells work online and frequently hosts local hand-lettering workshops as well.
Down the hallways from the vendors was the main Tank space, a sunken pit where performers, like the Gem City Chorus, Bach Society of Dayton and Forte, an acapella group based out of Centerville High School, performed.

Forte, a multiple award-winning a cappella group, performed classic holiday songs, such as “We Need a Little Christmas,” “Twelve Days of Christmas” and “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” Occasionally, Forte would combine these songs into a modern parody with songs like “Africa” by TOTO. As Forte wraps up their concert season, they prepared their Holly Days performance in just a week.

“We get caught up to do a lot of local events if they just want performers for something, or we usually go to a cappella conventions, like last year we went to a national a cappella convention, and there are several other small pocket fests,” Centerville High School student Samuel Villalva said.

Other highlights of Holly Days were the community Legos built by Brixilated, family-friendly trivia and art supply donations for We Care Arts.

On Dec.7, attendees could take a free shuttle to the Sunset at the Market event at the 2nd Street Market.

The organizers and sponsors of this year’s Holly Days were AES Ohio, Culture Works and Friends of the Arcade.

“I just hope that Daytonians have a renewed sense of pride in the community again. People are obviously very proud to be from Dayton, and having opportunities like this, especially to make these Christmas memories with their families, is really important,” Dunn-Peters said.

Holly Days 2024 will be on Dec. 11, 12 and 13.

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Katelun Combs
Deesha Philyaw's short story collection, “The Secret Lives of Church Ladies,” explores the internal and external struggles that these strong, independent Black women narrators are challenged with.

**Review**

Issues of the past are now of the present and worries of pleasing God and others lingers to the forefront. How can one truly be themself if they are in constant fear of disappointing loved ones and being sent to Hell?

This is especially true for Eula, Caroletta, Arletha, Rhonda and Jael. These are women who love and are interested in other women, although they are told that in the eyes of the Lord, homosexuality is considered “unnatural” and a sin.

Eula has internalized this notion as she tells Caroletta: “I just want to be happy,’ she sobs. ‘And normal.’”

She does not consider herself as being “normal,” as she is sexually attracted to her female best friend, Caroletta. Jael's grandmother does not consider her granddaughter “normal” either, as Jael writes improper thoughts about the pastor’s wife in her diary.

Sexuality is not the only controversial subject that Philyaw touches on. She also discusses adultery and its impact on others outside of the affair with “Peach Cobbler” and “Instructions for Married Christian Husbands.” Adultery is also considered a sin within various religions, but how seriously can it be taken when those of the faith are actively participating in it?

Philyaw does an incredible job of raising these questions and more as she takes on the many controversial subjects that surround the Christian faith and beyond. Her bravery for discussing the things that many would rather keep quiet is duly noted and highly respected.

Each of the Black women narrators that she brings to life act as inspiration to many, as they are more than capable of overcoming their hardships and fears and
accomplish just that, as shown with “Snowfall” and “How to Make Love to a Physicist.” Growing into and becoming who you are meant to be without the opinions and influence of family, friends and the religious faith taught to one growing up is no easy feat. One is never alone in their hidden desires and unholy thoughts, and “The Secret Lives of Church Ladies” is proof of that.

Just as Caroletta states, we often think we “… have to choose between pleasing God and something so basic, so human as being held and known in the most intimate way.” She continues by asking, “Why would He make rules that force such a painful choice?”

That is definitely a question worth pondering over.

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**Combs Family Christmas Candy Recipes**

*Katelun Combs  
December 20, 2023  
Wright Life*

It has become a tradition in the Combs’ household for my dad, Cleon, to make delicious homemade candy every holiday season to share with family and friends. He has since perfected his recipes, so here are some sweet treat recipes that you can make and enjoy as well.

**Potato Candy**

First, we have my personal favorite, potato candy. I know what you are thinking, how could candy possibly taste good with potato in it? Honestly, I was hesitant to give it a try at first too, but it quickly became a favorite once I did. You do not taste any of the potato once it is made, as only a small amount is used to help act as a binding ingredient. Trust me, it is worth giving it a shot.

½ cup potatoes (mashed)

5-6 cups powdered sugar

½-¾ cup peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ teaspoon salt

Mix the mashed potatoes, vanilla and only two cups of the powdered sugar in a bowl. Gradually add the remainder of the sugar according to your preferred sweetness (taste the dough as you do this).

Place a sheet of wax paper onto the counter and dust a light coating of powdered sugar onto the wax paper and your rolling pin.

Roll out the dough until it is about a quarter-inch thick.

Once the dough is rolled out, cut it into a rectangular shape and dust the top with a light coat of powdered sugar.

Cover your dough with another piece of wax paper and flip it over to the other side. Once flipped, peel off the first sheet of wax paper.

Place peanut butter into the microwave briefly to thin it down before stirring in the salt to enhance its flavor (this will also allow it to spread over the dough easier).

Spread your desired amount of peanut butter over the dough and place it in the fridge momentarily (10-15 minutes) for the peanut butter to firm back up.

Once the peanut butter has cooled, take it out of the fridge and begin to roll up your dough tightly.

Place your rolled up dough onto a cookie sheet and place it in the freezer for 30-45 minutes to stiffen up the dough and peanut butter. Once stiffened, take out of the freezer and cut the roll into the desired number of pieces. Enjoy!

**Creamy Peanut Butter Fudge**

Next, you can never go wrong with thick and creamy peanut butter fudge. This yummy treat can be quite rich, so it pairs well with a glass of milk.

3 cups whole milk
6 cups granulated sugar

12 oz marshmallow creme

32 oz peanut butter

1 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1 ½ salt

Place a pot of water onto the stove on low heat until it reaches a simmer. Take your mixing bowl from a stand mixer and place it over the pot, creating a double boiler.

Add peanut butter to the bowl to allow the heat to thin it slightly.

Once the peanut butter is warm and has thinned, add the marshmallow creme, vanilla and salt before mixing the ingredients together. Keep on low heat.

In a separate pot, mix together the milk and sugar and set it to medium-high heat. As it gets hot, make sure to stir it constantly so it does not burn. Once the milk and sugar comes to a rolling boil, check contents with a candy thermometer to make sure it has reached at least 220 degrees.

At 220 degrees, begin to gradually reduce heat and continue to stir until the candy thermometer reaches 238 degrees.

Remove contents from heat and remove the mixing bowl from the double boiler set up. Place the mixing bowl onto the mixer and set it to medium speed.

Begin to slowly pour the milk and sugar mixture into the mixing bowl. (Make sure not to scrape the sides of the pot for contents stuck to the side, as it has already crystallized and will make your fudge crumbly).

Once all the ingredients are mixed well, pour into a well-buttered 9-inch by 13-inch glass baking dish and allow it to cool. After the fudge has cooled and firmed up, cut it into the desired serving size pieces.

Buckeyes
Buckeyes are a staple candy in Ohio, and one of the easiest ones to make on this list. The mixture of peanut butter and chocolate will soon become a favorite of yours as well!

1½ cups peanut butter

1 cup softened butter (room temp, do not heat in microwave)

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

6 cups powdered sugar

4 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

Paraffin wax

In a large bowl, add peanut butter, butter, vanilla and powdered sugar and mix well until a stiff dough is created.

Form one-inch balls with dough and place them onto wax paper.

Insert toothpicks into the middle of each ball and place into the freezer for approximately 45 minutes to allow them to cool (this will allow the chocolate to easily harden later).

Set up a double boiler on low heat to melt your chocolate chips.

As the chocolate chips melt, add paraffin wax (about a teaspoon at a time) to assist with the thinning of the chocolate.

Once the chocolate is at the desired consistency, take the peanut butter balls out of the freezer and begin to dip each one into the chocolate. After each ball has been dipped into the chocolate, place them back onto the wax paper to cool.

Remove the toothpicks before enjoying them!
Many working parents rely on after-school programs while they work. There are many different programs that are available to students throughout the country. One close to home is the Voyager After School Program in Centerville, Ohio.

**The program**

The Voyager Program is an after school program that is run in a cafeteria or multipurpose room of several Centerville City Schools. Students transition from school to the program, and they are given time to do homework and get help with anything in class. From there, they do Voyager activities and end the day in parent pick up. Parents are free to pick children up whenever they need to during the day.

Julie Barr and Kendal Cooke are directors of the Voyager program. They are responsible for the registration of kids and activities of the program.

“Our program covers all of the major curriculum for children in school,” Cooke said.

The program’s main offering is homework help. The staff of the program work to help the kids who may need extra help in the classroom. The Voyager program runs adjacent to the school and is not run on funding from the school, so applicants are required to pay a fee for their students.

“There is a $50 registration fee. Then there is a monthly payment that parents have to make on the 1st. They have until the 10th to pay before they also get a $20 late fee,” Barr explained. “We are not run on school funding, so we rely on tuition to maintain activities.”
Barr and Cooke maintain that they have a good follow through with the program and that kids enjoy it.

Athena Croker is a Centerville alumna who graduated in 2019. She attended the program for two years while attending school at Primary Village North and John Hole Elementary.

“I loved it in primary school,” Croker said. “It was the best. I went from first to third grade, and I really enjoyed myself.”

**Getting involved**

The Voyager After School Program is currently hiring. They are seeking Wright State students who love kids and are wanting to build their resume up and network in the Centerville School District. The position is 20 to 25 hours per week and follows the Centerville City School District calendar.

Students who would like to apply are able to do so on Handshake or Joblink. Readers with children in the Centerville City School District who want to enroll their kids can visit the Voyager After School Program website for more information.

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**Top Ten Studio Ghibli Movies**

Aaron Cline  
December 22, 2023  
Pop Culture

With Studio Ghibli’s most recent movie, “The Boy and the Heron,” being released in theaters in the United States only a few short weeks ago, now is the perfect time to rank Studio Ghibli movies.


“The Wind Rises” focuses on a fictionalized retelling of the life of Jiro Horikoshi, a Japanese engineer known for his fighter jet designs and engineering prowess. It was Hayao Miyazaki’s last film until a decade later with “The Boy and the Heron.”
The film takes an artistic approach on Horikoshi’s life and tells both his passion for aircrafts as well as his love life. While I will not spoil too much, his life takes a tragic turn for the worst when the love of his life falls ill.

9. “Grave of the Fireflies”

This film is a storytelling masterpiece, but at a price: it is overwhelmingly heartbreaking. “Grave of the Fireflies” deserves a higher ranking, but many watchers are not looking for a heart-wrenching story when they put Studio Ghibli on.

“Grave of the Fireflies” tells the story of two war orphans who try to survive the horrors of the final months of World War II. After a tragic family death, they move in with their aunt, who turns out to be a selfish woman who does not have the best interest of the children in mind.

The older of the siblings, Seita, takes his younger sister to survive on their own rather than deal with the abuse of their aunt. The story continues to fall into tragedy, but the storytelling aspects of the film are astounding. If you are willing to experience such a heartbreaking film, I highly recommend “Grave of the Fireflies.”

8. “Castle in the Sky”

The first film that Studio Ghibli animated, “Castle in the Sky” tells the tale of a boy who wishes to clear his father’s name by finding the potentially fictitious floating island of Laputa. The boy, Pazu, is accompanied by a girl named Sheeta, as well as a crew of pirates run by a woman named Dola.

The conflict in this one is about greed, as others want to find the island of Laputa along with Pazu, as well as government influence. The film also has heavy steampunk elements.

7. “Spirited Away”

Many people first think of “Spirited Away” when they think of Studio Ghibli movies, and thus it is often ranked higher mainly for how well-known it is. While I am not here to argue that it is not a good movie, I simply find other Studio Ghibli movies to have a more interesting plot or world.
“Spirited Away” has a heavy focus on traditional Japanese folklore; to be specific, spirits. The main character, Chihiro, accidentally finds herself in the world of spirits after her parents are turned into pigs by a witch named Yubaba. She meets a colorful cast of characters as she tries to figure out how she is going to free herself and her parents from Yubaba’s grasp.

No-Face is a famous character from the film; however, there are many more interesting characters to be found in the world of spirits!

6. “Princess Mononoke”

One of Studio Ghibli’s more violent films, “Princess Mononoke” tells the story of a prince who accidentally finds himself wrapped up in the conflict of humanity versus the protectors of the forest.

Ashitaka, the prince of a far-away land, is banished from his home after fighting one of these gods of the forest to protect his people. He was banished not because he fought the god, but because he became infested with a deep hatred that the god had been plagued with. He sets off on a quest to learn where this hatred came from and comes to learn of the humans who are selfishly consuming the natural resources of the world and killing the protectors of the forest in the process.

Full of violence, self-sacrifice and fantasy elements, “Princess Mononoke” is an excellent pick for those who can handle a little bit of gore in their movies.

5. “Kiki’s Delivery Service”

A much more light-hearted film compared to the previous one, “Kiki’s Delivery Service” is set in a world of witches. After reaching the age of thirteen, Kiki is sent away from her parents to develop her independence with only the company of her cat, Jiji.

She is offered a home from the kind-hearted bakers who live in the city of Koriko and offers to deliver their baked goods as part of her payment for living with them.

The story is very warm and focuses on young girls forming a sense of identity, independence and responsibility.
4. “My Neighbor Totoro”

“My Neighbor Totoro” is yet another well-known name from Studio Ghibli. After a family moves to the countryside to be closer to their mother who is recovering from a chronic illness, two siblings, Mei and Satsuki, find themselves in the fantastical world of Totoro, a large forest spirit.

The younger sister soon encounters trouble, however, but the movie has a happy ending! It is an all-around heartwarming film about family bonds.

3. “Howl’s Moving Castle”

“Howl’s Moving Castle” is an epic interpretation of the book with the same name—which I also highly recommend—about the oldest in a hat-making business who feels herself ugly and insignificant until she is cursed by the Witch of the Waste for her beauty.

The film follows the now cursed woman, Sophie, as she leaves her hometown and pursues the witch in hopes of getting her spell lifted until she gets caught up in the life of Howl, a famous wizard with his own barrage of problems.

It has a heavy anti-war theme hidden within a story of love and conflict. The world they live in is fantastical, and I recommend reading the book the film was based on, as it provides more worldbuilding and a bigger appreciation for the film.

2. “Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind”

This film is actually not technically a Studio Ghibli film, but in my mind it counts. It was animated and published by a company that soon disbanded, and many of the employees at that company went on to form Studio Ghibli—plus, it was directed by Hayao Miyazaki, so I choose to believe that it is a Studio Ghibli film.

Anyways, onto the actual premise. “Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind” tells the story of a princess living in a post-apocalyptic world in which a toxic jungle has taken over much of the world, and this jungle is home to large, mutated insects. Nausicaä has a special empathetic connection to the insects, which proves vital in the plot.
The film focuses on the conflict between different kingdoms of the remnants of humanity and the giant insects that threaten to destroy them all. It has incredible worldbuilding and a fantastic story of war and violence with a happy ending.

1. “Ponyo”

“Ponyo” is a heartwarming tale of a girl from the sea who becomes entranced with human life after encountering a young boy named Sōsuke, who saves her from being trapped in a small glass jar. After their encounter, the girl—named Ponyo by Sōsuke—swears to become human and reunite with the boy who saved her life.

I personally believe Ponyo truly encapsulates the Studio Ghibli style, from the soft animation to the story itself, Ponyo is what I would point to to describe Studio Ghibli’s films. While this film lacks the actual romance most Studio Ghibli movies have, it is still full of love and warmth that would attract viewers from all genres.

Afterword

Of course, there are more Studio Ghibli movies than the ones featured on this list. With winter break approaching, students should settle down and warm their hearts by watching Studio Ghibli films with friends and family.

News Roundup: Week of Dec. 18

Alexis Lewis
December 25, 2023
News

From local happenings to national topics and global events, here is the news worth knowing from the week of Dec. 18, 2023.

Local
2 killed, including deputy, in early morning crash

On Monday, Dec. 18, Preble County Deputy Joshua Hamilton was killed in a head-on crash, according to the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Michael Gayhart was the other victim of the crash. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine ordered flags in the state to be lowered to honor the deputy.

Hamilton was a U.S. Navy veteran from 2009 to 2015 and joined the U.S. Army National Guard in January 2023, according to Hamilton’s obituary.

National

Two paramedics charged in death of Elijah McClain

On Friday, Dec. 22, two paramedics were charged for the ketamine overdose of Elijah McClain in 2019, according to an Associated Press release.

“The case involving the 23-year-old Black man’s death was the first among several recent criminal prosecutions against medical first responders to reach trial, potentially setting the bar for prosecutors for future cases,” the release reads.

Global

Pope Francis approves blessings for same-sex couples

On Monday, Dec. 18, the Holy See press office released a declaration “Fiducia Supplicans” on the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings, which allows Catholic priests to bless same-sex couples without the formal ritual blessing of a marriage. The declaration offers a broad understanding of the word “blessing,” maintaining the Church’s ban on gay marriage.

14 killed, 25 injured in Prague mass shooting
On Thursday, Dec. 21, a student at Charles University in Prague opened fire in the philosophy department building and killed 14 people while injuring 25 others, according to an Associated Press release. The gunman also died in the shooting. According to Prague Police Chief Martin Vondrasek, the gunman might be linked to other murders in the area.