

THE MERRILL GAZETTE

WINTER BUCKET LIST

By Phoebe Link and Hannah Roberts

I'm boooooored!

This is pretty much the most common phrase used by middle schoolers over winter break. Or just winter in general. It should also be noted, that statistic is just based on observations of my own family. Anyway, I'm here to tell you what to do when that thought comes to you. And I'll explain it too. So here is a jillion things to do.

1. Snow gear: if you don't have it, get it!

One thing you will notice about this list is a lot of it involves going outside, because nothing is better than coming inside to a warm hot chocolate after being cold outside.

2. Keep a calendar of where your peeps are going to be.

Winter break can be tough. You try to FaceTime your friend to ask if they can come over and they reply with, "Can't talk, I'm in Mexico." So, before break, **ask** your friends if they're going to be gone and when. Mark it all down on a calendar, and you'll

always know who you can hang out with over break.

Oh, wait... you're lonely and have no friends? That leads us to number 3.

3. Build a friend snowman.

Building snowmen is a classic outside hobby. Pray for good snow (it will probably just be the consistency of flour if you don't) and enjoy yourself! Or you could

be like the weather. Social outcast.

4. Bake

On a more serious note, baking is a good pastime. Meaning it takes time, but the end result is delicious.

Just bake the break away!

5. Get everyone festive

Sing Christmas, Hanukkah, Yule, Kwanza, and any other holiday carols you know. Try not to offend anyone, though. That would be dangerous.

6. Find a new hobby

I'm sure you've all heard that starting a new hobby or reading a great book is the best way to

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pass time. Well, the person that told you that is really boring. But they're right; just like me! Right, haha! I'm cool! I'm not boring! But yeah, find a new hobby, or practice an old one. It's really frustrating, but a good way to pass time.

7. Make yourself a human tree.

Just pretend to be a tree. In public; preferably crowded areas. From personal experience, it really weirds people out.

8. Drink hot chocolate.

Hot chocolate is the best thing since sliced bread. It's great. If you're bored, just try to make different combinations of ingredients to get the best hot chocolate possible.

The main point here is to have fun with your break! The list is over. But in case you did all this and are still bored, you should listen to Hamilton: An American Musical! Just a final note from the author. ☺

A HOLIDAY MYSTERY THAT REALLY ISN'T ONE

By Zoe Coffman

Once upon a few years ago, there was a house boiling with anticipation of the holidays. Now in this house, there was a fake pine tree, because two people out of the four who lived in this house were allergic to the real ones. Well, never mind that.

Anyway, on this tree there were ornaments, lights, and the most important thing of all... CANDY CANES! Fifty to be precise. Well, if you took a closer look at the tree, it would be easy to notice something

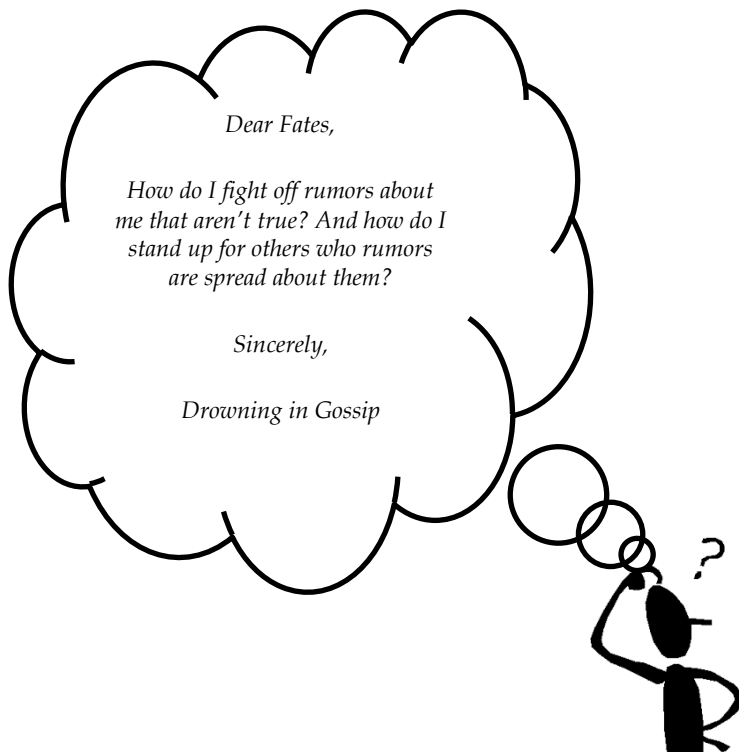
a little... "off." Did an ornament smash? No that's not it, did the lights go out? Nope, wrong again. What was really, truly wrong with the tree you ask? The fact is...there were no longer any candy canes on the tree!

Naturally, as the four people in the house noticed the disappearance, they began investigating. The parents claimed they had zero out of the 50 candy canes! The oldest confessed that indeed had consumed six, and the youngest said she could not

remember how many she had personally eaten, but she DID remember her cousin had eaten two candy canes.

Despite the lack of evidence, the blame settled on the youngest—the crime—unknowingly consuming 42 out of the 50 candy canes in the short time of only two weeks. The youngest child still to this day quips, "I thought Christmas was about giving!"

Ask The Three Fates: Mia Randazzo, Destiny Bos, and Lilly Mouw



Dear Drowning,

Have confidence!! Even though it's really hard, don't let rumors get to you. People who start rumors are jealous and seeking attention for something. When you hear a rumor about you or someone else just simply tell that person it isn't true. Also, if you hear something about someone and you didn't hear it from them; don't spread it around and tell other people!

~The Fates

Memes of 2k16

By Layla Sturdevant

2016 has been an... interesting year, to say the least. Some say that it's the worst year to date, with all the weird things that happened over the 365 days. Despite all that, there has been some good stuff that happened over the year. Actually... nothing good happened that won't start a controversy. So, here's this year's memes, sorted out, month by month. Don't hate me, this was going to be a legit article at one point, I tried. ☺

In **January**, the meme was both that picture of Squidward dabbing, whatever that was, or the "which way would a dog wear pants" argument. Look it up. Start arguments at your holiday dinner.

February brought us--Kazoo kid! "I like to sing, dance, pretend, and I like to have fun fun fun fun fun fun." Have fun with that.

March's meme was the Ted Cruz is the zodiac killer thing. I was not on the internet very much at that point...what does it mean? Why DID THIS HAPPEN? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Moving right along, **April's** memes were anything SpongeBob related. I'm just going to brush them all out of the way. The popular ones included the confused Mr. Crabs meme, the caveman SpongeBob meme, etc. I could honestly go on and on and on...

May. The meme was DAT BOIIIIIIII! O SHOOT WHADDUP! Sorry I have to self-censor, we cannot include any profanity here.

June's meme was Harambe. I regret bringing it up already. Please don't start crying about your dead gorilla. Please.

July's meme of the month was Pokémon Go. Of course. This is also when Arthur memes began popping up. I play Pokémon Go, every day, I play Pokémon Go...

August's memes were mostly Arthur memes, which were pretty great, but Harambe memes were still in full swing. Did it ever really die?

September's Meme of the Month was sort of the Rick Harrison's Pawn shop? September was the meme drought of 2016, along

with the first few days of October...

In **October**, Vine died, raising controversy throughout the internet. The meme of the month was probably The Bee Movie memes.

November's meme was the angry Kermit meme (a.k.a. the hooded Kermit memes). And of course, the highest honor goes to, Obama Biden memes. Those are truly the best.

And finally, in **December**, the memes were both The Bee Movie memes and Lazy Town memes. These are by far my favorite, and I'm sad to admit I've spent more than a few minutes watching various "remixes" of We are Number One." Oops.

And that wraps up the memes of 2016. I'm... kind of regretting writing this... Oh well! Hope you had a nice time looking through this year's memes, both good and bad. I also apologize to all adults reading this. The internet is a fun place.

Holiday Recipes

By Araceli Munoz

Watergate Salad

Ingredients:

2 packages instant pistachio pudding mix
2 cans crushed pineapple, with juice
1 bag of miniature marshmallows
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 container frozen whipped topping, thawed

How to Prepare:

In a large bowl, mix together pudding mix, pineapple with juice, marshmallows, nuts, and whipped topping. Chill for about 2 hours.

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Chill Time: 2 hours

HOT CHOCOLATE

Ingredients:

2 cups hot milk
2 unsweetened chocolate squares, cut in pieces
1/4 cup sugar
2 tablespoons instant coffee crystals
1 dash salt
2 cups cold milk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

How to Prepare:

1. Combine hot milk, chocolate, sugar, coffee and salt in a blender. Cover, blend at high speed, until chocolate is melted and sugar dissolves.
2. In a large saucepan, combine blended ingredients with remaining ingredients. Heat, stirring constantly. Blend small amounts of hot mixture just before serving.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 15 minutes

Saying Goodbye

By Ana Munoz

"What we have once enjoyed, we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes part of us." ~Helen Keller

The year 2016 was a year of many things, but it was also a year of loss. This article is a tribute to some of the inspirational people that we said goodbye to in 2016.

Kenny Baker: August 24, 1934 – August 13, 2016

This man was the guy inside the beloved R2-D2. He captured our geeky hearts by screaming mostly any time Luke Skywalker was in danger and that was ...a lot.

David Bowie: January 8, 1947 – January 10, 2016

Bowie was a famous artist, who was eccentric, and leader in the musical world. As a musician, songwriter, and actor his work was especially known in the 70s, but continued up until his final album release within days of his passing. If you don't know him, just ask your parents. And to add, he could've been Gandalf. Yes, the Gandalf from Lord of the Rings.

Prince: June 7, 1958 – April 27, 2016

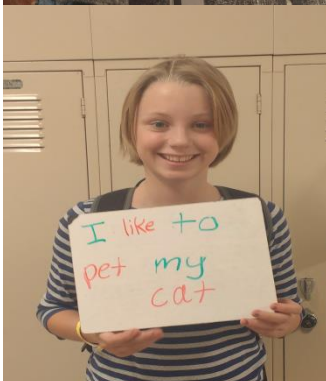
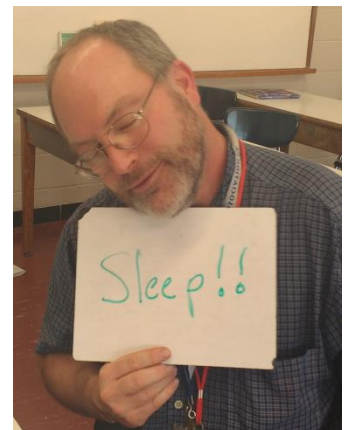
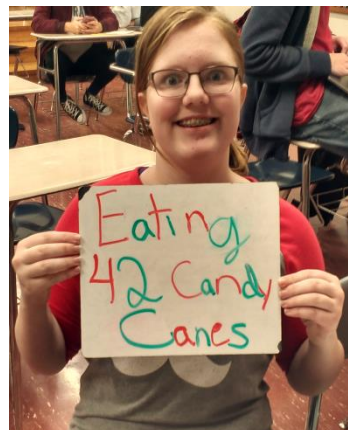
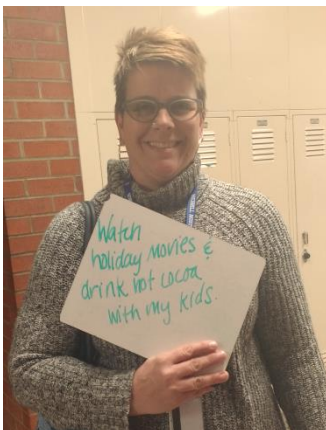
Another famous and loved musician. Prince was a multi-instrumentalist whose skills were beyond perfection in electric work and wide vocal range. "When Doves Cry" and "Purple Rain" soaked our cheeks when this famed musician passed.

Muhammad Ali: January 17, 1942 – June 3, 2016

Ali's impressive career as a professional boxer kept us at the edge of our seats. His work in as an activist made us know that he wasn't like any other boxer. He will always be known as a controversial, yet truly inspiring idol, inside and outside the ring.

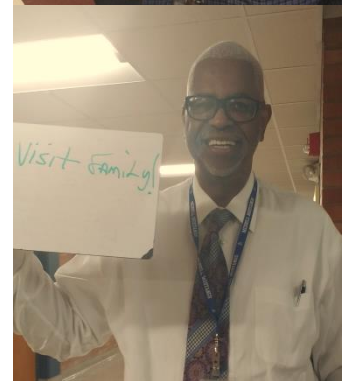
Alan Rickman: February 21, 1946 – January 14, 2016

Rickman was an actor and director on the big screen and stage. He was widely known as Severus Snape in the movies based on the book series Harry Potter. His work in various types of English and American films will always carry on his legacy and he will be in our hearts forever.



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO DOING OVER WINTER BREAK?

By Olivia Marsh



The Misadventures of Jim and Paul

By Hannah Roberts



Heard it the Halls!

"Oh, look. It's those newspaper people."

~Mr. O'Connor