

My Christmas Tree Tour: 2016



by Sam Blanc

You may have seen MTV Cribs, but no flat footage of any million dollar mansion will prepare you for what you're about to read. This is my Christmas Tree Tour: 2016.



Each person in our family gets to pick one new ornament each year. That's how it's worked ever since I was little. Looking back at the ornaments I picked can be very cringy, but also pretty nostalgic. When I was little it was mostly handmade thingamajigs attached with paperclips and string, but there's definitely some memories on that tree. From ornaments documenting my 2-3 year obsession with Doctor Who to a picture from my first--and probably only--convention (I just don't have the stamina), it's nice to look back and think 'what the heck was I doing in seventh grade?!'

Our tree is for the whole family, not just the Christian side (which is pretty much just my mom at this point). My dad has lots of ornaments, most of them representing the White Sox and his love of ice cream, but this one is probably the most memorable. I mean, how many people can say they have a menorah on a Christmas tree? Christmas may be a Christian holiday, but our Christmas tree is for everyone. One of my favorite things about Christmas is that, despite its origins, it's just as much about about music, and lights and spirit as it is about Jesus.



I'm sorry if you're reading this, Madame Vlasic. This ornament is the bathroom pass from my seventh grade french class. I walked out with it one day, forgetting I'd put it in my pocket to avoid the arduous exploit of holding a piece of plastic, and it never really made it's way back into the classroom. Call me a thief if you like, but I don't think too many nights were wasted speculating the fate of this plastic frog. Whether it's a gift or a stolen good, I think our tree says something not just about our immediate family, but about the people we come across in our lives.

It's not all good memories, of course. Last year my ferret died, and although the death of the animal equivalent of a matted feather boa might not seem like a lot, I missed the little guy. I used my ornament last year to remember him. It's just a plain circle of grey clay with his handprint, and a very faint hand print at that--he was hardly strong enough to press down his foot. But running my fingers over it, it makes it seem like he's still kind of here.



These are the weird ones--and yes, I suppose I'm proclaiming that a middle school hall pass and a stain glass menorah are not weird Christmas ornaments. It's become a more recent tradition of ours to scour the north shore for the weirdest ornaments we can find. This scraggly rodent complete with bent wire eyeglasses, for example, was given to my mother by yours truly. These are for the years that no one dies, that no one feels the need to express any deep-seated emotion. They make us happy, and I think that's my favorite thing about my Christmas tree. I love Christmas: the snow, the lights, the music, the gifts, but more than anything I love looking at my plastic tree full of wacky nick nacks and memories.

I know there are two weeks before the true holiday season--getting out of school, that is--begins but I thought I'd remind everyone to make some memories this year. Whether you're putting them on a tree, watching them under menorah light, or just keeping them in your heart.

Happy Holidays, New Trier!

A Chicago winter wish list



by Max Minogue

It's that time of year again. Christmas music is being played over every retail speaker. Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You" is stuck in everybody's head. So of course, everybody is wondering what I want for Christmas this year.

It'll be the last year I get presents from every member of my extended family meaning wads of cash that I can attempt to save for college. It'll be the last year before I'm officially an adult, thanks to my March birthday.

At the top of my wishlist is college related, so I won't focus on that. Number two on the list? An authentic Chicago winter. Yes, that means I'll be talking about the weather.

Once I'm away at college, I'll be surrounded by people from trash bins like Florida. I've never been in Florida during winter, thank the lord, but according to usclimatedata.com, the average December high in Miami is 78°F. Even the idea of that repulses me.

For my last year here, I want to experience winter as a true Chicago native, and I want Mother Nature to go all out. In contrast to last year's pitiful winter months, the Farmers

Almanac declares that "Winter is back!" and it better be.

My favorite part about living in Chicago has always been the overly aggressive winters. Middle school recess was always defined by snow forts being built over weeks, and snowmen being reduced into massive balls of snow that my puny 12 year-old arms couldn't dare to lift.

Even snow shoveling is a special form of satisfaction for me. I put in headphones, feel my nose turn red and runny, and just mechanically shovel. It always ends up being a meditative experience for me.

And coming inside afterwards, grabbing a steaming cup of Abeulita's hot chocolate? Indescribable. Divine. Better than anything Florida could ever offer.

For my last year here, I want to experience winter as a true Chicago native, and I want Mother Nature to go all out.

Not to mention the beauty of Chicago winter fashion. It's essentially seeing who can look the best in seven layers of thick clothes and hats, whoever looks the best as a thick marshmallow person.

It comes with walking around in tall boots everywhere, and hearing that familiar squeak when you walk into the school.

Walking around all bundled up

like that in the city, and then taking a plunge into each and every store for warmth is something I need to do this upcoming Chicago winter.

I want to have a day where everybody looks forward a couple of days in excitement, whether you're a kindergardener or a senior in high school, waiting to see whether the administrative gods of the schools decide to grant us a snow day.

Most importantly, I think I need to have a white Christmas.

I understand what I'm doing: romanticizing winter to the extreme. Winter sucks sometimes. People can slip on black ice and hurt themselves. It can be deadly to the homeless and those without heating. Basically, I do realize my own naivety.

However, one of the things that really makes me feel like a Chicagoan (and not just another suburbanite) are these brutal winters. Winters like these make us feel grounded and humbled by nature.

It'd be a lie if I pretended that winters don't get sickening after a few months, especially when the Groundhog decides he hates us all and spites us with a winter that drags into April. Although at the very least a winter like that could help me ignore global warming, but I digress.

Months after the final thaw, when it finally turns to spring after an especially rough winter, there really is nothing better than that first 60 or 70 degree day. And the worse the winter, the better a summer looks, and who doesn't want a great 2017 summer?

Staff Editorial

Supporting New Trier teams--all of them

The spirit at New Trier is undeniably colossal. With over 4,000 students and an entire grade devoted to be the schools spirit team through the Green Team. None can argue we have a huge team support system.

Walking through the halls of both campuses, green and blue line the hallways, with people wearing their team sweatshirts or Green Team apparel they bought. And students don't just wear their spirit, they show up to games.

Despite a disappointing turnout for the last football playoff game, the student section was packed during most home games with cheers led by the Green Team captains as well as the cheerleaders.

During the Quad Header, students filled the cramped bleachers at Wilmette Ice Arena. However, the biggest crowds were reserved for the boys games and even though there were people at the girls games, a large amount of those people were just there in order to get better seats for the boys games.

The Green Team and the immense spirit is reserved, it seems, only for boys' teams. And the boys team alone.

Although the problem of attendance at girls hockey is because of our reluctance to attend girls events, the New Trier Boys and Girls Hockey associations could do more to help get the Girls Hockey teams closer rinks for practice and games, so they could play in front of their community.

But unlike in hockey, ice time is not preventing the Green Team and other fans from attending other girl events.

Field hockey reports in seeing around five student fans during their regular season games. Student attendance spikes during girls' team playoff games, but in order to get to these playoff spots that New Trier teams are expected to get to, they need student support.

Not attending girls events and considering them a lesser athletic event can no longer be the norm.

Yes, some things like the location are out of students' control, but the collective student body needs to change the way we treat girls athletics.

The easy way to do this is to just show up for the games. Treat girls games with the same level of spirit you would the boys.

As Trevians, we need to show up for all teams. We need to support our girls teams in the same way we support our boys teams. Furthermore New Trier is lucky enough to have amazing girls athletic teams with reputations and records that sometimes surpass their male counterparts. Girls swimming, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, and basketball, to name a few, all have astounding records. Showing up to any of these games would be entertaining.

But despite the countless state titles and the nail biting athletic events, still small amounts of students attend these events.

Parents almost always outnumber the student presence at many girl sporting events. Athletes should be able to see their friends and classmates in the stands when they play, as it gives them valuable encouragement.

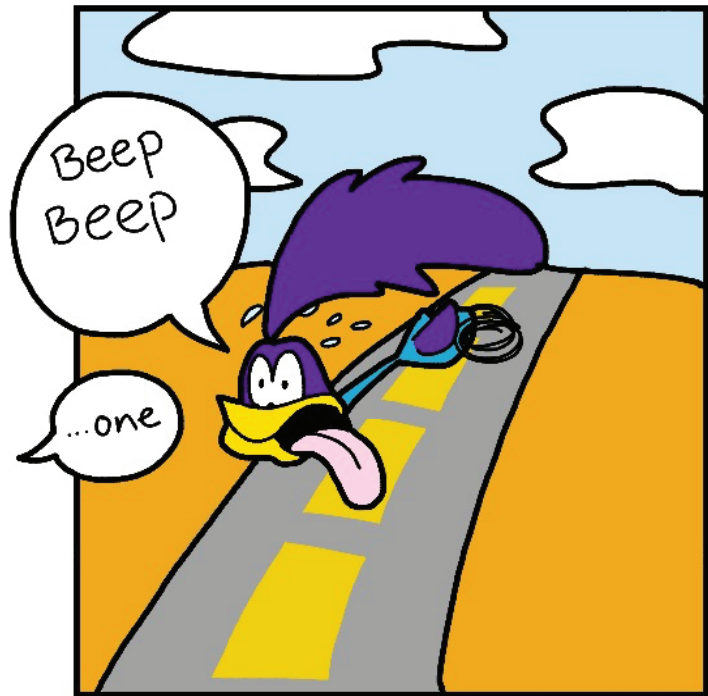
We shouldn't just be showing up to the "good" teams. It seems like the teams that have done the best always have big student attendance numbers. Take the Varsity Football team for example, throughout the season they had huge turnouts and did very well. However, one of the only home games when they had dismal turnout, they lost in the playoffs.

So student turnout is important. It is important to the players, the scoreboard, and reflects well on the school.

Furthermore New Trier students have always been on the forefront of new innovating ideas. We never falter in being accepting of positive change. We can change the inequity in the treatment of girls athletics by being active and aware in our show of spirit.

We have to turn out for our girl teams.

The creation of the PACER TEST



by Sam Blanc