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# Around-the-World Semester®: Feet, family and farewells

KENDRA SITTON  
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

In the liminal space between the hug of sleep and bright awake of the loft, I listened to the patter of voices without individuality. The warm buzz of people talking echoed along the wooden roof of the open room in Ecuador. As if underscoring the joyful reunion before the climax in a movie, Vinh serenaded us with his guitar.

With eyes closed, I only pieced together where people sat along the narrow aisles of bunks when my teammates laughed. Each of their laughs was too personal, too familiar to be mistaken for another. Through this method, I mapped out that Sam was at the front of the room with Nysa, Christian and Kyleigh sat beside me, Maddy was somewhere across from me. I enjoyed the waves of refreshment spilling from those around me into my near-dreams.

Earlier tonight in a travel group dinner, we discussed the first time the team gathered at the Vezner house after receiving our acceptance letters. The conversation was choppy, introductions overwhelming, games awkward. Much has changed in

*“Community is a place to find a home when you are traveling without one.”*

this group that once struggled in learning each other's names. Now we are fully comfortable in accepting our feet being washed by each other from the grimy reality of traveling. I was comfortable enough to fall asleep on someone else's bed while surrounded by a party. This group has been my

comfort as I travel far from family and friends, and the places I call home.

“Community is a place to find a home when you are traveling without one,” said Sophomore Adam Dougherty. In our nomadic lifestyle, the only permanence has been each other.

If the team is home, like any family, there are issues with feeling alone while surrounded by people, being annoyed by other's quirks, conflicts not easily resolved. Going through customs and onto airplanes with 38 people is often clunky, difficult and complicated. “It's kind of like being a part of a permanent group project... but more pleasant than that,” said Junior Laura Mietzner. It's easy to resent each other when sheer numbers add to the stress of travel. “Sometimes I just get overwhelmed with so many people. And I just step outside the community at times,”



Michael Hammerle, PC: Adam Lee  
said Senior Will Bakker who has struggled with a desire to engage the community of the team while also needing alone time to recharge.

A time in which the stress of the team seemed to dissipate was in Ghana. With no wifi and no nearby towns, we ate each meal as a group and spent all our time together. This time away from any other distractions allowed for self-reflection as well as community searching. “In Ghana I saw the community change solely as a result of God's grace and faithfulness. I saw people interacting in ways they wouldn't have previously. I saw people reconciling differences with each other in very honest and open ways,” said Dougherty.

Many of our attitudes about the team have evolved as we began to appreciate traveling in a group. “It was frustrating to always have someone by my side, but now I kind of like that,” Mietzner said. At this point, she thinks any three people on the team could hang out and enjoy it. She added, “I would never have talked to some of the people on this trip— we just didn't have the same friend group. I'm really happy to get to know people on that level.”

She found that now people constantly ask what her plans are and want her to join them. “People don't do that quite as much on campus. You're invited, but not pursued,” she explained.

“I don't think I could have made it through a trip like this without everyone,” said Bakker. “Collectively, the team has meant an ear to listen to me when I need it and people to understand me and really knowing who I am,” he said. “We are constantly striving to make each other better and helping each other to know Christ better.” With people from all grade levels, majors and backgrounds, the only real universal factor on the team was a foundation on Jesus Christ.

In the final week of ATW, some of us are already separating in the community as we divide between people so ready for home and people who never want ATW to end. As preparations for going home heighten, each of us grapples with holding on to the lessons and relationships most impactful this semester. “On this trip I've learned the more I get to know a person, the more I like them,” said Mietzner.

So far into the trip, I live without that fear of judgment and without the judgments I once held. As the last girl to get her feet washed tonight, partially because I spent the first hour of the party sleeping, I happily splashed my feet into the soapy gray water.

My feet have carried me across five continents and have the tan lines, blisters, calluses, scars and smell to prove it.

The past five months have held hardships and joys, and, as Mietzner said, “ATW isn't what I expected...but I'm really glad I went!”



PC: Adam Lee



# The most wonderful time of the year?

DARBY SCOTT  
STAFF WRITER

December has been deemed the most wonderful time of the year by Christmas enthusiasts around the world. However, college students unanimously cringe when they think about what December means in terms of school: Finals week. Although it is rewarding to put another successful semester behind us, it is astonishing how quickly the 16 weeks pass by. College is tough, but many students are using their anticipation of the most wonderful time of the year as a tool to stay motivated during this stressful period.

Finals week is filled with sleepless nights, an overabundance of pressure and reminders that it will all be over soon. To counteract the hardships

concluding the semester, Jonathan Predney, junior, said he is looking forward to “spending time with family and getting lots of sleep.” Predney’s favorite winter break activity is his family’s tradition of caravanning to various suburbs around Orange County to look at Christmas lights. Admiring the decorative lights has been a Predney family tradition for about 15 years, and has become one of the family’s most cherished activities during the holiday season.

Junior Victoria Peleras, is also using her excitement for Christmas break as a means of pushing through finals. Much like Predney, Peleras is eager to spend quality time with her immediate family and dogs. “We are all scattered around for college,” said Peleras of her

three siblings. The Peleras family celebrates Christmas with a 16-year tradition. “On Christmas Eve, we all open one present, which is always matching pajamas, and then we watch the ‘Polar Express’ followed by ‘The Grinch,’” Peleras explained.

In addition to her dog, Sally, Annie Studdert, junior, is thrilled to go home to her other pets (including cats, chickens and sheep) and spend time with her long-distance boyfriend. The Studdert activity she is most anticipating is a 20-year tradition: Ro-Sham-Bo. “It’s like white elephant,” says Studdert, “everyone brings a present and draws numbers for their turn to pick, but if you want to ‘steal’ you have to beat the person in rock-paper-scissors first, best 2 out of 3.”

As students count down the days remaining before traveling home to spend quality time with family and friends, it is also a reminder of how swiftly final exams are approaching. Although it is an unforgiving week, Peleras admits she uses her busy schedule to her advantage. “The thought of seeing my family gets me through finals,” said Peleras “The more I study and the busier I am, the quicker break seems to come.” To Studdert, the thought of break distracts her from studying and the pressure of finals, but she admits “it’s definitely helping me remember that there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

Finals week is approaching, but there is no need to fall victim to its daunting nature. In times of stress and sleep deprivation,

remember what is waiting at home over winter break. Predney wants to encourage his peers to “keep pushing because it’s almost done.” The all-nighters and long study sessions are nothing compared to the satisfaction of doing well.

In addition, Studdert reminds everyone to cherish the family time and keep in mind that Christmas is not just about gift giving. Remember the reason for the season and thank Christ for all of life’s blessings, no matter how small they may seem. Lastly, Peleras wishes “everyone a safe and fun winter break where they are able to enjoy and appreciate the time they have with their families.”

To everyone struggling, good luck on your finals and have the most wonderful time of the year.

## Concordia Christmas inspires holiday spirit on campus

SAMANTHA JENSEN  
STAFF WRITER

Concordia Christmas was held on Thurs., Dec 1, just in time for the holiday season. This Concordia tradition invites the community, alumni, faculty, families and students to take a break. With a Charlie Brown theme, despite homework and finals leaving them saying “good grief,” it was a great kick-off to the Christmas season.

The co-chairs of the event were junior Jessica James, ASCUI Secretary, and senior Braden Delannoy, LEAD Student Activities Coordinator. Their jobs were to oversee the development and functioning of the event. Senior, Ariana Sade-

ghipour, ASCUI president, was also involved in the planning process. She said, “As last year’s co-chair and current President, I assisted in making the co-chairs-to-do lists, giving advice or suggestions as needed and helping direct [James] to whom she would need to talk to for permission on campus.”

James came up with the idea for the Charlie Brown theme. She loves the Peanuts characters and Charles M. Schulz’s simplicity in his comic strips. After choosing the theme, each group involved (RES, PAL, Stagedoor 141, abbeywest, ISA, Fusion and Alumni Association) was asked to choose a representative to form a committee.

The co-chairs also decided on the big-ticket events. Delannoy said, “[James] and I as co-chairs decided on the sledding because it was a hit in the past. Everything else, the carriage ride, Santa, etc. is part of the longstanding tradition of Concordia Christmas.” Delannoy also chose the food truck: Waffle-icious. Other highlights included a photo booth featuring a life-sized Snoopy house made by two members of Fusion, Marty the Eagle dressed in a Charlie Brown shirt, “A Charlie Brown Christmas” playing in the amphitheater and live musical performance by Stagedoor 141, the campus musical theatre group.

James loved seeing the

whole event come together. “You can only do so much on paper for planning it,” she adds, “it’s such an awesome thing to see your vision actually come forth and see things that work and see how people are enjoying the event.”

Concordia Christmas offers a way for the whole school to get together, take a break from the stress of academics and celebrate the birth of our Savior. Sadeghipour said the event is crucial because “it directs the university’s attention to the reason for the season, which is the fact that we have a Savior who came to cleanse us of our sins. Furthermore, it allows the Concordia community to foster relation-



Marty the Eagle posing in front of Snoopy’s house, PC: Samantha Jensen

ships focused in Christ.” In addition, Delannoy said “it creates community among the student body and gives everyone a break from their responsibilities as a student.”

The semester may be drawing to a close, but be on the lookout for more events like Concordia Christmas by following ASCUI on Facebook @ConcordiaIrvineASCUI

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# Ammann looking to keep Men's Basketball soaring high

BLAKE WARYE  
STAFF WRITER

Men's Basketball Head Coach, Ken Ammann is in his 16th season as head coach, the longest tenure of any coach in Concordia's history. Ammann has 406 wins in 520 games over his previous 15 seasons. He has turned this program into one of the premier non-NCAA Division I programs in the country. With the move to NCAA Division II, the team hopes to continue this success.

Last year, which was also the team's first season in the PacWest conference, was a record setting one. The men finished last season with a 22-6 record and tied for first place in the PacWest. They also set a PacWest record for the Best Finish Ever for a program in their first year in the conference. Last year was Ammann's 13th 20-win season.

The Eagles went 2-0 in the Ayres Thanksgiving Classic back in November, which put them in a positive position for conference play which began early in December. The Eagles kicked off PacWest play on Dec. 1 with an 85-68 win against Azusa Pacific University with whom they shared the conference title last season. This was a positive start to conference play for the team, as it was a step in the right direction towards the team goal of a conference regular season championship.

With NCAA Division II in the future, the basketball team hopes to continue their strengths this basketball season. Students, faculty and staff are highly encouraged to come out to the home basketball games. Senior Alisha Alexander stresses the importance of cheering on the athletes to "show pride in [our] school" Senior Benjamin Haight added, "basketball games are the premier



Head Coach, Ken Ammann

chance for fun on our campus." He adds that "this is the best chance to see a primary sport on our campus."

Some of the key home game dates are: Dixie State University on Jan. 16, Hawaii Pacific University on Feb. 4 and California Baptist University on Feb. 23. The Homecoming game will be against Chaminade University on Jan. 28. Grab a friend and come see Ammann and the Men's Basketball Team continue to fly high. To check out the full men's basketball team schedule, go to [cuieagles.com](http://cuieagles.com).

# Coach Paula Weishoff wins PacWest Coach of the Year

JAMIE DERBY  
STAFF WRITER

Women's volleyball coach Paula Weishoff won PacWest coach of the year and led her team to the PacWest title in their second year of NCAA PacWest competition. The 26-3 overall record and outstanding statistics this season certainly show the hard work and dedication from the players and coaches.

Along with Weishoff's honor, five Eagles were selected to All-PacWest teams, which is the most in the conference and in program's history. Junior and outside hitter, Rachel Flynn, was selected to the First Team All-PacWest and Senior, Taylor Dennison, was selected to the third team. Ellie Ladensack, Morgan Nunley and Amber Rose were named Honorable Mentions. With a powerhouse team, the Women's Volleyball program took home the PacWest title. "We were more familiar with the PacWest in the second year so we knew what we were up against," said

pands far beyond Concordia. She is no stranger to winning awards, such as most valuable player and hall of fame acknowledgements. In her career, she has played and coached on the USA Volleyball Team, taking her to the Olympics in 1984, 1992 and 1996. In 1998, she was inducted into the USA Volleyball Hall of Fame. Weishoff's successful career has also continued during her previous time at Concordia, when she coached from 2004-2008. She was named NAIA Coach of the Year in 2008 after leading the Eagles to a 31-6 overall record. Dennison described how "the award will never come close to how great of a coach and person she is."

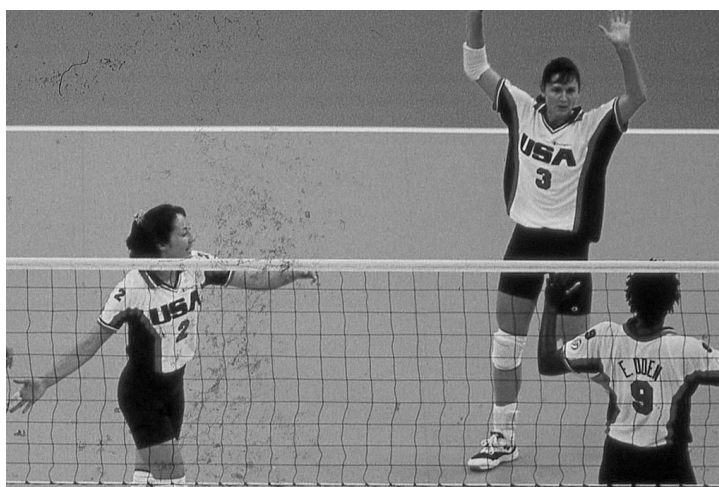
The ability to get a group of players motivated and striving for the conference title is no easy task. "Coach Paula Weishoff is one of the greatest coaches I have ever had the opportunity to play for" said Dennison. Mo Roberson, Director of Athletics, spoke about Weishoff and her pro-



Head Coach, Paula Weishoff

mentality, which was to get 1% better every time they stepped out into the court. Dennison said, Weishoff "loves the game and puts her heart into it and that's what separates her from so many other coaches." Dennison received her second All-PacWest honor and says this year provided "a well-balanced team with a ton of chemistry." Dennison expressed her gratitude towards her years spent at Concordia as a volleyball player by saying, "playing with some of my best friends and winning the PacWest Champion title is just unreal and so bittersweet to end my career." Having five seniors this year, Weishoff explained how they "really drove the team and knew what they wanted from this season, which was to leave a legacy for future generations to follow."

Weishoff said she feels she has "the best job and [is] so blessed to be at Concordia with a great group of girls, staff and support from administration." She looks forward to next year when they are able to participate in postseason play and the team will have the chance to test themselves at the national level. Roberson also expects next year's women's team to be just as competitive as this year's team and believes they will be a favorite pick to win conference.



Head Coach, Paula Weishoff on the USA Olympic Volleyball team

Flynn. "We were determined to win the championship, especially since we didn't do as well the year before." Flynn also credits much of the team's success to the coaching skills of Weishoff, stating that she "is a huge part of why we won the championship title."

Weishoff's experience ex-

fessionalism as well as her ability "to mold a team into a conference champion." Roberson noted how Weishoff gives her best and "helps her student-athletes excel [with her] ability to get them mentally and physically prepared."

Weishoff and Dennison both emphasized the team



Courtesy of Concordia.com



PC: Jeff Duran



# First person: making your mark

EMILY CHAN  
STAFF WRITER

As the semester is ending, many things are on the minds of students as some of them are preparing to cross the finish line and enter the real world, others are just starting to hit their stride and many are coming back to continue making their impact. But there is one semester left before summer. Each of us wanting to make our mark in some form, or so I wish to believe.

From my perspective as a freshman, when asked, “What do you want to be?” or “What do you want to do with your life?” I think to myself, “I do not know what I want to be because why do I need to know now?”

Yet I answer, “I do not know, but I do know that I want to be remembered. I remember reading a story that says that a person dies three times. The first time when they actually die, the second time when they are buried and the third time when they are forgotten. So essentially, nobody dies completely. They live on in the memories of others and are always watching over you. I want to be a person who is remembered for doing something that made a change. I want to make my mark.”

Yes, that is a mouthful but many people actually resonate with the idea of making a mark. Making a mark does not mean

that you have to change the entire world. I believe if you are able to say that you made a difference in at least one person’s life you made your mark. Often times, people do not actually

Senior Kaitlyn Miller explains how she chose her major, “My major is Liberal Studies with a concentration in Child Development. I am also working on my special education teaching

want to continue to advocate for children and their needs, both in the classroom and in the community. The best way to make this mark is to continue to listen to my future students and provide the best education I can for each child that I come across.”

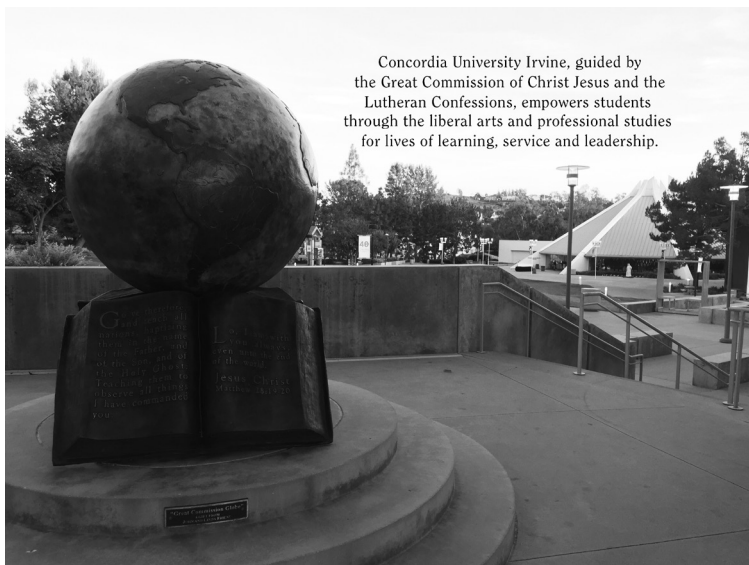
Here on campus there are so many opportunities to give back and to make an impact; through class, working as a tutor, living on campus, joining an intramural team, ASCUI, abbey west, volunteering at the Heritage Garden, joining fraternities, becoming a PAL or an RA, going on mission trips, studying abroad or just sitting in The Box and talking to a total stranger. Each of those activities can help you understand that you can change a person’s views and experiences, or in this case, the community on campus.

Sophomore Katherine Olea said, “I became a PAL because I wanted the incoming freshmen class to have an easy transition into the ‘collegelife’ and help them with any questions they had.”

ASCUI is another great example of how people are making their mark on the school by conveying the thoughts of students to administration in order to give students a voice and ultimately help the campus. Freshmen Josiah Popp said, “I decided to join ASCUI because my long-term goals include becoming a public policymaker,

and the student senate was a tremendous place to start learning what that entails.” Some of the things he is working on with the rest of the student body is drafting project proposals which include: cleaning up Rho and Sigma and addressing general issues of safety. Making your mark does not only apply to making a difference in someone’s life, making a mark could also mean that you helped the campus or environment by volunteering in our Heritage Garden or even picking up random pieces of trash lying around campus, the opportunities are endless.

Whether it is doing things for your chosen career, on campus, or something in the environment, ultimately it is to make the world a better place. I do not mean that you need to be a perfect person to make a mark or a change, sometimes just going to a shelter a few times or talking to someone new can make a difference. By being aware that you can make an impact in lives is enough. You can always make a difference in someone’s life whether it is now, or 20 years from now. Making your mark is not something you can just cross off of a list and go on your merry way once it is completed, it is something that happens continuously in life and can easily have a domino effect to become something bigger.



PC: Emily Chan

know that they made their mark in other people’s lives. And even if they do not, they will not be forgotten for that person whose life they changed will always remember what they did for them.

God puts people in your life and you in other’s lives for a reason; ultimately it will make a change in both parties and help shape each of you to become the person you are today. In relation to vocation, some people have very strong callings in certain fields while others are still finding theirs—for finding your vocation is never said to be easy.

credential. I have known since I was a little kid that I was going to be teacher but I never imagined I would do special education,” said Miller. “Then my little brother was born, and to me he was, and still is, the most perfect little bundle of joy. After two years of being alive, he was diagnosed with autism and also a speech deficit, which makes him non-verbal. He is now 12 and I can’t imagine doing anything with my life other than helping children like him.” Regarding her impact in the community, Miller said, “I

## Students share their experiences in Guatemala

SARAH DIXON  
STAFF WRITER

From Nov. 19 to 27, a group of Concordia students spent their Thanksgiving break on a mission trip in Guatemala. Concordia partnered with Central American Lutheran Missions Society (CALMS) to help provide the village of El Progreso with clean water while putting on a Vacation Bible School (VBS) for the children. Students shared the joys of helping the children of Guatemala and sharing the Word of God.

“Have you ever woken up so excited for the thrill of a new adventure that you awoke before the rooster crowed? Well, the first morning when I woke up in La Union, before we headed down to the village of El Progreso I went up on the roof,” said Lauren Kelley, junior. “I was in wonder to see what all God had in store for me on this trip.”

Kelley said that, alongside 13 team members, they headed out to the village of El Progreso to help, in service with CALMS and Bethany Lutheran Church doing VBS, house visits, women’s afternoon crafts and soccer time, while they visited the

Catholic and Evangelical churches. “When I heard that there was going to be a VBS I knew there would be an opportunity for me to help show the children

a feast. Junior Bailey Pope said that on Thanksgiving day, they planned to eat a simple lunch and found tables set up with a feast of traditional Guatemalan

makes beautiful things. Sometimes we just need to wake up and see all of the life He has to offer for us,” said Kelley.

Pope said that on the last day she found herself standing in a crowd of children in silence. “It was crazy for me to see how much just our presence meant to them, even if we can barely communicate,” said Pope. “It’s unbelievable how those bonds form.”

From this trip, Pope said she took away the importance of joy. “Those kids had nothing in comparison to what we are used

to, and it was very eye-opening to see the joy they still had despite their circumstances,” said Pope. “This experience really put ‘money can’t buy happiness’ in a whole new perspective.”

Kelley said that after experiencing the beauty of Guatemala, she knew someday she would have to come back. “I knew that even when we left Guatemala, God would be there with the people, He would be speaking the Word to them, and bringing other teams through CALMS to help spread the Gospel.”



Lauren Kelley (left) and Bailey Pope (right)

of El Progreso the light, and truth of the Bible,” said Kelley.

Although these students decided to use their Thanksgiving break to go on this mission trip, they did not miss out on having

food. “The people of El Progreso cooked us a huge meal to thank us for what we were doing there,” said Pope. Kelley also said this was a moment she would always remember. “I know God



The whole group



## Core Cambridge - Reading the tea leaves

*Semester by semester, Concordia students study abroad at Westfield House as part of Concordia's Enduring Questions and Ideas (Q&I Core) Cambridge program. Under the instruction of CUI professors Dr. James and Dr. Susan Bachman, these students study English and History, attend Cambridge University lectures, and take part in other required and elective courses offered by Westfield House of Theological Studies. Each week, the students or professors share with Courier readers some of their favorite observations about life and study in England.*

**James and Susan Bachman:** Professors talk a lot. Today we're happy to let our terrific students have the last words of the term.



**Aaron Borkovec:** One of the most important aspects of Cambridge for me would have to be the focus on learning rather than a grade. This was reinforced when Ben asked Dr. Boris Gunjevic about our grades in the class, and he told us that we all are likely to get A's; this meant that now we could focus on learning. In Cambridge, we all learn about ourselves too. Everyone here in Luther Hall is used to hearing my not-so-soft voice, except when I pop up behind them as I ask, "How's it going?" Curiosity may have killed the cat, but for me, making people jump just gets me in trouble and brings forth prompt shushes.



**Madison Kreinheder:** While living here, I experienced a side of the academic world that I had not encountered previously. This was the first semester I didn't take a science course. However, I was able to step out of my comfort zone and into the literary world of Chaucer and Shakespeare that I may not have had the opportunity to fully delve into otherwise.



**Lauren Shon:** Cambridge means growth for me. Spiritually, relationally and academically. My relationship with God since being baptized has been challenging, yet I'm seeing all the more reasons to praise God for the good He is doing to strengthen my relationships, both continuing and new. Academically, I have enjoyed this semester beyond expectations, thanks to our friendly faculty and persevering peers! A humorous self-realization I came to is that while abroad, I've become Hermione! I nag my friends to finish their own work—because it's important, people!



**Benjamin Lange:** At the beginning of the semester, daily chapel felt excessive and unnecessary. However, I eventually found that praying every morning as a community was conducive to growing together as friends and to improving my spiritual life more than I ever thought. I'm really glad that I gave that a chance. Moving from the sublime to the, well, opposite: British food is notoriously bland, and I found myself really missing American salty, greasy junk food and opted for too many pizzas.



**Carmel McGee:** "I owned every second that this world could give. I saw so many places; the things that I did. Yeah, with every broken bone, I swear I lived." - I Lived, OneRepublic.

Coming to Cambridge was one of the best decisions I may ever make. I learned to accept that failure happens, but that doesn't mean my effort was unimportant. Cambridge has been my own little fairy tale, and I wouldn't trade a single second, not even the bad times, because they taught me so much. Well, maybe that's not true... I might trade the few seconds I tried marmite because that was just bad, but everything else was okay.



**Jonah Laws:** Always try. Early in the semester, I answered a question wrong in class, and Dr. Susan said, "You are wrong, but I appreciate that you try." It has become a running joke, but also something I've spent time meditating on. If you never try, you will never learn. If you don't fail, how will you know how to pull yourself back up?



**Jared Peterson:** My experience here at Cambridge—unforgettable! It goes without saying—but I'll say it—studying abroad in such a prestigious city offers an immense opportunity. However, the moment this foreign country became familiar to me was the moment I realized how significant this semester really was. I couldn't even find my way around CUI's little campus until my second semester. Now I needed to navigate Cambridge?! Oh, I've gotten lost, and still do sometimes; but this place is home to me now.



**Emma Stanton:** From the start, I knew I couldn't pass up Cambridge. I've come far from my August me to the December me. Was there stress? Of course. It's no fun without challenges. In a scholarly British society like Cambridge, tight city living can be a shock. Everything scrunches so snug and close together. But what fun when you randomly bump into one of your classmates, or even your roommate (or someone who really looks like the Duchess of Cambridge!) while walking back from the market.



**Sam St. John:** From the land of royalty and admiralty, science, literature, and liturgy, lochs and fens, chimney tops, mistletoe, and rosy-cheeked children in the frosty air, Blessed Advent and Christmas. As Tiny Tim summed it up: "God bless us, everyone!"



# A night of peace

KRISTEN SAULMAN  
MUSIC COLUMNIST

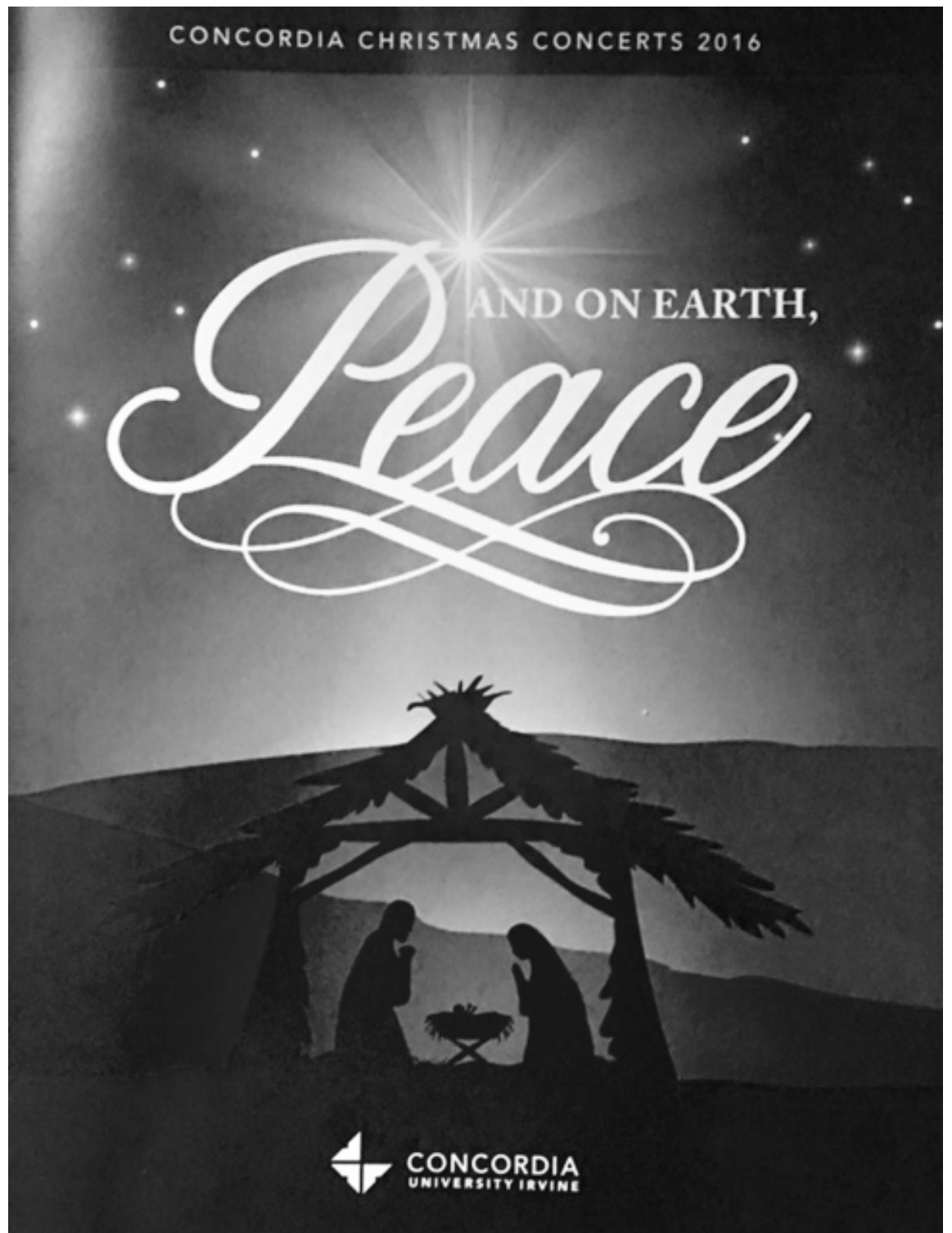
Sat., Dec. 3 was opening night for the Concordia Christmas concert series. The dark evening was accented by the soft lighting and cool atmosphere of the CU Center, and the Christmas decorations that adorned the interior made it feel a bit like home. The concert's theme was peace, and beginning with an opening litany that turned an "Evening Liturgy" into a beautiful song communicated that theme from the beginning. The concert's official title, *And on Earth, Peace*, alluded to Luke 2:14. It reads, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests." With calming songs and beautiful music, the concert delivered on its promise of peace.

Musical selections included classical Christmas favorites such as "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," and lesser known holiday carols like "The Work Of Christmas." Although some of the music was less familiar than others, the performers were wonderful and showcased their talents beautifully. In fact, an African carol titled "Noel," was easily one of the highlights of the night. Donne di Canto, the Concordia Choir, the Concordia Master Chorale, the Concordia Men's Chorus, and a selection of instrumentalists came together, energy radiated from the performers, and the audi-

ence was swept into the song's rhythmic cadence.

Performances like this are what make the Christmas concert so unique. It takes the musical talents of several of Concordia's music ensembles, including all four of Concordia's choirs, the Concert Handbells, Concordia Sinfonietta, and the Concordia Wind Orchestra, and blends them all into one show. Even if you have already seen one or more of these groups perform individually, there is something special that occurs when the groups come together, layer their voices and instruments, and create a lovely musical performance. Many of the concert pieces had the Concordia Sinfonietta accompanying one or more of the choirs' songs. One song that combined the talents of both Donne di Canto and Sinfonietta was "What Child," an English carol rendition of the Christmas song "What Child is This." It was really special to hear the gentle voices of the women combined with the soft notes of the orchestra to create a powerful swell of music.

Hoping to get into the Christmas spirit by seeing one of the Christmas concerts? Tickets are still available for the performance tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased and additional musical performances can be found at <http://www.cui.edu/en-us/academicprograms/undergraduate/music/calendar>.



## Honors Recital: Star strings, wonderful winds, brilliant bells and snappy singers

ANNELIESE LANE  
STAFF WRITER

The Fall Honors Recital will be held in the CU Center on Dec. 12 at 5 p.m. This recital, free for all students, puts the best of Concordia's musically talented on display, giving students an opportunity to reflect on the progress they've made and show the campus what they've learned.

Not sure what to expect? Past Honors Recital student, Josephine Thompson, junior, who has been playing violin for all three of her years at Concordia, shares why it is such an incredible event to attend. "My favorite part of the recital has to be hearing a performance on an unexpected instrument. Instruments like harps, solo handbells and alto vocalists. But of course, the best part is seeing [everyone's] improvement," said Thompson.

The Honors Recital features many outstanding soloists. Performing solo can be stressful, but it can also be inspiring. Thompson said the pressure she feels from all her classmates and

peers watching her performance is incredibly motivating. When the only sound in the room is going to be your voice or your violin, who wouldn't want to practice until they were perfect?

While the final lineup of performers was unavailable at

time of writing, those interested in attending can find out who's performing what with a short walk over to the music building where student names will be posted. The performers' names should also be posted on the Concordia Music website.

The students that perform during the Honors Recital are chosen during the end of year musical juries. "We all perform individually for the jury, and then they pick a select number of people who did an exceptional job to be in the honors recital," said Sarah Dixon, President of the Women's Choir, junior. "All vocal students go to the Honors Recital and listen to the performers that were chosen."

Preparing for the Honors Recital is hard work. "You are playing for the entire population of music majors, music minors, and private lesson students. There's much more pressure to make an excellent performance, so generally you'll be practicing more," said Thompson. "On top of school work, this can make for one stress ball of a student."

As the name might imply, performing in the Honors Recital is an honor. Singing quality and instrument expertise are the standards used to choose performers. So come join the party and listen to some of Concordia's most dedicated music students. For more information about the event contact Mike Zelazo, Director of Operations in the Music Department or visit online at <http://www.cui.edu/en-us/academicprograms/undergraduate/music/calendar>.



Courtesy of pixabay.com



## CU Give Back excites and exceeds expectations

ASHLEY SANDS  
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 15, Concordia's friends and family raised \$144,198 during the second annual CU Give Back. This event encourages students, alumni and the community to give back. The proceeds are donated and support everything from student aid and scholarships to the DCE program and Guatemala Water Initiative.

Despite the event's short history, 2016's donations not only surpassed expectations, but encouraged the coordinators to extend the day by 12 hours due to

the incredible interest in supporting the campus. Wendy Leivan, Director of Advancement Services and Director of the Annual Fund, said, "This year we really tried to get the message out to as many people as possible. We tried to reach people where they live, so social media of all types was used and extremely important."

With almost \$150,000 raised in total, Concordia graciously appreciates its benefactors. "An activity like Giving Day allows our whole community (alumni, parents, donors, faculty and staff) to grow in appreciation for what

we have been blessed with and the importance of giving back," said Tim Jaeger, Executive Vice President for University Advancement.

Concordia showcased the many programs and amenities offered here, from our many successful sports teams to our Theater and Art Departments. "CU Give Back is a way for many of the different clubs and activities to tell their story, make people aware of the great things happening and generate some excitement and support for their programs," said Jaeger.

This was truly a campus-wide

effort, with all of Concordia's departments and supporters working together to get the attention of students and donors. During CU Give Back, every inch of our campus was adorned in posters, balloons and support from students, faculty and staff.

Leivan said, "We are so thankful for all the students, faculty, staff and donors who participated this year. Now that they've seen the concept of a campus wide Giving Day, we hope to see it just explode next year. Next year we hope Giving Day will stretch to two days. One like you saw this

week and one where we have so many off campus projects for the students to be able to go into the community and Give Back."

With the success of this year's Day of Giving, Concordia can only thank the generous supporters who graciously gave back. The donations will help support Concordia's many academic and extracurricular programs in need of extra funding to meet their academic and spiritual goals.

To everyone involved in coordinating, volunteering or donating, your support directly impacts Concordia and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



PC: Caroline Wong

## Holly-Jolly events to cure finals blues

ALICE HOOVER  
STAFF WRITER

Have finals got you down? Are you desperately in search of events to go to with friends before heading home for winter break? The Courier has several options that will make you merrier than ol' Saint Nicholas himself!

Like any good celebration, you can start by decking the halls at Beloved and Battalion's event, **Tis the Season to be Jolly!** Gather all your friends, a substantial amount of cheer and head to Concordia's Kappa Lounge, located in the Upper Quads on Wed. Dec. 14. 7-9 p.m. You will have the opportunity to make ornaments, decorate cookies and compete in an ugly sweater contest. This is the

perfect event to chill out before finals and see your friends before heading home for the holidays.

Is Dec. 14 too far away? Fear not! The City of Tustin Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting their **Annual Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony** on Fri. Dec. 9, from 4-9 p.m. Located just a few miles from campus, head out to the Tustin City Hall to enjoy the festivities. In addition to the tree lighting itself, there will be performances by community groups and a special reading of "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." The event is free to attend and the Tustin Community Foundation will have refreshments for sale. For further information visit the website: [\[stinca.org/civicax/calendar/inc/blobfetch.aspx?BlobID=26425\]\(http://stinca.org/civicax/calendar/inc/blobfetch.aspx?BlobID=26425\)](http://www.tu-</a></p>
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If one tree lighting isn't enough to brighten up those finals blues, jingle on down to the **108th Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade!** Occurring from Wed., Dec. 14- Sun., Dec. 18, the Commodores Club of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce hosted event will feature boats decked out in beautiful displays of holiday spirit sailing along the waterfront. Each day, the festivities will begin at 6:30 p.m. and there is parking in the city parking lots as well as along the parade path. For a map of the parade path and schedule, visit [www.christmasboatparade.com/parade-route-and-schedule/](http://www.christmasboatparade.com/parade-route-and-schedule/)

Another wonderful way to

sleigh the holidays is by attending the **31st Annual Candlelight Walk** at the Heritage Hills Historical park. This event will be taking place on Sat., Dec. 10 and Sun., Dec. 11 from 5:30 -8:30 p.m. Parking is free and the event itself costs \$5. Candles and carolers will light the pathways as you stroll through this whimsical event. There will be Santa, holiday tales, holiday radio shows and Flamenco dancers at various places in the park. Hot Cocoa, Apple Cider and cookies will be available for purchase as well. For more information, visit [www.destinationirvine.com/includes/calendar-of-events/31st-Annual-Candlelight-Walk/19499/](http://www.destinationirvine.com/includes/calendar-of-events/31st-Annual-Candlelight-Walk/19499/)

Should visiting one of these

jolly events not be possible; there is still hope! While the weather outside is frightful, the **Irvine Spectrum Ice Rink** is delightful! The Irvine Spectrum has an Ice Rink that is available from now until early February. The cost with skate rentals is \$20, but if you bring your own skates it will be \$16. This outdoor skating rink is located in the Giant Wheel Court, adjacent to Macy's and Nordstrom. For more information visit [www.shopirvinespectrumcenter.com/entertainment/ice-rink/](http://www.shopirvinespectrumcenter.com/entertainment/ice-rink/).

Don't just be an elf on the shelf this holiday season; go out and have a blast with these fun events in the Irvine area! Just remember, you better not pout, and you better not cry, because these events are sure to fly by!



# Netflix Reviews: A merry selection of movies

A column that details the highs and lows of Netflix to assist Concordians in the ongoing struggle of picking something to watch.

CELINA STRATTON  
STAFF WRITER

Instead of reviewing one particular movie or TV series, here is a short list of my Christmas favorites to watch this holiday season. **“Love Actually”**

Now this is pretty much my all-time favorite Christmas movie and definitely a must-watch in the Stratton house. “Love Actually” has everything: –comedy, drama, and an all-star cast. For you “Harry Potter” series fans, this movie has both Professor Snape (the late Alan Rickman, Galaxy Quest) AND Professor Trelawney (Emma Thompson, Nanny McPhee). Those are just two notable actors from an ensemble that includes Liam Neeson (Taken), Keira Knightly (Pirates of the Caribbean), Andrew Lincoln (The Walking Dead), Chiwetel Ejiofor

(12 Years a Slave) and Hugh Grant (About a Boy)...just to name a few.

This 2003 Christmas-themed film follows eight very different couples with interrelated subplots who are all dealing with the ups and downs of love and life set during the five weeks leading up to Christmas. Sure it is technically a romantic comedy, but ignore the stigma that comes along with that genre and take the movie as it stands--a well-written, even better acted, and heartwarming story about one emotion that we have all felt at one point in our lives in whatever context: love. You can now stream “Love Actually” on Netflix. **“The Family Stone”**

Another favorite of mine that I cannot go a holiday season without, is “The Family Stone” (2005), another film with a dynamite cast.

Dermot Mulroney (The Wedding Date), Rachel McAdams (Mean Girls), Ty Giordano (A Lot Like Love), Luke Wilson (The Royal Tenenbaums) and Elizabeth Reaser (The Twilight Saga) play the dysfunctional children of Craig T. Nelson (The Incredibles) and Diane Keaton (Annie Hall). When Mulroney’s character, Everett Stone, brings his girlfriend, Meredith (Sarah Jessica Parker, Sex & the City), home for the holidays, high tensions and conflicts arise. Meredith cannot seem to find her place in the eccentric Stone family dynamic and realizes she is a misfit in their free-spirited way of life.

The chemistry between all members of the cast make the story so believable and relevant to audiences as they prepare for big family holidays and all of the chaos that comes along with it–

but it’s not all crazy antics and humor. As the plot unravels, drama shapes the way the Stones approach life after this family revelation. The familiar faces truly make it feel like this family is welcoming you to take a peek inside their lives and it all comes together in such a touching and sensitive film about realities that we all face at one time or another.

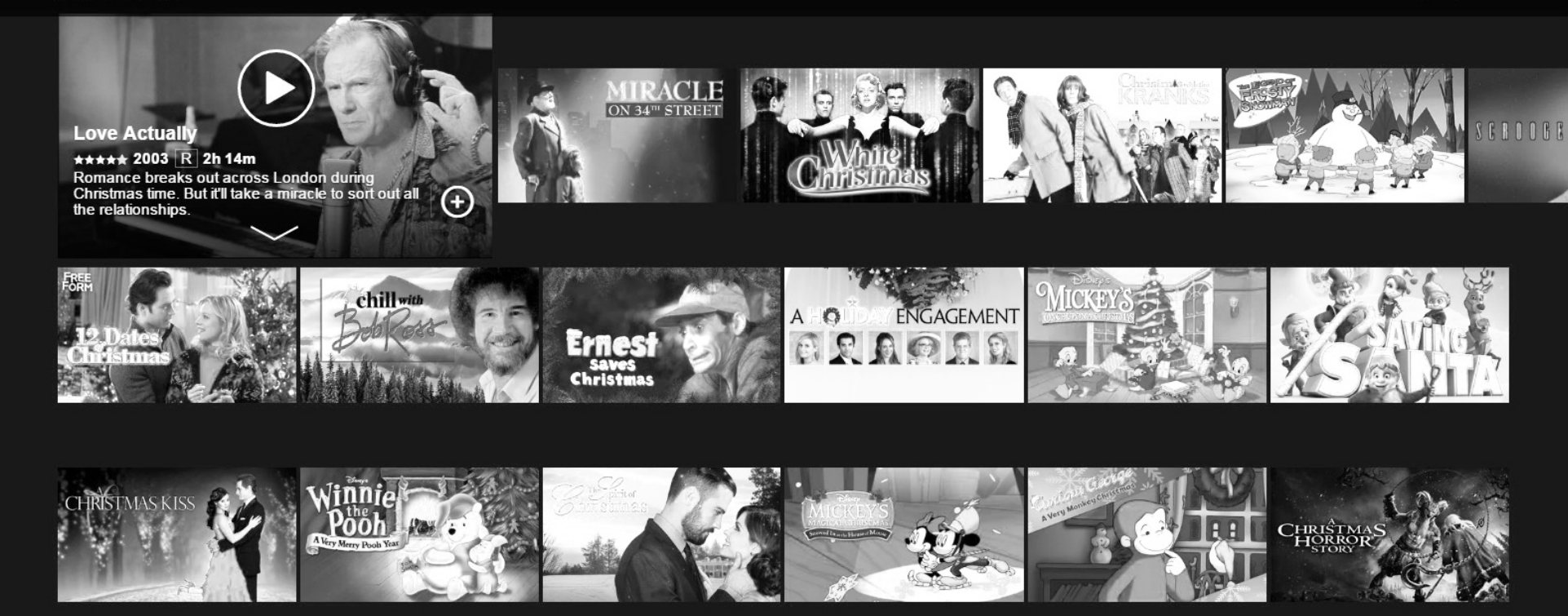
**“White Christmas”**

“White Christmas” is a fairly new addition to my Christmas film repertoire, but an excellent one nonetheless. This is one of the authentic Christmas classics you think about when you’re driving and listening to Christmas songs on the radio. As your mind drifts, you think about the superstar actors/singers serenading you and wonder where these holiday original songs came from. The most

famous version of the song “White Christmas” came from this 1954 classic starring Bing Crosby.

According to imdb, the storyline follows Bob Wallace (Crosby) and Phil Davis (Danny Kaye) leaving the Army after WWII and becoming a top song-and-dance act. The pair soon meets another song-and-dance duo of sisters, Betty and Judy Haynes (Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen, respectively) and travels to a Vermont lodge for a special Christmas performance.

The entertainment is endless, not just the story, but the singing and dancing performed by these classic talents. Impress your parents and grandparents and take a couple of hours to stream “White Christmas” on Netflix before heading home for the holidays. It is a Christmas classic you must see!



Holiday Favorites, Courtesy of Netflix.com

FOWL LIVING

ILLUSTRATED BY: KARA DER

PROVE YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THE HENHOUSE BY COMPLETING THIS WORD SEARCH! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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ASUJHP THMHIPHIRNG  
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EAGLES  
FOWL LIVING  
MARTY  
NOEL

PRESENTS  
STAR  
ANGEL  
COOKIES  
EGGNOG  
HOME

MISTLETOE  
NORTH POLE  
SANTA  
TINSEL  
CANDY CANE  
CUI

ELF  
JESUS  
NO HOMEWORK  
PEACE  
SNOW  
VIRGIN MARY