

T.C.A VOICE



The Student's newspaper - December

Back to the 80's

By Lauren Woodall

Last month, a wide variety of students were involved in the annual show 'Back to the 80's'. Whether it was performing, helping out, or simply just coming to watch, everyone knew about it, and was looking forward to it. As a dancer at Thorns, I'm usually on stage performing but this year I decided on a different approach and work with the 'backstage hands' behind the scenes. In doing so, my eyes have been opened to exactly how much work has to go into each of these shows so that they can be as brilliant as we manage to make them.

Since September, I have watched my friends from all parts of the performing arts – dance, music, and drama work long hours putting this show together, it took every inch of motivation they had to pull off the show. But it was totally worth all the work that everyone put in.

Joining the backstage crew at the last minute was rather chaotic. Tuesday before the show, I had absolutely no idea about where the props went or when to bring them on and off stage. I experienced two days of intensive training so that I was prepared for opening night. Looking back, I didn't quite realise the amount of energy, strength and organisation you need to be a successful helping stage hand. It will take your breath away. Literally. Also, I am quite proud of the fact I only ran on stage with a box, realised it wasn't the queue for the boxes and then ran back off stage just once, considering the short amount of time I had to learn!

Watching each show unfold from within the curtains showed me how much these performances benefit the students at Thorns. Friendships between the actors of all year groups grew each time they were on stage together. The students from year 11 had the opportunity to escape the madness of exams and just have a laugh. But most of all, it brought us all together and gave us some memories that will last a lifetime. If you haven't been to see or have been a part of one of these shows yet, I highly recommend you do – you would have never been a part of anything like it.

'Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas'

By Beth Shippam

There are some things that I simply don't understand. At this time of year, Christmas is one of them; it is a holiday celebrated by so many around the world every year. Christmas has become an integral piece of modern society worldwide. Economically, the holiday creates booming business and large profits, with black Friday- the biggest shopping day of the year; we congregate in shops to fight over deals and bargains in a futile effort to lessen the amount we spend

But, the burning question is: why? This holiday, born from religious belief, has been taken over by commercialism.

We have become eluded by material objects, being taught by society from a young age that Christmas meant presents and money. Fundamentally, there's nothing wrong with wanting to spend a holiday with loved ones.

However, some don't see the joy because Christmas steals the money from our pockets. It forces antisocial people to conform to the modern craze of society. The pressure of Christmas is real to many people, telling those less economically benefited to stress over pleasing everyone else.

If you simply don't like Christmas, or don't want to be in the jolly spirit, you become a Scrooge. Someone who doesn't appreciate what they have or what people are trying to do for them when they just want Christmas to be another normal day in their mundane lives. Christmas is optional, but is treated as though non-negotiable.

It's Christmas!!!

This addition is filled to the brim with Christmas festivity. There is an interview with a local charity worker that delves into the importance of helping those in need, especially at this time of the year. Travel back in time with the 'back to the 80s' production review and witness a catastrophe unfold with a few of our winning Stranger Saga stories. Pick a side... Christmas maniac or Christmas Grinch with our opposing article that tells you all about the pros and cons of Christmas.

So have yourself a merry little Christmas and a happy new year. Stay safe, spend time with your family and eat a colossal amount of mince pies.

Megan Jeffries & Rhiannon Armstrong.



WHO HAVE WE BEEN MEETING THIS MONTH?

By Tori Toogood

This month we interviewed a local charity worker at Love2Give. She tells us all the hard work she puts in to help underprivileged family's have the Christmas they deserve.

1. On a charity basis, what things do you do for people at Christmas?

Each year me and a friend host a Christmas party to raise money for families in need to give them a Christmas which is hopefully a little less stressful. The money raised is used to buy Christmas presents and sometimes trees and decorations for the families. These gifts are wrapped and delivered directly to the families homes, usually when the children are at school or in bed to keep the Christmas magic alive. Most of the families have kept in touch and often when they are settled they try to give something back by either donating themselves or helping to spread the word for donations.

2. How has doing charity work changed you as a person?

The more I give the happier I feel. To know that I've helped someone in my local community gives me a great sense of pride and achievement. I always get to meet these families and their children and offer them and their friends free tickets to our Christmas party. This makes me feel connected to other people and makes me empathetic towards their needs. I guess in many ways it has increased my self confidence and helps me be more physical as it's usually very hands on.

3. Do you do charity work all year round?

The charity work I do is mostly at Christmas but throughout the year to help boots the funds that we spend on Christmas presents I make and sell crafts. All profits from the sales of the crafts goes into charity funds. I have at times done appeals for household goods and furniture to support people moving into their new homes from a refuge and supported other people in charity things they may be doing.

4. In the future, what would you like to do for people via your charity?

I would like to continue what I am, doing now as each and every year the families in need appear to be growing and a bigger network of people who are also wanting to help is growing. It's good to be able to coordinate all this and continue the work I'm doing.

5. Do you believe that people should be helped all year round opposed to just at Christmas?

I think people do need more access to help but not just at Christmas. People struggle all year round and it seems that people are more willing to give and support others at Christmas simply because they believe that Christmas is meant to be a time of peace, giving and goodwill. Unfortunately people aren't always as willing to help others throughout the rest of the year when they get caught up in their own busy lifestyle.



STRANGER SAGAS

THE ADVENTURE
STARTS HERE...

Reality check

I am not normal, I have weird dreams that send me mad. Day after day night after night I feel surrounded by a presence that is normal. My chest feels crushed every time I'm in that world no creatures are too small to scare me I wake up sweat dripping down my raw red face I must have been crying. I have flash backs I don't know why. I try to tell my mom but she says I'm crazy. I'm not dreaming this is reality there is a different world than this someone help me. I must survive this nightmare.

Fright Night!

Solemnness fled throughout the town, it was fright night! Prepared for the nightmare that lay ahead unknown... unknown of their fate. Unknown of what the night will bring. The gates were opened. Large mists rose up, huge creatures emerged from the abyss. Like wildfire pouncing. Slashing. Creeping. They made their crimson walking causing terror. Silent screams. Devastating deaths. Chaotic creature. Would you survive? Alex ran out of his underground house he'd only been there for a year but had heard rumours and was prepared. Slashing through the monsters. He was trapped in a death trap...

Burn

The fire burned. You heard screaming of both children and adults. They ran, everyone ran. Fires rapidly spread across people's hometown causing chaos... "what's going to happen next? Will we survive?" people thought. Death occurred. People needed answers to what was happening but nobody had that answer. Izzy looked out her window and a sudden blast of heat came over her. The vicious fire carried on to destroy everything in its path. Izzy was horrified, her house was like an oven. No words could describe what she was feeling pure horror. Then suddenly, there was a bang, a big bang...

These are a few of our winning entries for the stranger sagas 'mission catastrophe' creative writing competition. Keep an eye out for our next competition, as we're always looking for young creative talent.

If you are interested go and speak to Mr Avis in the English department room EN5.

'Santa Clause Is Coming To Town'

By **Tori Toogood**

Family, love and food. Christmas is full of exciting things that you and your family go through. First, food. Now everyone loves a good Christmas dinner; turkey, stuffing, gravy and Yorkshire puddings. Pigs in blankets is the heaven of the day. It's an honor to get the last one and scoff it down before any jealous family members can steal it off you. But then you have the odd person at the dinner table that are the only ones who eat sprouts and stink for the rest of the holiday.

But Christmas isn't always about the food; it's about the love that is spread throughout the time you spend with the family. Exchanging presents and cards; playing games with your grandparents and cousins. This time to anyone is important. Now, there is always this one family member who splashes the cash on their favorite niece or nephew, and you're left there with a box of chocolates and a movie. But again, Christmas isn't about what you get or the money someone spends on you, it's about the love that your family shares and the time you spend together making new memories for the children to enjoy in their upcoming years.

Decorating the house on December 1st is the highlight of Christmas experience. First, you put up the tree. Hang a few baubles, untangle a few lights and throw on some sparkly tinsel. After all the tree decorating, it's time for outdoor lights, window decorations and light up Christmas characters like Santa, Rudolf, snowmen and penguins. There are always those houses who just go overboard a little bit and put a mass amount of lights. But the late comers are the worst. Still decorating for Christmas half way through December. That should be illegal!

In my opinion, I wish Christmas was all year round, but that would make a lot of happy children and a lot of broke adults. Even adults always get to be children on Christmas day, opening their presents that had been sent to them by Santa. Christmas is a time that should be loved by all and at the rate it's going it really is loved by the world.

It's just my opinion!

By **Rhiannon Armstrong**

Christmas is supposed to be the time for seasonal joy and festivity. We are supposed to feel the warmth and love spread to our hearts and allow Christmas to completely fulfil us. But we, as a nation need to collectively wake up. Christmas has become a commercial holiday that screams stress, expensive gifts and family arguments. We live in an overpriced, underpaid modern world. Big businesses pry upon the vulnerable; scamming them to empty their pockets via their 'big sales'. Our world is not economically suitable for Christmas.

Real Christmas trees confuse me. Because why would somebody want to yearly. Invest in this monstrosity? They either turn brown and die or set your white house on fire. The fairy lights can no longer compensate for the hideous Christmas decorations as they are now used all year round for aesthetic purpose. And don't even get me started on tinsel. The shabby shiny plastic leaves a plethora of mess throughout the house that you're still hoovering up by the time summer comes around.

We've outlived the usage of these Christmas songs. These repetitive, outdated jingles preach values that we no longer believe yet can not drag ourselves away from. We are forced to feed these songs and condition to love and embrace the holiday. And if we don't, we are dubbed a Grinch.

To the person who loves Christmas with a passion and is reading this fuming, I mean no disrespect. I am not trying to undermine your love. Some people like the bright coloured itchy jumpers and singing carols and seeing family and eating yummy foods. But I, like so many others do not. When January rolls around people like me are like "phew, glad that's over." People are glad that they have another 364 days to recover from the festive overload. January is utilized to exchange useless gifts or toss them to the back of the cupboard to be forgotten. January is the holy grail month. So why then, when December rolls back around do the odd Christmas drug set in and the nation goes utterly insane once more just to confirm to society's demands. I would rather be a Grinch than a mindless sheep. Always.

'Joy To The World'

By **Amarjot Singh**

The festive time of the year has finally come back bringing with it the Christmas mood. A time where nostalgia of your childhood comes surging back in the movies, drinks, foods and activities that we do at this point in time. Winter is now coming in full swing; soon the snowflakes will gently cascade on to our windows as we gaze outside huddling in our blankets. This time also brings with it snowman, sleighs and snowballs as people come out in the cold and embrace the fun of the snow. However for some staying in the warmth is more ideal listening to classic songs of this season.

Fairy tale of New York. Do they know it's Christmas time? All I want for Christmas. All these classics bring back the emotions of your Christmas past, making you grateful for your Christmas present and look forward for the Christmas future. Novelty drinks return to ease the stress of work and the stress of shopping for loved ones. Embracing your taste buds with Christmas special drinks, to ease the stress of shopping for your family or loved ones. Frantically, searching for the perfect gift to make them happy but actually just being with them is the best gift they could receive.

Festivity and happiness fill the air, a time where we actually think of others and enlighten someone's darkest times. This sensation makes us disregard the negativity in the world and focus on what's important to us; cherishing the good moments of our lives. This year will be the first time I properly celebrate Christmas with my family and me, too, have that Christmas sensation that bubbles up when it's the season. I hope you all enjoy this Christmas as well. Merry Christmas and have a happy new year.