



# The Lexington Concord

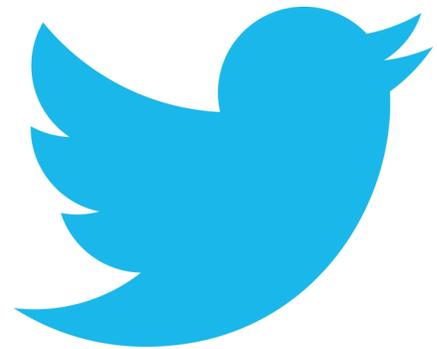
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## Side-Note:

Due to Federal law Lexington High School cannot use full names when referring to minors online. Therefore, all students will be referred to using first name and last initials only.



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## The Christmas Pickle

Sylvia T.

Growing up, the Christmas Pickle was always one of my favorite holiday traditions. It involved competing with my brother, and celebrating Christmas with my family, and pickles, which are three of my favorite things. Every Christmas Eve my parents would hide a pickle ornament in our Christmas tree, and my brother and I would race to see who would find it first. The champion was said to be blessed with good fortune and possibly receive an extra present. Unfortunately for me, my family stopped this tradition a few Christmases ago after a small mishap. In my excitement to locate the pickle I accidentally knocked the tree over, breaking just about every ornament on it, including a few of my mom's prized family heirlooms. Needless to say, I was not blessed with good luck, even though, technically, I did find the pickle first. Despite my former misfortune, I am excited to say that this year I have been deemed to be of an age where I no longer run the risk of ruining Christmas by knocking trees over. The pickle hunting will resume!



My parents always told me the Christmas pickle was a great German tradition which we did as a fun way to pay homage to our Germanic ancestry. As it turns out, the pickle hunt I know and love is American made, and most Germans have no knowledge of the Christmas Pickle's existence. The true origin remains a bit of a mystery, but there are some interesting stories behind the pickle. One account stems all the way back to the Civil War, at Fort Sumter. Private John C. Lower of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry was captured in April of 1864 and taken to a prison camp. On Christmas Eve he begged a guard for something to curb the starvation, and the guard provided a pickle. When he survived, Lower credited the pickle for saving his life, and he began the tradition of hiding a pickle in his Christmas tree. The practice of pickle hiding was passed through generations, and spread to many other American homes. Another, less dramatic, origin story says the pickle ornament was brought to America by the German glass-ornament company, Woolworths. The story of the Christmas Pickle was most likely fabricated by American Salesmen who wanted to sell the unusual ornament, and it ended up catching on. Either way, the Christmas pickle is just another fun way to celebrate the holidays and spend time with your family.



Click to see what Sylvia may have looked like trying to find the Christmas Pickle.

<https://youtu.be/OFjYrtoa7Bw>

## Christmas Time Recipes

By Benton D.

Every Family has their own Christmas traditions, whether it be with food or with activities, and my family is no different. Here are a few easy to make holiday recipes that have been a staple tradition in my family since the 1960s.

Butterscotch Cornflake Cookies:

- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 (12 oz.) package butterscotch chips
- 6 cups cornflakes

Mix peanut butter and butterscotch chips in microwave at low temperature until creamy. Slowly pour in cornflakes, mixing as you go. Press into a 9x13" greased baking dish. Sprinkle with holiday sprinkles for a festive look.



Gingerbread Cake:

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 3/4 tsp ground ginger
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup boiling water

Grease and flour an 8" square pan. Combine first six ingredients in a bowl and set aside. Cream sugar and shortening. Add egg and molasses and beat for one minute. Add dry ingredients, water, alternately, and mix. Turn into prepared pan. Bake at 350° for 30 - 35 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes. Serve with hot lemon pudding and whipped cream.



### Peanut Butter Blossoms:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Hershey Kisses



In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter and peanut butter with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add the 1/2 cup sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, and baking soda. Beat until combined, scraping the sides of the bowl. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in the remaining flour. Shape dough into 1" balls. Roll the balls in the 1/4 cup sugar and place 2" apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in a 350° oven for 10 minutes. Immediately press a Hershey kiss into each cookie's center. Cool on wire racks.

### Striped Delight:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup melted butter
- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 8 oz. package cream cheese
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp milk
- 2 (4 serv. Size) packages instant chocolate fudge pudding
- 3 1/2 cups cold milk
- 8 oz. cool whip
- Grated chocolate or chopped nuts (optional)



Combine first 3 ingredients and press firmly into a 9x13" pan. Beat cream cheese, sugar, and milk until smooth. Fold in half of cool whip. Spread over crust. Prepare pudding as directed, using 3 1/2 cups milk. Pour over cream cheese layer. Chill for several hours, or overnight. Spread remaining cool whip topping over pudding and garnish with grated chocolate or chopped nuts, if desired.

# Lex Argue

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By Chloe D .

## Are Real or Artificial Christmas Trees Better?

It's finally that time of year, Christmas is here! Christmas trees tend to be the main symbol of the holiday season, which leads to the question, are real or artificial trees preferred for celebrating Christmas?

### The Backstory

The tradition of Christmas trees is said to have started in Germany during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Devout Christians would bring decorated trees into their homes. It is said to be brought to the United States in the 1800s. In the early 1900s the Addis Brush Company, who was credited with producing one of the first toilet bowl brushes, decided to craft a fake tree made of goose feathers that were dyed green.



Goose Feather Tree

### The Debate

Unbeknownst to most, the topic of Christmas trees can spur many passionate arguments. There are countless differing viewpoints on the topic. 100 students and teachers from all grades of the high school were interviewed. When asked which type of holiday tree she prefers, student Rachel explains, "Fake trees. Spiders, sap, and fire hazards are annoying." Student Riley argues that real trees are "prettier and more Christmas-y". When questioned why she prefers real trees, Maddie responds, "Cause fake Christmas trees are dumb. Real ones come with experiences and memories." Landon counters Maddie with, "It's easier to put up for our family and is more durable for all our family ornaments."



### The Results

60% of the interviewees prefer artificial trees while 40% of the interviewees prefer real Christmas trees.



## Lex Traditions

This might be a small town, but we all have our different traditions. Where do traditions come from? Well the word tradition comes from the Latin word traditio which means to transmit, to hand over or to give for safekeeping. It was originally used in Roman law to refer to the idea of inheritance.

Why do we have traditions? Traditions make the holidays or even just certain day more special than they already are.



Going around and asking people what they do as a Christmas tradition gets many different answers. Alice B. said, “We do that German thing where you hide the pickle ornament on the tree.” This is a tradition where you hide a decoration on the tree and whoever finds it will receive a reward or good fortune the following year.

Melissa J. said, “We go in our PJs with hot chocolate and look at Christmas lights.” Many people do this one as well, where you pile your whole family into a car, and go look at Christmas lights. Blasting Christmas music and just enjoying being with your family even if it is for just one night.



## Christmas Scones

These scones are perfect for the busy Christmas mornings because you can prepare the dough on Christmas eve, and then put in the oven on Christmas morning. They could be ready for breakfast when all the presents have been unwrapped. The original recipe can be found in “*An Edible Mosaic*” By Faith Gorsky.

### Ingredients

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
6 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
¾ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon nutmeg  
4 teaspoons minced rosemary  
2 tablespoons chopped dried cranberries  
6 tablespoons chilled butter, diced  
1 cup half and half, with an additional 2 tablespoons for brushing the tops  
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste (or equal amounts of vanilla extract)

### Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar  
½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste (or equal amounts of vanilla extract)  
¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
2-3 tablespoons water

### Assembly

1. Preheat the oven to 450° F, line a baking sheet with parchment or slip-mat paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, nutmeg, dried cranberries, and rosemary.
3. Cut in the butter until the mixture looks like a coarse meal, using a butter knife or a fork. In a separate bowl, whisk together the half and half and vanilla bean paste, then incorporate it into the flour mixture, which should be coming together without being too wet
4. Shape the dough into a ball, then flatten it into a disk, wrap it in plastic wrap, and chill it for 10 minutes.
5. Place the dough on a lightly floured surface, the roll or press it into a circle about 7 to 8 inches wide, and ¾ inches thick. Cut it into 8 wedges of equal size.
6. Transfer the dough onto the prepared baking sheet, then lightly brush the tops of the scones with half and half (or milk if needed) and bake for about 14-16 minutes, or until puffed and lightly golden brown, then cool completely.
7. While the scones are in the oven, whisk together the all of glaze ingredients, adding in the water a little at a time until it reaches the desired consistency. Drip down the tops of the scones, sprinkling cranberries or rosemary on top if desired, and let the glaze cool completely before serving.
8. Eat up, and have a Merry Christmas

## The Origins of Christmas Trees



With Christmas right around the corner, families are beginning their Christmas celebrations. A prominent American tradition being the decorating of the Christmas Tree. However, the practice of decorating a tree may in hindsight seem absurd. What purpose or historic significance could it hold? This begs the question as to the origination of the tradition.

It's commonly believed to have originated from Pagan tradition, adopted by early Christians to help in the conversion of northern Europeans and this theory does have some ground beneath it, but regardless, it remains only half-true. Trees that kept green yearlong were considered significant in many ancient cultures. Egyptians would keep small bushes or wreaths in their homes as a sign of the triumph of life over death. Furthermore, the Celts decorated their communities with greenery as a sign wishing for longevity. These traditions carried over to Roman and Nordic cultures, becoming widespread in Europe.

However, despite the long time use of plant life by Pagan peoples, there is no significant evidence to prove these traditions were used to convert them. These theories likely come from the Medieval tales of early Christianity. One such story has Saint Boniface performing an animal sacrifice in front of an Oak tree (which held spiritual significance to Germanic cultures) before cutting it down. Although there is no real historic evidence this event occurred or any others like it. This may explain the widely held belief behind the origins of the Christmas tree.

The Christmas tree tradition undoubtedly does have connections to Christianity. The Protestant Minister Martin Luther is likely the source of this tradition. At the same time of Luther's sermons in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, German Christians built pyramid or triangular wooded sculptures decorated with evergreen and candles. Luther adapted this, hosting a small pine tree in his chapel with lit candles wired onto the branches.



# Origins, cont....

While the tradition caught fire in Germany in thanks to the Protestant Reformation, it would take many more years for it to spread to America. Early Pennsylvanian settlers would sometimes have communally decorated trees, but it was not widespread. Early Christmas trees (and Christmas itself) were seen as Pagan, Massachusetts even went as far as to ban celebrations on December 25<sup>th</sup>. This hatred of Christmas trees would last until 1846 when Queen Victoria of Great Britain was sketched standing by a lit tree. Unlike some of her predecessors, Queen Victoria was a widely popular monarch, and the tradition spread across the British Isles, eventually reaching British colonies like Canada. By the 1890's the tradition spread to America and became widespread, European ornaments were even imported in mass to help with the decorating process.



Queen Victoria and her family standing around a Christmas tree.

Christmas trees are a staple in American culture and traditions. But its origins lie in 16<sup>th</sup> century German society. Early Mediterranean cultures adopted similar celebrations, spreading to most of Europe. But it wouldn't be until relatively recent times for the Christmas tree to become well recognized across the world. So here's to Christmas celebrations, when we decorate our homes with greenery to wish for longevity and Christmas joy.

# January Athletic Events

January 2	5:30pm	Ashland	Swimming
January 3	3:00pm	@JC Gorman	Wrestling
	11:00am	@Subway Rocket	Swimming
January 4	10:00am	@JC Gorman	Wrestling
	8:45am	@Subway Rocket	Swimming
	5:00pm	Upper Sandusky	Boys BB
January 7	4:00pm	Galion	Bowling
	5:30pm	Ontario	Swimming
January 8	4:00pm	@Ashland	Bowling
	6:00pm	@Galion	Wrestling
January 9	4:15pm	@Shelby	Bowling
	6:00pm	@Mansfield	Girls BB
January 10	6:00pm	@Mansfield	Boys BB
January 11	9:00am	@Wooster	Swimming
	12:00pm	@Mt. Vernon	Girls BB
	5:00pm	Clear Fork	Boys BB
January 14	6:00pm	Mt. Vernon	Boys BB
January 15	4:15pm	Olentangy	Bowling
January 16	6:00pm	@Wooster	Girls BB
January 17	6:00pm	Wooster	Boys BB
January 18	10:00am	@AHS Baker Bash	Bowling
	2:00pm	Port Clinton	Swimming
	5:00pm	Olentangy	Girls BB
January 21	5:00pm	@Wooster	Swimming
	6:00pm	@Clear Fork	Girls BB
January 23	5:30pm	Madison	Swimming
	6:00pm	West Holmes	Girls BB
January 24	6:00pm	@West Holmes	Boys BB
January 25	6:00pm	@Sandusky	Boys BB
January 27	6:00pm	@Willard	Girls BB
January 28	4:30pm	@Wadsworth	Bowling
	6:00pm	Ashland	Boys BB
January 29	4:15pm	@Wooster	Bowling
January 30	6:00pm	Loudonville	Wrestling
	6:00pm	@Ashland	Girls BB
January 31	6:00pm	@Madison	Boys BB

NOTE: Home swim meets are at the Friendly House and home bowling matches are at Lex Lanes.

And the Winner is:



By one vote this is the Minuteman logo that students chose as their favorite.

## Upcoming events at Lexington:

NHS:

January 27th—Blood Drive

Student Council:

January 9th at 7:10am and 7:10pm - Meeting to plan for Powder Puff and Mental Health Fair

Prom Committee:

January 14th after school—Meeting